



RENTIERISM AND POLITICAL CULTURE IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES THE CASE OF UAEU STUDENTS

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Abstract

This dissertation discusses United Arab Emirates (UAE) state-society relations in historical perspective; analyses qualitatively the Emirati political culture; examines how the latter affects governmental policies in the UAE; and evaluates both qualitatively and quantitatively the political orientations and values of the Emirati educated youth. Through a discussion of existing theoretical and conceptual approaches, and the observation of the UAE case study, it argues that an important and overlooked dimension among students of state-society relations in authoritarian rentier states is citizens' political culture, which should nonetheless be examined within a more integrative framework of analysis.

Accordingly, this study employs a refined version of the holistic 'state-in-society' approach (Kamrava, 2008), in combination with rentier state theory (RST) and the political culture perspective (Almond & Verba, 1963), to qualitatively discuss the general Emirati political culture (agency/input), and assess how the latter affects governmental performance/policies (output); and to evaluate, both qualitatively and quantitatively, the political culture of the educated Emirati youth as the main potential supporters or opponents (agency/input) of the ruling elite.

Adding to the debate around the continued significance and scope of RST, the dissertation concludes that the rentier nature of a state does not necessarily determine its people's lack of interest in politics, but can actually empower them to challenge authoritarianism through political socialization. The historical approach to UAE political movements and discussion about contemporary political standpoints demonstrate that governmental policies (redistributive, co-optative, repressive, or reformist) are mainly driven by domestic pressure and run parallel to historical development of domestic political activism. Hence, rentierism by itself does not suffice to explain state-society relations in the Gulf region.

Finally, the analysis and measurement of cognitive, affective and evaluative political orientations of Emirati UAEU students reflects that there is adherence to 'post-materialistic' and 'self-expression' values among important sectors of the Emirati educated youth, which are associated with the emergence of a participative political culture (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005): an '*aspiring participant*' political culture.

A Luciano, por acompañarme en este largo camino.

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Translation and Transliteration Note

Translation:

In this dissertation, all sources in other languages than English¹ have been translated into that language by the author (and for the summary in Spanish, English sources into Spanish).

Transliteration of Arabic words:

- All transliterated Arabic words have followed the International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES) transliteration system (See Annex 1).
- All technical terms have been italicized and fully transliterated with diacritical marks.
- Terms that appear in Merriam–Webster or the IJMES Word List have been spelled as they appear there, not italicized and with no diacritics.
- Personal names, place names, and names of political associations and organizations have been spelled in accordance with the IJMES transliteration system but without diacritics (‘*ayn and hamza have been preserved in all cases; except for initial hamza, which is dropped).*
- The Arabic *tā’ marbūṭa* has been rendered *a* not *ah*, but in *idāfa* constructions, it has been rendered *at*.
- The *nisbi* ending has been rendered *-ī / -iyy* (masculine) and *-iyya* (feminine).
- Inseparable prepositions, conjunctions, and other prefixes have been connected with what follows by a hyphen (*bi-*, *wa-*, *li-*, etc.); and when it is followed by the article *al*, the *a* has been elided, forming a contraction (rendered as *wa-l-*, *bi-l-*, *li-l-*, etc.).
- Initial *hamza* has always been dropped.

Exceptions:

Translation of Arabic terms has been provided throughout the text, except in the following cases:

- Technical terms² have not been translated (e.g. *wasta*).
- The names of the seven emirates and main towns have been transliterated in the official form used by UAE institutions and on the national media (e.g. al-Ain, Abu Dhabi, Ras al-Khaimah, etc.)
- Names of Arab authors/personalities cited are written as the persons carrying that name normally uses (e.g. Sultan Al-Qassemi for the commentator, but al-Qasimi for the Emir of Sharjah; Abdulkhaleq Abdulla rather than ‘Abd al-Khaliq ‘Abd Allah).

¹ Regarding Arabic terms, the translation and transliteration system used in this dissertation has been the IJMES system. A summary of its use in this dissertation is described below. For a thorough description of this system see IJMES website at:

<http://ijmes.ws.gc.cuny.edu/authorresources/ijmes-translation-and-transliteration-guide/>

² Defined on IJMES website as “a word for which there is no English equivalent and that is not found in Merriam–Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, or a multi-word phrase excluding names and titles.”

SUMMARY IN SPANISH

RESUMEN EN ESPAÑOL

A través del estudio del caso de los Emiratos Árabes Unidos (EAU), esta tesis presenta nuevas aportaciones al debate en torno a la importancia de la Teoría del Estado Rentista (TER) para el estudio del cambio y la estabilidad política en los regímenes del Golfo. Las relaciones estado-sociedad en el Golfo han sido fundamentalmente explicadas a través de la TER, que asume que en los estados que reciben la mayoría de sus ingresos de rentas externas, los ciudadanos permanecen indiferentes a la política. Además, la estabilidad del régimen autoritario está garantizada mientras no haya tributación o crisis fiscal. En este sentido, la relación gobernante-gobernado está basada en un contrato social negociable, sostenido por los ingresos derivados de la explotación de los hidrocarburos por el estado (Beblawi & Luciani, 1987). Sin embargo, son varios los teóricos de la TER que han sugerido que otros factores deben ser tenidos en cuenta para el estudio de las dinámicas sociopolíticas en los estados rentistas (Capítulo 1). De hecho, las diferentes experiencias políticas de estados rentistas alrededor del mundo demuestran la invalidez de la ecuación que vincula exclusivamente las rentas del petróleo con el autoritarismo, así como también las diferentes historias políticas de los seis estados del Consejo de Cooperación del Golfo.

En primer lugar, el activismo político ha existido en diferentes formas y con diferente intensidad en todos ellos, antes del período británico y del descubrimiento del petróleo. En segundo lugar, siendo todos rentistas, circunstancias específicas en cada uno de los estados del Golfo han contribuido enormemente al establecimiento de diferentes sistemas políticos, con niveles variables de participación política. A pesar de los análisis que presentan a los estados del Golfo como una unidad de estudio uniforme, existen diferencias radicales entre las trayectorias políticas de cada país, en particular de Kuwait y Bahreín que, desde la independencia, han tenido parlamentos electos con cierto poder legislativo.

En los Emiratos han existido, al menos desde principios del siglo XX, demandas de reforma política, antes del descubrimiento del petróleo, pero bajo las estructuras rentistas derivadas de la relación con Gran Bretaña (Capítulo 2). Éstas se han centrado en el deseo de determinados sectores de la sociedad de

tener una cámara legislativa representativa. Sin embargo, el sistema político autoritario establecido tras la independencia en 1971 ha perdurado durante más de 40 años. Este hecho ha sido atribuido, en gran medida, a que los ingresos de los hidrocarburos serían suficientes para mantener la relación rentista estado-sociedad durante un futuro cercano. A pesar de lo anterior, en diciembre de 2005 el presidente de los EAU, Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, anunció que había llegado el momento de implementar gradualmente reformas hacia un sistema político más participativo. Hasta la fecha, los eventos más significativos de este proceso han sido las elecciones para el Consejo Nacional Federal de 2006 y 2011. A pesar de que ello satisfizo a algunos sectores de la sociedad, fue considerado irrelevante por muchos e insuficiente por otros. La mayoría de los analistas han interpretado este movimiento como una respuesta a presiones externas desencadenadas por la liberalización económica y los ataques terroristas del 11 de septiembre, aunque se ha prestado muy poca atención al papel de las presiones internas. Más recientemente, y tras el inicio de la llamada 'Primavera Árabe', las autoridades emiratíes han adoptado un enfoque más represivo hacia las demandas internas de cambio político. Como resultado, un importante número de activistas políticos han sido detenidos, juzgados y condenados, bajo alegaciones de conspirar para derrocar el gobierno de los EAU. Más aún, el estudio de los distintos posicionamientos políticos de los emiratíes, demuestra que no hay una cultura política uniforme en el país (Capítulo 3).

En este contexto, el presente trabajo llama la atención sobre la necesidad de examinar las dinámicas que explican la persistencia del gobierno autoritario y los factores que podrían traer cambio o crisis políticos en el Golfo, desde nuevas perspectivas. En este sentido, se argumenta que la naturaleza rentista del estado, en vez de mantener a la población indefinidamente indiferente, puede de hecho empoderar a sus ciudadanos a desafiar el autoritarismo e implicarlos políticamente, de modo gradual, a través de la exposición a 'agentes de socialización política' reformulados (educación, TICs, profesores y compañeros extranjeros, viajes, etc.). Estos factores, sumados al estrepitoso crecimiento demográfico, y la integración en el sistema capitalista global, determinaron el establecimiento de un sistema político autoritario en 1971, así como de una sociedad extremadamente jerarquizada, en la que cada grupo (ya

sea étnico o relacionado con sus ingresos) ocupa generalmente roles y sectores económicos específicos.

Las estructuras socio-económicas y políticas resultantes son legitimadas mediante un discurso oficial, que pone el énfasis en el pasado tribal de las élites gobernantes y sus aliados cercanos, ignorando otras identidades que conforman la sociedad actual emiratí. Por ello han emergido varios problemas sociales, como el desequilibrio demográfico, las dificultades de acceso a la nacionalidad o conflictos de identidad. Si bien estos asuntos despiertan sentimientos ‘alienantes’ entre las clases menos privilegiadas y las más educadas, sirven al mismo tiempo para justificar el status quo, bajo el pretexto de la preservación de la ‘seguridad nacional’.

En consecuencia, los siguientes capítulos exploran cómo la complejidad de una sociedad más urbana, cosmopolita, globalizada e instruida, afecta a las formas en las que el estado es gobernado, cómo nuevos o actualizados mecanismos de gobierno son adoptados y cómo los ciudadanos ven y reaccionan ante estos acontecimientos. Esta tesis emplea el enfoque holístico ‘estado-en-sociedad’ (Kamrava, 2008)³, combinado con la TER y la perspectiva de la cultura política (Almond & Verba, 1963; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005)⁴, analiza cualitativamente la cultura política emiratí en general (agencia/input), y valora, en perspectiva histórica, cómo ésta última afecta a las políticas y el comportamiento gubernamental (output). Finalmente evalúa, tanto cuantitativa como cualitativamente, la cultura política de los jóvenes emiratíes instruidos, que son considerados como los principales partidarios u opositores potenciales (agencia/input) de la élite gobernante.

Con estos objetivos, se contrastan tres hipótesis:

- 1 – La naturaleza rentista de un estado no determina necesariamente la falta de interés de sus ciudadanos en la política, sino que, de hecho, les empodera para desafiar al autoritarismo a largo plazo (a través de la socialización política).

³ La versión actualizada Mehran Kamrava (2008) del paradigma desarrollado por Joel S. Migdal de ‘estado en sociedad’(1988).

⁴ Que tiene en cuenta las orientaciones o actitudes políticas de un grupo social hacia el sistema político sin entenderlas como una característica específica o intrínseca de dicho grupo (Almond y Verba, 1963).

2 – El comportamiento del gobierno (redistributivo, cooptativo, represivo o de reforma controlada) está principalmente determinado por presiones internas (y opera paralelamente al desarrollo histórico del activismo político interno).

3 – Hay una adhesión a los valores ‘post-materialistas’ y de ‘auto-expresión’ en importantes sectores de la juventud emiratí instruida (los cuales están asociados con la emergencia de una cultura política participativa).

A través de la revisión de los enfoques teóricos y conceptuales existentes, esta tesis argumenta que la TER, por sí sola, no explica las dinámicas socio-políticas actuales de los EAU, y que la cultura política es un indicador importante para la explicación del cambio o el estatismo político. A pesar de que EAU es un estado rentista, hay sectores de la sociedad emiratí políticamente activos, que demandan cambio político. Sin embargo, una combinación de medidas redistributivas, cooptativas o represivas, junto con la reforma política ocasional y limitada, han sido históricamente empleadas por la élite gobernante para obstruir demandas domésticas de cambio, lo cual perdura hoy. En este sentido, una de las conclusiones alcanzadas es que el comportamiento del gobierno está determinado, en gran medida, por presiones domésticas y opera paralelamente al desarrollo histórico del activismo político interno (es decir, la agencia determina las políticas).

Por tanto, el rentismo es visto en este trabajo como el catalizador para los rápidos cambios experimentados por los principales agentes de socialización política en los EAU -familia, instituciones educativas y Tecnologías de la Comunicación y la Información-, mientras que la presión externa parece no ser determinante para el cambio político, debido al interés de las élites capitalistas y políticas globales en preservar el status quo en los países exportadores de petróleo. Consecuentemente, y cuestionando la TER, esta tesis argumenta que la naturaleza rentista de un estado no determina necesariamente la falta de interés político de su población sino que, de hecho, puede empoderarla a través de la socialización política, para desafiar al autoritarismo.

Finalmente, el análisis de datos obtenidos mediante una encuesta y entrevistas realizadas durante un extenso trabajo de campo en EAU, muestra que la

juventud emiratí instruida tiene escaso conocimiento político y, generalmente, una orientación evaluativa positiva. Sin embargo, los estudiantes tienen un interés relativamente elevado sobre acontecimientos políticos y una preocupación particular por ciertos temas. Por ejemplo, el desequilibrio demográfico entre extranjeros y nacionales, las prácticas de *wasta* y tribalismo y la falta de libertad de expresión y elección. Todos ellos son indicadores de una cultura política ‘aspirante a participante’. Además, los datos analizados indican que las orientaciones positivas hacia la reforma política son limitadas, debido a la percepción de inseguridad regional y al miedo a las posibles consecuencias del cambio, lo que también explica la tendencia a la autocensura y la falta de debates abiertos.

La investigación coincide, hasta cierto punto, con el argumento de Christopher Davidson (2012) de que las élites dirigentes de Emiratos (y del Golfo) no cuentan con una legitimidad imbatible. También coincide con la hipótesis de Abdulkhaleq Abdulla (2010), de que la región se encuentra en un momento determinante de su historia (el “momento del Golfo”) y de que las “fuerzas del cambio” no deberían ignorarse. Sin embargo, esta tesis no prevé el “colapso” de los regímenes que nos ocupan, ni que las emergentes clases medias tengan la capacidad de promover, de forma inminente, “un futuro democrático” (Abdulla, 2010: 15). Al examinar la congruencia entre cultura política y estructura, y siguiendo el marco teórico de Almond y Verba (1963), se demuestra que la mayoría de individuos ‘sujetos’ coincide con la estructura autoritaria, y cada vez más centralizada, de EAU.

Por tanto, no es de esperar que, en el corto plazo, el sistema político emiratí se desestabilice o sufra reformas políticas significativas. No obstante, es evidente que la cultura política emiratí está evolucionando hacia un modelo más complejo, en el que importantes sectores de la juventud instruida muestra opiniones críticas ‘post-materialistas’ y valores de ‘autoexpresión’, así como actitudes ‘alienantes’ hacia el autoritarismo en general, y con respecto a políticas y problemas sociales específicos. Puesto que las élites dirigentes no pueden depender exclusivamente de la redistribución de la renta para acallar las críticas o las demandas de reforma, esta tesis concluye que la cultura política ‘aspirante participante’ de EAU del siglo XXI ha introducido cierta incongruencia en la relación Estado-sociedad. Inicialmente, ésta facilitó la

implementación de reformas políticas superficiales, pero ha desembocado en un sentimiento de amenaza entre las élites y, consecuentemente, en una respuesta coercitiva. Para bien o para mal parece que, en los próximos años, la estabilidad en los EAU será protagonista en las relaciones entre gobernantes y gobernados y, por tanto, el cambio político es poco probable.

La estructura de esta tesis integra un primer capítulo introductorio, dos partes centrales, y una conclusión:

El capítulo 1 incluye la justificación, el marco teórico y conceptual, la revisión de la literatura existente sobre los EAU y la metodología de investigación implementada para este estudio.

La primera parte, integrada por dos capítulos, examina el proceso de formación del estado y la sociedad, así como la evolución de las relaciones estado-sociedad en los EAU.

El capítulo 2 trata sobre la evolución de las estructuras socio-económicas y políticas desde el período previo a los británicos y al descubrimiento del petróleo, y examina el impacto que el rentismo tiene en las políticas internas.

El capítulo 3 explora el activismo político y las respuestas del régimen a la potencial oposición.

La segunda parte, también compuesta por dos capítulos, analiza los datos recogidos a través de entrevistas y de una encuesta realizada a estudiantes de la Universidad de los Emiratos Árabes Unidos, y evalúa la cultura política de los jóvenes emiratíes instruidos.

El capítulo 4 valora el conocimiento e interés político, teniendo en cuenta las preocupaciones más importantes expresadas por los sondeados, y sus percepciones de los derechos humanos.

El capítulo 5 examina el alcance del apoyo de los estudiantes al sistema político y la idea de reforma política.

El capítulo concluyente presenta una discusión de las tres hipótesis contrastadas y su validez de acuerdo con la investigación realizada para esta tesis. Por consiguiente, cabe destacar que esta investigación hace contribuciones empíricas, teóricas y metodológicas a los estudios del Golfo y a la política comparada.

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation presents new input on the debate around the significance of the rentier state theory (RST) for the study of Gulf regimes' stability and change through the study of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) case. It suggests that, in addition to oil rent, other variables should be observed more closely for the understanding of the persistence of authoritarian rule in the region. Through the holistic 'state-in-society' approach, and in combination with RST and the political culture perspective, this research discusses state-society relations in historical perspective; analyses qualitatively the Emirati political culture; examines how the latter affects governmental policies in the UAE; and evaluates both qualitatively and quantitatively the political orientations and values of the Emirati educated youth. As such, it makes empirical, theoretical, and methodological contributions to Gulf and comparative politics studies.

In defiance of RST, this dissertation argues that the rentier nature of a state does not necessarily determine its people's lack of interest in politics, but can actually empower them in the long term to challenge authoritarianism through political socialization. Through a discussion of existing theoretical and conceptual approaches, rentierism is regarded in this study as the catalyser for the rapid changes experienced by the main agents of political socialisation in the UAE -family, educational institutions, and Information and Communication Technologies-, while external pressure seems not to be determinant for political change, due to global political and capitalist elites' interest in preserving the status quo in the oil exporting countries. Thus, the dissertation claims that RST used on its own does not explain current UAE socio-political dynamics, and that a more integrative framework of analysis that takes into account political culture is necessary for the explanation of political change or stasis.

Despite the UAE being a rentier state, there have historically been sectors of Emirati society that are politically aware and demand political change. However, a combination of redistributive, co-optative, and repressive measures, in addition to the occasional and limited political reform, has historically been employed by the ruling elite to obstruct domestic calls for change, and this continues today. In this regard, another conclusion is that government performance is, to a large extent, driven by domestic pressure and runs parallel

to the historical development of domestic political activism (i.e. agency determines policies).

The analysis of survey and interview data obtained through extensive fieldwork shows that the Emirati educated youth have low political knowledge, and generally positive evaluative orientations. However, data indicate that positive orientations toward political reform are limited by a sense of regional insecurity and fear of possible consequences of change, which also explains the tendency for self-censorship and lack of open debates. Moreover, students show relatively high interest in political developments, and many depict 'post-materialistic' critical positions and 'self-expression' values, as well as particular concern about a number of issues, including the demographic imbalance between foreigners and nationals; the practices of *wasta* and tribalism; and the lack of freedoms of expression and choice. Hence, these are considered in this dissertation as indicators of an 'aspiring participant' political culture in the UAE.

CHAPTER 1. THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Rationale and structure

State-society relations in the Gulf have been mainly explained through the RST, which assumes that in states that receive most of their revenues from external rents, citizens are uninterested in politics. In addition, authoritarian regime stability is guaranteed, as long as there is no taxation or fiscal crisis. In this regard, rulers-ruled relationship is based on a bargaining social contract, which is sustained by the income derived by the state from the exploitation of hydrocarbon resources (Mahdavy, 1970; Beblawi & Luciani, 1987).

However, comparative political scientists and Gulf area specialists have put forward refinements of the early RST that suggest other factors should be taken into account for the study of socio-political dynamics in rentier states. In fact, the different political experiences of rentier states around the world show the invalidity of the equation that exclusively links oil rent to authoritarianism, as do the dissimilar political histories of the Gulf states. Firstly, political activism has existed in different forms and with different intensity in all Gulf states since pre-British and pre-oil times. Second, having all become rentier states through their crucial relations with the British and the discovery of hydrocarbons, specific circumstances in each of the six GCC states has greatly contributed to the establishment different political systems with varying levels of political participation. Despite analysis of the Gulf states as a uniform unit of study, there are striking differences between the political trajectories of each country, in particular Kuwait and Bahrain, which have had elected parliaments with some legislative power since independence.

In the UAE, calls for political reform have existed since pre-oil days. These have centred on the desire of certain sectors of society to have a representative legislative chamber. However, the authoritarian political system established upon independence in 1971 has endured for more than 40 years. This has been largely attributed to hydrocarbons revenues being sufficient enough to maintain the state-society rentier relationship for the foreseeable future. Despite the former, in December 2005 the UAE President, Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, announced that the time had arrived to gradually implement reforms towards a more participatory political system. So far, the most significant events of this

process have been the 2006 and 2011 Federal National Council (FNC) elections. While this has satisfied some sectors of society, it was considered irrelevant for many, and insufficient for others. Most analysts interpreted the move as a response to external pressures, triggered by economic liberalisation and the 9/11 terrorist attacks, but paid very little attention to the role of domestic pressures. More recently, and after the beginning of the so-called 'Arab Spring', UAE authorities have adopted a more repressive approach to domestic demands for political change. As a result, an important number of political activists have been detained, judged, and condemned under allegations of plotting to overthrow the UAE government.

It is within this context that this dissertation seeks to present new input through the analysis of the UAE. It suggests that it is necessary to examine the dynamics explaining the persistence of authoritarian rule and the factors, which could bring about political change or crisis in the Gulf through a new lens. Moreover, it argues that the rentier nature of a state, rather than keeping people uninterested indefinitely, can actually empower its citizens to challenge authoritarianism and gradually make them politically aware through the exposure to reshaped 'agents of political socialization' (education, ICTs, foreign peers and professors, travelling, etc.). Accordingly, the following chapters explore how the complexity of a more urbanite, cosmopolitan, globalised and educated society affects the ways in which a state is ruled; how new or updated ruling mechanisms are implemented; and how citizens regard and react to these developments.

This dissertation employs the holistic 'state-in-society' approach,⁵ in combination with RST and the political culture perspective,⁶ to qualitatively discuss the general Emirati political culture (agency/input), and assesses, in historical perspective, how the latter affects governmental performance/policies (output). Finally, it evaluates, both qualitatively and quantitatively, the political culture of the educated Emirati youth as the main potential supporters or opponents (agency/input) of the ruling elite.

⁵ Mehran Kamrava's (2008) updated version of the Joel S. Migdal 'state-in-society' paradigm (1988).

⁶ That looks into the political orientations or attitudes of a social group towards the political system without regarding them as specific or intrinsic characteristics of that group (Almond & Verba, 1963).

For these purposes, three main hypotheses are tested:

1 - The rentier nature of a state does not necessarily determine its people's lack of interest in politics, but does actually empower them to challenge authoritarianism in the long term (through political socialization).

2 - Government performance (redistributive, co-optative, repressive, or reform policies/strategies) is mainly driven by domestic pressure (and runs parallel to historical development of domestic political activism).

3 - There is adherence to 'post-materialistic' and 'self-expression' values among important sectors of the Emirati educated youth (which are associated with the emergence of a participative political culture).

The dissertation consists of an introductory chapter, two central parts, and a conclusion. Chapter 1 includes the rationale, theoretical and conceptual framework, literature review on the UAE, and the research methodology implemented for this study.

Part I, integrated by two chapters, discusses the processes of state and society formation, as well as the evolution of state-society relations in the UAE.

Chapter 2 deals with the evolution of socioeconomic and political structures since pre-British and pre-oil days, and examines the impact that rentierism has on domestic politics. Chapter 3 discusses political activism and regime responses to potential opposition.

Part II, also consisting of two chapters, analyses the data collected through interviews and a survey among United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) students, and evaluates the political culture of the Emirati educated youth.

Chapter 4 assesses political knowledge and interest, discussing the major concerns expressed by respondents, and their perceptions of human rights. Chapter 5 examines the extent of the students' support for the political system and the idea of political reform.

The concluding chapter provides a discussion of the three tested hypotheses and their validity according to the research that was conducted for this dissertation.

2. Theoretical and conceptual framework

State-society (or rulers-ruled, to be more precise) relations in the Gulf have been largely explained through the political economy paradigm of RST, which puts emphasis on oil wealth as the main factor determining authoritarian rule and the lack of popular pressure to democratise. However, in parallel to comparative political studies dealing with other regions' or global political systems' trends, this dissertation combines the RST and the political culture approach in an attempt to bring the role of 'agency' into the analytical equation. More specifically, this research is primarily concerned with the role of rentierism in the evolution of the political culture of the Emirati educated youth, and with the ultimate impact that politically aware nationals have had, have, or may have on elite political performance. In order to justify the framework chosen, this section reviews the main perspectives that have been applied for the study of democracy and authoritarianism in general, and for the Middle East and the Gulf in particular, as well as the literature on the specific case of the UAE.

2.1. The end of the transitology paradigm?

The rise of communist and fascist regimes before Second World War, and of new authoritarian regimes with de-colonisation after it, proved the early institutional and historical unilinear evolutionary models of democratisation wrong and evidenced that the existing categories and concepts that had been conceived with Western Europe and the United States in mind did not fit all countries. Accordingly, some scholars started inquiring about the socio-economic conditions making democracy survive in some countries and collapse in others by developing a 'pluralistic theory' that sought answers in socio-political structure or institutions (Schumpeter, 1942; Almond, 1956; Rostow, 1960; Lipset, 1960; Linz & Stepan, 1978). Indeed, as some have suggested, the works of Seymour Martin Lipset on the relation between democracy and economic development (or 'modernisation') have "generated the largest body of research on any topic in comparative politics" (Limongi & Przeworski 1997: 156). Moreover, influenced by sociology, social anthropology and biology, comparative political scientists widely adopted positive science research methods (empirical observation, large-scale comparisons, and statistical techniques) in search of more abstract and universal theories, categories and concepts (Sartori, 1970; Lijphart, 1968b).

Disagreement has been a constant about whether there is a causal relationship between wealth and democracy, or if this correlation is explained by something else; and about the preconditions and processes producing different political outcomes. During the 1960s more attention was paid to the role of agencies other than institutions, such as civil society, social movements, public opinion, or political culture and behaviour. Accordingly, that trend became known as the behaviouralism or structural/systemic functionalism (Almond & Verba, 1963; Almond & Powell, 1966; Dahl, 1966; Easton, 1966). Almond and Verba's 'The Civic Culture' (1963) is considered the milestone of this period, for it was the first attempt to survey representative samples of countries, and to statistically test the theories linking political culture and democracy. However, some considered that the ahistorical categories of systemic functionalism were not valid to understand concrete cases, which was in fact its main objective, and that institutions (understood in a broader sense than previously) and history should still be taken into account (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967; Rustow, 1970; Powell, 1982; Lehmbruch & Schmitter, 1982; Lijphart, 1984; Skocpol, 1985; Przeworski 1985; March & Olsen, 1989). Hence, the latter is known as the neo-institutionalist approach, which included grounded and rational choice theories, as well as case-oriented analysis. Building from earlier perspectives, these authors claimed that socioeconomic structure works through political, social and economic institutions to shape the orientations of political actors (Caramani, 2011: 7-8).

Alternative or complementary to modernisation theories were the dependency (Cardoso, 1973; O'Donnell), the world systems (Wallerstein, 1974), the globalisation theories (Rosenau, 1969), and the more balanced 'state-in-society' paradigm (Migdal, 1988). Furthermore, the establishment of democratic systems of government in Southern Europe and South America during the 1970s and 1980s initiated what Samuel Huntington (1991) called later the 'third wave' of global democratization. The emergence of different types of regimes which adopted democratic practices around the world, but did not fulfil the listed socioeconomic requisites of democracy, made scholars point out the weakness of the existing theories and concepts for the study of political transition, and new perspectives and concepts were proposed to classify the emerging systems.

Very much influenced by 'modernists' Lipset and Lijphart, analysts of democratisation processes embraced the 'transitology'⁷ paradigm, which regained interest in transnational comparisons and adopted a simplified analysis of dominant factors. Transitology emerged mainly from Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe Schmitter and Laurence Whitehead's *'Transitions from Authoritarian Rule'* (1986) as a universal theoretical framework for the study of the interval between one political regime and another; and in the context of the fall and replacement of authoritarian regimes. Consequently, proliferations of concepts to define the new types of 'democracies' unfold: O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) emphasized the uncertain outcomes of transitions when they established that these could end in democracy, a liberalized authoritarian regime (*dictablanda*), or a restrictive, illiberal democracy (*democradura*). In this regard, Hermet, Rose and Rouquié (1978) were among the first academics to describe the implementation of elections in authoritarian regimes as a legitimising mechanism in response to domestic and external pressures. In 1989 Juan Linz, Seymour Martin Lipset and Larry Diamond dubbed 'semidemocratic' those regimes in which the power of elected officials is limited, political liberties are constrained and the outcome of competitive elections deviate from popular preference. Moreover, as the emergence of new democracies slowed down, political scientists concentrated on the study of consolidation and then of the quality of democracy. Terry Lynn Karl spoke in the early 1990s of 'hybrid regimes' (as did Diamond in 2002), and of 'electoralism' meaning "the regularized holding of elections, even as they continue to restrict the other political rights and opportunities of their citizens" (Karl, 1990: 14-15). By the same token, Fareed Zakaria later discussed the rise of 'illiberal democracies' (1997), but the most inclusive and still in use concept is 'hybrid', a type of regime that has been defined as combining:

"(..) democracy elements –such as pluralism, representative institutions, elections or constitutionalism- with other authoritarian forms of power. Thus, political competition can be restricted, or some groups with relevant social support can be excluded; decision-making political actors may exist, but without being subject to the political responsibility which limits the autonomy of representative

⁷ Dankwart Rustow is considered the father of 'transitology' for having broken with the prevailing schools of thought with his seminal work "Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model" (1970), in which he suggested democracy come into being through a gradual evolution from oligarchy and that only national unity is a necessary precondition for democracy.

institutions; and diverse forms of political rights and public freedom may be restricted, despite being formally guaranteed (Szmolka 2010: 15).

As democracies of the so-called 'third wave' (Huntington, 1991) failed to consolidate, the transitology paradigm was criticised (resembling earlier criticism of modernisation theories) for excessive generalisation and for the inability to produce testable hypotheses (Bunce, 1995). Thomas Carothers (2002) considered that transitional countries were in fact stuck in a 'grey zone' and declared transitology had "outlived its usefulness." He considered it no longer appropriate to assume that "any country moving away from dictatorial rule is a country in transition towards democracy; [t]hat democratization unfolds in a set sequence of stages (opening, breakthrough and consolidation); [t]hat elections foster a longer term deepening of democratic participation and accountability; [t]hat structural features or 'preconditions for democracy' are not major factors in the transition process, and that the process depends primarily on the political intentions and actions of its political elites; [t]hat democratic transitions making up the third wave are being built on functioning states and (...) state-building is secondary to democracy-building and compatible with it" (Carothers, 2002: 6-17).

In this regard, Laurence Whitehead wisely affirmed that if democracy is essentially a contested concept, so must be the process by which democracy is achieved (Whitehead, 2002: 30). Indeed, there is not one unique political path followed by countries, nor one single outcome or one type of democracy, and definitely not a perfect type of democracy. Therefore, no set of fixed conditions or sequences will be met by every country moving towards democracy, and those following some of the expected steps do not necessarily qualify as democratizing. It is uncertain which path 'transitional' countries will follow -and towards what kind of political system-, and therefore the process should be regarded as "open-ended" (Whitehead, 2002: 27). This is related to the 'contingency' or 'randomness' area of analysis, and is very much in line with what Mehran Kamrava has called 'the uncertainty principle' (2008: 61), which he links very neatly with quantum mechanics to explain how "a single definite result" cannot be predicted from an observation but, instead, "it predicts a number of different possible outcomes and tells us how likely each of these is" (Hawking, 1988: 55-56; in Kamrava, 2008: 62). The uncertainty principle, he

argues, “can be caused by any of four inter-related and complementary factors: circumstances and opportunities; historical accidents; unintended consequences; and personal initiatives” (Kamrava, 2008: 62).

Moreover, it is now clear that the holding of elections is not a factor making a country democratic or in the process to democratize. On the contrary, many authoritarian regimes have implemented elections to choose the members of non-democratic institutions, which are only advisory or consultative, while maintaining legislative, executive and judicial powers under the rulers’ grip (Levitsky & Way, 2002; Schedler, 2002 & 2006). Thus, since the late 1900s or early 2000 it is widely accepted that we can no longer consider political regimes as clearly democratic or absolutely authoritarian, and not necessarily in the way towards democracy. In this regard, we can say that the notions of ‘democracy’ and ‘authoritarianism’ for the study of contemporary regimes are still useful, although the conceptual and theoretical frameworks with which we refer to regimes has moved from a binary opposition democracy-authoritarianism to a ‘hybrid regime’ classification; and from an inevitable development into democracies to an uncertain future of how regimes evolve. In line with this, Francis Fukuyama (2010) explores why transitions to the rule of law have proven so much harder than transitions to ‘electoral democracies’.

Notwithstanding, although his 2002 article generated much debate, Carothers failed to eradicate the transition paradigm. The so-called ‘colour revolutions’ and, more recently the ‘Arab spring’, have made some political scientist reconsider its usefulness (Diamond, Fukuyama, Horowitz & Plattner, 2014). In fact, the accumulation of research in the field of democratisation leaves one main conclusion: that there are many sequences, actors and stages involved in the process. It cannot be denied, however, that the factors that are seen by some as preconditions for democratisation do cause more or less alterations in social structures, which can ultimately affect the ruling order. Hence, we must still analyse them, even if we do not consider them conditional, taking place in a particular order, or leading to specific outcomes.

2.2. Explaining MENA’s authoritarianism

Middle East and North Africa (MENA) area studies’ scholars have traditionally devoted their efforts to analysing particular cases rather than developing theories or concepts. On the other hand, seminal works on democratisation by

comparative politics scientists have largely excluded the MENA Islamic countries (O'Donnell, Schmitter & Whitehead, 1986; Diamond, Linz & Lipset, 1988). Moreover, some authors touching upon these countries linked the lack of political liberalisation to cultural and historical exceptionalism of this region (Huntington, 1984; Sharabi, 1988; Kedourie, 1992), as well as to the political economy of rentierism (Mahdavi, 1970; Beblawi & Luciani, 1987; Anderson, 1991). However, during the 1990s the aim of several works focused on demonstrating that "Arab politics should no longer be perceived as being peculiarly and uniquely Arab" or Islamic (Ayubi, 1995: xi; also Esposito & Piscatori, 1991), and on the necessity to employ broader comparative perspectives and frameworks for the study of political processes in the Arab and Islamic world (Murphy & Niblock, 1993; Salamé, 1994; Brynen, Korany & Noble, 1995; Norton, 1995; Esposito & Voll, 1996).

Influenced by the transitology paradigm, some of the most relevant specialists on Middle East politics put forward valuable frameworks in '*Democracy without Democrats*', under the question of "Why...is the Arab world not democratic" (Salamé, 1994). Similarly, Rex Brynen, Bahgat Korany & Paul Noble (1995) made a notable effort to address the specific factors in the democratization of the Arab World in their seminal work '*Political liberalization and democratization in the Arab world.*' In the first volume of this work they establish the core aspects for the study of political liberalization and democracy in the Arab world as follows: political culture and discourse; civil society; political economy; and regional and international context. In addition, they make two further observations: they stress the need to consider the impact of liberalisation on different sectors of society (class, gender, religion...); and the need to combine both theoretical and comparative empirical insights, thus highlighting the importance of case studies in addition to comparative perspectives (Brynen, Korany & Noble, 1995: 6-21). Regarding the specific role of agency, Richard Norton "*Civil society in the Middle East*" (1995) examined the existing varieties of civil society in the region, hence challenging the myth that this was lacking in the MENA countries; while the volumes by Ilya Harik and Dennis Sullivan (1992) and by Tim Niblock and Emma Murphy (1993) touched upon the linkages between economic and political liberalisation. All these works succeeded in bringing together social science theory and MENA area expertise

and, despite the diverging views over the importance of potential explanatory variables, agreement was reached on the fact that different types of impulses towards liberalisation could be identified. These ranged from “mass pressures (caused by changes in the implicit ‘social contract’ driven by state failure, financial crisis, and the effects of globalization-induced economic reform); to external pressures; and, third, voluntarily limited reform from above” (Nonneman, 2001: 144-145). Moreover, as Gerd Nonneman (2001: 145) explains, the limitations to liberalization were explained by two structural factors: rentierism and a bourgeoisie that shares interests with the regime and has no interest in real economic or political opening (also Hinnebusch, 1995).

The social movements described by some of the abovementioned works, and the limited economic and political liberalisation that was implemented by the regimes (both in response to domestic and external pressures, and especially in post-9/11 times) did not seem to significantly transform the authoritarian structures of the Arab states. Reflecting in which social science theories and MENA area studies publications explaining democratic deficit and the authoritarian persistence, Raymond Hinnebusch (2006) provided a comprehensive summary of the ways in which the former has helped improve the latter, as follows:

“Early modernization theory’s analysis of ‘requisites’ proved indeterminate and cultural exceptional arguments identified merely an intervening variable. Later theories of developmental imbalances and nation-building dilemmas explained more convincingly why democracy failed in the Middle East. Historical sociology, in identifying the social structural bases of alternative regime paths, showed what put Middle East states on their own distinctive authoritarian pathways. Institutionalist approaches to state-building helped explain the consolidation of authoritarian regimes in the region while political-economy analysis showed how these regimes adapted to changes in their environment. Rational choice approaches help show why the agency to lead democratic transitions has been lacking. Analysis of the impact of globalization and the United States hegemon suggest the international variable is compatible with liberalization of authoritarian regimes but not with democratization” (Hinnebusch, 2006: 373).

Accordingly, a number of analysts focused their research on the nature of the authoritarian states. As explained by Schlumberger, it was time to search beyond the democratisation paradigm in order to understand “how [Arab]

authoritarianism works in practice and how it can be grasped conceptually” (2007: 1), and to examine the ‘upgrading’ of these authoritarian regimes (Heydemann, 2007; also Pripstein & Penner, 2005; Pratt, 2007). In this regard, Daniel Brumberg considers ‘liberalized autocracies’ those regimes where “the trademark mixture of guided pluralism, controlled elections, and selective repression...is not just a ‘survival strategy’ adopted by authoritarian regimes, but rather a type of political system whose institution, rules, and logic defy any linear model of democracy”(Brumberg, 2002: 56-68). However, trapped in understanding the region’s authoritarian regimes, and with the focus set on institutions and elites, the Arab spring events caught most specialists by surprise.⁸ Reflecting on this issue, Gregory Gause (2011) has suggested that:

“Explaining the stability of Arab authoritarians was an important analytic task, but it led some of us to underestimate the forces for change that were bubbling below, and at times above, the surface of Arab politics... academics must reexamine their assumptions on a number of issues, including the military's role in Arab politics, the effects of economic change on political stability, and the salience of a cross-border Arab identity, to get a sense of how Arab politics will now unfold”.

2.3. Explaining Gulf regime stability through rentierism

One of the first explanations for the stability and the democratic deficit of the Gulf states came from the rentier state theory (RST) political economy approach in the late 1980s (Beblawi & Luciani, 1987). Building on the earlier work by Mahdavy (1970), RST establishes that states deriving a substantial percentage of the national revenues from external rents are unlikely to democratise. In accordance to it, in states that derive most of their income from external rents rather than from taxes, and where people are engaged in the consumption and redistribution of the rent, there is a low probability that movements for social or political change emerge. Accordingly, early RST assumes that the rentier nature of the Gulf states has maintained people uninterested in politics and has made authoritarianism persist until today. Hence, under a ‘rentier bargain’ scheme and under the premise of ‘no representation without taxation’, regime stability is guaranteed as long as there is no taxation or fiscal crisis (Mahdavy, 1970; Beblawi & Luciani, 1987). Finally, it combines with neo-patrimonial theory to

⁸ Some exceptions worth mentioning are the works by Bayat (2009) and Benin (2010), who anticipated the strength of ordinary people in causing political change through everyday actions.

explain “the mechanisms by which the allocative state distributes oil wealth and manages the elite relationships” (Gray, 2011: 6-7).

In agreement with the early RST formulation, most authors acknowledge that there is a correlation (or causal link) between oil wealth and authoritarianism, and that the ruling elite is autonomous from the people (Ross, 2001; Cebolla, 2006). However, the validity of this approach has been revised along the 1990s and 2000s, by scholars who argue “reductionism is inherent in simple regression modelling or in making economic generalizations without sufficient political context” (Rosser, 2010 in Gray, 2011). Accordingly, most Gulf experts suggest that other factors, such as historical dynamics, social or developmental exceptionalisms, and external influences should be included into the analysis of rentier states.⁹ Finally, and with the focus on the GCC states, Mathew Gray (2011) brings into the equation the evolution that the political economies of these countries have experienced. In his opinion, RST remains “core to understanding Gulf states’ politics” but several factors have changed the context of rentierism, including but not limited to: state maturity, globalisation, development policies, population and employment pressures. Consequently, the political elite has “developed a more nuanced, engaged and complex approach to society” (Gray, 2011: 18-37) and has had to gradually become more responsive do domestic and external pressures to liberalise, not only economically, but also politically.

The evolution of RST reflects that of comparative politics, and its democratization studies sub-discipline, in the sense that it has adopted more integrative and holistic approaches. In this regard, al-Naqeeb tried to apply a different perspective to the study of the relationship between state and society in the Gulf, using a set of conceptual tools to generate a “theoretical model of society which permits the deduction of a number of postulates concerning the active social-cultural dynamics in this society” (1990: 119). With the focus on the state within the world system, Ayubi (1995) asserts that persistence of authoritarianism in the Gulf is related to change in the mode of production from a tributary to a capitalist (and distributive) system that id dependant on global

⁹ Among these, the most relevant are: Crystal (1990 & 2005); Chaudhry (1997); Gause (1994); Hudson (1995); Herb (1999, 2005 & 2009); Aarts & Nonneman (2005); al-Naqeeb (2006); Niblock & Malik (2007); Schwarz (2008); Valeri (2009); Hertog (2006, 2010a & 2010b); Foley (2010).

dynamics. John E. Peterson has been studying the Gulf for a long time and has made some important contributions to the study of political development of these states. In his *The Arab Gulf states: steps towards political participation* (Peterson, 1988) he argues that the Gulf monarchies endured because they had sought to be accountable to their citizens through a flexible mixture of traditional and modern political structures. In “*The Arab Gulf states: further steps towards political participation*” (Peterson, 2006), an update of his earlier study, Peterson says that the willingness of the regimes for political reform is falling far behind and that there is a reluctance to make fundamental changes. It is interesting to note that his view has changed from an appreciation of the relationship established between the rulers and the people, to the recognition that the reforms are nothing more than cosmetic.

Anoushiravan Ehteshami has produced several works on political change in the oil monarchies. In a political economy analysis he argued that in face of “the grave economic differences and social tensions that confront them, the GCC rulers have had little choice but to consider the introduction of economic and political reforms” (Ehteshami, 2003: 57). He later established the rulers as the main “drivers of change”, and concluded that while they “hold power so tightly, change will only come if those in power choose to implement it” (Ehteshami & Wright, 2007: 914-915). Regarding the key contextual factors on the reform agenda he distinguishes between domestic and external, stressing the “combination of demographics and unemployment” and the “indirect geopolitical effects of the US invasion and occupation of Iraq” respectively (Ehteshami & Wright, 2007: 916). Thus it can be seen that he first thought reform was inevitable, but has since stated, along the lines of Peterson, that reform can only happen if that is what the rulers wish.

Michael Herb (1999) acknowledges the power that oil rent bestows on the ruling elites, but considers it should be treated as an “intervening variable.” Moreover, his 2005 statistical analysis of the causes of democratisation in oil-rich countries shows that by using a measure of development that excludes the effect of oil on the economy in the place of GDP per capita, these countries fit the same patterns as other cases; and that measured separately, rent dependence has no effect on political change (Herb, 2005).

Commenting on the RST, Gregory Gause III argues that depoliticizing effects are real, but only at the beginning stages of rentier state development (1994: 81); and, in his comprehensive account of the international relations of the Gulf states, he gives importance to the fact that the region became a “special security zone” as Britain’s Labour government decided to withdraw by 1971, and that regional states act “more against perceived threats to their own domestic stability emanating from abroad” arising from “the salience of transnational identities” (2009: 9). Similarly, Marc Valeri (2009) and Calvert Jones (2010) reject the idea of rentierism as a model for the Gulf states political structure and rather regard it as one of its characteristics.

In an effort to identify specific variables involved in political change in the Gulf, Jill Crystal (1990) has disputed the modernisation theory that rapid social and economic change leads to democratisation. Taking Kuwait and Qatar as her case studies, she explains how bargaining mechanisms had shifted from the rulers depending on the merchants to the merchants depending on the rulers. In this sense she borrows much from rentier state theory: political activism is co-opted, in her view, by oil wealth. However, she finds differences between the two cases and makes it clear that the specific characteristics of each Gulf monarchy should be considered even if they all share some commonalities. In 2005 Crystal produced an interesting report on political reform in the GCC. She analyses the reforms undertaken by each GCC state and maps out the factors which make it more or less likely that efforts for reform will succeed in these countries, stressing that although “external factors have played a role, however, the driving force for democratisation has been internal” (Crystal, 2005: 5), as follows:

- Internal factors
 - Economic Factors: giving importance to the existing correlation between the level of economic development and the likelihood of democracy.
 - Social Structural Factors: discussing the need to experience the emergence of middle and working classes; national unity; and civil society.
 - Institutional Factors: considering the building of democratic institutions as critical to democratic transition.

- External factors: mainly referring to the pressure for political reform primarily from the USA, but also from the EU and from other Gulf States (in an emulating move).

A valuable theoretical approach to these matters can be found in the chapter by Gerd Nonneman in *Reform in the Middle East Oil Monarchies* (Ehteshami & Wright, 2008). Comparative studies have, as Nonneman stresses, established a variety of factors involved in liberalisation and democratisation processes which include “the role of domestic actors” and “environmental / structural factors (domestic and external) and external actors” (2008: 14). After elaborating on the main lessons of democratisation theories, this author provides a list of “key factors relevant to liberalisation in the GCC states”, although indicating that these aspects “overlap and interlink” (Nonneman, 2008: 18), including: socio-economic development, the middle class and civil society; state and regime types; cultural factors and political culture; and external factors.

The perspective adopted by Adam Hanieh gives weight to the globalisation factor. He explains that despite oil being the “major factor differentiating the region from any other in the world”, it should be regarded as “a commodity embedded in a set of (globally determined) social relations” (2011: 15-16). Hanieh explains that it cannot be assumed that rentierism, or the actions and decisions by rentier elites, determine social relations (and political orientations) by themselves. Conversely, he puts the focus on Gulf capitalism and he considers Gulf class formation to have “evolved alongside and within the development of a global capitalist system” and that nor oil neither the state are the only catalysts for social and political change (Hanieh, 2011: 15-16). However, one of the most influential views over rentierism is currently that of Steffen Hertog. He has identified historical continuities in the way politics and state-business relations function in the Gulf, and argues that several of these continuities do not fit the ‘resource curse’ theory of rentier states (2006, 2010a & 2010b). In this regard, he argues that most Gulf capitalists’ “activities still amount to more sophisticated rent recycling rather than autonomous diversification...[and that this explains their] weak role in today’s political arena despite a strong pre-oil history of collective action” (Hertog, 2013: 1).

Although some scholars mention political culture as an important factor when studying Gulf political developments, when it comes to the empirical research

most research has been done from political economy and international relations perspectives, and less attention has been paid to the impact of domestic dynamics on political change or stasis. Behavioural and political culture approaches have been largely avoided, with only a few scholars studying the role of 'agency' in Gulf state-society relations and political performance, and even less within social sciences theoretical frameworks, or indeed applying quantitative methods. Among these, the most relevant are those of Carapico (1998) on civil society in Yemen; Longva (1997) and Tétreault (2000) on society structure and political participation Kuwait; Eickelman (1984, et al.) and Valeri (2009, et al.) on the socio-politics of Oman; Rugh on leadership political culture in the UAE (2007); and Krause (2008) on women civil society in the UAE. More recently, however, some scholars have questioned more explicitly that a rentier economy automatically depoliticizes the population (Mitchell, 2010); and Gray stresses that rentierism should take into consideration the changing socioeconomic demands of the population (2011: 23). Adding to this list, a more comprehensive source that to some extent distances from previous theories of democratisation, identifies four forces as the main shapers of current political attitudes and behaviour across the Gulf (Tétreault, 2011 et al.):

- Movements to broaden women's political participation.
- The media.
- Current US national security policy.
- Regional defence cooperation.

Even if I do not neglect the relation between socio-economic conditions and the political orientations, it seems not to be the determinant variable for political change, but rather many other factors also have a role in these dynamics (including, but not limited to, institutional factors). In this regard, the suggestion by Jackman and Miller (1996) that the political culture approach needs to recast in institutional terms makes a lot of sense, but the same is valid in the opposite direction: structural approaches should not ignore the importance of political culture.

Authoritarian politics in the MENA region has been a key focus of research in the Spanish academia, despite the lack of audience these works have enjoyed among English literature. However, only a few of them deal with the political

experiences of the GCC states. An early work by Bernabé López García and Cecilia Fernández Suzor on the Arab regimes and their constitutions included a chapter on Saudi Arabia and one on the smaller Gulf monarchies (1985). López García's later monograph and his later book written in collaboration with Fernando Bravo (2011) on political history in the Arab and Islamic world, are two valuable titles but only cover briefly the Gulf cases. Similarly, the comprehensive volume on the Arab state 'crisis' by Gema Martín Muñoz does not get into much detail with regard to these countries, except for an interesting discussion on the Kuwaiti electoral system and of the shura practices in Saudi Arabia (1999: 140-150). Likewise, the edited book by Ferrán Izquierdo Brichs (2009; and published in English in 2012) includes a chapter by Eduard Soler and Luciano Zaccara (and a commentary by Fred Halliday) on Saudi Arabia state-society relations. The latter forms part of the several efforts made by Izquierdo to explore the forces behind the persistence of authoritarianism in the MENA region, and which have materialised in his eloquent sociology of power theoretical framework that explains regime stability or crisis through elite-people relations and the level of elite control over resources of power (2007-2012). Finally, the *Hesperia Journal* monograph on Qatar includes an article on political reform by Ignacio Gutiérrez de Terán and Leyla Hamad Zahonero (2009); and the volume by Gutiérrez de Terán and Ignacio Álvarez-Ossorio a chapter on the case of Bahrain by Luis Mesa (2011).

Other relevant works concerned with democratisation and authoritarianism in this region, but which do not study the Gulf, are the volumes by Lopez García, Martín Muñoz y Miguel Hernando de Larramendi (1991), Álvarez-Ossorio and Zaccara (2009), María Angustias Parejo (2010), Álvarez-Ossorio (2013); and the articles by Luciano Zaccara on elections in the GCC (2012; 2013). Finally, researches by Inmaculada Szmolka on regime types (2010; 2011) and on processes of political change in the Arab world (2012; 2013) are also relevant for the present study.

2.4. The political culture perspective

"The notion of political culture has been around as long as men have spoken and written about politics" (Almond, 1989: 1). In their seminal work *'The Civic Culture'* (1963), Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba explain how the designed theoretical and methodological framework had received influences from

“historians, social philosophers, anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, and psychiatrists who have been concerned with the relations between the psychological and political characteristics of nations” since ancient times (Almond & Verba, 1963: 13). However, it was not until their study that an attempt was done “to explore empirically one of the less studied (...) realms of politics, namely, the role played by the political culture” (Wiatr, 1989: 103); and with a focus on the “relationship between political culture [agency] and political structure” (Lijphart, 1989: 37). Although *The Civic Culture* deals with the political orientations in five countries with established democratic systems, the categories and classifications developed by its authors are useful for the study of the political culture of citizens in any regime type because they enable us “to formulate hypotheses about relationships among the different components of culture and to test these hypotheses empirically” (Almond & Verba, 1963: 14). Hence, it is from them that I borrow the framework for the analysis of the Emirati educated youth political orientations, as well as the definition of the concept political culture:

“[T]he particular distribution of patterns of orientations towards political objects among the members of a nation”; the “political orientations—attitudes toward the political system and its various parts, and attitudes toward the role of the self in the system” (Almond & Verba, 1963: 13).

Emerging in the aftermath of World War II and under the auspice of the behavioural revolution, the political culture perspective states that there is a direct and causal relationship between socio-economic structures, the shaping of ordinary citizens’ political orientations, and the development and maintenance (or failure) of democracy. Thus, it argues that political orientations and mass beliefs (which are inferred from individual level findings) have an aggregate effect on political change, legitimacy and stability of regimes (Inglehart & Welzel, 2009b: 298). Following Parsons and Shils, Almond and Verba identified three types or modes of political orientations toward political objects (1963: 15):

- Cognitive orientation: knowledge of and belief about the political system, and its roles and incumbents of these roles.

- Affective orientation: feelings about the political system, its roles, actors and performance.
- Evaluational orientation: judgments and opinions about political objects.

In Almond and Verba's work, the 'general' political system (including structures, actors and policies) and the 'self' as political actor are differentiated. Thus, evaluation of the political culture of an individual should incorporate an exploration in his orientations towards the system as a general object (state and political system's history, size, location, power, constitution, etc); towards 'input' objects (structures and roles, political elites and policy proposals they are involved in the upward flow of policy making, such as political parties, interest groups and the media); towards 'output' objects (downward flow of institutional policy enforcement, structures, individuals and decisions involved in these processes, such as bureaucracies and courts); and towards himself as a member of his political system (the "self" as an object). Hence, "characterizing the political culture of a nation means (...) filling in such a matrix for a valid sample of its population" (Almond & Verba, 1963: 17).

Despite Almond and Verba's categorisation of political culture in three main types (*parochial*, when orientations towards objects approaches zero; *subject*, if high frequency of orientations towards the system and its output aspects, but orientations towards input objects and the self as active participant approach zero; and *participant*, when its members are oriented towards all objects), they clarify that one orientation does not necessarily replace the others and that this classification "does not imply homogeneity or uniformity of political cultures" (Almond & Verba, 1963: 20), meaning all of them can be present and interact with each other in one country. Accordingly, they present a classification of political culture subclasses (parochial-subject, subject-participant and parochial-participant), and an ideal culture: the *civic culture*, which they describe as a pluralistic culture of consensus and diversity that permits changes but moderates them. Moreover, as long as it refers to some collective unit, political culture can be studied at different levels (e.g. elites, masses, technocrats, students, etc.).

Table 1: Congruence of political cultures¹⁰

	Allegiance	Apathy	Alienation
Cognitive orientation	+	+	+
Affective orientation	+	0	-
Evaluative orientation	+	0	-

Finally, *The Civic Culture* explains how “political cultures may not be congruent with the structures of the political system”: a parochial culture would be congruent to a ‘traditional’ political system; a subject culture to a centralized authoritarian structure; and a participant one to a democratic structure; and how they tend to be incongruent to each other, especially in ‘transitional’ countries. For the study of congruence between political culture and structures the authors provide a scale by which ‘allegiance’ is predominant if orientations to objects approach unity; ‘apathy’ when congruence is weak (political structure is cognized but the frequency of positive feeling and evaluation approaches indifference or zero); and ‘alienation’ when a culture shows signs of incongruence (negative affect and evaluation) (See Table 1). This scale can, moreover, reflect the stability or instability of a system because incongruence “may take the form of a simple rejection of a particular set of role incumbents (e.g. particular dynasty and its bureaucracy); or it may be an aspect of a systemic change, that is, a change from a simpler pattern of political culture to a more complex one” (Almond & Verba, 1963: 20-26).

‘Political socialisation’ is understood in the political culture approach as the process by which people acquire political cognition, attitudes, and behaviours (Greenstein (1965); Hyman (1969); Niemi (1974, 1995); Sapiro (2004); Sigel (1965); *et al.*) or, in other words, the process by which a given ‘political culture’ is attained (Almond & Verba (1963 & 1980); Pye (1971); Inglehart (1988, 2000, 2005); *et al.*). Political socialisation takes place through the exposure to new or reshaped ‘agents of political socialisation’, including the family and friends, the school, the religious temple or clerics (if there are any involved), the work group, associations and/or political parties, the media, and the government institutions. Moreover, this process can take place in ‘manifest’ or ‘latent’ ways, for it involves the direct communication of information, values or feelings towards

¹⁰ Source: Almond & Verba (1963: 22).

political objects, for instance, through school curricula; while they also entail the transmission of non-political values that affect attitudes towards analogous roles and objects in the political system, for example, through family interaction. In this regard, Almond and Verba observe “how men and women, occupational and income groups, educational and religious groups are oriented toward the political structure” and that the educational level was the variable having the strongest relationship with political attitudes (Almond & Verba, 1963: 377). This attests to the relevance of conducting surveys at different levels, and more specifically to the importance of analysing the political culture of the educated youth, as this dissertation does.

In sum, the political culture perspective is concerned with the link between people’s political orientations and regime types, and it sees socioeconomic development favouring democracy, but because people become increasingly articulated, capable, and “motivated to demand democratization from the elites” (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). On the other hand, authoritarianism persists while elites are not confronted with well-organised and motivated masses, and not only as a consequence of repression or co-optation (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). Moreover, the analysis of the effects of globalisation (economic, cultural and political) on societies, and of their political orientations as an intervening variable between the socioeconomic conditions and political change are relevant for this study, for “people’s prevailing beliefs translate socioeconomic conditions into the collective actions that attain, sustain, and deepen democracy” (Inglehart & Welzel, 2009b: 301) or other types of regime. In this regard, a supportive perspective comes from international relations and globalisation academic James N. Rosenau who argues that the decline of ‘fixed identities’ leads to “the imposition of an inescapable and unrelenting autonomy on many people” (Rosenau, 2003: 25); that a ‘skill revolution’ has been taking place for some years and that “ordinary persons (...) are increasingly competent” (Rosenau, 2008: 15); and that individuals become key variables for macro structures, which interact at different levels (Rosenau, 2008: 15). Accordingly, he claims the need is for a “heightened focus on demographic trends, social capital, immigrants and reactions to them, the role of networks and smart mobs, emerging identities, corrupt officials and executives...” (Rosenau, 2008: 7-15). By the same token, I argue here that rentierism fast-

forwarded the incorporation of Gulf society into the globalisation processes, not only in its economic dimension, but understood as the growing interconnectedness between people and places worldwide, and between time and space (Giddens, 1990).

As explained above, the debate between advocates and opponents of this approach has run since *The Civic Culture* was published until today, which indicates the contribution that this work has made to the social sciences. One of its main supporters, who has further elaborated the theory of political culture is Ronald Inglehart, who contends that “political culture may be a crucial link between economic development and democracy” (1990: 45), and that regime “survival depends on the values and beliefs of ordinary citizens” (2000: 96). In an analysis of global World Values Survey (WVS) data, himself and Christian Welzel (2005) have found a significant relationship between demands for democracy and peoples’ adherence to secular and self-expression values, as well as the emphasis on human freedom. Moreover, in a ‘revised theory of modernisation’, they explain that socio-economic development is associated with the fading of “existential threats” on a mass level. However, they argue that at different phases of development different values emerge, that secular values are compatible with certain forms of authoritarianism, but that self-expression values are not because these encompass a “humanistic transformation” through which people become gradually empowered to challenge authoritarianism (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005: 150-157). Finally, “trust, tolerance, and feelings of efficacy represent ‘civic virtues’ that enable democratic regimes to function effectively” (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005: 157). By the same token, they claim that, in the absence of those attributes, it is unlikely that democracy emerges, survives or consolidates.

Criticism against the political culture approach mainly emerges from the neo-institutionalist that think democratic values or attitudes follow growing income equality, capital mobility, and elite-led political reform (Schmitter, *et al.* (1991); Jackman & Miller (1996); Acemoglu & Robinson (2006)). In this regard, Jackman and Miller affirmed they found “little evidence to indicate a systematic relationship between political culture and political and economic performance” and considered the political culture approach needs to acknowledge a more relevant role of institutional/structural factors (Jackman & Miller, 1996: 632-633).

These authors seem to understand political culture studies as willing to demonstrate that particular cultures have specific characteristics that make them different to other societies, and ultimately determine economic and political outcomes. They are right in their understanding of correlation between culture and outcome, but they miss the fact that, although political culture proponents tends to use normative terms which may lead to confusion (e.g. culture, traditional, modern/isation, et al.), they do not consider the different political culture types as intrinsic to one or another society.

Moreover, rather than linking more or less 'democratic' beliefs to certain cultures, the political culture approach associates them to historical, social and economic circumstances: "social configurations that induce more secure existential conditions (e.g. economic prosperity, physical security, cross-cutting cleavages, and moderate social polarization) nourish open belief systems"; while "social configurations that induce existential pressures (e.g. precarious economic conditions, crime and war, conflated cleavages, and extreme social polarization) are conducive to closed belief systems" (Inglehart & Welzel, 2009: 300). Accordingly, the political culture approach must be well differentiated other 'cultural' approaches that make generalisations about the beliefs, norms and values of societies and treat them as stable mentalities belonging to particular nations or regions (e.g. Huntington, 1996). Finally, Muller and Seligson (1994: 646) have challenged idea that interpersonal trust is an attitudinal prerequisite for stable democracy, which is one of the main assumptions of the paradigm; and they suggest that the study of political culture of elites might be more appropriate.

Following decades of encountered debates on this issues, students of democracy and authoritarianism have agreed that "context matters," and therefore gradually adopted approaches that took in to account "structural, cultural, institutional, and strategic; social, economic, and political; international, domestic and local" (Franzese, 2007: 29); as well as historical factors. Yet some proponents still put more emphasis on structural and others on systemic factors. In this regard, an updated version of the 'state-in-society' paradigm put forward by Kamrava (probably with the Middle East in mind), which suggests that six elements should be considered in these kind of analysis: state; society; political culture; political economy; extra-national influences and forces; and random

occurrences (2008: 47), seems holistic and flexible enough to better understand state-society relations in the UAE. Furthermore and again influenced by other social sciences approaches, there is wide agreement that a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods is the most desired choice to conduct comparative politics research. Accordingly, this dissertation uses both methods.

2.5. Literature on the UAE case

The abovementioned edited books and articles on political liberalisation in the Gulf published since the 2000s dedicate little space to the UAE case, and only a few chapters and articles have commented on aspects directly related to the topics of this dissertation. Commenting on the prospects for political change in the UAE, Sean Foley supports a 'necessity' thesis which sees the rulers obliged to reform the political systems if they want to survive and in face of "domestic and security challenges" (Foley, 1999: 25); while Fatima al-Sayegh sees the 9/11 terrorist attacks as the main factor pushing towards reform and argues that "diversification away from oil dependency (...) will fuel success for [democratisation]" (al-Sayegh, 2004: 123). Similarly, Frauke Heard-Bey, also pointed at 9/11 as the turning point that made the UAE tackle the democratic deficit with more urgency (Heard-Bey, 2005: 367). Moreover, she is confident that changes will "come about through consultation rather than confrontation" (Heard-Bey 2005: 375). In a more inclusive position, Christian Koch supports the idea that political reform was "accelerated by pressures from globalization and political fallout from events such as the 9/11 and the Iraq War," but adds that "local observation of reform measures implemented elsewhere in the region," "a better education system and a freer media environment" also contributed to the enhancement of political awareness among Emiratis (Koch, 2011: 173).

In a comparison of the cases on Kuwait and the UAE, Michael Herb argues that the fact that "political liberalisation and economic diversification have not gone hand in hand (...) is no accident" (Herb, 2009: 375), and that while "Kuwait's higher levels of political participation have exacerbated its economic dependence on oil," in the UAE "a Kuwaiti-style parliament...would repudiate [its] economic model" (Herb, 2009: 390-392). Citing Adam Przeworski, he explains that the reasons for this "are specific to the peculiar political economy

of these labour markets: in these richest of rentier-states, there is little need for the class compromise between capitalists and workers on which capitalist democracy usually rests” (Herb, 2009: 375). Christopher Davidson had only touched on this topic in his initial works and agreed that rentierism hindered political liberalisation in the UAE (Davidson, 2005; 2008a; 2009a). Davidson focused on the economic aspects of this process, as the title of one of his chapters reflects: ‘The United Arab Emirates: economy first, politics second’ (2009b), and argued that “the UAE’s rapid economic development may soon serve as a catalyst for more meaningful political reform” (Davidson, 2008b: 118). In fact, he was confident that a “major boost for the prospects of meaningful civil society, and perhaps the most important glimmer of hope for political liberalization in the UAE, has been the state’s enforced retreat from the control of information” (Davidson, 2008b: 125). Finally, in his post-Arab spring monograph Davidson elaborates on the variables relevant for monarchical survival or collapse, and concludes (not very convincingly) that rising domestic and external pressures will inevitably cause the collapse of the Gulf monarchies in a scope of two to five years (Davidson, 2012: ix).

Authors have broadly commented on the political culture of Emiratis (normally insisting in the lack of political awareness), but very little systematic research has been conducted on Emirati nationals political culture as it relates to the potential for political change. Two relevant works are the PhD dissertations by Abdulkhaleq Abdulla (1984), and by Hendrik Van Der Meulen (1997). Abdulla focuses on the internal political consequences of the integration of the UAE into the global capitalist system that make the UAE an authoritarian “dependent capitalist country” (1984: 288); while Van Der Meulen provides an extensive survey of the role of tribal and kinship ties in UAE politics. Additionally, a comprehensive study of the UAE leaders’ political culture is ‘*The Political Culture of Leadership in the United Arab Emirates*’ by Andrea Rugh, which describes the history of leadership in the UAE and explains how tribal political culture has evolved in parallel to the political system, but maintaining many aspects of the ‘tribal culture’. However, the approach of Rugh is historical–anthropological oriented rather than focused on people’s political attitudes or orientations.

Regarding the study of UAE political culture through the analysis of representative survey data it is worth mentioning the work by Mohammed Khalfan (1997), in which he examines the opinions of FNC members and the intellectual elite towards the practicality of having the Federal National Council of the United Arab Emirates become an elective body. Since it analyses orientations towards hypothetical political reform, this may be considered an elite political culture study. Other public opinion surveys have been conducted in the UAE by specialized polling institutions, including Zogby, Gallup and Pew centers, as further reviewed in part II of this dissertation. These, nevertheless, tend to exclude sensitive political questions and therefore barely qualify as political culture research.

3. Research methodology

This research is multidisciplinary not only theoretically, but also methodologically since political science borrows research techniques from different social sciences, mainly sociology and social anthropology. Thus, a balance has been kept between qualitative and quantitative research techniques in order to offer more a comprehensive analysis, and to present a broader picture of UAE state-society relations.

At the initial stages, an extensive review of all works relevant to the research questions and the hypotheses was done to identify the topic's "state of the art", covering both area studies and disciplinary publications. Being a case study as it is, the most appropriate theories and approaches were identified, in order to decide on the research techniques and strategies that should be tested and applied in the process of elaborating the research, conducting it, and analysing obtained data for this dissertation.

The most common technique borrowed from sociology employed by political scientists to evaluate the political culture of people has been surveying, thus its use was considered as a key technique for this research since the beginning. However, since quantitatively gathered and analysed data only was not considered to be fully reliable on its own, qualitative data that provides direct input from people was also included to complement the survey quantitative data, as it will be explained in detail in the following sections.

Other qualitative techniques borrowed from social anthropology by political scientists in order to capture the general picture as well as the particular stories, impressions and experiences of people include participant observation, semi-structured interviews and informal conversations, all of which have been implemented during the course of this research.

Participant observation took place for almost a year, from 4th April 2011 to 4th March 2012. During these months several courses at the Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty at the UAEU were attended, where I participated in the discussions held in the classroom, while observing the teaching dynamics and the taught curricula. This technique allowed the establishing of relationships with students, an important part of the survey's population. Likewise, the coexistence with students at the University residence facilitated a better understanding of the type of life students from other emirates have, and about the topics they discuss in their free time during their university studies. Moreover, some of them were eager to be interviewed, since this personal contact allowed them to fully understand the aim of my research, and had no doubts about second intentions.

In addition, during the same period over 50 in-depth semi-structured interviews and countless informal conversations were conducted with university students, professors, politicians, members of parliament, political and human rights activists, and journalists in several cities of the country (Abu Dhabi, al-Ain, Dubai, Sharjah). The information obtained through these qualitative techniques has been documented either on recording transcriptions and written notes or only written notes, in the cases where recordings made participants uneasy.

All the data obtained through the survey, participant observation, semi-structured interviews and informal conversations have followed the same principles: detailed information on the research has been given to participants before they took part in it; their consent has been obtained; their anonymity has been protected, using a pseudonym system that assigns one to each of them in the stored data, and without mentioning them throughout research and writing of this dissertation (unless they wanted it differently); in the case that any participant's responses have been found ambiguous or unclear, they have been contacted to check with them about the exact meaning/wording.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that during this period several academic events in al-Ain, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and in other GCC states (Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain) were attended; the 2011 Election Day was observed by accessing one of the polling stations in Dubai; and a session of the FNC was witnessed. All of these experiences facilitated the acquisition of a broader understanding of UAE's political scene.

3.1. Surveying the Middle East

The conduction of public opinion surveys on political issues is relatively recent in the MENA region due to constraints that restrict this kind of polling in authoritarian regimes, and only became widespread after the September 11 attacks, when interest about Arab views grew in the United States. Accordingly, several institutions engaged in the complicated task of gathering opinions in this region, including renowned University of Michigan World Values Survey,¹¹ the World Public Opinion,¹² the Pew Research Center,¹³ the Gallup Center, and James and John Zogby's polling companies.¹⁴

Among these, the most comprehensive surveys on political issues have been conducted in the MENA countries by the Zogby brothers for the Arab American Institute Foundation (AAI),¹⁵ as well in collaboration with Professor Shibley Telhami from the Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development at the University of Maryland.¹⁶ Since 2002 the AAI has conducted dozens of polls in a number of Arab countries, including the UAE, but these mostly focus on gauging the opinion about regional conflicts and perceptions over terrorism and US foreign policy, and are generally not concerned about domestic politics. However, a few of them have included questions related to internal issues, including satisfaction regarding authorities, the need for political reform, as well as identity and leadership.

Under the label of 'Annual Arab Public Opinion Survey', the Sadat Chair in collaboration with Zogby has conducted surveys on a yearly basis since 2003. These have also enquired mainly about the US, Iran, the Palestinian conflict, the Iraq war or the Arab Spring; and have also been conducted in several Arab

¹¹ www.worldvaluessurvey.org

¹² <http://worldpublicopinion.org/>

¹³ www.pewglobal.org/

¹⁴ www.zogbyanalytics.com; www.zogbyresearchservices.com

¹⁵ www.aaiusa.org

¹⁶ <http://sadat.umd.edu/>

countries, including Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Yet their results are unfortunately not available disaggregated by country and it is therefore only possible to explore them combined. While based in the UAE, Gallup surveyed the GCC populations (with the exception of Oman) in their 2011 survey 'Progress and Tradition in the Gulf Cooperation Council States'. Although the survey focused on "issues ranging from wellbeing and education to family and religion" (Gallup, 2011), section four explored attitudes toward religion, migration, and civic engagement. It did however not include any specific questions about internal or regional politics.

Additionally, the Arab Barometer (AB) under the leadership of Professor Mark Tessler at Michigan University;¹⁷ and the 'Arab Opinion Index' of the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies in Doha (Qatar),¹⁸ have also contributed with important polls in Arab countries during the last decade; but none of them have included the UAE among the countries surveyed. The works by the AB are nonetheless the most significant of all the above for this dissertation since they are concerned with national political culture, and therefore "measure and track over time citizen attitudes, values, and behavior patterns relating to pluralism, freedoms, tolerance and equal opportunity; social and inter-personal trust; social, religious and political identities; conceptions of governance and an understanding of democracy; and civic engagement and political participation."¹⁹ The AB polls have been conducted in six Arab countries including Morocco, Algeria, Kuwait, Palestine (West Bank and Gaza), Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen. With the aforementioned political culture theorists in mind (Almond & Verba; Inglehart & Welzel), Tessler and Gao select six elements that they consider relevant for the study of political culture orientations: support for gender equality, tolerance, interpersonal trust, civic participation, political interest, and political knowledge (2009: 198). Tessler, Amaney and Robbins (2012) use the former in a post-Arab spring analysis, which makes interesting findings through the examination of public opinion data gathered by the Arab Barometer in the periods of 2006-2007 and 2010-2011. First, they identify that one constant has been the "overwhelming support for democracy" (2012: 89); second, they observe that support for the role of religion in politics and for

¹⁷ <http://www.arabbarometer.org/>

¹⁸ <http://english.dohainstitute.org>

¹⁹ <http://www.arabbarometer.org/content/arab-barometer-i>

government declined; and third, that support for political diversity increased (Tessler, Amaney and Robbins, 2012: 89).

Some more specific surveys have been conducted in the UAE in recent years that are of relevance to this research. Muhammad Khalfan's 1997 PhD dissertation on the practicality of having the FNC become an elective body; several surveys by the Dubai think tank B'huth;²⁰ the Dubai School of Government survey on the role of women in the 2006 FNC elections (mentioned in chapter 3); a government ordered survey for 800 Emiratis by Zogby to gauge Emirati perceptions of the 2011 election process; a study of 200 university students by UAEU senior student Fatima Al Maamari (Salem, 2012); the survey conducted by Calvert Jones to over 5,000 youth at schools across the UAE for her PhD dissertation on social engineering (Jones, 2013); and an unpublished study by Georges Naufal, Ismail Genc, and Carlos Vargas-Silva (2014) that surveys Arab students perceptions of the Arab Spring at UAE universities, which was prepared for a CIRS workshop. Unfortunately, though, only some of these polls could be accessed for the elaboration of this research, being most of them not available to the public.

3.2. The survey: obstacles faced and implementation

For the purposes of this research the ideal would have been to conduct a survey among all UAE's citizens, but due to the restrictions and sensitivity of the Emirati security apparatus with regards to political research, it was considered more attainable to limit the survey to a smaller population: the Emirati university students.²¹

Initially, the survey was going to be conducted in several universities of each of the seven emirates, and in both private and public universities, however due to approval issues with several institutions it was decided to limit the implementation of this technique to only one, the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU, in Al-Ain, Abu Dhabi). The reasons to choose this institution were many: it is the first and oldest of the three main public universities

²⁰ www.bhuth.ae

²¹ Initially it was also planned to pass a second questionnaire to the members of the FNC, but after several tries through different channels this could not be achieved.

(established in 1976) in the country,²² it has the largest ratio of Emirati students and professors to that of foreigners (which was of much relevance to my research), which come from the seven Emirates, and it has the first and one of the very few departments of Political Science in the country. Moreover, several professors of this department had publishing quite controversial articles in Emirati newspapers prior to my first fieldwork visit to the UAE, through which they both advocated for political reform and democracy in a very open way, and were therefore identified as key informants for this research.

Nevertheless, getting the approval at UAEU was not easy, as it took almost one year to redesign the questionnaire, do the pilot study, make some final changes, and finally get the approval from the university authorities to distribute the questionnaire to the students. In this regard, several professors at UAEU were very helpful for they explained the steps that should be followed to get the authorisation from the university. First an application, along with the questionnaire, a summary of the research project, and the ethical approval granted by the University of Exeter had to be submitted to the UAEU Ethical Committee.²³ After some months without a response to the request, the initial permission granted by Zayed University (ZU) to broadcast my questionnaire (which was finally rejected) seemed to be the turning point that made the UAEU grant their approval in just a few days. By the time the official authorization was given the research fieldwork was by, hence the questionnaire could not be personally distributed as was initially devised, but an online platform to publish it and collect the responses could be used to implement this technique. Finally, the link to the questionnaire was sent by email to the surveyed population on 7th March 2012.

The implementation of the survey through an online platform carries both disadvantages and advantages. Firstly, not being able to include in the sample a specific number of random students from each degree meant it would be a “volunteer” sample because people from the population would choose to respond or not and, therefore, there would be issues of sample selection (i.e. representativeness) (Evans & Mathur, 2005: 201). On the other hand, online

²² The other two are Zayed University (which used to be only for female students, but now offers some programmes for male students too), located in Dubai, and the Higher Colleges of Technology, which are spread around the different Emirates.

²³ See Ethical Approval Certificates in Annex 3.

surveys are thought to obtain higher response rates than do other survey types (Fricker & Schonlau, 2002), thus this way of implementing the survey might have had a positive impact as it allowed a large number of responses, despite not being selected according to a sample. Secondly, not having human contact in online surveys can have a positive or negative impact, since it limits the ability of the interviewer to explain unclear questions or terms, but it also avoids any influence that the interviewer's body or explicit language can have on the respondent. Moreover, regarding the data analysis, using an electronic survey environment avoids the manual input of each response, therefore saving a lot of time and effort.

Finally, as it happens in authoritarian contexts, students might have encountered some privacy and security issues mainly associated with the level of anonymity of the information they provided and with the ways in which the data was going to be treated (Berry, 2004). These issues may have aroused in this case because participants received the link to the questionnaire through their university, thus some responses may have been influenced by the fact that some participants might fear that someone unrelated to this research could have accessed them. However, the online platform chosen to implement the survey (*SurveyMonkey*) sticks to a privacy policy that in principle guarantees a high level of security regarding the data collected through their website, where they state that they "will never use your survey questions or responses other than in accordance with this privacy policy unless we have your consent," and that "SurveyMonkey does not ever disclose your survey questions or responses unless you permit or request for us to do so." Furthermore, they explain that surveys are stored in a certified 'SunGard' data centre protected by various means, which should be very difficult to penetrate by the UAEU or UAE authorities, if they had any interest in having a look at the responses.²⁴

3.3. The design of the questionnaire

In order to design the questionnaire, instruments prepared by organizations with experience in the region such as the Arab Barometer, the Gallup Center, and the Dubai School of Government, among other institutions that conduct surveys around the world were closely studied (e.g. World Values Survey, Zogby

²⁴ See SurveyMonkey (2013, September 9) and SurveyMonkey (2013, October 29) for more details.

surveying companies). An interview with a member of Gallup Center in Abu Dhabi²⁵ helped in identifying the challenges faced when conducting surveys in the UAE, and to learn from their experience in the region. Among the things mentioned was the fact that in the surveys Gallup conducted in the Gulf they had to remove some of the political questions they normally ask in other countries.²⁶

Also, the advice of several professors at UAEU was very helpful in the rephrasing of some questions to make them less sensitive, but keeping their relevance and with no impact in the content itself. An example of it may be changing “what is your level of trust in the following institutions” for “how effective you think” they are; or putting “general working class” rather than “lower class” to avoid potential offenses.

Table 2: Total population (2012 Spring semester) and survey responses

Total population (Emirati non-1 st year undergraduates) ²⁷	6,629
Total responses	689 (10.39%)
Total valid responses (Sex non-missing)	469 (7.07%)

Finally, the involvement of some female UAEU students²⁸ in the conduction of the preliminary pilot study (gathering ten students enrolled in different years and disciplines as respondents), and the final version of the questionnaire was also very helpful, as it ensured all questions were understandable in both English and Arabic. Moreover, it also facilitated to build a trustful relationship with them, to make them familiar with the research (and its genuine intentions), and to gain through them the confidence of other students who were not met personally.

The surveyed population were all UAEU non-first year undergraduate students registered at the UAEU during the spring term of 2012.²⁹ The questionnaire link

²⁵ The centre was closed in 2012 under unclear circumstances, which may point at disagreement with the authorities (Personal interview with Emirati professor, Dubai, April 2013).

²⁶ This interview took place in May 2011.

²⁷ The total number of undergraduate students registered in the UAEU during the 2012 Spring semester was 11,649, of which 9,621 were Emiratis (and children of National women), being 6,629 undergraduate and not 1st year students. Source: UAEU Statistical Year Book 2011-2012.

²⁸ These students made up also the bulk of the semi-structured interviews and informal conversations conducted while in the UAE (and later by e-mail and Facebook).

²⁹ The decision of not surveying first year students was based in the understanding that after one year of study at university, during which people are exposed to a broader range of ideas

was sent by email on 7th March 2012, and responses started to arrive the same day, unexpectedly reaching the number of 414 only in the first 24 hours. After this surprising beginning, the number of responses per day decreased gradually, and completely stopped during two weeks before the closing of the collection period on 15th April 2012. Since all the literature on UAE society describes Emiratis as uninterested in politics, it was expected to have a low response rate, which would not allow making any inferential assumptions. Nevertheless, the final response rate (or participation rate, as some prefer to call it for being self-selected)³⁰ was 689. As shown on table 2, this number meant that over 10 per cent of the total population did respond, and more than seven per cent of them were valid responses.

3.4 Preliminary analysis of data

Adding to the aforementioned disadvantages of the online collection of responses, a further problem arose when data was looked at closely: there was a high risk of having 'non-response' bias. Not requiring the participants to answer every single question, and the length of the questionnaire due to the high number of issues addressed (See Survey Questionnaire in Annex 2), made an important number of people leave some questions unanswered, especially those at the end (i.e. the demographic ones which were to serve as independent variables).

Despite this bias potentiality, the weighting of some of the variables allowed the sample to better reflect the population, not only avoiding the 'non-response' bias, but also reducing the 'self-selection' bias (i.e. the fact that only the people who chose to did respond), even if the latter is impossible to completely remove. In order to decide by which variables was most appropriate to weight the data, some frequency analyses were run in order see a better picture of the missing values. These test showed that around 200 values were missing in all the demographic questions, thus confirming that the 'non-response' pattern had most probably not to do with the sensitivity of the topics being asked (or the fear to answer to specific questions), but rather with a matter of lack of time or willingness to fully complete it.

and experiences, they develop a political culture more independent from the official discourse and the positions of their families.

³⁰ See AAPOR (2011).

Moreover, the raw data indicates that the distribution of students among the different degrees reflects quite well the population, and that the larger number of responses does not come from students of disciplines more related to political topics, but rather from biological or physical sciences, which are the largest departments at the UAEU. Likewise, only around 30% of respondents are from the social sciences degrees, and around 20% from Business and Economics, which again is very similar to the population distribution (See figure 1, and table 3).

Figure 1: Sample Emirati Students

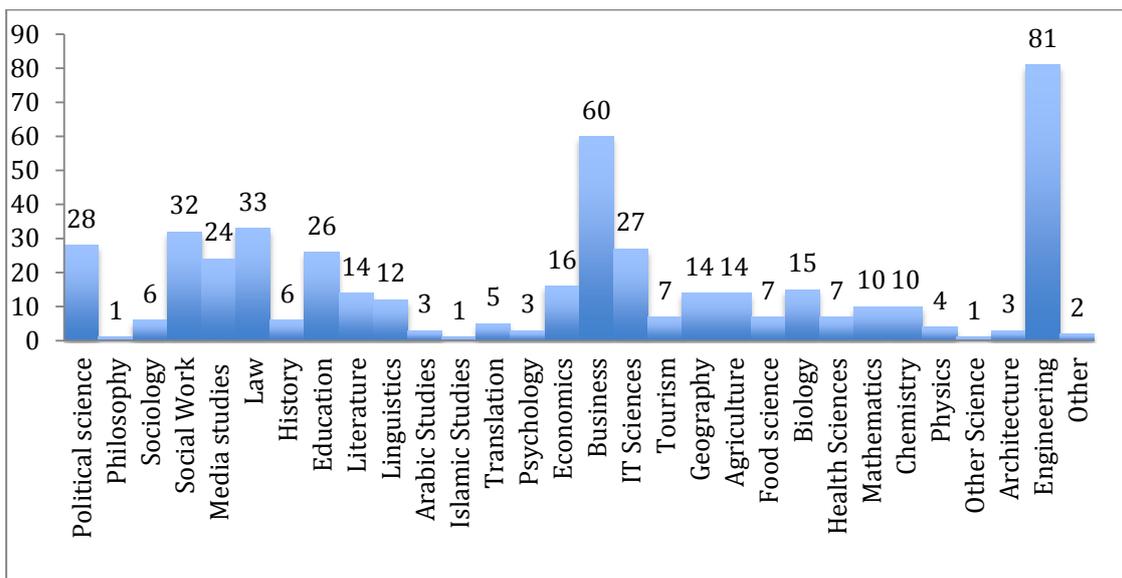


Table 3: Percentage of Students in Population and Sample by College

College	Percentage of students in population	Percentage of students in sample
Humanities & Social Sciences	27%	32.5%
Business & Economics	21%	16%
Engineering	17%	17%
IT Sciences	8%	6%
Law	7%	7%
Science	6%	8.5%
Education	6%	5.5%
Food science & Agriculture	5%	4.5%
Medicine & Health sciences	3%	1.5%

Furthermore, the distribution of respondents from the Humanities and Social Sciences College, show that the percentage of students from disciplines which could be considered as more politically exposed (i.e. political science or sociology) is low compared to those enrolled in other degrees (See table 4). Interestingly, this fact allows affirming that the respondents belonged to all segments of the population, and that there is not a particular group which is over-represented³¹. Thus, there was not a real need to weigh the sample according to discipline of study, as it was initially thought of doing to reduce the 'self-selection' bias.

Table 4: Percentage of Students in Sample by Degree

Degree	Percentage of students in population	Percentage of students in sample
Social work	2.7%	6.0%
Mass Comm.	2.5%	5.0%
Linguistics	2.3%	5.0%
Political Science	1.6%	0.2%
Literature	1.5%	6.7%
History	0.6%	6.0%
Sociology	0.3%	1.2%
Tourism	0.2%	7.0%

However, the number of female respondents quintupled that of men, which did not quite reflect the population surveyed, even if female are still over three times UAEU's male students. Therefore data had to be weighted by sex, as ideally the proportions of a sample should reflect the proportions of the population surveyed. By weighting the collected data the vulnerability of having different balance between these proportions is removed, helping to make the results better reflect the population which inferences are going to be made of. Moreover, weighting the collected data by sex does not eliminate the answers to questions by the approximately 200 people who did not answer to the 'sex' question, but gives them larger proportional value (See table 5).

³¹ This is something that was questioned when some preliminary results were presented at the 2012 Gulf Conference at the University of Exeter (July 2012).

Table 5: Percentage and Proportion of Students in Sample by Sex

	Female	Male	Total
Students	5,313	1,316	6,629
Percentage	80%	20%	100%
Proportion	0.801478353	0.198521647	1

3.5 The statistical tests run

The tests chosen to evaluate whether the data collected was statistically significant enough to make some inferences about the population from the sample were:

- *Chi-Square Pearson* – Run for nominal variables.
- *Chi-Square for linear by-linear association/trend* – Run for ordinal/ranking variables.

These are bivariate statistical tests that show whether any differences in the responses received between categories of variables (males/females, emirates of origin, social class...) are statistically significant. “If the probability of obtaining the value of our test statistic by chance is less than .05 then we generally accept the experimental hypothesis as true: there is an effect in the population” (Field, 2009: 53) at the 5% level. However, if that *p-value* is between .05 and .1 at the 10% level, it is accepted that there is a high probability that the same result would be obtained if the whole population were surveyed. Therefore, it was considered that these tests sufficed for the purpose of this study of evaluating the general political culture of the UAEU educated youth. More sophisticated statistical analyses, such as regression, could not be conducted for this dissertation due to time and space limitations, and are left for future exploration of the effect of combined independent variables on dependent variables, as well as the strength and direction of these effects.

PART I STATE AND SOCIETY IN THE UAE

Part I of this dissertation looks into the history of state-society relations in the UAE from a holistic and integrative perspective that takes into account local, regional and global dynamics, as well as political, economic, cultural and environmental factors that have affected the specific context of that country. With the aim of framing the setting in which contemporary Emirati citizens understand, evaluate and feel with regard to the UAE political system and ruling elites, Chapter 2 explains how the composition of society and the nature of rulership have changed over time, and concludes that rentierism is not the main or only factor affecting people's political culture. Furthermore, it argues that rentierism can actually empower people to become more politically aware in the long term, through the exposure to new or reshaped agents of political socialization.

Chapter 3 deals with the episodes of political activism that have taken place in the UAE and the approach of authorities regarding the political socialization of its citizens. This chapter also presents an assessment of the different political standpoints that have existed in the past and exist today in the UAE, to later focus on the most recent domestic calls for political reform and the different responses that the ruling elites have chosen to give at different times. The main conclusion is that leadership strategies of legitimization vary and are combined, depending on the challenge being faced, whether these are ideological, redistributive, co-optative, limited power sharing, or coercive measures. Hence, it supports the main hypothesis of this dissertation that rentier state theory does not by itself explain the survival of authoritarian rule in the UAE, and that effective redistribution of oil rents is not sufficient to prevent the cyclically emergent calls for political reform.

CHAPTER 2: UAE SOCIETY: FROM TRIBAL TO GLOBALISED?

This chapter discusses the processes of state and society formation in the UAE, and the factors determining their relationship, in historical perspective. The first section presents an explanation of the tribal system of social organization predominant in pre-British days, which is relevant to understand contemporary political structures, while explaining it was significantly affected by British interference (and later by the discovery of oil). The second section complements the previous one with an account of the commercial activities and population fluctuation that took place in the Gulf during the centuries prior to the British arrival to the region, challenges the generally accepted assumption that Gulf people (or *khalijī*) lived isolated until the discovery of oil, and provides an explanation for the culturally mixed backgrounds of Emirati citizens. Section three outlines the steps taken for the establishment of the UAE Federation and analyses the political system; while section four discusses the fundamental aspects of citizenship and national identity crafting by governmental policies. This discussion provides the necessary background for the social stratification of the UAE, which is examined in section five. Finally, sections six and seven argue that rentierism cannot be considered the main or only factor affecting political culture in the UAE, and lays out the main elements involved in the process of political socialization in that country.

1. The pre-British tribal setting

Arab tribes have been described by anthropologists as being agnatic, patrilineal descent social groups who name themselves after an eponymous founder (an apical descendant); that organize under and are loyal to a chieftaincy or sheikh; which have the sense of collective responsibility over the protection of the group; and who are linked by *‘aṣabiyya*³² (Barfield, 1990; Gellner, 1990; Khoury & Kostiner, 1990; Ibn Khaldun, 1967; Wilkinson, 1977). However, despite being a category widely used to describe Arab societies, controversy over this concept has been determined by its use to support theories of socio-cultural

³² *‘Aṣabiyya* (from now on *‘asabiya*) is often glossed as social cohesion or social solidarity among a human group, mainly among tribal groups. This term became popularized after Ibn Khaldun's use of the concept as the essential bond among humans in a group (stronger in the tribal stage, diminishing as it evolves into states and empires) and the fundamental force driving human history in his circular model (see below for details).

evolution³³ and is today considered by many social scientists an ethnographic fiction or a creation of colonial administrators (Tapper, 1990: 48-51).³⁴ Moreover, since 'tribe' has been so widely and differently used in social sciences as befitting the analysis of a particular society,³⁵ and hindering rather than increasing its understanding, "it has almost ceased to be of analytical or comparative value" (Tapper, 1979: 6). Nevertheless, since the concept has been, is, and will surely continue to be used to describe Arab societies,³⁶ a brief summary of the main theoretical models of how tribes form, organize and function in the Arab world is provided as follows. These comprise Ibn Khaldun's 14th century theory, Evans-Pitchard segmentation theory, and several authors' reformulations or criticisms of the latter.

The concept of *khalījī* is essential to understanding Ibn Khaldun's³⁷ circular model of human history: in his view, the primary stage of human social organizations relates to tribes, which are composed of *Badū*³⁸ and are the most

³³ Views regarding 'tribe' as one of the first (or the first) stage in human social evolution include the Ibn Khaldunian model, the unilinear evolutionist model (Morgan and Tylor) and neo-evolutionist model (White and Steward), the Marxist (Marx and Engels) and neo-Marxists models, or the sociological French school (Durkheim). Despite the many differences these paradigms show, they all agree that 'tribe' is a primitive stage in social organization, which will ultimately evolve into a final stage, which varies in nature according to each paradigm (bureaucratized state, civilized state, Asiatic/Germanic organization, etc.).

³⁴ See Amin (1970), Asad (1972), Bourdieu (1962), Caton (1990), Christensen (1986), Cole (2003), Fernea (1970), Fried (1975), Glatzer (1983), Peters (1967), and Tapper (1979, 1983) for works revealing the use of the concept 'tribe' as a tool used by colonialist states (both modern and pre-modern) to expand their empires and increase their control over remote, mobile populations.

³⁵ Each author stresses a particular or several characteristics when defining 'tribe': a common language, a common genealogy (common ancestor), a common self-identity, a common political autonomy, a common shared space, a common simple technology, a common self-sufficient economic system, a common religion, a common illiteracy, a common social homogeneity, etc.

³⁶ This is especially the case with regards to the GCC states because the regimes base their legitimacy upon 'traditional' practices and institutions as they have reformulated them (majlis, *shūrā*, sheikh, etc.). See section on Statecraft in the UAE in this chapter.

³⁷ Ibn Khaldun (1332 AD – 1406 AD) was an Arab Muslim historian and philosopher, considered one of the founding fathers of modern sociology, economics and historiography. His best-known work is "*al- Muqaddimā*" (written in 1377, Prolegomena in Greek or Introduction in English), which discusses the notion of *'asabiya*; presents his human history circular model; developed the dichotomy of *Hādhār* versus *Badū*; and also makes a clear distinction between two types of Arab people: Arab by descent (i.e. of ethnic Arab descent) and Arab by language (i.e. ethnically non-Arab populations who speak Arabic as a first language). He never refers to the latter as Arabs, but rather calls them by their ethnicity or places of origin (ex. Persians or Egyptians) (Cruz Hernández, 1996: 697-700).

³⁸ The Arabic word *Badū* (singular *Badawī*) may be interpreted as "desert-dwellers" and from it derives the English term Bedouin. They have been generally linked with the raising of livestock (mainly camels and goats, but also sheep, cattle, horses, etc.) in the *Bādiyya* (which can be translated as "range, steppe, desert"). Despite most Bedouins are semi-nomad, having seasonal settlements in oases or coastal sites, it has been commonly misunderstood that Bedouins are nomads, in contrast with *Hādhār* as sedentary. In this sense, Bourdieu (1962: 66-

cohesive social group due to the strong *'asabiya* of its members. Over time tribes settle down, becoming *Hādhar*,³⁹ diminishing the *'asabiya* among them, and forming states.⁴⁰ Eventually, his theory goes, states grow into empires, which further lessens the *'asabiya* among its members, thus causing its weakness and downfall, and are finally defeated by tribes that have developed into a state holding a stronger cohesion. The Khaldunian model considers kinship ties essential since “affection for one’s relations and blood relatives (...) is a natural urge in man, for as long as there have been human beings” (1967: 98). These blood ties, together with the closeness of a common shared space and interests, are the main factors strengthening *'asabiya*. Hence, for Ibn Khaldun, the same *'asabiya* that holds groups together and leads them to power contains within itself the seeds of the group's downfall, to be replaced by a new group bound by a stronger cohesion. Moreover, as Caton (1990: 86) points out, this model implies that the Bedouins/tribes are the human group with the “purest lineage”⁴¹ and therefore the most “cohesive”. However, despite being the most cohesive, the tribal system is not egalitarian in Ibn Khaldun’s view,⁴² but is unequal due to the existing state within the tribal order, which allows that order to survive (Caton, 1990: 87). This state within the tribal order of the Bedouins “results from the great respect and veneration they [sheikhs]⁴³ generally enjoy among the people” (Ibn Khaldun, 1967: 97). In his view, the leader of a tribe is expected to be “obeyed, but he has no power to force others to accept his rulings” (Ibn Khaldun, 1967: 108). Thus, he is forced to seek consensus among the ruled and to elude confrontation with them, being his basis of power not coercion but *'asabiya*.

67) warned, “one must be careful not to regard [the *Badū*] as radically different from the sedentary peoples.”

³⁹ Is the antonym of *Badū* and can be glossed as “sedentary, urban”, as they permanently live in towns and cities. The Khaldunian dichotomy of *Badū* versus *Hādhar* in Arab societies, which conceives the central social conflict (“town” versus “desert”) by which the *Badū* necessarily loosed power when they became *Hādhar*, has been used by many over the centuries to explain the social conflict happening in a given Arab society. From now on these two terms will be simplified into *'badu'* and *'hadhar'*.

⁴⁰ To Ibn Khaldun, the ‘state’ is the restraining influence among a given human group and contains man's naturally aggressive nature. Nevertheless, as Ibn Khaldun argued, “tribes and states maintain each other as a single system rather than function as two separate and opposing systems” (Christensen, 1986: 286).

⁴¹ According to Ibn Khaldun these are people whose “pedigree can be trusted not to have been mixed up and corrupted” (1967: 99).

⁴² As it will be discussed below, this clearly contradicts the segmentary-lineage model.

⁴³ See Amin (1970: 83-86 and 104-107), Cole & Altorki (1998: 67-74 and 210-213), Fernea (1970: 105-107), and Salim (1962: 27-33), for analysis of the sheikhs’ (and other tribal leaders) role in tribal communities.

The segmentary–lineage model defined by Evans-Pritchard and Fortes in the 1940s describes tribes as organised according to an egalitarian segmentary opposition of descendent groups; a way in which each segment “sees itself as an independent unit in relation to another segment of the same section, but sees both segments as a unity in relation to another section” (Evans-Pritchard, 1940: 147).⁴⁴ These segments arguably emerge as subgroups of a tribe that split, grow in size and gain importance, giving birth to new segments that either stay under the paramount rule of the clan from which they descend or join a different confederation. Moreover, lineages are, in theory, “supported by, or opposed to, one another based on their degrees of relatedness [giving] rise to the ethnographic cliché often cited by anthropologists and tribesmen alike: Me against my brothers; my brothers and me against our cousins; my brothers, cousins, and me against the world” (Barfield, 1990: 160). Thus, tribal segments unite when they have to fight an opponent, transforming social conflict into social order, because these opposed forces are supposed to be equal, or otherwise the system would collapse (Caton, 1990: 92).

Tribes, therefore, ally with each other depending on who their enemy is at a specific moment; protecting the closer relatives but not so worried about the wellbeing of the other groups they are also related to; and sometimes fighting against segments of the same tribe. Following this same survival and self-interest rationale, clans or families could shift their loyalty to another sheikh if they felt unhappy or unprotected under the sheikh to which they had pledged *bay‘a* or allegiance.⁴⁵ Like in the Khaldunian model, in the segmentary-lineage model loyalty to a sheikh is not determined by coercion or inheritance, but by an idealistic segmentary logic based on kinship and common interests between the sheikh and his people. Nonetheless, as discussed below, these principles as basis of tribal allegiance have been challenged as not egalitarian (even authoritarian) and including some principles of succession for the case of Southeast Arabia during the pre and post-British periods.

⁴⁴ According to the segmentary-lineage model applied to Arab tribes, families group together in lineages, which “are named collectivities that group together all male and female descendants through the patriline from an eponymous ancestor who existed at about five generations” back (Cole, 2003: 261); lineages then form clans (due to their claimed common ancestor), and these in tribes and tribal confederations (again, as descendants of a common ancestor).

⁴⁵ “Oath of allegiance to a leader. Unwritten pact given on behalf of the subjects by leading members of the tribe with the understanding that, as long as the leader abides by certain responsibilities toward his subjects, they are to maintain their allegiance to him” (Esposito, n.d.).

Finally, authors that have reformulated or criticised the aforementioned theoretical models have been many.⁴⁶ Ibn Khaldun's ideas, and especially the concept of *'asabiya*, have been used to explain the cohesiveness of human groups or even to understand the social conflict (and bonds) existing between *badu* and *hadhar*. Likewise, the segmentary–lineage model has been widely used to understand Arab societies, but it has been criticised on three grounds. Firstly, since inequality is manifest due to different variables (demographic, ecological, or economic) rarely, if ever, allowing tribal segments to be equal, the segmentary-lineage principle of egalitarian opposition is not to be found in practice (Peters, 1967: 281). As explained above, even at the segments' level the Khaldunian model challenges this presumed egalitarianism, since the existing state within the tribal order grants its unavoidable unequal feature. Secondly, the segmentary-lineage model stereotypes tribal societies as stagnant, which is a feature long discredited in all social sciences, as today is taken for granted that the understanding of any society requires a diachronic analysis of the processes of change. Lastly, this model presents tribes as isolated, reinforcing the tribe/state dichotomy and despite the evidence that “the tribes and the state have never lived in isolation from each other but have always been interdependent” (Caton, 1990: 102).

In this regard, Ernest Gellner adopted a corrective model of the segmentary-lineage system by including the Khaldunian concept of the state, in which the sheikh surpasses the segmentary tendency of tribal society (Caton, 1990: 94-96) and there is an institutionalization of collective responsibility in the system (Van Der Meulen 1997: 18-30). In his words, “the persistence of a segmentary society requires, paradoxically, that its mechanisms should be sufficiently inefficient to keep fear in being as the sanction of the system” (Gellner, 1981: 53). Similarly, Tapper (1979: 6) points out that tribes should not be analysed in isolation from the political, economic and cultural contexts in which they appear, because “there is ‘state’ within every tribe, and ‘tribe’ within every state; state is

⁴⁶ Examples of it are the works by Amin (1970), Asad (1972), Barfield (1990), Bourdieu (1962), Caton (1990), Cole & Altorki (1998), Cole (2003), Christensen (1986), Eickelman (1980, 2002), Fenelon (1976), Fernea (1970), Fried (1975), Gellner (1981), Glatzer (1983), Khalaf (1990), Khazanov (1984), Lienhardt (2001), Peters (1967), Peterson (1977), Onley & Khalaf (2006), Salim (1962), Sahlins (1961), al-Sayegh (1998), Tapper (1979, 1983), etc.

partly defined in terms of tribe, tribe in terms of state” (Tapper, 1983: 45).⁴⁷ Thus, tribes and states should be understood as interrelated in mutually engendering and transformative ways.

Accordingly, talking about UAE’s socio-economic and political structures, and the ‘tribal’ side of these, requires some conceptual precisions for which I mostly rely on Dale F. Eickelman’s definitions. Tribalism or tribe is understood as a form of social organisation that “signifies a group of people often conceptualized in terms of genealogy” (Eickelman 2002: 65).⁴⁸ In this regard, the concept *badu* or Bedouin refers to nomad or semi-nomad “peoples who live in a symbiotic relationship with settled [or *hadhar*] peoples” and who organise tribally or according to kinship ties (Eickelman 2002: 65).⁴⁹ Thus, being tribal in Southeast Arabia did not necessarily mean being nomad or Bedouin, for these societies integrated both tribal *badu* and tribal *hadhar*, in addition to non-tribal *hadhar* people (i.e. people not claiming kinship ties to the local tribes, who were settled and living in towns and cities, and were linked by tributary or mercantile interests to the kin-ordered group). Hence, this dissertation refers to contemporary Emiratis that descend from the Bedouin, including those segments that had been settled for long time, as ‘tribal’ or of Bedouin origin.

Taking all these views and concepts into account, the UAE’s pre-British ‘tribal’ social system may be described as one in which semi-nomadic Bedouins coexisted with settled people who had tribal origins, and to whom they were linked to each other by kinship or other ties (commercial, political, slavery, etc.). Likewise, “no single mode [of economic modes of production – household, kin-ordered, tributary and mercantile] was dominant; they were all present in varying degrees in different situations” (Cole, 2003: 240), thus further complicating the description of the pre-British tribal setting, which is often presented in an essentialised and idealised way. In this regard, scholars like

⁴⁷ Essentialist definitions of either ‘pure’ tribe or ‘pure’ state are an empirical impossibility (Tapper, 1983: 66-67), because “these ideal-types are only rough approximations to the social reality which they purport to explain” (Christensen, 1986: 290).

⁴⁸ It is important to note that the belief of a tribal decent form a common ancestor is simply a misfit, because “all societies play genealogical tricks and commit genealogical frauds. Constructing and deconstructing their origins, people blend myth and reality into firmly held beliefs” (Fried, 1975: 16). However, as Fried points out, genealogies do play an important role in social life, since they act as agreements among people, which provide each member a position in society and legitimize everyday relationships amongst them (1975: 16).

⁴⁹ In this regard, Cole (2003: 237) stresses that “today, ‘Bedouin’ refers less to a ‘way of life’ than to an ‘identity’. The way of life was grounded in ecology and economy, the identity in heritage and culture.”

Cole and Altorki (1992) argue that coastal inhabitants did not exactly reproduce the inland structures or ways of life since these were more heterogeneous and mixed communities. Moreover, economic activities varied depending on the location where a specific group spent most time (a coastal town or an inland oasis) and on the season of the year (summer or winter).

As further explained below,⁵⁰ following political instability in Persia and the decline of the port of Linga commerce flourished in the Trucial States at the turn of the 20th century. Its ports became major trading centres, incrementing notably the non-tribal *hadhar* elements of their social system. Especially Dubai consolidated as a cosmopolitan 'City of Merchants', as it has since been known, while Ras al-Khaimah and Sharjah were the other two most important ports during those days. Abu Dhabi had a lower profile in sea trade for a longer period of time –probably due to the predominantly inland (and mainly *badu*) character of its population, which had its main settlements in the oases of Liwa and Buraymi (today divided between the Omani city of the same name and the Emirati city of al-Ain). Thus, the main economic activity at that time in the Trucial States was based on the primary sectors of fishing, agriculture and animal husbandry, as well as on sea and land trade, and the pearl industry. *Badu* and *hadhar*, coastal and inland inhabitants, carried out different activities—which were determined by seasons—and complemented each other. The *badu* were mainly camel-herding tribes that migrated “in regular patterns throughout the year in search of water and pasture” (and were therefore pastoralist); while the *hadhar*'s activities varied whether they lived in inland oases or the coast, and whether they were linked by kin-based ties to the *badu* or not. In the oasis they would harvest the palm tree farms, while in the coastal towns they would be more engaged in trade or fishing and pearling activities. Moreover, some combined nomadic and sedentary activities existed and, especially during the summer when they faced bad weather conditions inland, the *badu* abandoned their nomadic activities (and left women and children behind) to embark in the boats of pearl merchants; thus existing a symbiotic relation among settlements (Eickelman, 2002: 64-65).

In the coastal towns, all revolved around the maritime activities and the pearling industry. Pearl diving took place in four phases from April to September, being

⁵⁰ See section on traditionally globalised society in this chapter.

the most important the one between June and late August. Merchants, who played “a key role in (...) government decision-making process” and “were the driving force behind development” (al-Sayegh, 1998: 87), made large fortunes with the pearl business; while “the rulers who levied a tax on every boat relied on the industry as their main source of revenue. The divers and other members of the crews, however, did not fare so well” (Fenelon, 1976: 53). Many products coming from around the world were traded through these ports. During the rest of the year, they had to earn a living by fishing, building ships, or as craftsmen who made agricultural and fishing tools, fabrics, and household utensils; or they either returned to the inland settlements or engaged in nomadic herding.

Regarding leadership in the pre-British setting, among tribes no fixed principle of succession existed, and in practice rulership was semi-hereditary (Herb, 1999: 22). They arguably followed a mix of personal interest and internal dispute with the Islamic principles of *ijtihād* (interpretation) and *shūrā* (consensus) in order to choose the best ruler from the possible members of the tribe. Thus, although the sheikh was the sovereign over the territories under his control, his authority was to some extent “limited by tribal custom and the laws of Islam” (Kour, 1991: 187). Thus maintaining political authority by one *sheikh* for long periods of time was very difficult, and rulers who succeeded in this enterprise “did so by acting in consensus with the opinions of the leading citizens of their domains” (Eickelman, 1980: 20).

James Onley and Sulayman Khalaf have quoted Gellner’s description of the pre-oil sheikhdoms as “tribal proto states”, and have explained how inhabitants pledged allegiance (*‘asabiya*) to the ruling sheikh, and how the boundaries of their domains were “defined by loyalty” (Onley & Khalaf, 2006: 191). Main settlements of Southeast Arabia were along the coast or in the oases, which were controlled by the ruler, while smaller inland settlements were under the control of members of the ruling family or other tribes chiefs allied to the ruling family, thus giving important roles to any potential opponent. However, the *bay‘a* or “oath of loyalty taken by a tribesman to a ruler was explicitly considered to be a contract (*‘aqd*), revocable in theory and often in practice” (Eickelman, 1980: 20). In addition, the social system situated the family of the ruler as a challenge for his power and therefore he had to be aware of their concerns and aspirations, as well as of the rest of the community, because they could be

deposed by a member of their own family, or be abandoned by other clans or families who could indeed shift their loyalty to another ruler from another tribe, if they decided the existing ruler was incapable of fulfilling the necessities of the group. In this regard, Peterson agrees that the size of the *dirah* (the territory under control of a Sheikh) varied depending on the loyalties of the tribes, and has explained how the “settled tribes are more likely to possess a strong central organization whereas the nomadic tribes generally are divided into independent family units” (Peterson, 1977: 2).

Moreover, rulers were dependent on the taxes they levied from economic activities, therefore not only Arab tribal, but also non-tribal and non-Arab merchants had a say in politics. Distribution of revenues among notable members of the community was accordingly important. These strategies would normally maintain stability as long as the ruler provided the community with what they needed and was capable of protecting them from potential threats. In this regard, growth of the ruling families is thought to have been one of the main causes of strife with potential rulers when the revenues did not increase at the same time as the members of the family did (Lienhardt, 2001: 165-166, 187). However, as explained in more detail below, with the coming of the British and the legitimization of particular sheikhs as leaders of their communities, these principles were transformed into the more authoritarian ruling system that is in place today. It is important not to forget that, as in other colonized territories, sheikhs and tribal elites in the areas were used by the British “as a means to govern a remote, mobile population located in a difficult or nearly inaccessible terrain, making direct rule virtually impossible” (Caton, 1990: 99). In this sense, Asad (1972: 137) asserts that the tribal political elite acted as “entrepreneur, middleman or representative, but it does so as a middleman who has a privileged monopoly in relation to his tribal [and non-tribal] ‘clients’.”

Social structures of Southeast Arabia have adapted to regional economic, political and religious circumstances along history (as was the case with the embracement of Islam), but further structural changes that forever changed the socio-political system took place already during the pre-oil days with the British interference in the sheikhdoms’ affairs. Their presence should therefore be considered the main catalyst of the establishment of the Gulf nation-states as

we know them today, followed by the discovery of oil that prompted even more dramatic socio-economic and political transformation.

2. A traditionally globalised society

Scholars have not been able to provide enough evidence to form one view on the distribution of the population of the Arabian Peninsula in ancient times and what can be said comes mainly from orally transmitted stories, travellers' accounts or literary sources. Nonetheless, it is widely accepted that the Arabs of today descend from a same ethnic origin that was divided in two groups at some time in history: the *Qaḥṭānī* (southern, al-'arab al-'ariba, or *Hināwī*) and the *'Adnānī* (northern, al-'arab al-must 'ariba, or *Ghafīrī*). The former group is believed to be originally from Yemen and the latter from the Hejaz region (on the Northwest of the Arabian Peninsula), being the segment from which Prophet Muhammad descended. There is a third group of Arab tribes known as the "perishing Arabs" (*al-bā'ida*) mentioned in the Quran as those tribes that disappeared because of their decadence. Although there is evidence of the presence of Arab tribes in the Southeast region of the Arabian Peninsula since the first millennium BCE (Wilkinson, 1977: 126), there is consensus among scholars that several important migrations from the Southwest and the North of the Arabian Peninsula (mainly of the *Qaḥṭānī* tribes) took place since the 2nd century BCE and that these migrations increased especially after the decline of the Yemeni Sabeen Kingdom in the 3rd century (Anani & Whittingham, 1986: 24), making the population of the Southeast coast of the peninsula be "predominantly of Arab stock" (Heard-Bey, 1996: 21). However, the former does not mean that the people living in that region have always and only been Arabs, for it is well documented that different peoples have lived there since at least the 6th century BCE; and that these had for millennia been involved in sea and land trade routes of the region, connected to other parts of the Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula, East Africa, South Asia, and even to the Far East.

The oldest known written records regarding the Southeast region of the Arabian Peninsula are the Sumerian cuneiform texts (ca. 2300 BCE), which refer to it as the land of Magan, which was "a source of copper and diorite for the flourishing city-states of Mesopotamia" (Bhacker & Bhacker, 1997: 1).⁵¹ Dionisius Agius

⁵¹ The region has also been mentioned in Greek, Roman, Persian, Arab and Ottoman texts; and, later, in Portuguese, Italian, Dutch and British official and travellers' records.

has explained how “material culture of coastal existence unearth (...) present a picture of coastal communities who interacted with their neighbours while at the same time undertaking long distance trade with the great cities of the Indus civilisation” as far as in the third millennium CE (Agius, 2012: 60). Moreover, archaeological excavations in several locations in the UAE are evidence of cultures “earlier and contemporary to that of Dilmun”, and of the “transnational character of the peoples of this region” (Potts, 2000). Furthermore, archaeological research shows that different beliefs must have coexisted in the region, which eventually eroded with the gradual embracement of Islam since the 7th century CE (King, 2001: 80).⁵² South-east Arabia fell since that period under the influence of the subsequent Islamic Empires and other regional powers (importantly the Persian), but a high level of political autonomy is thought to have been maintained by the Arab tribal rulers who had gradually gained power over these territories (King, 2001: 74-84), probably because of the lack of interest in an eminently infertile territory.⁵³

It was not until the 15th century that Europeans arrived to the Gulf, after the Portuguese discovery of the route to Asia through the Cape of Good Hope, which needed stability in the waters surrounding their new colonies.⁵⁴ In addition, the Ottomans made their appearance in the region in the 16th century, and maintained a claim for the Arabian Peninsula until the early 19th century (Anscombe, 1997: 12). Thus, the rivalry in the Gulf waters was at that time between the Ottoman, the Safavid (Persian) and the Portuguese Empires (and later the Saudi), making the Gulf “inextricably linked with the commercial and

⁵² Syriac sources speak of Christian monasteries in the Gulf as early as the 4th century. Unfortunately, the uncontrolled construction of cities, and the lack of cultural awareness during the first decades of development in the UAE, “means that it is probably no longer possible to assess the archaeology of the towns of Umm al-Qawain, Ajman, Sharjah and Dubai in the 6th/7th century AD and in the Islamic period generally” (King, 2001: 75); but the few remaining ruins and the accounts of Arab medieval scholars and travellers help imagine how this region might have been in the centuries following the advent of Islam.

⁵³ Arab authors that have mentioned the Islamic period of south-east Arabia are: al-Dinawari (ca.895 AD),

Muhammad ibn Habib al-Baghdadi (also known as Ibn Habib al-Muhabbar) (d.859 AD), Al-Idrisi (1100 – 1165/1166 AD), Yaqut al-Hamawi (1179–1229 AD), Ibn Jubayr (1145-1217 AD), and Ibn Battuta (1304 – 1368/1369 AD), among others.

⁵⁴ It is thought, according to Portuguese accounts, that during this period the town of Julfar (now in ruins in the outskirts of Ras al-Khaimah) “enjoyed great prosperity as a regional trading entrepôt. Its connection with the Indian Ocean commercial network is reflected in the quantities of Chinese, Vietnamese and Thai ceramics recovered in excavation, along with Indian glass bangles and Iranian pottery”. This period has been mentioned by Italian Gasparo Balbi (ca. 1580 AD); by the local Arab navigator, Ahmad Ibn Majid (latter half of the 15th century AD); and by Duarte Barbosa (1617 AD) (King, 2001: 85-91).

political rivalries of western countries” (Zahlan, 1998: 10), including those of Holland, France, Germany, and finally Britain, who eventually got the upper hand.⁵⁵

Within that context, fluctuation between both shores of the Gulf, and with ports in other parts of the Indian Ocean was common. People chose to settle on one place or another depending on economic, political and climate conditions, mixing with the local communities by engaging in the local economic activity, as well as through marriage. In this regard, it is important to note that, even if Arab tribal women were (and still are to a large extent) not married outside the kinship relations, it was not uncommon that Arab tribal men married women from different backgrounds, thus introducing different ethnicities into the Arab tribes.⁵⁶ Moreover, it has been argued that occasionally men “who were not originally part of a tribe, became integrated into the tribal system” (Heard-Bey, 2008: 11). For instance, a given tribe could eventually assimilate someone who had to abandon his tribe for some reason, or a traveller who had got lost.⁵⁷ Reasonably, migrants arriving from Muslim, Arab, and/or tribally organised societies (such as the Baluchi) were more easily integrated into the local communities (Wilkinson, 1977).

The slave trade was another way through which the non-Arab population increased in the region. It was a common and profitable practice to bring slaves from East Africa, which declined mainly because the British gradually imposed treaties to ban slavery in the Western Indian Ocean during the 19th century,⁵⁸ but also because of the rise of Baluchi slave trade that “came to replace east Africa as the main source of new labor for eastern Arabian markets by 1920”

⁵⁵ For a thorough analysis of the Portuguese presence in the Gulf area, see Handhal (1997). Similarly, the Ottoman influence is described to some detail in Lorimer (1915).

⁵⁶ J.E. Peterson explains this with regards to “Omanis who went to Africa decades and in some cases centuries ago...and frequently inter-married with African women” (Peterson, 2004: 46). Similarly, tribal Arabs who travelled elsewhere must have married local women.

⁵⁷ In the Arab tribal social system there were two ways of becoming part of a tribe: by descent (*ḥamūla*) or by ‘association’/‘incorporation’ (*‘ashīra*), which is through marriage or by consideration of a tribe member that a person deserves to join the tribe (Personal interview with member of the al-Suwaidi tribe. Doha, January 2014). This system was the base for the design of today’s nationalisation policies as explained in more detail below.

⁵⁸ Also, due to the interference of Mozambique’s Portuguese colonial government. According to Heard-Bey (1982: 211; 231-2; 290), importation of slaves was officially outlawed in the ‘Trucial States’ in 1847 by an agreement with the British, although they were still bought and sold in the main markets, as they were crucial in the pearling industry. Slavery was only officially declared illegal in 1962.

(Hopper, 2011: 54-59).⁵⁹ In this regard, J.E. Peterson explains that slaves adopted the name of the family or tribe in which they served, but used to carry the word '*khādim*' (servant) to make clear their condition (e.g. Muhammad Khadim bani Fulan). That appellation was abandoned once they were freed, and they since became known plainly by the name of the tribe (e.g. Muhammad al-Fulani) (Peterson, 2004: 47). Hence, the descendants of these slaves were integrated into the Arab tribal hierarchy (but keeping their lower social status⁶⁰), and form part of the contemporary Emirati population. Finally, the vestiges from regional languages in the Arabic dialects spoken in contemporary UAE also attest to the multicultural nature of the Emirati society. The Kumzari-Shehhi dialect spoken in the Musandam Peninsula is especially illustrating since it is considered to be "a remnant of a south semitic language that predates the Arabic dialect of surrounding areas...but has characteristics of Sassanid Middle Persian" (Zacharias, 2013, May 17). Likewise, all other Arabic dialects spoken in the country do also include words from Persian, Urdu and Hindi. Accordingly, it is impossible to say nowadays who is an 'original' (*uṣūlī*) or 'pure' Arab, as some Emiratis like to assert.

Furthermore, at the turn of the 20th century, many Arab, Persian and Baluchi migrants were encouraged to move to the coast of southeast Arabia by the enhanced job opportunities emerging from "the abolition of a 5 per cent customs duty following the declaration of Dubai as a 'free port'" in 1904 (after the port of Linga in Persia fell in decline in 1902, when the Qajar Shah increased taxes imposed to merchants) (Davidson, 2008: 67-76; Elsheshtawy, 2010: 64).⁶¹ Especially during the first two decades of that century, the opportunities that the lower Gulf towns offered in trade or in the pearl industry—which was the most

⁵⁹ The desperate times in Baluchistan [drought and locust invasion in Baluchistan—a mountainous region on the Iranian plateau, located in present western Pakistan, south-eastern Iran and south-western Afghanistan— in the early 20th century devastated agriculture and led to widespread desperation and famine] coincided with much better economic times across the Gulf and Baluchi "women, children, and young men were captured and sold across the Gulf to Batina or the Trucial Coast" (Hopper, 2011: 54-59). Others, however, chose to cross the waters of the Gulf to find a job, even if it was as slaves. There are accounts that relate how some Baluchis that were freed by the British and sent back to Baluchistan did return to Arabia in search of a better life (Hopper, 2011: 54-59).

⁶⁰ For this reason, many decided (and still do) to marry women with lighter skin, in order to have less black children that could integrate better in society (Personal interview with Qatari with Emirati mother of slave-Nubian origin, March 2014).

⁶¹ In 1925, for instance, many Persian merchants settled in Dubai after the ruler offered them to stay in the city and even gave them some land in the area known as Bastakiyya, since many came from Bastak, in Iran (Elsheshtawy, 2010: 64).

profitable activity during those decades-, had an impact on the demographics of the already called 'Trucial States'.⁶² "many families moved to live permanently in one of the coastal settlements, increasing, in particular, the size and importance of Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Sharjah, Ra's al-Khaimah and the intervening coastal villages were already long-established as ports of the tribal Arabs" (Heard-Bey, 2001: 106), and population rose significantly. According to Lorimer, at the beginning of the 20th century the estimated population of the 'Trucial States' were 80,000 people, being 8,000 of them nomads (1908: 1432-36).⁶³ Although this data probably covered only the coastal towns and therefore might have missed other nomad or semi-nomad inland inhabitants, and unfortunately does not specify the ethnicities of people, other sources claim that at that time around 500 Persians and 52 Banians, and 96 Persians and 39 Banians lived in Dubai and in Abu Dhabi respectively (Abdullah, 1978: 105).

However, the 1930s were tough years for the inhabitants of the Trucial States: the intra-war period and the world economic crisis made the global (and especially the European) demand of pearls decrease, at the same time that cultured pearls begun to be produced in Japan, driving many of the merchants and divers to migrate elsewhere or become indebted (Heard-Bey, 2008: 61). European presence meant that the Gulf tradesmen lost control over the Indian Ocean, but the major decline in their mercantile activities occurred as the British became the paramount power in the region. The former, in addition to the arbitrary policies and restrictions on international commercial ties that the British imposed (which mainly benefited them and their Indian subjects), made it difficult to compete for the long-established merchants who were, moreover, "deprived of their social and political privileges" (al-Sayegh, 1998: 94). By incorporating the Trucial States into the global economic system, or rather by imposing limits to their economic system and links with other commercial partners (Kechichian, 1999: 22), the British were also the main catalyst for change in socio-economic and political patterns which begun to undergo important structural changes during these pre-oil decades. In this regard, as the

⁶² Several sheikhdoms of southeast Arabia started to be known as the Trucial States (or the Trucial Coast) after the signature of the Perpetual Maritime Truce of 1853 with the British.

⁶³ See Annex 4 UAE Population.

rulers began to receive rents from the British, they became economically independent from the merchants and therefore more authoritarian.⁶⁴

In spite of their hardship, however, some scholars state that before the establishment of the UAE Federation, local communities “allowed no major distinction between the ethnic groups which lived and traded” in coastal towns (al-Sayegh, 1998: 88). Furthermore, Beeman (2009: 150) recalls that, in the early 1960s he was “friends with many extended families, who had brothers, sisters and cousins living all over the Gulf on both sides,” and that there “were households everywhere and widespread intermarriage”. Thus, he claims this society “was vastly different than either the general non-tribal Iranian population or the other Arab populations of the Arabian Peninsula”. Finally, it was an “integrated culture” which “persist[s] until today (...) but [has been] eroded and compromised by political processes” (Beeman, 2009: 150). This might have been true in the sense that anyone was welcome to engage in business or become part of the workforce in the main ports, and that mixed marriages took place more often than in post-Federation days, but there is no doubt that a social hierarchy was already in place, in which the ruling tribes and affiliated families were at the top.⁶⁵ In fact, others recall that many of the Persians “remained socially and legally outsiders [even if] they were economically fully integrated”, being the *Khamiri*⁶⁶ the only ones with temporary residence permits in Dubai since the 1920s and with important presence in Abu Dhabi; and that Indians, whether Hindu or Muslim, were yet then more difficult to integrate (Heard-Bey, 1982: 216-245), probably because of their condition of British subjects. Nevertheless, some adopted more tribal and Arab names for their families in order to improve their position within society. Examples of this are the prominent Bin Lootah family, which Heard-Bey (1982: 212) explains is of *Banian* origin (Indian-British subjects); or the al-Sayegh family (meaning jeweller) that, Peterson explains for the case of the Omani branch of this family, migrated also from India and adopted the Arabic name of their profession (Peterson, 2004: 39).

⁶⁴ The evolution of the political structures is further explained below. (See section on State formation and Political System in this chapter).

⁶⁵ See section on the Tribal pre-British tribal setting, and the section on State formation and Political System in this chapter.

⁶⁶ Arab people (non-tribal Sunni Muslims) from the Persian town of Khamir, who resettled on the Arab littoral of the Gulf. Since the foundation of Abu Dhabi town in 1761 until early 20th century about 500 *Khamiri* settled there (Heard-Bey, 1982: 201).

With regard to religion, most of the inhabitants of this area belonged at the time of the arrival of the British to the Maliki (especially those of the southern Arab tribes, such as those belonging to the Bani Yas confederation), the Shafa'i (followed by some southern Arab tribes, such as the *Shihūh*), and the Hanbali (especially the northern Arab tribes, such as the Qawasim) schools of Sunni Islam, while a minority followed the *ibādī* creed (Heard-Bey 1982: 133), which is the case of the majority in neighbouring Oman. Likewise, some non-tribal Arabs, Persians and Baluchis followed Sunni Islam; other Persians, but also some Arabs, were Shi'a; while Indians mainly followed Hinduism. Finally, any vestiges of Judaism or Christianity (and older religions like Zoroastrianism) had already disappeared. Since the ruling tribes of the most powerful sheikhdoms ascribed to Sunni Islam, people gradually assimilated to it as a way of climbing up the hierarchical social structure, and today most Emiratis are Sunni.⁶⁷

In terms of population, this impoverishment period implied that many inhabitants had to leave in search of better lives, or simply suffered scarcity if they stayed. During those years of hardship, many migrated elsewhere in the Gulf, including the already oil producing Gulf Sheikdoms of Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar⁶⁸ in search of jobs, which were mostly lower-paid manual jobs, since people lacked any special skills (Fenelon, 1976: 64). The once growing population was reduced significantly until the discovery of oil (Heard-Bey, 1982: 26), but the numbers are unknown since there is no demographic data available for this period. Thus, between the 1930s and the 1960s the Trucial States went through adversity and isolation, which has led many to think that the people of the UAE were secluded from the world before the discovery of oil. On the contrary, southeast Arabian was connected to the world during centuries (not only as a consequence of the discovery of oil), and it was only during those three-four decades that commercial activities had to be restricted to their closer neighbours, as well as subject to the rules imposed by the colonial power.

Emirati society has, therefore, been “a ‘globalized’ community from time immemorial” (Nicolini, 2007: 84) and, even if “one must be careful about any

⁶⁷ Although there is no demographic data on religious affiliation available, nowadays approximately 85 percent belong to the Sunni branch and 15 percent are Shi'a, mostly Twelvers. See Sison (2006, April 15).

⁶⁸ Oil was discovered in Bahrain in 1932, in Kuwait in 1938, and in Qatar in 1940, so they needed workforce earlier than the UAE. At that time, Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar (to a less extent) had more developed administration and services than those of the Trucial States, who had the most underdeveloped infrastructures and political institutions of Eastern Arabia.

implication that Emiratis of today are direct descendants of the inhabitants of the region in antiquity” (Szuchman, 2012: 42),⁶⁹ it must be kept in mind that the region is today “home to an intriguing variety of religious, social, and/or ethnic minorities and communities who, in many cases, have been (...) [there] for centuries” (Peterson, 2009). The bulk of photographs taken by foreign visitors to the region in the years prior to the establishment of the Federation constitute a unique portrait of pre-oil UAE that reflects the hard years people went through and the very simple conditions in which they were living.⁷⁰ Furthermore, the sailing boats, agricultural systems, and architectural techniques that were used, and even the clothes and hair arrangements people displayed, show similarities with other regional communities and, therefore, are further evidence of the influences that the local population had received from several cultures throughout history (see photographs in Annex 5).

3. UAE State Formation and Political System

As the British arrived to the Gulf during the mid-eighteenth century, the Al Qasimi (plural Qawasim)⁷¹ family ruled over most of the area –even over some coastal settlements in the Persian shore of the Gulf– and controlled very much maritime trade. Thus, they became the main target of the British who fought them until their defeat and made them (and the rulers of neighbouring sheikhdoms)⁷² sign the 1820 ‘General Treaty of Peace’. This treaty aimed at protecting British subjects in their maritime trade routes throughout the Indian Ocean from the alleged raiding by Arabs of the lower Gulf, something that has been portrayed in British official sources as ‘piracy’, but is widely interpreted

⁶⁹ The long history of “population movements within Arabia and between Arabia, East Africa, and South Asia precludes drawing direct links between modern Emiratis and the peoples of ancient southeast Arabia” (Szuchman, 2012: 42).

⁷⁰ Examples of these photographic testimonies are Major Sir Wilfred Patrick Thesiger’s, who between 1945 and 1949 explored the southern of the Arabian Peninsula and took many photographs (his vast collection of 23,000 negatives belongs today to the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford). His pictures attempt to capture the life of the *badu* in his work “*Arabian Sands*” ([1959] 1991, London, Penguin Books). Also Ronald Codrai’s (who arrived to the UAE in 1949, after taking a job with Petroleum Concessions Limited). His pictures are a rare and unique visual documentation of the pre-oil Trucial States, collected in several books, like “*Faces of the Emirates. An Arabian album: a collection of mid-20th century photographs*” (2001, Abu Dhabi, Motivate Publications), or “*The Seven Shaikhdoms: Life in the Trucial States Before the Federation of the United Arab Emirates*” (1990, London, Stacey International). Likewise Gertrude Dyck’s, a Canadian nurse who lived and worked in the oasis city of al-Ain from 1962 to 2005, and whose pictures strongly complement her comprehensive description of the city during the 1960s-70s in her book “*The oasis. Al Ain memoirs of ‘Doctora Latifa’*” ([1995] 2010, Abu Dhabi, Motivate Publications). See photographs in Annex 5.

⁷¹ The Qawasim are the current ruling families of Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah.

⁷² These included the sheikhs of Ajman, Umm al-Qawain, Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Bahrain.

today as pure commercial rivalry by historians.⁷³ This treaty was followed by the signature of several others, being the most important one the 'Perpetual Maritime Truce' of 1853,⁷⁴ by which the rulers compromised to stop all hostilities at sea, and the 'Exclusive Agreements' of 1892, by which they ceded control over their external affairs to the British Government (Onley, 2004: 31-32), thus becoming de facto protectorates (Davidson, 2011: 7).

At first instance, British authorities did not interfere much in Gulf internal affairs. However, as the oilfields were discovered elsewhere in the Gulf -and suspicion grew that plenty were to be found in the region-, British interest shifted towards higher domestic political control and internal stability in the lower Gulf sheikhdoms. In this regard, exploration and commercialization agreements were signed with Great Britain during the first half of the twentieth century (and before oil was discovered in the Trucial States in October 1958),⁷⁵ by which the rulers guaranteed not to grant any concession except to companies appointed by the British Government (Zahlan, 1998: 17). It was not until then, and probably not coincidentally, that the British started promoting the idea of defining borders and of introducing new forms of government, namely a federal political system for the Gulf sheikhdoms. In addition, the growing threat of the expansionist Saudi-Wahhabi movement and the Iranian claims over some of the island under their control (as well as the interest of other foreign powers in the region), also made the sheikhs become more aware of the importance of establishing alliances under "some form of state organized on a territorial basis rather than by a fluctuating tribal organization" (Fenelon, 1976: 21).

Moreover, oil had attracted other foreign powers, and the United States started to threaten Great Britain's hegemony. The disputes for oil concession between these two powers was directly related to the boundaries dispute with Saudi Arabia and Oman over Buraymi in 1952, which further highlighted the need for promoting some kind of regional unity in order to guarantee security and the smooth flow of oil (Zahlan, 1978: 193), and in 1951 London Foreign Office

⁷³ Some of the most relevant historical accounts for this period are: Lorimer (1915) and Kelly (1980), who present a positive view over the British presence; while the works by Taryam (1987), al-Qasimi (1988) and al-Naqeeb (1990) emphasize the negative aspects of this relationship. In a middle position, Zahlan (1998) and Onley (2007), provide a more balanced view of this historical period. For a discussion of the British imperial presence in the UAE see Hawley (1970), Fenelon (1976), Heard-Bey (1982), Zahlan (1978) and Khalifa (1979).

⁷⁴ It was since then that they began to be known as the 'Trucial States'.

⁷⁵ According to Davidson (2011: 50) oil was first discovered in 1958 at Umm Shaif, Abu Dhabi; while Heard-Bey (2008: 65) dates it in 1960 in Abu Dhabi (and in 1967 in Dubai).

created the defence force of the Trucial Oman Levies (later known as Trucial Oman Scouts). The same year, the Trucial States Council was established in which the sheikhs of the seven emirates of today's UAE were represented: Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Dubai, Fujairah, Ras al-Khaimah, Sharjah and Umm al-Qawain. Although it was merely a consultative body and had no executive powers or formal constitution, it was the first formal forum for debate among the rulers and therefore meaningful for the establishment of the federation.

Regarding the local rulers, there was a shift in the balance of power to the more inland oriented Bani Yas tribal confederation, as an outcome of the Qawasim defeat and the consequent decline of its maritime activities. In this regard, a comparison of the distribution of inhabitants among emirates in 1908 and 1968 reflects the decline of Ras al-Khaimah and Sharjah, Qawasim centres of power, in favour of Abu Dhabi and Dubai, Bani Yas enclaves (see Table 6). By then, the Bani Yas (whose paramount ruler was from the Al Nahyan family of Liwa; and from which both the Abu Dhabi and Dubai ruling families descend) had managed to gain the loyalty of the majority of tribes of the area and became the major tribal confederation, controlling around "85% of the territories of the Trucial States" (Rugh, 2007: 11) during the year prior to independence. Moreover, "the combined effect of the relationship with Britain and the opening of the region by the oil companies had a powerful local impact on the role of central authority. (...) The treaty system strengthened [the sheikh's] position and assured the continuity of his influence. With time, it became a guarantee. Most important, it contributed to the institutionalization of his position" (Zahlan, 1998: 26-27).

Table 6: 1908-1968 Population distribution among Emirates⁷⁶

	Abu Dhabi	Dubai	Sharjah	RAK	Fujairah	Ajman	UAQ	Other
1908	11,000	10,000	18,750	26,700	-	750	5,000	8,000 Nomads
	14%	13%	23%	33%	-	1%	6%	-
1968	46,375	58,971	31,668	24,387	9,735	4,246	3,744	1,100 Trucial Scouts
	26%	33%	18%	14%	5%	2%	2%	-

⁷⁶ Several sources. See Annex 4 UAE Population.

As previously stated, during the pre-British period sheikhs only succeeded in maintaining political authority by achieving consensus with his ruled, but this changed radically when the British entered the equation. By supporting economically and militarily the sheikhs who happened to be in power at the time when the agreements were signed, they fixed their families in power until today.⁷⁷ The relationship established between the two parties was therefore in many ways symbiotic: the rulers gained their legitimacy from the British who, in return, protected them against any external or in fact internal threat (dissent emerged several times during the protectorate and was put down with British support, as explained in Chapter 3). This also implied that the rulers gradually became economically less dependent on, and politically more independent from the merchants, as they begun to receive rents from the British (first for the establishment of communication lines and airports and, later, for the exploitation of oil),⁷⁸ initiating the first stage of the Gulf States rentier economy, as the rulers received most of their income from external rents rather than from taxes. Moreover, the British had frozen to a large extent the existing tribal confederations, for new tribes were more unlikely to form (or at least they lost that characteristic of being in constant transformation). This is not to say, however, that the rulers had no longer to take into account the interests of all groups integrating society but that, by gaining control over the revenues of the state, power became more centralised and autocratic. Rulers would still consult (and still do to some extent) with the sheikhs of the most relevant tribes and notable merchants, but all these have since been in less powerful positions.

Thus, by the end of the 1960s the Trucial rulers had consolidated control over their territories, product of that mix of local alliance building and the legitimacy bestowed to them by the British. Yet, the high dependence they had developed upon Great Britain became evident when it was announced in 1968 that they would leave the region by 1971, and the rulers expressed their reluctance to lose their protection and even offered to subsidize the maintenance of British

⁷⁷ The ruling families of the UAE are: the Al Nahyan in Abu Dhabi; the Al Maktoum in Dubai; the Al Qasimi in Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah; Al Nu'aimi in Ajman; Al Mu'alla in Umm al-Qawain; and Al Sharqi in Fujairah.

⁷⁸ Rentier State Theory (RST) says that in rentier states there is a low probability that movements for social or political change emerge and, when they do, they are easily put down (Mahdavy, 1970; Niblock, 1980; Beblawi & Luciani, 1987; al-Naqeeb, 1990; Crystal, 1990; Gause, 1994; Ayubi, 1995; Herb, 1999; Ross, 2001; Hertog, 2010a & 2010b; Gray, 2011). This is explained in more detail in the Theoretical Framework section (Chapter 1).

troops in the lower Gulf (Davidson, 2005: 45; Kéchichian, 2008: 283). This attitude is by large and far an exception in the Arab world colonial experience, and points to the special circumstances of these small sheikhdoms, as to the peculiar relation their rulers had established (and still have) with the British and other foreign powers (especially the US) that filled the relative vacuum left thereafter. It is noteworthy that this dependency did not only have to do with regional security, but also with the fact that during this phase of reconnection with the world (and with new worlds) the British were acting as the link between this emerging principalities and the world markets, for oil production was “part of a larger process of integration (...) into the global capitalist economy” (Davis, 1991: 114; also Luciani, 2006; Hanieh, 2011; Gray, 2011). Reasonably, the need to decide under which framework they would become an independent state became then more urgent. The process did not take place without disagreement among the rulers (especially while Bahrain and Qatar were potential members), including on the method of voting in the Supreme Council, representation of the Union Council in the Constitution, and the location of the capital (Heard-Bey, 1996: 357). The main promoter of the Federation, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan (ruling Sheikh of Abu Dhabi since 1966) recognised years later that “his fellow rulers were exceptionally astute” and that “negotiations that led to the creation of the UAE were taxing, both politically and financially” (Kéchichian, 2008: 282, 340).

Abu Dhabi's contribution to the budget of the Trucial States Council increased every year, becoming the largest contributor by 1968 (Abed, 2001: 127) and, since the oil fields in the other sheikhdoms were not very significant (or inexistent), they did not count on the huge wealth Abu Dhabi (and Dubai in second instance) started to accrue. This indeed, situated Abu Dhabi in a privileged position in the negotiations towards the creation of the state. Moreover, there is shared scholarly opinion that the role of Sheikh Zayed was determinant in the establishment of the United Arab Emirates.⁷⁹ He had already gained people's respect by showing his intention to invest in development (even before oil) while he was representative of the ruler in al-Ain (Kéchichian, 2008: 289), was able to solve long standing conflicts with the ruling family of Dubai, and was smart enough “to extend his influence to potential rivals by sharing his

⁷⁹ Further analysis on this will be found in the section on UAE Statecraft in this chapter.

wealth, assigning them positions of power, and arranging marriages to encourage closer relations with them” (Rugh, 2007: 219), ultimately being able to unite the seven Trucial States under the federal state of the United Arab Emirates.⁸⁰

The political independence that the rulers had acquired by means of British support and oil rents determined the supremacy that Abu Dhabi and Dubai—which had the largest oil reserves—gained over the other sheikhdoms. This was reflected in the ‘Provisional Constitution’ of 1971,⁸¹ and tribal political structures were to a large extent “superseded by territory and hierarchical authority” (Tapper, 1990: 50). Although the text establishes a political structure at federal and emirate levels, in which the Emirs⁸² are sovereign within their emirates—and even if much of the decision-making process depends on the relationship between both these levels of authority (Heard-Bey, 2005: 358)-, the tendency has been toward centralisation of power. Actually, as explained in the following section, the political system adopted already pointed in this direction since representation of the emirates in the federal institutions is established hierarchically with Abu Dhabi at the top, followed by Dubai, Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah, and Fujairah, Ajman and Umm al-Qawain.

The political system

The Federal Supreme Council (FSC) is the highest executive and legislative authority of the federation. This body is comprised of the seven emirate rulers and is responsible for establishing federal policies and sanctioning legislation. There is no real separation of powers and the rulers of each emirate take all decisions in the last instance, with the rulers of Abu Dhabi and Dubai having veto power on FSC decisions as expressed in article 49: “The decisions of the Supreme Council on substantive matters are taken by majority of five of its

⁸⁰ Bahrain, Qatar and Ras al-Khaimah decided to go their own way, but the latter finally decided to join the federation two months later it was established. For details on this events see Davidson (2005), Heard-Bey (1982), Khalifa (1979), and Zahlan (1978).

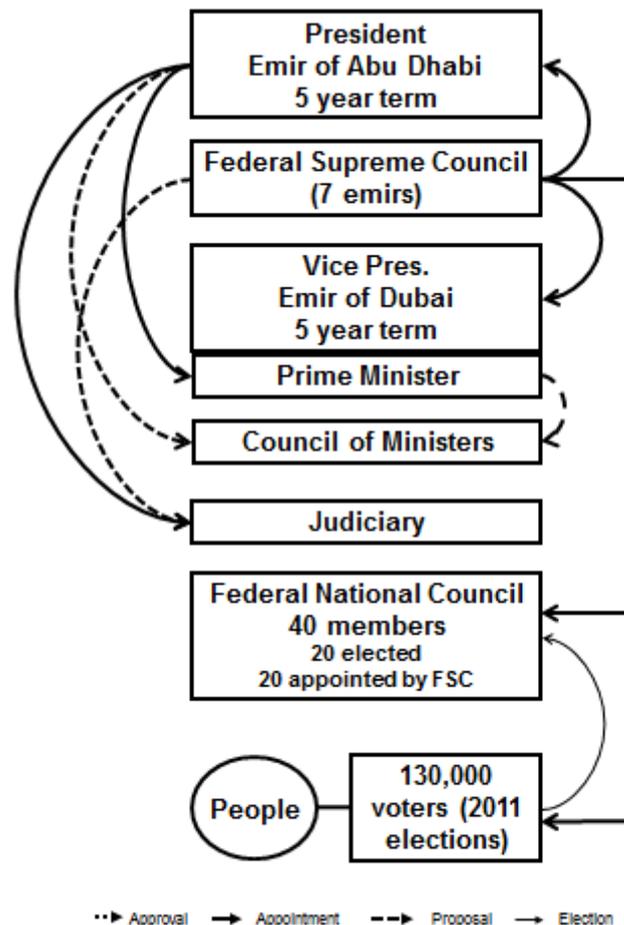
⁸¹ The ‘Provisional Constitution of the United Arab Emirates’ was drafted in 1971 and came into effect on December 2nd, the day of the official establishment of the UAE. The draft was amended in 1972, when Ras al-Khaimah joined the federation, and in 1976 to unify the UAE armed forces and to extend the transitional period of the provisional constitution for five years, which happened also in 1981, 1986 and 1991, until it was made permanent in May 1996. Article 121 was replaced in 2004 to establish the federation as the sole in charge of enacting laws on several matters. The last amendment was in 2009 (see Chapter 3 for details). The constitution is available in English at: <http://www.almajles.gov.ae:85/Uploads/Files/2011/06/20/15206.pdf>

⁸² The title of *Shaykh* was eventually changed by *Hākīm* (ruler) and, finally by *Amīr*/Emir (prince). Nonetheless, the rulers and members of the ruling families are still referred to as sheikhs.

members provided that Abu Dhabi and Dubai Emirates must be among the five members. The minority shall abide by the opinion of the majority.” This is related to the abovementioned shift in the balance of power that took place from the Qawasim to the Bani Yas, as well as to the fact that Abu Dhabi, followed by Dubai, had the largest oil reserves.

The President is the head of state. He is elected by the FSC for a five-year term and appoints the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, and the Council of Ministers. A vice president is also elected by the FSC who “shall exercise all the powers of the president in the event of his absence for any reason” (Article 51). Although is not formally established in the article, the president has been always the ruler of Abu Dhabi, confirming the uncontested hierarchical supremacy of this emirate. The first president of the UAE was Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, who was succeeded by his son Khalifa bin Zayed in 2004 (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Federal political system of the UAE (as to 2014)



Another element that attests to the increasing power of Abu Dhabi in the federal structure was the definition of the capital. According to Article 9 of the constitution Abu Dhabi was to be the 'provisional capital' of the UAE, with the project of establishing the future capital in a newly constructed city between Abu Dhabi and Dubai territories, which would be named *Karama*. However, despite the criticism of Dubai and Ras al-Khaimah, that idea was abandoned as Abu Dhabi developed its infrastructures rapidly while functioning as the *de facto* capital and no new city was constructed. When in 1996 the Constitution was amended to become permanent, Abu Dhabi was ratified as the permanent capital of the federation (Abed, 2001: 131). Initially, the Prime Minister and Vice President positions were held by the heir apparent of Dubai, Sheikh Maktoum bin Rashid Al Maktoum. Only in 1979, after a confrontation over the creation of a federal defence force was brought to an end, the Emir of Dubai, Sheikh Rashid bin Said Al Maktoum, accepted to become the federation's prime minister and vice-president as an expression of Dubai's commitment to the UAE project.⁸³

The next institution on the power scale is the *Council of Ministers*, which is appointed by the President and headed by the Prime Minister. It "shall consist of the Prime Minister, his Deputy and a number of Ministers" (Article 55) and its members "shall be chosen from among citizens of the Union known for their competence and experience" (Article 56). It drafts decrees and laws but cannot approve them. The composition of the cabinets since 1971 also reflects the power struggle in the federal structure and the relative increment of Abu Dhabi's quota of power: the first formation of 1971 included only one; the 1990 and 1997 four; and the 2004, 2006 and 2008 seven members of the Al Nahyan ruling family of Abu Dhabi.⁸⁴

⁸³ In 1978 an alliance was formed by Dubai, Ras Al-Khaimah and Umm al-Qawain, who temporarily announced their secession from the federation, which opposed Sheikh Zayed's unilateral decision of merging of the Abu Dhabi Defence Force into the newly created Union Defence Force (and the appointment of Sheikh Sultan bin Zayed Al Nahyan as its commander-in-chief). To preserve unity, Abu Dhabi postponed any further unification of the national armed forces (Davidson, 2009a: 63). The confrontation ended with the mediation of the Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs who made possible an agreement by which Sheikh Zayed had to temporarily postpone any further federal integration policies and Sheikh Rashid accepted to become the federation's prime minister and vice-president (Davidson, 2009: 64; Peck, 2001: 154).

⁸⁴ See Annex 6 Main ministries by tribe.

The Federal National Council (FNC) is a unicameral advisory and consultative body composed of forty members, which reviews legislation and proposes amendments but cannot enact or revise legislation and does not have veto power. It can make policy recommendations to the Cabinet, has the power to question any minister regarding ministry performance, and discusses the annual budget. Resembling the Federal Supreme Council and Council of Ministers in structure, the composition of the FNC established by the Constitution favours the emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai, with eight representatives each, while Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah are represented by six each, and Fujairah, Ajman and Umm al-Qawain by only four each.

Despite the fact that the constitution mentions in its preamble that the UAE government is going “towards a full-fledged representative democratic regime,” none of the amendments has introduced a reference to the process of popular election of the representatives of FNC (not even the 2009 amendment, after the first elections took place in 2006). Conversely, Article 69 establishes that every emirate “is free to determine the method of selection of its representatives in the FNC”, providing no constitutional justification for a permanent elective body of representatives. Following that article, the rulers of each emirate appointed the forty seats until 2006, when partial elections were introduced as the mechanism to choose half of the FNC seats by a selected portion of the population. The period of term in office was two years until Article 72 of the Constitution was amended in December 2009 to extend it to four years. A second election took place in 2011.⁸⁵

The constitution provides for a formally independent federal judiciary, as the text goes “justice is the basis of rule. In performing their duties, judges shall be independent and shall not be subject to any authority but the law and their own conscience” (Article 94). However, in practice “judicial decisions are subject to review by the government. The Ministry of Justice is directly involved in almost all aspects of court administration” (CEIP & FRIDE, n. d.). Moreover, the fact that the Federal Supreme Court—which consists of a president and a number of judges not exceeding five in all—, is “appointed by decree issued by the President after approval by the Supreme Council” (Article 96), demonstrates the absolute dependence of the judicial power on the will of the seven emirs.

⁸⁵ A detailed analysis and significance of the electoral processes can be found in Chapter 3.

Primary Tribunals organisation, formation, and chambers are regulated through by-laws (Article 103).

At the local level, the highest institutions are the courts of the Emirs and of the heirs apparent. Abu Dhabi, due to the size of its territory also has ruler's representatives and courts in the eastern and western regions. In addition, Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah have executive councils; and Abu Dhabi and Sharjah have consultative councils similar to the FNC (Davidson, 2011: 13), but members are appointed rather than elected. According to the constitution, each ruler within his emirate was preserved and gave him "the power to block the local implementation of any federal law or decision considered to be unacceptable, or incompatible with his own interests" (Abed, 2001: 142) but, as this brief description of the UAE political system shows, the UAE power is largely centralised in the hands of the President of the federation (until today the Emir of Abu Dhabi) and, to less extent, in the hands of the Vice-President and the Prime Minister (positions controlled by Dubai). Moreover, the dependence that the rest of the Emirates have on Abu Dhabi's wealth has contributed to enhance the power of the presidency and of the Al Nahyan family in general.

Dubai has historically been politically more autonomous since the wealth achieved through the diversification of its economy allowed its leadership to act more independently, or even contradict Abu Dhabi's mandates (also due to the historical rivalry between these two).⁸⁶ However, this situation changed after Dubai's economy was hit by the global financial crisis in 2008 and had to rely on Abu Dhabi's financial support. In return, Dubai had to give up political power, contributing to further centralisation of power. Remarkably, this was reflected and made clear to the population through the naming of landmark buildings and main roads in Dubai after sheikhs of Abu Dhabi: the tallest tower in the world (until today), which was going to be 'Burj Dubai' was finally named 'Burj Khalifa' (after the Emir of Abu Dhabi, president of the UAE); and the main highway

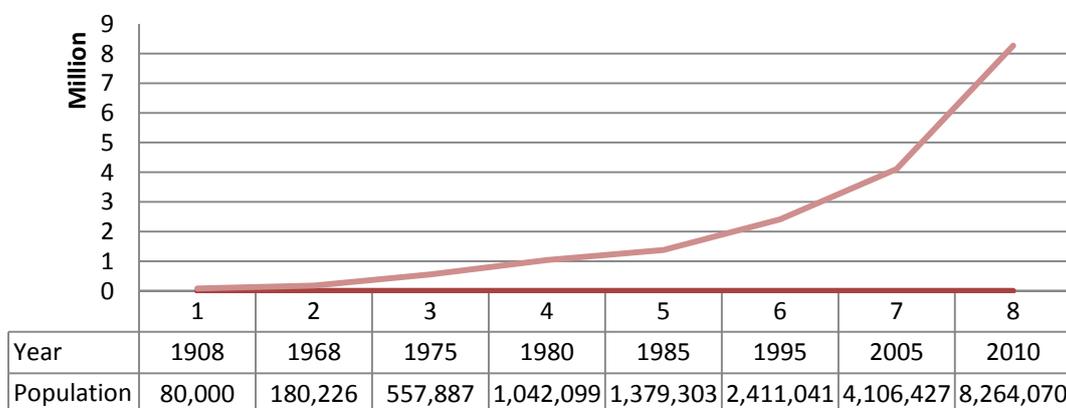
⁸⁶ The historical rivalry between the ruling families of Dubai and Abu Dhabi dates back to 1833 when, after a series of disagreements over the chieftaincy of the Bani Yas tribal confederation, and a violent suppression of the perpetrators of a coup attempt against the paramount ruler (an Al Nahyan of the al-Bu Falah), several tribes under the leadership of Maktoum bin Butti al-Falasi (of the al-Bu Falasah clan) left Abu Dhabi and settled in Dubai. In 1835, the newly established sheikhs, the Al Maktoum, were invited to sign the new Perpetual Maritime Truce by the British, hence recognising their independence from Abu Dhabi. After several attempts of reabsorbing the seceded tribes under their rule, the Al Nahyan had to accept their counterparts and eventually regained them as allies, even marrying women from the Al Maktoum family and thus established kinship ties (Davidson, 2009a: 13-15).

connecting all the Emirates, and which used to be called ‘Emirates Road’ was changed in 2013 to ‘Sheikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Road’ (Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and deputy supreme commander of the UAE Armed Forces). As an informant put it: “After Sheikh Zayed passed away, power became more centralised and this has been more noticeable after the financial crisis. Dubai has been brought to its knees and Abu Dhabi is the real decision maker.”⁸⁷

4. UAE Statecraft: Citizenship and National Identity

The dramatic demographic growth, resulting from the large numbers of workers that started to migrate to the UAE to work in the oil industry, and in the enormous infrastructure and construction projects, changed very rapidly the composition of society to the point that Emirati nationals have become a tiny minority within today’s population. From a total of 80,000 inhabitants at the beginning of the 19th century (Lorimer, 1908: 1432-36), population has escalated to four million in 2005 and to around eight million in 2010, of which only 20 and 11 per cent respectively were Emirati citizens (see Figure 3 and Annex 4). These unique demographic figures probably make the UAE an unprecedented case in history (along only with the state of Qatar). The rapid and constant population growth has contributed to the shaping of a very heterogeneous social stratification, which is organised to a large extent along ethnic and nationality lines, and to the proliferation of social problems and identity issues among the different communities that co-exist in this country.

Figure 3: UAE Population growth 1908-2010⁸⁸



⁸⁷ Personal interview with Emirati intellectual. Dubai (March 2012).

⁸⁸ Several sources. See Annex 4 UAE Population.

Certainly, the design of nationality laws is the 'cornerstone' of Gulf social stratification (Longva, 2005: 119-120), as it is directly related to the construction of national identity and the legitimatisation of the rulers. Following the Kuwaiti model,⁸⁹ the UAE initially granted nationality based on the relation people had to the territory (regardless of their ethnicity) or to its rulers (i.e. tribal affiliation). This was done according to the Federal Law Concerning Nationality and Passports, which established that nationality could be obtained by law (*bi-l-qānūn*) to anyone who had been a usual resident of one of the emirates before 1925; by dependence (*bi-l-tab'iyya*) to wives of Emiratis, and their children; or by naturalisation (*bi-l-tajannas*) to Omanis, Qataris and Bahrainis residing more than three years in the UAE, other Arabs living there for more than ten years (five after the date of issue of the law), and others that had resided in one of the Emirates since 1940 or for more than 30 years (20 of them at least after the date of issue of the law) or have rendered "marvellous deeds for the country...regardless of the period of residence" (UAE Nationality Law).

According to Colonel Ali Ghanim al-Mirri, Advisor for Naturalisation Affairs to the Director of the General Department of Residency and Foreigners Affairs, "[c]ommittees with members from reliable families with good reputation and well-known persons in each and every nook and corner of the country were formed. The members of those panels who knew every person in their respective regions were authorised to approve or reject the applications for passports those days" (al-Zarooni, 2013, 23 August). Apparently, it was not difficult to obtain the nationality during the first years of the federation, but in this too the inland-coastal factor seems to have played an important role during the first years of the federation. Sheikh Rashid of Dubai is supposed to have been in favour of recognising as citizens the inhabitants of Dubai no matter their origins, while Sheikh Zayed of Abu Dhabi was arguably more concerned with the genealogy of Arab tribes (Dresch, 2005: 141; McCoy, 2008: 78).

Again, population data give us a hint of how social structure was in the years prior to the federation. The first census conducted in the country shows that the most populated town in 1968 was Dubai, followed by Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Ras al-Khaimah, Fujairah, Ajman and Umm al-Qawain (being the total population of

⁸⁹ The Nationality Law of Kuwait was amended more than seven times in 30 years, "each time for the purpose of further restricting access to membership" (Longva, 2005: 121).

the region 180,226 people); and that only 70,000 people belonged to the Arab tribal population,⁹⁰ reflecting the importance that the non-tribal element had in pre-federation times (almost 60%). Moreover, Dubai already had the smallest percentage of tribal population, while the emirate with more tribal population was Ras al-Khaimah. This might explain their reluctance of Ras al-Khaimah to accept the new federal setting in first instance, for in the tribal setting the sheikh that enjoyed allegiance from more people would have most likely become the paramount ruler of a confederation of tribes; whereas at that moment Abu Dhabi and Dubai (followed by Sharjah) were imposing themselves above the rest of the emirates because they had found more oil fields and therefore had more British support and prospective wealth revenues. The emirate with the second largest tribal population was Abu Dhabi, followed by Sharjah, Fujairah, Dubai, Umm al-Qawain, and Ajman, reflecting that physical distribution of people was adapting to the new oil based economy and moving away from its previous *badu-hadhar* and fishing-merchant character (see Table 7).

Table 7: 1968 UAE Tribal – Non-tribal population⁹¹

Emirate	Population	Tribal	% of tribal
RAK	24,387	17,941	74%
Abu Dhabi	46,375	17,750	38%
Sharjah	31,668	12,769	40%
Fujairah	9,735	9,138	94%
Dubai	58,971	7,864	13%
UAQ	3,744	3,209	86%
Ajman	4,246	1,611	38%
Total	180,226	70,282	39%

It could be argued that many of the non-tribal people included in the 1968 census could have been recent migrants and therefore would not apply for nationality but, it seems likely that the census had probably only counted the

⁹⁰ The 1968 census listed as 'tribal' the people belonging to the following clans, tribes or confederations, which integrated both settled, nomad and semi-nomad people: Bani Yas, al-Sharqiyyin, Shihuh-Habus, al-'Ali, al-Qawasim, al-Manasir, Za'ab, al-Dhawahir, Mazari', al-Bu Shamis, Bani Kitab, al-Nu'aim, al-Naqbiyyin, and al-'Awamir. There is an additional "other" category, under which 10,695 people were counted, but it does not specify their affiliation (Kalifa, 1979: 97). Since slavery had already been abolished, we can assume that this numbers included the former slaves and its descendants.

⁹¹ Several sources. See Annex 4 UAE Population.

people who were residing there permanently, excluding the temporary residents who were there in commercial missions. Moreover, since the population was small at the time when the federation was formed, both tribal and non-tribal, settled and nomad elements of society were recognised as citizens, including families of Persian origin (*'Ajami*), Arabs who had forgotten their tribal genealogy (or had never had one, but claimed to have had it) while living in the Persian coast of the Gulf but claimed links to Arabia (*Hawla*), Baluchis and Africans who had worked mainly as slaves (Peterson, 1977 and 2004; Hopper, 2011) as well as some Indians who had become assimilated to the local Arab society. Even people who had never lived in the Trucial States (some already carrying other passports) were invited to join in. In Abu Dhabi, for instance, these were mainly from related (and not so related too) tribes of Najdi, Omani or Yemeni origin (Dresch, 2005: 142), who switched their allegiance to the Al Nahyan rulers, and to the UAE more generally. On the other hand, however, some problems emerged with the new law: The seven sheikhdoms used to grant passports to their citizens during the pre-unification period, even if they had arrived after 1925, but with the new nationality law the old passports became invalid and many who had a pre-Federation passport were not granted the Emirati nationality (Shahwari & Almadani, 2011: 27). Moreover, some settled inhabitants who carried other regional passports did not bother to apply for nationality even though they were long-term residents, for they ignored the importance of doing it at that time and the consequences it would bring later to their families.⁹² It is thought that others (mainly *badu*) who did not have any passport at all did not apply either, probably because they were not aware of what was happening. In fact, “oral accounts point to a haphazard registration process, with a clear disparity between urban and nomadic” inhabitants, with the latter failing “to register for a number of reasons: illiteracy, unfamiliarity with the idea of documented citizenship, or lack of identifying paperwork” (Cella, 2014, February). The cases turned to be a huge problem when the law was amended in 1975 and it became more difficult to obtain the nationality. In fact, this is the origin of the *bidūn jinsiyya* or just bidun (*'without nationality'* in Arabic), who are residents of the UAE (and other Gulf states) who do not have any

⁹² Personal interview with a long-term resident family of Emirati mother (of Iranian origin) and Iranian father who did not apply early, and as a consequence any of their children had access to nationality (al-Ain, March 2012).

nationality up until today, and the children born in the UAE to a stateless father.⁹³ Of course, there is always two sides to a story and, in this case, there are also cases of people who moved to the UAE after 1971 and claimed to have lived there since earlier times in order to be granted the nationality (mainly Iraqis that migrated after the 1990 Gulf War), making it more difficult for those that had actually lived there since pre-federation days but applied for nationality later.⁹⁴

The 1975 amended Nationality Law specifies that a citizen is by law “an Arab who was residing in a member Emirate in 1925 or before and who continued to reside therein up to the effective date of this law”; and adds that nationality could also be granted to “[m]embers of the Arabian tribes who have immigrated from neighbouring countries to the UAE and have been continuously and residing in the UAE for more than three years immediately before submission of application for citizenship” (UAE Nationality Law), giving much importance to the Arab tribal element and, one could argue, even putting in doubt the citizenship of the many non-Arabs who were recognised in 1971. As Paul Dresch puts it, “the Abu Dhabi view...was winning” (2005: 144) and an Arabizing campaign was initiated which intended to erase from the historical memory of citizens any other heritage. This further paved the way for the emergence of profound identity conflicts within Emirati society, both between and among the national and non-national populations.

Table 8: UAE National/Non-national population⁹⁵

Year	Population	Nationals	% of Nationals
1908	80,000	*	*
1968	180,226	*	*
1975	557,887	201,544	36%
1980	1,042,099	290,544	28%
1985	1,379,303	396,114	29%
1995	2,411,041	587,330	24%
2005	4,106,427	825,495	20%
2010	8,264,070	947,997	11%

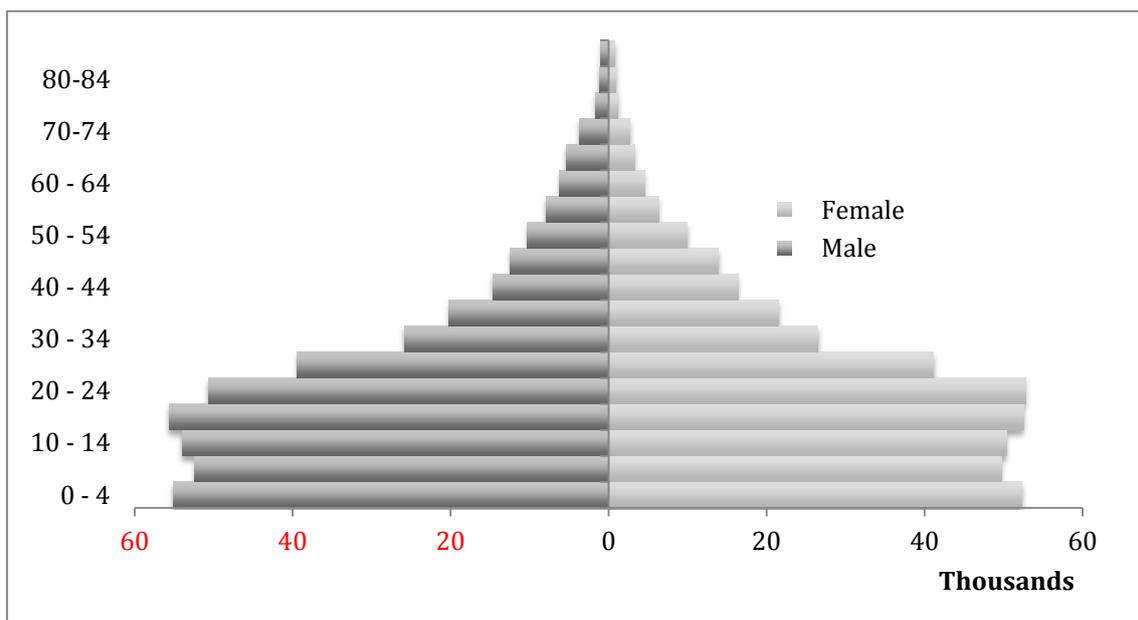
⁹³ The situation of the bidun is further explained in the Social Stratification section of this chapter.

⁹⁴ Personal interviews with government officials and university professors. Several places and dates (UAE, 2011-2014).

⁹⁵ Several sources. See Annex 4. Where (*) appears, no data was available.

Passports, moreover, used to specify whether you were a citizen by law (who had obtained it by *jus sanguinis*)⁹⁶ or by naturalisation, effectively dividing society in two classes of nationals or *muwaṭīn*: the ‘native’ (*‘Ayal al-Balad*, literally children of the country) and the ‘naturalized’ (*mujannasun*), who are second category nationals and do not enjoy the same rights and privileges as the first, thus contributing to social division and discrimination (for example, they are normally not employed in sensitive government departments or high positions). To further close the ‘national club’ a marriage fund that was established in 1992 aimed at avoiding mixed marriages and grants generous subsidies to national couples, which resulted in an increase of consanguineous marriages from 39 per cent to 50.5 per cent in one generation (al-Gazali et al., 1997). These policies have to do with the feeling of fear among Emiratis that the majority foreign population is eroding Emirati customs to a worrying level and that marriage outside the national population would only worsen this situation.

Figure 4: National population pyramid (2005)⁹⁷



In this regard, a debate emerged around the 2005 census data that revealed a huge national – non-national population imbalance, and which raised “serious issues regarding national identity, citizenship, residency, multiculturalism, sustainability and, ultimately, the question as to who [would] be in the driving seat of this rapidly globalising society?” (Abdulla, 2007). Khalifa Rashid al-

⁹⁶ *Jus sanguinis* is the legal principle of nationality law by which nationality is not determined by place of birth, but by having blood relationship with a national.

⁹⁷ Source: 2005 National Census, UAE National Bureau of Statistics.

Sha'ali, an Emirati writer who specialises in legal affairs, argued that “the number of naturalised people, who have been granted citizenship, should not exceed the number of native citizens, because this, if it happens, will pose a strategic threat to the nation's identity and homogeneity” (al-Sha’ali, 2012, March 6). In a more critical position, Mohammed al-Roken, lawyer from Dubai who was among the 2013 detainees sentenced to jail for alleged association with the Muslim Brotherhood,⁹⁸ expressed in 2007 his desire to embolden citizens to raise their voices against “an authoritarian government [that] caters to expatriates” (Shadid, 2007, May). In fact, Table 8 shows that the population imbalance has steadily grown from 36 percent in 1975 to 11 percent of nationals in 2010, while figures 4 and 5 reflect the different age and gender structures of the total and national populations.

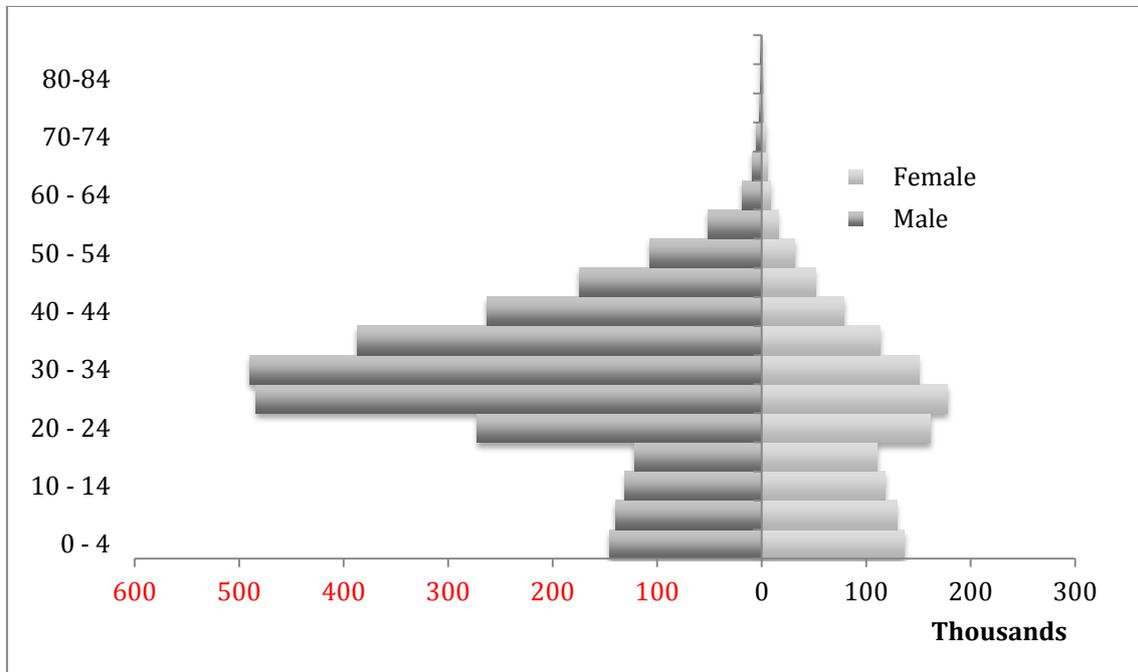
Nonetheless, research on acculturation demonstrates “that acquired cultural knowledge does not actually replace existing knowledge structures” and that “the experience of many bicultural and multicultural individuals around the world attests that it is possible to internalize more than one body of cultural knowledge” (al-Dabbagh & Gargani 2011: 13). In this regard, the Emirati commentator Sultan Sooud Al-Qassemi reminds that many of the 19th and 20th century immigrants “assimilated and enriched UAE society having become citizens of the newly created state,” and that “mixed marriages and a more globalised migration ensued, further diversifying the population” (Al-Qassemi, 2013, December 1), thus pointing out to the fact that naturalisation of expatriates can have positive outcomes.⁹⁹ In line with this, Jamal al-Suweidi (senior advisor to the Abu Dhabi crown prince) thinks that “the demographic fight is ‘lost’ and that ‘coexistence’ is needed” (Partrick, 2009: 30), while al-Gergawi advocates for “offering a special permanent residency status to those long-term residents sharing the cultural values and (official) language of the country” (Partrick, 2009: 30). Interestingly, the ethnic backgrounds and tribal ascription of the Emiratis quoted above are very different: at least one is of Arab non-tribal origin; one descends from one of the tribal ruling families; one from a ‘noble’ Arab tribe; and one is of Persian descent. Their opinions therefore represent important groups of society, and show that the “fluidity of identity [between both coasts of the Gulf] was probably always present” and that

⁹⁸ See section on the Post-Arab spring landscape in Chapter 3.

⁹⁹ See also: Al-Qassemi (2013, September 22).

“understanding that this is the nature of the ordinary people who live in the region helps explain why the battle to control and shape their identities can be so fierce” (Beeman, 2009: 156-157).

Figure 5: Total population pyramid (2005)¹⁰⁰



In this regard, Davis and Gavrielides have discussed “the relationship among state formation, historical memory, and popular culture” (1991: xiv) and explained how in the Gulf, as in other countries of the Middle East and around the world, the rulers have made huge efforts to reinterpret history “in ways intended to weaken active or potential opposition to its rule” (1991: xvi). These authors make a very wise distinction between the notions of ‘state formation’ and ‘state-craft’, which they define as “the process or mechanisms whereby a state enhances its power and authority” or “the skills whereby political elites or ruling classes promote state formation” in order to “generalize their interests to the populace at large” (Davis, 1991: 12). This is normally achieved -they clarify- through the combination of formal (establishment of institutions) and informal means (reinterpretation of history/culture) to build “emotive links with populace” (Davis, 1991: 13). In this regard, the UAE authorities “have actively promoted the notion of Gulf folklore as a basis for forging a more explicit political consciousness centred around a Gulf Arab identity” (Davis, 1991: 19) or, more

¹⁰⁰ Source: 2005 National Census, UAE National Bureau of Statistics.

precisely, a Gulf Arab tribal identity.¹⁰¹ Especially since 2008, which was declared the year for National Identity and when the Federal Demographic Council was established (Baharoon: 1), “images of camels, horses, forts, coffee pots, dhows, and falcons have been actively used by the state to symbolize Emirati identity” (al-Dhaheiri, 2009: 276) and are “a forceful reminder...as to who dominates this society” (Blau, 2003: 28, in Szuchman, 2012). This serves to “reinvigorate tribal histories, thereby reminding the population of the historical roots of the traditional monarchy’s legitimacy” (Davidson, 2009a: 133), and leaves out of the picture many aspects of this society and ignores information that is useful to understand current structures and dynamics. It is moreover, “aimed both at Emirati nationals... [but also at] resident expats, as a visual reminder of their status as guests of the UAE” (Szuchman, 2012: 37).

Regardless of the multicultural and ‘globalised’ character of an important part of the UAE historical society,¹⁰² school textbooks, museums, and even the citizenship law, focus on the Arab tribal identity to which the rulers, and specifically the more inland oriented tribes belong to. In order to “maintain the illusion of a purified national identity” migrants are “placed historically into a timeline where the presence of the foreign coincides with oil,” because acknowledging “the long history of South Asians in the Gulf is to allow space for both past and present forms of hybridity and cultural exchange, which may create a crisis” (Vora, 2013: 63). Indeed, huge efforts have been done to erase any existing cultural particularities arguably to unite citizens under a common identity, but which has conversely enhanced differences between social groups and discrimination towards the “less Arab” and the “less tribal.” The emphasis on “a Bedouin-style cultural past even as nationals are overwhelmingly part of settled communities¹⁰³ (...) underscores the separate identity and history of the individual emirates, for whom the notion of the wider Emirati nation is a construct with, by definition, a short-lived history” (Partrick, 2009: 17). Children are raised without being told that “the teak wood used for doors and window frames came from India, that pottery clay came from Iran, that there is a strong African influence in ‘Arabian’ music, that falcons for the national sport of

¹⁰¹ Main works discussing the construction of Emirati identity are: al-Dhaheiri (2009), Al-Dabbagh & Gargani (2011), Dresch (2005), Khalaf (2013, 2000), and Szuchman (2012: 35-52).

¹⁰² See section on Traditionally Globalised Society in this chapter.

¹⁰³ As mentioned above, according to the data gathered at the beginning of the 20th century only 10% of the population were nomads (Lorimer, 1908: 1432-36).

falconry were caught in Pakistan, or that ‘traditional’ henna designs originated in the subcontinent” (Vora, 2013: 59); and all nationals (or aspirants to becoming nationals) are expected to adopt that constructed identity in order to integrate in the community, to be recognised as real or ‘pure’ (as some like to call themselves) Emiratis, no matter what their cultural backgrounds are and how long they have lived in the territory today known as the UAE.

As a result, a discourse emerged “of some citizens being more citizens than others” (Baharoon, 2012: 1), thus showing that citizenship and national identity policies contribute to society being, not only hierarchical, heterogeneous and ethnocentric, but to a large extent xenophobic. In 2004, the Dubai think tank B’huth conducted a study that “warned of ‘back-fire’ potential of maintaining a discourse of the threat against UAE National Identity from other cultures in the UAE” (Baharoon, 2012: 1) and launched a social development program called ‘*Watan*’ (my nation), which aims at creating “a discourse of National Identity that does not collide with multiculturalism in a diverse community” within “a framework where National Identity can be maintained through inclusion rather than exclusion” (Baharoon, 2012: 2). However, the emphasis is mainly on the Emirati-Non Emirati divide, and little attention is paid to the plural cultures that have historically contributed to the shaping of the multiple Emiratis Identities, something that would enhance the feeling of inclusiveness and acceptance of differences as enriching rather than threatening.

5. UAE Social Stratification

Optimists argue that, having diverse cultural backgrounds, Emiratis have “amalgamated into what has become the Emirati identity” over the last four decades and that being Emirati has, as Al-Qassemi puts it, “started to denote...a way of life, a sense of common destiny” (Al-Qassemi, 2013) However, while the feeling of belonging to the federation has surely been enhanced since its inception, ethnicity, social background, and *wāṣṭa*¹⁰⁴ still determine to a large extent the hierarchical character of the UAE social system.

¹⁰⁴ *Wāṣṭa* (from now on *wasta*) is an Arabic term that refers to “an implicit social contract, typically within a tribal group, which obliges those within the group to provide assistance (favorable treatment) to others within the group.” In the past, “the head of the family, tribe or clan acted as the *wasīf* (middleman) to mediate and adjudicate within the tribal group and to negotiate points of conflict with other tribal groups.” In time, however, *wasta* evolved from being a mediation mechanism into a “means of intercession,” which is seen by some “as a move in the

As with state-society relations, class formation in the GCC states has been predominantly studied through the lens of the Rentier State Theory (RST) that puts the emphasis on external rent as the main factor shaping structures and dynamics (Mahdavy (1970), Niblock (1980), Beblawi and Luciani (1987), al-Naqeeb (1990), Gause (1994), Ayubi (1995), Crystal (1990), Herb (1999), Ross (2001), Hertog (2010a), Gray (2011)).¹⁰⁵ Certainly, by becoming economically independent, the Gulf rulers developed new relations with the people as the providers of subsidies and social services (al-Naqeeb, 1990) and as a result differentiated levels of government beneficiaries emerged, which are however also heavily conditioned by other factors. In this regard, Ahn Nga Longva identifies in her study of the Kuwaiti society “internal power asymmetries” that run along sectarian and cultural-historical lines –both among nationals and non-nationals-, and describes the social system as an ‘ethnocracy’, which she defines as one where there is a tendency for the elite “to posit their own physical characteristics and cultural norms as the essence of the nation...excluding all those...who do not exhibit the same characteristics”, thus giving importance to ethnic and ideological factors (Longva, 2005: 120).

Similarly, Nora Colton observes that social stratification in the Gulf is based primarily on affiliation to the ruling family and to nationality, but she sees further divisions related to economy, religion, tribal connections, regional location and gender (Colton, 2011: 39), supporting the idea that the RST is useful to explain some dynamics but that the analysis of Gulf socio-politics requires that we apply a holistic approach. Complementing the former, Michel Herb sees ‘ascriptive status’ and control over the rent as determinant for the position people occupy in Gulf societies. He first differentiates between people of tribal and not tribal origin, but also distinguishes between *sharif* or *aşilî* and non-*aşilî* tribes (of ‘noble’ or ‘subordinate’ origin), as well as between the *badu* and *hadhar* sectors of society. In line with the RST, his view is that through the control of the petro-state, the ruling families gained paramount power that allowed them to determine which elements of the population to promote and which not (Herb,

direction of *wasta*’s slow disappearance as a dominant social mechanism” (Barnett, Yandle, and Naufal, 2013: 41-43).

¹⁰⁵ Rentier state theory says that in states that derive most of their income from external rents rather than from taxes, and where people are engaged in the consumption and redistribution of the rent, there is a low probability that movements for social or political change emerge and, when they do, they are easily put down. This is explained in more detail in the Theoretical Framework section (Chapter 1).

1999: 51-65). Adam Hanieh, however, puts the focus on Gulf capitalism for he considers Gulf class formation to have “evolved alongside and within the development of a global capitalist system” and that nor oil neither the state are the only catalysts for social change (Hanieh, 2011: 15-16). Additionally, and addressing the Emirati case, Khalid Almezaini argues that “it is clear that to a large extent, it is *wasta* (connections) that determines the financial status and class of many members of society” (Almezaini, 2013: 65).

Taking these approaches into account and following the theoretical approach of ‘sociology of power’ (Izquierdo, 2008),¹⁰⁶ I hereafter present a discussion of Emirati social stratification. The following classification looks into the several layers that exist within the national and foreign populations and their formation, which are conditioned by all the above mentioned factors: history, ethnic origin, culture, demography, ideology, ascriptive status/genealogy, *wasta*, control over resources of power, and regional and global socio-economic and political dynamics. Firstly, I agree with Izquierdo (2008) that the establishment of socio-political hierarchies primarily implies a division between the members of society who rule and compete for the control over resources of power, and those who are governed; between the elites and the population. This is those whose primary interest is the differential accumulation of power and those who generally rely upon decisions made by the elites, except when they become aware of a necessity or feel unhappy about a situation, and therefore mobilise to obtain their claims. Thus, social actors “establish relations with one another, according to their capacity to utilize given resources of power...whether political, economic, informative, coercive, ideological or of any other nature” (Izquierdo and Lampridi-Kemou, 2012: 8).

In the UAE case, the Emirs and those members of the ruling families closer to them are at the top of the social pyramid, and can be considered the *‘rentier oligarchy’*, for it is the elite in control of the main resources of power: the state and the rent from oil. The ruler of Abu Dhabi and his closer relatives occupy the highest layer above all other rulers, followed by those of Dubai and, then, by the rest of the emirates’ ruling elites. The state is the most important resource of power because it is through it that the elites administer the rest of resources

¹⁰⁶ The Sociology of Power approach is explained in the Theoretical Framework section (Chapter 1).

that allow them to accumulate power and therefore is the main instrument that helps them consolidate their position (Izquierdo, 2007: 5). Only members of this elite hold key governmental positions, being the more sensitive reserved to members of the Al Nahyan family of Abu Dhabi and Dubai (i.e. president, vice-president, prime minister, and ministries of interior and defence). The ruling elites of the seven emirates have competed for power since pre-British, pre-oil, and pre-federation times, with the Al Nahyan of Abu Dhabi finally taking the lead as they are in control of the largest oil fields among the seven, and therefore of the second resource in importance: the rent generated by oil exports (i.e. the capital). However, the main objective of the ruling elites is not primarily to accumulate capital from that rent and invest it to generate benefits, but to distribute it effectively among the population in order to legitimise their role and to accumulate more power. Ideology—which is mainly transmitted by the family, and through education and the media¹⁰⁷ has been a useful resource of power since the establishment of the Federation through the promotion of a constructed national identity that invite citizens to emulate the rulers and display loyalty to them. Finally, having full control over the state, the ruling elite controls to a large extent the information channels, manages the security apparatus, and is ready to resort to coercive measures if any opposition arises that threatens their power.

The rest of social strata organise in subordinate positions and maintain clientele and patrimonial¹⁰⁸ relationships with the ‘rentier oligarchs’. Members of the extended ruling families and of major tribes (of *aşil*//noble origin)—led by tribes of the historical Bani Yas tribal confederation and their closest allies—form the social class immediately below the ruling families, who are the most benefited by oil rents, and occupy most key governmental positions. I therefore call them the ‘*tribal aristocracy*’. Both the Al Nahyan ruling family of Abu Dhabi and the Al Maktoum ruling family of Dubai fall under the Bani Yas umbrella, having been

¹⁰⁷ See section on Rentierism and Political Socialisation in this chapter.

¹⁰⁸ There is ambiguity and overlapping in the use of the terms clientelism, patrimonialism and patronage. Here we understand clientelism as a political system based on a mutually beneficial, but hierarchical and asymmetric relationship between a ‘patron’ and its ‘clients’ who are linked together through the exchange of favours for political support. With the concept patrimonialism we refer to a personalistic and bureaucratic form of governance (or system of government administration) characterised by a top-down structure where rulers do not distinguish between public and private patrimony, appointments to governmental institutions depend mainly on patronage (and not on merit), and civil servants are only responsible to the political leadership. Finally, patronage is the distribution of government jobs or other favours to reward political allies or kin (Weber in Mommsen, 1992; Eisenstadt, 1973; Clapham, 1985; Roniger, 2004).

the Al Nahyan its paramount rulers during centuries. Additionally, some of the most influential tribes of the Bani Yas in contemporary society are the al-Suwaidi (plural Sudan), who used to be involved in pearling and trading along the coasts of Dubai and Abu Dhabi; the al-Mazrou'i (plural Mazari'a), which used to be the main Bedouin section and settled in Liwa, but also engaged in the seasonal pearling industry in Abu Dhabi; and the al-Mansoori (pl. Manaseer), who settled mainly in Abu Dhabi and Dubai.¹⁰⁹ Members of all these tribes have been appointed as ministers of the UAE Cabinet along the years, thus reflecting the confidence rulers have historically had upon them. As explained above, Arab clans already had an important legitimizing role during pre-British and pre-oil days, but could change their allegiance from one sheikh to another if they considered it appropriate. However, the nation-state set borders that could no longer be easily trespassed, and consequently citizens have become linked to specific rulers to whom they are expected to be loyal. Moreover, the rulers went from being tax collectors and wealth distributors to being exclusively oil rents distributors, and allegiance of prominent tribes to the ruling elite was "secured through several means such as subsidies (...), intermarriage with the ruling family, and the distribution of government posts" (Peterson, 1977: 9), hence incorporating them into the patrimonial system of government administration. As Table 9 shows, the most sensitive ministries (interior, defence, oil and energy, and foreign affairs) have been run since 1971 by the rentier oligarchy and the tribal aristocracy, and the most represented clans or families are those related to the Bani Yas confederation.

Additionally, as Jill Crystal explains for the cases of Kuwait and Qatar, the newly established nationality and commercial laws, benefited greatly the old trading families (Crystal, 1990: 8), including members of the tribal aristocracy, but also Arab non-tribal and non-Arab families who were historically engaged in commercial activities, and were granted nationality. Especially those who

¹⁰⁹ Other influential and well connected, but less powerful tribes of the Bani Yas are the al-Qubaisi (pl. Qubaisat) and the al-Hamli (pl. Hawamil), who settled in Liwa and mainly depended on camels and palm plantations; the al-Rumaithi (pl. Rumaithat), the al-Marri (pl. Marar), al-Muhairi (pl. al-Bu Muhair), and the al-Muhairbi (Mahariba) that used to work mainly as fishers and pearl divers. Another non-Bani Yas tribes that eventually pledged their allegiance to the Al Nahyan, and were accordingly promoted in the social hierarchy, are the al-Amiri (pl. 'Awamir) and the al-Dhaheri (pl. Dhawahir), which were *badu* tribes that settled in al-Ain, as well as the al-Za'abi (originally from Ras al-Khaimah, but moved to AD) (Heard-Bey (1982), Van Der Meulen (1997), Ono (2011), Council of Ministers. (n. d.), and personal interviews with members of the 'Awamir).

stayed loyal to the rulers during the hardship period between the 1930s and the 1970s became a privileged class among the ‘*national bourgeoisie*’ after the UAE independence. However, Abdulkhaleq Abdulla pointed in his 1984 dissertation at a subgroup of “nationalistic-minded internal bourgeoisie and local businessmen who [were] excluded and negatively affected by the dependent nature of the UAE economy” and saw them as a potential “force of change” (Abdulla, 1984: 286).

Table 9: Main ministers by family name (1971-2013)¹¹⁰

Year	Interior	Defense	For. Affairs	Oil/Energy
1971	Al Nahyan (Bani Yas, Abu Dhabi ruling family)	Al Maktoum (Bani Yas, Dubai ruling family)	al-Suwaidi (Bani Yas)	Al Maktoum
1973	Al Nahyan	Al Maktoum	al-Suwaidi	al-Otaiba (al-Marri tribe, Bani Yas)
1977	Al Nahyan	Al Maktoum	al-Suwaidi	al-Otaiba
1979	Al Nahyan	Al Maktoum	al-Suwaidi	al-Otaiba
1990	Bin Ali (al-Dhaheri)	Al Maktoum	al-Nuaimi (Ajman ruling family)	Bin Yousef (al-Muhairi)
1997	al-Badi (al-Dhaheri)	Al Maktoum	al-Nuaimi	al-Nasseri
2004	Al Nahyan	Al Maktoum	al-Nuaimi	al-Hamli (Bani Yas)
2006	Al Nahyan	Al Maktoum	Al Nahyan	al-Hamli
2008	Al Nahyan	Al Maktoum	Al Nahyan	al-Hamli
2013	Al Nahyan	Al Maktoum	Al Nahyan	al-Mazrou'i (Bani Yas)

More recently, Davidson divided the national bourgeoisie in two groups: the old and the new rentiers (Davidson, 2005: 225). Representative of the first group are mainly members of the tribal aristocracy closely related to the Al Nahyan who “remain reliant on oil-derived rent” and aim at “maintaining the status quo,” such as the Dhawahir, the Bani Yusefs (al-Muhairi tribe), the Mazari’a, the Hawamil, and members of the al-Jaber, the al-Otaiba (both of the al-Marri tribe) and the al-Fahim (Davidson, 2005: 225-227). Conversely, the ‘new rentiers’ tend to come from non-tribal backgrounds and to seek “fresh and finite sources of economic rent from non-oil-related activities” and therefore advocate for

¹¹⁰ Source: Council of Ministers. (n. d.). See also Annex 6 Main ministries by tribe.

economic “liberalizing reforms” (Davidson, 2005: 225-227), such as Muhammad al-Abbar (owner of Emaar Properties), and the al-Futtaim, al-Habtoor, al-Ghurair and al-Tajir families in Dubai; the Bukhatir and al-Midfa‘ in Sharjah; the Hamarain in Ras al-Khaimah; and the Behruzian in Fujairah. Among this ‘new rentiers’ and below the well-positioned Arab businessmen are the leading merchants of Persian origin who are well connected to the ruling families and/or the tribal aristocracy, such as the al-Khoori in Abu Dhabi; the Galadari, the Gargash, al-Gergawi and the al-Rostomani in Dubai; and the al-Fardan family in Sharjah (Abdulla, 1984: 148-156; Almezaini, 2013: 56-57; Davidson, 2005: 225-227).

Members of the national bourgeoisie, and most significantly those of Arab background, have been appointed to state institutions such as the FNC or ambassadorial positions, but not so often to positions in key or sensitive ministries, which are kept in the hands of the rentier oligarchy and its tribal aristocracy allies. Emiratis of Persian have punctually been given prominent positions as in the cases of Mohammed Abdullah al-Gergawi, who was appointed Minister of Cabinet Affairs in 2006, and Anwar Mohammed Gargash, who holds the positions of Minister of State for Federal National Council Affairs and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs (although the latter is subordinated to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Abdulla bin Zayed Al Nahyan) (See Annex 6).

As oil revenues started to flow, the rulers engaged with the businessmen in the developmental projects and the emerging private sector activities. Thus, as in the past, it was a symbiotic arrangement by which the political and economic elites supported each other; while at the same time prevented any potential bourgeoisie political dissent, as the experienced in Dubai during the previous decades.¹¹¹ Moreover, since this ‘*capitalist class*’ is “inclusive of state personnel and individuals from the ruling families” (Hanieh, 2011: 14-17), it could be argued that the merchants are the closest to an elite that competes for private capital as a resource of power. However, the national bourgeoisie is kept in a clientele relationship because private capital still depends upon rent, which is controlled by the oligarchs. In this regard, Steffen Hertog argues that most Gulf capitalists’ “activities still amount to more sophisticated rent recycling rather

¹¹¹ See section on Political activism in Chapter 3.

than autonomous diversification...[and that this explains their] weak role in today's political arena despite a strong pre-oil history of collective action" (Hertog, 2013: 1). Additionally, as explained by Khalid Almezaini, "there are no clear-cut boundaries defining government ownership" in the UAE private sector, and "the patron-client relationship between regime and business actors [is] the result of a number of motivating factors including both economic gains and non-economic objectives, such as national security and regime survival" (Almezaini, 2013: 50-51).

The non-national bourgeoisie is in a similar position, with the difference that they do not enjoy the privileges of being citizens, but they are nevertheless very well situated within society and enjoy a high degree of independence. Long established Indian businessmen mainly compose this social layer, such as Tony Jashanmal, Sunny Varkey or Ram Buxani (in the UAE since the 1950s) (Gulf Business, 2013, July 24), while Iranian businesses do also have a major presence in the UAE (there are over 8,000 companies and tradesmen registered by Iranians in Dubai, which is the main point from which re-exportation of product to Iran takes place).¹¹² Additionally, some Arab, Western and, increasingly, East and Southeast Asian entrepreneurs are also making vast profits in the UAE.¹¹³ National and non-national bourgeoisies play an important role as accomplices of the ruling elite "in producing social and economic hierarchies that benefit both citizens and elite expatriates while maintaining a structure of labor migration that significantly disadvantages the majority of foreign residents living in the United Arab Emirates" (Vora, 2011: 122). However, neither of them can really be considered political elites because they do not have any real capacity to compete for political power. Significantly too, through the presence of multinational corporations in the UAE, and the increased foreign investment of Emirati companies and Sovereign Wealth Funds (mainly Emirates and Etihad airlines, the Abu Dhabi government-owned Mubadala Development Company, and the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority) contributes to the insertion of the Emirati economy in the global financial and commercial circuits. Thus, the rentier oligarchs and the national bourgeoisie are directly linked to the international bourgeoisie and, since they share the

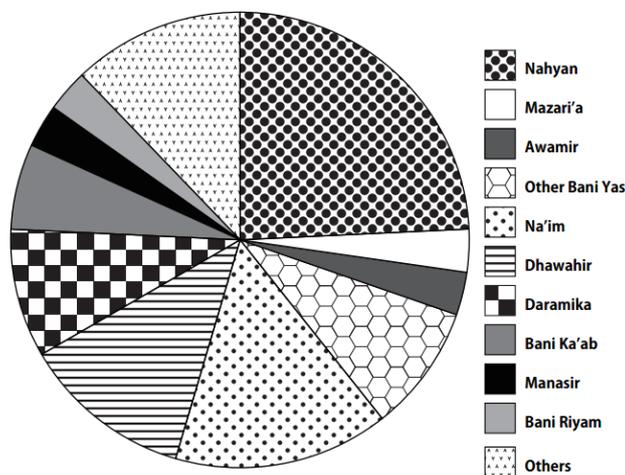
¹¹² See: www.iranian-uae.com

¹¹³ The richest businessmen among the UAE bourgeoisies are currently Abdulla bin Ahmad and Saif al-Ghurair, Majid and Abdulla al-Futtaim, Mahdi al-Tajir and the Gargash family, in addition to non-national resident Indian tycoon Micky Jagtiani (Forbes, 2014).

common interest of guaranteeing the smooth flow of oil, the regime counts on the support of the global elites, which can therefore be considered another resource of power (Izquierdo, 2007: 5-8).

Access to jobs among nationals also depends on tribal ascription, ethnic origin, and wasta. Senior ranks in the security forces are kept in the hands of members of the ruling families and closely allied tribes, and “military employment has often been used as a tool of patronage rather than capacity-building” as reflected by the size of GCC military budgets, where “the focus is on acquiring high-tech kit rather than training” (Hertog, 2011). Historically, sheikhs relied on the Bedouins/tribes for military protection of the territories under their influence. For instance, the Mazari’a and ‘Awamir “offered security and protection for the connecting route between the coast and inland” settlements of the Al Nahyan, and became “military forces when conflict with outsiders occurred” (Ono, 2011: 28). However, the abovementioned Trucial Oman Scouts’ personnel included by 1971 forty percent “local Arabs” (i.e. tribes affiliated with the Trucial sheikhs), thirty percent Omanis (i.e. probably also tribal), and the remaining was made up of Indians, Iranians, and Pakistanis (mainly Baluchis) (Peck, 2010: 28).

Figure 6: Key tribes in Abu Dhabi defense and security organizations¹¹⁴



While many of these soldiers were granted nationality upon the formation of the UAE or, even if not, continued to work in the federal armed forces, those of non-Arab background were gradually relieved from their duties and replaced by Emiratis from Bani Yas tribes and other allied tribes (See Figure 6), as well as by other tribal Arabs who were invited to join and granted nationality (mainly

¹¹⁴ Source: Ono (2011: 30).

Omanis and Yemenis).¹¹⁵ The reason behind this could be that authorities have higher trust in the loyalty of Arabs of *badu* background, than in those with other backgrounds, and especially in those of Iranian origin after the Islamic Revolution.

Next in the scale are the '*national middle class*' and the GCC and Western 'technocrats.' These three groups enjoy similar social status, although the first one is the more benefited by the direct distribution of rent in the form of salaries, services and subsidies, through which they establish a patrimonial relationship with the ruling elite. The people who were recognized as citizens in 1971 and their progeny form the national middle class, which is the bulk of the national population. As mentioned earlier, these are the *Hawla* (non-tribal Arab *hadhar*) and the non-Arab *hadhar* ('*Ajami*'; Balushi and African former slaves) among which some used to be -and some still are- Shi'a;¹¹⁶ in addition to members of subordinate nomadic tribes (*non-aşilī Arab badu*). As nomadism declined aided by official policies of sedentarisation, and many of the old economic activities were abandoned, new jobs became available, first in the oil companies, then gradually in the newly established federal and local state institutions, and gradually also in the private companies covering a wide range of sectors. Local "sailors, pearl-divers and nomadic shepherds...turned into state employees" (Longva, 2005: 128), while agriculture, farming or fishing activities that persist have been gradually taken over by lower income groups of new migrants.

Although the majority of the middle class are state-employees, there is a growing number of Emiratis, which encouraged by the exemption from taxes and the profitable *kafāla*, or sponsorship system,¹¹⁷ have established their own

¹¹⁵ Personal interviews with UAEU professor and with UAEU student. Al-Ain (March 2012).

¹¹⁶ Laurence Louër's research about the Shi'a in the Gulf (2008) and Marc Valeri's account of the Shi'a of Oman (2010) support the hypothesis that also in the UAE the Shi'i groups have historically been important allies of the rulers. Nowadays, however, the rise of sectarian politics in the region (1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, 2003 Iraq war, Bahraini Shi'a uprisings) has affected the views of Emiratis towards the Shi'a or the people with Shi'a or Persian backgrounds and, therefore, these prefer not to openly publicise their condition.

¹¹⁷ The *kafāla* is an individual-sponsoring system through which migrant workers' immigration status is legally bound to a national employer or sponsor (*kafil*) for their contract period, rather than to the state. The system was adopted since the 1950s in several Arab countries, including the GCC states, Jordan and Lebanon. Although this practice is supposed to come from the tribal custom of granting strangers protection and even affiliation into the tribe for specific purposes, it has become an abusive arrangement that situates migrant workers as completely dependent upon their *kafil*. Foreigners cannot enter the country, transfer employment nor leave the country without permission from the *kafil*, who often exerts control over the workers by confiscating their passports. Thus it has been described as a contemporary form of slavery and has been largely criticised by International Human Rights Organisations. Illegal, but

businesses. This is what Abdulkhaleq Abdulla has called the “entrepreneurial middle class” (Abdulla, 2010: 15), and which Ferrán Izquierdo explains is subject to discrimination by the ruling elite that privileges the national, and even the non-national bourgeoisies (Izquierdo 2007: 5). In this regard, Almezaini too explains “marginalized families such as the al-Sa’idi, al-Kalbani, al-Riyami or al-Khatri, have received less support from the government owing to their limited historical and social connections with the ruling families” (Almezaini, 2013: 51). However, members of this social layer have occasionally been appointed as for governmental positions in order to incorporate potential political opposition into the system. For instance, several leftists-nationalists and Islamists were appointed as ministers in the 1970s, including Abdullah bin Omran Taryam (Minister of Education and of Justice 1970s), and Mohammed Abdulrahman al-Bakr (Minister of Justice 1977-1990) respectively.

The GCC and Western technocrats enjoy a similar status to the national middle class with regards to access to jobs, the treatment they receive from authorities and, in many cases, GCC migrants receive preferential treatment from authorities if they are related to the ‘tribal aristocracy’. Something similar happens with Western migrants who are generally given better treatment and salaries than other nationalities, just for the sake of originating ethnically from the former and current metropolis (and neighbouring countries). In this regard, members of the national middle class often complain that foreign technocrats are preventing them from accessing jobs and better salaries in the private sector, or even that they (especially westerners) enjoy more freedoms than nationals actually do, and they therefore feel that the system is benefiting non-nationals in many ways. Indeed, the influence and contact networks (*wasta*) that, not only higher national classes, but also some expatriate groups enjoy in the UAE are stronger than those of members of the national middle class, and generates dissatisfaction among them. Education, moreover, has produced a generation of educated Emiratis, who are aware of and disapprove their subordinate position in society, and who are developing new equality aspirations, as shown by the responses of students to the interviews and survey conducted for this dissertation. UAEU students express high concern regarding the large numbers of foreign workforce and the perception that this causes

unprosecuted, visa trading (the selling of work permits) is a profitable practice through which many nationals make a good income, and therefore resist the reform of the system.

unemployment, threatens local culture, and generates a lack of safety and stability.¹¹⁸

Below the mentioned strata are the Arab migrants, making up the most significant number of workers after the establishment of the Federation, who came especially from Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon and Yemen. In a chapter on the impact of post-oil Arab migration on Gulf societies, Melikian addresses how the 'socio-political life-styles' of Gulf citizens or '*khalijī*' were amazingly influenced by their presence. The perception they had of their Arab fellows was that they were more qualified and educated, so they had the necessity to progressively develop "compensatory life-styles", which are cumulative and have, as this author predicted, "become identifiable and self-generating" (Melikian, 1988: 113-114). However, due to the attachment of many of these to Arab nationalistic and leftist movements that begun to challenge the Gulf regimes, Arabs were since the 1970s gradually replaced by Indian sub-continent and other Asian migrants, which exercised less political influence upon nationals.¹¹⁹ Especially in the 1990s, many Arab residents were expelled from all GCC states under the pretext that their governments had supported Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, and by 2002 "the Arab proportion of migrant workers in the GCC had fallen from 72 percent in 1975 to around 25-29 percent" (Hanieh, 2010: 79). Red lines were drawn for the Arabs who stayed or came later, and those who are caught speaking local or regional politics are deported. The most recent examples of this reality have taken place after the so-called Arab Spring, when many Arabs were warned not to get involved in politics, or directly asked to leave the UAE. For instance, Syrian citizens received mobile text messages reminding them they should not engage in political activities and a Syrian Imam was given 24 hours to pack and abandon the country after he had been commenting on some issues related to the situation in his country.¹²⁰ However, they still represent an important sector of society and are better situated than workers coming from Asia or Africa (they can, for instance, migrate with their families more easily), although they enjoy fewer privileges than GCC or western technocrats. Arabs are hired for different at a wide range of employment sectors, depending on their educational backgrounds and

¹¹⁸ See Part II of this dissertation.

¹¹⁹ See Chapter 3 for details on the ideological influence of Arabs in the UAE.

¹²⁰ Personal interview with Syrian long-term resident. Dubai, UAE (April 2012).

professional experiences, and their salaries are normally lower than the Westerners' but higher than others'. The attitudes of Gulf citizens towards other Arabs have also changed significantly, as there is a general feeling that they no longer have a superior 'life-style'. Since the Arab Spring uprisings started to take place, many Arabs were warned not to speak politics in the workplace or by the authorities, and several were dismissed from their jobs in the UAE. Moreover, some companies and institutions stopped hiring Arabs, especially from Egypt and Syria.¹²¹

The aforementioned bidun or stateless people form a liminal class situated between the national middle class and the expats. Exact figures are unknown, but according to Refugees International there are between 10,000 (the official number) and 100,000 bidun in the UAE (Lynch, 2010, January 12). Depending on their *wasta* they can access more or less benefits, but have in general limited access to public medical care and education, cannot be issued marriage certificates or driving licenses, and struggle to obtain birth and death certificates (Shahwari & Almadani, 2011: 29) that could later serve as evidence of long-term residency. Moreover, without passports and other basic identity documents, their movement is restricted and employability is constrained, making them a discriminated and therefore vulnerable social group, and hence many live in poverty. Similarly, the children of those residents of the Trucial States who had a passport from other countries and did not apply for nationality early enough must stick to their father's nationality, even if they have been born in the UAE, and even if their mothers are Emiratis.

This issue has been debated openly in the local newspapers and online blogs and social media during the last two decades and, although many Emiratis consider that citizenship granting should be restricted as much as possible,¹²² the opinion exists too that it is "insulting to question the loyalty of Emiratis who are born to a foreign parent. It is also unfair, un-Islamic and ultimately...un-Emirati to generalise about people of any background (Al-Qassemi, 2010, August 29). In response to the pressure from significant sectors of society, in 2008 new family books were issued for the first time since 1971 for those who

¹²¹ Personal interviews with Tunisian, Egyptian, Libyan and Syrian UAEU students, professors and staff. Al-Ain, Abu Dhabi, UAE (April 2011-March 2012).

¹²² For a discussion among Emiratis about how should nationality be granted or not, see The Daily Dubai blog (2010, June 20).

could “prove their pre-1971 ancestry” (Davidson, 2009a: 130-131) and, on the occasion of the 40th National Day (2011), the President Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan issued a decree allowing children born to Emirati women married to foreign or stateless fathers to seek UAE citizenship on their eighteenth birthday if they met certain conditions (university education, police record clearance, etc.). However, the process is not very transparent and people complain that nationality is being given to some individuals rather than whole families, thus creating conflicts between family members. Moreover, residents of Iranian origin find it almost impossible to obtain the nationality even if they meet the requirements; and many young bidun or ‘Gulf Dreamers’¹²³ feel increasingly frustrated as they grow and discover that they cannot access certain studies or jobs, that they cannot travel, that they are an inferior category of Emiratis. In this regard, the daughter of an Emirati national woman married to a non-national expressed her frustration for not being granted the nationality:

“We are raised in a fairy tale, but all coins have two faces... I grew up thinking I was Emirati, playing with my Emirati friends, learning we should be grateful for what the Sheikhs have done for us, being proud of my country. Only when I went to high school I realised I was different... I could not do many things others could do for the simple reason of not having the Emirati citizenship... For medical test I should go to the same queue as the maids... I could not choose to study engineering or medicine at university (there are reserved quotas for nationals). But I always had a high GPA... I consider myself Emirati, but you go by the passport, you know... It really breaks my heart... The UAE has given me many things: education, everything...! But we also give things back to them! Lately I started to feel rejected... I started to be angry.”¹²⁴

Technocrats of other nationalities (mainly East and Southeast Asians) have been migrating to the UAE since the late 1980s. Their salaries are normally lower than those perceived by Westerners in their same positions, and they are often subject to discrimination due to the similar appearance they have to services sector and blue-collar workers, who are unfortunately generally mistreated in the Gulf states. The latter form the lowest societal layer, are the most affected by the abovementioned *kafāla* sponsorship system, receive the

¹²³ The term ‘Gulf Dreamers’ has been adapted from the so-called ‘American Dreamers’, who are the children of illegal migrants in the USA, as both bidun and ‘American Dreamers’ face similar problems.

¹²⁴ Personal interview with UAEU student. Al-Ain, UAE (March 2012).

lowest salaries and live in the worst conditions. Many are forced upon arrival to sign contracts with lower salaries than promised, and acquire huge debts to pay for the administrative expenses and the flight to get to the working destination. Sadly, most employers regard them as temporary workforce that can be exploited under the threat of deportation and occasionally avoid paying them their salaries, with the migrants not having access to legal assistance to claim their money (labour unions are illegal).

Matsuo Masaki has described this practices as a form of internal colonialism (Masaki, 2011: 35-40), in the sense that workforce is exploited inside the country rather than abroad. The situation of lower income workers in the Gulf has been repeatedly denounced by international human rights organizations¹²⁵ but, since the domestic awareness on the issue, and therefore the pressure for change is very limited, the reforms accomplished to improve the working and living conditions of this social group has been minimal. In fact, there is a widespread attitude among *khalijī* that “if expatriates are unhappy with their situation, they can always return home and be [easily] replaced” (Colton, 2011: 32). This precarious situation of the majority foreign population adds to the controversy around nationality and identity policies.

The huge demographic imbalance in which Emiratis are a minority, helps explain the emergence of asymmetrical social relations in the UAE, which are not only conditioned by history, culture, ascriptive status/genealogy, control over resources of power, and regional and global socio-economic and political dynamics; but determined by ethnic origin, *wasta*, and governmental ideology and national identity campaigns. The main objective of the oligarchic, aristocratic and bourgeois elites is to maintain the status quo and accumulate more power, while the different sectors of the population are aware of the differences that divide them and aim at fulfilling their individual wishes but not at any cost. Within this context, can we really say that in the UAE “the only tribe is the Emirati.”¹²⁶

¹²⁵ See, for instance, UN report (2009, October), ECHR report (n.d.), MFASIA report (2011, January and n.d.), or HRW actions (n.d.).

¹²⁶ Abu Dhabi anonymous citizen quoted in Al-Qassemi (2013, December 1).

6. Rentierism and Political Socialisation in the UAE

There is no doubt that both pre-oil and post-oil rentierism –understood as the process by which a government receives a substantial percentage of the national revenues from external rents on a regular basis (Mahdavy, 1970; Beblawi & Luciani, 1987)- was the main catalyst of socio-economic and political transformations that materialised in the form of autocratic or oligarchic regimes in the Gulf. In these regimes the rulers are supposedly politically autonomous from the population, provided they allocate a share of the rental wealth among them and it is unlikely that political opposition emerges (as stated by the early rentier state theory).¹²⁷ However, the discussion presented in the previous pages demonstrates that other pre-oil and post-oil factors are crucial to fully understand how social relations develop in these states and therefore these are not only determined by rentierism.

In this regard, the perspective adopted by Adam Hanieh (2011: 15-16) that oil is the “major factor differentiating the region from any other in the world”, but that it should be regarded as “a commodity embedded in a set of (globally determined) social relations” is certainly valuable for the purpose of this study. This perspective explains that it cannot be assumed that rentierism, or the actions and decisions by rentier elites, determine social relations (and political orientations) by themselves (Hanieh, 2011: 15-16). By the same token, I argue here that rentierism fast-forwarded the incorporation of Gulf society into the globalisation processes, not only in its economic dimension, but understood as the growing interconnectedness between people and places worldwide, and between time and space. As Giddens asserts, these connections take place “in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring miles away and vice versa” (Giddens, 1990: 64), and the processes of change connecting time and space “underpin a transformation in the organization of human affairs by linking together and expanding human activity across regions and continents” (Held *et al.*, 1999: 16). In this regard, James Rosenau (2008: 12-15) explained:

“...as information technologies, jet aircraft, and other innovations make the world more intimate, so too do people and the roles they occupy increasingly serve as foci of concern”, “[w]e have entered

¹²⁷ The rentier state theory is explained in the Theoretical Framework section (Chapter 1).

the era of the individual, an era that I bound to be different from those in the past and that will doubtless witness intense upheavals as governments have to be more responsive to domestic pressures; there is a 'skill revolution' by which ordinary persons...are increasingly competent."

In the UAE, those spatial-temporal processes of change and of global interconnectedness have taken place in a record time period, which has transformed fishing towns and rural villages into cosmopolitan cities with international weight in less than half century. As rentierism took root and the population grew, the different social layers were defined and new spaces for interaction emerged. External rent was not only distributed in the form of subsidies and services, such as health care, public housing, subsidised food or cheap petrol, but was also invested in projects for the development of infrastructures, industry, education and culture. Accordingly, oil wealth has been visible in urbanisation and the physical redistribution of cities, the emergence of new job opportunities, massive increase of literacy rates of both men and women, as well as on the enhanced chances to interact with people from all over the world. Foreign domestic workers were hired to raise the children; kids from different nationalities shared the classrooms at schools;¹²⁸ and nationals shared the workplace with expatriates from a wide range of countries. Wealth quickly brought the radio and the television into most households—and later the satellite channels, and the Internet—through which the people gained access to all kinds of information from all around the world. Furthermore, people started to travel a lot, went to study abroad, and brought properties in other countries, where they spend several months yearly.

Thus, rentierism and the interlinked incorporation into globalisation have introduced a large variety of new cultural elements and mechanisms to child and adult general socialisation and political socialisation. The latter is the learning process by which people acquire political cognition, attitudes, and behaviours (Greenstein (1965), Hyman (1959), Niemi (1974, 1995), Sapiro (2004), Sigel (1965), *et al.*) or, in other words, the process by which a given

¹²⁸ Public schools were open and free to all residents until the 2000s, when enrolment of expatriates was limited to 20 percent of the student body (personal interview with UAE Arab resident, Facebook chat, April 2014). Moreover, the enrolment of Emirati students in private schools has increased to over 50%, where children of all nationalities attend (al-Mulla, 2011: 20).

'political culture'¹²⁹ is attained (Almond & Verba (1963, 1980), Pye (1971), Inglehart (1988, 2000), *et al.*). All these new ways of interacting form part of both the 'manifest and the 'latent' processes of political socialisation, for they involve the direct communication of information, values or feelings towards political objects, for instance, through school curricula; while they also entail the transmission of non-political values that affect attitudes towards analogous roles and objects in the political system, for example, through family interaction (Almond & Verba, 1963).¹³⁰ It is within this context that, adding to the debate around the validity of the rentier state theory for the study of state-society relations in the Gulf (Aarts & Nonneman, 2005; Gray, 2011; Foley, 2010; Herb, 2009; Hertog, 2010a & 2010b; Hudson, 1995; Niblock, 2007; Ross, 2001), I suggest that rentierism should not be considered the only or main factor determining political culture in rentier states, for it inevitably brings attached unexpected or 'collateral effects' that affect the process of political socialisation. Thus, I argue that the rentier nature of a state does not necessarily keep people uninterested in politics indefinitely, but does actually enhance political awareness in the long term through the exposure to new or reshaped 'agents of political socialisation'¹³¹ (i.e. the people and institutions that transmit political values to society).

"Look around and be grateful" goes a say often repeated by both Emirati nationals and long-term middle and high-class residents. This thinking falls within the RST argument that state-society relations in rentier states are based in a social contract by which the ruled renounce to political rights in return of the wealth distributed by the rulers. Contrary to this, however, some Emiratis explain that there is a real sense of respect and pride for the leadership among nationals; a perception that arouses from the consideration of many that it was the rulers' "wisdom and vision" that made it possible for Emiratis to live as they do today, and that even if oil depleted they would "stay loyal to them".¹³² However, despite nationals generally displaying a high level of respect towards

¹²⁹ Political culture is understood here as political orientations (cognitive, affective and evaluative) towards the political system as a general object, the 'input' and 'output' objects, and the self as an object (Almond & Verba, 1963).

¹³⁰ The political culture and the political socialisation approaches are explained in more detail in the Theoretical Framework.

¹³¹ The agents of political socialisation include the family and friends, the school, the religious temple or clerics (if there are any involved), the work group, associations and/or political parties, the media, and the government institutions.

¹³² Personal interviews with UAEU students. Al-Ain, UAE (April 2011-March 2012).

their rulers, this seems to be especially the case among the elder generations, but feelings tend to be slightly different when it comes to those born from the 1970s onwards. Being raised in the welfare state, the younger generations of Emiratis have developed a concept of citizenship that brings attached governmental services and benefits but very few responsibilities, and this creates higher expectations but less compromise.¹³³ As the survey exploitation presented in Part II of this dissertation shows difference in perceptions of leadership also varies among Emirates, being the people of the Northern emirates more critical of authorities (and especially of Federal institutions) than in Abu Dhabi or Dubai (see chapter 5). In this regard, it can be argued that a gradual detachment from the ruling elites is taking place among some sectors of society, which has to do with age, socio economic differences between Emirates, as well as with the changes that the agents of political socialisation have undergone since the establishment of the UAE. Moreover, some Emiratis express their opinion that the rulers should not be regarded as “superior human beings” but as “equals to their people”¹³⁴ and, as is further explained in Chapter 3, there are important sectors of society that support political reform.

Regarding foreigners, Vora (2013) has explained how Indian businessmen and middle-class long-term Indian residents who describe Dubai as a place of “freedom” where they find better business opportunities than back home, regard the country as a second home and points “to a need for scholars to understand how multiple logics of belonging and citizenship circulate not only in the Gulf, but within all contemporary spaces” (Vora, 2013: 115). Similarly, several UAEU students with passports from different countries, but who were born and raised in the UAE, expressed their feeling of belonging to the UAE and the detachment from their parents’ homeland, which they regard as a place for vacation. In this regard, a Pakistani student said to be grateful for the chance she was given to study a university degree, as it was something she would have probably not have been able to do in Pakistan; while an Egyptian student said to be worried about the cultural shock she would go through if she had to go to live to Cairo in case her family was expelled from the UAE due to the Arab Spring events.¹³⁵

¹³³ Personal interviews with UAEU students. Al-Ain, UAE (April 2011-March 2012).

¹³⁴ Personal interview with Sharjah University students. Sharjah, UAE (March 2011).

¹³⁵ Personal interviews with UAEU students. Al-Ain (May 2011 and November 2011).

6.1. Political socialisation within the Emirati family

Parents and schools socialize individuals in the dominant values of the society in which one grows up, and are therefore generally considered to be the main shapers of basic attitudes. Even though education is fundamental, since it is at schools where official discourses are transmitted, the first stage of political socialisation takes place within the family. Reasonably, in households where parents often discuss political issues children are expected to become politically active adults, whereas in family environments where political conversations are rare, children are discouraged to engage in politics. According to my informants, political conversations are rare within the Emirati domestic environment or, and that families tend to teach their children “there are some taboo topics, including politics and religion.”¹³⁶ Moreover, and falling within the latent verge of the process of political socialisation, children are raised in a patriarchal environment that teaches them to follow strict rules and not to question those above them in the family, and therefore in the social hierarchy, hence inculcating a submissive attitude towards political authorities.

Figure 7: Individuals per household by emirate (2005)¹³⁷

Abu Dhabi	8.5
Dubai	7.6
Sharjah	6.9
Ajman	6.8
UAQ	7.8
RAK	6.8
Fujairah	8.6
Average	7.6

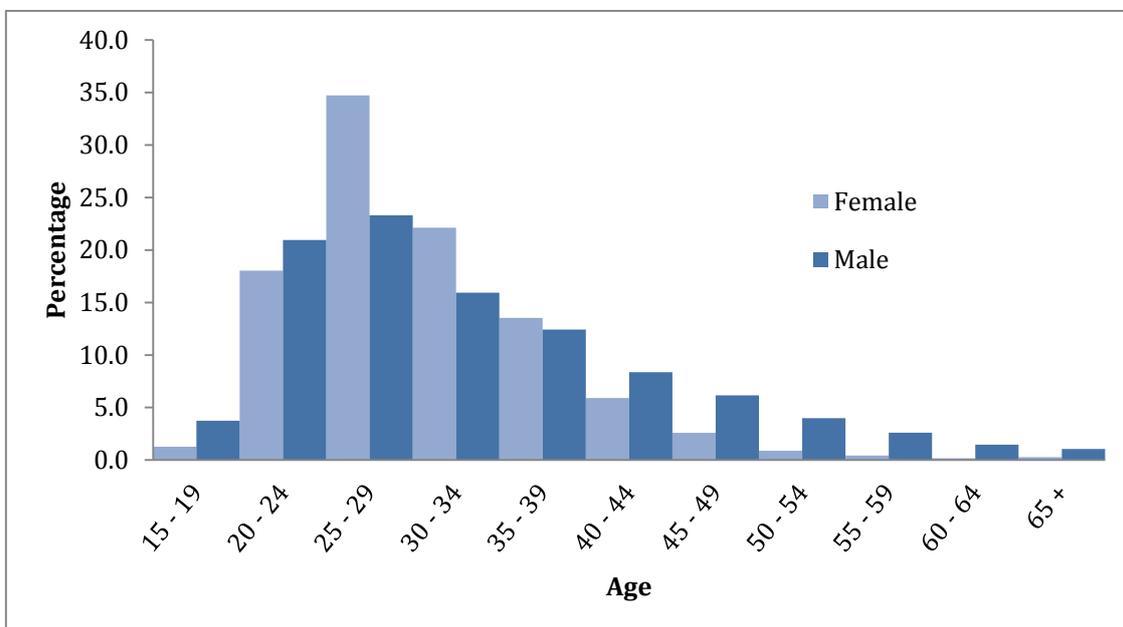
The extended family remains important and its members are to a large extent asked to respond to kinship ties affiliation. The average of individuals per household is of 7.6 (see figure 7). In this regard, Sara A. Crabtree has explained how in the UAE “access to institutions, jobs and government services is often through family connections” (Crabtree, 2007: 575). Similarly to other Arab countries, in the UAE one’s destiny is intrinsically linked to the connections and influence him/herself of his/her family have within the community: the

¹³⁶ Personal interview with Emirati university student. Al-Ain, UAE (March 2012).

¹³⁷ Source: National Bureau of Statistics (census data).

wasta. This is regarded, “especially by those who do not have *wasta*, as a means to gain what seems an undeserved advantage or as a mechanism that yields decisions based on connections instead of merit;” while academics consider it “a source of nepotism, cronyism and corruption generally” (Barnett, Yandle & Naufal, 2013: 41-43). Likewise, and related to *wasta*, appears the issue of family reputation or honour, which implies that the individual must take into consideration the impact that any of its actions will have on the rest of the family, which is directly linked with the image the community at large holds of one’s family (Joseph, 1996: 199). Thus, the tribe and/or family one belongs to are of crucial importance for Emiratis.

Figure 8: Percentage distribution of employed Emiratis by age and sex¹³⁸



Nevertheless, kinship relationships have been affected to a large extent by rentierism. Government housing has not always taken into account tribal affiliation and, therefore, members of the same tribe do not necessarily live in the same neighbourhoods (Longva, 2005: 128). Thus, “the structural system of the city (...) separates the individual from the environment of local community relationship” (el-Haddad, 2003: 2), providing citizens with new spaces for interaction and allowing the younger generations to act more freely, away from the extended family scrutiny. However, it has been argued that in the past women had to contribute to the economy and therefore had to participate in

¹³⁸ 15 years and over. Source: National Bureau of Statistics (census data).

public life, enjoying more social freedom (especially in the rural areas), and that urbanisation has to some extent limited their freedom of movement (Tétréault, 2000; Willoughby, 2008). Nevertheless, governmental policies have encouraged and promoted women's incorporation into the educational system and the job market, thus creating new spaces where women have found ways of exercising their freedom individually. In this regard, Figure 8 shows how the younger Emirati women have become more employable than their mothers. Moreover, women from conservative families, which are reluctant to allow their girls to study or work, are grateful for the role that the authorities have played in encouraging the education and employability of national women officially.¹³⁹

Regarding marriage, it is customary that families arrange them and, although the current law states that both parties must be willing to marry, family pressure often makes people accept undesired marriages. On the other hand, some women choose to marry early to attain freedom from their families, either through an early divorce –divorced or widowed women have more liberty in choosing a new husband (Kour, 1991: 191)–, and even sometimes Emiratis marry in agreement with a friend just to content both families (and perceive the governmental subsidy). For instance, a student in her early twenties confessed to be considering marriage with a friend from childhood who would be acceptable for her parents, just to avoid being married to a relative that was proposing and under the agreement of getting a divorce shortly after; another young woman was thinking of either failing on purpose to stay one more year at university, or leaving the country to avoid being forced to marry someone she had not chosen after graduation;¹⁴⁰ and an administrative assistant at UAEU shared with me the hardship she was going through after having accepted to marry her Omani cousin under the promise that she would be allowed to study postgraduate studies if she did.¹⁴¹ Thus, despite the legal framework has been reformed in ways to recognise more women rights, the UAE remains a very segregated and male dominated society and many young women feel they have not yet achieved the right to self-determination or real freedom of choice. Consequently, women tend to prolong their studies to avoid facing marriage proposals and the attached family pressure.

¹³⁹ Personal interviews with UAEU female students, staff and professors. Al-Ain, UAE (April 2011-March 2012).

¹⁴⁰ Personal interviews with UAEU female students. Al-Ain, UAE (December 2011).

¹⁴¹ Personal interviews with UAEU administrative assistant. Al-Ain, UAE (February 2012).

The fact that family structure is gradually changing affected by urbanism and education, among other factors, towards a more individualistic model that distances young nationals from their parents' social patterns reflects the development of critical thinking, which in turn is expected to impact upon the concept of authority and, ultimately, upon political behaviour. Moreover, it is indicative that other agents have undertaken a more important role in children's socialization, significantly reducing the family's role in this process. In this regard, the educational system constitutes a "powerful source of socialization that competes strongly with traditional family roles" (el-Haddad, 2003: 4), due to the exposure to alternative perspectives of peers and teachers, who are respected sources of information.

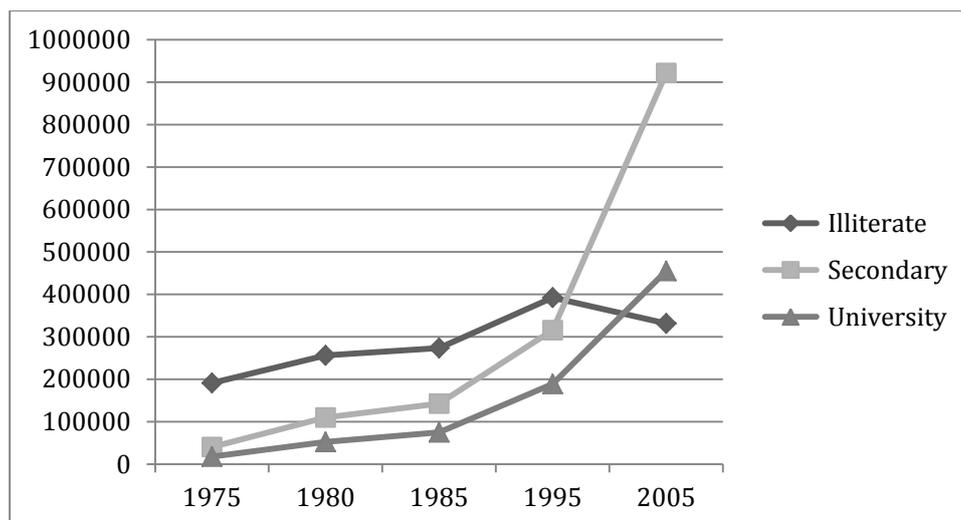
6.2. Political socialisation through education

Education in authoritarian contexts is generally assumed to strengthen attachment and loyalty to the political status quo since it is often controlled or influenced by the ruling elites (Nisbet & Myers, 2010: 142). It can be therefore considered not only an agent of political socialisation, but also a further power resource. However, even if the UAE government has carefully designed school and university curricula to avoid controversial political topics that could elicit doubts in students regarding the established political system, as well as to prevent the development of critical thinking capacity, political views are influenced indirectly by the exchange of ideas that takes place with local and foreign professors with different ideologies, and with peers from different backgrounds. As Melikian has put it, "besides the transmission of knowledge, teachers may consciously or otherwise transmit some of their political, social and religious attitudes to their students (...) since they are often taken as models, with whom their students identify" (Melikian, 1988: 122). This is part of the cultural globalisation Emirati students are exposed to, which included the flow of symbols, images, languages and other forms of cultural expressions that connect regions, civilisations and continents, and which is gradually creating a sense of global identity or belongingness (Held *et al.*, 1999: 16).

Until the early 1900s, education in the UAE was carried out at homes or at the *kuttāb* (elementary school attached to the mosque), where the curricula were based on the Qur'an and the Hadith or teachings of the Prophet (Kour, 1991:

253).¹⁴² The first formal schools for boys were established by merchant philanthropists in Sharjah were the al-Tatwiriyya (1907) and al-Qasimi (1923) schools; and in Dubai, the al-Ahmadiyya (1912), al-Salmiyya (1923) and al-Falah (1926) (Davidson, 2008: 24-27). However, during the hardship years that followed the decline of the pearl industry many socio-economic projects went into decline, including formal education institutions that were briefly reinstated in 1938. After the Dubai Reform Movement succeeded, the merchants regained some political power and set up a proper education department, which again was undermined once the movement was put down and did not recover until the 1950s. During that decade aid arrived from the wealthier emirate of Kuwait, which financed the salaries of teachers (predominantly Egyptian and Palestinian) and provided with school uniforms and stationary (Davidson, 2008: 31-32). Some of the old schools expanded (al-Ahmadiyya in Dubai had around 820 students in 1951) and new ones opened, including al-Falahiyya and al-Batin in 1961 in Abu Dhabi. Around that time also, the first school for girls was opened in Dubai: the Khawla bint al-Azwar School. In parallel, Saudi Arabia opened several Islamic education institutions in Dubai (1962), al-Ain (1967), Ras al-Khaimah (1967), and Ajman (1969). Likewise, the Shah of Persia government and the Indian merchants established their own schools, to provide education to their communities.

Figure 9: Population by Educational status (1975-2005)¹⁴³



¹⁴² This education system was also known as the *muṭawa'a* system. The *muṭawa'a* was the religious man, often an *imām* or cleric, who taught the children (Davidson, 2008: 25).

¹⁴³ Source: National Bureau of Statistics (census data).

Finally, after independence, the ministry of education was set up and the number of schools rapidly raised, an increased proportion of which was for girls (Davidson, 2008: 30-36). As Figure 9 reflects, literacy rates have increased very rapidly during the last four decades. Although each Emirate initially designed its own school curricula, matching the tendency towards political federal centralisation all national schools eventually unified textbooks. In response to questions of religious legitimacy, following the Islamic Revolution of Iran, the UAE rulers appointed several religious people to the Ministry of Education, as well as to others. Arguably, many of them had become influenced by the ideology of the Egyptian organisation of the Muslim Brotherhood and, consequently, education was until the late 1990s very much influenced by Islamist ideas.¹⁴⁴ Finally, these elements were fought against especially fiercely after the 9/11 attacks, and more are since the Arab Spring is being indiscriminately persecuted.¹⁴⁵

School political socialisation in the UAE depends much in whether you attend a public or private school, and there are a variety of views on the issue. Some parents prefer to enrol their children in private schools because it offers proper English education, which facilitates access to universities and enhances job opportunities, while they also think that the international mix in private schools will definitely be useful when their kids work with people from different nationalities. However, other parents worry about the influence foreign teachers and classmates might have on their children on their children's discipline (al-Mulla, 2011: 21-22). Additionally, there is a widespread concern that the growing impact of English language is damaging the Arabic language competence, and that the younger generations cannot express themselves properly in neither English nor Arabic, and over the erosion of religious orientations.¹⁴⁶ However, it should be noted that, the number of Emirati students

¹⁴⁴ Personal interviews with Emirati professor. Dubai (March 2014).

¹⁴⁵ See section on Political Activism in Chapter 3.

¹⁴⁶ Personal interview with an Emirati professor. Al-Ain, UAE (April 2011). The Arabic spoken in the Gulf already includes words from the languages of the peoples they have interacted with, including Farsi, Urdu, Hindi, and Swahili, and people even use variations of words and accents in different UAE regions. Nevertheless, the influence of English is currently the most visible. In this regard, Beeman mentions a Gulf form of 'Sprachbund' (Beeman, 2009: 148), a linguistic situation where there is strong influence between different languages, even from different linguistic families. Since the influence of English has become so prominent, Gulf Arabic has begun to be called 'Arabish'.

attending private schools has been gradually increasing over the last 10 years to over fifty percent (al-Mulla, 2011: 21).

The United Arab Emirates University of al-Ain was the first to open in the country in 1977, but the opening of other public higher education institutions has proliferated during the last two decades, including the federal Zayed University and Higher Colleges of Technology; as well public local universities in each emirate, such as the University of Sharjah, the University of Ajman or the Khalifa University in Abu Dhabi; and branches of international private universities, such as the American and the British Universities in Dubai, or the New York University and the Sorbonne University in Abu Dhabi. Another particular aspect of higher education has been (and increasingly is) the periods of study that Emirati students spend in foreign (mostly western) countries. By spending several years living abroad, many students develop positive perspectives about the possible enhancement of participatory politics and transparent practices in their countries. In fact, there is a generation of “Western-educated technocrats”, some of whom are “no longer so closely in touch with the traditional social system” (Heard-Bey, 2005: 369). However, others have developed anti-Western feelings due to bad experiences in those countries, or disapproval of their liberal customs, thus becoming more religious and recruitable by Islamist organisations.¹⁴⁷

Regarding higher education, the exchange of views over more controversial topics is likely to form, reinforce or challenge existing political beliefs among students. Thus, it is considered the environment in which people become more engaged in politics (Niemi & Hepburn, 1995: 7-16). In the UAE, even though the curricula are government supervised, the majority of professors teaching at both public and private universities are either Arabs from outside the Gulf or Westerners. This makes it difficult to avoid students from being influenced by a wide range of ideas that compete with what they have been taught at home and the school. Interestingly, the gender imbalance is huge when it comes to national university registration. While women find university as way out of the tight control families generally exercise over them, and therefore try to attend as many years as possible; men attain their independence through their

¹⁴⁷ This is reflected in the comments of some Islamist Emiratis in the media (See section on Political Tendencies in Chapter 3).

incorporation to the job market and the perception of a salary of their own. In fact, male students underperformance takes place at all levels, with Emirati schoolboys dropping out of high school at four times the rate compared to the girls, twice as many boys failing high school compared to the girls, and only 30% of men enrolling in higher education compared to 70% for women (Ridge, 2009).¹⁴⁸ In a paper exploring the reasons for low male university enrolment, Fatma Abdulla and Natasha Ridge explain that “males view connections in pursuit of employment opportunities as more potent in achieving social and economic mobility than attainment in higher education” (Abdulla & Ridge, 2011: 12). The fact that Emirati men can access well-paid governmental jobs with basic education contributes to the development of a ‘rentier mentality’ (Beblawi & Luciani, 1990: 87-88) and can therefore be interpreted as a governmental redistributive measure intended at preventing men from becoming “too” educated (see Table 10).

Table 10: Percentage Distribution of Emiratis Employed by Educational Status¹⁴⁹

Educational Status	Male	Female	Total
Illiterate	3.01	0.89	2.58
Read & Write	4.1	1.01	3.46
Primary	8.0	1.2	6.6
Preparatory	19.6	4.3	16.4
Secondary	41.4	30.4	39.2
Below University	4.7	9.8	5.7
University	16.7	48.8	23.3
Above University	2.5	3.4	2.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

In a lecture delivered by Omar Ghobash (2013, March 18), he explained how he realised, as he became an adult and was confronted with regional and international events that touched him, that he had not been given the analytical instruments to understand why those things happened and where he stood in relation to them. An analysis of his own experience made him recognise that in the UAE (and in other Arab countries) “all politics starts off as personal to each

¹⁴⁸ Higher dropout and university no-show rates of young men are higher in the poorer northern emirates than in Abu Dhabi or Dubai (Abdulla & Ridge, 2011: 12).

¹⁴⁹ 15 years and over. Source: National Bureau of Statistics (census data).

individual as he finds himself faced with questions and situations that puzzle him.” For him this happened in several stages: while he was conducting university studies in the UK and engaged in conversations with friends about Middle Eastern issues; when the 9/11 attacks took place; and with the assassination of Lebanese politician Rafiq Hariri in 2004. In his public lecture, Ghobash explained how he decided to take the responsibility of finding answers to the existential, socio-political, historical and ethical religious questions he was being puzzled by.

This is very similar to the experiences described by many of the students I interviewed in the UAE, who said to have begun searching for answers to similar questions since they entered university, and as they became aware of regional socio-political events that involved Arab and Islamic neighbouring countries,¹⁵⁰ hence reflecting the importance that higher education has on political socialisation in the UAE. In fact, political activism at the UAEU campus reflects the general Emirati political standpoints (see chapter 3), with two groups being predominant: the Islamists and the liberals. Interestingly, in October 2011 a “final warning” letter was sent to female students to stop giving lectures that included political topics in the campus mosque (see Annex 13); and a booklet against the Muslim Brotherhood doctrines started to be freely distributed among UAEU students since the Spring of 2014 (see photographed cover in Annex 5).

6.3. Political socialisation through the media

Additionally, it has been argued that the mass media, and especially the Internet and the online social networks, are playing a decisive role in the engagement of the younger generations into cultural globalisation, and therefore in the development of political awareness (Nisbet & Myers, 2010: 142). Although the UAE population had had access to regional radio broadcasts during decades, it was not until 1966 that the first official radio station was established in Abu Dhabi (Boyd, 1999), and other since mushroomed. Followed by Abu Dhabi Television in 1969, Dubai gained their first channel in 1972, one English channel in each of the former emirates a few years later, and Sharjah Television in 1989 (Ayish, 2013: 14). The content offered by the very few channels available showed censored local news, Arab soap operas and

¹⁵⁰ Personal interviews with Emirati UAEU students. Al-Ain (UAE April 2011-March 2012). See Survey Analysis in Part II of this dissertation.

religious and cultural programmes, but since the early 1990s the UAE broadcasters went international on satellite (Ayish, 2013: 15) and people started to watch a wide range of contents. Naturally, rentierism accelerated the process by which the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) reached the Emirati household and today they are among the highest media exposed societies (see Table 11).

Table 11: ICTs Penetration Rates (2012)¹⁵¹

	Fixed line telephone subscriptions	Mobile-cellular telephone subscriptions	Computers/ household	Internet access/ household	Individuals using the Internet
World	17%	91%	41%	37%	36%
Developed	43%	124%	75%	74%	73%
Developing	11%	84%	28%	24%	28%
Arab States	9%	102%	34%	30%	34%
UAE	50%	98%	85%	72%	85%

Regarding the Internet, it was the people who first complained about the content accessible after public access became available in 1995 throughout the UAE. In Dubai, for instance, the Parent-Teachers Association “complained that addresses for pornographic websites were being circulated around schools” (Murphy, 2006: 1072). As a consequence, the government did initially not face popular opposition to the monitoring of Internet traffic. However, as Emiratis became more educated and exposed to the influence of other agents of political socialisation, concerns raised over media censorship and freedom of expression among some sectors of society. Especially the very Internet savvy Emirati youth is very critical of these policies and have learned how to curtail governmental censorship. Not surprisingly, an Emirati student complained that many Internet sites are blocked in the UAE and confessed that they therefore have to use proxies to find their way around to get hold of some information, especially to gain access to objective opinions regarding UAE politics.¹⁵² In fact, most political debate in the UAE (and the Gulf) currently takes place over the Internet, where young people (and increasingly adults) find spaces where they can express their opinions more freely and, if they will, anonymously, in addition

¹⁵¹ Source: International Telecommunication Union (www.itu.int)

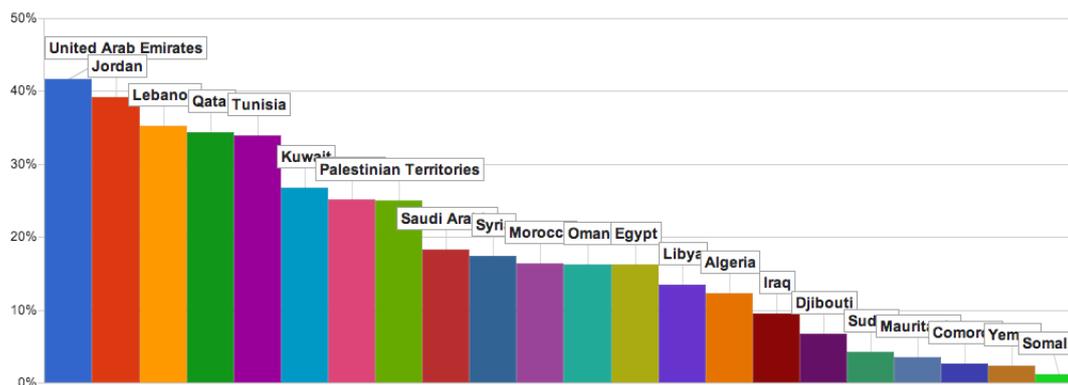
¹⁵² Personal interviews with UAEU student. Al-Ain, Abu Dhabi, UAE (March 2012).

to being able to engage in gendered mixed discussions, which are rare in the still very segregated Emirati national society.

Overall, the Arab public is exposed to three main discourses over the ICTs: First, regime's nationalistic propaganda is continuously delivered through national television, newspapers and magazines, as well as on radio programs, on Internet websites, and through social media. Secondly, the Islamist tenets also reach Arab households through all media outlets. Finally, Western principles and values are currently dominant in the entertainment media consumed by the Arab youth (Mellor, 2005: 5), including most of the American or European films, television comedies and dramas, music, and video games, which also contain much political content. Moreover, Nisbet and Myers (2010) find evidence that "exposure to transnational Arab TV increases the probability of transnational Muslim and Arab political identification at the expense of national political" (Nisbet & Myers, 2010: 347). In this regard, after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the development of Gulf TV satellite channels (first the Saudi MBC channels and al-Arabiya, then the Qatari al-Jazeera) rapidly unfolded to prevent the influence of the Iraqi television propaganda upon the local, and more broadly the Arab populations. Moreover, these channels challenge the dominant Western perspective over regional events by presenting information from an Arab or Muslim perspective. More specifically, al-Jazeera has played during the last decades an important role in forming more politically critical Arab public opinion because it "challenge(s) traditional social norms as much as they do the state, breaking taboos by discussing controversial topics" (Murphy, 2006: 1069-70).

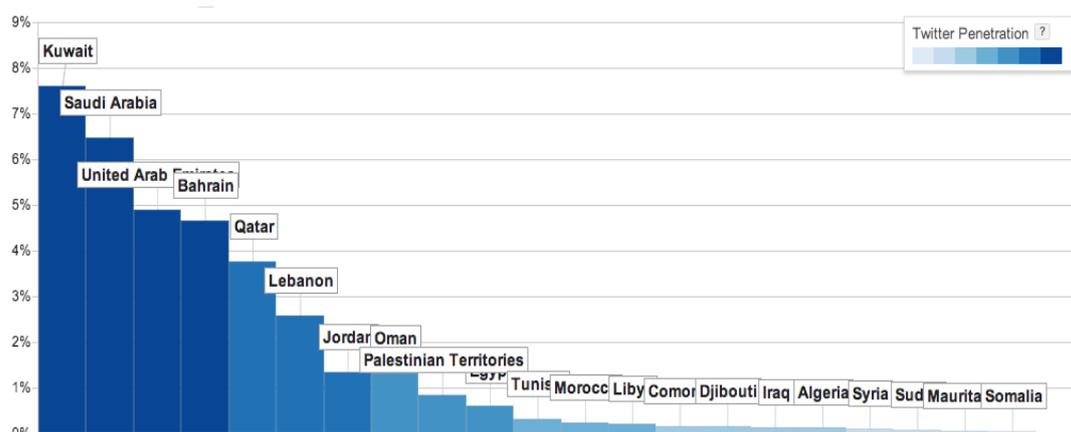
Regarding the Gulf, Murphy has examined the possible role played by the ICTs (mainly satellite television and the Internet) in stimulating political liberalisation, and concludes that since modern ICTs have the potential to expand the existing public sphere, they do create new opportunities for political activity (Murphy, 2006: 1059). Nonetheless, she appropriately explains "any democratising impact of the new ICTs is limited by a combination of...the capacity of the state to utilise those same ICTs in its own defence" and "the introduction of new non-state actors seeking to assert their own hegemony-directly or non-directly-over the consumers of the technologies" (Murphy, 2006: 1066).

Figure 10: Facebook penetration rates (2013)¹⁵³



The Internet and the recent social media networks differs from other ICTs socializing agents in that it allows for high degree of individual choice among a wide and diverse range of materials. In turn, however, the many material and ideological options available may sometimes cause disorientation (Jensen, 1995: 519-530). In this regard, the Arab Social Media Report (ASMR) series has explored the growth of social media in the Arab region, and the change from social to a wider, more political and civic, usage (Mourtada & Salem, 2012: 2-3). According to ASMR data, the UAE has the highest Facebook penetration rate in the region (41.66%) with Jordan, Lebanon, Qatar and Tunisia trailing behind, and has the third highest Twitter penetration rate (4.89%) after Kuwait and Saudi Arabia (see Figures 10 and 11).

Figure 11: Twitter penetration rates (2013)¹⁵⁴



Moreover, it loosens governmental (and parental) control over the contents of the media consumed, creating new spaces for discussion and the exchange of ideas, and promotes transnational political identities and mobilization (Lynch,

¹⁵³ Source: Arab Social Media Report (www.ArabSocialMediaReport.com).

¹⁵⁴ Source: Arab Social Media Report (www.ArabSocialMediaReport.com).

2006: 52). In this regard, Murphy has noted “Arab use of ICTs and the emergent Arab public sphere are fostering (multiple) identities among Arab populations which overlap or integrate with more global identities, and (are) reconfiguring Arab notions of self and otherness” (Murphy, 2009: 1141-1142). Despite censorship and surveillance still prevents the Arab physical and virtual public spheres from being an open space for debate, Arab regimes have had to adapt to the growing ability of Arab citizens to access uncensored information (Eickelman, 2002: 20), and “can no longer ignore the reality of the emerging public sphere that is growing in strength and vitality in the Arab world” (al-Jenaibi, 2008: 58-59). In the UAE, the recent detentions of political activists were intrinsically linked to their political activities over the Internet, therefore showing that both liberal and Islamist Emirati activists have been using online forums and social networks for political discussion. Finally, the reform of the media law to strengthen the regime control over these activities is a clear evidence of its potentiality to influence citizens’ political culture, and of the threat it represents for the maintenance of the status quo.¹⁵⁵

To sum up, we can see how the transformation of old and the emergence of new agents of political socialisation were fast-forwarded by the rentier nature of the UAE, in addition to the ensuing incorporation of its society into the global capitalist system in both its economic and cultural spheres, as well as by the access of people to education, international media and new means of communication. Although the family is generally the most influencing agent, the generational gap that exists in the UAE between the rather conservative adults and a more globalised and open-minded youth, has contributed to the educational environment (especially the university) and the ITCs to become more determinant in the acquisition or awareness of political standpoints. The impact these developments have had on the process of political socialisation of Emiratis can therefore be considered an unexpected collateral effect of a rentier state apparatus aimed at manipulating social-political mobilisation through the control of the state and the rent, and by constructing a national identity discourse (i.e. the ruling elite’s three main resources of power).

¹⁵⁵ See section on the Post-Arab Spring landscape in the UAE, in Chapter 3.

Conclusion

UAE society has changed from being eminently tribal in its socio-political organisation, but multicultural in its composition and connected to the world through maritime trade over centuries; across a period of socio-economic stagnation and isolation from the world during the British protectorate; and to a phase of reconnection with the world (and with new worlds) since the discovery of oil, and the subsequent integration into global capitalism. Those dynamics have influenced the conformation of the contemporary socio-political structures and explain the establishment and endurance of authoritarian rule in the UAE. Moreover, the federal institutional setting and legal framework, as well as the 'state-crafted' policies of citizenship and national identity, have been directed at portraying the ruling Emirs as the legitimate and ideal ruling elite, and at nurturing a feeling of affection and loyalty towards them, and a feeling of belonging to the UAE among the population.

Despite the differences between historical coastal and inland oriented societies and, although they have influenced each other, the tendency has been towards a hierarchical social organisation that primarily organises along tribal and ethnic lines; and which is supported by legislation that privileges the tribal aristocracy and limits nationalisation to a select group of people. Additionally, these experiences and strategies that serve to legitimise the rulers, have at the same time caused several social problems such as the demographic imbalance, national identity issues, the discrimination towards nationals of non-Arab or non-tribal backgrounds, the social exclusion of the children of Emirati women married to foreign fathers, or the situation of the bidun.

To conclude, state and society formation have taken place in parallel to the transformation of the basic shapers of political culture: the family, the educational system and the mass media (the main agents of political socialisation). Effective redistribution of oil rents has prevented political awareness and activism in the short term, but has also facilitated and accelerated the exposure of citizens to new or reformed agents of political socialisation since the 1970s: the unexpected outcomes of rentierism. Thus, rentierism is regarded here as indirectly enhancing political awareness in the long-term, hence affecting state-society relations.

Chapter 3: RULERS APPROACH TO POLITICAL SOCIALISATION

The previous chapter explains how merchants were key political actors in the coastal towns of the Gulf during pre-British days: rulers depended on custom duties and pearling taxes, often needing to ask merchants for financial assistance; rulers, in return, protected merchants' trade with their armed forces. However, if rulers' tax levies were too heavy, merchants could move to another town to carry out their commercial activities. Therefore, rulers had no other option but to consider their opinions, to the point of granting them representation in advisory boards or *Majālis*.¹⁵⁶ Merchants, both Arabs and non-Arabs, tribal and non-tribal, have been hence seen as associated to the 'de facto government' led by the ruler during pre-British times (al-Sayegh, 1998: 90-91). This interdependent relationship was gradually lessened as rulers began to perceive external rents, first from the British and then from oil exports, making them less economically dependent on merchants.

However, the latter did not accept the new reality without revolting, and several political movements emerged during the 20th century demanding popular political participation. The first section of this chapter presents a historical account of political activism in the UAE from the 1920s until today, while the second discusses the most recent events regarding the ruling elites' response to demands for political reform during the last decade (2005-2014). It also includes a section explaining the government's plans for gradual political liberalisation, which were announced in 2005, and examines the main steps given in this direction; an analysis of the 2006 and 2011 Federal National Council (FNC) elections; and an evaluation of the post-Arab Spring landscape.

1. Historical political activism in the UAE

Several political movements emerged during the 20th century, mainly in Dubai although closely related to the other emirates, especially Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah (RAK), which had a longer tradition of maritime trade than the

¹⁵⁶ The Arabic term *Majlis* (pl. *Majālis*) is used to name the social gatherings that men (and increasingly women, or mixed) hold in a specific section of the family house which is designed for this use, and in which people discuss all kind of issues, including politics. Also this term is used to name the consultative forums held by the rulers or senior members of the ruling families to meet their people and listen to their grievances, which although not so often as in the past, still take place in the Gulf. By extension of this second use, *Majlis* has been used to name the councils or parliaments of many contemporary Arab and Islamic states.

predominantly inland oriented emirate of Abu Dhabi. As described in chapter two, Dubai had become the main port of the Trucial Coast and therefore had the largest population, which was ethnically heterogeneous and well connected with other regional ports. Among the most notable merchants were members of the Al Maktoum ruling family who suffered the 1930s economic depression and the British restrictions to their activities. In contrast, through the signature of agreements and concessions with the British, the ruler's position was strengthened and his personal finances improved. Accordingly, it is not surprising that a merchants-led political movement emerged at a time when not only their wealth, but also their political influence in society was diminishing. In fact, the account of the events by Rosemarie Zahlan (1970) shows how, even though the movement was "naive in political concept, [it] insisted on the formation of a representative Council with executive and administrative powers [and conducted reforms of] commercial, political and social nature, [hence belying] the accepted tradition of political apathy [in the UAE]" (Zahlan, 1970: 249-263).

1.1. The Dubai reform movement

The first uprising against the authority of the ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Sa'id bin Maktoum Al Maktoum, took place in 1929 when some members of the Al Maktoum (led by Mani' and Hashar bin Rashid, and Suhayl and Sa'id bin Butti) allied with notables of the ruler's council who opposed his policies and relationship with Britain. The anti-colonialist movement succeeded in proclaiming Mani' bin Rashid ruler of Dubai on 15th April of that same year, but without the agreement of the British, Sheikh Sa'id was restored in power only three days after (Zahlan, 1970: 250-251). However, his authority continued to be questioned by his cousins as reflected by a series of events that took place during the following years. In 1931 a boat of the British India Steam Navigation Company collided with one of the boats of Sa'id bin Butti, who threatened and refused to meet the British officers, despite finally accepting to apologise and make reparations. Only three years later (1934) members of the Bin Rashid and Bin Butti families unsuccessfully attempted on the ruler's life. Again, the British reasserted their support to Sheikh Sa'id bin Maktoum and, for the first time, overtly intervened in a local struggle, providing the ruler with fire arms and flying Royal Armed Forces fighter planes low over the town (Davidson, 2005: 39 and

2008: 31-32). A *majlis* held by the ruler, during which families of the Al Bu Falasah clan recognised his position, was followed by a visit paid by members of the Manasir tribe, forcing rebellious Bin Rashid and Bin Butti to take an oath of loyalty to Shaikh Sa'id. Moreover, the ruler wisely appointed Sa'id bin Butti as governor of Deira, which in turn infuriated Mani' and Hashar bin Rashid (Zahlan, 1970: 250-252).

Nonetheless, further opposition to Sheikh Sa'id bin Maktoum emerged within the Al Bu Falasah shortly after. This conflict was above all related to the ruler's contention with policies imposed by the British, such as measures to reduce slave trade and arms traffic, which were important sources of income during the interwar period. Additionally, in 1937 Sheikh Sa'id signed oil and air agreements that guaranteed him fixed annual incomes, which he was neither sharing with his extended family nor had an impact on the town's development. Consequently, in May 1938, the Al Bu Falasah presented a petition to Sahikh Sa'id that listed their demands: "a Budget and Civil List; proper arrangements for health and sanitation in the town of Dubai; a Watch and Ward service; re-organisation of the Customs department; fixed allowances for members of the Ruling Family; the abolition of the monopolies held by the Ruler, his wife and son," etc. (Zahlan, 1970: 256-257). Since there was no positive response to their demands, the most significant upheaval took place during the summer of 1938, which was known as the Dubai Reform Movement: The Bin Rashid, Bin Dalmuk, al-Ghurair, and Bin Thani families, encouraged by the Kuwaiti Reform Movement, mobilised about 400 people (Davidson, 2008: 32-36), who occupied several towers, the Deira side of the town (including its customs house), and placed the ruler in a weak position.

After long negotiations, an agreement was reached in October 1938 with the mediation of several sheikhs and the British, through which the self-called Dubai Reform Movement (Thawrat al-Islah) succeeded in achieving many of their demands. A Council or *Majlis* was set up, which was "made up of fifteen members selected by the 'principal people' of Dubai, and any operative decision had to be passed by a majority" (Zahlan, 1970: 258). The ruler was recognised as its president, but he was forced to share 85 percent (seven-eighths) of the total revenue, which was to be spent to improve social conditions and to enhance economic activity in the town. They further established a Council of

Merchants (*Majlis al-Tujjar*), as well as the first Municipal Council (*Baladiyya*) of the Trucial States, and invested particularly in developing the education sector.

However, the decision of the *Majlis* in 1939 to limit even more the ruler's income coincided with the gradual manifestation of resentment among some people who reportedly felt "that for one despot there had merely been substituted a board of despotism" (Political Resident, cited in Zahlan, 1970: 261), as they felt their ideals and good intentions were "dissipated by self-interest" (Zahlan, 1970: 261). Relying on British and Bedouin support, Sheikh Sa'id bin Maktoum resorted to force killing or imprisoning most members of the *Majlis* and, therefore, bringing to an end what was regarded at that time by British Officials and other Arab countries' journalists as a 'popular', 'democratic' or 'liberal modernist movement'. The main leader of the movement, Mani' bin Rashid, who acted as the spokesman of the *Majlis* and the Director of Education, together with around half of the members, fled to Sharjah and finally moved to Bombay. By the end of the 1940s, a new Merchants' Council was created that continued developing some of the previous council initiatives, but had no executive power at all (Davidson, 2005: 39-41 and 2008: 32-36; Heard-Bey, 1982: 256; al-Sayegh, 1998: 95-96; Zahlan, 1970: 247-263).

1.2. The Dubai National Front

During the 1950s, Gulf opposition movements were "directly influenced by political movements in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt" (Melikian, 1988: 119). Newspapers from these countries that openly criticized the British presence in the Gulf and their close relations to the rulers already reached the UAE populations (al-Sagri, 1988: 143), as did programmes air waved especially to the Gulf by Egyptian transnational Arabic-language radio *Ṣawt al-'Arab* (Rayyes, 1988: 78). Moreover, Arab schoolteachers (mainly from Egypt, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon) transmitted pan-Arab nationalistic views and raised awareness of the anti-imperialist Arab movements and the Palestinian conflict, significantly influencing the political thinking and behaviour of Gulf inhabitants. Thus, Gulf revolutionary movements grew "out of, and in conflict with, the policies of Nasserism" (Halliday, 1974: 26). In the UAE, a nationalist organisation emerged in the early 1950s led by foreign Arab teachers (Front for the Liberation of Occupied Eastern Arabia) that advocated to "end British colonialism and overthrow the ruling oligarchy" (al-Nabeh, 1984: 121-123).

Local and foreign students were encouraged to demonstrate with Arab nationalistic banners and flags, and carried out some violent actions such as the attempt to burn the British base in Sharjah (Davidson, 2008: 42). Schools in Dubai even started to display pictures of Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser on the walls, and celebrated the creation of the United Arab Republic, something that concerned both the rulers and the British agent (Hawley, 2007: 116-200), and which was probably the genesis for an indigenous Arab nationalism movement in 1953: the National Front.¹⁵⁷

The Dubai National Front was formed by a group of predominantly Sunni Arab merchants (mainly the al-Futtaim and the al-Ghurair families, supported by Sheikh Juma bin Maktoum Al Maktoum¹⁵⁸). They had connections in Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, and “opposed the growing influence of Persian and Indian merchants” (al-Sayegh, 1998: 98),¹⁵⁹ as well as sought “to reduce the power of the ruling family and British interference in domestic matters” (Davidson, 2008: 43). The National Front, which had around 500 supporters, perpetrated several violent attacks, including the burning of part of the British agent’s house, an attempt to destroy British transmitters near the base in Sharjah, an attack to the car of the Chief of the Trucial Oman Levies, and an assassination attempt against the ruler of Sharjah, Sheikh Saqr bin Sultan al-Qasimi (Davidson, 2008: 47-48). The movement became very powerful and was only appeased when Sheikh Rashid bin Said Al Maktoum succeeded his father in 1958 and, being himself a trader, adopted a more inclusive approach to the conflict with the merchant community.¹⁶⁰ Sheikh Rashid re-established the Dubai Municipal Council by integrating National Front supporters (al-Sayegh, 1998: 99). Despite the fact that all decisions taken by the new institution had to be approved by the ruler, this integration reflected the rulers’ awareness that, in order to soothe political opposition, they had to somehow integrate the prominent merchant community into the political system.

¹⁵⁷ Both the Front for the Liberation of Occupied Eastern Arabia and the Dubai National Front group were probably related to the pan-Arab Nasserist Movement of Arab Nationalists (Haraka al-Qawmiyyin al-‘Arab) founded in 1948 after the Arab-Israeli war, and divided into independent groups after the 1967 Six-Day War (Halliday, 1974: 28-31).

¹⁵⁸ The main pillars of the movement were Hamad bin Majid al-Futtaim and Sheikh Juma, who were exiled to Dammam in 1955. Other prominent members of the Front were Ahmad bin Sultan bin Sulaim, Murshid al-Usaimi, Thani bin Abdulla (Davidson, 2008: 44-45).

¹⁵⁹ Eventually, however, the Front “attempted to ally with prominent Persians against the Al Maktoum family, thereby...dropping the more xenophobic elements of its campaign” (al-Sagri, 1988: 177).

¹⁶⁰ Personal interview with Emirati professor, Dubai (March 2014).

On the other hand, the merchants became aware that British support to the ruler would impede any further political advantages and chose to work within the new framework. This enhanced the resentment felt by the Bedouin towards the merchants, with whom they lived in relation of semi-dependency since they employed them during the pearling season (al-Sayegh, 1998: 98). Moreover, it probably determined that the rulers also made efforts to strengthen alliances with the Bedouin by distributing valuable gratuities and by recruiting them into the military establishments (Herb, 1999: 61).

Islamism and Salafism took root in the Gulf alongside leftist and nationalistic ideologies. It is well known that, as in other Arab countries, “Egyptian teachers who had to leave Egypt in the 1950s [for being at odds with Jamal ‘Abd al-Nasir’s government], were primarily responsible for promoting the politico-religious ideologies of the Muslim Brotherhood” (*al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun*) in the Gulf (and other Arab countries); and that most “preachers, many of the imams and speakers on radio and television or writers of religious articles in newspapers [were] primarily from Egypt” and Syria (Melikian, 1988: 122-123). Thus, many Emiratis (especially from Dubai, Ras al-Khaimah, and Sharjah) developed either pan-Arab or pan-Islamic standpoints influenced by Arabs living in the UAE or while studying abroad (mainly in Egypt, Kuwait or Saudi Arabia).¹⁶¹

In Abu Dhabi, more inland oriented and with a more homogeneous, and less progressive society, Sheikh Shakhbut did not face such political opposition from the smaller merchant community during the decades prior to the federation. In fact, he was to some extent an anti-imperialist who resisted British desire to control domestic affairs and the investment of oil rents in speedy developmental projects that would damage the ‘traditional’ lifestyle; and was therefore more concerned about the opposition represented by members of his own family who opposed his views. After deposing Sheikh Shakhbut with British assistance, his brother Sheikh Zayed—who had gained a reputation for the initiation of the developmental projects as the governor of al-‘Ain—, carefully incorporated the main branches of the Al Nahyan family and the most powerful Bani Yas tribes into the system through a combination of distributive and inclusion politics (Davidson, 2005 and 2012; Heard-Bey, 1982; Lienhardt, 2001: 177–179).

¹⁶¹ Personal interview with Emirati professor, Abu Dhabi (March 2014).

Meanwhile, in order to contain Arab nationalist influence, other Emirates' rulers worked closely with the British to strengthen security forces and the control over local courts,¹⁶² as well as to restructure the educational sector by removing more conflictive leftist teachers (Hawley, 2007: 295). In this regard, the government threatened non-oil producer Arab countries "to expel these workers and replace them with a more docile and cheaper workforce," while Arab leaders "threaten to use their expatriates (...) to destabilise" the Gulf populations (Rayyes, 1988: 86).

More importantly, the early 1960s oil concessions' rent and the incorporation of the UAE into world-capitalism were key factors for the decline of Arab nationalism. Indeed, "the combination...of welfare programs and repression was one factor that enabled a smooth transition" (Halliday, 1974: 461). Oil revenues allowed the rulers to free their population from all forms of taxation, and to provide people with public services across the emirates, which helped to consolidate the Federal government's legitimacy early on (Peck, 2001: 154). Consequently, the rulers became the providers of welfare, and the merchant families "lost much of their power base" (Davidson, 2008: 47-48). However, as explained in the previous chapter, they were given their own role in the new socio-economic and political setting as service suppliers, for they were awarded important developmental projects, and ultimately regained limited political influence (al-Sayegh, 1998: 99-101).

1.3. The Memorandum Movement

Despite the surrounding unstable regional setting (Nasser's death, Arab-Israeli Wars, Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Islamic Revolution of Iran, Iran-Iraq war), the 1970s and 1980s came marked by the readjustment of power relations among the rulers of the seven emirates. The process of integration into a federal state was not easy and several constitutional crises took place, with Abu Dhabi pushing for centralisation, while the other emirates resisted giving up sovereignty. During the summer of 1978 the FNC invited the Council of Ministers, which as mentioned above integrated several members of the non-tribal bourgeoisie and the educated middle class since January 1977, to a "closed session that resulted in a joint commission 'to remove the obstacles to Federal progress'" (Fyfe, 1989: 191). This resulted in two members of the FNC

¹⁶² See section on the State Formation in chapter 2.

and two of the Cabinet drawing up a 'Joint Memorandum' in February 1979 (Fyfe, 1989: 192), which coincided with the conflict that arose after Sheikh Zayed unilaterally merged the Abu Dhabi Defence Force into the newly created Union Defence Force.¹⁶³ At the centre of the movement were Khalfan Rumi, Minister of Health from a prominent family in Sharjah and who has been a member of the commission drafting the constitution; Taryam and Abdullah Taryam, FNC Speaker and Minister of Education respectively, and owners of the daily *al-Khaleej*; Abdullah Mazrou'i, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs; and Said and Saif Ghobash, Minister of Planning and Minister of State for Foreign affairs respectively, originally from Ras al-Khaimah, and owners of the "radical" weekly '*al-Azmena al-Arabiya*' (Fyfe, 1989: 188-189).

The petition urged the Supreme Council to build up proper federal armed forces, to transfer more of its decision-making powers to the Council of Ministers, and to give the Federal National Council more control over legislative ratification (Davidson, 2009a: 64). Moreover, although not explicitly, the petitioners questioned the future of hereditary regime (Fyfe, 1989: 210). The Supreme Council set up a committee to evaluate the petition in March 1979, since it appeared to have wide popular support as reflected by the demonstrations that took place across the country. Marches were especially significant in Ras al-Khaimah, where the ruler Sheikh Saqr finally asked the protesters to write a list of their demands. The 'People's Committee', as it became known, "called for total fusion to replace federation, for Sheikh Saqr to endorse the [Joint] Memorandum unreservedly and for the formation of a consultative council" (Fyfe, 1989: 198). After Supreme Council negotiations, the appointment of Sheikh Rashid of Dubai as Prime Minister in April 1979, and the subsequent reshuffle of the Cabinet that removed some of the petition's initiators from their positions, weakened the movement; and Sheikh Zayed postponed any further moves towards more integrated and representative institutions, arguably in order to deter other rulers from federation withdrawal.¹⁶⁴

1.4. The UAE Muslim Brotherhood

Moreover, since the late 1970s, religious intellectuals were given prominence in the UAE to counterbalance the rise of leftist (and anti-imperialist) ideologies.

¹⁶³ See section on the State Formation in chapter 2.

¹⁶⁴ Personal interviews with Emirati professor, Dubai (March 2014).

Likewise, they were conferred political importance in response to the emergence of questions regarding rulers' religious legitimacy and the new alliance forged with the USA, following the fall of the Shah of Persia and the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In 1974, the Association for Reform and Social Guidance (Jam'iyya al-Islah wa tawjih al-ijtima'iyy or just al-Islah)—which was formed by Emiratis who adopted Islamist views in collaboration with Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood exiles— was registered as a religious, charitable and cultural association in Dubai—just after Law No. 6 was issued to govern 'associations for public benefit' (Jam'iat nafi' 'amm) (Krause, 2008: 36).¹⁶⁵ Sheikh Rashid bin Said Al Maktoum of Dubai welcomed the establishment of the religious association and engaged its members as government officials in the ministries of Islamic Affairs and *Awqāf*, education, justice, and labour and social affairs,¹⁶⁶ assuming this “would incorporate them politically and by extension, aid the state in its projection of a conservative and Islamic image” (Partrick, 2009: 15). In this regard, the most significant appointments were those of Saeed Abdullah Salman (reportedly the head of *al-Islah* at the time) as Minister of Education; Mohammed Abdul Rahman al-Bakr as Minister of Justice, Islamic Affairs and *Awqāf* since 1977; and Saif al-Jarwan as Minister of Labour and Social Affairs (being all from Ras al-Khaimah), for the third cabinet formed in 1979. In addition, *al-Islah* members with Law studies, who were the best prepared at the time, became influential within the Ministry of Justice.¹⁶⁷ For more than 20 years *al-Islah* worked side by side the Emirati government, cooperating in areas of social and cultural development. During this period, it benefited vastly from its privileged relationship with the rentier oligarchy, and was a key element to contain the spread of leftist ideas by the

¹⁶⁵ Article 33 of the Associations Law states that “the freedom of congregation and the establishment of organisations are accepted within the lawful limits” (al-Hajji, 2000, cited in Krause, 2008: 36). Initially, both citizens and foreign residents could create associations, but the law was amended in 1980 and 1981 “to prevent immigrants from establishing organisations (unless done through a local group), since there were increasing too quickly in number” and to give the ministries “full legal interventionist powers” (Krause, 2008: 36-37). Political parties and labour unions are forbidden; although professional associations are permitted (e.g. teachers, jurists, engineers, etc.). Moreover, in order to avoid organisations from getting involved in human rights activities, the government has established a human rights department under the police administration and funds the Human Rights Committee of the Jurists' Association. The authorisation for registration of organisations has become very arbitrary, as shown by the 1991 unanswered application of UAEU faculty, which functions as an organisation without approval (Krause, 2008: 37-38).

¹⁶⁶ Personal interview with Emirati professor, Dubai (March 2014).

¹⁶⁷ Personal interview with Emirati professor, Dubai (March 2014) and UAE Cabinet (n.d.).

inheritors of the aforementioned leftist Dubai National Front, some of who eventually evolved into what is today known as ‘liberals.’

Since the 1990s, however, this temporary synergetic relationship deteriorated for several reasons. First, there were allegations that religious people with connections to *al-Islah* received a treatment of preference in accessing jobs and scholarships through the ministries under their control. In this regard, some consider that authorities realised that “the UAE's judicial and education sector was effectively a state within a state [and that] the student councils and professional associations...were turned into Muslim Brotherhood outposts dedicated to advancing their interests”(al-Qassemi, 2012, December 14). Second, they opposed the increasing presence of non-Muslim foreigners in the country, to whom they referred as a ‘fifth column’, and started to criticise the rulers for deviating from Islamic values, hence becoming a potentially threatening force for the legitimacy of UAE leadership. Finally, allegations made by Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak in 1994, during a visit to the UAE, that *al-Islah* members were funding violent groups like *al-Yihad* in Egypt, were followed by a UAE authorities’ investigation and a warning that they should cease any involvement with foreign organisations.¹⁶⁸

Consequently, in 1994 the *al-Islah* board of directors was dismissed and replaced by government supporters (al-Teniji, 2012, 2 October), officials with affiliation to the organisation were removed from key ministerial positions, and people with links to it started to be transferred to other institutions (Salama, 2013, April 13). *Al-Islah* leaders then turned to the ruler of Ras al-Khaimah, Sheikh Saqr bin Muhammad al-Qasimi, who allowed them to legally establish in that emirate and appointed his relative Sheikh Sultan bin Kayed al-Qasimi (recently sentenced to 10 years of prison¹⁶⁹) as chairman of the Ras al-Khaimah branch. Reportedly, they also opened another branch in Fujairah around that time.¹⁷⁰ Yet, the perceived threat that political Islam could represent for internal and regional stability—and foreign relations—became more evident when in 2001 two Emiratis participated in the 9/11 attacks in New York (CNN Library, 2013, July 27). It was then when the UAE authorities decided to reform the

¹⁶⁸ Personal interview with Emirati human rights activist, Dubai (April 2014). Also see Braude (2014).

¹⁶⁹ See section on the Post-Arab Spring landscape in this chapter.

¹⁷⁰ Personal interview with Emirati professor (Dubai, March 2014) and with Emirati human rights activist (Dubai, April 2014). See also Braude (2014).

educational system and school curricula, the preachers were required by the Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs to adhere to sermons pre-approved by the Ministry (Sison, 2004, November 10), and surveillance was conducted over people suspected of participating in Islamist activities to prevent them from spreading their ideology. Although it was not very much publicised, according to Amnesty International over 250 people with Islamist leanings were detained by the State Security Apparatus (*Amn al-Dawla*, SSA)¹⁷¹ in the aftermath of 11th September 2001 and many others have been detained since (Amnesty International, 2004, June). Moreover, many lawyers, judges, teachers and university professors –with different levels of attachment to *al-Islah*– have since faced restrictions on work opportunities, and some of them have reportedly been warned not to participate in seminars or public events (Amnesty International, 2004, June), in addition to having been threatened with having their professional licenses removed.¹⁷² Likewise, hundreds of employees of the Ministry of Education and school directors and teachers were forced to take less significant functions or retire early during the following decade (Amnesty International, 2004, June). Commenting on these events, Mohammed al-Roken and Muhammad al-Mansoori, both former heads of the UAE Jurist Association and holding Islamist views, lamented in a 2007 interview with the Washington Post that the ruling families had distanced themselves from those they govern and that the space for freedom had “become smaller and smaller” (Shadid, 2007, May 22).

1.5. Other pro-reform movements

Simultaneously, liberal views supporting reform were consolidating being “grounded in the growing political awareness produced by a better education system and a freer media environment, [which were enhanced by] local observation of reform measures implemented elsewhere in the region, [and] accelerated by pressures from globalization and political fallout from events

¹⁷¹ SSA arrests usually take place in obscure modes by men dressed in civil clothes, which arrive in black cars, identify themselves as SSA, and take people without charging them with any offence. It is not uncommon that they are taken to prisons in undisclosed locations, kept in detention incommunicado and in solitary confinement, and with no access to lawyers or families. Moreover, detainees previously held by the SSA have allegedly been tortured by several methods (Amnesty International Report, 2004, June; and personal Interview with Ahmed Mansoor, Dubai, March 2012).

¹⁷² This was the case, for example, of Muhammad al-Roken, who received a three-month suspended sentence after being charged with sex out of wedlock in a politically motivated case in 2007. See HRW (2009, January).

such as the 9/11 and the Iraq War” (Koch, 2011: 173). Many voices emerged asking for political participation in the UAE, which concentrated in the need to enhance the powers of the FNC and to make it an elected institution. Contrary to the Islamists, liberal intellectuals were allowed to express their ideas for years within a broad margin of freedom, as reflected by their active participation in the local media and public events. For instance, Dr. Khalifa Bakhit al-Falasi, a former Ambassador to Australia and former Undersecretary at the Ministry of Education, wrote in the Arabic daily *al-Bayan* that people should be “given the right to elect FNC members in line with the UAE constitution that allows for holding polls to elect members of the house.” Furthermore, Saeed Hareb, professor at UAEU, said that it was “embarrassing that Iraqi expatriates had voted in the UAE for their country’s election, but the UAE nationals [did] not have the right to franchise” (Ahmad, 2005, March 4). Similarly, Abdulkhaleq Abdalla stated that it had become “embarrassing for the UAE to lag behind others politically in the region [and that] at the time when more than 10 million Arabs in Palestine, Iraq and Saudi Arabia exercised their right to vote and be elected, it is completely unacceptable that the UAE still has an appointed house” (Salama, 2005, February 23).¹⁷³

Table 12: UAE Petitions

Year	Signatories	Addressee	Demands
1938	Merchants of the Al Bu Falasah	Ruler of Dubai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Budget and civil list - Health and Security services - Reorganisation of customs department - Fixed allowances for ruling family - Abolition of ruler’s monopolies
1979	FNC and CoM members	UAE Supreme Council of Rulers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proper federal armed forces - More executive powers for the CoM - More legislative powers for the FNC
2008	UAE Intellectuals	President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Halting of the federal Media Law - Freedoms of opinion and expression
2011	UAE Intellectuals + Associations	President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Universal franchise for 2011 elections - Legislative powers for the FNC

¹⁷³ All Gulf States had undergone political reforms and held elections when these declarations took place in 2005.

Emirati political activists have put two more petitions together in more recent times, and participated in a third one that brought together civil society groups of all GCC states. Several unspecified civil society organisations met in parallel to the 2009 GCC summit and put together a statement that was submitted to the leaders of the GCC. The document appealed for the implementation of economic integration, and emphasized the need for the participation of the peoples of the GCC countries in policy and decision-making through elected parliaments (Mansoor, 2008, December 26). During the same year, a number of Emirati academics and significant cultural and media figures submitted a petition to the President, which focused on the need to stop the controversial Media Law that was being discussed by the FNC, and called for the lifting of the ceiling of freedoms, especially freedom of the press, of opinion and expression, which they presented as a major concern for those involved in writing in the UAE. Importantly, this was the first petition bearing the names of specific people (Abdulla, 2009, February 10). Finally, as further explained in the section on the post-Arab Spring landscape, a petition asking for universal franchise and FNC legislative powers was sent to the President of the UAE in March 2011, which was followed by a similar plea signed by several associations (see following section).

2. Political standpoints in contemporary UAE

Gulf political standpoints have ranged since the 1950s “from Arab Nationalists to socialists, from secularists to religious fundamentalist and from conservative traditionalists to the modern technocrats” (Melikian, 1988: 119). In the early 1980s Abdulla identified four potential opposition forces, including the already mentioned nationalist-minded internal bourgeoisie, the nationalist and reform-minded element of the young intellectuals, the Islamic fundamentalist groups, and the military establishment, which he considered the least challenging (Abdulla, 1984: 286-287). However, the former have evolved into four main tendencies in contemporary society: the *liberal*, the *religious*, the *capitalist*, and the *ultranationalist* (Al-Qassemi 2011).¹⁷⁴ In this regard, Davidson has explained

¹⁷⁴ These are the four possible blocs that Sultan Al-Qassemi identified for the FNC 2011 elections, which coincide with the general classification of my informants. In Arabic they refer to the liberals as the *'libraliyun'*; to the religious as the *'mutadayyin'* or *'islami'*; to the capitalists as the *'ra'smaliyun'*, or simply the *'tujjar'* (merchants); and to the ultra-nationalists as the *'qawmiyun'*

how “politically opposed blocs and differing elite orientations do exist underneath the surface of UAE politics, and that (...) the political elite is far from being a single unit” (Davidson, 2005: 227-228). As an example, he presents how the election of Muhammad al-Habtoor as speaker of the FNC in 1998 was fiercely fought in the council with voting patterns that did not reflect regional or family origin.

Opposition exists primarily within liberal and religious circles that support political reform, but from radically opposed standpoints; while the capitalist and ultranationalist segments align with the ruling elite for the maintenance of the status quo. Since political parties or associations are not legal in the UAE, these groupings are nothing but organised or cohesive (with the exception of some religious organisations) and, since there are very few academic works on the issue, their different positions hereafter presented are extracted from interviews and newspaper articles. More recently, different opinions have been expressed through Internet’s social media, as most people mentioned below have Twitter (and to a lesser extent Facebook accounts and/or blogs).¹⁷⁵

Liberals may be considered the inheritors of anti-colonial and nationalist ideologies that were behind the first reform movements since the beginning of the 20th century in the UAE, for they mainly demand more representative and transparent institutions.¹⁷⁶ Those movements were initiated by merchants in response to seeing their position in society weakened; but, with their incorporation into the federal system as the main capitalists in charge of the developmental projects, they lost interest in reforming a system from which they have been benefiting since then. However, with the growth of the national population base and its improved education, as well as its increased exposition to new or updated agents of political socialisation,¹⁷⁷ many found responses to their concerns in the liberal thought, ranging from radical to more conservative, and from secular to more religious views. Accordingly, some intellectuals argue that the UAE liberal faction “is made up of the educated elite, the newly

(*nationalists*), or ‘*wataniyun*’/‘*wataniyun al-jadid*’ (*patriots/new patriots*) to differentiate them from the 1900s nationalists, whose ideas were closer to the contemporary liberals’.

¹⁷⁵ In this regard, for example, a debate was held over Twitter under the hashtag #uaefiveforum in which the pardoned UAE5 detainees (see section on Post-Arab Spring landscape) discussed their case and answered questions about it. The full conversation is available at: <http://uaefree.blogspot.com/2012/01/blog-post.html> [In Arabic].

¹⁷⁶ See section on Historical Political Activism in this chapter.

¹⁷⁷ See section on political socialisation in chapter 2.

assertive middle class and the younger generation inspired by the current Arab Spring, [being their main arguments that] political reform has been delayed for too long already [and that the UAE would be] better off with a fully elected and empowered Federal National Council” (Abdulla, 2011, June 22).

Despite some argue that Emiratis are ready for a democratic system and therefore oppose the governmental gradual approach,¹⁷⁸ others have adopted a more cautious view over reform, especially since the Arab Spring. Although they do not think democracy is urgently needed, they claim it is “metaphorically, the oxygen that sustains political stability and shields economic prosperity” (Abdulla, 2011, June 22). Followers of this line of thought do not organise themselves into any kind of structured collective action. In this regard, and in comparison to the more organised religious groups, the failure to join forces around some kind of organisation is identified by some of them as their major weakness.¹⁷⁹

Popular support to this tendency remains limited in the UAE, since liberals carry “the negative connotation of secularism, which loosely translates in some people’s minds as an equivalent to atheism” (Al-Qassemi, 2011, August 8). Moreover, for some Emiratis the term ‘democracy’ also has attached “negative connotations resulting from the belief that it is primarily a US mechanism for imposing an external system of rule on the country” (Koch, 2011: 184). Nevertheless, intellectuals belonging to this group have been calling for political reform on local media and at national and international public events and conferences during the last two decades, if not more. Moreover, they are being active on Internet social media, putting the emphasis on the enhancement of accountability, transparency and the rule of law. Importantly, liberals’ different socio-economic backgrounds (tribal aristocracy, educated middle class, national bourgeoisie and even rentier oligarchy) show that political ideology transcends the ethnic and rentier social hierarchy.

Among these, the most visible intellectuals are Ebtisam al-Kitbi, professor of political science at the UAE University, who has advocated for democratisation of the Emirati political system and was a signatory of the 2011 3rd of March

¹⁷⁸ Personal interviews with Emirati liberals, al-‘Ain (February 2012) and Dubai (March 2012).

¹⁷⁹ Personal interview with Emirati liberal university professor, Dubai (March 2012).

petition;¹⁸⁰ Abdulkhaleq Abdalla,¹⁸¹ former professor of political science at the UAE University, who has also repeatedly expressed his support for political liberalisation; and Ahmed Mansoor al-Shehhi,¹⁸² who describes himself as a liberal-secular human rights activist, was one of the first 2011 detainees, and one of the founders of the online discussion forum 'UAEHewar'.¹⁸³ Others who may be included in the liberal group are the younger newspaper columnists Sultan Al-Qassemi¹⁸⁴ and Mishaal al-Gergawi.¹⁸⁵ Although these two do not make very strong public statements about political change in the UAE, they both support regional democratization. For instance, Al-Qassemi was quoted in February 2011 as having said: "People say the youth of the Gulf aren't concerned or prepared...but they have the same ambitions as the young people elsewhere" (Malas, 2011, March 9). Although he is a supporter of universal suffrage and a parliament with legislative power in the UAE, Al-Qassemi says to be more interested in Egypt and Saudi Arabia (KSA) because he thinks, "when change comes to these countries it will come to the rest of the region, especially KSA with regard to the Gulf" (Malas, 2011, March 9).¹⁸⁶

As explained in the section on the post-Arab spring landscape, most liberals have silenced their calls for reform or, at least moderated their discourse amid the detentions that have been taking place since March 2011. Even though some liberals were detained at the beginning, the crackdown then concentrated on Islamist reformists and, not wanting to be associated with that ideology, liberals decided to step back or did so due to pressure from authorities.

¹⁸⁰ Twitter account: @ekitbi

See for instance al-Ketbi's article "Tryst with democracy," in which she wrote that that it was key to expand the FNC's "authority from the consultative to the legislative domain, activating its supervisory role in terms of parliamentary practices such as questioning, forming investigation committees, and casting a vote of no-confidence against the government, in addition to expanding the range of membership" (Al-Kitbi, 2006, October 20).

¹⁸¹ Twitter account: @Abdulkhaleq_UAE

¹⁸² Twitter account: @Ahmed_Mansoor; Blog: <http://emarati.katib.org/>

¹⁸³ Personal interview with Ahmed Mansoor, Dubai (March 2012). The forum *Al-Hiwar al-Imarati* or *Emirates Discussion*, also known as *al-Hiwar/al-Hewar* (www.uaehewar.net) was blocked in the UAE. See section on political standpoints and on the Post-Arab Spring landscape in this chapter.

¹⁸⁴ Twitter account: @SultanAlQassemi; Blog: <http://sultanalqassemi.blogspot.com/>

¹⁸⁵ Twitter account: @algergawi

¹⁸⁶ Sultan Al-Qassemi describes himself as a UAE based freelance columnist who does not write for any specific publication, is active on social media, but likes to formulate his opinions in articles rather than in tweets. He is also interested in Arab art, which he considers an important political tool. Although he is a member of the ruling family of Sharjah, he makes clear that he does not represent them in any way. Finally, he works in his family business, making him financially independent (Personal interview with Sultan Al-Qassemi, Sharjah, March 2012).

Commenting on these issues, a liberal UAEU student (personal communication in *Facebook* [Page type], May 2014) explained:

“Some liberals convince themselves that the government is doing a good job and those Islamists are gonna compromise the stability we have so let put them in jails... I can’t ignore the positive aspect of this crackdown against Islamists: It’s the ‘top-down’ movement toward a more liberal, anti-religious sphere in UAE society... But I think it’s hypocritical. It’s selective concept of justice... Some liberals have no choice cause they’re under a lot of pressure, and sometimes tweet pro government and sometimes against government. This so called Arab spring is a bless, it revealed all the masks of those who we call public figures... Wallah [(really)] everyday I scratch a name off my list of Emirati writers/journalists/academics.”

Some of them have even justified the fact that the government is persecuting Islamism for the sake of stability, and have interpreted it as the support of authorities to a liberal rather than religious approach to reform.¹⁸⁷ Others however, consider that liberals are under much pressure and have no other option but to keep a balanced discourse even if they do not agree with the way in which detentions are being carried out. In relation to this, al-Qassemi explained that this was especially the case with regards to Emiratis of non-tribal or of mixed origins, whose loyalty to the country was being questioned by some nationalist people. In this regard, a tweet by al-Gergawi (of Persian and mixed origin) shows how he had to clarify his loyalty to the country after it was questioned by ultra-nationalist Dherar Belhoul (al-Gergawi, 2011, April 25):

“@dbelhoul Don’t presuppose anything while you’re not following me. I declared my standpoint here before, I stand with God and the Nation and the President as our father Zayed taught us.”

In line with liberals, religious groupings arise from all social layers, but the bulk of its supporters belongs to the educated middle class. Religious associations or organisations exist, although they are not supposed to engage in political activities. However, as stated by an Emirati citizen: “Everybody is in the UAE, from the *Ikhwan* to *al-Qa`ida*” (cited in Krause, 2008: 97). Among UAE religious groupings, the best organised and most supported is the aforementioned *al-Islah*, whose declared goals are to promote Islamic social and cultural values and engage in charity activities (Pekka, 2012).

¹⁸⁷ Personal interview with Emirati profesor, Abu Dhabi (April 2014).

At the same time, it has proven to also be, or at least some of its members, the most active in promoting human rights and the rule of law in the UAE and, as in other Arab countries, advocates for political reform as a means to gain legal political influence. Moreover, their publications call for the establishment of a social order that follows Islamic principles, and for the *shari‘a* (Islamic law) to be more strictly applied. As summarised in table 13, members of the association claim they subscribe to the values of moderate political Islam, oppose violence, and are not directly linked to organisations abroad. Conversely, the UAE government’s current views over the nature of *al-Islah*, its objectives and intentions are very different from what the association claims, as they portray it as a movement disloyal to the state, that seeks to overthrow the regime, and that includes an armed wing (Hakala, 2012, November 15).

Table 13: Nature of *al-Islah* Association¹⁸⁸

	al-Islah	UAE government
General view of the movement	Inspired by the values of moderate political Islam, al-Islah’s aim is to provide moral guidance and discourage extremism. From its origins as an association first registered in 1974, al-Islah has opposed violence and favoured reform.	The movement is disloyal to the state, a threat to political stability and endangers the results reached by the Emirati leadership through a ‘transformation of a tribal society to a modern state, creating synergy between people in a multinational society in a very short period of time’.
Links to other movements	Shares ideological compatibilities with other movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, but has no direct links with any movement abroad.	Linked financially and politically to the international Muslim Brotherhood movement and orchestrated from abroad. The movement is engaged in clandestine activities.
Main objectives	The establishment of an elected national assembly with real powers. Reform of the political system in the UAE and for an end to government interference in all spheres of public life, including the media and the judiciary.	The movement’s aim runs counter to religious and cultural tolerance and to rapid economic and social development already established in the country.
Methods	Non-violence.	The movement includes an armed wing.

Prominent members of the association are: Sheikh Sultan bin Kayed al-Qassimi, last president of *al-Islah* and member of Ras al-Khaimah’s ruling family; and his deputy, Muhammad Ali Saleh al-Mansouri,¹⁸⁹ supervisor of the

¹⁸⁸ Source: Hakala (2012, November 15).

¹⁸⁹ Twitter account: @Dr_malmansoori

London-based Islamist website Emirates Media and Studies Center (EMASC)¹⁹⁰—both sentenced to fifteen years of prison in the UAE94 case.¹⁹¹ Some of the tweets the latter posted in defence of *al-Islah* during the months before his arrest were as follows:

“Dawat al-Islah is against sectarianism and against Iranian hegemony in the Arab islands” (al-Mansoori, 2012, April 28).

“I say to all of those who lied and made up false stories: I am proud of al-Islah” (al-Mansoori, 2012, April 30).

Others linked to the association, but allegedly not directly involved, are: Nasser bin Ghaith,¹⁹² former Abu Dhabi’s Sorbonne University professor, and one of the UAE5 detainees; and the abovementioned Muhammad Abdullah al-Roken, sentenced to ten years of prison in the UAE94 case.¹⁹³ As the UAE’s demographic imbalance grew, a national debate emerged in the 1990s that “questioned the thin line between modernization and Westernization [and] whether the West was really worth imitating. [In response to this issues,] some thought that it was time to return to one’s roots, specifically Islam [as a mean] of regaining one’s true cultural identity” (al-Sayegh, 2004: 113-116). Thus, Islamist views found wide support among important sectors of the UAE society, which does not necessarily mean they support political Islam or the Muslim Brotherhood rationale. In this regard, Al-Qassemi stated that, according to official estimates, the number of people that subscribe to political Islam in the UAE reaches currently 600 members (Al-Qassemi, 2012, May 20), while *al-Islah* has claimed to have some 20,000 sympathisers (Ulrichsen, 2012, August 5), constituting around 20% of nationals.

Both the capitalist and the ultranationalist groups fall under what Abdulla has called the anti-democracy segment of society which “seems to be content with the political status quo and would oppose any sudden move to rock the boat”, whose “main concern is political stability, which is viewed as paramount to economic prosperity” (2011, June 22). Capitalists are essentially citizens belonging to the national bourgeoisie and the tribal aristocracy, in addition to the rentier oligarchy.¹⁹⁴ Among them, a good representative is Nasser al-

¹⁹⁰ See: www.emasc-uae.com

¹⁹¹ See section on the Post-Arab Spring landscape in this chapter.

¹⁹² Twitter account: @ N_BinGhaith

¹⁹³ See section on the Post-Arab Spring landscape in chapter 3.

¹⁹⁴ See section on Social Stratification in chapter 2.

Shaikh,¹⁹⁵ member of a prominent business family of Dubai whom Al-Qassemi describes as a “social media star in the UAE”; his “balanced Tweets and Facebook updates have garnered him wide support” (Al-Qassemi, 2012, May 20). This collectivity shows interest in economic liberalisation and is currently happy with the political status quo that benefits their businesses and social status. An example of al-Shaikh’s online political activism was a tweet posted on March 2012 in relation to developments in Egypt:

“The biggest loser from these events is the Islah movement in the UAE which has not issued a statement denouncing the threats of the [Egyptian Muslim] Brotherhood to the UAE thereby wasting a golden opportunity to distance suspicion from itself” (al-Shaikh, 2012, March 10).

Under the ultranationalist category falls an emerging group that frantically defends the ruling elite—especially since the 2011 petition was sent to the UAE President—¹⁹⁶ in face of calls for political reform, which is portrayed as a threat to the establishment. They have been repeatedly declaring their loyalty to rulers and the political system during the last years, and openly and aggressively expressing disapproval of any criticism to the UAE government on the press and social networks. The patriotism of some of them has translated into violent actions, such as threatening opponents over social networks and even physically attacking some of them.¹⁹⁷ Again, according to Al-Qassemi (2011, August 8), ultranationalists are also referred to as ‘conservatives’, the UAE’s ‘Tea Party’ or as he has dubbed them in Arabic: the ‘Qahwa’ (Arab coffee) party.¹⁹⁸ Among this segment of society, he mentions Dherar Belhoul¹⁹⁹ (General Manager of Watani²⁰⁰ and host of a popular Arabic radio talk show) as a well-respected Emirati and “an authority on various aspects of UAE culture and tradition” (Al-Qassemi, 2011, August 8). Another representative of this standpoint, who has caused several national and regional controversies, is

¹⁹⁵ Twitter account: @NAIShaikh

¹⁹⁶ See section on the Post-Arab Spring landscape in chapter 3.

¹⁹⁷ Ahmed Mansoor was beaten twice in the parking of the university he was attending after being released from jail as were some of the relatives of the UAE94 detainees (Interview with Ahmed Mansoor, Dubai, March 2012). See section on the post-Arab spring landscape in this chapter.

¹⁹⁸ Personal interview with Sultan Al-Qassemi (Dubai, March 2012).

¹⁹⁹ Twitter account: @dbelhoul

²⁰⁰ Watani is an organisation that aims to strengthen the sense of national identity in UAE citizens. See chapter 2 for details.

Dhahi Khalfan Tamim,²⁰¹ Head of General Security for the Emirate of Dubai, and former chief of the Dubai Police Force. These are the tweets of a conversation between him and liberal Ahmad Mansoor about one detainee in March 2012:

"@Ahmed_Mansoor. Challenging the prosecution procedures does not serve our law, brother Ahmad. Don't challenge the justice from the perspective of one person. Ask God to guide you" (Khalfan, 2012, March 9).

"@Dhahi_Khalfan. Dear Sir, I wish to hear the full details of the story of brother Juma' al-Falasi. There are enough reasons to say there is selective application of law" (Mansoor, 2012, March 9).

Under a broader classification that looks into Emirati citizens' support to democracy, Abdalla has observed that society can be divided into three main categories: the pro-democracy advocates, the anti-democracy segment, and the silent segment of society; each of them possibly representing one-third of the national population. With regards to the silent segment of Emiratis, which has not been covered above, he identifies that it "has no strong views on the issue of democracy in the UAE [and] are mainly an apolitical bunch...happy to defer the whole issue to the government" (Abdulla, 2011, June 22). Finally, he considers the perspective of this group "is mostly situational and varies according to turn of events [and] easily swings from one end, the advocates of democracy, to the other extreme, the anti-reform pundits"(Abdulla, 2011, June 22).

3. Towards political liberalisation?

The two international events that raised concern worldwide about the lack of democracy in the Gulf were the 9/11 attacks and the invasion of Iraq in 2003, encompassed by the promotion of democracy by the US, and especially the Greater Middle East Initiative. Accordingly, external pressure to democratise, as well as to put down Islamist movements, has played an important role during the last decade. However, the message sent to Gulf rulers has often been contradictory and more rhetoric than a real and final goal: the US openly ask them to liberalise politically but also to control any potential rise in extremist Islamism because they fear any possible destabilizing effect, making the enhancement of liberties complicated (Crystal, 2005: 4). Additionally, UAE's

²⁰¹ Twitter account: @Dhahi_Khalfan

participation in global economy, such as the conditions for membership established by organizations like the World Trade Organization has been a catalyst for the signature of international agreements by which states agree to adopt 'good governance' practices. Other external actors for the embracement of the international law codes are international, non-profit and human rights organizations. Concerned with the image UAE projects outside their borders, authorities have been pushed to sign treaties and adopt policies that they might have otherwise not agreed to. In any case, these factors "can either facilitate or obstruct political liberalization, not determine outcomes on its own" (Nonneman, 2008: 25). External factors are expected to have an influence on the evolution of internal actors and structures, which ultimately can have an effect on policymaking, but "the driving force for democratisation has been internal" in the Gulf (Crystal, 2005: 5). Thus, the promotion of democratic practices by foreign forces cannot really be considered a determinant factor for political reform but only an added pressure element.

The 21st century was the time when a younger generation of Gulf monarchs had to assume power under increasing pressure from economic and cultural globalisation; and who "lacking the charisma of the older generation, recognized the need for institutional legitimacy to complement traditional and charismatic sources of legitimacy" (Abdulla, 2010: 18). By 2004 all Gulf states but the UAE had held elections (or announced them in the case of Saudi Arabia) and had conducted some 'cosmetic' reforms that were interpreted as an "upgrading of authoritarianism" (Heydemann, 2007). Thus, adding to globalisation, regional trends were also putting pressure on the UAE to liberalise politically. Furthermore, the way in which the succession of Shaikh Zayed, first President of the UAE, was to be handled, became a vital concern for leaders during those (Ehteshami, 2003: 70).

Although rumours and speculation about alternative succession scenarios unfolded during the months prior to Zayed's death (Albright, 2004, October 27), Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan took office smoothly in 2004. Nonetheless, one of his first announcements was on political reform, probably in response to the growing domestic calls for political liberalisation. During the country's 34th national day celebrations on 2nd December 2005 he proclaimed, in his address

to the nation, that elections would be implemented shortly to choose half the members of the FNC, as part of a project to improve the UAE political system:

“Considering the developments in our region, which is now witnessing transformation and reforms, the years ahead in our blessed march require a bigger role for the Federal National Council by empowering it (...). We have decided to start activating the FNC role through electing half of its members through councils for each emirate.”²⁰²

Appealing to the need to consolidate developments achieved by the federation, the speech called for all federal institutions to face, with the highest degree of responsibility and transparency, the “challenges confronting the nation.” It also established that the process would require the revision of all bodies and structures, and that it should be done “by ensuring the entrenchment of *Shura*” (Islamic consultation) in a “gradual and organised way” to culminate in more public participation.” Such a declaration of intentions meant the adoption of a new discourse by UAE rulers; the recognition, at least rhetorically, that changes were necessary to address economic and social needs of the increasingly complex Emirati society; and the initiation of a new stage in the history of the UAE. However, the statement did not specify the actual implications of the reform programme and several steps had to be given before some light was shed on the rulers’ plans.

Reactions to the presidential announcement were polarized. Some saw the ‘partial’ elections as a historic move and others considered them too limited, while government officials and rulers repeated in their speeches and declarations that it was the first step of the President’s vision to develop the country’s participatory political system. For instance, Minister of Economy and Planning, Shaikha Lubna al-Qasimi (the first ever Emirati female minister), said that the President’s decision strengthened “the relationship between the rulers and the people”; Mohammad al-Gergawi, CEO at Dubai Holding and Chairman of Dubai Development & Investment Authority (DDIA), considered that through the decision we would “see a tremendous improvement in productivity and quality across all sectors”. Similarly, Hamad bin Sultan al-Darmaki, a former FNC member from Abu Dhabi, described it as “a decision that wins hearts” (Hoath, Za’za’, al-Jandaly & Nazzal, 2005, December 2).

²⁰² See Shaikh Khalifa’s speech attached in Annex 10.

The day following the presidential speech the Supreme Council endorsed it as national law, and approved a framework for the establishment of the necessary regulations and institutions to put the decision into effect. Accordingly, in February 2006 the Ministry of State of Federal National Council Affairs²⁰³ was created in a cabinet reshuffle and was given three main functions: coordination between the government and the FNC; participation in drafting legislations related to the role of the FNC; and supervision of media affairs linked to parliamentary practice.²⁰⁴ The process got under way in August with the issuing of a presidential decree, which called for the setting up of the National Electoral Committee (NEC).²⁰⁵ The NEC would be chaired by the newly appointed Minister of State for FNC Affairs, Anwar Gargash (a Dubai citizen of Persian ancestors), and would be in charge of the preparations, organization and supervision of elections. Moreover, the NEC was entitled to set up the timeline for registration of candidates, the date and method of conducting the election in every emirate, and to announce the results of the elections within three days after the polls. The Executive Election Instructions were issued next as the legal framework for conducting indirect FNC elections, in which only a small percentage of the population would be allowed to participate, and polls were announced for December 2006.²⁰⁶

The announcement that not all nationals would be allowed to vote in the first UAE elections, and that only half of the seats would be elected, brought about a generalised feeling of confusion and disappointment.. The main aspect criticized by Emirati analysts was the Electoral College system. Ebtisam al-Ketbi repeatedly expressed her discomfort with the path chosen by authorities. Some days before the elections she wrote an article in the national newspaper *Khaleej Times* under the title “Tryst with democracy,” in which she said that the system of voters’ selection contradicted Article 25 of the UAE Constitution (“...all individuals are equal before the law, and there is no distinction between the citizens of the federation...”), because clearly “distinction has been made and consolidated” (Al-Kitbi, 2006, October 20). Abdulkhaleq Abdulla stressed that Emirati society was “divided into two categories –a lucky minority and a disappointed majority, which is embarrassing for both sides, since the UAE’s

²⁰³ MFNCA website: www.mfnca.gov.ae

²⁰⁴ See: http://www.mfnca.gov.ae/?lang=en&m=options&act=content_detail&content_id=12

²⁰⁵ NEC website: www.uaenec.ae

²⁰⁶ See section of the 2006 and 2011 FNC elections in this chapter.

small and coherent society cannot tolerate this kind of unprecedented political division” (Abdulla, 2006, October 23). Mohammed al-Roken, was quoted by the US Embassy as having said that, as long as the FNC was not given more powers and FNC members were not elected directly by the citizens, the process was merely “a public relations gesture,” and that voting rights should have been given to all citizens (Sison, 2005, December 5). He also explained that the main reason the government had opted for controlled election was the fact that “the Muslim Brotherhood could currently win seats if direct elections were held today” (Sison, 2006, June 27). In a more measured position, Muhammad Abdullah al-Mutawa, professor of Sociology at the UAE University, argued that although the majority of Emiratis would have to wait longer to exercise their electoral rights, “the election of half of the FNC’s members [was] a very crucial step, paving the way for greater political participation and wider representation of citizens” (al-Mutawa, 2006, October 22).

Journalists also gathered the opinions of young Emiratis at that time. Some expressed their willingness to see a representative government implemented, and showed enthusiasm and optimism with regards to the process: “This is a great and new idea in the country. The people of the UAE have so many issues and problems, which they need to bring to the Rulers' attention. By electing people who know about our needs we can achieve that,” said Aisha Al Zahmi, business sophomore at Zayed University (ZU). Aisha Shukrallah, a pharmacology sophomore at Dubai Women's College (DWC) noted that: “The concept of *shura* or consultation in Islam has existed since the days of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). The participation of the people in the council will not only affect the nation, but also each coming generation” (Saffarini, 2006, December 30). Nevertheless, there were others, like 19-year-old Emirati citizen Samir Marzouqi, who thought the system in place needed no improvements and, when speaking to a European journalist, affirmed that the UAE was “the best democracy ever”, arguing that citizens were able to convey their concerns to the rulers at the *majalis* (Sharp, 2005, July 29).

The president’s programme was planned to take place in a three-step process: the first stage being the election of half of the FNC members through an Electoral College (EC); the second expanding the powers of FNC members and the enlargement of its members – an important step because it would require

constitutional amendments; in phase three, an electoral law would be issued and universal elections for half the council would be held. The three phases were planned for a four-year period (MEED, 2006, December 1), meaning it should be completed before the following FNC elections in December 2010. However, more than one year after the announcement of reforms, no clear programme had been presented to the public. It was not until April 2007 that a Government Strategy was publicly unveiled by Sheikh Muhammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, to explain the direction that would be taken during the following three years in order to implement the presidential project. The event took place in presence of the president of the federation, all Emirati rulers, the cabinet ministers, the members of the Federal National Council, and over 1,000 senior government officials (Khaleej Times, 2007, April 17), probably to project an image of unity and support from all UAE authorities to the presidential project. The document explaining the strategic aims (UAE Cabinet, 2007, April) focuses on six major areas: social development; economic development; government sector development; justice and safety; infrastructure; and rural areas development. Moreover, it states the general principles of the strategy:

- Continuous maintenance of cooperation between federal and local authorities.
- Revitalization of the regulatory and policy making role of the ministries, and improve decision making mechanisms.
- Increase of the efficiency of governmental bodies, and upgrade the level of services through focusing on customer needs.
- Development of civil service regulations and human resources, focusing on competence, effective 'emiratization' and leadership training.
- Empowerment of ministries to manage their activities in line with public and joint policies.
- Review and upgrade of legislations and regulations.

In particular, the policies announced for the reform of the government included four aspects: a focus on strategic planning and the building of an integrated performance management system; the upgrade of the civil service system, emphasising the principles of competency as the main criteria for recruiting, promoting and retaining employees; the development of government services based on international best practices and the promotion of a culture of

excellence in service delivery; and the strengthening of e-government programmes, adopting a new approach and encouraging the private sector's participation in delivering central services.

Unfortunately however, this document was neither specific nor clearly understandable for the public. Although the introduction to the document reaffirms the regime's compromise with a needed reform project "to maximize efforts and introduce radical changes to the existing practices within the UAE Government", in the preface Sheikh Muhammad stresses that it "is a living document which paves the general direction towards the future we all aspire to, and is therefore flexible and adjustable if need be". Accordingly, the language employed along the document is grandiloquent but does not present specific plans or schedules to enhance the legislative powers of the FNC. Nonetheless, while statements of the rulers and strategies presented seemed to use empty words, some facts displayed intentions to reform the political system and to improve its performance, at least to some extent. Lawrence Groo, executive director of *Musanada* (a company recently established by the Emirate of Abu Dhabi to improve the efficiency, quality and transparency of government services)²⁰⁷ highlighted in 2009 the fact that there "is probably not a single government entity in Dubai and Abu Dhabi that hasn't, over the last three or four years, come up with a new strategy or strategic plan" (Groo, 2009, May 28) such as the 2030 Vision Abu Dhabi or the Dubai 2015 Plan, which outline the key initiatives of the government's plans for the following years. Groo also provided his own estimation that 10-15% of the annual public sector budget outlays are being employed for the reform project, adding to an amount "never used before by any government in the world" for the same kind of programme (Groo, 2009, May 28).

3.1. Law amendments

Moreover, the Constitution, which has been amended a few times without any move towards enhancing the power of the FNC or the Cabinet,²⁰⁸ was reformed

²⁰⁷ Established by Sheikh Khalifa in December 2007, Musanada was designed to develop and manage cost-effective and responsive services for the Government of Abu Dhabi. Musanada means "to support" in Arabic (Company's website: www.musanada.com).

²⁰⁸ 1972 Constitution was made permanent in May 1996. Article 121 was replaced in 2004 to establish the federation as the sole in charge of enacting laws on several matters. The last amendment was in 2009. See the constitution in English at Federal National Council (2011).

in that direction in 2009. Amendment no. (1) of that year introduced changes in six articles of the constitution as follows:

- Article 1: One of the Prime Minister deputies will exercise and assume all powers of Prime Minister when he is absent for any reason by an order from Supreme Council chairman and upon recommendation from Prime Minister.
- Article 62: The Prime Minister, his deputies, or any federal minister should not indulge in any professional work, commercial, financial or any trade deal with the federal government or local governments while on duty. However, they can hold board membership of a commercial or financial company.
- Article 72: The membership duration of the FNC was extended to four years instead of two.
- Article 78: The annual ordinary session of the FNC should not be a period inferior to 7 months, beginning in the third week of October each year.
- Article 81: A general secretariat for the FNC was created. Its functions are specified by bylaws.
- Article 91: The government should report to the FNC the international treaties and agreements, which are to be discussed by the FNC before their ratification.

The Minister of State for Federal National Council Affairs said that the constitutional amendment “is a reiteration of the leadership's efforts to enhance the participation of the FNC in strategic decisions (...) [it would] further boost the process of political empowerment launched by the President (...), and help the members strengthen their involvement in the political process” (UAE Interact, 2009, February 3). Indeed, the approval of these constitutional amendments by the FNC, the Supreme Council and the President meant the endorsement of all national authorities to the enhancement of the powers of the FNC, even if only to a very limited extent.

As explained in chapter 2, the FNC is responsible for examining and suggesting amendments to all proposed federal legislation (draft by the cabinet) prior to their submission to the Supreme Council and the president, it can summon and question ministers, and it reviews and approves the annual budget.²⁰⁹ Adding to this list, the supervision of international agreements is a small but nevertheless relevant concession as the council is thereby integrated in the foreign policy

²⁰⁹ See section on state formation in chapter 2.

decision-making process. The extension of the 'legislature' term to four years was a positive reform, because its members would have more time to become familiar with the functioning of the body, hence earning more experience, and eventually the council would become more efficient. Finally, the impediment of ministers to hold other positions or establish any deal with federal or local governments was a measure intended at reducing corruption and mismanagement, as well as at making officials more responsible for their federal duties.

Thus, although the reforms implemented during the first decade of the 2000s were overly cautious the enhancement of transparency and accountability of governmental institutions (which have been increasingly required to present their plans and report on progress to the public); the reforms in education and health services; the 'emiratization' programme to improve employment opportunities for nationals; and the vivid debate that took root on the media around elections and the need to expand FNC powers they signalled that the leadership was moving toward liberalisation. In this regard, the US Ambassador in Abu Dhabi reported in November 2007 that: "As the UAE moves rapidly forward in an era of high prosperity, it is becoming somewhat more open, tolerant, and willing to address issues that define its international reputation" (Sison, 2007, November 8).

However, many of the pre-existing governance problems remained unresolved, despite the presidential announcement of gradually reforming the political system to enhance participation. Incongruence and anachronism are very visible regarding rule of law, as the impartiality of the judiciary and the police force²¹⁰ is not clear, and the protection of human rights is not sufficiently applied. The Press and Publications Law (Federal Law No. 15 of 1980) is a good example of the incongruence inherent to the government strategy. It is considered one of the most restrictive press laws in the Arab world for "it authorizes the state to censor both domestic and foreign publications prior to distribution, and prohibits criticism of the government, rulers and ruling families,

²¹⁰ Example of this was the case of a member of the ruling family of Abu Dhabi who was acquitted despite a video, which was recorded by a policeman, showing him beating and torturing an Afghan man in 2004 (See al-Jazeera (2010, January 10) for details); or the more recent cases of political activists that are detained by the State Security Apparatus and kept incommunicado and in unknown locations for long periods of time (See section on Post-Arab Spring landscape).

and friendly foreign governments”, and violations of this law can result in fines, prison sentences, or prosecution under the penal code (Freedom House, 2013). Moreover, self-censorship is very much in place since most journalists are foreign residents with temporary contracts that can be easily cancelled, thus they generally avoid touching upon potentially sensitive topics, and are extremely cautious in their activities. Similarly, it has been argued that the judiciary is largely comprised of Egyptian and Sudanese nationals working on fixed-term contracts and that are, therefore, “less likely to make rulings that might antagonize their hosts” (Sison, 2007, November 8).

Furthermore, in the years following the 2006 FNC elections, the closing down of Internet sites, blogs and forums, as well as the confiscation of newspaper issues, reflected that the space that appeared to have emerged for discussion of national affairs, and expression of disagreement with governmental policies, was fading. This probably had to do with the increased use of social media among Emiratis (the UAE has one of the highest Internet penetration rates of the Middle East), which made it more difficult for authorities to monitor and contain the exchange of ideas.²¹¹ The crackdown on websites initially took place under Federal law no. (2) of 2006²¹² on the Prevention of Information Technology Crimes (abrogated later by Federal Decree-Law no. (5) of 2012),²¹³ which was the first law of this kind enacted in a GCC state. In addition to criminalizing acts commonly associated with “cybercrimes” such as hacking, phishing and other forms of financial fraud, the law explicitly criminalized the use of the Internet to commit a wide variety of crimes and provided fines and prison terms for Internet users who violated political, social and religious norms in the country. In 2008 there was an important clampdown on the Internet, with thousands of websites being blocked *en masse* (AKI, April 2008), which has steadily continued during the following years in the absence of procedural transparency or judicial oversight regarding the blocking or removal of online content. Among the most controversial websites blocked were the famous blog of the atheist Emirati blogger Ben Kerishan (www.benkerishan.blogspot.com);

²¹¹ As of 10th July 2013, the number of active Twitter users in the UAE stands at 363,624 ; and the total number of Facebook users stands at 3,593,704 (www.stats.ae).

²¹² Full text in English available at: Federal Law No. (2) of 2006 on the Prevention of Information Technology Crimes. (2006, 30 January).

²¹³ Full text in English available at: Federal Decree-Law no. (5) of 2012 on Combating Cybercrimes. (2012, August 13).

the 'Secret Dubai Diary' blog, which dealt with different UAE issues, including politics, and which had won the Middle East and Africa prize of Bloggies 2007 Weblog Awards (www.secretdubai.blogspot.com); or 'UAE Torture' website that posted the video of a member of the ruling family of Abu Dhabi torturing a man (www.uaetorture.com). An example of the extreme sensitivity of authorities toward criticism of members of the ruling families was the temporary suspension in July 2009 of the website and newspaper al-Emarat al-Youm (www.emaratalyoum.com) for having published a story about the doping of a horse owned by two sons of the UAE president (Freedom House, 2013).

The apparent opening of spaces for debate in the national media, in addition to the virtual spaces that emerged on the Internet, encouraged many Emiratis to participate in political discussions both in person or online. Among others, the aforementioned online discussion forum 'UAEHewar' was established by a group of liberal Emiratis. The aforementioned liberal Ahmed Mansoor came up with the idea of establishing an online discussion forum with, as he explains it, "high freedom of expression and that included different school thoughts in one place, and where all opinions were respected."²¹⁴ Other young people, with whom he had been in touch over other Internet forums and blogs –such as 'Mujarrad Insan' or 'Abstract Human'–²¹⁵ that commented about political reform or human rights issues in the UAE but which were frequently censored by sites administrators or the authorities, liked the idea and they decided to open it and run it together. Notably, none of the five people initially involved knew each other personally. Fearing reprisals for their political commentaries, most of them wrote online under pseudonyms and were not willing to reveal their identities.²¹⁶ Today it is known that among the three men and two women who started the forum, the three most active were Ahmed Mansoor, Rowda al-Balushi,²¹⁷ also known by her literary pseudonym Rawdah Hamed, an Emirati (bidun) writer from al-'Ain, in addition to a younger student whose name might better not be revealed at the moment.²¹⁸

²¹⁴ Personal interview with Ahmed Mansoor, Dubai, UAE (March 2012).

²¹⁵ Available at: <http://mujarrad-ensan.maktoobblog.com/>

²¹⁶ Personal interview with Ahmed Mansoor, Dubai, UAE (March 2012).

²¹⁷ Twitter account: @Rowda_Hamed. She also had her own blog called '*makanan qasyan*' or 'faraway place'.

²¹⁸ Personal interviews with UAEU students al-'Ain (April 2011-March 2012) and with Ahmed Mansoor, Dubai, UAE (March 2012).

The forum became operative in August 2009 and quickly became one of the preferred sites among opinionated Emiratis who otherwise could have not exchanged their ideas so openly. Moreover, the forum intentionally did not require registration in order to participate, so those who preferred to stay anonymous could do so. In this regard, Ahmed Mansoor explains that “people were happy to have this space for discussion...they saw it as a chance to discuss many topics that were never discussed in such an open way before...people before would speak behind closed doors, but not in public...”²¹⁹

The forum had several discussion ‘rooms’ including: National Affairs, The UAE in the eyes of others, Arab and International Affairs, Literary Affairs, and People’s Talk (or ‘*kalam al-nas*’), where people expressed a wide range of opinions which were only removed by the administrators if criticism was directed towards individuals rather than public figures or policies. By 2011, it had around 2,000 members registered, and more than 45,000 threads, subjects and comments of members and guest users.²²⁰

Apparently the authorities considered that the expressed opinions crossed red lines and, only three months after the forum went online, a post was blocked for the first time, which was written by an agnostic under the title “*Ma wara’ al-sirat al-dhatiyya li-Allah?*” (What is behind the CV of Allah?). Three other months further, the site was blocked in the UAE, redirected to another link by administrators, and finally completely blocked five months later, together with its Twitter and Facebook accounts.²²¹ The blocking of the website was done in an unusual way, by which a ‘technical glitch’ message was displayed instead of the normal blocking message. This could have had two objectives: first to identify the owners of the site if they complaint, and second, to not publicly disclose that it was being blocked by authorities. In March 2010 a complaint was filed to the prosecutor general in Dubai against the Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA) for blocking the forum, but access from the UAE has been disrupted since February 2010. Moreover, by the summer of 2010, the SSA had identified some of the people participating in the forum, including Rowda al-Balushi and some UAEU students, who were interrogated and warned to stop

²¹⁹ Personal interview with Ahmed Mansoor, Dubai, UAE (March 2012).

²²⁰ Personal interview with Ahmed Mansoor, Dubai, UAE (March 2012).

²²¹ Personal interview with Ahmed Mansoor, Dubai, UAE (March 2012).

spreading their ideas through the Internet.²²² Ahmed Mansoor was to be detained later under allegations of having insulted the authorities of the country, incited others to revolt through UAEHewar and social media, and for his blog publications.²²³

Also in 2010, the electronic magazine “Hetta” (www.hetta.com) became the first UAE e-magazine that was ordered to shut down, under allegations of defamation on an article published entitled “Abu Dhabi TV: Emirate TV only in name,” which criticised the way the emirate's TV channels are being administrated (Salama, 2010, January 16). On the same year, issue No. 11655 of the Arabic newspaper “*al-Sharq al-Awsat*” was reportedly confiscated for containing an article written by Abdulkhaleq Abdulla criticising the Abu Dhabi Vision 2030 project. The project was accused of reflecting the intention of concentrating investment in local development under the banner of “Abu Dhabi first,” hence leaving aside federal development, and Abdulla argued this would contribute to the enhancement of population imbalance, which would ultimately contradict Sheikh Zayed’s approach (Abdulla, n.d.). Therefore, limits to free expression of political ideas were clearly set, for both Islamists and liberals, years before the Arab Spring exploded. However, it was only then when prominent members of both ideological groups were detained and when previous silent ostracism of potential opponents became, thanks in part to the new ITCs, widely publicised domestically and internationally.

It was around this time when, as the second FNC elections of the country were not being announced, that more Emiratis started to get nervous and to question the authenticity of the reform project. Intellectuals and members of the FNC urged the government to expand the FNC’s power and to start preparing for the next polls as promised. Nevertheless, it still took authorities a while to announce the dates and procedures for the new election, scheduled for September 2011 – over six months after expected.

3.2. The Electoral Experiment

Among the reforms put forward after 2005 National Day presidential speech, the most visual one was calling for elections to choose half of the Federal National Council (FNC) members. Although it did not really affect the decision-making

²²² Personal interviews with UAEU students, al-‘Ain, UAE (February 2012).

²²³ For more details, see section on the Post-Arab Spring landscape in this chapter.

power structure, it generated much debate surfacing many of the citizens' concerns. In this regard, and in agreement with Andreas Shedler (2006: 12), Luciano Zaccara explains that the observation and analysis of electoral processes in authoritarian regimes are important "for assessing the value that authorities give to the opinions and wishes of their subjects, and for evaluating their commitment to implementing transparent mechanisms to collect those views" (Zaccara, 2013: 83). Using Zaccara's adapted version of Rafael Bustos' Qualitative Criteria for Democratic Electoral Assessment,²²⁴ the following pages discuss the two electoral processes that have been held in the UAE—the first one in December 2006 and the second one in September 2011.

In the absence of a specific Electoral Law in the UAE, the Executive Election Instructions²²⁵ regulated the 2006 and 2011 FNC elections in the following terms: Only 20 of the 40 FNC members should be chosen by Electoral Colleges (EC), and only these EC nominated by the rulers of each Emirate could participate. Likewise, the EC should be appointed by the rulers of the seven emirates "in multiples of hundreds relative to the number of seats apportioned to that emirate in the FNC" (al-Dabbagh & Nusseibeh, 2009: 22). This involved having to nominate at least 100 times the number of its representatives. As a result, the very limited EC selected for the 2006 FNC elections—only 6,595 voters—which has been labelled as "the most partial electorate ever invented (...) in the entire world since the Greeks" (Sadiki, 2009: 77). Although the number of eligible voters was increased significantly to 129,000 for the 2011 FNC elections, and the selection mechanism was supposedly random, there are serious doubts as to how the electorate is nominated. Although the quantitative analysis of the B'huth research and consulting centre did not identify clear patrons in the selected voters that could have reflected tribal or political allegiances with the ruling families,²²⁶ other sources explain that the rulers of each Emirate put together an initial list of participants that was then sent to the

²²⁴ See the OPEMAM research project at www.opemam.org/en. The variables observed include: (a) Participation; (b) Competition; (c) Transparency; (d) Party representation and debate during the election; and (e) Openness. The combination of these five criteria will produce a final assessment of the relevance of the electoral process (OPEMAM; Zaccara, 2013: 83).

²²⁵ Based on the Federal Cabinet decree No. 4 for 2006 and the presidential decree No. 3 for 2006.

²²⁶ See al-Muqbel (n.d.) and personal interviews with B'huth researchers, Dubai (February 2012).

central government and revised by the SSA, which removed any sensitive or, according to them, potentially dangerous names.²²⁷

In accordance with electoral instructions, the country was divided into seven electoral districts representing the seven emirates. Four candidates were to be chosen in the electoral district of Abu Dhabi and four in Dubai, three in Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah and two in Fujairah, Ajman and al-Qawain (UAQ). Thus, each voter in Abu Dhabi or Dubai could vote for one or up to four candidates, a voter in Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah between one and three, while in Fujairah, Ajman or Umm al-Qawain could vote for one or two candidates.

Also, since political parties are illegal in the UAE, candidates run as independents, and only EC members could contest the FNC seats allocated to their emirate, provided they were qualified for the position as specified by the constitution: all FNC members should be UAE citizens, permanent residents of the emirate they wish to represent, 25 years of age or older, literate, and have no criminal record. Finally, voting is not compulsory and electors should basically be part of their emirate EC, as to be entitled to vote: they must be Emirati citizens, reside in the country at the time of election and be at least 25 years old.

The 2006 FNC Elections

The 2006 elections were held in three stages: 16th December in Abu Dhabi and Fujairah, 18th December in Dubai and Ras al-Khaimah and 20th December in Sharjah, Ajman and UAE; and in seven polling stations—one in every emirate—, which is a very small number considering the extension of some emirates, such as Abu Dhabi, in comparison to smaller ones, like Ajman or Umm al-Qawain. With around 400,000 nationals eligible to vote, a total of 6,595 members of the EC were entitled to vote: 1,741 from Abu Dhabi, 1,520 in Dubai, 1,061 in Ras al-Khaimah, 1,017 in Sharjah, 436 in Ajman, 417 in Fujairah and 403 in Umm al-Qawain. This means that only 2.2 percent of nationals eligible to vote were allowed to participate (Abdullah, 2006), and thus only this percentage of people was to be represented by the winners of the elections. Moreover, only 18 percent of the EC were women (Abdurabb, 2007).

²²⁷ Personal interview with university professor, Dubai (November 2011); and with Emirati independent intellectual, Dubai (March 2011).

Table 14: Electoral Colleges and candidacies 2006 FNC elections²²⁸

Emirate	Total EC	Women in EC	Candidates Registered	Female Candidates	Seats by election	Total seats
Abu Dhabi	741	-	100	14	4	8
Dubai	1,520	-	82	15	4	8
Sharjah	1,017	-	101	29	3	6
RAK	1,061	-	83	3	3	6
Ajman	436	-	24	2	2	4
Fujairah	417	-	37	1	2	4
UAQ	403	-	29	1	2	4
TOTAL	6,595	1,162	456	65	20	40

The participation rate nationwide was 74.4 percent (al-Dabbagh & Nusseibeh, 2009: 23),²²⁹ reasonably high in comparison to other countries, but very low if we take into account the restricted number of voters, how they were previously selected by the rulers, and the number of Emirati citizens in age of voting. Astonishingly, a government official said that the turnout was “disappointing given that all of the candidates and participants were from very good families, and were all personally approved by the UAE’s rulers” (Davidson, 2008: 166). It has, however, been reported that some of these potential voters decided not to participate in the polls because they considered it a pointless exercise (Davidson, 2009b). The highest participation rates were recorded in Fujairah and Umm al-Qawain, followed by Ajman, Sharjah, Ras al-Khaimah, Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Interestingly, in Umm al-Qawain, all female members of the Electoral College cast their ballots.²³⁰

The EC system limited the possibility of any real competition: Candidates had to present a copy of their ‘family book’ (*khulasa al-qaid*) for registration purposes, meaning that women had to ask permission from their husbands, fathers or brothers (legal holders of this document). This would obviously hinder female candidates without family support to present their candidatures.²³¹ A total of 456

²²⁸ Source: al-Dabbagh & Nusseibeh (2009) and Salem (2007).

²²⁹ However, several participation rates can be found in the different sources available ranging between 60% and 80%.

²³⁰ See the Inter-Parliamentarian Union website:

http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/2333_06.htm

²³¹ The Inter-Parliamentarian Union report pointed out that the recent introduction of individual identity documents would overcome this obstacle in the future.

candidates,²³² including 65 women, contested the elections. A report published by the MFNCA in May 2007 revealed that more than the 50 percent of candidates had a university-level degree and that the majority worked in the government sector (Abdurabb, 2007). Furthermore, candidates had a two-week period prior to the Election Days to run their campaigns, which had to be self-funded. Some candidates were critical of the uncertain criteria employed in EC selection process, which favoured people from certain tribes and families. The main drawbacks candidates faced were that the campaign period was too short, as well as the lack of training (specifically on how to raise funds and how to manage their budgets) and the difficulty in accessing voters (especially of the opposite sex due to social barriers) (al-Dabbagh & Nusseibeh, 2009: 33-38).

Table 15: Elections 2006 participation rates²³³

Emirate	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Abu Dhabi	64.75	43.98	60
Dubai	71.33	69.47	71.5
Sharjah	82.38	81.75	82.20
Ajman	85.22	83.33	85.09
UAQ	88.64	100	88.83
RAK	79.54	75.66	78.98
Fujairah	90.77	88.89	90.41

Regarding transparency, Minister Gargash “ruled out any possibility of foreign observers being allowed to monitor the elections” when he argued that the UAE could not copy the practices of others and affirmed the UAE did “behave in a transparent and reliable manner” (UAEInteract, 2006, December 13). However, local associations had the chance to observe the process if they had requested it. For instance, the Dubai Establishment for Women's Development monitored the elections in Dubai (WAM, 2006, December 18). Moreover, the UAE News Agency (WAM) established a media centre equipped with the latest IT systems catering for local and international media covering the elections. Voting stations were open from 8am to 7pm or until all voters in the stations had cast their ballots; all votes were cast and counted electronically, making the UAE the first

²³² The data related to candidates, EC and results for 2006 elections, varies from one source to another, with numbers varying from source to source. Therefore, I have chosen to use the data from the DSG report, which refers to official documents.

²³³ Source: al-Dabbagh & Nusseibeh (2009: 52).

Arab country to introduce e-voting. The voting process included checking identification, e-voting, printing out votes cast, and putting their out-print ballot into the box. No problems were registered in any of the voting stations, the Election Days passed smoothly and no particular complaints were raised. The only alleged irregularity was that some names in the EC corresponded to people aged under 16, and to others who were no longer alive (Davidson, 2008: 166).

Nonetheless, in light of the procedures employed to run the elections and the people allowed to participate, the main aim any election should seek, that of electing candidates representing citizens, was not met. Ebtisam al-Kitbi noted that the 2006 electoral outcome did not “reflect the different intellectual, social, economic and political spectrum” but it instituted “the control of the elite belonging to any of these groups” (al-Kitbi, 2006, October 20), hence not meeting minimum representation standards.

The awareness-raising campaign launched by the Ministry of State for FNC Affairs (MFNCA)²³⁴ in order to promote knowledge on the aims of national elections and to develop a culture of political participation in the country, as well as several other initiatives implemented between October and December 2006, generated popular debate around the process.²³⁵ The main means used for targeting EC members was media. Moreover, a number of training seminars were held for both voters and candidates, as well as voting simulations in the weeks prior to the polls; and a call centre was established to solve any doubts the EC could have regarding the process.²³⁶ The Internet was also an important resource during the preparatory stages of the electoral process. EC members had on-line access to timetables and regulations through the websites of the MFNCA and the NEC, and could also send inquiries by e-mail.²³⁷ Besides the scheduled training sessions, and after the candidates had requested more training, several seminars were organized in cooperation with independent organizations, such as the aforementioned *Watani* programme that works to

²³⁴ The Ministry of State for Federal National Council Affairs (MFNCA) is a federal government ministry that was established under Federal Decree No. (10) of 2006 to coordinate the affairs of the FNC. The MFNCA was originally mandated as an organizing body for the elections in 2006 as the Secretariat to the National Elections Committee, but was then ratified to develop as a ministry to continue the goal of developing political participation in the UAE (al-Dabbagh & Nusseibeh, 2009: 65).

²³⁵ WAM, 1st October 2006 [Accessed 10th June 2009].

²³⁶ WAM, 15th October 2006. [Accessed 10th June 2009].

²³⁷ See MFNCA & NEC websites: <http://www.mfnca.gov.ae> & <http://www.uaenec.ae>

reinforce national identity, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the UAE General Women’s Union (GWU).

Openness of the process was very limited, since not having opposition candidates and having all candidates pre-selected by the authorities, allowed no possibility of surprise or unexpected results. The only uncertainty was about the turnout and, even if voters were handpicked by the government, participation showed that disinterest in the process or unconformity with how the elections were handled also existed within this select group. In fact, the limited openness of the process was acknowledged by some prominent Emirati officials when inquired about the FNC elections during a meeting with the US Ambassador in Abu Dhabi, Higher Education Minister Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak was quick to correct: “elections, or selections?” (Sison, 2006, June 27).

Table 16: Elections 2006 results²³⁸

Emirate	Elected candidates	Votes
Abu Dhabi	Muhammad Ali Fadil al-Hamali	304
	Ahmed Shabib Muhammed Hilal al-Dhaheri	302
	Amal Abdullah Juma al-Qubaisi	265
	Rashid Musabah al-Kindi ‘Ali al-Marrar	194
Dubai	Jamal Matar al-Hai	340
	Khalid ‘Ali Ahmed bin Zayed	227
	Sultan Saqr al-Suwaidi	208
	Hussein Abdullah al-Shaafar	196
Sharjah	Obeid Ali Obeid bin Butti al-Muhairi	165
	Khalifa Abdullah bin Sa’id bin Huwaidin	141
	Hamad Harith Hamad al-Midfa	139
RAK	Abdullah Ahmed Salem al-Shehi	219
	Abdul Rahim Abdul Latif Abdullah Shahin	133
	Yousif Obeid ‘Ali bin Isa al-Nuaimi	133
Ajman	Hamad bin Abdullah bin Sa’id al-Ghafli	187
	Khalid Hamad bin Muhammad Bu Shihab	68
Fujairah	Sultan Ahmed Abdullah al-Danakhani	122
	Ahmed Sa’id Abdullah al-Danakhani	94
UAQ	Sultan Saif al-Kubaisi	120
	Yousif ‘Ali Fadel	97

²³⁸ Source: WAM, 2006, December 24.

The National Elections Committee (NEC) held its ninth meeting on 24th December after the elections, and endorsed the list of successful candidates (see table 16). But a quick look at the family names of members of the FNC shows they mostly belong to families and tribes close to the ruling families. A few intellectuals and important businessmen not related to the rulers were however also included. Only one woman, Ms. Amal Abdullah Juma Karam al-Qubaisi, Professor of Architecture at the UAE University, won a seat (in Abu Dhabi). Eight women were later appointed to the FNC: Abu Dhabi appointed one and Dubai three, while the emirates of Sharjah, Ras al-Khaimah, Ajman and Al-Fujaira appointed one woman each, making a total of 9 FNC female members.²³⁹

The 2011 FNC Elections

The year 2010 was one of uncertainty regarding the presidential ‘gradual’ reform project. It was the last year of the 2006 formed FNC term, and yet the government had not announced plans to hold elections to renew the members of the body. Intellectuals, political activists and council members alike were concerned with the fact that the government was not mentioning the matter and that an electoral law had not yet been issued. In this regard, there were speculations about three possible scenarios once its last session expired in February 2011: First there was a possibility of postponing elections and extending the term four more years; second, the council could go on “parliamentary holiday” (i.e. suspension of its sessions) as had already been the case during the 23-month-period prior to the 2006 elections; and third, which is what happened, elections would take place during the months of recession of the FNC (Shaheen, 2011, January 10).

Moreover, although a majority of FNC members seemed to be in favour of the gradual approach to reform—especially seeing Kuwait’s powerful parliament as a regional example, which has halted many economic reforms—,²⁴⁰ there was a general agreement among members of the FNC and Emirati intellectuals around three points: that the number of the council members should be increased to match the population increase; that the electorate should be

²³⁹ For further details see the UAE profile of the Programme on Governance in the Arab Region (POGAR) at: <http://www.pogar.org/countries/theme.asp?th=3&cid=21>

²⁴⁰ In this regard, Michael Herb has argued that while “Kuwait’s higher levels of political participation have exacerbated its economic dependence on oil,” in the UAE “a Kuwaiti-style parliament...would repudiate [its] economic model” (Herb, 2009: 390-392).

extended; and that the FNC should be given more legislative powers, such as making their recommendations binding. For instance, in March 2011, Abdul Raheem Shaheen, a deputy from Ras al-Khaimah, claimed that “the preamble of the Constitution states the establishment of democratic governance” but that “four decades later, we have states that have started after we did and they’re ahead of us.” He thought that the UAE was ready for democracy, which for him “resembles swimming, you can’t learn to swim if I don’t throw you into the water.” In a different opinion, Ali Jasem –the longest-serving member and from Umm al-Qawain–, did not believe the country was ready for dramatic change: “The Emirati society is not politically mature yet,” he said; “intellectuals say that we’ve reached political maturity, but I think the majority are not there yet,” and “people still don’t understand the political process or the role of the federal council (Habboush, 2010, March 11). Later that year, Sultan Saqr al-Suweidi, a member from Dubai, was quoted as having said: “The council should be able to propose laws,” and “the Government rejection shouldn’t be final” (i.e. the FNC should have the right to question government decisions). Similarly, the FNC Speaker at that time, Abdul Aziz al-Ghurair who was an advocate of the ‘gradual’ approach, believed that the process was turning “too slowly” (The National, 2010, April 15), and, in October 2010 during the first session of the *majlis* urged that a “clear and defined programme for the development of the election experience” was necessary (The National, 2011, January 10).

However, despite the mounting pressure, the announcement of elections did not take place until few days after the FNC term had ended, when Presidential Decree No. (2) of 2011 was issued to amend some provisions of the Presidential Decree No. (3) of 2006 on the method to select representatives of emirates in the FNC (WAM, 2011, February 15), and specific details were not announced until one month later. Elections finally took place on 24th September of 2011. In this occasion, the right to vote was extended to 129,274 people, still supposing only a representation of 28% of the country’s population aged over 21 (eligible to become part of the EC). Hence, it is clear that the government privileged stability and the prevention of undesired opposition empowerment before extending participation. As Gargash clearly expressed: “We are aware of the Islamic fundamentalism sweeping through the region, and are careful to limit its influence here” (Sison, 2006, June 27). This concern was also expressed by

the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, to the US authorities in June 2006, as follows:

“The victory of Palestinian Hamas in 2006 elections should be a lesson to the west which encourages us to establish democracy and hold free elections. We assure you that if there were a real election in Dubai tomorrow; the Muslim Brotherhood would win it. We do not want democracy that brings them to power. Certainly, we are at war with the Muslim Brotherhood and have a huge challenge to find a way to liquidate them forever so they never return” (MEMO, 2013, November 24).

The privileged minority was, according to official sources, randomly selected to vote among the Emirati citizens eligible to take part of the EC. As it had happened in 2006, the way by which the selected people were informed about their right to vote was not clear enough and, apparently there was no direct regular or electronic mailbox notification from the electoral commission to the EC members. In fact, several EC members said they only knew they were eligible to vote through the list published in local newspapers or through family members.²⁴¹ Although the EC list was available on the FNC website and it was possible to check its members searching by name or with the ID number, this meant you had to be aware of how the process was actually taking place, which was not the case among the majority of the population. Not all the eligible voters received direct information about the elections neither about their right to vote or to run as candidates. Several Emiratis consulted those days were not aware of the existence of elections,²⁴² which reflects that the official effort to inform about the process was not effective enough to attract the attention of citizens, which may in part explain the very low participation rate (27.75%).

Comparing the EC members of 2006 and 2011 elections, some features are worth mentioning. Firstly, the overall proportion of women significantly increased, from 17.6% in 2006 to 46.4% in 2011. Intriguingly, the percentage of female voters was much higher in Abu Dhabi and Dubai (51.6 and 52.5 respectively) than in the smaller emirates such as Umm al-Qawain and Fujairah (32.7 and 30.4 respectively). Secondly, the increased number of EC members significantly differed if we compare across the seven emirates: While in Abu Dhabi members increased 26.3 times and in Dubai 24.3 times, Ajman and Umm

²⁴¹ Personal interviews with UAEU students, al-‘Ain, Abu Dhabi, UAE (October 2011).

²⁴² Personal interviews with UAEU students, al-‘Ain, Abu Dhabi, UAE (October 2011).

al-Qawain members increased 8 and 7.2 times respectively. These figures could represent the interest of ruling elites in extending the vote in those emirates in which the potential political opposition would represent a serious challenge to the country's stability. However, this variation could also reflect their decision to not franchise more people in the poorer emirates, with allegedly more opposition.

Table 17: Electoral Colleges FNC 2011 elections²⁴³

Emirate	Gender	Number	Percentage
Abu Dhabi	Males	22,952	48.4
	Females	24,492	51.6
	Total	47,444	100
Dubai	Males	19,713	52.5
	Females	17,801	47.5
	Total	37,514	100
Sharjah	Males	7,237	51.9
	Females	6,700	48.1
	Total	13,937	100
Ajman	Males	2,391	61
	Females	1,529	39
	Total	3,920	100
UAQ	Males	2,212	67.3
	Females	1,073	32.7
	Total	3,285	100
RAK	Males	10,378	61.6
	Females	6,472	38.4
	Total	16,850	100
Fujairah	Males	4,400	69.6
	Females	1,924	30.4
	Total	6,324	100
UAE	Males	69,283	53.6
	Females	59,991	46.4
	Total	129,274	100

In order to assess participation we have to bear in mind that, as stated above, the participation rate nationwide was very low (27.7%), a very pronounced decrease compared to the 2006 FNC elections (75%). The highest turnout was in Umm al-Qawain (54.7%), the smallest emirate in the UAE and the only one

²⁴³ Source: al-Muqbel (n.d.).

where a woman was elected. The lowest turnout was in Abu Dhabi (21.3%), the most powerful and richest emirate in the UAE. Only 11,719 women out of 59,991 voted, a 19.5% turnout of the selected voters, representing 31% of the total final voters. The male turnout was 35% of selected voters (24,260 out of 69,283), which represented 69% of the total voters. This imbalance might reflect an increased lack of interest among female voters as well as any obstacles for participating these might face in the more conservative families.

Table 18: Voter turnout FNC 2011 elections²⁴⁴

Emirate	Voters	Turnout	Men	%	Women	%
Abu Dhabi	10,155	21.3%	6,617	65%	3,538	35%
Dubai	9,276	24.7%	5,973	64%	3,303	36%
Sharjah	5,904	42.2%	3,872	66%	2,032	34%
RAK	5,109	30.2%	3,778	74%	1,331	26%
Ajman	1,563	39.8%	1,140	73%	423	27%
Fujairah	2,176	34.3%	1,699	78%	477	22%
UAQ	1,796	54.7%	1,181	66%	615	34%
Total /Average	35,979	27.75%	24,260	69%	11,719	31%

As in the 2006 elections, the Electoral College system limited the possibility of any real *competition* in 2011, since candidates still needed to be part of the selected EC members in order to apply. In spite of the participation effervescence coming from the Arab Spring and the increase in EC members, figures of candidates practically remained the same as in 2006. A total of 469 candidates (compared to 456 in 2006), including 85 women, contested the elections.

Although Emirati authorities made a big effort in guaranteeing the *transparency* of the process, some dozens of complaints related to technical problems on the electronic voting system could have hampered the whole process. Not only were there inconveniences in checking the validity of the desired vote by touching a screen without a printed prove and some problems related to the identification of voters, but also doubts were raised with regards to recounting electronic votes. This last issue provoked that some candidates appealed the

²⁴⁴ Source: UAENEC (2011, August 20).

results (Zaccara, 2013: 86). However, the National Election Committee (NEC) headed by Anwar Gargash, rejected any formal complaint, reassured that the “electronic voting system ensures transparency and credibility” of the Emirati elections, and confirmed the results (UAENEC, 2011, September 25).

Table 19: Candidates for FNC 2011 elections²⁴⁵

Emirate	Candidates	Female Candidates
Abu Dhabi	117	22
Dubai	124	26
Sharjah	94	16
RAK	60	9
Ajman	34	5
UAQ	19	4
Fujairah	21	3
Total	469	85

The number of polling stations²⁴⁶ in the country was raised to 13, which is still considered a very reduced number keeping in mind the extension of the country (Zaccara 2013: 84). Only three polling stations were located in the emirate of Abu Dhabi, two in Dubai, and the remaining eight distributed among the remaining five emirates. Voting stations were open from 8am to 7pm, one more hour than planned due to technical problems experimented in some polling stations. The elections were held in the presence of local media representatives with no foreign media covering the event. Moreover, there were neither international nor national mechanisms of electoral monitoring, like in the 2006 elections, although candidates and some of their representatives were allowed to directly observe the whole process. As in 2006, the fact that the electorate is not made up by all citizens in age of voting makes it impossible for the candidates to represent the real Emirati political spectrum. Some candidates participated in TV programs to discuss their proposals, and representatives of the MFNCA held university lectures and talks around the country. Interestingly, at one of these lectures at the UAEU, students inquired the speaker about the impossibility imposed on the majority of Emiratis to exercise the right to vote,

²⁴⁵ Source: UAENEC (2011, August 20).

²⁴⁶ See photographic annex for pictures at a polling station.

and pointed out this was contrary to the constitution. Similarly, in another talk, professors and candidates attending the event raised their voices to articulate the several pitfalls they found in the gradual implementation of representation mechanisms and share them with the audience (al-Mazrouie,²⁴⁷ 2011, May 22; and Gargash,²⁴⁸ 2011, May 29).

The existing debate focused around the need to extend the FNC powers, as well as the disenchantment with regards to the limitation of franchise for only a part of the citizens. However, the fact that since April 2011 the government had been detaining several intellectuals and activists who had published their opinions against the way in which the electoral process was to be held –among them Ahmed Mansoor, one of the founders on UAEhewar online discussion forum who had called for a boycott of the elections in February²⁴⁹–, prevented many critics from openly expressing their thoughts before, during or after the campaign. Moreover, although candidates' photographs were visible on streets, many people did not know why they were there,²⁵⁰ thus showing that the information available and the possibility of debate were limited.

Furthermore, openness of the process can only be said to have been very limited, since the selection of voters and nomination of candidates allowed no possibility of surprise or unexpected results. A complaint was presented over the possible alliances or arrangements that could have taken place in Abu Dhabi, where three candidates from the 'Awamir (sing. al-'Amiri) tribe were elected. This family belongs to one of the most powerful families in al-'Ain, and holds good relations with the Al Nahyan ruling family of Abu Dhabi. According to electoral instructions, political parties are forbidden, as well as electoral lists and tribal and primary elections. Thus, the complaint in this case was supported by the idea that these 'familiar arrangements' were a kind of 'party' or 'list' forbidden by law. Hence it affected the openness of elections but, nevertheless, the complaint was rejected. Moreover, none of the incumbents was re-elected, although comparing their surnames it is possible to say that there are some family trends in the electoral results of 2006 and 2011. As it happened in the

²⁴⁷ Former FNC member.

²⁴⁸ Minister of FNC Affairs at the time.

²⁴⁹ See the press release calling for the boycott in Annex 7.

²⁵⁰ Personal interviews with UAEU students, Abu Dhabi, UAE (October 2011).

2006 elections, only one woman obtained a seat through electoral competition: Sheikha Eisa Ghanem, from Umm al-Qawain.

Table 20: Elections 2011 results²⁵¹

Emirate	Winning candidates	Votes obtained
Abu Dhabi	Salim Mohammed al-Amiri	2,815
	Mohammed Moslam al-Amiri	2,380
	Mohammed Buti al-Qubaisi	1,199
	Ahmed Mohd al-Amiri	1,153
Dubai	Hamad Sultan al Rohomi	1,327
	Marwan bin Ghalita	1,195
	Ahmad Abed Malik Ahli	1,164
	Rashad Bukhash	1,077
Sharjah	Ahmed Mohammed Ali Huweidan	805
	Ahmed Mohammed Rashid al-Jarwan	766
	Misbah Saeed Ali Harb Al Katbi	652
RAK	Ahmad Abdullah al-Amash	1,449
	Saed al Khatri	957
	Faisal Abdullah al-Teniji	717
Ajman	Sultan al Shamsi	296
	Abdullah Hamad Rashed al-Shamsi	287
Fujairah	Gharib al-Saridi	436
	Sultan al-Samahi	396
UAQ	Sheikha Eisa Ghanem	536
	Obaid Hassan Rakad	332

Considering the powers granted to FNC by the constitution of 1996 (and 2009 amendment), it is clear that the overall significance of elections does not reside on the capacity that new elected members will have to change policies or the political system. The fairness of the electoral processes is unclear in three ways: first, because of the obscure mechanism of selection of voters and candidates; second, because of the inefficient notification of their enfranchised status to voters; and third, because of the suspicion over voting procedures and vote counting, mainly during the second elections.

²⁵¹ Source: UAENEC (2011, August 20).

Participation was very low in both electoral processes due to a combination of lack of interest and awareness among a sector of the Emirati population that was invited to participate, and of disenchantment of others with the process itself. In this regard, one must remember that the Electoral College only represented 2.2% and 28% of the potential electorate in 2006 and 2011 respectively, and that some of the more politically aware sectors of society were probably not invited to participate. In particular, the 2011 turnout was very bad news to the 'legitimizing appeal' of the UAE rulers, who did not expect such low participation²⁵² and even hired experts to gauge Emirati perceptions of the election process.²⁵³

Finally, given that the powers of the FNC were not to be extended during the new 'legislative' term, the democratic ethos of the electoral process was further doomed; it remained as a mere experiment to test citizens' stand towards reform, as well as a strategy of authorities to respond to growing internal and external pressures. However, these elections were significant for having been the first change introduced in UAE political structures since its establishment in 1971, as well as for having surfaced UAE socio-political dynamics and, maybe unintentionally, encouraged people to discuss politics more openly. The latter, as the next section explains, might have played against the interests of the ruling elite.

4. The post-Arab Spring landscape

The calls for and late announcement of the 2011 elections were taking place just as the Arab Spring sparked. This might have influenced the leadership's final decision to actually hold elections and to enlarge the Electoral College, while at the same time keeping a firm grip on the process. This would be done by not opening the polls to all adults in age of voting,²⁵⁴ nor further enhancing the powers of the FNC. In fact, as popular uprisings began to take place in several Arab countries, including Bahrain, since the end of 2010 –and smaller protests in Oman, Kuwait and KSA-, Gulf rulers became nervous and surveillance of pro-reform, especially Islamist, sectors of society became of

²⁵² Personal interview with Emirati professor, Dubai (October 2011).

²⁵³ The Ministry of State for Federal National Council Affairs asked Zogby Research Services to conduct a poll and a report analysing the results. It is unfortunately not available for the public. See: <http://www.zogbyresearchservices.com/emirati-election-poll-2011/>

²⁵⁴ See section on the 2006 and 2011 elections in this chapter.

utmost importance. Resembling other Gulf states,²⁵⁵ the UAE adopted some measures which, although interpreted by some as “simply business as usual, not a pre-emptive response to a potential Arab Spring contagion” (Forstenlechner et al., 2012: 55), are regarded by others as a redistributive measure to appease potential revolt (and even as an insult by some more opinionated Emiratis).²⁵⁶ The measures included a visit of Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, crown prince of Abu Dhabi, to the poorer northern emirates (February 2011), the subsequent announcement that more than \$1.5 billion would be invested in utilities infrastructure in those emirates (March 2011) (Kerr, 2011, March 2), the creation of jobs for more than 6,000 unemployed UAE citizens (June 2011) (WAM, 2011, June 18), the fixing of prices of 400 major commodities until the end of 2011 (May 2011) (WAM, 2011, May 27), an increase of salaries of federal government employees by 35 to 100 per cent, and the setting up of a \$2.7 billion fund to help pay debts of some low-income citizens (December 2011) (WAM, 2011, November 30).

As in 2006, opinions were divided with regard to the fact that only a small percentage of citizens had been invited to participate in the electoral process (28% in this occasion). Najla al-Awadi, one of the youngest FNC members appointed in 2006 considered that “if the leadership decided to move at a slower gradual pace, then there were good reasons for it” and thought “each country has to move at its own pace” (al-Huneidi, 2011, February 17). Contrarily, a former FNC member from Dubai stated that they were “with the leadership in moving gradually, but we should take steps forward, [and added] How many years is it going to be before everyone can vote? It must be open for everyone” (Shaheen, 2011, March 8). Ebtisam al-Ketbi was less concerned about the number of people participating in the process than about the fact that the FNC remained “an advisory unit for the Government, rather than a legislative one” (al-Huneidi, 2011, February 17); while Abdulkhaleq Abdulla thought “the glass [was] half-full from the perspective that there [was] an increase in the number of people that are eligible to vote, [but that it was] half-

²⁵⁵ Saudi Arabia led the way with an economic stimulus package worth an estimated \$130bn, and the six-member Gulf Co-operation Council promised to invest a total of \$20bn in Oman and Bahrain; and Qatar announced pay rises of 50-120 per cent for public sector employees. See also Gara (2005, November 30).

²⁵⁶ Personal interviews with UAEU students and professors, al-‘Ain, UAE (April 2011-June 2011).

empty in that there [was] absolutely no reason why the government [did not] allow everybody to vote; [and considered that] the really big issue [was] not the voting, [but] the power of the FNC” (Hall, 2011, August 24). Moreover, in an interview during the Al-Jazeera Forum, Abdulla warned that because “the Gulf is geographically and culturally part of the Arab world...and the winds of change [had] already taken root in the Gulf...[they] should not be dismissive of anything, [and he thought there was] plenty of room for political reform, [and that although] people [were] not calling to put down the regimes..., everybody would support a banner for political reform in the Gulf” (Abdulkhaleq Abdalla, in Aljazeeraforum, 2011, March 12).

In agreement with the need to implement reform faster, a group of liberal and Islamist nationals put together a petition asking the president to reconsider his decision, grant legislative powers to the FNC and franchise all citizens. The text, later known as the 3rd of March petition,²⁵⁷ was signed by 133 Emiratis, and included former members of the FNC, former government officials, university professors, writers, lawyers, human rights activists, and members of UAE’s limited civil society. Among them the entire political spectrum was represented, although there was an undetermined but significant number of Islamists. However, it was the aforementioned liberal Ahmad Mansoor, who had also been calling for a boycott of the elections for considering the announced procedures unconstitutional, who wrote a first draft and who was its custodian during the process of gathering signatures. Other people from different political tendencies and emirates also participated in its writing or revision, as Mansoor considered it was important to have all groups’ opinions represented.²⁵⁸ One year earlier, he had tried to bring liberals and Islamists together in a meeting to discuss issues of national interest and common concern, such as the lack of freedom of expression or association, but the group failed after liberals withdrew due to disagreement on many aspects.²⁵⁹ As in other Arab countries, the two tendencies have tried to unite forces, but ideological clashes are frequent and the liberals’ fear that Islamists will eventually betray them is high.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁷ See petition attached in Annex 8.

²⁵⁸ Personal interview with Ahmed Mansoor, Dubai (March 2012).

²⁵⁹ Personal interview with Ahmed Mansoor, Dubai (March 2012).

²⁶⁰ Personal interview with Emirati professor, Dubai (February 2012).

Nonetheless, when the petition was put forward, and since the text appealed to issues of common interest, people from all sides decided to sign. Among the signatories were: Liberal Ebtisam el-Ketbi, who did not sign until the last minute;²⁶¹ Abdullah Ali al-Sharhan, businessman and former appointed FNC member from Ras al-Khaimah with nationalist views, who was allegedly involved in the previous 1979 petition; Abdullah bin Loquies al-Shehhi, a nationalist, head of the *Shuhuh* Culture and Heritage Association; Abdulhamid Ali al-Kumaiti, lawyer and human rights activist closer to liberal views; Dr. Mohamed al-Roken, lawyer, former UAEU professor, and last elected head of the Jurists Association with Islamist views but not directly linked to *al-Islah*; Muhammad al-Mansouri, lawyer, former head of the Jurists Association, administrator of the EMACS website,²⁶² and member of *al-Islah*; Dr. Abdulla Muhammad Rahma al-Shamsi, Islamist, Vice-Chancellor of the British University in Dubai; and Mohammed Saqer al-Za'abi, a judge with Islamist views, who was very active online.

In a somehow uncommon practice, the petition was sent by postal mail to the Presidential Office rather than handed in personally by a representative of the group. This was taken as discourteous by authorities and used as an argument to publicly undermine the image of petitioners.²⁶³ Moreover, the petition was sent to local, regional and international press, as well as to international HRRs organisations, and some of the signatories appeared in TV satellite and online channels speaking about it. Consequently, it rapidly became a trending topic among local and Gulf social media communities, which emboldened the leadership even. Popular division of opinions regarding the petition among the national population is reflected in the comments of anonymous people on an entry of Ahmed Mansoor's blog:

Amal: *"The Federal National Council is of utter importance to the country. And I trust our leadership would not appoint a person unworthy of such responsibility. A lot of people are driven by ulterior motives, whether its fame or money- I don't trust the entire population of the UAE to make the right choice if given the opportunity to vote. If*

²⁶¹ el-Ketbi's hesitance to sign the petition had to do with the previous unsuccessful experience liberals had had in cooperating with Islamists to push for democracy. She was, in fact, the last person to sign, but appeared the first one of the list. She later suggested her name was put at the top on purpose, but this was reportedly the case because the names were put in alphabetical order. Personal interview with Ahmed Mansoor, Dubai (March 2012).

²⁶² EMACS website: www.emasc-uae.com

²⁶³ Personal interview with UAEU profesor, al-'Ain (May 2011).

the FNC makes a mistake, it takes decades to fix that mistake. And we don't want any in this country. Mostly everyone thinks they'll make a great job as a FNC member, myself included. But we need to ride the ladder one step at a time. We cannot jump the gun and go for complete democracy, that's a jungle. Democracy leads to social segregation and ultimately civil war. I hope the people who signed the petition think wisely before they did and have more trust in your leaders."

Aljameye: *"Exactly for the same reason that you mention FNC is of 'utter importance to the country' then be assured that the best way to ensure its effectiveness and transparency is through democratic election by participation of all the citizens. I wonder what makes you think one person is better able to elect a number of people than the whole population. Your logic is flawed as contrary to what you claim and propose has proved to work in majority of the countries of the world, from rich Scandinavian countries to so called resource-constrained countries such as Bangladesh. By the way do you think till now FNC has not made any mistake? Then you are completely out of touch with reality!"²⁶⁴*

Further challenging the leadership's decision, four associations –Jurists, Teachers, UAEU professors and al-Shuhuh for National Heritage– launched another petition in April 2011, which called for universal franchise. The authorities' reaction was revealing of their determination to put down any further political activism: associations were accused of having violated section 16 of the UAE's 2008 Law on Associations, which prohibits associations and their members from interfering "in politics or in matters that impair state security and its ruling regime" (HRW, 2012, January); and their elected boards were disbanded and replaced.

Simultaneously, some of the most outspoken pro-reform Emiratis criticised the handouts that were being distributed by the rentier oligarchy through different means. For instance, Ahmed Mansoor made a comment on US TV al-Hurra in which he referred to the recent investments and benefits announced as "economic or social bribes."²⁶⁵ Similarly, Dr Nasser bin Ghaith, a lecturer of economics at Abu Dhabi Sorbonne University (and one of the first post-Arab spring detainees) who holds Islamist ideas but is not a member of *al-Islah*, was quoted as having said:

²⁶⁴ Anonymous comments on Ahmed Mansoor's blog (2011, March 9).

²⁶⁵ Personal interview with Ahmed Mansoor, Dubai, UAE (March 2012).

“They have announced 'benefits and handouts' assuming their citizens are not like other Arabs or other human beings, who see freedom as a need no less significant than other physical needs. So they use the carrot, offering abundance. But this only delays change and reform, which will still come sooner or later... No amount of security - or rather intimidation by security forces - or wealth, handouts, or foreign support is capable of ensuring the stability of an unjust ruler” (Davidson, 2011, April 11).

There was never a formal response whatsoever to any of the petitions, which were portrayed by the government as illegitimate claims coming exclusively from the Islamists.²⁶⁶ As the debate became more vivid on the Internet, and people from different political tendencies were commenting on the issue, authorities initiated a series of investigations to track some of the more politically active people and soon started calling them for interrogation or detaining them. First, it was Ahmed Mansoor,²⁶⁷ who had rejected an offer to take a job abroad from his boss at one of the state-backed telecommunications company, and was subsequently arrested on 11th of April 2011 by State Security Apparatus (SSA) officers –some of which were reportedly un-uniformed and non-Emirati– without being informed of the charges against him. His house was searched, his passport, computer and other electronic material seized; he was taken to an unknown location, and later held in al-Wathba prison in Abu Dhabi.²⁶⁸ The same happened shortly after to abovementioned Nasser Bin Ghaith and other people who were expressing their frustration online. Among them: Fahad Salim Dalk Al-Shehhi, liberal, close to secular views; Hassan Ali Al-Khamis, a moderate, neither Islamist nor liberal; and Ahmed Abdulkhaleq al-Balushi, a *bidun* blogger with religious views, but not from *al-Islah*, who was active in speaking for the rights of the bidun.²⁶⁹ Importantly, among these detainees, only Mansoor had been involved in writing the 3rd of March petition and had signed it, and none of them had been involved in the associations’ petition, hence pointing to an initial targeting of people closer to liberal views and not belonging to civil society organisations.

²⁶⁶ Skype conversation with Ahmed Mansoor, Dubai (March 2014).

²⁶⁷ Actually the first arrest of 2011 took place in February when Hassan Mohammed al-Hammadi, an Imam from Sharjah, was arrested after delivering a speech in support of Egyptian demonstrators. This was interpreted by some academics as a first reminder to the population that political activities were not allowed in the UAE. Personal interview with UAEU professor, al-‘Ain, UAE (May 2011).

²⁶⁸ Personal interview with Ahmed Mansoor, Dubai (March 2012).

²⁶⁹ Ahmed Abdulkhaleq’s blog, Emarati Bedoon (<http://emaratybedoon.blogspot.com>), highlights the suffering of this community in the UAE.

Ahmed Mansoor's discourse, as a supporter of human rights and political reform, had gained popularity among the young educated middle class during previous years and, coupled with his links to international human rights organisations (he was, and still is, a member of *Human Rights Watch* advisory board), a global campaign was carried out that called for the liberation of the group, which became to be known as the 'UAE5'. Other people who had been active, and had signed the petition or were supporting the cause of the five detainees were summoned by the SSA for interrogation and warned not to continue with their activism. Interestingly, the treatment of women involved was quite different to that of men and, instead of putting them in jail, their families were informed of the situation and made responsible for their behaviour. This was the case of several UAEU students, who had been actively participating on the UAEHewar forum, and of its co-founder Rowda al-Balushi (or her literary pseudonym Rowda Hamed), who had been actively supporting the five detained activists on Twitter and joined them on the hunger strike they underwent (Kareem, 2011, November 19).

Nevertheless, liberals' support for the five students and for Rowda wended down due to the warnings many of them received from the SSA, and an ever-growing clash between Islamists, who defended the detainees and their alleged goodwill,²⁷⁰ and the 'ultra-nationalists', that started a smear campaign against reform advocates, especially against the figure of Ahmed Mansoor. The campaign was intended at damaging their image by portraying them as traitors to the nation, as foreign agents or '*ameel*,' by alluding to their ethnic background, and by associating them with *al-Islah*. In this regard, while there is no available evidence to prove the government's involvement in hiring people to spread propaganda, "a large number of anonymous Twitter users appear dedicated to harass and intimidate political dissidents and their families online" (Freedom House, n.d.). The following tweets are an example of that type of messages:

[Rozez r rEd](#): "*Rowda Hamed is Iranian not Emirati. She has nothing to do with the UAE.*"

²⁷⁰ For instance, Islamist young blogger Khalifa al-Nuaimi (@Alnuaimi_k) started the hashtag #RowdaHamed in her support. See Kareem (2011, November 19).

AliAlisaeed5: “You Muslim Brotherhood groups want to play on us. I spit on you. You are calling on people to stand against the state with this Iranian woman. The truth will come out as usual.”²⁷¹

After eight months in prison, where the UAE5 were reportedly subject to solitary confinement and different types of physical and psychological torture (HRW, 2012, January; and Amnesty International, 2004, June), Mansoor was sentenced to three years and the other four to two years of prison for “breaking laws and perpetrating acts that pose a threat to state security, undermining the public order, opposing the government system, and insulting the President”²⁷² through their social media accounts, their blogs or other websites and forums, including the aforementioned UAEHewar website. Mansoor was additionally charged with inciting others to break the law by calling for an election boycott and for demonstrations (al-Jazeera, 2011, November 28) and, contrary to what many think, neither the petition nor his bribery allegations were part of the prosecution.²⁷³ In what some considered a magnanimous act, and others a legitimating strategy that acknowledged the disagreement of many citizens with these detentions, the president issued a decree pardoning all five the following day, which coincided with the 40th Anniversary of the establishment of the Federation. The charges against them, however, were not withdrawn and their passports not returned, thus making it complicated for them to find jobs and limiting their freedom of movement.²⁷⁴ They all continued being active on social networks following their release, but the pressure they and their families have been put through since has forced them to smoothen their voices. Moreover, Ahmed Abdulkhaleq was stripped of his residency papers, given a passport

²⁷¹ Anonymous tweets cited in Kareem (2011, November 19).

²⁷² Article 176 of the Federal Penal Code (No. 3) for the year 1987 (and its amendments) permits a sentence of up to five years in prison for “whoever publicly insults the State President, its flag or national emblem.” Article 8 of the code widens the application of the provision to include the vice president, members of the Supreme Council of the Federation, and others. See Federal Law No (3) of 1987 on Issuance of the Penal Code (2013, April 3).

²⁷³ Personal interview with Ahmed Mansoor, Dubai, UAE (March 2012).

²⁷⁴ As to April 2014, Ahmed still has not been able to get hold of his passport. Personal interview over Skype with Ahmed Mansoor, Dubai, UAE (April 2014).

from the Comoro Islands,²⁷⁵ and deported to Thailand. He was later granted political asylum by Canada where he is currently living.²⁷⁶

In order to show domestically and internationally that the UAE leadership's legitimacy rested on solid popular support, authorities resorted to the tribal aristocracy, and hordes of members of some of the largest tribes, including al-Dhawahir, al-Shawamis, al-Za'ab, al-Ka'ab, or al-Balushi, publicly declared their loyalty to the Sheikhs and compiled allegiance documents which were signed by thousands of people. Some of the senior members of these tribes said (Hoath, 2011, May 16):

“All the tribes have expressed their loyalty to the leaders and the government – like they have always done. The hosting of these meetings or majlis is a common tradition of the country where tribes get together from time to time and assure their full support for their rulers and leaders. It is an ancient trend of hosting such meetings.”

“We have full trust in our leadership and the decision they make for the interest of the people of their country. We stand united for the country. We continue hosting and holding these gatherings to express our solidarity for the interest of national unity and prosperity.”

“All these people are here to sign a document reiterating their full support to their leadership, government, the country and for the national unity. This is our tradition to express our loyalty to our rulers and country, both in good and bad times. It is a spontaneous pledge.”

Unlike the opinions of liberal and Islamist pro-reform activists, the national media extensively covered these allegiance pledges, which encouraged other tribes and members of the national bourgeoisie to follow. However, reactions among the educated middle class were still diverse: some supported the signatories; some agreed with the content but not with the manner in which it had been handed in and publicised; others were against the petition as a whole. For instance, a UAEU student argued: “They only want to create instability; they want to take the power from the Sheikhs...Why? We have everything we need!” Another one, however, said: “I agree with the petition, but we cannot yet have open free elections because the Islamist will win;” and another one thought that

²⁷⁵ Other bidun have also taken Comoros Islands Passports under a 2009 agreement between the UAE and that country. This has been considered by some as a step towards obtaining the Emirati citizenship (you have to provide a previous nationality in order to apply), but as a strategy to reduce the numbers of bidun in the country, who could eventually be deported to a country they have no connections to. See ECHR (n.d. b).

²⁷⁶ Personal interview over Skype with Ahmed Mansoor, Dubai, UAE (April 2014).

“although political reform is necessary, maybe it is not the best moment to call for it, especially in the way they have done it.” A third student expressed her uncertainty with regards to Ahmed Mansoor who she had been following through the Internet, and agreed with the need to reform the political system, but was no longer sure of his intentions: “I don’t know what to think about him anymore.”²⁷⁷

The SSA then launched a State Security campaign mainly against Islamists with links to *al-Islah*, and detentions started to take place. First a group of seven Islamist critics, some of whom had signed the 3rd of March petition, were detained and stripped of nationality. The group, which became known as the ‘UAE7,’²⁷⁸ claimed they were “unjustly targeted for their political views” (Davidson, 2012, September 18). However, an unnamed source at the General Administration for Naturalisation, Residency, and Ports Affairs was quoted as having said that they were targeted for threatening “the national security of the UAE through their connection with suspicious regional and international organisations and personalities” (al-Jazeera, 2011, December 22). The seven, who had been granted citizenship once the federation was already established, reflected the vulnerability of the status of naturalised people within the UAE social system. Consequently, citizenship was utilised as another resource of power of the rentier oligarchy and a message was sent to other potential activists that they risked their passports (and their families) in this battle. In this regard, nationals that could not believe the authorities would go as far as removing their citizenship received the case with surprise. For instance, a UAEU student expressed her concern as follows:

“I never feel safe because of their presence [the SSA], they are the ruin of the state, it is not safe. I hope that the nationality will be restored to the citizens of the 7 Emiratis [the UAE7] as I see a lot of mistakes in this decision. The Emirates were not like this during the great era of Zayed. We did not expect this from the UAE rulers and their highnesses. There is a lot of injustice in our state, but no one can speak about it because they fear the so-called ‘state security’. We do not want to prejudice the security of our nation, but in reality it would be better to call to court every undisciplined minister, dictator

²⁷⁷ Personal interviews, al-‘Ain, UAE (March-May 2011).

²⁷⁸ See UAE7 websites: www.uae7.com and <http://uaeseven-en.blogspot.com>

*and thief of the state, and to establish strict laws for all ministers of discipline.*²⁷⁹

Regardless of these views, and in reaction to the growing online activism of Emirati Islamists, and non-Islamists like Ahmed Mansoor that claimed for the respect of HRRs in their cases, who supported the UAE7, indiscriminate detentions escalated. *Al-Islah* association's board was dismantled and some of its former members established a parallel non-registered organisation under the name of *Da'wat al-Islah* (or Call of reform, in the Islamic sense of plea to God), which was arguably the main target of authorities.²⁸⁰ By the summer of 2012 the SSA had arrested more than 60 people over charges of founding, organising, and administering an organisation aimed at overthrowing the government. Eventually, the number of people detained reached 94, hence becoming known as the UAE94 case. Many of the detainees were members of very well-known Emirati families and some thought this would make the case "a landmark in the UAE [and a] hard case" (Ghobash, 2013, March 18). However, according to FNC members, nobody "really knew what was really going on," but that they had been briefed on the issue, and understood that the government had "made many efforts to engage prominent members of *al-Islah* in the community" before resorting to the crackdown.²⁸¹

Da'wat al-Islah's (*Da'wat* from now on) position towards detentions was however very different: They alleged the people arrested were human rights defenders and civil liberties activists who had no intention to topple the rulers and did not have an armed wing (Bayoumy, 2013, July 2). These claims were heard by the International HRRs organisations that published several reports on the case, but which anyway focused on the human rights violations perpetrated during the arrests, detentions, and trial, rather than on the political tendencies of the activists. Nonetheless, some Emiratis raised their voices to explain to the world that the UAE94 were not human rights defenders but members of an extremist organisation,²⁸² being one of the most solid comments that of Sultan al-Qassemi who asked the international community to properly

²⁷⁹ Response to survey open question 23.

²⁸⁰ In this regard, an article in the local newspaper *The National* explained that "it is important to distinguish between *al-Islah* society, a legal organisation not implicated in the trial, and *Dawat al-Islah*, a religious and political movement affiliated to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt." See: Hassan (2013, March 20).

²⁸¹ Personal interviews with FNC members. Abu Dhabi and Dubai, UAE (April 2013).

²⁸² For instance see al-Noaimi (2012, October 15).

refer to them as “right-wing, exclusionary political movements [and explained he had been] following their rhetoric—in Arabic—...on social media with great concern [and] found it to be xenophobic; anti-Semitic; sectarian; exclusionary; racist toward Asians, Africans and other Arabs and overall repugnant, [which could hardly be considered] the language of ‘human rights defenders’” (al-Qassemi, 2012, October 25).

However, he exclusively provided a selection of tweets by Hassan al-Diqqi, one of the hardliners of *Dawat* who had announced the establishment of an organization called the Islamic Umma Party (*Hizb al-Umma al-Islami*) during the summer of 2012, without elaborating on more moderated discourses of other Emirati Islamists who were also detained, such as Mohammed al-Roken. Moreover, although nobody can really be certain about the intentions of *al-Islah* or *Dawat* members, there is enough evidence that proves that, as in the UAE5 and UAE7 cases, detainees were held for long periods of time incommunicado and in unknown locations where they were allegedly tortured, and held in dubious conditions; and only local observers and press were allowed access to the trial.²⁸³ Thus, even if *al-Islah* had really become a violent group, the opacity in which the case has been handled, in addition to the fact that detentions of family members and sympathisers of the UAE94, and harassment of the pardoned UAE5, are still taking place almost on a daily basis,²⁸⁴ logically rests credibility to the official account.

Many sympathizers and family members of the detainees continued to express their support primordially through social media. This caused many of them to be threatened, harassed, and ultimately detained. Moreover, the government decided to issue Decree Law 5/2012 on cybercrimes on 12th November, which replaced an earlier decree from 2006. This decree “criminalizes a wide range of online activity commonly accepted within international norms” and “contains punishments for offending the state, its rulers, and its symbols, or for insulting Islam and other religions” (ex. calls to change the ruling system are punishable by life imprisonment) (Freedom House, 2013). Several people have already been detained and convicted under these allegations, thus affecting the

²⁸³ See Amnesty International (2004, June), HRW (2012, January) and Robertson, Irvine, Osborne & Naik (2013, April 24: 28).

²⁸⁴ Email correspondence with Emirati Human Rights activist Ahmed Mansoor.

provision of freedom of expression significantly. Accordingly, people have reduced their online appearances.

Finally, the UAE94 trial took place in March 2013 only under the scrutiny of local media and a few family members, since international trial observers and international media representatives were denied entry to the trial. The primary charge against the 94 defendants was founding and administering an institution aimed at overthrowing the government, as per Article (182/1) of the Federal Penal Code (No. 3) for the year 1987 and its amendments: “Shall be sentenced to imprisonment for a term not exceeding ten years, whoever exploits religion to propagate verbally, by writing or by any other means, ideas that may give rise to commotion or prejudice national unity or social peace” (Federal Law No (3) of 1987 on Issuance of the Penal Code, 2013, April 3). However, according to the Emirates Centre for Human Rights (ECHR), a London based organisation, the prosecution case was based on the confession of one of the detainees, Ahmed bin Ghaith al- Suwaidi, which apparently was given under torture, hence resting legitimacy to the accusations. In court, al- Suwaidi denied all charges against him and stated to the judge: “I am scared. Scared for my life and for my family, and I request the court to extend its protection because I am denying all these charges.”²⁸⁵ Among the defendants, 25 were acquitted and 69 received sentences of between seven and 15 years in prison. Of the 69 condemned, eight were convicted in absentia and 24 of them had signed the initial 3rd of March petition. Again, female defendants were treated with more deference, some of them being on bail at the time of the trial, and all of them having been acquitted.²⁸⁶

Conclusion

This chapter has first presented a historical approach to political activism in the UAE, with a focus on the different political ideologies adopted at different times, and the responses of ruling elites to the movements. It has then outlined the different political standpoints of politicised Emiratis, which might be divided in two main groups: supporters of the status quo and supporters of political reform.

²⁸⁵ Footnote: Declaration by Ahmed bin Ghaith al-Suweidi during the UAE 94 Trial (4th March 2013), cited in Robertson, Irvine, Osborne & Naik (2013, April 24: 28).

²⁸⁶ See the list of post-Arab spring detainees in Annex 11.

Among the later, two further divisions have been identified: the Islamist and the liberal tendencies.

The third section goes into the more recent calls for reform that were more visible on the press and online social media since the 2000s and the liberalising responses given initially by authorities, including the call for elections to select half of the members in the consultative Federal National Council. The 2006 and 2011 electoral processes and socio-political dynamics attached have been discussed, before finally covering the more repressive measures adopted by the UAE government since domestic calls for reform became more demanding after the so-called Arab Spring took root in the region.

Supporting the hypotheses outlined in chapter 2, this chapter has shown how political activism exists in a rentier state like the UAE. I have argued that rentierism is not sufficient to appease calls for reform in an increasingly educated and globalised society, but rather enhances the flow of ideas and therefore the political awareness of citizens in the long term.

PART II: UAE POLITICAL CULTURE: THE CASE OF UAEU STUDENTS

More often than not, and in consonance with the 'gradual' approach to political reform of the Emirati ruling elite, analysts have regarded the political culture in the UAE as "parochial and traditional" (Abdulla, 1984: 288) since the establishment of the federation. The previous chapters have explained how rentier state theory (RST) considers the state to be independent from society as long as wealth is distributed among people effectively. Following this perspective, most specialists of Gulf studies assume that citizens (and residents) of these rentier states are kept politically unaware, and do not demand political representation, hence making authoritarian rentier states stable. However, the socio-political historical accounts discussed and the analysis of the current socio-political landscape of the previous sections demonstrate that political activism has existed in the UAE since pre-oil days, and that the ruling elites have historically had to resort to a combination of mechanisms to contain political opposition.

Accordingly, this dissertation argues that the study of political culture in rentier states is pertinent in order to evaluate to what extent citizens are actually supportive of the regimes by which they are ruled, and of the status quo in general. As such, and as explained in the theoretical and methodological section (see chapter 1), a survey was conducted to measure political attitudes in this country. Since it was not possible to run a nation-wide survey that covered all UAE social groups, the educated youth was chosen as the target population of this research. Through the analysis of quantitative (closed questions) and qualitative (open questions) data gathered among non-first year undergraduate students at the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) between March and April 2012, the following two chapters discuss the cognitive, affective and evaluative orientations of respondents (input/subjects/agency) towards the political system, as well as authorities and governmental policies (output/objects/structures). The analysis also takes into account qualitative data that was obtained through in-depth semi-structured interviews and informal conversations.

As explained above research on political culture on the UAE is very scarce, especially analysis of data gathered through surveys and that explore the link

between political orientations and government policies or regime types. Except for the more specific polls done punctually, such as the Dubai School of Government survey on the role of women in the 2006 FNC elections (al-Dabbagh & Gargani, 2011; referred to in chapter 3), or the government-ordered survey on Emiratis' perceptions of the 2011 election process (results not available to the public),²⁸⁷ the only available ones exploring issues at the national level that are of concern for this dissertation are the 2007 survey on '*Arab Views of Leadership, Identity, Institutions and Issues of Concern*' by the Arab American Institute Foundation (AAI, 2007) and the 2011 Zogby Research Services' one on '*Political concerns and Government*', which included data from previous years (Zogby, 2011). Although some of the data include responses of both Emirati nationals and Arab residents, these are an indicator of the general attitudes of Emiratis towards the political system. Accordingly, some of the results are presented here as an introduction to the analysis of political orientations of UAEU students.

Table 21: Confidence in national institutions (2007)²⁸⁸

Confidence in...		UAE (Emiratis only)
Religious institutions	Confidence	47%
	No confidence	41%
Police	Confidence	41%
	No confidence	51%
Press/Media	Confidence	52%
	No confidence	38%
Judiciary (courts)	Confidence	48%
	No confidence	42%
Parliament	Confidence	43%
	No confidence	49%
Armed forces	Confidence	63%
	No confidence	29%

One of the most interesting questions of the AAI survey was the level of confidence in national institutions. Responses highlight that opinion was very divided on the level of confidence in all institutions but the press/media and the

²⁸⁷ See: <http://www.zogbyresearchservices.com/emirati-election-poll-2011/>

²⁸⁸ Source: All Survey (2007).

armed forces were chosen by 50% of respondents (only Emirati nationals). However, the only institution obtaining over 50% no confidence responses was the police (see table 21).

Moreover, two questions in the Zogby survey reflect higher trust in the political system are especially relevant. First, when asked about satisfaction with the pace of change in the government, 88 percent of respondents claimed to be satisfied. Second, although responses regarding the importance of national and regional issues reflect low concern over democracy and political reform, they show growing preoccupation over civil rights (from fifth position in 2009, to 1st in 2012 and 2011) and over political debate (from the lower position in 2009, to second and third in 2010 and 2011, respectively). Finally, the issue of corruption was rated as not very important by a majority of respondents, while education dropped from the first position in 2009 to the eighth in 2010 and 2011(see table 22).

Table 22: Importance of issues (2009-2011)²⁸⁹

Rank	UAE (350 Emiratis + 150 Arabs)		
	2011	2010	2009
1	Civil rights	Civil rights	Education
2	Israel/Palestine	Political debate	Israel/Palestine
3	Political debate	Health care	Health care
4	Health care	Israel/Palestine	Employment
5	Employment	Employment	Civil rights
6	Women's rights	Women's rights	Women's rights
7	Democracy	Democracy	End corruption
8	Education	Education	Terrorism
9	Political reform	Political reform	Political reform
10	End corruption	End corruption	Democracy
11	Terrorism	Terrorism	Political debate

An examination of the orientation of UAE elites' was conducted by Muhammad Khalfan in his PhD dissertation (1997). It assessed the practicality of having the FNC become an elective body, surveyed the members of the FNC and all UAEU professors who had graduated from Western universities. Interestingly,

²⁸⁹ Source: Zogby survey (2011).

his main conclusion was that a majority of respondents agreed the FNC should become elective (see table 23) and be given legislative powers (see table 24).

Table 23: FNC should be elected²⁹⁰

	Agree	Disagree
Professors	80%	20%
FNC members	91%	9%

Table 24: FNC should be given more power²⁹¹

	Agree	Disagree
Professors	88%	12%
FNC members	80%	20%

Thus, the results of surveys on political orientations in the UAE reflect that, despite showing general high support for the system, citizens' confidence in national institutions was far from homogeneous in 2007, that there was a slight growth in concern about political issues and civil rights between 2009 and 2011, and that members of parliament and intellectual groups' support for political reform was high in 1997. With the aim of adding to the knowledge about political culture in the UAE, the following pages analyse the orientations of the Emirati educated youth. Despite the shortcomings of this survey, which are acknowledged in the methodology section (see chapter 1), and taking into account the high rates of enrolment at tertiary education in the UAE and the high ratio of young people in the overall population, the responses of the sample of university students polled may be considered fairly representative of the young generation of Emiratis.

²⁹⁰ Source: Khalfan (1997: 102).

²⁹¹ Source: Khalfan (1997: 99).

CHAPTER 4: POLITICAL INTEREST AND CONCERNS

Coinciding with most analysts of Gulf political affairs, foreign UAE long-term residents often express their view that Emirati nationals are not interested in politics and are content with the political status quo. For instance, a European employee in her thirties, working for a company related to UAE governmental institutions at the time of the 2006 elections, stated that her Emirati colleagues and friends did not express any opinion regarding the electoral process; that she hardly ever discussed political matters with them; and that she thought they were not interested at all in politics. In line with this view, an Arab postgraduate student born and raised in the UAE considered that there are some Emiratis who follow politics, but that there is also “a big part of the society/students and youth whom (...) are not really interested in this.” However, an American professor teaching at Zayed University, and who has lived for more than ten years in the UAE, observed that some of his students expressed an interest in a more representative government, but that the majority opinion seemed to be that “things [were] working pretty well”.²⁹² Similarly, a foreign professor at Khalifa University, and long-term resident in Abu Dhabi said, “Why would any Emirati want real change? It won’t benefit them... Speaking to students I feel they are content with status quo... But maybe who I see is not representative...”²⁹³

Emiratis concerned about UAE politics often express the feeling that other nationals are not interested in politics. In one exchange with an Emirati political science postgraduate student, the desire to see the UAE eventually become a democracy was expressed. However, he thought that any change introduced to the political system at that time would “bring chaos” and was therefore “inapplicable.” In his view, the FNC’s decisions “are not taken seriously and public does not understand the real duties of this body,” and the rules regulating the elections “serve political elites interests,” thus highlighting the fact that UAE society is not interested in and/or does not understand politics.²⁹⁴ Another Emirati graduate thought “the majority of Emiratis don’t care about freedom of expression when it comes to political matters. They’ve delegated this right to the government, they don’t even wanna think. And the key characters in royal

²⁹² Interviews conducted by e-mail for author’s MA dissertation (July and August 2009).

²⁹³ Personal communication through *WhatsApp* (16 February 2014).

²⁹⁴ Interviews by e-mail for MA dissertation. *Ibid.*

families in Abu Dhabi and Dubai have charismatic personalities, despite everything (Mohamed bin Zayed and Mohamed bin Rashid).” However, this student was unable to answer when asked if she thought there were other Emiratis, like her, who care about politics but do not speak about it openly.²⁹⁵

During the fieldwork for this research, it was confirmed that Emiratis (especially the youth) are reticent to discuss political issues, and most interviewed were initially surprised and suspicious when asked about their opinions or feelings regarding the policies carried out by their government, or even when asked about the Arab Spring events or other political developments. However, it was later discovered that, after understanding the nature of the present research project, they developed confidence and openly shared their thoughts and beliefs about international, regional, and local events. Yet they were, in general, unwilling discuss politics with other people, in some cases not even friends. This already elucidated that the lack of political interest was not as widespread in the UAE as it might seem at first, and that these impressions depend very much on the environment in which one interacts, and on which type of relationship one builds with Emiratis. What then are the reasons for the lack of political discussion in the UAE? What is the real level of political interest? And, what knowledge do Emiratis have of their political system?

This chapter analyses the responses to survey and interview questions related to UAEU students’ political knowledge and interest (i.e. cognitive orientations), and explores the link between these two variables. In order to identify the main agents involved in students political socialisation process, it examines the perception of respondents regarding the acquisition of political knowledge and interest. Finally, the chapter assesses how students rank domestic socio-political problems in order to evaluate their feelings and experiences in relation with those issues.

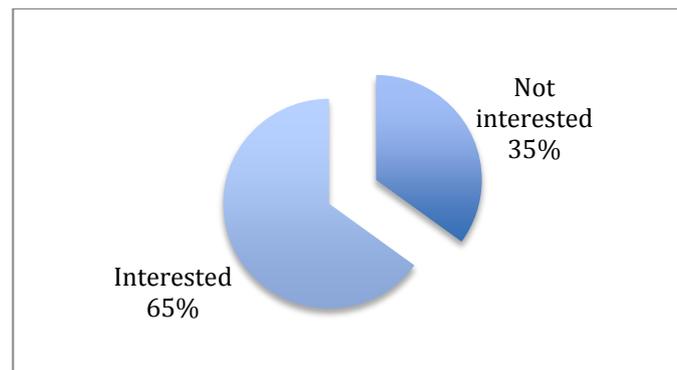
1. Political interest

As explained in the methodology section (see chapter 1), the largest number of respondents came from the Engineering department, followed by those enrolled in Business, and then those studying Political Science and Law. However, when

²⁹⁵ WhatsApp conversation with UAEU student (May 2014)

collapsed into colleges, the Humanities and Social Sciences College (Huss) was the most represented, followed by the College of Engineering (CoE) and the College of Business and Economics (CBE), reflecting the Spring 2012 UAEU enrolment percentages. This indicates that a larger number of students from these colleges participated in the study, but is most likely due to the larger numbers of students enrolled in these colleges, not because they were necessarily more interested in politics.

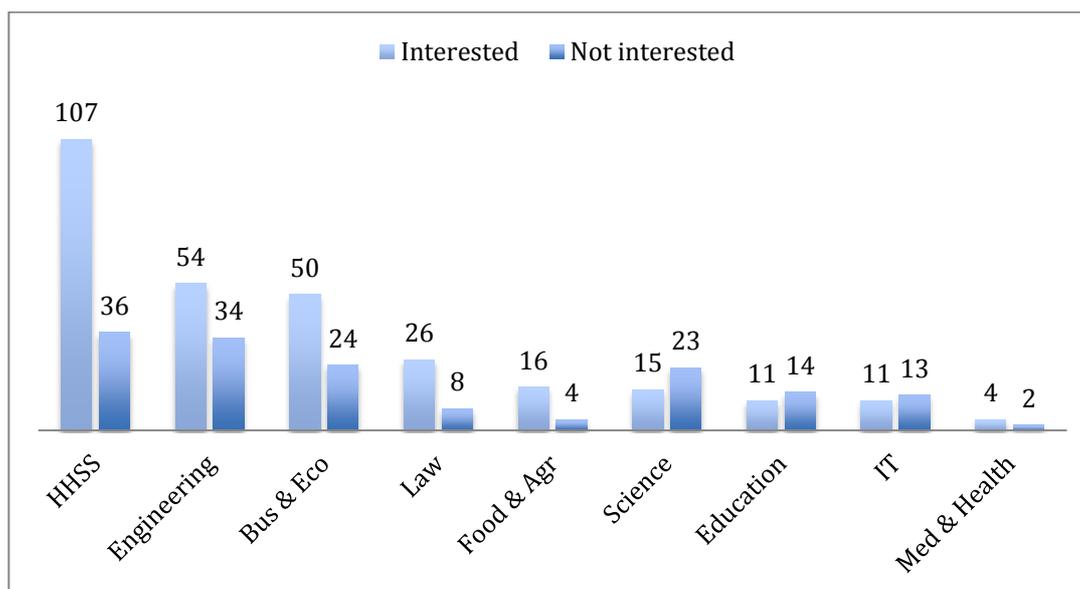
Figure 12: UAEU Students Interest in Politics



Remarkably, 65% of respondents expressed to have interest in politics, which (even if we cannot infer from this that this is the case among the whole studied population)²⁹⁶ constitutes a noteworthy starting point for the analysis of the survey. Moreover, the fact that 414 students answered the survey on the first day of its distribution (and a total of 689 responded) is in itself indicative that there is more interest in politics among university students than it is generally thought. Initial scrutiny of responses of students showed that political interest is actually spread among students of all disciplines and that, in absolute numbers, most respondents with an interest in politics were from the HuSS College, followed by students of the CoE, and then by those of the CBE. Moreover, in most colleges, there was greater number of respondents who expressed interest in politics than those who were disinterested.

²⁹⁶ The fact that the survey was self-selected does not allow to infer that this percentages would definitely be the same had the whole population been surveyed, but by weighting the data before running the statistical tests, the sample was made more representative of the population, and the results more reliable. See the research methodology section for an explanation of the limitations of the survey (see Chapter 1).

Figure 13: Interest in politics by college (absolute numbers)



However, an analysis of the same data in percentages (after the weighting was made) shows a slightly different picture: the largest per cent of students interested in politics actually corresponded to the College of Law (CoL), then to HuSS and CBE, followed by students of the CoE. Moreover, a chi square test showed that the difference between categories is large enough to assume that there would be similar results if the whole population were surveyed (p-value of .000).²⁹⁷ Not surprisingly, highest interest rates were concentrated among students of humanities and social sciences disciplines, except for those of engineering that also fall under the group with more than 50% respondents showing interest (see figure 14).

These results may be explained by the fact that in rentier economies there are large proportions of nationals that choose to study engineering in order to access jobs in the hydrocarbon industry. Moreover, some studies suggest there is a high percentage of political Islam ideologically oriented individuals (i.e. with high political interest) who “have no theological training or knowledge” and that hold “degrees in engineering, medicine, or law, leading to the sometimes

²⁹⁷ Chi-square tests were run to test the relationship between variables and to determine if there were statistically significant differences that would allow to make the claim that the same results would probably be obtained if the whole population were surveyed (i.e. make inferences). P-values of between .0 and .05 give a 5% significance level, which is ideal because it allows the inference that this would be the case if the whole population were surveyed. However, p-values of between .05 and .1 should also be taken into account, because they provide a significance level of 10%, which indicates a tendency that this would also happen within the whole population.

mocking term of ‘engineer Islam’” (Johnson, 2011: 43).²⁹⁸ This is something that would, nevertheless, require further examination in the Emirati case, but which might explain the high interest among students of engineering.

Figure 14: Interest in politics by college (percentages)

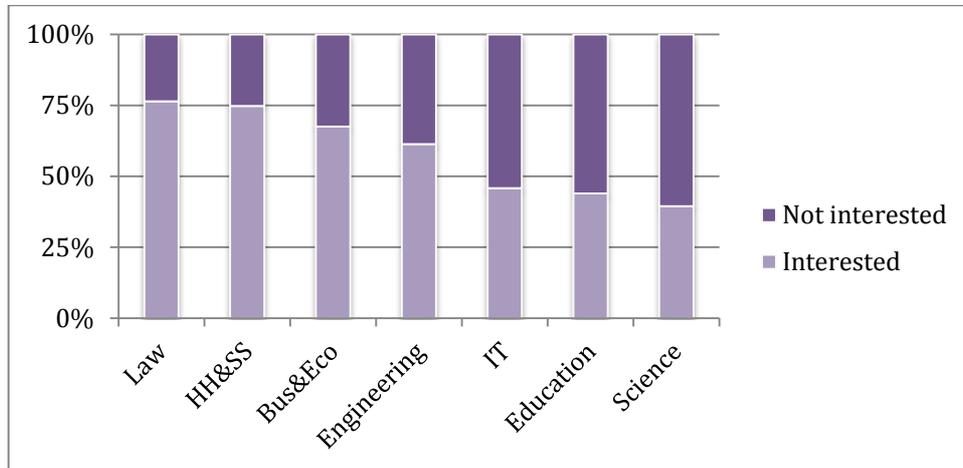
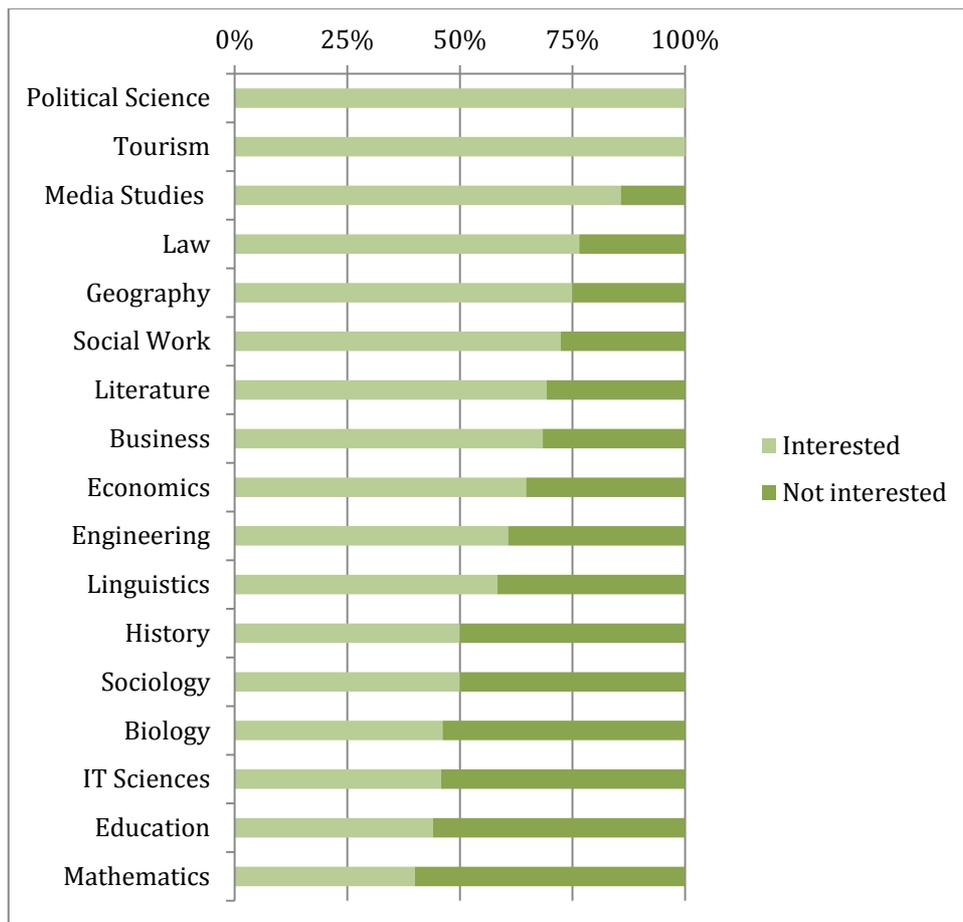


Figure 15: Interest in politics by degree (percentages)



²⁹⁸ See also: Gambetta and Hertog (2009); Hegghammer (2006); and Ibrahim (1980).

Additionally, a cross tabulation of interest by degree of study²⁹⁹ shows that all students of Political Science and Tourism affirmed to be interested in politics, as did the majority (over 75%) of respondents enrolled in Media Studies, Law, Geography, and Social Work. Over 50% of students of Literature, Business, Economics, Engineering, Linguistics, History, and Sociology (in this order) also responded that they had interest; whilst less than 50% of participants from Biology, IT Sciences, Education, and Mathematics expressed interest (see figure 15).

Differences in political interest among sexes was statistically significant at the 10% level (.073 p-value) showing that, although over 60% of both groups said that they were interested, male students tend to have a slightly higher interest in politics than female students. This is perhaps due to the fact that men have traditionally occupied the political sphere in the UAE. However, the high percentage of interested female students (62.8%) is relevant for the same reason, and is indicative of change in the UAE socio-political structures, which is increasingly experiencing female involvement and participation (see figure 16 and table 25).

Figure 16: Male & Female Students Interest in Politics

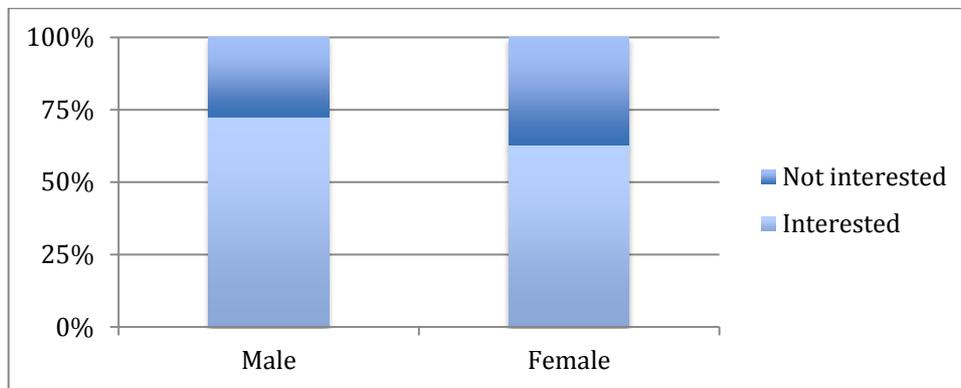
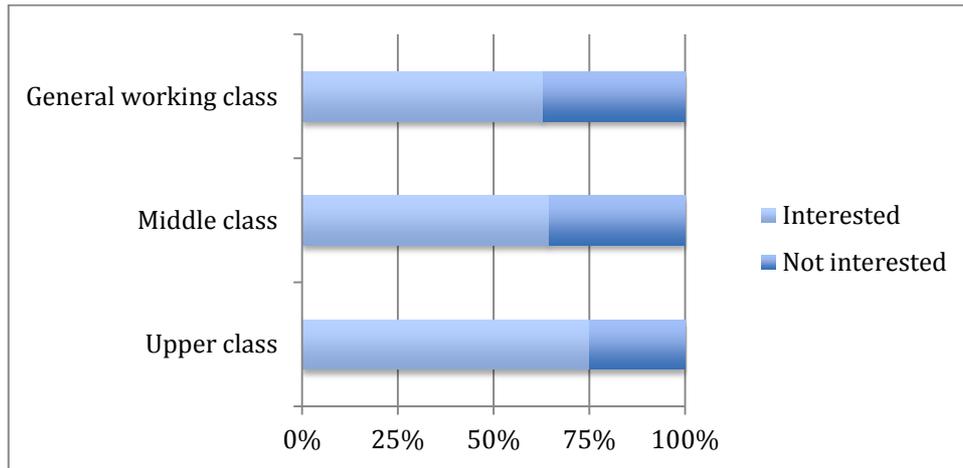


Table 25: Male & Female Students Interest in Politics

	Male	Female	Total
Not interested	27.4%	37.2%	35.2%
Interested	72.6%	62.8%	64.8%

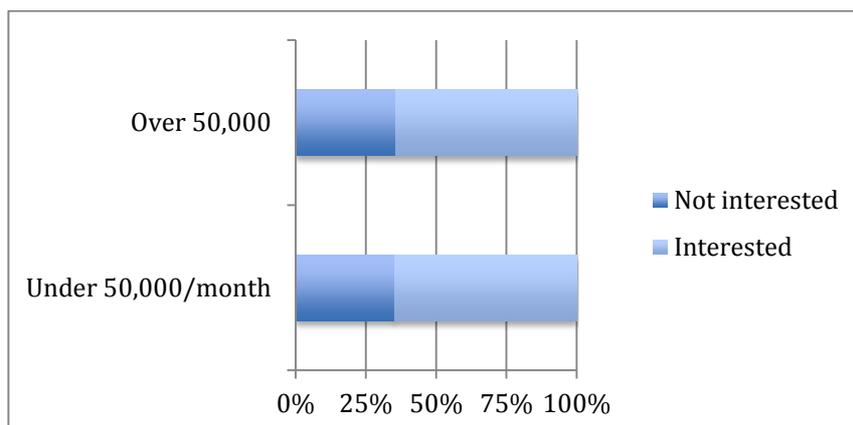
²⁹⁹ Taking into account only those degrees that had more than 5 respondents, as required to run a chi-square test.

Figure 17: Interest by social class



Interest by social class³⁰⁰ was similar for students considering themselves as the middle and working classes (65% and 63% respectively interested), but different for the upper class (75% interested). Thus, the upper class seems to have more interest than the other classes. However, there were only 16 respondents who consider themselves as belonging to the upper class, which is too few to claim this is indicative of the whole population, and a likely the reason that the result of the chi-square test was non-significant. This implies there was simply not enough data to establish a significant difference, and it can only be claimed that there may be a tendency that the highest class is more interested. Other variables, such as income, did not show significant differences (p-value 0.93), thus not being statistically significant (see figure 17 and table 26).

Figure 18: Interest by income³⁰¹



³⁰⁰ As explained in the methodology, the social class category was constructed by asking the students to self-classify themselves into three categories: Upper, middle and general working classes ('lower class' was not included to avoid negative feelings). See chapter 1.

³⁰¹ 50,000AED is approximately equivalent to 10,000€.

Table 26: Interest by income

	Under 50,000/month	Over 50,000
Not interested	35.20%	35.70%
Interested	64.80%	64.30%

As such, it could be argued that the fact that the higher classes show a slight higher interest in politics supports the main hypothesis of this dissertation that wealth does not necessarily cause a lack of political awareness, but differences are unfortunately too small to make such claim. However, differences between respondents of the different emirates shed some light on this matter. Overall, political interest is evenly spread among Emirates. In each of them less than 40% of respondents were not interested in politics, but it was in the northern emirates³⁰² where the lowest rates of interest were found. The chi-square test run turned to be not significant but, since the responses from Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah were very similar (~30-33% not interested), it was possible to collapse them and make a comparison between the Northern emirates and the rest of the UAE. The test run after this merge confirmed that interest is slightly higher in AD, Dubai and Sharjah. Moreover, this might be due to major governmental investment done in education in these emirates, which provides more opportunities for political socialisation, in addition to the more cosmopolitan nature of these cities, and the international exposure of its citizens. This may indicate that other factors, apart from high income per capita accrued from oil rent, affect political culture. These are further explored below. The p-value of .049 indicates that the difference between the responses of students born in the Northern Emirates and the rest of the UAE was large enough to infer that this would probably be the case among the population studied (see figures 19 and 20).

³⁰² A frequency test revealed that there were too few respondents from some of the Northern emirates, and therefore a chi-square test could not be run to evaluate the differences between respondents from each of them. Thus, responses from Ras al-Khaimah (RAK), Fujairah, Ajman and Um al-Qawain were collapsed into the category of 'northern emirates' and compared to the other three emirates.

Figure 19: Interest by emirate of origin (percentages)

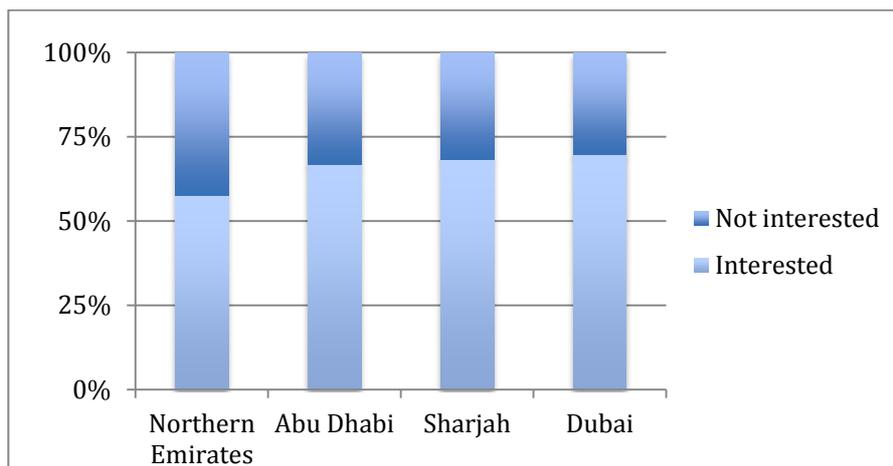
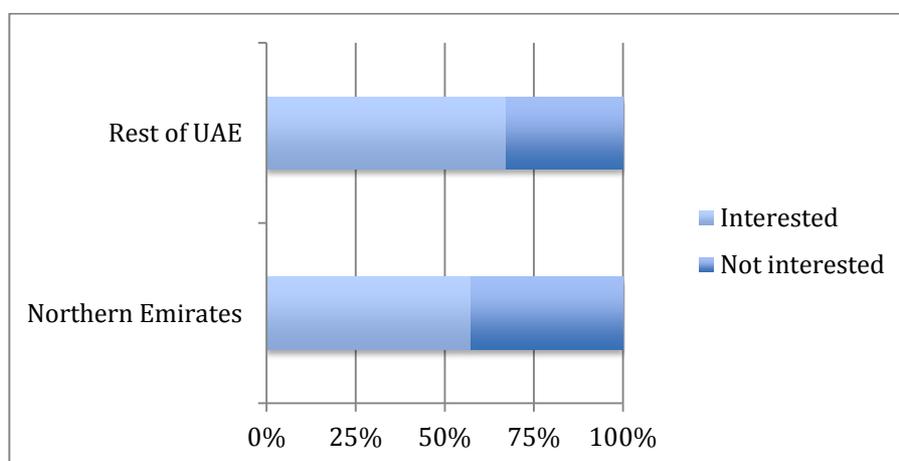


Figure 20: Interest by emirate of origin (Northern vs. Rest of UAE)



It is also noteworthy that students from Sharjah align with those from Abu Dhabi and Dubai, differentiating themselves from the poorer northern emirates. This might be explained by the proximity of Sharjah to the Emirate to Dubai, as well as by the development of thriving cultural initiatives in this emirate, which gives the students the opportunity, and provides them with the spaces, to exchange ideas and meet scholars from all around the world. Finally, it is interesting that, contrary to what one would expect if, as the RST argues, the higher the income level, the lower the interest in politics (see chapter 1), students from the wealthier emirates (i.e. benefiting more from welfare) are the ones more politically oriented. This indicates that very possibly other factors influence change in political culture in this country (as happens in others), apart from the high per capita income of citizens or the lack of a taxation system; hence supporting the idea that rentierism can actually facilitate change in the agents involved in the process of political socialization.

2. Knowledge of politics

In the UAE, photographs of the rulers are present in every possible setting. They are seen upon arrival in the country in the airports, on billboards in the streets, at the front desks of hotels, at governmental institutions, public offices, and at school and university halls. They also appear repeatedly on local TV channels, their agendas are explained in radio news bulletins, and are covered by national newspapers. It is therefore difficult not to know who your rulers are if you see their images and hear about them several times per day. All efforts are made by the government to ensure people know who the 'fathers of the nation' (as they are dubbed) are, and to portray them as benevolent and magnanimous.

Conversely, there is not much effort placed on teaching how the Emirati or other political systems around the world work either at schools or at universities, which explains why the knowledge of UAEU students is weaker when it comes to institutions. What is taught at public schools in the UAE about politics is mainly the official version of the foundation of the federation and the history of the Islamic world, and the structure of the political system is only broadly taught. Additionally, topics are not explained in comparison to experiences of other countries and there is very little discussion on issues. Rather, lecturing is the main teaching method and memorising the main learning technique, thus leaving little space for the development of critical thinking skills. Special emphasis is placed on the role of Sheikh Zayed and Sheikh Rashid as the 'fathers' of the nation, as well as on the importance of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Arab League. Finally, much emphasis is put on the 'traditional' Emirati customs and traditions, and the privilege it is to be part of the national population and the opportunities given to foreigners.³⁰³ In this regard one student expressed her experience at school as follows:

"Books were always about what good our country did and the royal family whether it's locally or globally! They never gave us the tools/methods to explain the political system. It was all about being patriotic, learning the traditional culture and how it evolved from being tribes to our current time. Having those memories in my head made my mind as a kid to be thankful and grateful to have our Sheiks and for their great practices in our country. It's been always

³⁰³ Personal interviews with several UAEU students, al-Ain (January-March 2012).

*praising the good side of them, NEVER the bad side. My personal experience was filled of patriotism more for being local, and not knowing a thing about politics and what actually happens to non-locals and some of the poor locals in the country!*³⁰⁴

Statistical analysis confirms that knowledge about domestic politics is weak among Emirati students. As expected, the data reflecting knowledge about political authorities showed that most respondents were familiar with the figures of the President and the Prime Minister of the Federation (over 98% and 90% of both male and female, respectively). However, many were unsure who the Vice-president was (over 65% of both male and female got it right). Regarding ministers, more students were familiar with who was running as Minister of Foreign Trade at the moment the survey was conducted (79.5% knew the name), than those who the Minister of Education was (86.9% did not know). The latter possibly responds to the fact that the Minister of Foreign Trade, Sheikha Lubna bint Khalid bin Sultan al-Qasimi, was the first woman to hold a ministerial post in the United Arab Emirates (since November 2004), something that was extensively broadcasted by local and international media (see table 27). In this regard, an information technology student said, “female UAE nationals entered the government a long time back. Shaikha Lubna al-Qasimi (...) has proved to everyone what women are capable of.”³⁰⁵

Table 27: Knowledge of Authorities (percentages)

	President	PM	VP	Minister of Education	Minister of Foreign Trade
Incorrect	0.2%	8.3%	32.2%	86.9%	20.5%
Correct	99.8%	91.7%	67.8%	13.1%	79.5%

Table 28: Knowledge of Institutions & Elections (percentages)

	Most Pow. Inst.	FNC Power	First Election	Month of 2011 elections
Incorrect	47.8%	55.3%	69.6%	62.6%
Correct	52.2%	44.7%	30.4%	37.4%

When asked to designate the most powerful institutions, only around 50% of students could identify the most powerful, and less than 45% understood the

³⁰⁴ Facebook communication with UAEU student (31st December 2013).

³⁰⁵ Gulf News, 30 December 2006.

power of FNC. Moreover, they were neither very familiar with the year that the first election held in the UAE, nor with the month in which elections were held in 2011 (see table 28). In this regard, most of the chi-square tests showed that the discipline of study variable is not determinant of the general knowledge of institutions.

However, when with regards to the 2011 elections, it is significant at the 5% level that over 40% of the students from HuSS, CoL and CoE (in this order) got the answer right, while at the other colleges over 60% answered incorrectly (p-value .015). Thus, HuSS, CoL and CoE coincides with the high rates of political interest, while CBE goes down in the list to the sixth position, even below the CoE, and the Colleges of Information Technology (IT) and of Sciences (CoS) (see figure 21). This indicates that even if a large percentage of students of Business and Economics claim to have political interest, not many are knowledgeable about the political developments taking place in their country. Also, the fact that Education students are very uninformed about UAE politics poses doubts as to how they will be able to teach it to future generations.

None of the crosstabs run by emirate of origin was statistically significant, which indicates there were no important differences between students from the seven emirates regarding political knowledge. Thus, it can be claimed that knowledge of federal institutions, authorities and the role of citizens is evenly weak across students of all emirates. However, a trend was observed that students from Sharjah and RAK were slightly more knowledgeable regarding the power and role of federal institutions specifically (see tables 29 and 30).

Interestingly, the data collected indicates that those more familiar with the political history of the UAE were from RAK and Dubai. Thus, it seems to be the case that students from RAK are slightly more politically aware than students from other emirates, both regarding institutions and when it comes to the UAE's political history (first election ever). We have explained in chapter 2 how RAK (and Sharjah) has a long history of settled communities that engaged in maritime trade for centuries before oil was discovered, and that this came into decline, as Dubai and Abu Dhabi became the main cities of the federation. Moreover, and hoping to be able to survive as an independent state, RAK only joined the federation a year after it was established. Very possibly the political

history of RAK is the main reason behind the slightly more profound knowledge of federal institutions and trajectory.

Figure 21: Month of 2011 FNC election

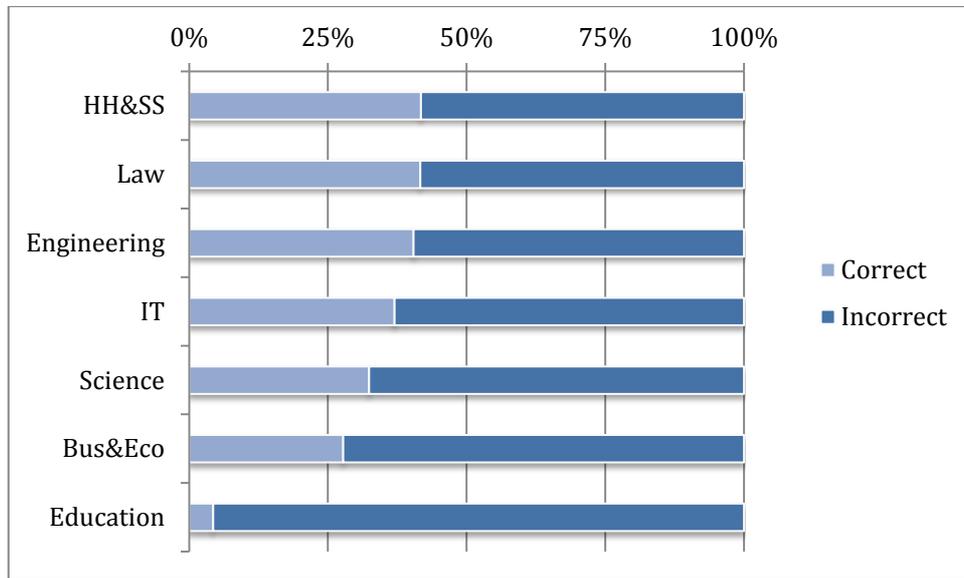


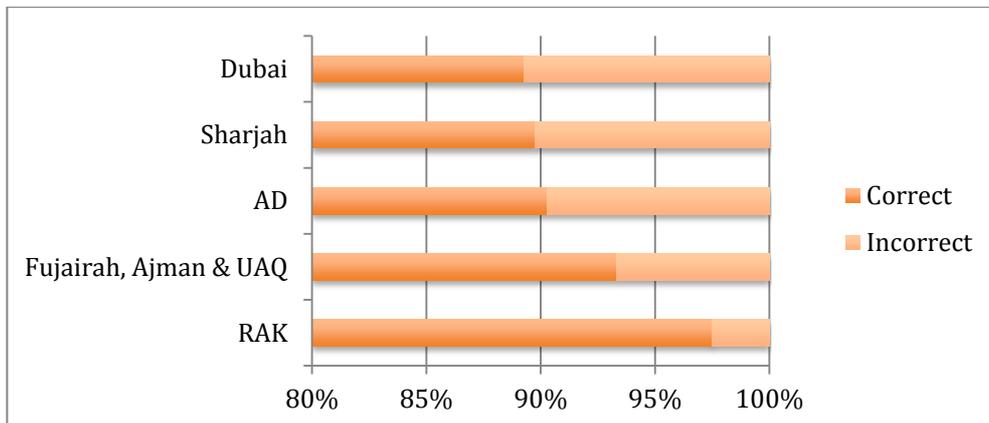
Table 29: Most powerful institution

	AD	Dubai	Sharjah	RAK	Fujairah, Ajman & UAQ
Incorrect	47.4%	50.0%	44.7%	46.3%	48.7%
Correct	52.6%	50.0%	55.3%	53.7%	51.3%

Table 30: First election in UAE

	AD	Dubai	Sharjah	RAK	Fujairah, Ajman & UAQ
Incorrect	70.9%	64.7%	71.7%	63.0%	75.3%
Correct	29.1%	35.3%	28.3%	37.0%	24.7%

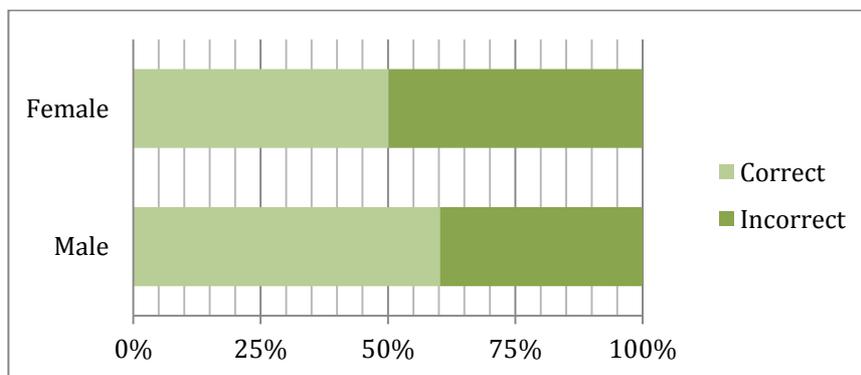
Figure 22: Name of Prime Minister



On the other hand, it was surprising to discover that the lowest rate of correct answers to the question asking for the name of the Prime Minister was Dubai (89.3%) (Emirate from which the Prime Minister originates). This indicates that students from Dubai (and possibly all Emiratis) still identify more with local politics, as they surely know Sheikh Muhammad bin Rashid as the Emir of Dubai, but are not familiar with his role as Prime Minister or Vice-President. The highest rate was again from RAK (97.5%), followed by the other northern emirates, thus indicating these respondents were more familiar with the federal political structures (see figure 22).

With regards to sex, it was observed that male students tended to be more knowledgeable. 60% of male students knew what the most powerful institution of the UAE was; while only 50% of females got it right (p-value of .075). Moreover, although not statistically significant, when asked about the powers of the FNC, only 51% of male and 43% of female answered correctly (see graphs 23 and 24). These low rates of correct answers demonstrate that the knowledge of the political system is limited among the population studied, but that males have a slight better understanding.

Figure 23: Most powerful institution by sex



Furthermore, awareness of the electoral processes that have taken place in the country is even weaker. Approximately 70% of respondents did not know when the first FNC election was held in the UAE, and it was interesting to note a significant difference between sexes when it came to the 2011 elections: 65% of female and 53% of male students did not know in which month they took place (p-value of .022), meaning the trend was also evident that men were better informed about political developments (see figure 25). These numbers

are especially striking bearing in mind that respondents were over 21 years old, and therefore could have been nominated to vote.

Figure 24: First FNC election by sex

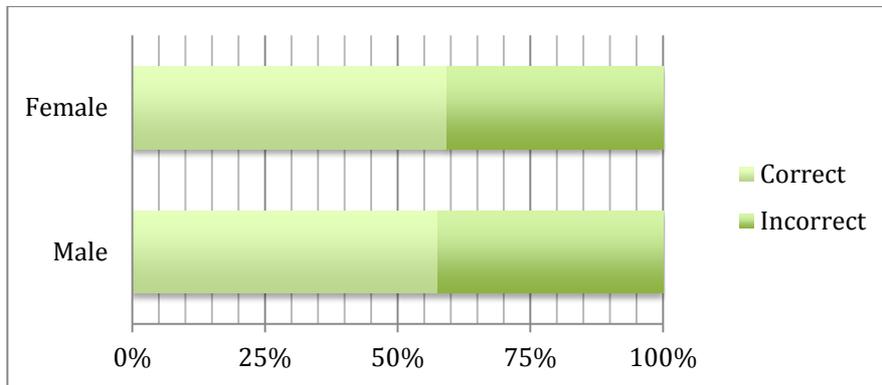


Figure 25: Month of 2011 FNC election by sex

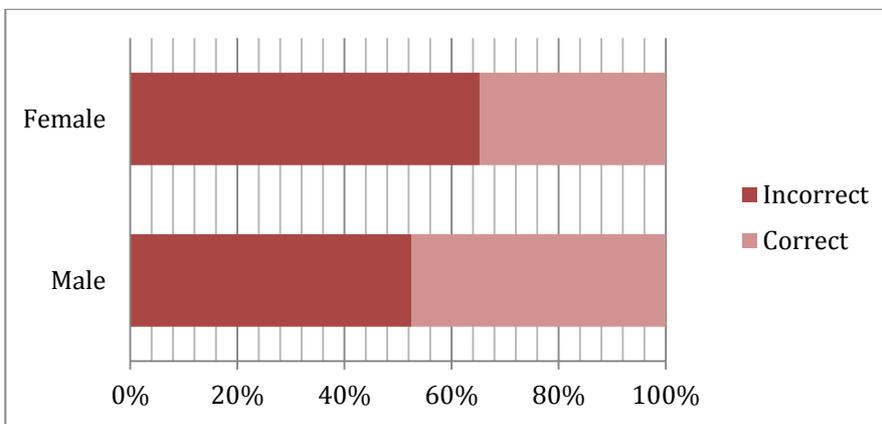
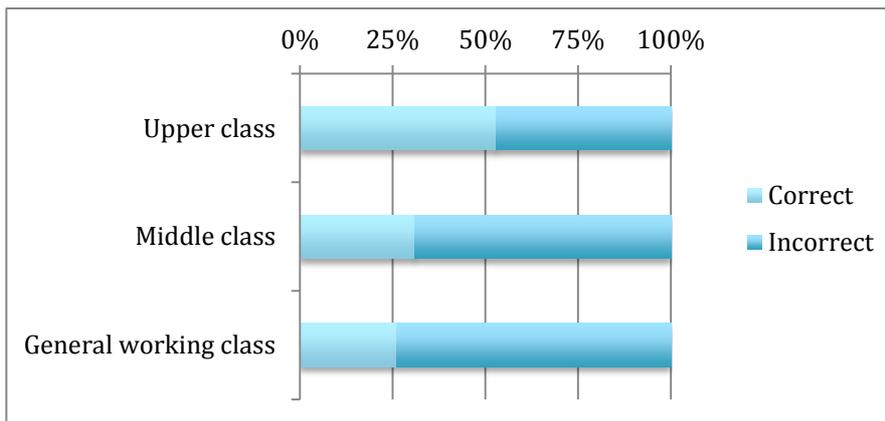


Figure 26: First UAE Election by class



The social class of the individual was statistically significant for knowledge of institutions and elections at the 10% level- the highest rate of correct answers by the self-selected upper class and the lowest among the lower class. Only 26% and 31% of the general working and middle classes respectively knew the year of the first UAE election, compared to 53% of the upper class (p-value

.075) (see figure 26); while 29%, 38% and 65% of lower, middle and upper classes respectively gave the correct answer for the month of 2011 elections (p-value .010) (see figure 27). Furthermore, over 75% of the upper class knew the most powerful institution compared to 40-50% of the middle and lower classes (p-value .058) (see figure 28).

Figure 27: Month 2011 FNC election

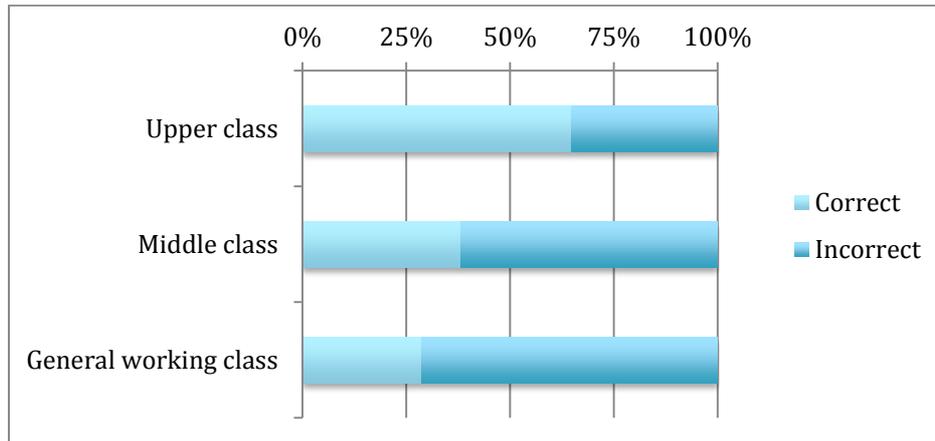
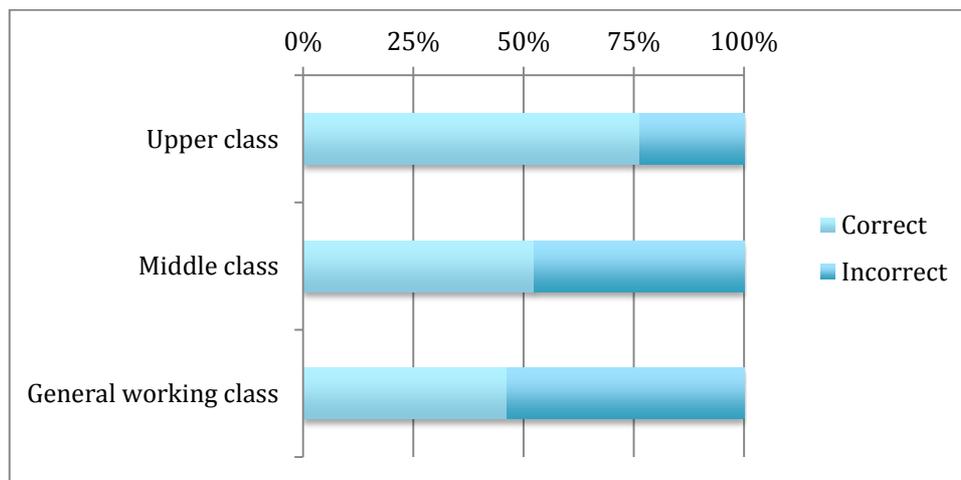


Figure 28: Most powerful Institution by class



These percentages show that the upper class is better informed both regarding institutions and political developments, which reflects the failure of the government's claimed political awareness campaigns (see chapter 3), especially among the middle and lower classes. In this regard, it is interesting to note that among the students interviewed, many did not know they could have been entitled to vote; and some who voted only knew about the process by chance and did not know what they were voting for. For instance, one student

reported she only knew about the elections, and the fact that she could actually vote, because her sister saw the list of voters by chance in a newspaper.³⁰⁶

Likewise, the income variable was relevant for knowledge of recent political events (p-value .010), and showed that students from higher income families had better knowledge than those from lower income families, again supporting the hypothesis that high income does not necessarily cause political apathy (see table 31). In fact, these results partially support the main research hypothesis of this dissertation that rentierism can actually facilitate political socialization and, therefore, enhance political awareness.

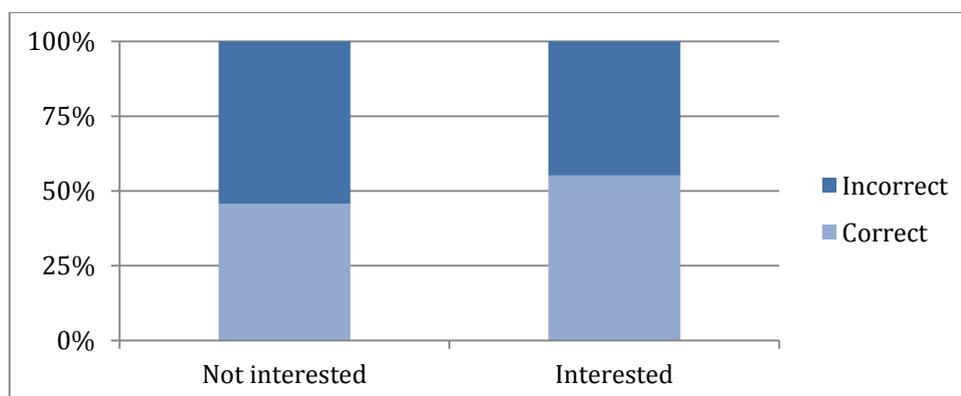
Table 31: Month 2011 FNC election

Household income	Under 50,000/month	Over 50,000
Incorrect	65.1%	47.4%
Correct	34.9%	52.6%

2.1. The link between knowledge and interest

An analysis of the relationship between interest in politics and knowledge shows that those interested tend to know more about UAE politics. Responses were quite similar among groups regarding the names of authorities, but there were statistically significant differences between those interested and those who expressed not to be interested in politics when it came to institutions and electoral processes.

Figure 29: Most powerful Institution by interest

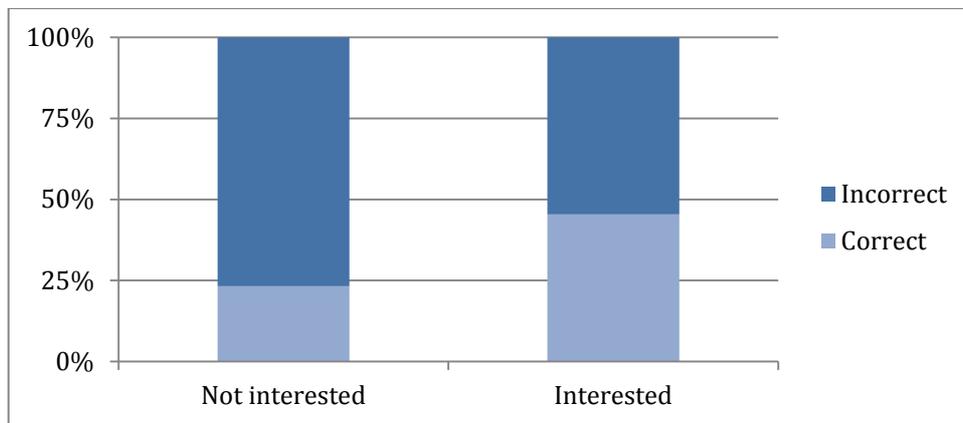


The difference with regards to knowing the most powerful institution was not large, but showed that over 50% of students who gave the correct answer also

³⁰⁶ Personal interview with UAEU student, al-Ain (October 2011 – March 2012).

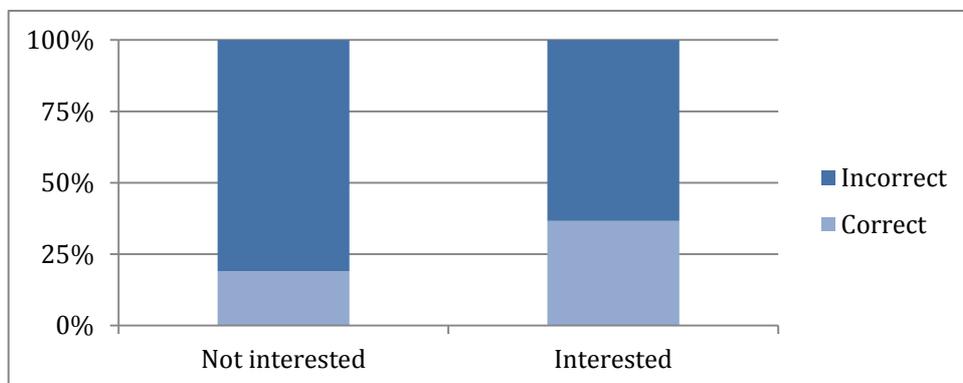
said they have an interest in politics, while among those with no interest, less than 50% were right (p-value .051) (see figure 29).

Figure 30: Month of 2011 FNC election



Differences were more important in the questions about the election days, where the differences between both groups were of 9.2 points for the month of the 2011 election, and of 26.8 for the year of the first UAE election (p-value for both .00) (see figures 30 and 31). This implies that the more knowledge UAEU students had, the more interested they were, and vice versa, although we cannot precisely determine which one causes the other.

Figure 31: First UAE election by interest



However, if the knowledge of the political system (which is mainly acquired at home and school) is weak among all categories in similar percentages, but that knowledge of recent political events is more profound among those students who claimed to have interest, it can be implied that it is probably interest that determines the knowledge among the UAE educated youth. As one of the students interviewed said: “Most of the families teach their children that there are some topics that are taboo: politics and religion. But if you read, you

investigate...you can find. Most of the things are blocked [in the internet], so you have to use proxies... But you can find your way around. We all do!”³⁰⁷
 Which variables affect political interest is yet another question.

3. Factors influencing political awareness

When asked about the factors determining interest in politics, most students considered ‘*watching the news through satellite channels*’ the most important factor among the options provided in the questionnaire. This issue therefore deserves special attention. Other factors ranked as important were what they learned at school and university, followed by the discussions they had with relatives at home, and then the debates with friends (see table 32). Thus, the hypothesis that the agents of political socialisation also influence political culture in rentier states seems plausible. In this regard some students’ comments are illustrative:

*“Till I took ‘Introduction to Politics’ at University, I never knew a thing about politics and how it runs in our country”.*³⁰⁸

*“By conducting this survey I realized that I am far away from lots of matters related to the politics of my state, which is something unpleasant.”*³⁰⁹

Table 32: Factors determining interest in politics

Factors determining interest in politics	Mean	Mode	Median
1) Watching the news through satellite channels like Al-Jazeera or Al-Arabiya	1,5102	1	1
2) What I was taught at school and university	1,7679	2	2
3) The discussions I have at home with my parents and relatives	1,9043	2	2
4) The discussions I have with my friends	2,1069	2	2
5) Being in contact with people from different cultural backgrounds	2,1324	2	2
6) The foreign movies and series I watch on TV	2,2149	2	2
7) Awareness seminars organized by the government to explain issues regarding UAE politics	2,2500	2	2

(1=Very important; 2=Important; 3=Not very important)

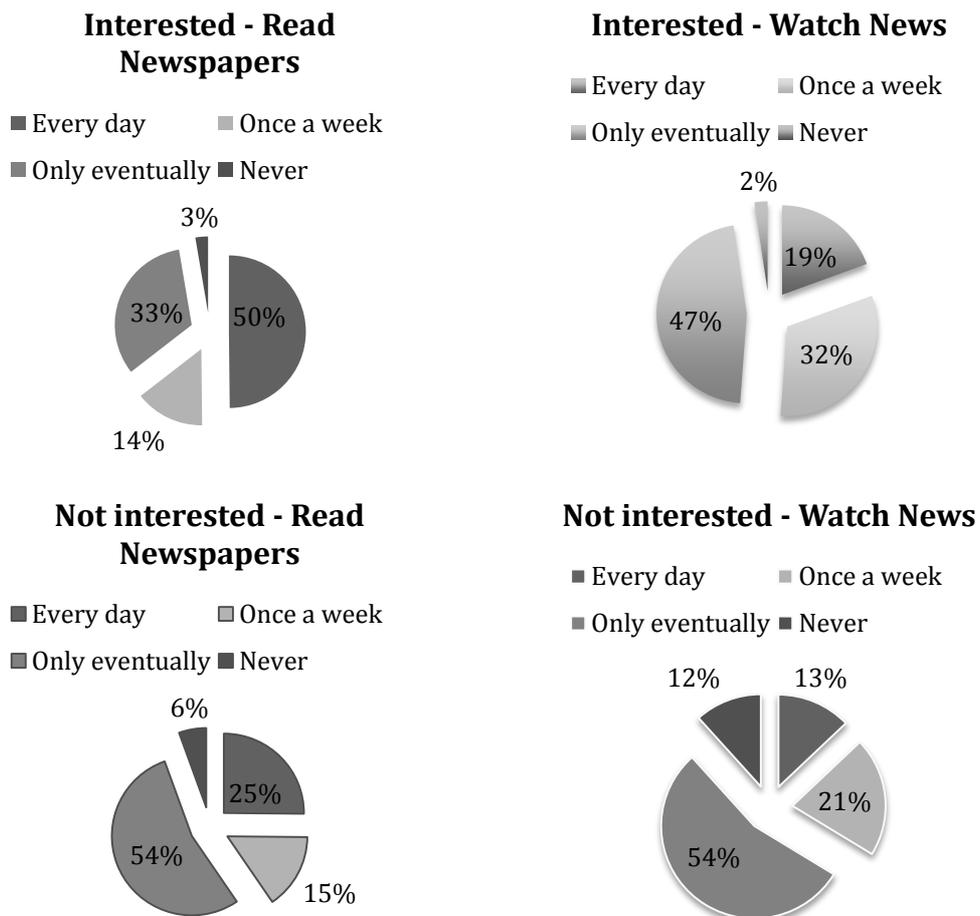
³⁰⁷ Personal interview, Al-Ain (March 2012).

³⁰⁸ Facebook communication (31st December 2013).

³⁰⁹ Open question 24.

Traditional media (newspapers and television) was identified as influencing significantly the political knowledge and interest of the Emirati youth. When asked about the frequency with which the students follow the news on TV or newspapers, around 50% followed regularly (at least once a week) while the other 50% do so only occasionally and only a few recognize that they never read newspapers or watch the news on TV (see figure 32). When crossing the responses about level of interest in political issues with the frequency of following news more than 60% of those with interest in politics said they read the newspaper and over 50% watch the news on TV more than once a week; while over 60% of students not interested in politics do this only occasionally or never. Thus, a p-value of .0 allows us to affirm that following the news frequently is a determinant factor influencing the interest in politics of Emirati youth.

Figure 32: Traditional media

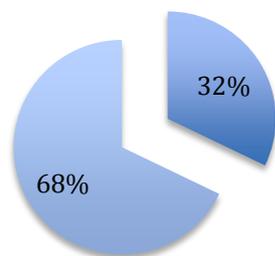


When questioned about the use of social media, around 70% said that they used Twitter and Facebook (FB) at least once a week. Data shows that there is a link between Twitter and political interest, but this is not the case with Facebook. Unfortunately, this research cannot determine whether this correlation works in one direction (Twitter has an effect in the development of political interest) or the other (political interest leads people to be more active on Twitter). Percentages are very similar between those using Facebook regularly and those using it only occasionally and therefore the chi-square test does not provide statistical evidence that it affects the interest of students in politics. Nonetheless, a p-value of .012 makes the frequent use of Twitter statistically significant (at the 5% level), which is enough to claim this would be the case among the same percentage of all UAEU students (see figure 33).

Figure 33: Social media

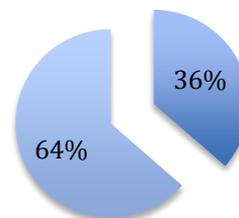
Use FB at least once a week

■ Not interested ■ Interested



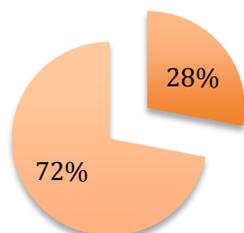
Use FB only occasionally or never

■ Not interested ■ Interested



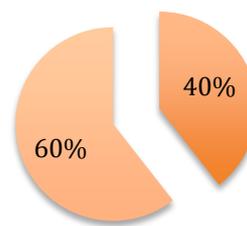
Use Twitter at least once a week

■ Not interested ■ Interested



Use Twitter only occasionally or never

■ Not interested ■ Interested



Moreover, the most commonly mentioned factor among students in response to the open questions about what influenced their political interest was the Internet.³¹⁰ Interviews supported this view as many students expressed how they had found a platform for debate on the Internet, and how they learned about political issues through Twitter and Facebook, as well as websites they learned about through their virtual contacts (see chapter 3 for details on online political activism). One of them describes the Internet as:

*“The space where opinions can be expressed freely and anonymously; and where men and women can talk, without being judged or put in risk of being targeted by authorities if discussing sensitive issues”.*³¹¹

These feelings were, however, expressed before the new Decree on cybercrimes was passed on 12th November 2012 (see chapters 2 and 3). If the same question were asked now, respondents would most likely respond that they have realised that the Internet is no longer a safe space to speak up, although they would possibly still regard it as a valuable source of information. Some had actually already become aware of the potential risks of expressing opinions online: a student who had been involved in the controversial *al-Hewar* online forum (see chapter 3) had already stopped posting when interviewed, after having been warned by the State Security to abandon those activities.³¹²

4. Major socio-political concerns

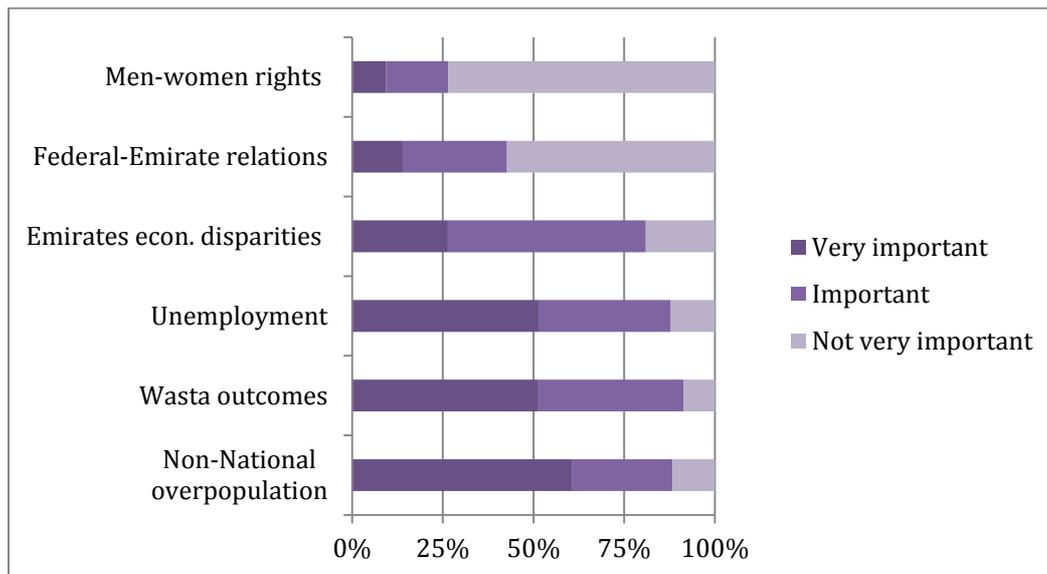
Some questions on the survey sought to identify the major social problems that concerned the Emirati youth. Of the provided options, students regarded the non-national overpopulation as a ‘very important’ problem (over 60%), but the issue considered ‘important’ by more students was the outcomes of *wasta* (over 90%) (see figure 34).

³¹⁰ This shows that it was shortsighted not to put the Internet as one separate option in this question when designing the questionnaire. Fortunately, open question provided space for respondents to emphasize this aspect.

³¹¹ Personal interview with UAEU student, al-Ain, November 2011.

³¹² Personal interview, al-Ain, January 2012.

Figure 34: Perceptions on socio-political problems



Another issues which caused concern among the students was unemployment, with more than 50% of respondents considering it 'very important' and almost 37% 'important', followed by economic disparities between emirates (over 25% said it is 'very important' and almost 55% 'important'). Finally, more than 50% of respondents considered federal-emirate relations and unequal rights between men and women as not very important (see figure 34 and table 33). The gender of the respondent was not statistically significant for this question, but emirate of origin, social class and income were significant in some cases, as explained below. The descriptions of an ideal society by a couple of students summarize well the issues concerning the Emirati youth:

“A society that recognizes the citizen's rights and duties and defines the goals of the state and its facilities. A society free of wasta and favouritism at the expense of work and the general welfare of the country; a society that gives priority to the nationals in all fields, and then to the residents and foreign workers; that gives importance and value to the citizens, passing laws for guaranteeing their rights inside and outside the state. I think the ideal society (...) an institutionalized society that does not depend on the tribal system.”³¹³

“A society that conserves customs and traditions with the ability to change for the better... That acts in the interest of the nation and the community, providing help and assistance to those in need, not to the greedy... A society that seeks state security with respect for the residents of the national territories... A society that does not rob

³¹³ Open question 22.

the resources of the country and is oppressive to the non-beneficiary class... A society without wasta and racial discriminations among citizens and newcomers... Whose first concern is the Emirati citizen and not a foreigner who has many rights to the land of others... A society where businessmen or great politicians do not tyrannize over ordinary citizens.”³¹⁴

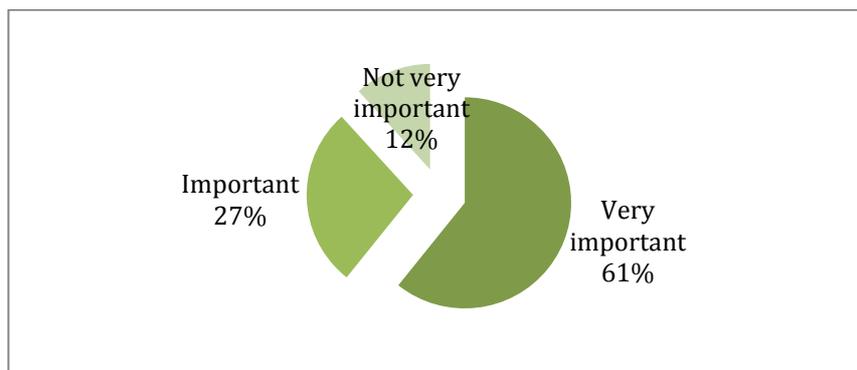
Table 33: Perceptions on socio-political problems

	Very important	Important	Not very important
Non-National overpopulation	60.7%	27.6%	11.7%
Wasta outcomes	51.4%	40.1%	8.6%
Unemployment	51.4%	36.5%	12.2%
Emirates econ. disparities	26.4%	54.6%	19.0%
Federal-Emirate relations	13.9%	28.8%	57.3%
Men-women rights	9.3%	17.1%	73.6%

4.1. Non-National overpopulation

It is no surprise that being a minority group in their own country, demographic imbalance is a source of concern for Emiratis, as it generates feelings of insecurity and uncertainty. This is a topic much discussed among Emiratis who express “the fear of being outnumbered by large crowds of people coming to live in their country from all around the world, threatening their culture and worsening the employment situation”³¹⁵ (see figure 35).

Figure 35: Non-National overpopulation



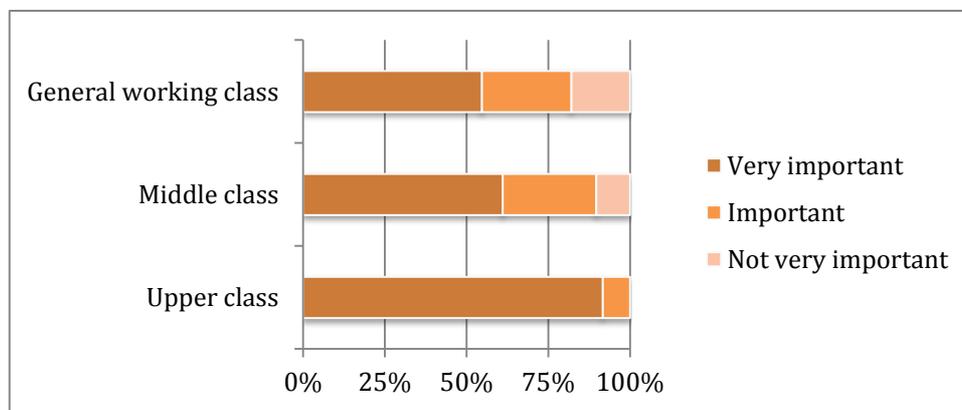
Responses were quite consistent with regards to seeing non-national overpopulation as a major societal problem. Interestingly the upper class was

³¹⁴ Open question 22.

³¹⁵ Open question 22.

especially concerned about this issue : 100% of them considered it important, while around 20% of respondents from the lower class said it is not very important, followed by around 15% of the middle class not finding it so worrying (p-value .052) (see figure 36). This significant , especially taking into account that those who self-selected themselves as upper class presumably belong to the tribes and business families closer to the rulers, and therefore might see a potential threat to their privileges in an expanding foreign population. On the other hand, the middle and lower classes were most likely made up of members of the less influential tribes, and by citizens that were naturalised at different stages of the history of the UAE, hence carrying different cultural backgrounds and being slightly more tolerant of non-nationals than the upper class.

Figure 36: Non-National overpopulation



Many students expressed their concern about non-national overpopulation when were questioned about what they would ask the UAE rulers to change regarding the current social and political situation of their country. One student said that she “would put a limit to the number of new entries, simply due to the fact that our state has become similar to a colony because of the exceeding number of persons who arrive. This causes unemployment for the children of Emirati people.”³¹⁶ In line with this view, other students affirmed:

“The increase in the number of foreigners (non-Arab) impacted negatively on the country and led to a marked deterioration in many sectors (most importantly education, insofar as these strangers destroyed the minds of an entire generation, the sons of the nation).

³¹⁶ Open question 23.

*The process of attracting such people must be reduced before the matter gets worse and uncontrollable later on.*³¹⁷

“There must be a control on foreign workers, both in education, administration and any other field. Really, there must be a control on them because they are plundering the country, they say ‘goodbye’ (go in safety) but they are wicked. I’m not talking about all of them but the majority. There is no control on foreigners; their salaries are higher than the nationals’ ones, why did we get to this situation? Where is control? Where, where? Our state is a united Arabic emirate, but I think that nowadays foreigners have conquered it. Many of us complain about this but in vain.”³¹⁸

Some proposed solutions included “passing strict legislation regarding foreigners as to their possibility to enter the state, whether for visiting or residence and setting up rigorous procedures for entering, and forbidding foreigners from owning land in the UAE by law,”³¹⁹ or “to pass a law preventing the marriage between Emirati men and women not from the Gulf, except with an official permission from higher authorities.”³²⁰ Others, however, considered that there are other solutions to the demographic imbalance:

*“In the future (you know we are having a great number of Indians) we should be imagining like one time they will come and ask we should be having our rights, and they’re going to ask for citizenship, but I think citizenship is a special case, is given for certain people, like not for all... I would give citizenship to the one who is born and raised in UAE, the one who is familiar to the culture of the UAE, and the one who speak Arabic... Everyone who can serve the country...”*³²¹

*“Facilitating the naturalization process only for those who deserve it, in order to increase the demographic structure”, while a female student said: “I wish they sought a solution to the problem of the demographic structure, that they speeded up the process of granting citizenship to the children of female citizens because they are considered sons of this country.”*³²²

Granting citizenship to the children of Emirati women married to foreigners was identified as an important societal problem by some students who think these “should be given the Emirati nationality because they live in this state and contribute to its development”³²³ (see chapter 2 for details on citizenship

³¹⁷ Open question 23.

³¹⁸ Open question 24.

³¹⁹ Open question 23.

³²⁰ Open question 23.

³²¹ Personal interview, Al-Ain, March 2012.

³²² Answers to open question number 23.

³²³ Open question 23.

issues). A UAE born student of Emirati mother and Yemeni father expressed her frustration:

“There are a lot of cases of people with no Emirati nationality, so this makes a generation who is really angry... Like, my loyalty is to the UAE since I was born and raised here, and I want to do good things for this country, but I am rejected! So all this good feelings change into anger, and you ask yourself why... Why they have us defend the country, work in their army and police forces, but then they don't give us the passports?”³²⁴

In a similar way, another student of Emirati mother and Iranian father expressed her suffering of having to carry an Iranian passport even though she has no connections with Iran and she feels 100% Emirati:

“The worst time of my life is when I have to go to the Iranian embassy to renew my passport... I've got a phobia I want to change my passport to any nationality... I hate it... They give me a hard time every time I travel... The checking points are horrible... Why do I have to hold an Iranian passport if I am by heart Emirati?! I think the government is doing their best... But when I look at my father, it breaks my heart... Because he worked here for more than 40 years and they never recognise him... In any country they would give him the nationality... He never even had a parking ticket... He doesn't care anymore, but he want's to make sure we are all ok [before he passes away].”³²⁵

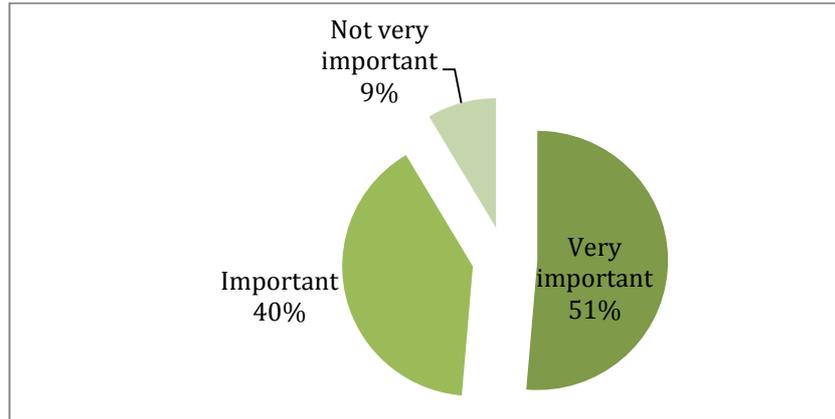
4.2. The outcomes of *wasta*

Wasta refers to the connections or influence one has in society (see chapter 2). It is the conceptualisation of a reality that exists in all societies, but that is very much present in the Emirati everyday life. *Wasta* is often discussed among both Emiratis and foreigners. Whether you (and your family/business) have the right level of *wasta* or not determines many things in life, from what school you are accepted at, what you study at university, whether or not you get a scholarship, to being hired for one job or another, etc. An individual's (or family's) position in society is determined by *wasta*. Thus, a 'greater amount' of *wasta* indicates that the individual (or family) has closer connections with the sheikh, and therefore is better positioned in society. Survey data highlights that '*wasta* outcomes' is considered an important problem by a large majority of respondents (91%) (see figure 37).

³²⁴ Personal interview, Al-Ain, February 2012.

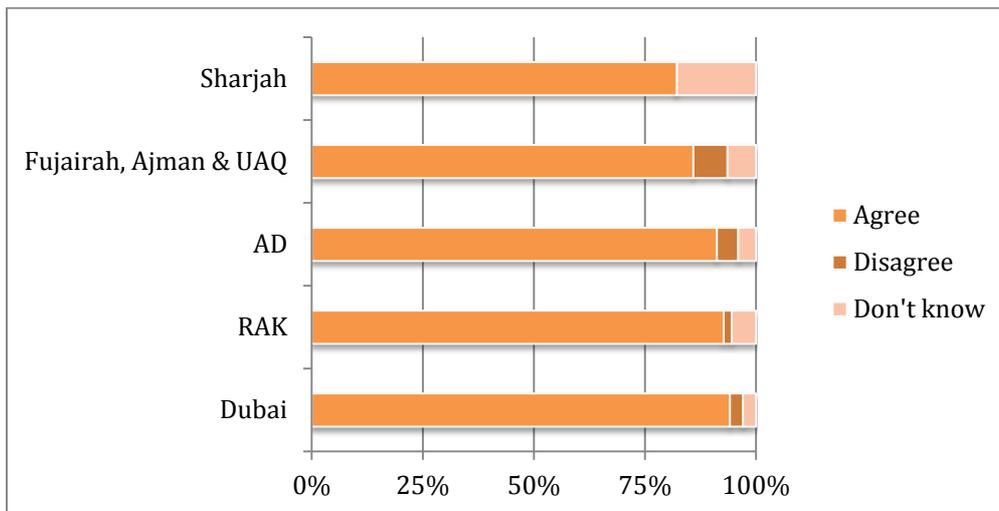
³²⁵ Personal interview, Al-Ain, March 2012.

Figure 37: Wasta outcomes



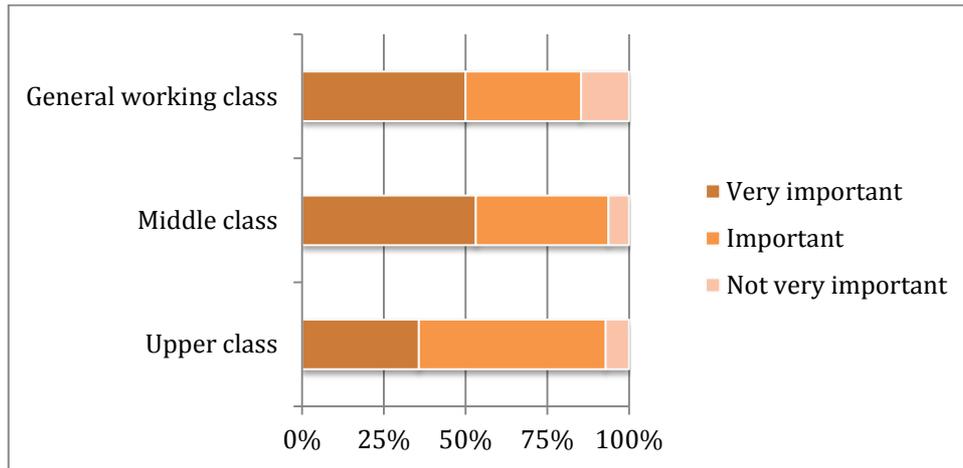
By emirate, students from Dubai and RAK were the most concerned about *wasta*, which might reflect that these groups were the most affected, or the fact that they have better knowledge of politics (as explained above) makes them more aware of the unfairness of this practice. These differences are statistically significant at the 5% level (p-value .017) (see figure 38).

Figure 38: Wasta outcomes by emirate



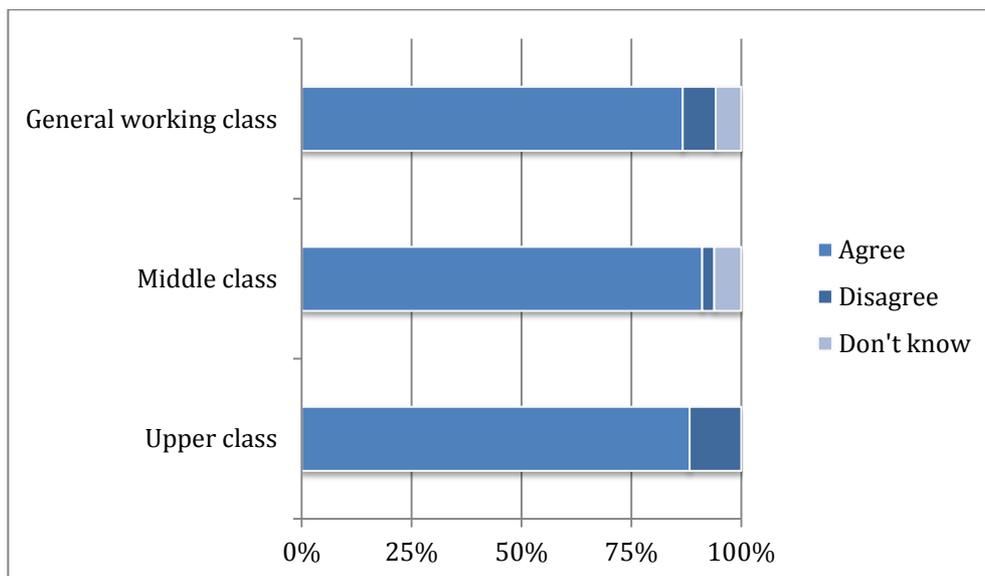
Interestingly, students seeing themselves as upper class that considered *wasta* 'important' (92.8%), but only 35.7% of this group said it was 'very important', compared to more than 53.2% and 50% of the middle and lower classes, respectively (p-value .052) (see figure 39). This is quite understandable given that the people affected by the negative consequences of *wasta* are the less connected, who are usually the less wealthy and those who do not belong to the oligarchy or tribal aristocracy.

Figure 39: Wasta outcomes by social class



Moreover, although most students agreed that the elimination of corruption and *wasta* should be a priority of reform, it was the upper class that showed the largest disagreement (over 10%), being significant at the 10% level (p-value .089) (see figure 40). This coincides with the previous question in which less upper class students rated *wasta* as a 'very important' issue (figure 39).

Figure 40: Elimination of corruption and "wasta" as priority of reform



Many students took the opportunity to respond to the open questions and reflect on this issue. For instance, when describing their imagined ideal society some wished for:

“An integrated society free of wasta and personal interests, where the public interest prevails over the individual's one...[and where

*there is] equality among all the Emirates because we all live in one state.*³²⁶

*“A society that does not discriminate between its members by means of *wasta* or anything else... Where ruler and ruled live in the same way... Where all are equal, even the head of state... Where, similarly, legislation is enacted only after the approval of the community members.”*³²⁷

However, as explained by a member of the FNC, *wasta* is such an institutionalised practice in Emirati society that it has become a social requirement for those holding higher positions. As responses show, one is expected to take care of relatives, and it is not well regarded if you can offer positions to members of your family/tribe but you do not.³²⁸ In this regard, some students expressed their discontent with political corruption and nepotism, and their desire that rulers changed “the *wasta* system (nepotism, cronyism) that nowadays is everywhere and annihilates all the efforts made by qualified citizens”, and that they “stay away from *wasta* and punish those who carry out such a thing.”³²⁹ Moreover, they wish authorities would “evaluate the people who hold positions connected to the president and the deputies, and the situation of the people. To get rid of the *wasta*;³³⁰ and that “ministers and heads of ministries and departments [were designated] depending on the academic qualifications (it is not correct, for example, to designate as Minister of Health a person who has nothing to do with Medicine).”³³¹

Moreover, it cannot be ignored that not only Emiratis have *wasta*, and that some foreigners enjoy its privilege more than some nationals. It was quite shocking to realise that in some professions Westerners earn more than nationals when an employee of the UAEU said:

*“I am less than a foreigner...my salary is lower than the salary of a westerner!”*³³²

4.3. Unemployment

Students from all emirates considered unemployment to be a major problem with over 70% considering it an important problem (see figure 41).

³²⁶ Open question 22: How would you describe your ideal society?

³²⁷ Open question 22.

³²⁸ Personal interview, Dubai, April 2013.

³²⁹ Open question 23.

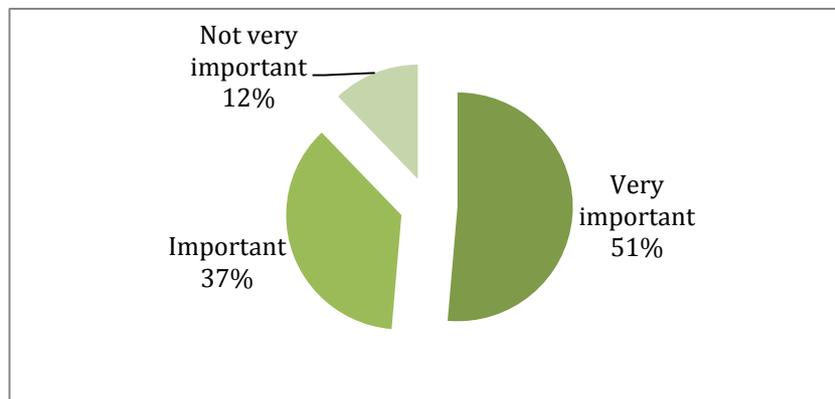
³³⁰ Open question 23.

³³¹ Open question 23.

³³² Personal interview, Al-Ain, March 2012.

Unemployment among Emiratis is currently approximately 14%³³³ with youth unemployment being expectedly much higher and, therefore, a growing challenge for the UAE government. Although several initiatives have been implemented to increase the number of Emiratis in the workforce, especially in the private sector, a recent study established that ‘Emiratisation’ would not succeed so long as it focused “on increasing the incentives for jobless Emiratis” rather than on addressing “the deep-rooted, institutional and socio-cultural causes of high unemployment” (ICOS: 1-2). Moreover, this report identified concerning levels of youth frustration, sadness, insecurity and anger related to the growing unemployment rates (ICOS: 4-5), which explains the fact that it constitutes such a concern for UAEU students.

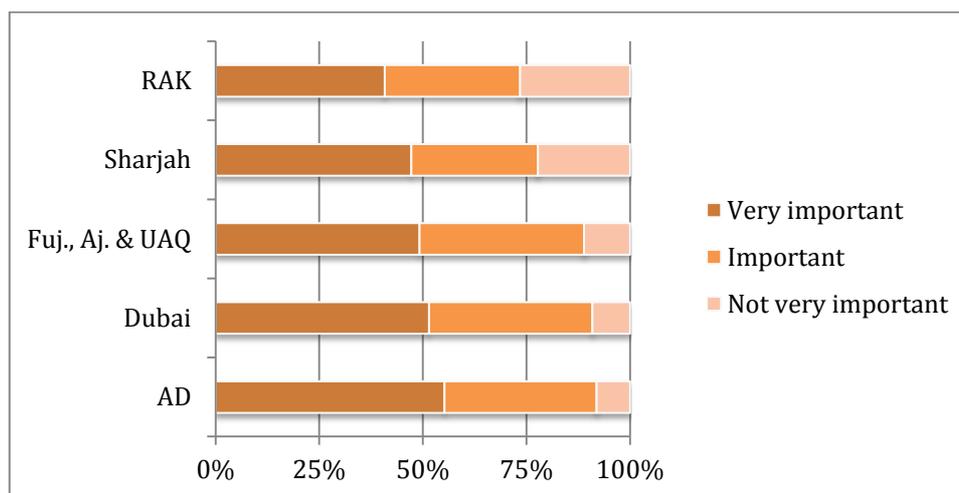
Figure 41: Unemployment



One would have expected greater concern about unemployment in the northern emirates since they are the poorest. However, statistically relevant differences between some emirates at the 5% level (p-value .030) revealed otherwise.. Approximately 25% of students from RAK and Sharjah thought that the unemployment amongst Emiratis was ‘not very important’ an issue, while only 10-15% of respondents from Abu Dhabi and Dubai agreed. Moreover, respondents from Fujairah, Ajman and UAQ had similar perceptions of the issue to those from AD and Dubai. (see figure 42).

³³³UAE National Bureau of Statistics (www.uaestatistics.gov.ae)

Figure 42: Unemployment as a problem



Unemployment rates among UAE nationals do not really explain these responses, since the highest rates correspond to Fujairah and Ras al-Khaimah (20.6% and 16.2% respectively), followed by Sharjah and Abu Dhabi (both with 15.3%); and the lowest to Dubai, Ajman and UAQ (8.7%, 7.3% and 6.3%) (see table 34). The larger number of foreigners living in AD and Dubai compared to the other emirates might be more significant as a reason for this. However, a student said what she would ask of the rulers:

“The elimination of unemployment, especially in the Emirate of Ras al-Khaimah characterized by severe lack of jobs, both in the private and public sector. I would be glad if this question was considered, as well as equality among all the Emirates in terms of job availability in every sector. Since the Emirate that is suffering the most from unemployment is Ras al-Khaimah, I wish it was supplied with many jobs.”³³⁴

Table 34: UAE Nationals’ Unemployment rates³³⁵

Abu Dhabi	Dubai	Sharjah	Ajman	UAQ	RAK	Fujairah	Total
15.3	8.7	15.3	7.3	6.3	16.2	20.6	14.0

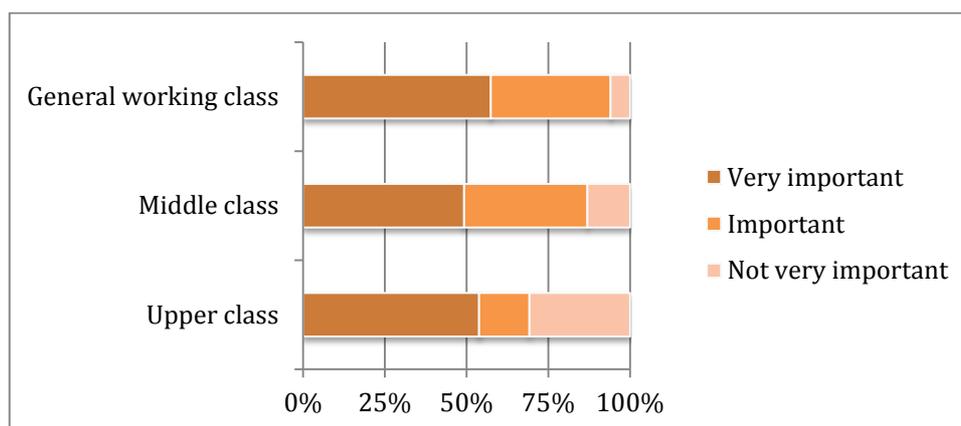
Furthermore, responses to open questions regarding unemployment made emphasis to the lack of opportunities that nationals are given in the place of foreigners. Many said they would like to ask from their rulers to solve “the problem of unemployment among nationals, that they excluded foreigners from

³³⁴ Open question 23.

³³⁵ Source: UAE National Bureau of Statistics

the jobs which basically are a citizen's right,"³³⁶ and that they give "nationals the priority in higher positions...in companies and governments...for I see that in a lot of institutions the managers and the officials are foreigners."³³⁷ Expressing a similar sentiment, another student insisted that "excluding the foreign workforce from administration, jobs and so on, giving priority to nationals, priority to nationals in education and only afterwards to foreigners, without giving importance to the latter more than to the former. Also, the salaries of nationals should be higher than foreigners or equal, the contrary would not be right."³³⁸ Finally, another said priority should be given to "UAE nationals instead of foreigners, because there are well qualified citizens who are not given any chance... and a careful designation of some officials in some positions."³³⁹ In this regard, the fact that there are higher number of foreigners in Dubai and Abu Dhabi partially explains why respondents from these emirates express greater concern about unemployment.

Table 35: Unemployment



Some differences were also observed between social classes, with (quite logically) the lower class the most concerned about unemployment, and the upper class the least concerned (p-value .042): 95% of the working class considered it as important or very important, compared to less than 70% of the upper class (figure 35). The perception of a direct link between unemployment and the lack of *wasta* was evident, as some further responses to open questions reflected desire for:

³³⁶ Open question 23.
³³⁷ Open question 23.
³³⁸ Open question 23.
³³⁹ Open question 23.

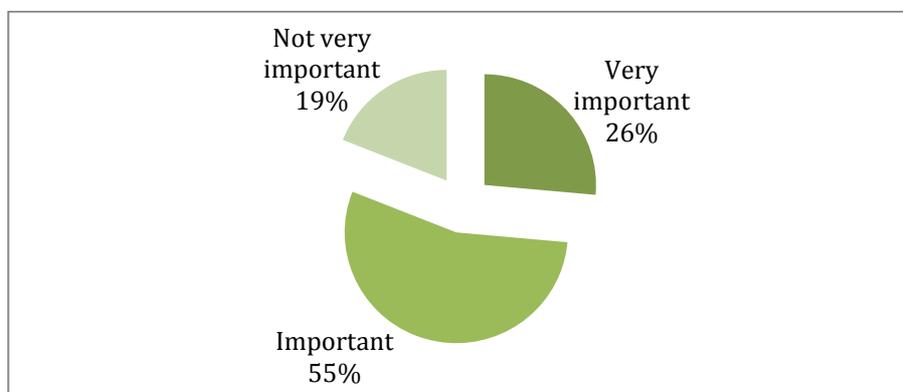
“A labour legislation since most graduates or high school graduates are unemployed because they don't have wasta.”³⁴⁰

“A change in the perspective about work which is now based on personal wasta (connections)...and [that takes] into account work experience and qualifications.”³⁴¹

4.4. Economic disparity between emirates

The economic disparity between emirates is due to the lack of hydrocarbon resources of the northern emirates, as explained in chapter 2. Federal investment has taken place in the northern emirates since the establishment of the federation (the basic necessities such as health services or schools are well covered), but to a much lesser extent than in Abu Dhabi, Dubai or Sharjah.

Figure 43: Economic disparity between emirates

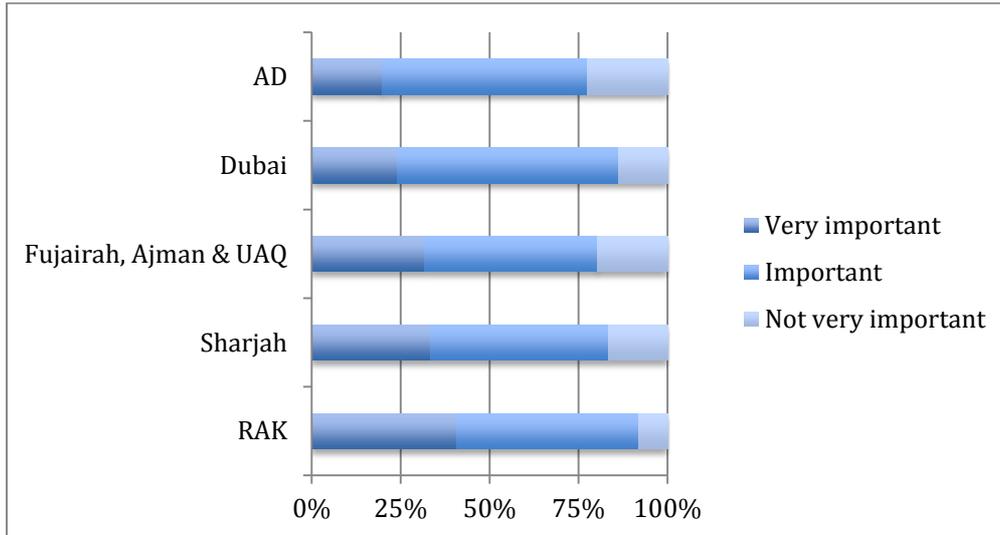


Thus, economic disparity has been a source of tension between the seven emirates and its inhabitants since the establishment of the federation. Survey data showed that over 80% of respondents considered this an important problem, with 26% finding it 'very important' (see figure 43). Not surprisingly, students from the northern emirates were more concerned with this issue, although there was high concern in all emirates. Nonetheless, a high percentage of students from Dubai (even more than some of the northern emirates) saw it as an important problem. This might be due to the competition that exists between Abu Dhabi and Dubai, and the higher federal investment that takes place in Abu Dhabi as compared to Dubai.

³⁴⁰ Open question 24.

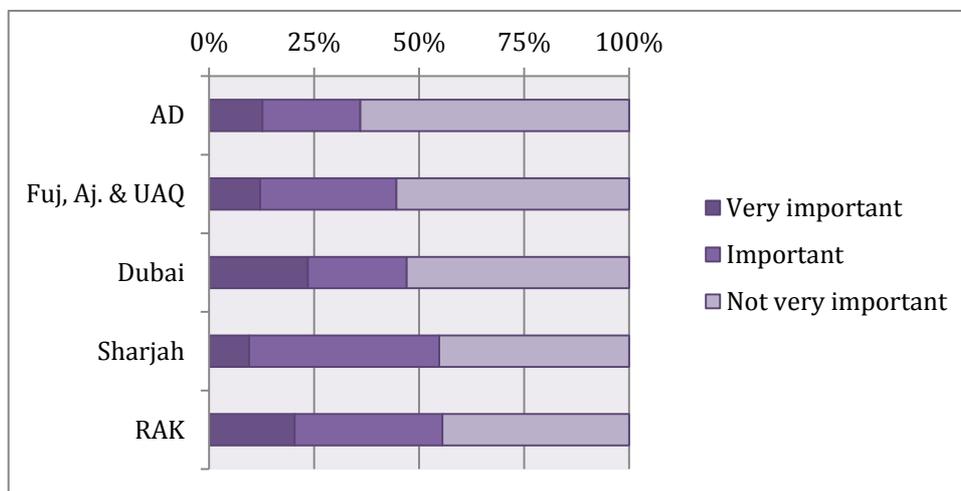
³⁴¹ Open question 24.

Figure 44: Economic disparity between emirates



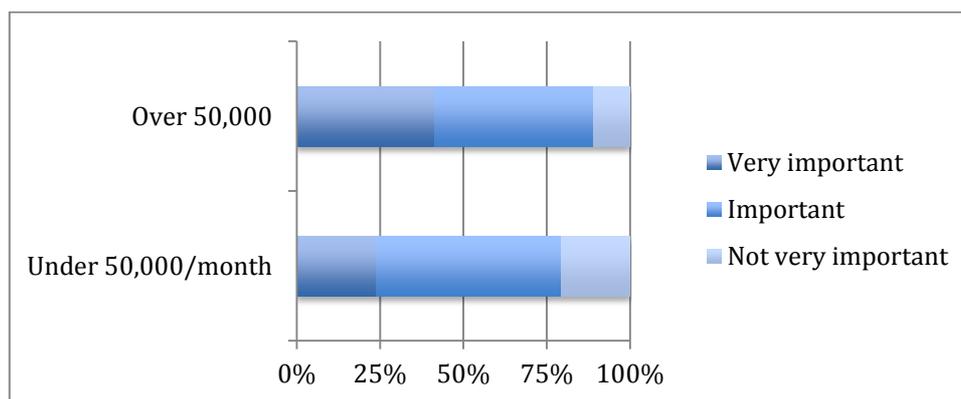
Differences between the level of concern in Abu Dhabi and Dubai (less than 25% said it was 'very important') and the northern emirates (where over 25% thought it was 'very important') are large enough to claim that similar results would be obtained among the whole population studied (p-value .055) (figure 44). Responses to the question on federal-local governments relation was also statistically significant (p-value .027), thus supporting the above (figure 45).

Figure 45: Relation federal-local governments



Surprisingly, students whose household earn more than 50,000 AED considered the economic disparity problem more important than those earning less than 50,000 AED (p-value .029) (see figure 46). Again, those with higher income show more concern about socio-political issues, thus supporting the main hypothesis of this dissertation.

Figure 46: Economic disparity between emirates



The opinions of students in relation to differences between emirates provide more input on this issue. Some hoped “to see all the remote areas at the same level of the others or, at least, supplied with the basics;”³⁴² for “equality among all the seven Emirates, as I do not feel that there is equality but advantages only for certain Emirates although we are one nation and its entirety consists of seven Emirates! Features must be the same, and there has to be the same degree of development in all the UAE... In this way, we would increase people's well-being in many ways without discrimination nor racism;”³⁴³ and to see adjusted “the economic disparities within the UAE as some of the Emirates are suffering from huge deficiencies due to these internal differences; citizens wages are poor.”³⁴⁴ Others said they would like the rulers to bring about “social and economic equality among all the UAE, [and that they change] some of the officials who take advantage of their position for personal purposes and are not the right persons for their roles;”³⁴⁵ while one respondent explained how “there are plenty of good jobs but only in Abu Dhabi and Dubai... Jobs available in the other Emirates are characterized by little income, which does not meet the needs of the individual and their families, [and asked for] equality between nationals.”³⁴⁶ Finally, one student related to the royal family of one of the emirates acknowledged that:

“The budgets in Abu Dhabi and Dubai are very good, but the other emirates they don’t have the same facilities or opportunities, [and that] there is the voice of the people than live there, they cannot go and share their opinions; and they don’t have the same facilities like

³⁴² Open question 22.

³⁴³ Open question 23.

³⁴⁴ Open question 23.

³⁴⁵ Open question 22.

³⁴⁶ Open question 23.

in AD and Dubai. This is why you see most of the people from Fujairah and RAK moving to AD and Dubai. ³⁴⁷

4.5. Other problems raised

Besides the problems questioned about in the survey, other issues were raised by students when answering the open questions and during interviews. Among them, the most common were education, language and culture (including the abandonment of religious practices and/or local customs), salaries, the rising of prices, the provision of housing to nationals, marriage and divorce rates, the problem of the *bidun* and the children of Emirati mothers married to foreigners, and the UAE relations with other countries.

Concern was expressed about the threat that non-national overpopulation problem arguably poses to culture and traditions. Some thought the main problem was the ways in which curricula are implemented, therefore blaming the authorities for deciding to adopt “foreign” practices. They expressed their opposition to “adopting foreign systems which are distant from our customs and traditions [and their support for] teaching the Arab culture without concentrating on foreign cultures and languages.” ³⁴⁸ Others affirmed that “the Arabic language should be the official language while studying academic and school subjects; the English language should be a secondary language, without importance. The curricula in universities, schools and colleges should be controlled, because they change constantly and uncontrollably.”³⁴⁹

In this regard, an Emirati professor complained that most of her nieces and nephews were unable to speak and write proper Arabic or English, and argued that this had a negative effect on the generation of ideas and, ultimately on the development of the country.³⁵⁰ Related to this, one student said:

*“What I have to add refers to the school curriculum and commitment to credibility, since these suffer from defects. It is necessary to control those who have weak minds, what they do and what they instil through the curriculum in the minds of our children, from the blur of history to other things we don't even know.”*³⁵¹

³⁴⁷ Personal interview, Al-Ain, March 2012.

³⁴⁸ Open question 23.

³⁴⁹ Open question 23.

³⁵⁰ Personal interview with UAEU Professor, Al-Ain, May 2011.

³⁵¹ Open question 24.

Others focused more on materialistic rewards by wishing for “a greater interest in higher education and providing material and moral incentives for each Emirati student who wants to complete his education from a federalist and not local point of view.”³⁵² With regard to the concern over the rising of prices, the salaries of nationals, and the provision of housing by the state (and other welfare benefits), students would like the rulers to make changes in “the conditions of education, health, housing and the problems of the demographic structure by passing legislation to facilitate the process of marriage.”³⁵³ Students mentioned that “public housing that rewards beneficiaries should take into account the size, according to the entitled family...and also rise in prices. As a matter of fact, we don't want salary increase with an increase of prices. What would be the advantage then?”³⁵⁴; and that the state should provide “nationals who are about to marry with residential land and public house above all.”³⁵⁵ This reflects the existence of a rentier mentality among sectors of the youth population, which expect the state to guarantee the provision of the broad range of services they have been given since birth.

Some students were more worried about how the presence of foreigners, rather than the policies implemented, negatively affected local customs and traditions of Emiratis, and who found solutions to this problem in religion. These wished for “a society free of migrations that corrupts customs, traditions and norms;”³⁵⁶ “a technologically advanced society that preserves the values of the Islamic civilization and is ruled by security and stability;”³⁵⁷ “a peaceful society that preserves its religious values, on the basis of which decisions are taken. Where there are plenty of ways to make the individual live in prosperity. I do not mean comfort and luxury, but giving people all the rights that help them persevere in their duties towards the community. And a sense of belonging through love and mutual pride between the individual and the society.”³⁵⁸ A few found a solution in “granting the right of nationality to the children of female citizens provided

³⁵² Open question 24.

³⁵³ Open question 23.

³⁵⁴ Other section of question 1.

³⁵⁵ Open question 23.

³⁵⁶ Open question 22.

³⁵⁷ Open question 22.

³⁵⁸ Open question 22.

that they persevere on the straight path, and they care to spread the religious awareness according to the *Salafi* approach.”³⁵⁹

Similarly, other religious approaches were identified. Some described their ideal society as one that “adheres to the Islamic principles, customs and traditions more than to the principles of ‘politics’. [One that] believes in freedom of expression and opinion, a believer society,”³⁶⁰ “a society based on the true religion, ruled by justice and equality, that enjoys political freedom and freedom of expression, where the people determine their destiny, the individual gets the job he deserves and there is no place for the *wasta*,”³⁶¹ “a society committed to the whole Islamic law that gives us the right to denounce anything that touches our religion or our bashfulness negatively. Also, a society where people strive to improve it, they are educated, conscious and open within the boundaries of the Islamic law,”³⁶² “a society ruled by security, freedom of expression and adoption of ideas... [One] that values the citizen and gives him rights, although a right is not a gift from someone...a society that values the citizen for his competencies not ancestry...a cooperative society that seeks the elevation of religion and the nation...a society where everybody respects each other... A Muslim society.”³⁶³ Furthermore, some thought that “devoting the state resources to the development of society in all respects, but keeping in mind that the starting point are the Islamic principles and not the imperialist ones or others,”³⁶⁴ was necessary and some saw a need “to forbid strong drinking, dance, gambling, usury and bribery that stain and corrupt the country.”³⁶⁵

In a more conciliatory position, there were students who hoped to achieve a society that follows the Islamic values and Emirati traditions and which also respects other cultures and religions. These called for “a democratic, confederate and simple society, [where] its rules are in line with the religion of the state and its customs, thus creating an atmosphere of love and intimacy

³⁵⁹ Open question 23.

³⁶⁰ Open question 22.

³⁶¹ Open question 22.

³⁶² Open question 22.

³⁶³ Open question 22.

³⁶⁴ Open question 23.

³⁶⁵ Open question 23.

between the members of the community. Also, it accepts other religions' rights and their nationalities;"³⁶⁶ and insisted that:

*"It is necessary to reduce foreign workforce and to increase national workforce, and to be less open towards the Western influence, which affects our principles and our religion in a negative way, such as: hosting singers who distort the minds of young people, and putting huge Christmas trees in the commercial centres. But there is nothing wrong if every believer such as Christians and others practice freely their religious rites in the scope of their homes, families and cult houses."*³⁶⁷

Additionally, some respondents expressed their preoccupation about the high divorce rates and the obstacles making marriage difficult. As discussed in chapter 2, many young Emiratis get married as a mean of achieving greater independence from their families and to obtain governmental benefits attached. As a consequence of these marriages of 'convenience' the divorce rate has steadily increased during the last decade and is seen by many as a social problem that should be addressed (see chapter 2).

Finally, a number of students identified the UAE's foreign policy as a problem that deserved attention by the authorities. A student said:

*"The modification of the political situation in terms of concern about strengthening ties with foreign countries that do not cause any long-term problems or destabilize the people and the government, or affect negatively the economy of our state."*³⁶⁸

Some thought it was necessary "to examine the problem between Iran and the boundaries of our state and its unwarranted interventions;"³⁶⁹ and wished the rulers "dealt firmly, without negotiating, with Iran that is occupying our islands;"³⁷⁰ and hoped they took "our islands back from Iran, and the initiative to help Syria."³⁷¹ These opinions reflect awareness of and concern about regional political events among a number of students. In this regard, some wanted to see the GCC strengthened and more links with other Arab states, and saw a necessity:

³⁶⁶ Open question 22.

³⁶⁷ Open question 22.

³⁶⁸ Open question 23.

³⁶⁹ Open question 23.

³⁷⁰ Open question 23.

³⁷¹ Open question 23.

“to defend ourselves from the occupying countries, consulting with the Gulf countries and other countries, to meet all the needs of the Peninsula Shield Force, to protect the sibling states not only the Gulf countries, since before being Arab we are a Muslim community, we are all linked by an Islamic blood, not only to support them with aids that help them to live, but also to put our hands close to theirs and free them from the slaughterhouses they are in. Maybe I am not talking logically, but is it logical that we see Arabic blood bleeding in front of us and we stand still, where is our humanity, how can we say that we are an Arab nation, one single community?”³⁷²

Overall, these additional concerns expressed by respondents show that awareness of national and regional socio-political issues is instilled in the minds of some sectors of the educated youth, and that they believed that these issues should be addressed by the authorities. As such, these are signs that, even if knowledge of the political system and of specific political developments of the country is weak, ‘post-materialistic’ and ‘self-expression’ attitudes exist among the studied population.

5. Perceptions of Human Rights

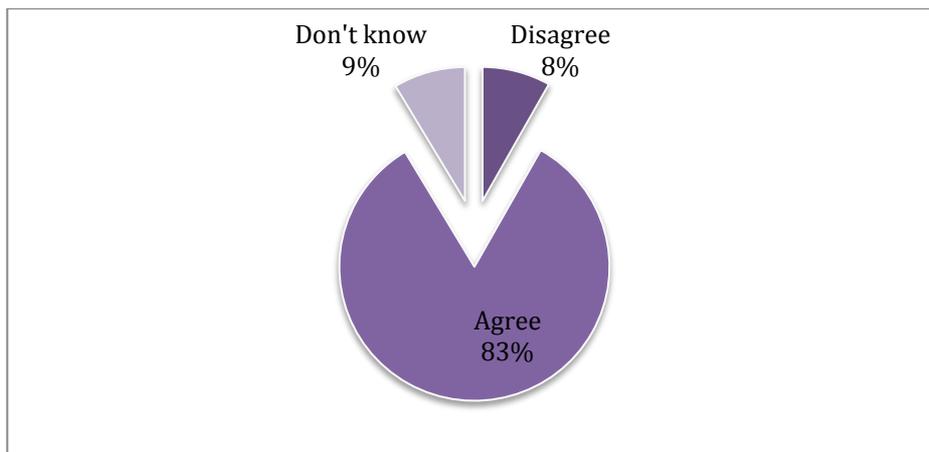
Respect of human rights is a controversial topic in the UAE (and the Gulf in general). The conditions under which migrants live in this region are internationally criticised, especially construction and domestic workers, whose illiteracy makes them the most vulnerable and therefore the most affected.³⁷³ As explained in chapter 2, the *kafala* system places the workers under the responsibility (and in the hands) of the employer, and leaves them migrants little opportunity to seek legal assistance at a governmental institution if any abuses or mistreatment occurs. Domestically, however, this issue does not seem to cause much concern. Many Emiratis benefit economically from the *kafala* system and, as such, do not desire a reform of the law regulating it. Moreover, the post-Arab Spring detentions and trials have also put under scrutiny the respect of human rights by the UAE authorities (see chapter 3).

³⁷² Open question 23.

³⁷³ The recent criticism by human rights organisations regarding the situation of the stateless (*bidun*), the *kafala* sponsorship system, and the concession of the Expo to the UAE (or the World Cup to Qatar) are examples of this. See Human Rights Watch page on the UAE: <http://www.hrw.org/middle-eastn-africa/united-arab-emirates>

Nevertheless, despite the dubious respect for human rights in the UAE, responses of the students reflected a high confidence in the fact that human rights and individual liberties are guaranteed in the UAE (83%) (see figure 47). None of the variables showed statistically significant differences in responses to this question, implying that a similar opinion is held regardless of gender, emirate of origin, or social class.

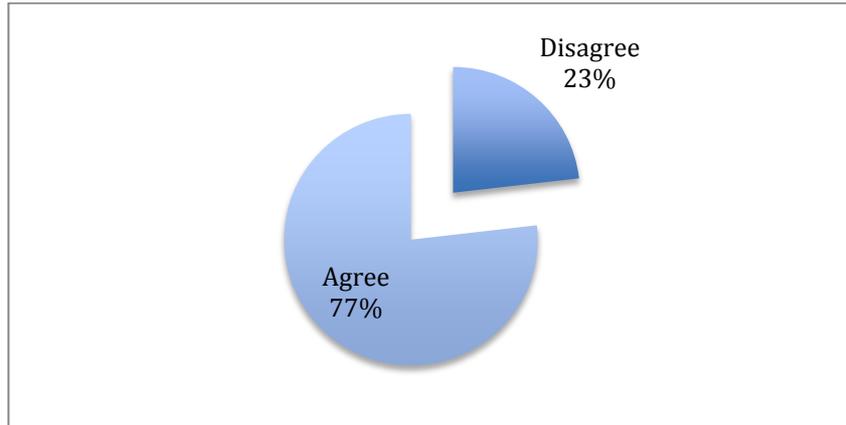
Figure 47: Human rights respect and individual liberties guaranteed in the UAE



Linked to this is the feeling of insecurity that Emiratis have developed (and which is enhanced by the official discourse) for being a small and young country surrounded by the regional powers of KSA and Iran, as well as for being a minority within their own population. This feeling of insecurity contributes to the fact that Emiratis accept higher levels of censorship and the curtailing of civil and human rights. This is reflected in the data, and could be due to the fact that Emiratis are educated to be grateful for what they have (as compared to the pre- oil period, or in comparison with other countries), and lead to believe that they could lose everything if the security of the nation was damaged. In this respect, 77% of the students agreed that “preserving the security of the country is the most crucial duty of the government, even if it needs to curtail some human rights” (see figure 48). For instance, one student claimed that “human rights and freedom of opinion are safeguarded and the ruling system treats everybody equally.”³⁷⁴

³⁷⁴ Open question 22.

Figure 48: "Preserving security...even if curtailing human rights"



There is, however, a statically relevant difference between the opinion of women and men on this issue, with less than 75% of female respondents agreeing compared to almost 90% of male students (p-value .001) (figure 49). This highlights the fact that women tend to be more aware of the infringement of human rights that occurs in the UAE, and are less willing to accept this situation even if national security is threatened. Moreover, the fact that women are more affected by the curtailment of freedom in the UAE may also contribute to this perception. Finally, Emiratis from the northern emirates are more in favour of curtailing rights if necessary to preserve security in the nation, followed by those of Dubai and Abu Dhabi (over 75%); while Sharjah students are the less supportive of this idea (~60%) (p-value .051) (see Figure 50).

Figure 49: "Preserving security...even if curtailing human rights"

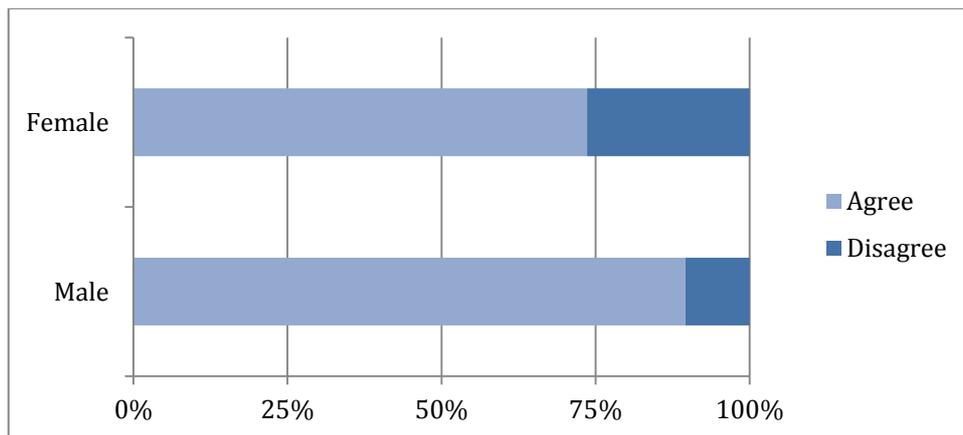
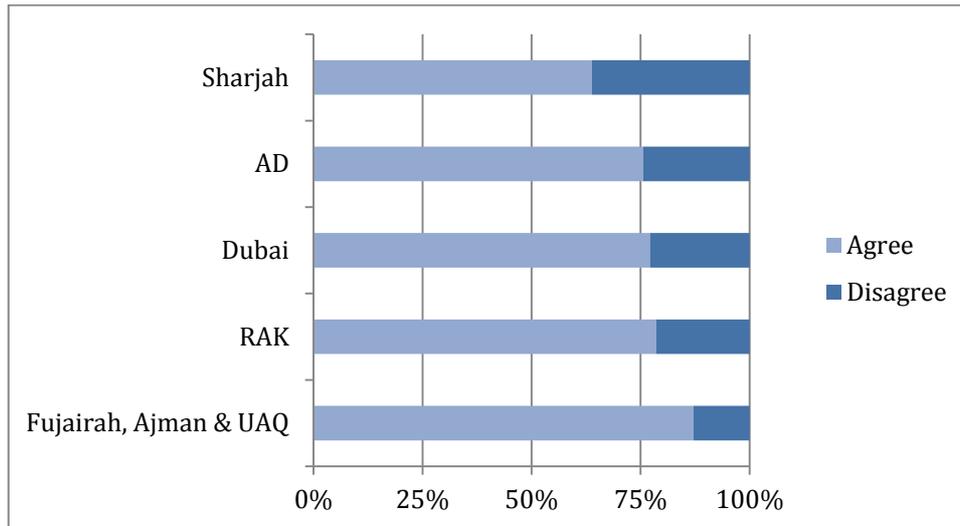


Figure 50: "Preserving security...even if curtailing human rights"



Regarding more specific individual liberties and rights, such as freedom of expression, choice or movement, and women's rights, Emiratis tend to praise the rulers for their efforts in delivering the people with what they need; and criticism is very limited. As one student put it:

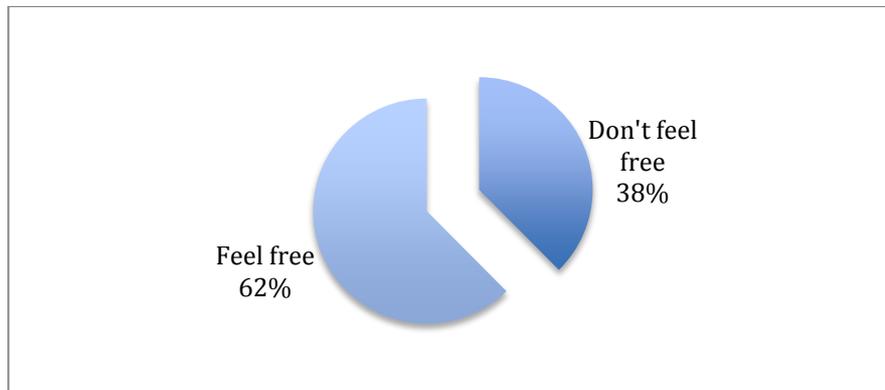
"The majority here are like babies, they have been raised as babies, they give them everything and they become greedy...and this is why they say 'look around and be thankful'... [Gulf] Arabs do like birds, and they act like them sometimes...they are so proud, so full of it, like falcons, they worship them; [and] at the same time they are like ostriches: they are big, they have things, but they hide their heads...and this is so obvious."³⁷⁵

However, as has already been explained, and as the following data shows, the perceptions of UAEU students include discontent about the limiting of their freedoms. Perceptions about freedom of expression were measured through a question on how free respondents felt to speak politics in the UAE. Although over 80% of respondents expressed their confidence in the fact that human rights and individual liberties are guaranteed in the UAE, this dropped down to 62% when questioned about the freedom to speak politics (see figure 51). Thus, 38% of the students feel they do not enjoy freedom of expression, contradicting the high belief in the respect for human rights, which is possibly due to a lack of understanding about the concept of human rights. In this

³⁷⁵ Personal interview, Al-Ain, March 2012.

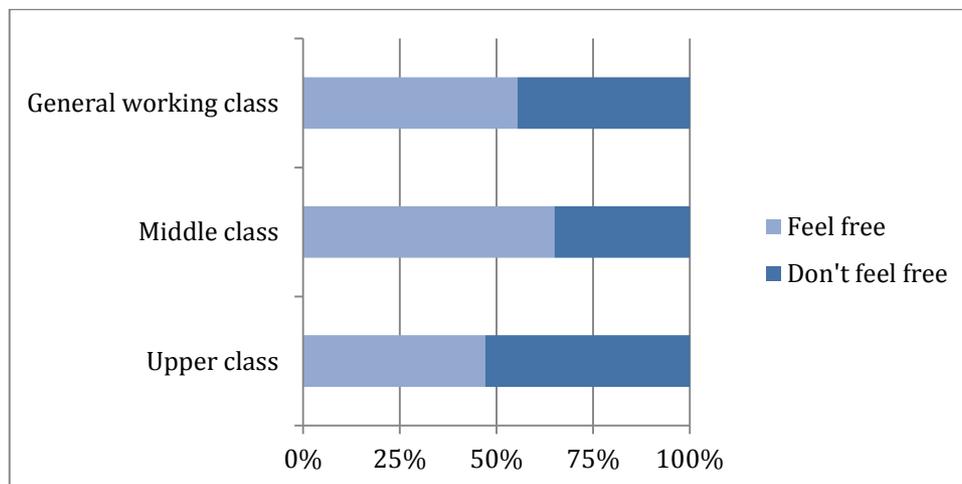
regard, one student said rulers should “grant citizens the freedom of expressing their views through newspapers or social networks”.³⁷⁶

Figure 51: Feeling of freedom to speak politics



Emirate of origin and gender were not determinant variables in this regard. Regarding social class, differences between groups were large enough (p-value .084) to affirm a tendency for the upper class to feel less free to speak about politics (47.1%), followed by the lower class (55.5%), with the greatest percentage of respondents in the middle class believing that they had the freedom to speak about politics (64.9%) (see figure 52).

Figure 52: Feeling of freedom to speak politics



During interviews, students expressed the opinion that individuals need to be careful when speaking politics in front of others “because it can bring unexpected consequences.”³⁷⁷ Students from countries where the Arab Spring popular unrest or the overthrowing of rulers was taking place, such as Tunisia, Egypt, Libya or Bahrain were very cautious not to speak about the

³⁷⁶ Open question 23.

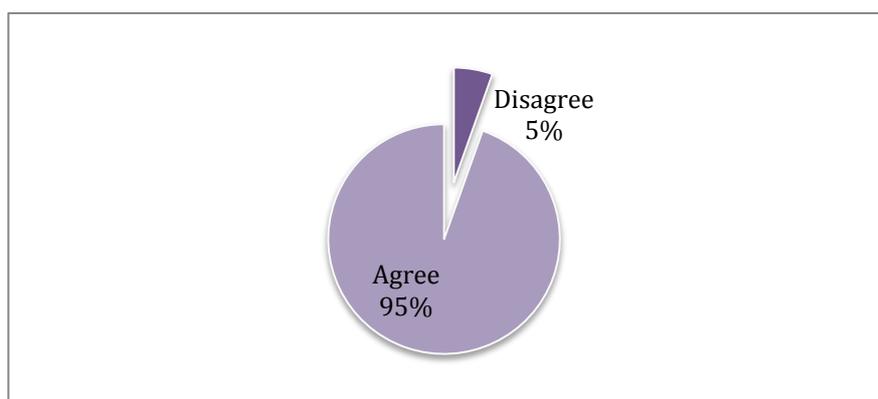
³⁷⁷ Personal interviews May 2011, UAEU, Al-Ain, UAE.

developments in their countries in public, and were even warned by professors not to express their feelings in public. A Tunisian student, for instance, reported that she was shushed by her long-term UAE resident Palestinian professor when she made a comment about the Tunisian revolts in the classroom and explicitly told (after the class) that she should keep that thoughts to herself, that expatriates “should not speak politics or they could get in trouble.”³⁷⁸ This shows that politics is not only a taboo topic for Emiratis, but also for foreign residents. However, in the right setting most students shared their thoughts, and appeared to have interest in regional and local political events, even if most were not willing to become an active part of these. In regard to this, an Emirati student said:

“There is a lot of injustice in our state, but no one can speak about it because they fear the so-called ‘state security’. We do not want to prejudice the security of our nation, but in reality it would be better to call to court every undisciplined minister, dictator and thief of the state, and to establish strict laws of discipline for all ministers.”³⁷⁹

It was pointed out earlier that gender inequalities are not a major concern of Emiratis. Further data confirms this reality, and 95% of respondents agreed that women's rights are guaranteed in the UAE. Nonetheless, although differences between groups were not statistically significant, a trend was observed that a larger percentage of females (over 75%) than of males (67%) said gender inequalities were not an important problem (see figures 53 and 57).

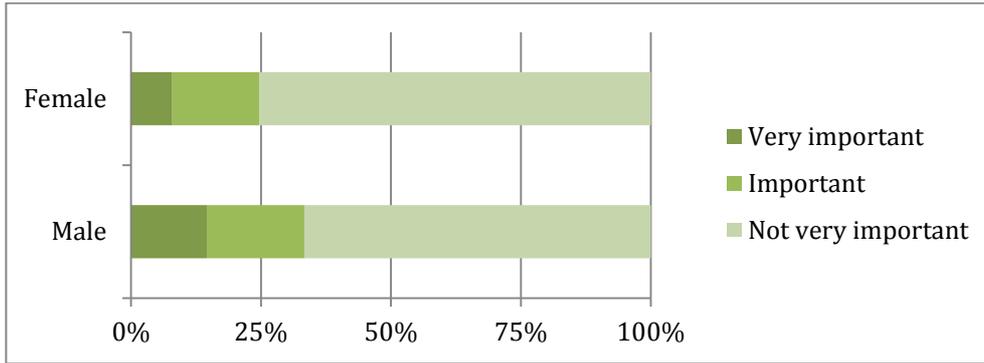
Figure 53: UAE laws guarantee women’s freedom of choice and movement



³⁷⁸ Personal interviews May 2011, UAEU, Al-Ain, UAE.

³⁷⁹ Open question 23.

Figure 54: Unequal rights of Emirati men and women by sex



In contrast, substantial differences were found between male and female students when asked about the roles of women in society and in politics. Women were more supportive of their participation in the public, job market, and political sphere (p-values .000 - .010) (see figures 55, 56 and 57).

Figure 55: Women can be president or PM

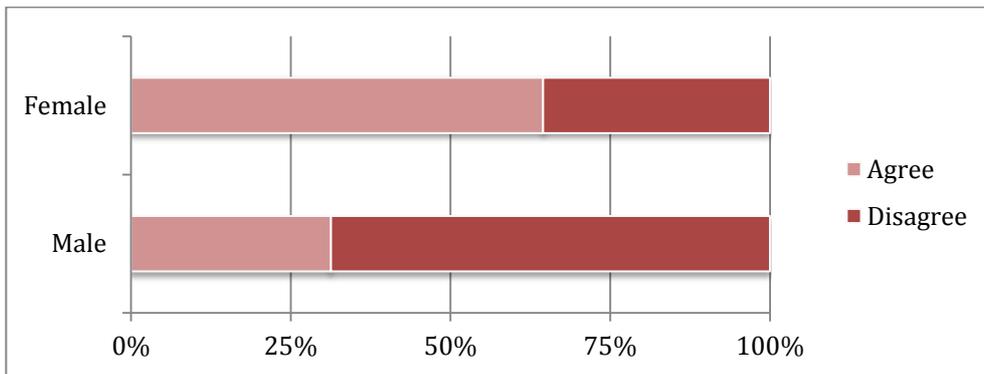


Figure 56: Women can work outside home

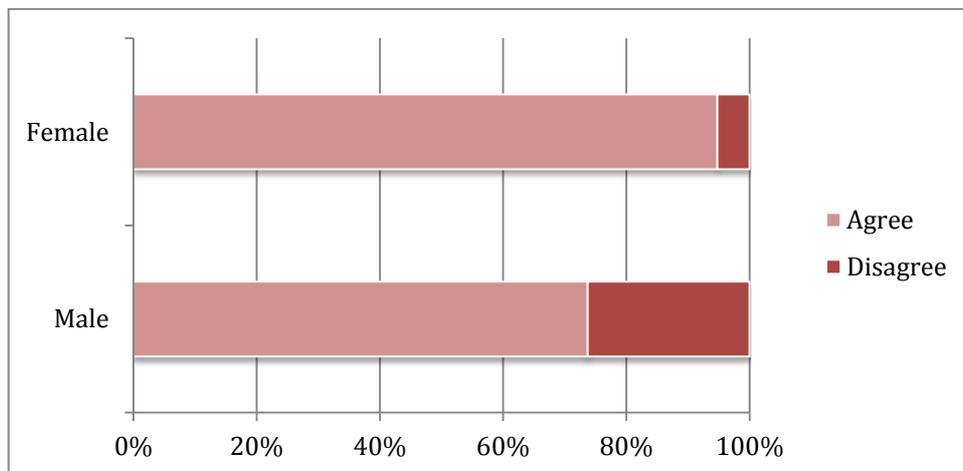
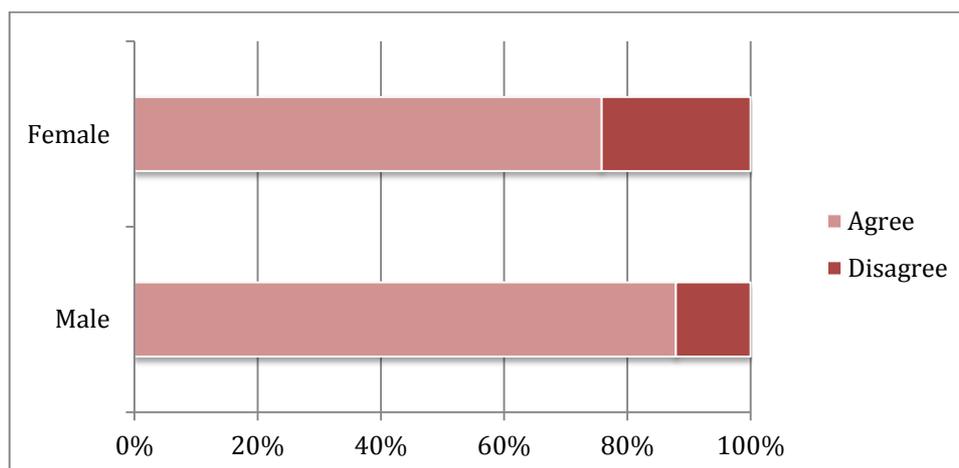


Figure 57: Men make better political leaders than women



Conservative views over the role of sexes in society persist in the UAE, but there is also a high level of pride (or face saving) in these responses. Interviews and responses to open questions showed that many male and female students are not very happy about some of the gender-related political practices in the UAE (or with the ways in which these have evolved). One student said she would like the rulers to guarantee the “freedom for women, adequate financial aid to complete the study in the country, or a personal salary;”³⁸⁰ while another one blamed it on the families rather than the authorities or laws:

“The government gives the full opportunity and the full freedom for the woman, but it’s a family restriction, is not about the government restriction... it depends... There should be like a feminism; you know, there should be like an organisation for them who is calling for their rights and protecting them... Women should organise better and I will be willing to do this... I think about starting this kind of association that informs girls better about their rights and so on... who protects the rights of women...”³⁸¹

Conclusion

This chapter has assessed the cognitive orientations of UAEU students, explored the main agents of political socialisation as identified by respondents, and discussed their feelings with regards to domestic socio-political problems (i.e. affective orientations). It was observed that, although cognitive political orientations are weak among all groups forming the sample, there is significant

³⁸⁰ Open question 23.

³⁸¹ Personal interview, Al-Ain, March 2012.

interest in politics among some sectors, and that factors other than income, influence youth political socialisation in the UAE. Among these, the most significant is the media, followed by the university experience. This was confirmed by several chi-square tests: those following the news regularly have a higher interest in politics and vice versa as do those using Twitter habitually.

Statistically significant differences between social classes and income groups in response to cognitive and affective questions reveal that the upper class, higher income individuals, and those from wealthier emirates have better knowledge and more interest in politics than the middle and lower classes. Responses of students from the seven emirates about interest in politics reveal new information about the actual orientations of Emirati educated youth. Students from Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah expressed a higher interest in politics than students from the rest of the UAE. Moreover, the survey reflects that interest in politics is higher among Law and HuSS students, and especially among students of Political Science, Tourism and Media Studies and there was enough statistical evidence to claim that male students tend to have more interest than female students (72.6% and 62.8% respectively).

Similarly, although knowledge of the political system was in general low, there is a tendency for greater understanding by male students. Knowledge of authorities is very high (90%-98% of correct answers); knowledge of political institution not so high (50%-55%); and knowledge of elections quite low (40%-30%). Interesting disparities were identified between students enrolled in the different colleges, with those in HuSS, Law and Engineering being the best informed. While, there were no significant differences between students of the seven emirates, students from RAK seem to have a better understanding of the politics of the UAE. Moreover, the self-selected upper class is the most knowledgeable about the political system (+75%), as well as the most aware of the electoral processes (50%-60%).

Regarding socio-political problems, the upper class is the most concerned about non-national overpopulation, while the middle and working classes worry more about *wasta*, corruption, and unemployment. The majority of UAEU students did not express concern about the human rights situation in the UAE. However, when asked if these should be curtailed to preserve domestic security, women are (statistically) less supportive of this idea, with students

from Sharjah being the least supportive, followed by Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Moreover, there is not much concern about the legal situation of women. In fact, 95% of students thought that law guaranteed women's freedom of choice and movement. Surprisingly, men show slightly higher concern about the situation of women in the UAE. However, when asked about the roles of women in society and politics, men are more reluctant than women. Finally, around 40% of respondents claimed that they did not feel free to speak politics in the UAE, with the upper class feeling the least freedom and the middle class the most.

Overall, the analyses conducted in this chapter support the main hypothesis that the rentier nature of a state does not necessarily determine its peoples' lack of political interest, but can actually contribute to it through the exposure to agents involved in the process of political socialisation (especially education and the media). Data reveal important differences between the different social classes, hence highlighting that this variable is very relevant for the understanding of political orientations in the UAE. Concerns of the different social classes coincide with issues affecting them in similar ways, but vary according to their status and, in some cases to gender. As such, the wealthier and better-positioned social layers are more concerned about 'post-materialistic' issues than the rest of society. However, concern of the middle and lower classes over 'post-materialistic' problems is also present, hence indicating a tendency towards 'self-expression' attitudes within all social strata (further discussed in chapter 5).

CHAPTER 5: SUPPORT FOR THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

Chapter 2 explains that although the first article of the UAE's constitution expresses that its rulers aimed at preparing UAE nationals "for a dignified and free constitutional life while going ahead towards a full-fledged representative democratic regime in an Islamic and Arab community free of fear and anxiety",³⁸² very little has in fact been done in this direction. There have been calls for political reform since the inception of the federation (and even before), and more specific demands to enhance the powers of the FNC and to make it an elected institution. Nevertheless, the authorities have insisted on the necessity to follow a gradual process of political liberalisation, and only partial elections for a consultative council have been held in the country. Throughout the analyses of survey and interview data, this chapter is primarily concerned with affective and evaluative orientations of UAEU students, trust, tolerance and efficacy -values that have been associated with regime stability in cross-national political culture research. Therefore, it assesses the support of UAEU students for UAE authorities and their evaluation of governmental policies, perceptions regarding political reform and, more specifically, the elections held in the country in 2006 and 2011, as well as their adherence to self-expression values, since this is an indicator of 'post-materialistic' views and concern over political participation and the rule of law (or the lack of these) (Inglehart, 2005; theoretical framework, chapter 1).

1. Perceptions of authorities and governmental policies

Comments on online social networks and governmental official websites are filled with messages of admiration and pride for the rulers, and especially to late Sheikh Zayed, to whom Emiratis refer to as 'Baba Zayed'.³⁸³ Whether all posts are genuine or if there is a regime effort to fill the Internet with this kind of comments, fieldwork observation and interviews confirm there is widespread respect for the founders and current leaders of the country. Messages of love and admiration can be read on the Twitter and Facebook profiles of Emirati

³⁸² UAE Constitution. Available at:

<http://www.almajles.gov.ae:85/Uploads/Files/2011/06/20/15206.pdf>

³⁸³ Many Emiratis refer to Sheikh Zayed as 'Baba Zayed', which in Arabic means 'daddy', reflecting the paternalistic and neo-patriarchal character of the relationship between rulers and ruled.

students, many of whom carry photographs of the leaders on their folders or laptop cases, and speak about them with affection. Examples of this are the comments by some during the UAE National Day thanking Sheikh Zayed for what he did for the nation, or the one made by a UAEU student on Facebook about a BBC interview of the ruler of Dubai:

“#MomentOfPride

The five statements made by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid to the BBC are just brilliant!

#ThankYouSheikhMo”³⁸⁴

Support for the rulers was also expressed in the open questions of the survey and throughout the interviews conducted. For instance, one student wrote:

“Thankfully, we are an ideal society as mentioned, ruled by security and above all care for the honourable elderly, where we are offered everything we need in our lives and, most importantly, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan, God rest his soul and allow him to enter paradise, who made every effort to please the sons of his nation, and this is what our elderly are accomplishing nowadays, God preserve them all.”³⁸⁵

This, of course, is a reflection of the extent to which the portrayal of the rulers as the fathers and protectors of the nation is effective. Some, however, acknowledge some societal necessities while still praising the ruler’s ‘vision’:

“Thanks God our government is wise and our elders desire all the best for the Emirati society. Inevitably, every society has negative sides and, God willing, with the cooperation of everybody we will overcome them.”³⁸⁶

“The UAE and its government is one of the best countries in the world and, God willing, will be achieved. All we need is young people awareness of their role and a change in their ideas, and creating the opportunity for these young people to show their abilities.”³⁸⁷

In a more critical position, other Emiratis express mixed feelings towards the current rulers, and some discontent with them, or the way in which things are run today as compared to the glorious old days, when Sheikh Zayed was the president. One student, for instance, wished for the establishment of “an open a

³⁸⁴ Facebook, 13th January 2014

³⁸⁵ Open question 22.

³⁸⁶ Open question 24.

³⁸⁷ Open question 24.

council responsible for receiving complaints from the citizens as during the days of Zayed, may God have mercy on him...with no interference from third parties between the ruler and the ruled.”³⁸⁸ Similarly, another one though:

*“A lot of things could be changed. First, the situation of UAE citizens since it is not right that foreigners or newcomers are preferred to UAE citizens, is it? And also the policy of ‘state security’, I never feel safe because of their presence, they are the ruin of the state, and it is not safe... The Emirates were not like this during the great era of Zayed. We did not expect this from the UAE rulers and their highness.”*³⁸⁹

However, regarding the lack of open expression of discontent, a foreign university professor explained that people seemed comfortable with the system as it is and are “hesitant to begin the messy business of devolution of absolute power.” Further, he observed there was “a conflict-avoidance tendency among the population, and perhaps a bit of pre-emptive face saving: the rulers are not to be dithered with.”³⁹⁰ The following sections explore what quantitative data reveals about UAEU students’ orientations towards institutions, authorities and policies, as well as about the reasons behind the little, or discreet, criticism of authorities. This is complemented with excerpts from interviews and responses to survey open questions.

1.1. Perceptions of institutional roles

In response to survey questions about the effectiveness of political institutions, students show a high level of trust, although this varies significantly from one institution to another. The Federal Supreme Council and the Council of Ministers were considered effective by more 70% of respondents, but this percentage dropped to 56% for the FNC. The latter is possibly related to the general lack of knowledge about this institution and its functions. Moreover, around 30% said they did not know whether these were effective or not, again reflecting the weak knowledge of the system (see figure 58).

³⁸⁸ Open question 23.

³⁸⁹ Open question 23.

³⁹⁰ Interviews by e-mail for MA dissertation (July and August 2009).

Figure 58: Effectiveness of FSC, FNC and Council of Ministers

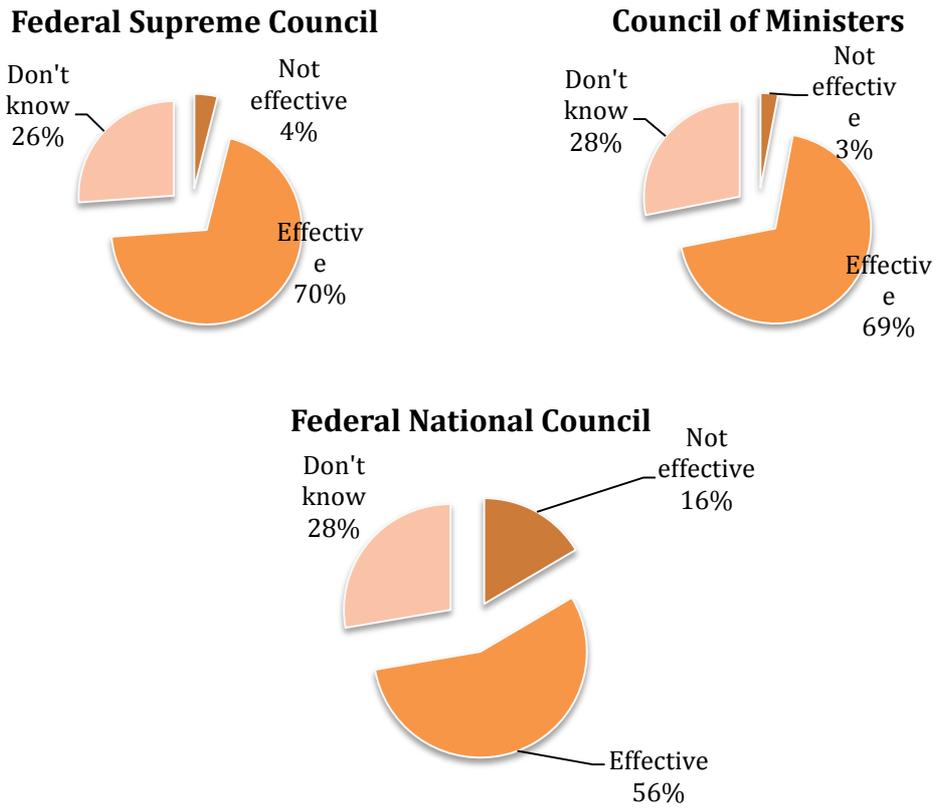
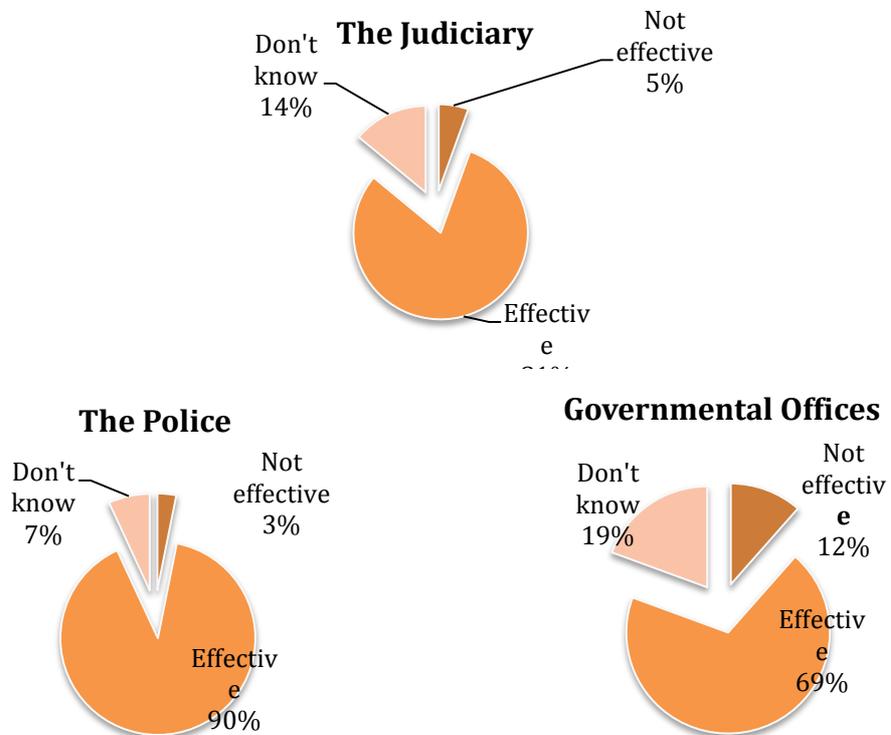


Figure 59: Effectiveness of Judiciary, Police and Governmental offices



When questioned about trust, data showed high levels in the judiciary and the police (81% and 90% respectively), but lower levels for governmental offices (69%) (see figure 59)., Females had greater belief in the role of the FNC than males (80% and 69% respectively; p-value .019), reflecting the larger support of women towards political participation. Secondly, although trust was high towards the judiciary, students from the different emirates had varying opinions (p-value .033) (see figures 60 and 61).

Figure 60: Effectiveness of FNC

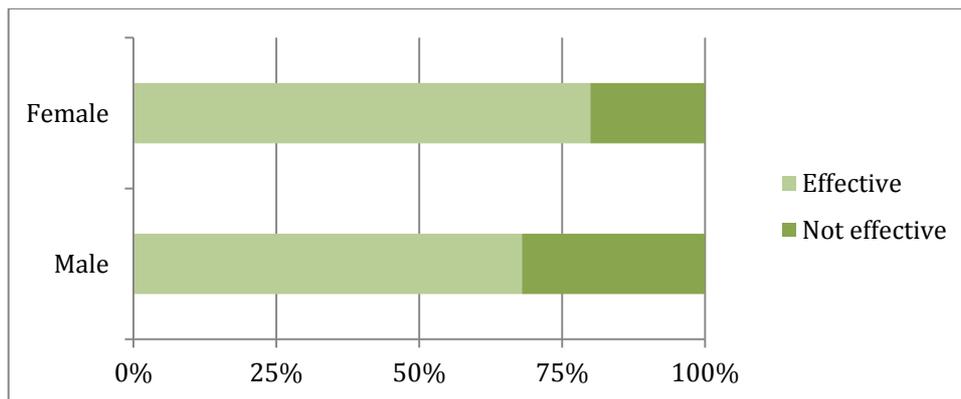
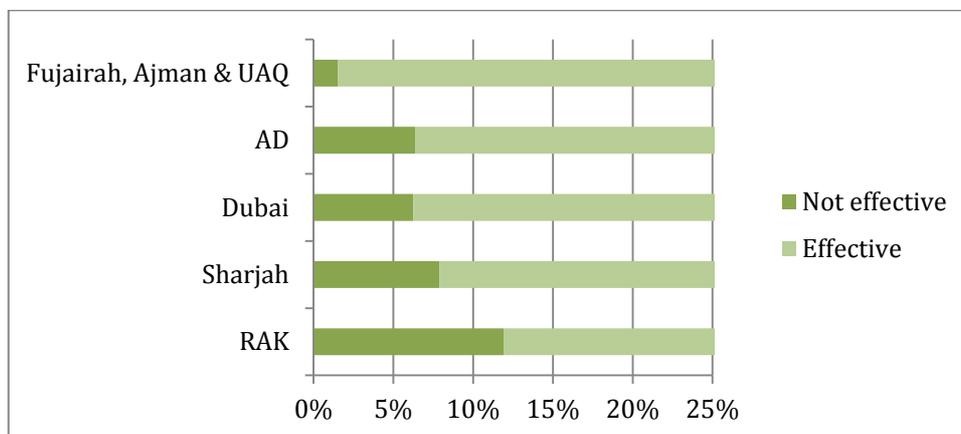


Figure 61: Effectiveness of the Judiciary by emirate



Again RAK and Sharjah (followed by Dubai) stood out from the other emirates and, in this case, had higher distrust in the judiciary (see figure 61 and table 36). This might be due to the obscure circumstances of detentions of individuals from those emirates by the State Security Apparatus at the time the questionnaire was distributed (see chapter 3), or the preferential treatment that Emiratis feel AD and Dubai citizens are afforded.³⁹¹ In desire for the

³⁹¹ Personal interview with Emirati professor, Dubai (April, 2013)

improvement of the judiciary, a student wrote: “Fairness should be the distinctive quality of the judicial departments of our state. If we don't find fairness in those places, where can we find it?”³⁹²

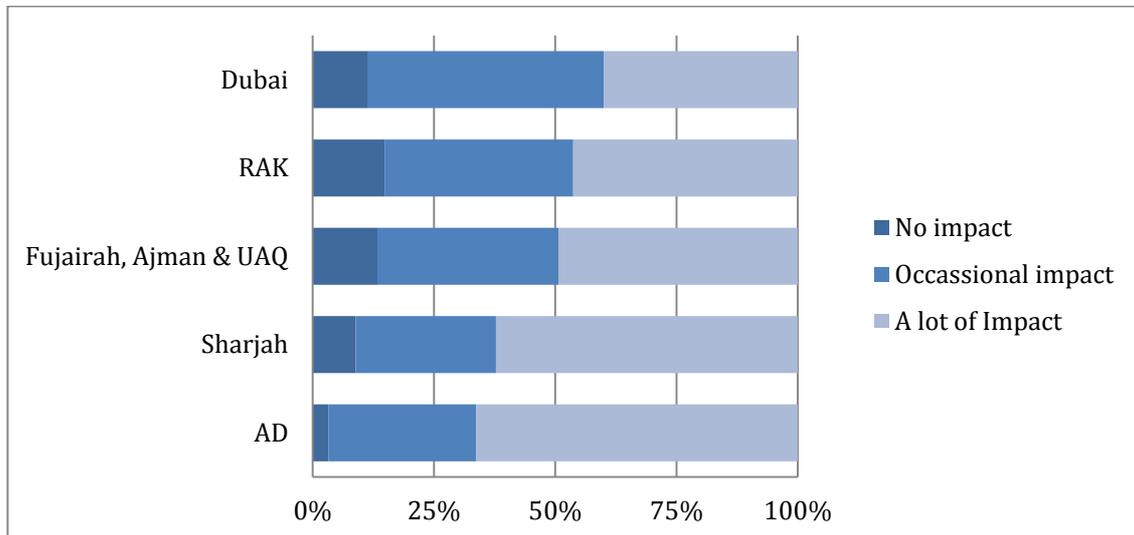
Table 36: Effectiveness of the Judiciary by emirate

	RAK	Sharjah	Dubai	AD	Fujairah, Ajman & UAQ
Not effective	8.8%	6.5%	6.1%	5.6%	1.3%
Effective	64.9%	76.1%	90.9%	82.7%	82.1%
Don't know	26.3%	17.4%	3.0%	11.7%	16.7%

1.2. Impact of Federal policies

The opinions of students about the impact that federal policies have in their hometowns revealed significant differences between emirates at the 5% level (p-value .001), and between social classes at the 10% level (p-value .054). Here again we see how students from RAK are more critical of federal policies, followed by the other northern emirates and Dubai, while Abu Dhabi citizens hold the federal efforts in the highest esteem (see figure 63).

Figure 62: Impact of Federal policies in your Emirate

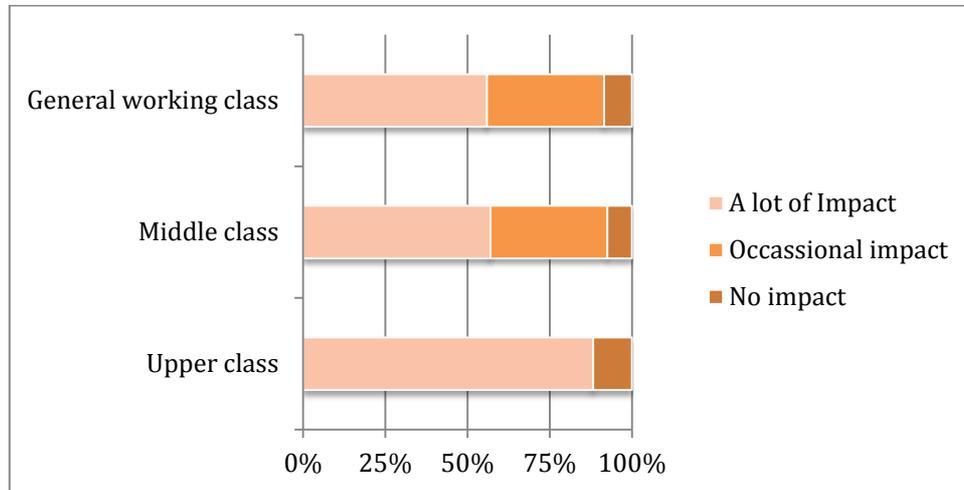


Moreover, the students who described themselves as higher class were actually unhappier about the impact that federal policies have in their emirates. This, again, supports the hypothesis that there might be unexpected outcomes of

³⁹² Open question 24.

rentierism, for a significant percentage of those benefiting most from the system were the most critical of it (see figure 64).

Figure 63: Impact of Federal policies in your Emirate



1.3. Unconditional support?

Overall, students were supportive of their rulers. However, only around 50% thought that they should support government policies even if they disagreed, which reflects that support is not unconditional in the eyes of all young educated nationals, and that many thought they should instead follow their own principles. The following is an example of a student who supports the rulers but would like to see some changes in the system:

“We cannot deny we should have changes to meet global standards, but most of the people here (I’m not gonna say all of them) are satisfied with the UAE government, with the UAE political system here, but I cannot deny there should be some changes. For example, the freedom of speech and the participation.”³⁹³

Data again revealed that support for authorities and governmental policies is high. 90% of respondents agreed that the government of the UAE “does all it can to provide citizens with all necessary services and infrastructure” (see figure 64). Importantly, however, less than 50% thought “people should always support the decisions of the government if they disagree with their decisions”, thus showing independent and critical thinking and a significant level self-expression aspirations (see figure 65).

³⁹³ Personal interviews, Al-Ain (January 2012).

Figure 64: Government does all it can

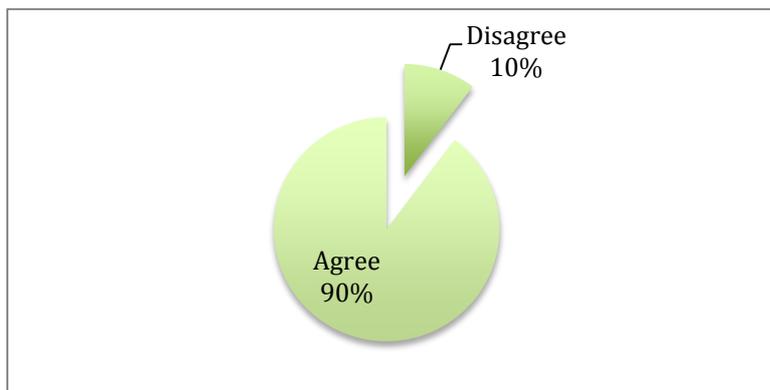
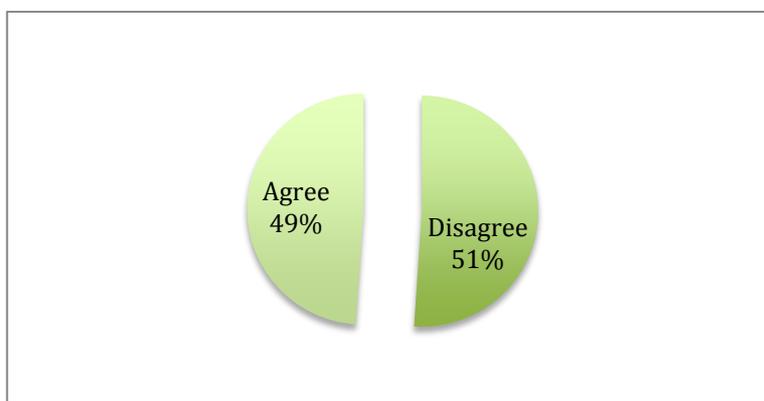


Figure 65: Support government decisions even if disagree



Cross tabulations and chi square tests of these questions showed important differences between groups. Difference between male and female respondents is significant at the 5% level, with percentages of 61% and 46% respectively, agreeing that they should support the authorities (p-value .009). This means that there is enough statistical evidence to state that men's support was more unconditional than that of women and that men tended to show more support the government even if they disagreed with its policies (see figure 66).

Moreover, although not statistically significant, a trend was observed that respondents with the lowest degree of support for authorities were students of Law and Humanities and Social Sciences degrees (almost 60%), followed by students of Business and Economics (over 50%), and then by students of Engineering (50%) (see figure 67). Bearing in mind that students of these disciplines had higher rates of interest and knowledge of politics, we can conclude that there is a relationship between these variables: the higher the

knowledge and interest in politics, the lower the unconditional support for governmental policies. Accordingly, a tendency was observed that those interested were more critical of governmental policies.

Figure 66: Support government decisions even if disagree

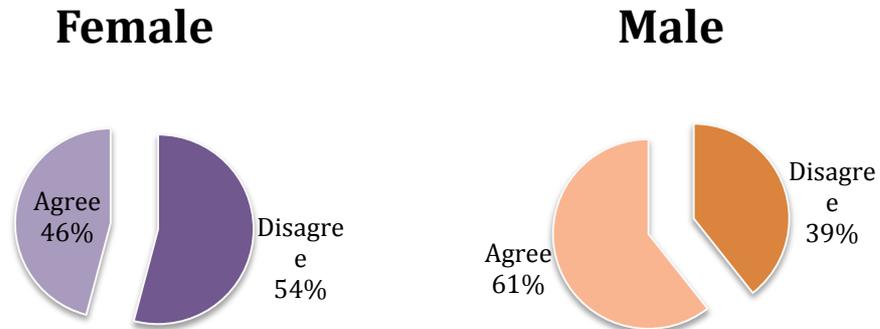
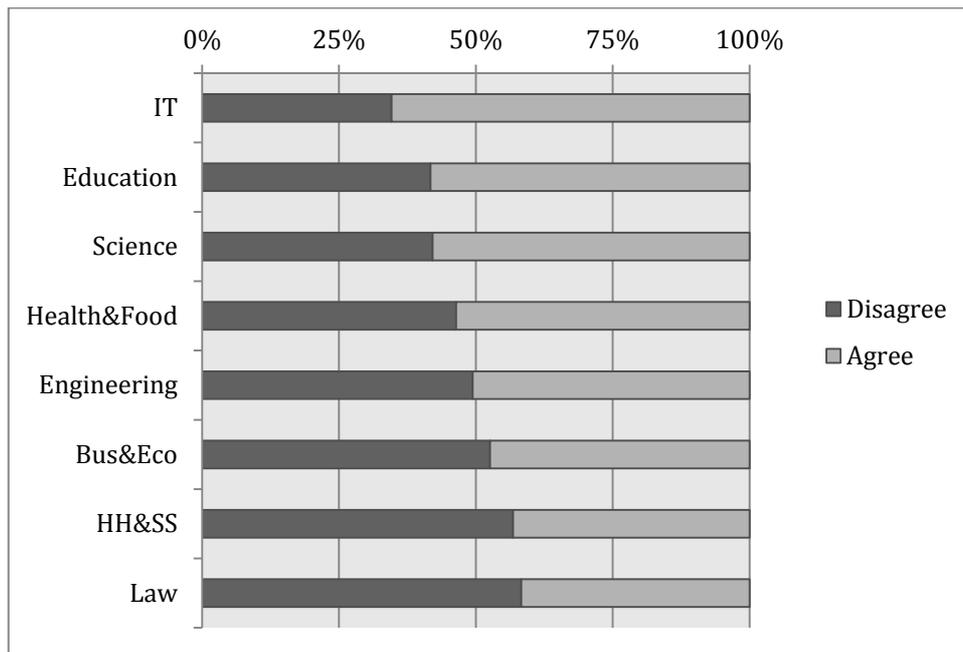
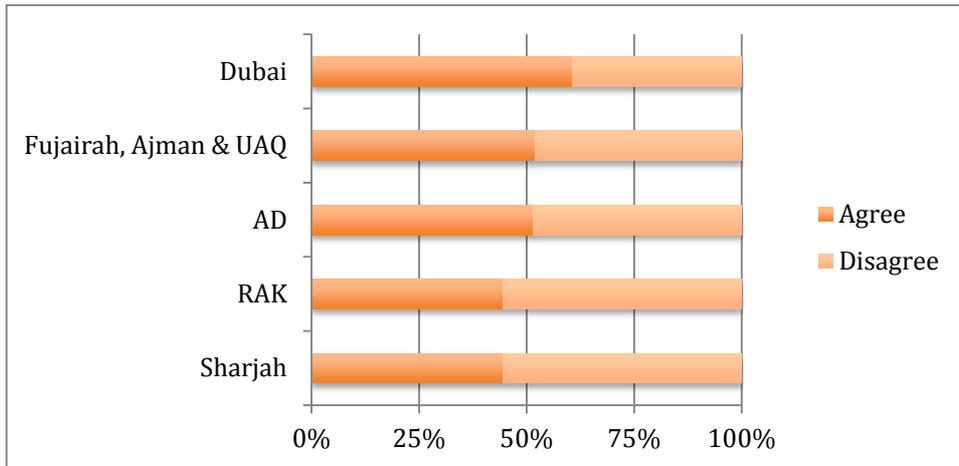


Figure 67: Support government decisions even if disagree



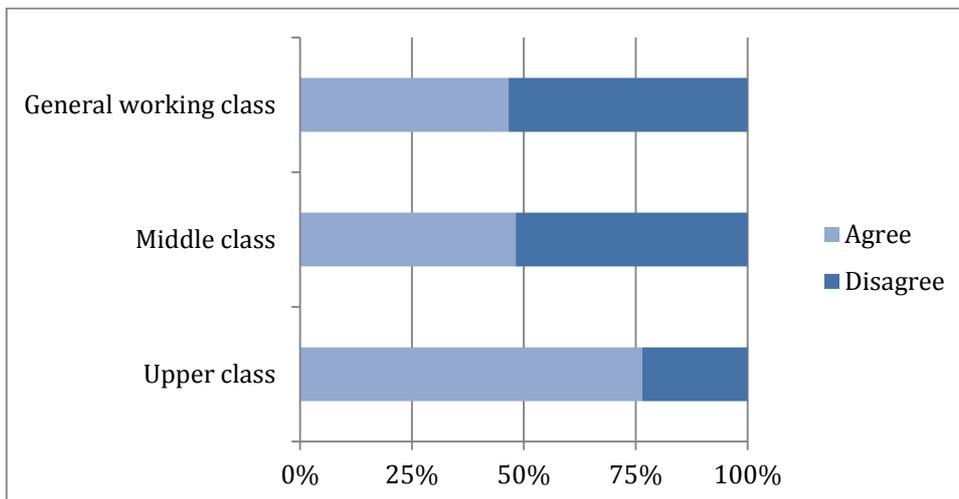
The differences of opinion of respondents from the different the emirates of origin for support of government decisions when disagreeing with them were not large enough to be statistically significant. However, results reflect a tendency that those more supportive come from the emirate of Dubai (60%), and that the least supportive respondents were from Sharjah and RAK (45%), also coinciding with the analysis of previous questions that showed students from these emirates were the most critical of the system (see figure 68).

Figure 68: Support government decisions even if disagree



Moreover, a significant difference between the upper class (over 75% agreed) and the middle and lower classes (less than 50%) allows confirmation that the support of the former is more unconditional than that of the latter (p-value .064) (see figure 69). The compliance of the higher class with governmental decisions, even if they disagree with these, fits to some extent the rentier state theory model that explains the political quiescence in return for public services, subsidies, public jobs and no taxation.

Figure 69: Support government decisions even if disagree



Although appearing to contradict the results and indicating that interest and knowledge are higher among the upper class (see chapter 4), - thereby disproving the hypothesis that in rentier states other factors are more significant than the rentier nature of the individual- the hierarchical structure of society can explain this discrepancy. First, it is understandable that if those who self-

selected themselves as upper class form part of the Emirati oligarchy, tribal aristocracy, or even the well-connected national bourgeoisie, they would not be interested in political change, even if they have interest in and are knowledgeable of politics. On the other hand, the relatively low support among the middle and working classes, who occupy less privileged positions in society but nonetheless enjoy extensive welfare, is related to the enhancement of political awareness among these sectors through the exposure of reshaped agents of political socialisation (see chapters 2 and 4). Education, access to media and Internet, and general increased interconnection with the world seem to play an important role in the adoption of 'self-expression' and 'post-materialistic' (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005) attitudes such as the lack of support for decision they do not agree with. This confirms the third hypothesis of this dissertation to some extent, as it ultimately shows an important development of critical thinking among Emirati citizens.

2. Support for political reform and elections

Another objective of the survey was to evaluate the feelings of students towards political reform and the electoral processes of 2006 and 2011. Responses showed a large agreement with the government's official 'gradual approach' (90%). There were no significant differences between any of the variables, thus indicating that this perception is very similar among all societal groups. In this regard, many respondents shared the opinion that:

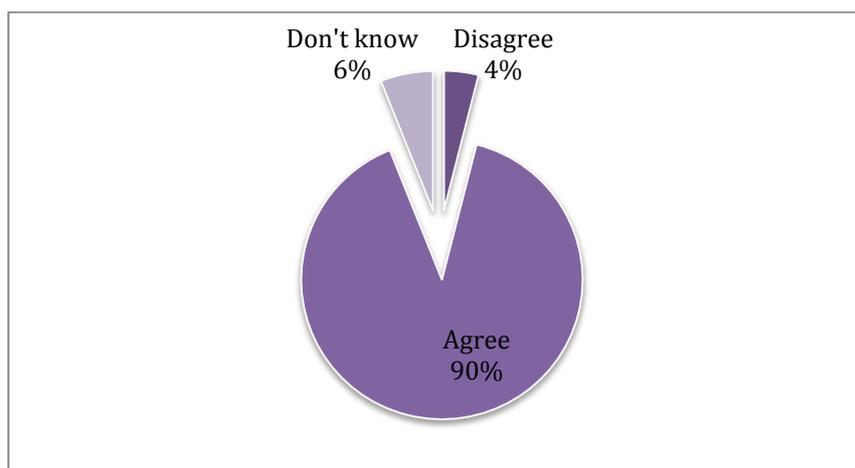
"Society is still not fully developed and faces many social problems that need to be tackled before going into politics. So better social reforms should take place first before political;"³⁹⁴

"Changes are needed if the people want them, but if you make a survey you will see people are satisfied... At universal scale we don't have autonomy, or freedom of speech, but people are content with what they have. Change should come from the people, but not from the outside."³⁹⁵

³⁹⁴ Personal interviews, Al-Ain (February 2012).

³⁹⁵ Personal interviews, Al-Ain (March 2012).

Figure 70: Political reform step by step



On the other hand, some students expressed their hopes “that the government of the UAE will listen to young people because they are the leaders of the future. I hope it will give them freedom, so that they will be able to stay away from useless hypocrisy and praise;”³⁹⁶ and asked for “the creation of an efficient regulatory system in order to check each employee, director or minister, the development of the health sector and non-discrimination in the family relationship between citizens.”³⁹⁷ Further, some suggested solutions to tackle socio-political problems: “a website related to social, political and labour issues faced by the country and its citizens should be created, with the aim of solving these problems.”³⁹⁸ In a middle position one student related to one of the ruling families said:

“In some emirates there are people trying to make changes, it depends in the emirate itself, but there are only a few. Lots of people from Sharjah and RAK, even from the royal family, for example, who are trying... Even, I am not going to mention them, but you can see them on Twitter and Facebook what they are writing, what they are calling for. There are some people within the same families who oppose political change, for the safety of the country...you know, like in everything you have two sides: opponents and supporters. And those members of royal families are meeting now with rulers from AD and Dubai, to discuss all these issues, about participation, as well as about improving the services in the northern emirates.”³⁹⁹

³⁹⁶ Open question 24.

³⁹⁷ Open question 23.

³⁹⁸ Open question 23.

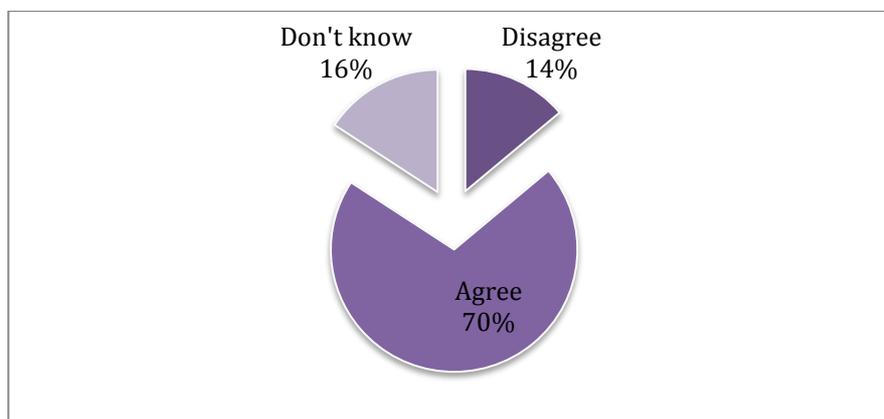
³⁹⁹ Personal interview with UAEU student, Al-Ain (March 2012).

Thus, although quantitative data did not offer significant differences between groups to establish links between variables, qualitative data shows there are various approaches to the issue even among those in agreement with gradual reform. Moreover, some of the opinions above reflect that alternative factors to blind confidence in rulers are also important. The following sections look into some of these.

2.1. Fear toward political liberalisation

While agreeing with the governmental 'gradual approach', 70% agreed that competition and disagreement among people with different political ideas is not a bad thing for the UAE, thus expressing their support for the creation of spaces for debate between people with different opinions (see figure 71).

Figure 71: Competition and Disagreement not bad



This was the opinion of many students interviewed in 2011-2012, but since the post-Arab spring crackdown on political activists and the reform of Internet law in the UAE, many people who supported and called for reform have stepped back or changed their discourse. This, they explain, happens either because they fear the possible consequences, or because they agree with the authorities that the open expression of political ideas other than those of the establishment may, at least at the moment, generate security threats to the state.⁴⁰⁰ The above, together with the fact that the fear of Islamism and neighbouring Iran has been strengthened after the Arab Spring upheavals, has convinced many pro-reform citizens that it is necessary to wait a number of years before participation and the rule of law is properly established in the country, even if is preferable for it to happen sooner.

⁴⁰⁰ Personal interviews with students, academics, and activists. Dubai, Al-Ain, Dubai (March-April 2013).

Even at the time the survey was distributed, some students articulated fear to express their desire for reform and fear of the possible consequences of having expressed their opinions through the survey. One student confessed to be “afraid [he had] been very frank and this could cause [him] some problems;”⁴⁰¹ and another thought “the ideal society is free of oppression and fear of expressing an opinion.”⁴⁰²

The unsuccessful political participation experiences of neighbouring states such as Kuwait and Bahrain, and the other Arab countries, as well as the alternative Islamic Republic of Iran, also play a role in acceptance of the status quo.⁴⁰³ Embedded in a lack of understanding of the Arab Spring people’s claims, and the concept of democracy itself, some reproduce the ‘national security’ official discourse as follows:

“Authorities should take [detain] all those tempted to act against state security to destabilize it.”⁴⁰⁴

“The Arab countries are undergoing a difficult phase, a phase of great changes and many around us are attempting to destabilize the security of our nation. But thankfully God has given us unity, love for the country and our president. For this reason we face anyone who thinks to harm our state and our government. Nowadays Emirates are united and we protect them from the enemies.”⁴⁰⁵

2.2. The electoral dilemma

In chapter 3 explained that the UAE was the last of the GGC states to hold elections, and that only a small number of citizens (~6,000) were invited to participate in 2006, and this was increased to 130,000 in 2011, generating conflicting feelings among some of those excluded from the processes. It is discussed, moreover, that participation rates were low and awareness of these processes is not widespread among the UAEU students (see also chapter 4).

⁴⁰¹ Open question 24.

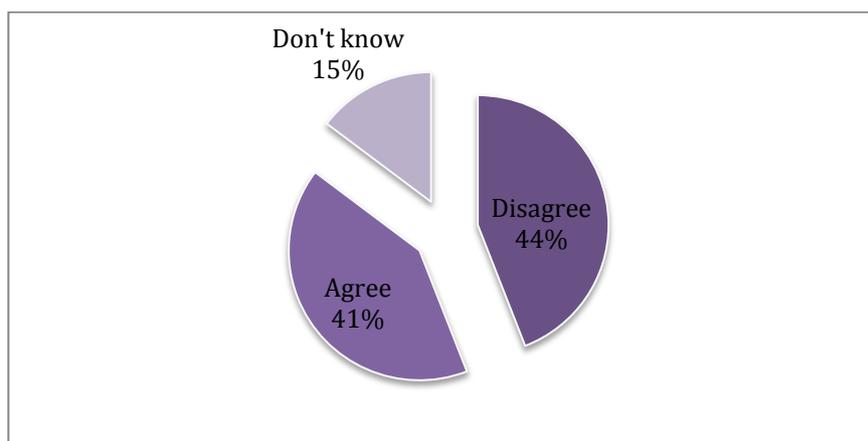
⁴⁰² Open question 22.

⁴⁰³ Personal interviews with students, academics, and activists. Dubai, Al-Ain, Dubai (March-April 2013).

⁴⁰⁴ Open question 24.

⁴⁰⁵ Open question 24.

Figure 72: Elections are useless



Perhaps for this reason, the issue of elections was a more controversial topic. Over 40% of students believed these were useless, and 15% said they did not know. Thus approximately 50% of those with an opinion on this issue believed elections to be useless, and the other 50% disagreed with this (see figure 72 and table 37). One student said: “FNC doesn’t have the full empowerment, they only make suggestions to the government, not like the US Congress or other councils around the world...I think there should be more participation and more representation of all groups; with full power to make laws;”⁴⁰⁶ while another one said:

“I think it’s worthless...I don’t want to be so pessimistic, but the thing [the 2011 electoral process] was so glamorous. You could see the photos of the candidates around, but after all happened, and after the nominations, nothing happened. [It was] a pointless campaign. I think it is the fault of the system and of the candidates. You cannot give this responsibility to someone who is not used to this, they don’t know. I’m waiting to see a project with their names on it, but until now I don’t see anything.”⁴⁰⁷

Table 37: Elections are useless

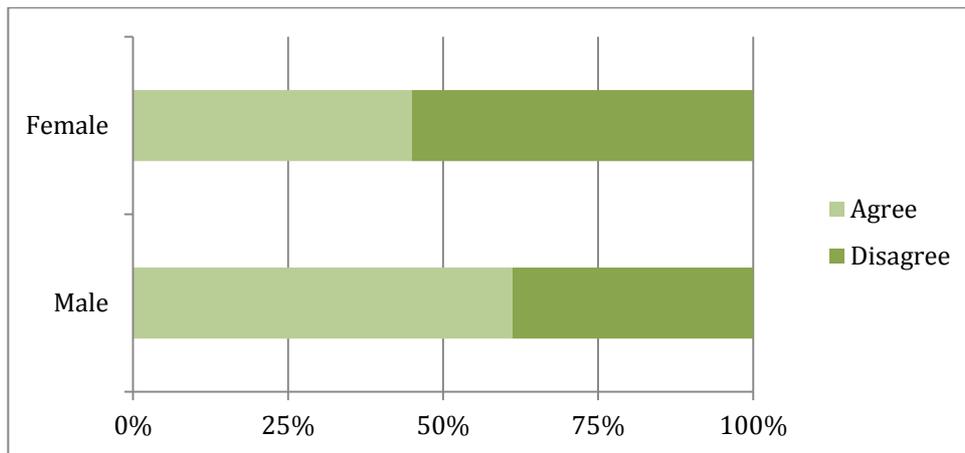
	HuSS	Edu	Law	Bus & Eco	IT	Science	Engineering
Disagree	55.8%	40.0%	57.1%	32.9%	29.6%	37.5%	40.0%
Agree	32.7%	32.0%	31.4%	53.9%	55.6%	47.5%	41.1%
Don't know	11.6%	28.0%	11.4%	13.2%	14.8%	15.0%	18.9%

⁴⁰⁶Personal interview, Al-Ain (March 2012).

⁴⁰⁷Personal interview, Al-Ain (March 2012).

Opinions of the use of elections were quite similar among the different colleges. However, data showed that students of Law and HH&SS were more supportive of elections, followed by students of Education and Engineering, coinciding with the previous results that identify these groups as more supportive of political reform. Women were significantly more supportive of elections than males (p-value .028), which corresponds with the higher trust they also expressed to have in the FNC and with them being more critical of governmental policies if in disagreement (see figure 73).

Figure 73: Elections are useless



In addition, although 41% of respondents agreed that elections were useless, almost 50% (or over 50% if we remove those who said they did not know) agreed the FNC members should be selected through elections, and women again showed more support of political reform with over 50% of them agreeing (p-value .003) (see figures 74 and 75).

Figure 74: FNC members selected through elections

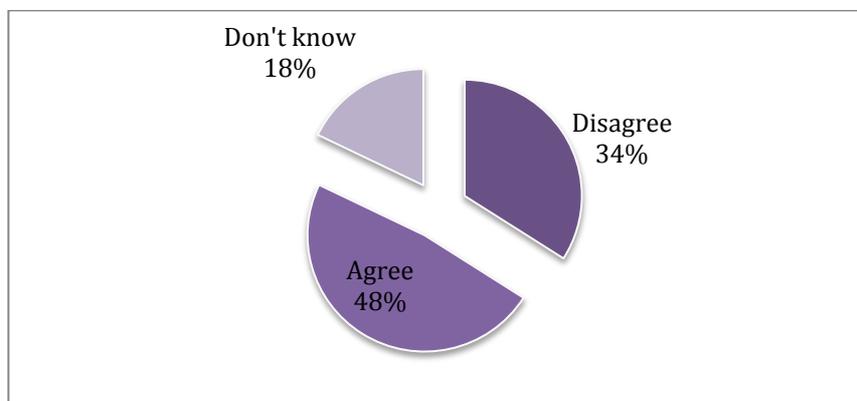
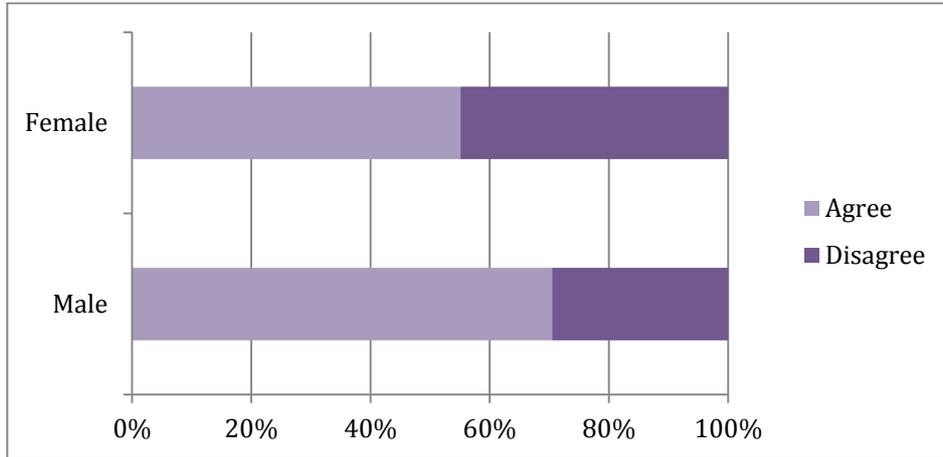


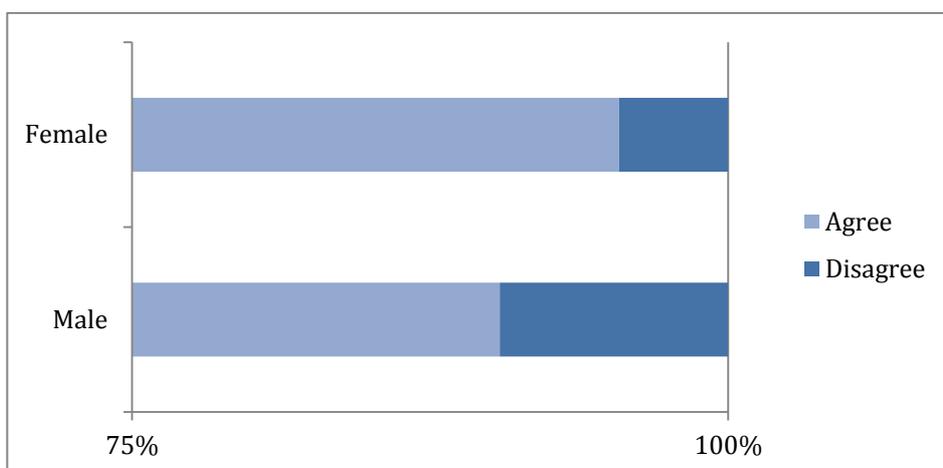
Figure 75: FNC members selected through elections



Moreover, over 90% of respondents agreed that selection of candidates should be based on their qualification and experience, and a significant p-value (.063) indicates that women are more supportive of candidates only being allowed to run for office on that basis (see figure 76). In this regard one student wrote:

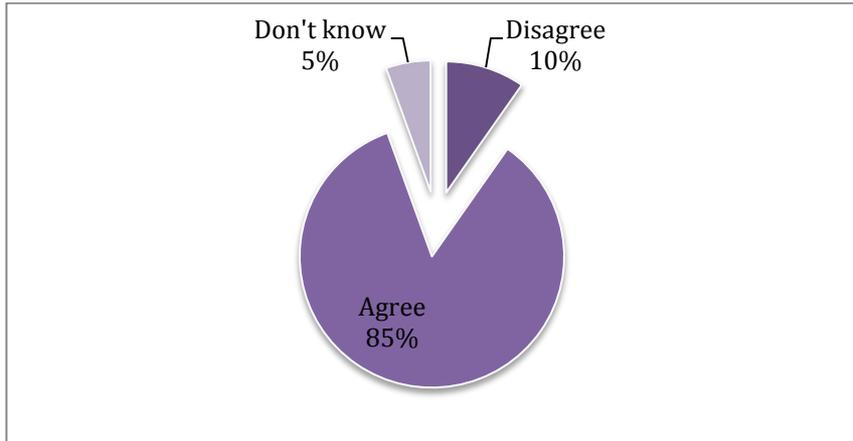
*“In which fields are elections used? Few people participated, isn't that true? I participated in the elections, but honestly I didn't know what had happened before. I mean, there are people who don't care about elections, about the reason why there are university lectures on the importance of elections or concerning the candidacies, I'd like to mention that in some of the seven Emirates candidates weren't nominated with expertise and high educational qualification, but they were nominated by means of the wasta or, more correctly, as we say colloquially 'only through the tribes' spells”.*⁴⁰⁸

Figure 76: Selection of candidates by qualifications and experience



⁴⁰⁸ Open question 24.

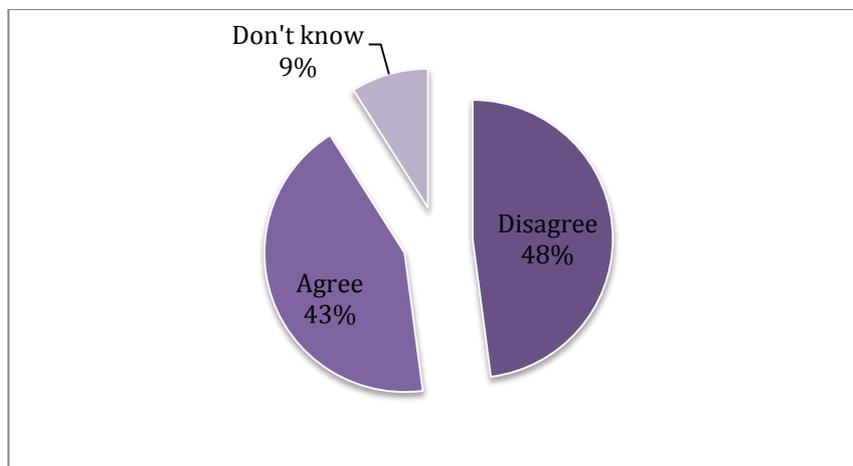
Figure 77: All Emirati citizens should have the right to vote



Considering the enfranchisement of Emirati citizens, data clearly showed that there is wide consensus that all Emirati citizens should have the right to vote with no difference, and the lack of significant differences between groups strengthens this conclusion. One student related to one of the ruling families thought rulers:

“should open the elections for the whole nation of the UAE. The voice of the people would be listened by the government; the government would be aware of the people’s needs. [Currently] for some it is reached, for others no. Once you give the opportunity to the whole nation of the UAE, then all having a representative of their voice, all will be the same... You know, for some people it is more difficult to make themselves heard because they don’t have the channels, or the relatives or friends, people they know to get them there.”⁴⁰⁹

Figure 78: Non Emiratis should have the right to vote



⁴⁰⁹ Personal interview, Al-Ain (March 2012).

The data revealed the opposite opinion of respondents when it questioned about giving the right to vote to non-Emiratis. The majority disagree with this (see figure 78). Moreover, a significant difference (p-value of .002) between the group that more strongly opposes giving the right to vote to non-Emiratis (Law with 77.8%), and the one that more supports this idea (Education with 69.2%) was evident and (see table 38).

Table 38: Non Emiratis should have the right to vote

	HuSS	Education	Law	Bus & Eco	IT	Science	Engineering
Disagree	41.5%	19.2%	77.8%	50.7%	63.0%	45.0%	51.1%
Agree	51.0%	69.2%	19.4%	38.7%	29.6%	40.0%	36.7%
Don't know	7.5%	11.5%	2.8%	10.7%	7.4%	15.0%	12.2%

Finally, some students expressed their confusion about the electoral processes and said they chose not to vote for that reason. Among those who understood the process better, some were optimistic that it was a step forward, but others expressed their disappointment with the process and saw it as a pointless exercise. One hoped there would be:

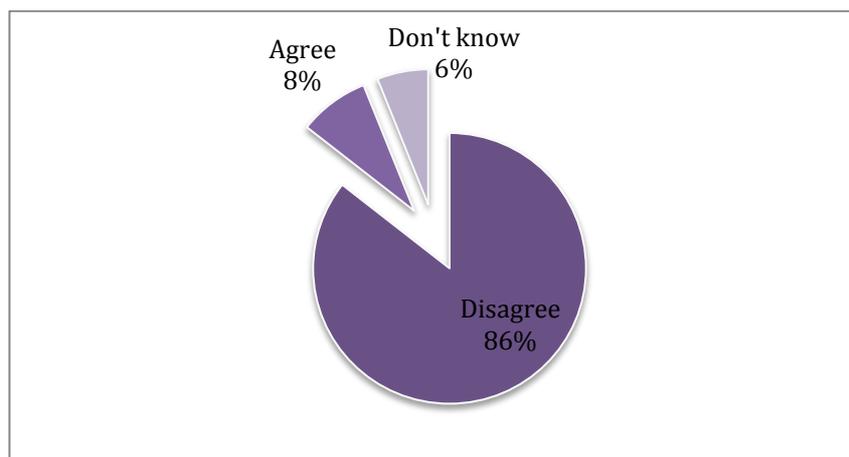
“greater awareness among people during the next elections, that can be reached by explaining the techniques and ways of voting and so on... I also hope that the candidates will be nominated and voted on the basis of their experience and qualifications and not because of their status and high standard of living as it happened in the last elections... If the candidate wins the vote because of his education and experience he will be an effective member of the Council, with important opinions. On the contrary, if the candidate wins because of his position, using money to get people to vote for him, and if he wants to be elected only for social prestige... he won't be an effective member of the Council, he will be worthless... I hope, therefore, that measures will be taken to prevent this kind of manipulation in the next elections. I hope that people with experience will be nominated, not wealthy people who don't even know how the others live... they don't need any help... This is just a personal opinion.”⁴¹⁰

⁴¹⁰ Open question 24: Please, add any further thoughts that came to your mind while completing this questionnaire.

2.3. Enough of tribal politics?

Formal structures are still not widely used to raise concerns to the rulers, while informal means of communicating with the authorities are more common. Tribal politics have been in place in the Gulf region for centuries. However, as the population grows, these are proving to be ineffective in allowing every citizen to raise their voice. Moreover, as explained in chapter 2, the way in which tribal politics has been practiced in the UAE (and the Gulf) has changed over time due to several factors, including the meddling of Great Britain in the region and the discovery of oil. Thus, the tribal politics of today bears little resemblance to the way in which things were done in the past. Nonetheless, the rulers still emphasize the tribal legitimacy of their power and have the support of the main tribes living in the UAE, but many (and especially the younger generations) find there little reason to maintain old structures, partially without providing the spaces for citizens to communicate their aspirations to the rulers.

Figure 79: Choose candidates belonging to your tribe



Surprisingly, 86% of respondents disagreed that people should vote for candidates belonging to their tribes, thus showing a high detachment from the reinvented tradition of blind (and unquestioning) loyalty to the ruling sheikhs (see graph 5.22). This could possibly be due to the fact that (as explained in chapter 2) the majority of the national population does not have tribal origins, and therefore a feeling of discrimination by these practices. Moreover, although not statistically significant, the fact that the middle and working classes seemed to agree more with this statement also speaks in favour of this argument (see figure 79). Logically, this is related to *wasta*, which was perceived as a major

problem of the Emirati society by 96% of students who agreed that political reform should include its elimination as a priority (see figure 80 and chapter 4).

Figure 80: Choose candidates belonging to your tribe by class

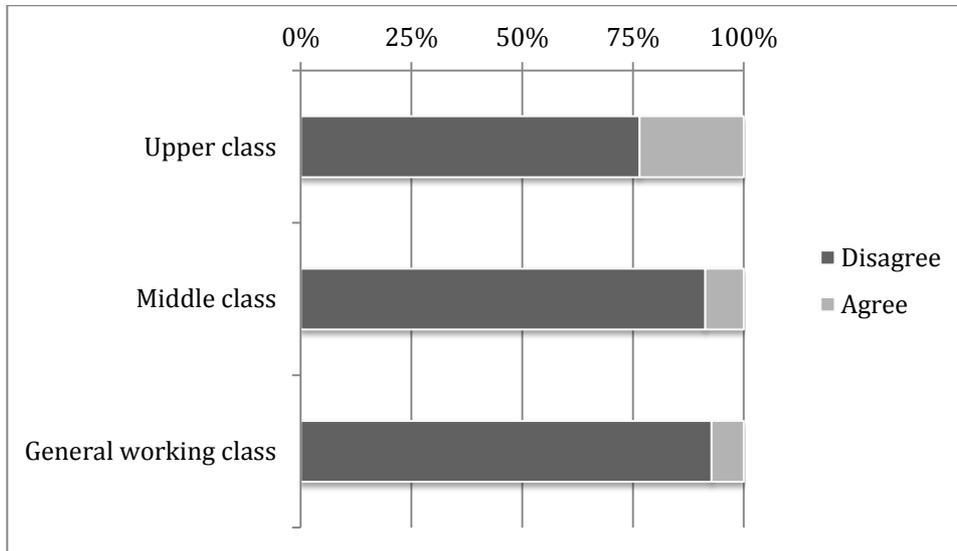
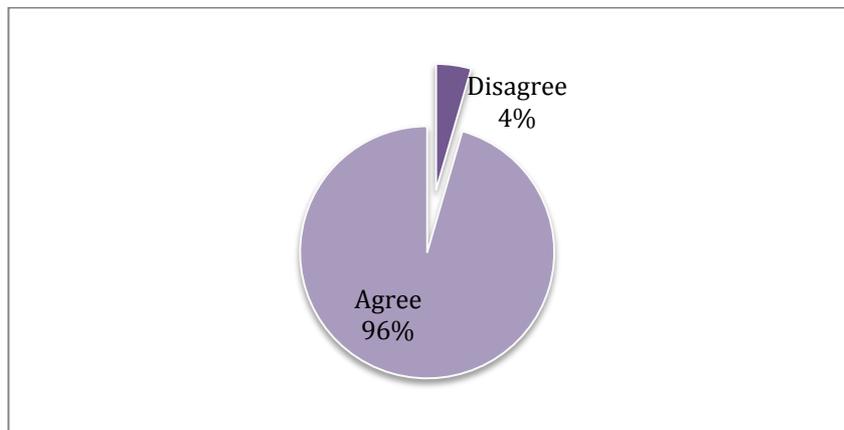


Figure 81: Elimination of wasta as a priority of reform



Some students wished “to become socially and politically equal, not divided by the names of the tribes, and to enjoy individual rights on the basis of consciousness and qualifications;”⁴¹¹ thought “the government should treat equally every member of the society in terms of rights, without using the tribal system to discriminate against individuals in the economic, political and social

⁴¹¹ Open question 23.

sphere;”⁴¹² and wanted “*wasta* principles, racism and tribalism” to be abolished.⁴¹³

These overwhelming positions against tribal politics and *wasta* practices reflect a high degree of disapproval for how things are actually run. However, respondents seem not to relate these ways of doing things with the rulers, instead deeming them as ‘traditional’ ways of doing things and should be altered. In fact, some of the previous results have also shown that most students do not identify the rulers as responsible for wrongdoings, but rather as the ‘visionaries’ who try to make things work; and there is a tendency to blame the people around them (ministers, FNC members, foreign forces, etc.). It might be that the general low knowledge of how the system works impedes young Emiratis from seeing that the Supreme Council, not the Prime Minister or the President, are in charge of most of what happens in the UAE. Some know very well that they can only indirectly criticise policies or decision taken by authorities. As such, one student hoped:

*“the rulers of the Emirates, especially the Council of Ministers, gave qualified young people their right to get a job. Unfortunately, we see that the ministers are always the same, what happens is simply a switching of chairs.”*⁴¹⁴

Conclusion

Affective and evaluative orientations analysed in this chapter are overall positive, while cognitive orientations are in general low. The frequency of feelings and the evaluation orientations towards the political system is generally positive, thus approaching ‘allegiance’. Trust in ruling authorities is high -90% of respondents believe government does all it can to provide citizens with all necessary services and infrastructure. Belief in the effectiveness of institutions is also high in general -less than 5% find them inefficient, except for the FNC (16%) and the Governmental offices (12%).

However, there are signs of ‘alienation’ among students with aspirations for political participation. Around 50% think they should not support the government if they disagree with their policies. Further, support for government policies

⁴¹² Open question 23.

⁴¹³ Open question 23.

⁴¹⁴ Open question 23.

when disagreeing with it was lowest among students of law and HHSS (students of business and economics), and engineering. Moreover, male and self-selected upper class students' support is more unconditional than that of female and the rest of the population.

Finally, although agreement with the gradual implementation of reform is widespread (90%), elections are perceived to be useless by only 40% of respondents. Female students have a better opinion of the FNC, and significant p-values show that they are more supportive of elections, and of reforming the FNC so that all of its members are selected through electoral processes. This clearly reflects adherence to 'self-expression' values among important sectors of the population studied, which are seen in political culture research as conducive to popular demand for democracy (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). However, despite socio-economic development being associated with the fading of 'existential threats' and the emergence of 'post-materialistic' views, at different stages it might be compatible with certain forms of authoritarianism.

Regarding the variables determining differences in political orientations in this country, a global look at the obtained p-values allows to claim that the sex and social class are the most significant, followed by emirate of origin (see table 39).

Table 39: Significant p-values by variable

	Sex	Social class	Emirate of origin	College	Income	Media
- .05	9	2	6	4	1	2
+ .05	3	8	2	0	0	0
Total	12	10	8	4	1	2

In the light of these conclusions, and following Almond and Verba's classification (1963), the political culture of UAEU students can be described as an '*aspiring participant culture*' taking into account that three types of individuals were identified within the population:

- A majority of 'subjects' (showing low frequency of orientations towards politics in general and 'allegiance' towards the system);

- A sector which approaches 'parochialism' (with high frequency of orientations towards the system and its output aspects, but low orientations towards input objects and the self as active participant);
- And a growing 'participant' group (with high frequency of orientations towards politics in general).

Results of chapters 4 and 5 reveal important variances within an apparent homogeneous population, and support the hypothesis that the rentier nature of a state does not necessarily determine its peoples' lack of political interest, but can actually contribute to it through the exposure of people to agents involved in the process of political socialisation. Moreover, these chapters also support the hypothesis that there is high adherence to self-expression values within relevant sectors of the population studied. However, this seems to be limited by a sense of insecurity and fear of the possible consequences of change (or of demanding change), which also explains the self-censoring attitudes and, therefore, the lack of open political debate in the UAE.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

While there has been little inclusion by Comparative Politics scientists of the MENA countries in cross-national qualitative and quantitative research, in the studies that have been conducted the tendency has been toward considering this region as embedded in cultural and/or religious exceptionalism. The GCC states, among MENA area studies, have had a similar fate. They have often been treated as a 'rentier' exception within the Arab and Islamic exception. Moreover, despite the propensity to propose more integrative theoretical perspectives for the study of these countries during the 1990s, in practice, most studies have paid more attention to 'structures' rather than 'agency'.

During the 2000s most MENA area specialists focused on the analysis of authoritarian structures and elites, as well as on the economic factors behind these. As such, important societal dynamics had passed unnoticed, explaining why the Arab Spring events took a number of scholars by surprise. Studies of the 'rentier' Gulf states highlighted the necessity to take into account factors other than redistribution of external rent to explain regime stability (as done by the RST, Chapter 1). This has mainly translated into the examination of elite autonomy through the perspective of historical and International Relations paradigms, without considering the perceptions of ordinary citizens, and still assuming that rentierism keeps Gulf nationals uninterested in politics.

In an attempt to address these shortcomings, and adding to the debate around the continued significance and scope of RST, this dissertation suggests that an important and overlooked dimension in the study of state-society relations in authoritarian rentier states, like the UAE, is citizens' political culture. However, a more holistic version of the political culture perspective is adopted. This takes into account all six elements suggested by Kamrava's refined version of the state-in-society approach: state, society, political culture, political economy, extra-national influences and forces and random occurrences (Kamrava, 2008). Additionally, this theoretical framework is complemented with qualitative and quantitative analyses of data collected through extensive fieldwork in the UAE. This case study demonstrates that rentierism does not solely explain the socio-political developments taking place in the UAE. Many factors have shaped state-society relations since pre-British times, including, but not limited to, the rentier nature of the state. Chapter 2 discussed the processes of state and

society formation, and the evolution of the relationship between the ruling elites and the population diachronically. It evaluated the impact that rentierism has had at the local level, by also taking into account regional and global dynamics. Therefore, this has led to several conclusions. First, that the multicultural and globalised facets of Emirati society are not specifically a post-oil outcome, as is generally assumed, and that the movement of people across the Gulf was dependant on political, economic, and environmental circumstances over the centuries. Second, that British role in the region since the beginning of the nineteenth century was a turning point in the UAE's recent history, and was determinant in establishing the power of current ruling families, as well as in the adoption of 'rentier' state-society relations—later enhanced by oil revenues. Third, the 'rentier' nature of the newly created state provides citizens, not only with material benefits, but with access to education, ICTs, travelling, etc. ('agents of political socialisation'), which inevitably affect political orientations.

These factors, in addition to massive population growth and integration into the global capitalist economic system, determined the establishment of an authoritarian political system in 1971, and the configuration of a very hierarchical society in which each group (whether ethnic or income related) generally plays specific roles, and occupies specific employment areas. The resulting socio-economic and political system is legitimatised through a reconstructed official discourse that places emphasis on the tribal past of the ruling families and closely related tribes, ignoring other identities that form Emirati society. Consequently, several social problems have emerged, including citizenship, national identity, and demographic imbalance. While these issues awake the feelings of 'alienation' among the less privileged and the more educated social classes, they serve to justify the status quo under the guise of preserving 'national security'. As such, the chapter supports the main hypothesis of this dissertation—that the 'rentier' nature of a state does not necessarily determine political apathy, but instead can actually empower people politically through the exposure to reshaped 'agents of political socialisation'.

The historical approach to UAE political activism presented here (Chapter 3) also reinforces this hypothesis as it demonstrates that aspirations for political participation have been present in the country since at least the early twentieth century, including under rentier structures. By exploring the current political

viewpoints of Emiratis, it also demonstrates that there is no uniform political culture in the UAE, but different perspectives regarding politics and political liberalisation, hence filling a gap in literature on the UAE. Furthermore, the different strategies adopted by the ruling elites to combat political upheaval at different times, substantiate the second hypothesis which proposes that government performance, and decision to initiate or avoid political reform, is mainly driven by domestic pressure. Both in pre and post-oil periods, rulers have resorted to a combination of limited power-sharing, redistributive, coercive and co-optative measures in response to demands for political change, with the main objective being the preservation of control over the resources of power that guarantee their position. In recent years, these responses included the announcement of a top-down liberalisation project, including the conduct of partial elections for a consultative body, but which was halted since unfolding of the Arab Spring. These events resulted in a shift toward a security oriented approach that has translated into numerous detentions, reportedly unfair trials of political activists, and the passing of laws that further restrict civil and human rights.

Within this background, the analysis and measurement of cognitive, affective and evaluative political orientations of Emirati UAEU students (Chapters 4 and 5) reveal that there is high interest but weak knowledge of politics; high concern over the population imbalance as well as about *wasta* and 'tribalism'; general high support for the rulers and the system as a whole; but concern over the lack of freedoms; and caution in demands for political reform. The general perception of the majority of Western academics—that there is a lack of political interest and awareness among Emirati citizens—is probably due to the fact these topics are seldom discussed in public. However, qualitative and quantitative research shows that there is greater awareness than appears on the surface, and that politically aware Emiratis do not speak openly about political issues for reasons related to the authoritarian nature of the regime (i.e. fear of domestic consequences and regional instability). Confirming hypothesis 3—that there is adherence to 'post-materialistic' and 'self-expression' (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005) values among important sectors of the Emirati educated youth—, these chapters conclude that UAEU students have high affective and evaluative orientations towards the political system, while having low cognitive orientations. Hence,

their political culture is described as an *'aspiring participant culture'* taking into account the three types of individuals identified within the population studied: a majority of 'subjects' (low frequency of orientations towards politics in general and 'allegiance' towards the system); a sector of society which approaches 'parochialism' (high frequency towards the system and its output aspects, but low towards input objects and the self as active participant); and an emergent and growing 'participant' group (with high frequency towards politics in general).

This research coincides, to some extent, with Christopher Davidson's (2012) argument that the UAE (and the Gulf) ruling elites do not enjoy uncontested legitimacy. It also concurs with Abdulkhaleq Abdulla's (2010) assertion that the region is currently at a turning point of its history (the "Gulf moment") and that the "forces of change" should not be underestimated. However, this dissertation does not foresee the "collapse" of these regimes (Davidson, 2012) nor the emergent Gulf middle class being able to imminently foster a "democratic future" (Abdulla, 2010: 15) any time soon. When examining the congruence between political culture and structures, and following Almond and Verba's framework (1963), this study demonstrates that the majority of 'subject' individuals fairly matches the increasingly centralised authoritarian political structure.

Therefore, the UAE political system is not expected to destabilise or undergo significant reforms in the short term. However, the change from a simpler pattern of political culture to a more complex one is evident, in which important sectors of the educated Emirati youth depict 'post-materialistic' critical positions and 'self-expression' values, as well as 'alienation' attitudes towards authoritarian rule in general, and specific social problems and policies. Accordingly, and since the ruling elites cannot rely solely on redistribution of rents to appease criticism or calls for reform, this dissertation concludes that the twenty-first century UAE 'aspiring participant' political culture has introduced some incongruence into the state-society relationship, initially facilitating the implementation of cosmetic political reform, but ultimately generating a feeling of threat among regime elites and, therefore, resulting in a repressive response. For better or worse, significant political change seems unlikely and stable state-society relations appear to be the most plausible scenario in the UAE presently and for the coming years.

Annexes

Annex 1: IJMES Transliteration Chart

Transliteration of Consonants

Letter Name	Arabic				English
	Isolated	Final	Medial	Initial	
'Alif	ا	ا	ا	ا	' / ā
Bā'	ب	ب	ب	ب	b
Tā'	ت	ت	ت	ت	t
Tha'	ث	ث	ث	ث	th
Jīm	ج	ج	ج	ج	j
Hā'	ح	ح	ح	ح	ḥ
Khā'	خ	خ	خ	خ	kh
Dāl	د	د	د	د	d
Dhāl	ذ	ذ	ذ	ذ	dh
Rā'	ر	ر	ر	ر	r
Zā'	ز	ز	ز	ز	z
Sīn	س	س	س	س	s
Shīn	ش	ش	ش	ش	sh
Ṣād	ص	ص	ص	ص	ṣ
Ḍād	ض	ض	ض	ض	ḍ
Ṭā'	ط	ط	ط	ط	ṭ
Ẓā'	ظ	ظ	ظ	ظ	ẓ
'Ayn	ع	ع	ع	ع	'
Ghayn	غ	غ	غ	غ	gh
Fā'	ف	ف	ف	ف	f
Qāf	ق	ق	ق	ق	q
Kāf	ك	ك	ك	ك	k
Lām	ل	ل	ل	ل	l
Mīm	م	م	م	م	m
Nūn	ن	ن	ن	ن	n
Hā'	ه	ه	ه	ه	h
Wāw	و	و	-	-	w
Yā'	ي	ي	ي	ي	y
Hamzah	ء	أ/أؤ/أى	أ/أؤ/أى	أ/أؤ/أى	'

Survey for Emirati Undergraduate Students (NOT 1st Year)

DETAILS OF THE PROJECT

This research looks into the domestic politics of the UAE and especially into the political culture of Emirati citizens. The aim of this research project is to evaluate the importance of political culture as a factor in political change. The nature of this research is only academic and the results obtained will be part of the researcher's PhD thesis and related academic publications only.

Know that I have the approval of your university to send you this questionnaire. Completed questionnaires will be held in confidence. They will only be used for academic purposes and third parties will not be allowed access to them (except as may be required by the law). Data will be held and used on an anonymous basis, but I will refer to the group of which you are a member (university students).

أقوم بإجراء بحث حول النظام السياسي لدولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة. الهدف الرئيسي من بحثي هو قياس سلوك الشباب الإماراتي اتجاه النظام السياسي للدولة. يهدف البحث إلى تقييم أهمية الثقافة السياسية كعامل في التغيير السياسي. طبيعة هذا البحث هي أكاديمية فقط ولن يتم نشر النتائج في أطروحة الدكتوراه أو منشورات أكاديمية أخرى. النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها ستكون جزءاً من أطروحة الدكتوراه ودراسات أكاديمية ذات صلة.

Consent

By answering to this survey you are voluntarily agreeing to participate and to the use of your responses for the purposes specified above.

Contact Details

For further information about the research or the questionnaire, please contact me at:

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If you have concerns/questions about the research you would like to discuss with someone else at the University, please contact my supervisors:

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نشكركم جزئياً على المشاركة والتعاون في هذا البحث.

Survey for Emirati Undergraduate Students (NOT 1st Year)

1. Please, rank the following problems being faced today by the UAE, being 1 the most important

من فضلك، رتب المشكلات التالية التي تواجهها دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة الآن بحسب أهميتها. رقم 1 لأكثر أهمية

Unemployment of nationals / البطالة بين المواطنين	<input type="radio"/>					
Non-National overpopulation (immigrants) / الزيادة السكانية لغير المواطنين (المهاجرين) في دولة الإمارات	<input type="radio"/>					
Economic disparities between emirates / التفاوت الاقتصادي بين الإمارات	<input type="radio"/>					
The outcomes of waste usage (like benefits for specific people) / استخدام النفايات (مثل فوائدها لبعض الأشخاص)	<input type="radio"/>					
The relation between federal and local governments / العلاقة بين الحكومات الاتحادية والإمارات	<input type="radio"/>					
The unequal rights of Emirati men and women / عدم تساوي حقوق الرجال والنساء في الإمارات	<input type="radio"/>					
Other you may want to mention / ملاحظة (أرشادات) أخرى غير متكررة سابقاً	<input type="text"/>					

Survey for Emirati Undergraduate Students (NOT 1st Year)

2. Which do you think is the best way to proceed if you need to search for help to obtain administrative or social services from the government (i.e. access to specific university degree, scholarship or internship; getting loans for properties or business; etc.)? ما هي أفضل وسيلة لإيجادها عند الحاجة للبحث عن مساعدة للحصول على قروض للطلاب أو الإخصاء الحكومية؟ (مثال: الحصول على منحة جامعية محددة أو الحصول على قروض للطلاب أو الإخصاء الخ)

- مكتب مؤسسة محلية / اتحادية / حكومية
- منظمات لا ربحي إلى الربح أو المنظمات الخيرية / الخيرية / الجمعيات الطلابية
- Tribal leader (going personally to the Majlis of a Sheikh) / شيخ القبيلة (تذهب شخصياً إلى مجلس شيخ القبيلة) / شيخ القبيلة (تذهب شخصياً إلى مجلس شيخ القبيلة)
- Through friends or relatives / من خلال الأصدقاء أو أحد أفراد عائلتي / من خلال الأصدقاء أو أحد أفراد عائلتي

3. Indicate your degree of agreement with the following sentence: "Preserving the security of the country is the most crucial duty of the government, even if it needs to curtail some human rights". إلى أي مدى توافق على الجملة: الأمانة المحظوظة على أمن الدولة هو من أهم واجبات الحكومة، حتى لو احتاج الأمر إلى الحد من بعض حقوق الإنسان

- لا أوافق بشدة / I strongly disagree
- لا أوافق / I disagree
- أوافق / I agree
- أوافق بشدة / I strongly agree

Survey for Emirati Undergraduate Students (NOT 1st Year)

4. The UAE Constitution states that the Federation aims at "going ahead towards a fully-fledged representative democratic regime in an Islamic and Arab community free of fear and anxiety". Keeping this in mind, please indicate your degree of agreement with the following:

تستورد دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة بنص على أن الاتحاد يهدف إلى "المضي قدماً نحو نظام يحررنا من الخوف والقلق". عند أخذ ذلك بعين الاعتبار، يرجى الإجابة على مدى اتفاقك مع ما يلي من جملة عربي إسلامي متحرر من الخوف والقلق.

- I strongly disagree / لا أوافق بشدة
- I disagree / لا أوافق
- I agree / أوافق
- I strongly agree / أوافق بشدة
- I don't know / لا أعرف

Political reform should be introduced step by step instead of all at once / الإصلاح السياسي يجب أن يكون تدريجياً بدلاً من التغيير فجأة وحاداً

Political reform should take into account traditional and modern mechanisms of rule, like shura and elections / الإصلاح السياسي يجب أن يؤخذ بعين الاعتبار الآليات التقليدية والحديثة للحكم، مثل الشورى والتشاور

Competition and disagreement among people with different political ideas is not a bad thing for our country / اختلاف وجهات النظر السياسية لأفكار بيننا ليس شيئاً سيئاً

Political reform should include the elimination of corruption and "wasta" as a priority / الإصلاح السياسي يجب أن يركز على القضاء على الفساد والواسطة

Human rights respect and individual / احترام حقوق الإنسان

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liberties are guaranteed for all inhabitants in the UAE, including foreign workers / قلوب / دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة تضمن احترام حقوق الإنسان و الحريات الفردية لكل سكان الدولة بما فيهم العمالة الأجنبية

5. What kind of impact do you think Federal policies have in your Emirate?

- من وجهة نظرك، ما هو تأثير السياسات الاتحادية على إمارتك؟
- Federal government makes no difference in the development of my emirate / إمارتي الحكومية لا تصدية لأصن، جدا في تطوير / الحكومة الاتحادية لا تصدية لأصن، جدا في تطوير
 - Federal government only invests time and efforts to improve conditions in my Emirate from time to time / الحكومة الاتحادية تستثمر وقتها وجهدها فقط في بعض الأحيان لتحسين الأوضاع في إمارتي
 - Federal government does a lot to improve the living conditions in my Emirate / تصنع الظروف المعيشية في إماراتي

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ما مدى اتفاقك مع العبارات التالية عن الانتخابات

strongly disagree / لا اوافق بشدة | disagree / لا اوافق | agree / اوافق | strongly agree / اوافق بشدة

حرف | حرف

Elections are useless, we should have tribal traditional mechanisms of rule / الانتخابات ليس لشيء، أو داغ من الأضن أن نذكر ليد بطرق تقليدية

Selection of candidates should be based on their qualifications and experience / المرشحين للانتخابات يجب أن يستند على مؤهلاتهم وخبراتهم

It is important to choose the candidates belonging to your tribe, even if you don't share their way of thinking / من المهم اختيار المرشحين الذين ينتمون إلى قبيلتك، حتى إذا كنت لا تشارك طريقة تفكيرهم

All FNC members should be selected through the elections / يجب أن يتم اختيار جميع أعضاء المجلس الوطني الاتحادي عن طريق الانتخابات

All Emirati citizens should have the right to vote with no differences / يجب أن يتمتع كل إماراتيين بحق التصويت وبنون أي تمييز

Non Emiratis should have the right to vote and be candidates if

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they were born in the UAE or have lived here for a long period
 يجب ان يتبع / من هنا لفترة طويلة
 الشهرة / المصروفات
 والارواح في حجة بوقت بعد
 دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة
 أو في حجة بوقت في المرات
 لمدة طويلة

7. Please, select the answers regarding how effective you think the following institutions are

من فضلك، حدد إجابتك فيما يتعلق بكيفية فعالية المؤسسات التالية

	Not effective at all	Not effective	Effective	Very effective	I don't know
Federal Supreme Council / المجلس الأعلى / المحكمة الاتحادية	<input type="radio"/>				
Federal National Council / المجلس الوطني / المجلس الاتحادي	<input type="radio"/>				
Council of Ministers / مجلس وزراء الاتحاد	<input type="radio"/>				
The Police / الشرطة	<input type="radio"/>				
The Judiciary - Courts / القضاة / المحاكم	<input type="radio"/>				
Governmental offices / المكاتب الحكومية	<input type="radio"/>				

8. Indicate your degree of agreement with the following statement: "The government does all it can to provide citizens with all necessary services and infrastructure?"

عبر عن مدى اتفاقك مع الجملة التالية: "إن الحكومة تفعل كل ما بوسعها للمواطنين لتقديم جميع الخدمات اللازمة وتوفير البنية التحتية"

- لا اوافق بشدة / I strongly disagree
- لا اوافق / I disagree
- اوافق / I agree
- اوافق بشدة / I strongly agree

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9. Please, rank the following personalities, being 1 the one you most admire

رتب هذه الشخصيات حسب مدى إعجابك بها

	1	2	3	4
Sport players or artists (singers, actors...) / الرياضيون أو الفنانين	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Politicians (rulers, ministers...) / سياسيون	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professionals (engineers, physicians, professors...) / المهنيون وعلماء	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Businessmen / رجال الأعمال	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Indicate your degree of agreement with the following statement: "People should always support the decisions of their government even if they disagree with their decisions".

عبر عن مدى اتفاقك مع الجملة التالية: "على المواطنين دعم كل القرارات الحكومية حتى ولو كانت لا تروق لهم (موافقهم) وإرائهم"

- لا اوافق بشدة / I strongly disagree
- لا اوافق / I disagree
- اوافق / I agree
- اوافق بشدة / I strongly agree

11. Thinking of the following countries, their political systems, and their living conditions choose the one you would prefer to live in if you had to move from the UAE

أي دولة من الدول التالية بالنظر إلى نظمها السياسية ونظرفها المعيشية تفضل العيش فيها إذا اضطرت إلى ترك الإمارات العربية المتحدة؟

- المملكة العربية السعودية / Saudi Arabia
- إيطاليا / Italy
- مصر / Egypt
- الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية / United States of America
- ماليزيا / Malaysia
- الكويت / Kuwait

Please, say why you choose that country or mention another country if you wish / اذكر بلد آخر، في كلت تريد

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12. The following questions are about the principles that should determine the behavior and situation of women in this society. For each of the statements listed below, please indicate your degree of agreement

الأسئلة التالية تخص المبادئ التي تحدد سلوك ووضعية المرأة في المجتمع الإماراتي. عبر عن مدى اتفاقك مع الجمل التالية
 لا أوافق / لا I disagree / لا
 أوافق بشدة I strongly agree / أوافق بشدة

A woman can be a president or prime minister of a Muslim country / للمرأة المسلمة أن تكون رئيسة أو رئيسة وزراء في بلد مسلم	<input type="radio"/>				
A married woman can work outside the home if she wishes / للمرأة المتزوجة الحق في العمل (خارج البيت) إذا كانت تود هي رغبها	<input type="radio"/>				
On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do / الرجال أكثر حكمة من / النساء في القيادة السياسية بشكل عام	<input type="radio"/>				
UAE laws guarantee women's freedom of choice and movement / قوانين دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة تضمن حرية المرأة في الاختيار والتنقل	<input type="radio"/>				

أي شيء آخر تريد أن نتكلم / Any other comments?

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

PLEASE, IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU DON'T SEARCH FOR -OR ASK OTHERS- ABOUT THE RESPONSES FOR THE QUESTIONS IN THIS PART. FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH I NEED YOU TO TELL ME EXACTLY WHAT YOU KNOW AND WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW. THANK YOU! :D

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13. How interested are you in politics and since when?

ما مدى اهتمامك بالسياسة ومنذ متى

- I have never been interested in politics / لم أقم بالسياسة أبدا /
- I only became interested in 2011 / 2014 / أصبحت مهتما فقط في عام 2011 / 2014
- I became interested during my university studies / أصبحت مهتما أثناء دراستي الجامعية /
- I have been interested in politics since I can remember / لقد كنت مهتما بالسياسة منذ صغري /

أخرى / Other

14. What about talking about local, national and/or regional political and governmental affairs to other people? / ماذا عن مناقشة السياسات المحلية والإقليمية والشؤون الحكومية مع أشخاص آخرين؟

- I don't feel free to discuss politics with anyone / لا أتفعل هذا الأمر مع أحد /
- I don't feel free to discuss it with many people / أجد في مناقشة هذا الأمر مع عدد كبير من الأشخاص /
- I feel free to discuss it only with a few people / أتفعل الأمر فقط مع بعض الأشخاص /
- I feel free to discuss it with anyone / أنا لا أتفعل في مناقشة هذا الأمر مع أي شخص /

Survey for Emirati Undergraduate Students (NOT 1st Year)

15. Rank how determinant are the following factors in your knowledge of politics, being 1 the most determinant

رتب العوامل التالية حسب مدى تأثيرها في معرفتك بالسياسة ورتب 1 الأكثر أهمية

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Watching the news through satellite channels like Al-Jazeera or Al-Arabiya / مشاهدة قناة الأخبار من خلال القنوات الفضائية مثل قناة الجزيرة أو قناة العربية	<input type="radio"/>						
What I was taught at school and university / ما تعلمت في المدارس والجامعات	<input type="radio"/>						
The foreign movies and series I watch on TV / أفلام ومسلسلات الأجنبية التي أراها على شاشة التلفزيون	<input type="radio"/>						
Being in contact with people from different cultural backgrounds (international students, expat professors, maids ...) / الاتصال بأمم (...) من خلفيات ثقافية مختلفة (طلاب أجانب و إماراتية ...) لوافدين خدمت	<input type="radio"/>						
Awareness seminars organized by the government to explain issues regarding UAE politics / ندوات التوعية التي تنظمها الحكومة لتدريج القضايا المتعلقة بعمليات دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة	<input type="radio"/>						
The discussions I have with my friends / المناقشات مع صديقي	<input type="radio"/>						
The discussions I have at home with my parents and relatives / المناقشات مع والدي و الأقارب في المنزل	<input type="radio"/>						

Survey for Emirati Undergraduate Students (NOT 1st Year)

خبري / Other

16. Could you please select the most powerful UAE Federal institution?

هل يمكنك أن تحدد المؤسسة الاتحادية الأقوى سياسياً في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة؟

PLEASE, DON'T ASK OTHERS

- مجلس الوزراء / Cabinet / Council of Ministers
 المجلس الوطني / (FNC) / Federal National Council
 لا أعرف / Don't know
 لا أعرف / Don't know
 المجلس الأعلى للاتحاد / Federal Supreme Council

17. Can you name the following UAE government officials?

هل يمكنك ذكر أسماء المسؤولين التاليين؟

PLEASE, DON'T ASK OTHERS

من فضلك، لا تطلب من الآخرين

- رئيس دولة - President
 رئيس - Prime Minister
 نوزراء
 نائب - Vice-president
 تربيون
 Minister of Education
 وزير التربية والتعليم -
 Minister of Foreign Trade
 وزير التجارة - الخارجية

18. Do you know when FNC elections took place for the first time in the UAE?

متى أجريت أول انتخابات للمجلس الوطني الاتحادي في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة؟

PLEASE, DON'T ASK OTHERS

من فضلك، لا تطلب من الآخرين

- 1971
 2006
 2011
 لا أعرف / Don't know

19. When did 2011 FNC elections take place in the UAE?

متى وقعت انتخابات المجلس الوطني الاتحادي في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة عام 2011؟

PLEASE, DON'T ASK OTHERS

من فضلك، لا تطلب من الآخرين

- يناير / January
 يونيو / June
 أبريل / April
 سبتمبر / September
 لا أعرف / Don't know

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20. Do you know what the powers of FNC are?

هل تعرف ما هي صلاحيات المجلس الوطني الاتحادي?
PLEASE, DON'T ASK OTHERS

من فضلك، لا تطلب من الآخرين

- Legislative - قنصلية - استشارية / تشريعية - قنصلية - تنفيذية
- Consultative - استشارية / تشريعية - قنصلية - تنفيذية
- Don't know - لا أعرف

21. Please, answer with yes or no to the following questions
من فضلك، اكتب "نعم" أو "لا" بجواب على الأسئلة التالية

Yes No I don't know

Were you among the people who were granted the right to vote? هل كنت بين الناس / الذين منحوا حق التصويت؟	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did you vote? هل صوتت؟	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did any of the members of your family vote? هل أفراد عائلتك صوتوا؟	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did any of the members of your family run as candidates? هل أفراد عائلتك تنسب في انتخابات؟	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did you attend any seminar / lecture about the elections? هل حضرت / أي ندوة / محاضرة عن انتخابات؟	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did you attend any candidate campaign event? هل حضرت / أي ندوة / محاضرة لمرشح؟	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did you volunteer at the voting centers? هل تطوعت في أحد مراكز التصويت؟	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Survey for Emirati Undergraduate Students (NOT 1st Year)

22. How would you describe your ideal society?

كيف تصف مجتمعتك المثالي؟

23. What would you like the UAE rulers to change regarding the current social and political situation of your country?

ماذا تريد من حكام دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة أن يغيروا إذا أخذت الوضع السياسي والاجتماعي بعين الاعتبار؟

24. Please, add any further thoughts that came to your mind while completing this questionnaire:

من فضلك، اكتب هنا إضافاتك وأفكارك التي أتت إلى ذهنك خلال ملء هذا الاستبيان

Demographics / الديموغرافية

* 25. Age / العمر

--

26. Gender / الجنس

- Male / ذكر Female / أنثى

27. Marital status / الحالة الاجتماعية

- Single - never married / أعزب / أعزبت لم يسبق الزواج
- Married / متزوج / متزوجة
- Separated or Divorced / متلاق / متلاقين

28. At which university are you studying?

--

--

29. What are you studying?

--

--

Survey for Emirati Undergraduate Students (NOT 1st Year)

30. Where would you like to work after your studies? / أين تريد أن تعمل بعد التخرج من الجامعة؟

- At a governmental position / العمل في منصب حكومي
 Private company related to my studies / شركة خاصة مرتبطة بتخصصي
 Start my own business / بدء شركة خاصة بي
 Other / أخرى

31. In which city or village were you born? / في أي مدينة أو قرية ولدت فيها؟

32. In which city or village do you currently live with your family? / في أي مدينة أو قرية تسكن مع عائلتك حالياً؟

33. Within the Emirati citizens (not compared to expats), what would you say is the social status of your family? / ما هي حالة الإجماعية بالنسبة لعائلي الإماراتيين (وليس الوافدين)؟

- Upper class / الطبقة العليا
 Middle class / الطبقة الوسطى
 General working class / الطبقة العامة

34. What is approximately the total monthly income of your household? / ما هو الدخل الشهري للتعائلة تقريبا؟

35. What is the monthly allowance you receive for your expenses? / ما هو مصروفك الشهري لالتكاليف؟

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36. Please say how often you do the following activities / من فضلكم حدد مدى تكرارك للأنشطة التالية

الأنشطة / Activities	كل يوم / Every day	مرة في الأسبوع / Once a week	أحياناً / Occasionally	نادر / Never
Read newspapers (paper or online) / قراءة الصحف (الورقية و الإلكترونية)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watch the news on TV / مشاهدة الأخبار في التلفاز	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use Facebook / استخدام فيس بوك	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use Twitter / استخدام تويتر	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hang out with your friends / من خلال الأصدقاء	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

37. On which channels do you watch the news? / من خلال أي قنوات شاهد الأخبار؟

- الجزيرة باللغة العربية / الجزيرة
 العربية / العربية
 أبو ظبي / Abu Dhabi
 Al-Jazeera English / الجزيرة

Other/s / أخرى

38. Which newspaper/s do you read? / أي جريدة/صحيفة تقرأها؟

- الاتحاد / الإمارات اليوم
 الخليج / Khaleej Times
 البيان / Gulf News
 The National

Other/s / أخرى

39. Do you have a smartphone? (Blackberry, iPhone, etc.) / هل لديك هاتف ذكي؟

- YES / نعم
 NO / لا

40. Do you have internet connection in your mobile? / هل لديك خدمة الانترنت في هاتفك المتحرك؟

- YES / نعم
 NO / لا

Annex 3: Certificates of Ethical Approvals



**COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

Amory Building
Rennes Drive
Exeter UK EX4 4RJ
www.exeter.ac.uk/socialsciences

CERTIFICATE OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

Academic Unit: Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies

Title of Project: Political culture and Reform in the UAE

Name(s)/Title of Project Research Team Member(s): Marta Saldana Martin

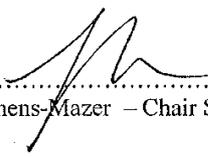
Project Contact Point: ms383@exeter.ac.uk

This project has been approved for the period

From: December 2011

To: March 2012

College Ethics Committee approval reference: 16.11.11-xviii

Signature.......... Date..... 16/12/11.....
(Jonathan Githens-Mazer – Chair SSIS College Ethics Committee)

CERTIFICATE OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

Academic Unit: Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies

Title of Project: Political culture and Reform in the UAE

Research Team Member(s): Marta Saldaña-Martín

Project Contact Point: ms383@exeter.ac.uk

This project has been approved for the period

From: 01.04.2013

To: 01.06.2013

Ethics Committee approval reference: 14.02.13-10

Signature.....
(Lise Storm , Chair, SSIS College Ethics Committee)

Date..... 3 April 2013

No: VPRGS/ 57 /2012
04/03/2012

To: Ms. Marta Saldana Martin

Subject: *Political culture and reform in the UAE*

Dear Ms. Martin,

Please be advised that the UAEU Scientific Research Ethics Committee, in its meeting No. 27th dated March 4, 2012, reviewed the ethical principles involved in your submission.

The Decision reached is:

- Approved as is
 Not Approved
 Approved with the following comments

On behalf of the committee, I wish you every success with your study.

Sincerely,



Prof. Manfred Malzahn
Director of Research and Graduate Studies Support



Annex 4: UAE Population

	Abu Dhabi	Dubai	Sharjah	RAK	Fujairah	Ajman	UAQ	Other	Total population	Nationals	% Of Nationals	Sources
1908	11,000	10,000	18,750	26,700		750	5,000	(8,000 Nomads)	80,000			Lorimer (Data gathered 1904-1907); Fenelon 1976; Heard Bey 1982
1968	46,375	58,971	31,668	24,387	9,735	4,246	3,744	(1,100 Trucial Scouts)	180,226			70,282 Tribal population (Khalifa 1979, from census)
1975	211,812	183,187	78,790	43,845	16,655	16,690	6,908		557,887	201,544	36%	National Census Fenelon 1976 & al-Naqeeb
1980	451,848	276,301	159,317	73,918	32,189	36,100	12,426		1,042,099	290,544	28%	National Census*
1985	566,036	370,788	228,317	96,578	43,753	54,546	19,285		1,379,303	396,114	29%	National Census
1995	942,463	689,420	402,792	143,334	76,180	121,491	35,361		2,411,041	587,330	24%	National Census
2005	1,399,484	1,321,453	793,573	210,063	125,698	206,997	49,159		4,106,427	825,495	20%	National Census
2010								(10-100 thousand bidun)	8,264,070	947,997	11%	Estimate (UAE National Bureau of Statistics)

* UAE National Bureau of Statistics (www.uaestatistics.gov.ae)

Annex 5: Photograph



*Men in an 'abra, Abu Dhabi, ca. 1950s.
Picture by Ronald Codrai.⁴¹⁵*



*Abras in Bur Dubai Creek, March 2012
Picture by dissertation author*



Women in an 'abra, Abu Dhabi, ca. 1950s. Picture by Ronald Codrai.⁴¹⁶



*Dubai Skyline, December 2011
Picture by dissertation author*



*Two pearling merchants, Abu Dhabi, ca. 1950s.
Picture by Ronald Codrai.⁴¹⁷*



*Abu Dhabi, 2011
Picture by dissertation author*

⁴¹⁵ Source: "Water: H₂O = Life" Exhibition. http://www.waterexhibitionadach.ae/index.php/en/photo_gallery/11

⁴¹⁶ Source: "Water: H₂O = Life" Exhibition. http://www.waterexhibitionadach.ae/index.php/en/photo_gallery/11

⁴¹⁷ Source: "Water: H₂O = Life" Exhibition. http://www.waterexhibitionadach.ae/index.php/en/photo_gallery/8



*Electoral candidate poster in Abu Dhabi, September 2011.
Picture by dissertation author*



*Polling station in Dubai, September 2011.
Picture by dissertation author*



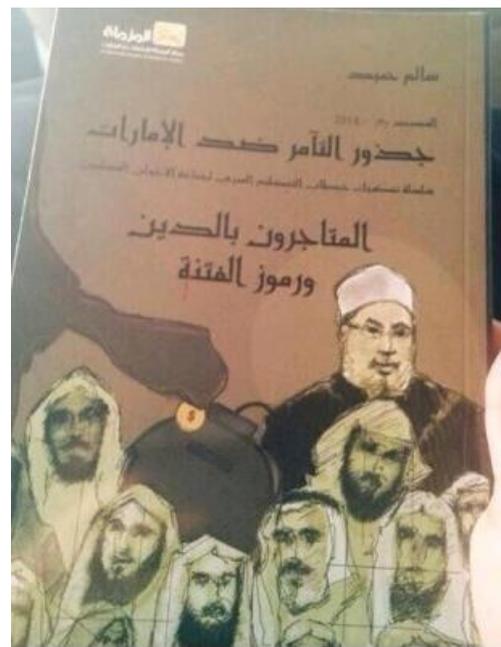
*National Day celebration in Abu Dhabi, December 2011.
Picture by dissertation author*



*National Day celebration at UAEU, December 2011.
Picture by dissertation author*



*Class at UAEU Campus, February 2012.
Picture by dissertation author*



*Booklet against Muslim Brotherhood distributed at UAEU since Spring 2014.
Picture by informant sent to author via Facebook*

Annex 6: Main ministries by tribe⁴¹⁸

Year	Interior	Defense	For. Affairs	Oil/Energy	Informat.	Econ/ Trade	Justice	Education	Higher Education
1971	Al Nahyan (Bani Yas)	Al Maktoum (Bani Yas)	al-Suwaidi (Bani Yas)	Al Maktoum	al-Hamed (al-Qubaisi, Bani Yas)	Al Maktoum	Taryam	al-Qasimi	–
1973	Al Nahyan	Al Maktoum	al-Suwaidi	al-Otaiba (al-Marri tribe, Bani Yas)	Saeed al-Ghaith?	al-Mualla	al-Qasimi	Taryam	–
1977	Al Nahyan	Al Maktoum	al-Suwaidi	al-Otaiba	al-Hamed	al-Mualla	al-Bakr	Taryam	–
1979	Al Nahyan	Al Maktoum	al-Suwaidi	al-Otaiba	al-Hamed	al-Mualla	al-Bakr	Salman	–
1990	Bin Ali (al-Dhaheeri)	Al Maktoum	al-Nuaimi	Bin Yousef (al-Muhairi)	al-Roumi	Ghobash?	Taryam	al-Midfa (Sharjah Arab Merchants)	Al Nahyan
1997	Bin Ali (al-Dhaheeri)	Al Maktoum	al-Nuaimi	Obaid bin Saif al-Naseri	Al Nahyan	al-Qasimi	al-Dhaheeri	al-Sharhan	Al Nahyan
2004	Al Nahyan	Al Maktoum	al-Nuaimi	al-Hamili (Bani Yas)	Al Nahyan	al-Qasimi	al-Dhaheeri	Hasan Ali al-Qassim	Al Nahyan
2006	Al Nahyan	Al Maktoum	Al Nahyan	al-Hamili	–	al-Qasimi	al-Dhaheeri	Hasan Ali	Al Nahyan
2008	Al Nahyan	Al Maktoum	Al Nahyan	al-Hamili	–	al-Mansoori (Bani Yas)	al-Dhaheeri	Hasan Ali (2009)	Al Nahyan
2013	Al Nahyan	Al Maktoum	Al Nahyan	al-Mazrouie (Bani Yas)	–	al-Mansoori (Bani Yas)	al-Dhaheeri	al-Qutami	Al Nahyan

⁴¹⁸ Source: Council of Ministers (n. d.).

Annex 7: Press Release - Call for FNC Elections Boycott⁴¹⁹

بيان صحفي للنشر الفوري

17-2-2011

دعوة لمقاطعة الانتخابات الشكلية للمجلس الوطني الاتحادي (البرلمان) في الإمارات

جاء القرار رقم (1) لسنة 2011 م المتعلق بتعديل أحكام قرار المجلس الأعلى للاتحاد رقم (4) لسنة 2006 م في شأن تحديد طريقة اختيار ممثلي الإمارات في المجلس الوطني الاتحادي، جاء، مخيباً للحد الأدنى من للأمال و الطموحات التي يتطلع لها شعب الإمارات – التي تأخر فيها الإصلاحات السياسية عن بقية دول المنطقة

و يأتي هذا القرار، الذي لا يختلف عن سابقه سوى من حيث عدد الناخبين الذي تضاعف إلى ثلاث مرات، في الوقت الذي تشهد فيه المنطقة ثورات عديدة تطالب بالإصلاح السياسي و الحرية و المساواة و العدالة الإجتماعية و احترام حقوق الإنسان، وقد نجح بعضها في إسقاط بعض الأنظمة الديكتاتورية العتيدة

:إلا أن القرار جاء ليعيد التجربة الشكلية لعام 2006 على النحو التالي

أولاً: سيتم تعيين من يحق لهم الإنتخاب و الترشح لعضوية المجلس الوطني الاتحادي من قبل الحكومات المحلية (أقل من عشرين ألف شخص سيتم تسميتهم من قبل حاكم كل إمارة). و هو ما يعني أن الإنتخابات ليست سوى تعيين غير مباشر للأعضاء

ثانياً: يقتصر حق الترشح و الإنتخاب على أقل من عشرين ألف شخص من مجموع مواطني الدولة البالغ عددها تسعمئة ألف نسمة تقريباً؛ أي أن النسبة تمثل أقل من 2% تقريباً من المواطنين فقط. (العدد الرسمي 12,000 ناخب كحد ادنى حسب عدد المقاعد المخصصة لكل إمارة في الدستور

ثالثاً: لم يشر القرار إلى نية إصلاح تشريعات المجلس الوطني و إعطائه الصلاحيات التشريعية و الرقابية الكاملة، مما يعني أن دور المجلس الوطني سيبقى كما هو مجلس إستشاري دون أية صلاحيات حقيقية

رابعاً: لم يشر القرار إلى استقلال المجلس الوطني عن الحكومة و مازال عمله يخضع إدارياً للحكومة عبر وزارة الدولة لشؤون المجلس الوطني

خامساً: سيتم تعيين نصف الأعضاء بشكل مباشر من قبل الحكومات المحلية

لهذه الأسباب مجتمعة، و لما يحمله هذا القرار من تفرقة بين أبناء الإمارات، و لعلمنا المسبق بالتدخل الأمني في الموافقة على قائمة الأسماء التي سيتم ترشيحها من قبل الحكومات المحلية، أعلن أنا الموقع أدناه عن رفضي القاطع لهذه الإنتخابات و أدعو المواطنين المعنيين من أبناء الإمارات بالمقاطعة أيضاً و المطالبة بانتخابات مباشرة لجميع أعضاء المجلس الوطني و استقلاليتها استقلالية كاملة عن الحكومة

أحمد منصور-الإمارات

ناشط حقوقي مستقل

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

17-2-2011

A Call for a boycott of the cosmetic election of the Federal National Council (Parliament) in the UAE

Decision No. (1) for the year 2011 on amending the provisions of previous decision of the Supreme Council of the Federation (No. 4) for the year 2006 that governs the method of selecting representatives of the UAE Federal National Council ("FNC", the Parliament), came to be very disappointment to a wide range of the citizens and was not meeting the bare minimum hopes and ambitions, and puts UAE in a very late stage when it comes to political reform compared with the rest of the countries in the region.

This resolution, which does not differ from its previous one except in the number of voters which tripled, comes at a time when the region is undergoing many revolutions demanding political reform, freedom, equality, social justice and respect for human rights. Some of the revolutions succeeded in forcing dictatorial regimes to step down.

However, a decision was made to re-experience the cosmetic election of 2006 as follows:

First: All members of the Electoral Committee, who are the only eligible to vote and to run for the election, are going to be directly appointed by the Rulers of different Emirates. (Less than a total of twenty thousand people will be nominated by the local Rulers); which means that the elected members would be indirectly appointed to start with.

Second: only the right to stand for election is granted to less than twenty thousand people of all UAE citizens, which constitute less than 2% of the citizens only. (The official minimum number of the Electoral Committee is 12 000 voters as per the decision).

Third: The decision did not indicate any intention of reform to the legislation of the FNC to give it complete legislative and monitoring authorities, which implicitly means that the role of FNC will remain as is as an advisory council without any real authority.

Fourth: The decision does not indicate that FNC would be administratively independent of the government, which means it will still remain under the government through the Ministry of State for National Council Affairs.

Fifth: Half of the members of the FNC will still be directly appointed by Local Rulers.

Thus, for all these reasons, and due to the fact that such selective indirect election unfairly discriminates between the people of the UAE, and due our prior knowledge of intervention of the Security Authorities in screening the names of the nominees before the final approval, I hereby announce my complete rejection of this elections and I call upon concerned citizens to boycott it and to demand for a completed direct election of all members of the FNC and its full from the government.

Ahmad Mansoor – UAE

Independent Human Rights Activist

Annex 8: 3rd of March Petition (2011)⁴²⁰

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

صاحب السمو الشيخ / خليفة بن زايد آل نهيان

حفظه الله

رئيس دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة

أصحاب السمو أعضاء المجلس الأعلى للإتحاد

حفظهم الله

3 مارس 2011

بشرفنا نحن الموقعون أدناه، مجموعة من أبناء دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة، أن نرفع لمقام سموكم الكريم ولأصحاب السمو أعضاء المجلس الأعلى للإتحاد بالغ التقدير والاحترام، كما نحى سموكم على ما تبذلونه من جهود مباركة لتحقيق العزة والكرامة لأبنائكم شعب دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة.

لقد عاشت دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة عبر تاريخها المشرق، ومارالت، انسجاماً كاملاً بين القيادة والشعب، وتعتبر المشاركة في صنع القرار جزءاً من تعاليد وأعراف هذا الوطن منذ قبل قيام الدولة وما بعدها وذلك كله نحرص على استمراره، وإننا نعتبر ذلك مبعثاً للفخر والاعتزاز، وقد تأكد من خلال النظرة الناقدية للمعفور له الشيخ زايد بن سلطان آل نهيان مؤسس الدولة وإخوانه أعضاء المجلس الأعلى حكام الإمارات، حين وضعوا المشاركة الوطنية كأحد أسس الدستور الذي نص في مقدمته على:

"..... والسير به نحو نظام ديمقراطي نيابي متكامل الأركان في مجتمع متحرر من الخوف..."

ولم يكن المجلس الوطني الاتحادي إلا نواة لهذه المشاركة، إلا أن الجهود في نمو مسيرة المشاركة الوطنية في القرار السياسي في الدولة منذ 39 عاماً لم تتغير على النحو الذي نص عليه الدستور. ومع يقيننا الكامل بإدراك سموكم أن التطورات الإقليمية والدولية المتسارعة تقتضي تطوير مسيرة المشاركة الوطنية.

وانطلاقاً من إيماننا العميق بحرص سموكم على مصلحة هذا الوطن وأبنائه الذين هم أبنائنا، وإيماناً منا بحرص سموكم على التواصل الدائم مع المواطنين فإننا نتقدم إلى سموكم وإلى أصحاب السمو أعضاء المجلس الأعلى للإتحاد بطلب إعادة النظر في قرار المجلس الأعلى رقم 4 لسنة 2006 والقرار الاتحادي رقم (2) لسنة 2011 والقرار رقم (3) لسنة 2006 بشأن تحديد طريقة اختيار ممثلي الإمارات في المجلس الوطني الاتحادي على نحو يحقق التطلعات التالية:

1- انتخاب جميع أعضاء المجلس الوطني الاتحادي من قبل كافة المواطنين كما هو مطبق في الدول الديمقراطية حول العالم.

2- تعديل المواد الدستورية ذات الصلة بالمجلس الوطني الاتحادي بما يكفل له الصلاحيات التشريعية والرقابية الكاملة.

وفقكم الله لما فيه خير هذا الوطن ومستقبل أجياله وأعانكم على تحمل مسؤولياتكم في خدمة وطنكم وأبناء شعبكم.

هذا والله الموفق،

⁴²⁰ Available (in Arabic) at: <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/uaepetition71/>

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.1	د. إبراهيم احمد إبراهيم علي الحمادي	أستاذ جامعي
.1	د. إبراهيم إسماعيل الياسي	أكاديمي
.1	د. إبراهيم علي الشال	أستاذ جامعي
.1	د. إبراهيم يوسف المجيني	أستاذ جامعي
.1	د. أحمد راشد الفيشي	أستاذ جامعي
.1	أحمد راشد النعيمي	نائب رئيس جمعية المعلمين بالدولة
.10	أحمد سالمين آل علي	كاتب سيناريو
.11	د. أحمد سعيد راشد الشامسي	أستاذ جامعي
.12	د. أحمد صالح الحمادي	استاذ جامعي
.13	أحمد صقر السويدي	تربوي
.14	أحمد عبدالرحمن محمد الزرعوني	ناشط إنترنت
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105	محمد أحمد محمد صالح	مدير مدرسة سابق
106	محمد جمعة الحوسني	رئيس اللجنة الشرعية بجمعية الحقوقيين
107	محمد سعيد أحمد الفص	مهندس
108	محمد سعيد الكندي	مواطن مهتم
109	محمد سليمان إبراهيم الهوني	مستشار قانوني
110	محمد صقر الزعابي	كاتب و ناشط حقوقي
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113	د.محمد عبدالله خلفان مخلوف	أستاذ جامعي
114	د.محمد عبدالله الركن	أستاذ جامعي وناشط حقوقي
115	د. محمد عبدالله المحمود	أستاذ جامعي
116	د. محمد عبيد عباس	أستاذ جامعي
117	د.محمد علي المنصوري	مستشار قانوني وناشط حقوقي
118	أ.د.محمد هادي أميري	أستاذ جامعي
119	مريم الأحمدى	ناشطة حقوقية
120	مصيح الرميني	ناشط اسلامي - دعوة الإصلاح
121	د.منى سيف علي بوفروشة الفلاسي	أستاذة جامعية

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Annex 9: Associations Petition (2011)

ارسل

مواطن إماراتي مغلوب على أمره

ليس لدي ما أقوله، فقد تلاشت كظني الذي كان هناك

الرئيسية سيرة ذاتية

“أربع جمعيات إماراتية تطلق مبادرة “انتخابات عامة لأمة راشدة

في 6 - أبريل - 2011 emarati

مبادرة انتخابات عامة لأمة راشدة

ونحن نحتفل هذه السنة ببلوغ دولتنا العزيرة (دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة) عامها الأربعون فإن الجمعيات ذات النفع العام والهئات الموقفة على هذا البيان بصفتها جزءاً من المجتمع المدني في الدولة ترى أن الوقت قد حان لضمان حق المشاركة السياسية لكل مواطن بلغ سن العادية والعشرين في الاقتراع الحر المباشر في الانتخابات العامة لمجلس وطني واتحادي كامل الصلاحيات الرقابية والتشريعية في سبتمبر 2011 لأنه حق إنساني وشرعي وقانوني.

وتهيب الجمعيات الموقفة بحكومتنا الرشيدة تحقيق هذا المطلب بعد مرور 40 عاماً على إنشاء الدولة وذلك للأسباب التالية:

1- **سبب تاريخي:** ففكرة حق انتخاب أعضاء المجلس الوطني ليست أمراً مستحدثاً على شعب الإمارات بل له خلفيته التاريخية. فقد تم اقتراح هذا الحق لشعب الدولة لأول مرة في الدورة الثالثة للإتحاد التساعي في الدوحة مايو 1969 بحيث تكون الانتخابات الوسيلة الوحيدة لتشكيل المجلس الوطني الاتحادي. وبسبب عدم الإجماع بين أعضاء الاتحاد حينها على هذا الحق فقد تركت مسألة تحديد طريقة اختيار أعضاء المجلس لكل إمارة دون قضاها على وسيلة التعيين أو الانتخاب الجزئي كما أوضحت ذلك المادة 69 من الدستور. وتكرر اقتراح حق الانتخاب لشعب الدولة في مشروع الدستور الدائم الذي وضع عام 1976 حيث نص في المادة 64 منه على أن الانتخاب عن طريق الاقتراع العام في الدوائر الانتخابية المختلفة هو الأصل على أن يكون تعيين عدد من الأشخاص لا يقل عن خمسة أمثال عدد المقاعد المخصصة للإمارة مسألة مؤقتة. والمرة الثالثة كانت حين أوردت المذكرة المشتركة بين مجلس الوزراء والمجلس الوطني الاتحادي المرفوعة للمجلس الأعلى للإتحاد في 13/2/1979 موضوع المشاركة السياسية والتي تعني الانتخاب الحر المباشر لجميع المواطنين، حيث ذكرت مايلي: “وليس بالخير وحده يحيا الشعب، فالشعب هو دعامة الوطن وحاميها وهو القاعدة العريضة العاملة على استقراره وتقدمه، ولذلك فإنه يجب بنائه كذلك بناء ديمقراطياً يعتمد على توفير الحريات، وإفساح مجالات الرأي والفكر، وتدريبه على المشاركة السياسية في شؤون البلاد، في إطار ديمقراطي سليم، ينم عن مبادئ ديننا الحنيف، الذي جعل أمرنا شورى بيننا.” وعدم إشراك جميع مواطني الدولة في اختيار من يمثلهم في المجلس الوطني الاتحادي بعد مرور عقود على إنشاء الدولة والتجارب التاريخية التي مرت بها لا يتسق مع التطور التاريخي للدولة في كل جوانب الحياة الثقافية والاقتصادية والاجتماعية والفكرية.

2- **سبب دستوري:** فالدستور في سطورته الأولى نص على أن هدفه هو السير بالشعب إلى “حكم ديمقراطي نيابي متكامل الأركان”، وهذا الحكم الديمقراطي النيابي قد استقرت تجارب البشرية والأمم المتحضرة على أنه لا يقوم إلا على أركان عديدة أهمها: (أ)- المشاركة السياسية العامة لكل المواطنين في الترشيح والانتخاب لمن يمثلهم في المجلس النيابي وعدم قصر هذا الحق على فئة أو طائفة أو نسبة من الشعب (ب)- أن يكون المجلس المنتخب ذو صلاحيات تشريعية ورقابية حقيقية ليمارس دوره نيابة عن الشعب. كما أرسى الدستور الذي وضعه مؤسسو الدولة رحمهم الله مجموعة مبادئ مهمة في شأن الحقوق والحريات العامة لمواطني الدولة أهمها: حق المساواة بين جميع المواطنين كدعامة من دعومات المجتمع (المادة 14)، وحق المساواة أمام القانون وعدم جواز التمييز بين مواطني الدولة على أي أساس كان (المادة 25)، وحق الاجتماع للمواطنين (المادة 33)، وقصر حق الانتخاب والترشيح بعد أربعين عاماً من صدور الدستور على نسبة لا تتجاوز 4% من مواطني الدولة تشوبه شائبة مخالفة هذه المواد الدستورية إذ أنه يحرم غالبية المواطنين من حق الترشيح والانتخاب ويوجد تمييزاً وعدم مساواة بين المواطنين وفقاً لمعيار غير موضوعي لا يمكن التحقق منه.

3- **سبب دولي:** لقد التزمت الدولة أمام المجتمع الدولي بتوقيعها والتصديقها على مجموعة من الاتفاقيات الدولية بتوفير ممارسة الحقوق السياسية لمواطنيها كحق الاشتراك في الانتخابات اقتراعاً وترشيحاً بدون تمييز بينهم. فالدولة اعترفت على المستوى الدولي بحق كل مواطن في المشاركة في إدارة شؤون بلده كحق من الحقوق الأساسية التي يجب عليها كفالتها له. مما يعني أن على الدولة عند سن قانون لممارسة هذا الحق الأساسي أن يكون القانون متماشياً مع التزامات الدولة الواردة في القانون الدولي. وقد ورد حق المواطن في المشاركة في إدارة شؤون بلده في الاتفاقيات الدولية التالية:

- (المادة 21 الفقرة 3) من الإعلان العالمي لحقوق الإنسان (1948).
- (المادة 25 الفقرة ب) من العهد الدولي الخاص بالحقوق المدنية والسياسية (1966).
- المادة (5 الفقرة ج) من اتفاقية القضاء على جميع أشكال التمييز العنصري (1965). والدولة صادقت والتزمت بنصوص هذه [الاتفاقية منذ 20 يونيو 1974].
- المادة (7 الفقرة أ) من اتفاقية القضاء على جميع أشكال التمييز ضد المرأة (1979). والدولة صادقت والتزمت بنصوص هذه [الاتفاقية منذ 6 أكتوبر 2004].
- المادة (29 الفقرة أ) من اتفاقية حقوق الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة (2006). والدولة صادقت والتزمت بنصوص هذه الاتفاقية منذ 19 مارس 2010.
- [المادة (24) من الميثاق العربي لحقوق الإنسان (2004). والدولة طرف موقع وملتزم بنصوص هذا الميثاق].
- إعلان الاتحاد البرلماني الدولي بشأن معايير الانتخابات الحرة والنزيهة، الذي اعتمده الاتحاد البرلماني الدولي (1992).

وقد اعتبرت هذه المنظومة بمثابة ثوابت قانونية للانتخابات في دول العالم كافة، وشكلت توافق المجتمع الدولي حول معايير الانتخابات الحرة والنزيهة. إن قصر حق المشاركة السياسية بما فيها الانتخاب والترشيح على جزء بسيط من شعب دولة الإمارات لا يتفق مع الالتزامات الدولية التي صادقت عليها الدولة.

4- **سبب إقليمي:** فحول مجلس التعاون الخليجي ذات الظروف الاجتماعية والسياسية والثقافية المتشابهة مع دولتنا يمارس مواطنوها كافة ومنذ سنوات حق الترشيح والانتخاب في انتخابات نيابية أو بلدية. فمواطنو دولة الكويت يمارسون حق الانتخابات لإختيار أعضاء مجلس الأمة منذ اصدار الدستور عام 1962 واشتركت المرأة في الانتخابات في 16 مايو 2005. ومواطنو سلطنة عمان (رجالاً ونساءً) كفلت لهم منذ أكتوبر 2003 حق المشاركة الانتخابية دون تمييز بينهم. أما مملكة البحرين فقد تم إجراء أول انتخابات نيابية وبلدية عامة شارك فيها جميع المواطنين منذ عام 1973. ومارس جميع مواطنو دولة قطر حق انتخاب المجلس البلدي المركزي منذ عام 1999. والمملكة العربية السعودية شهدت في 10/2/2005م أول انتخابات بلدية عامة، وتشهد هذه السنة انتخابات عامة في ثلاث دول خليجية شقيقة: ففي سلطنة عمان ستجرى في سبتمبر القادم انتخابات نيابية للدورة السابعة لمجلس الشورى، والمملكة العربية السعودية سوف تشهد انتخابات بلدية، وستشهد قطر في 10/5/2011 إجراء انتخابات جديدة لأعضاء المجلس البلدي مع وعد لإجراء انتخابات لمجلس الشورى هذا العام. وإن قصر حق الانتخاب والترشيح على شريحة بسيطة من مواطني دولة الإمارات يجعلنا في مؤخرة ركب دول مجلس التعاون ولا يتناسب مع التقدم الاقتصادي والاجتماعي والثقافي والوعي الذي تحظى به الدولة حكومة وشعباً.

وفي ضوء ما ورد أعلاه فإننا نطالب حكومتنا الرشيدة بأن تضمن ممارسة مواطني الدولة كافة (رجالاً ونساءً)، أسوة بباقي المجتمعات المتقدمة بصفة عامة ودول مجلس التعاون بصفة خاصة، حقهم المكفول دستورياً ودولياً في المشاركة في انتخابات مجلس وطني إتحادي ذو اختصاصات تشريعية وسياسية كاملة تتوافق مع نظام "حكم ديمقراطي نيابي متكامل الأركان".

الجمعيات الموقعة:

- 1- جمعية الحقوقيين.
- 2- جمعية المعلمين.
- 3- جمعية الشجوح للتراث الوطني
- 4- جمعية أعضاء هيئة التدريس بجامعة الإمارات العربية المتحدة.

[1] المادة (5 الفقرة ج) تنص على أنه: (تعهد الدول الأطراف بحظر التمييز العنصري والقضاء عليه بكافة أشكاله، وبضمان حق كل إنسان، دون تمييز بسبب العرق أو اللون أو الأصل القومي أو الإثني، في المساواة أمام القانون، لا سيما بصدد التمتع بالحقوق التالية: (ج) الحقوق السياسية، ولا سيما حق الأشتراك في الانتخابات -اقتراعاً وترشيحاً- على أساس الاقتراع العام المتساوي، والإسهام في الحكم وفي إدارة الشؤون العامة على جميع المستويات).

[2] المادة (7 الفقرة أ) تنص على أنه: (تتخذ الدول الأطراف جميع التدابير المناسبة للقضاء على التمييز ضد المرأة في الحياة السياسية والعامة للبلد، وبوجه خاص تكفل للمرأة، على قدم المساواة مع الرجل، الحق في: (أ) التصويت في جميع الانتخابات والاستفتاءات العامة، والأهلية للانتخاب لجميع الهيئات التي ينتخب أعضاؤها بالاقتراع العام).

[3] المادة (29 الفقرة أ) تنص على أنه: (تضمن الدول الأطراف للأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة الحقوق السياسية وفرصة التمتع بها على قدم المساواة مع الآخرين، وتعهد بما يلي: (أ) أن تكفل للأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة إمكانية المشاركة بصورة فعالة وكاملة في الحياة السياسية والعامة على قدم المساواة مع الآخرين، إما مباشرة وإما عن طريق ممثلين يختارونهم بحرية).

[4] المادة (24) تنص على أنه: (لكل مواطن الحق في: 1- حرية الممارسة السياسية. 2- المشاركة في إدارة الشؤون العامة إما مباشرة أو بواسطة ممثلين يختارون بحرية... 4- ترشيح نفسه أو اختيار من يمثله بطريقة حرة ونزيهة وعلى قدم المساواة بين جميع المواطنين بحيث تضمن التعبير الحر عن إرادة المواطن... 7- لا يجوز تقييد ممارسة هذه الحقوق بأي قيود غير القيود المفروضة طبقاً للقانون والتي تقتضيها الضرورة في مجتمع يحترم الحريات وحقوق الإنسان لصيانة الأمن الوطني أو النظام العام أو السلامة العامة أو الصحة العامة أو الآداب العامة أو لحماية حقوق الغير وحرياتهم).

[5] وينص الإعلان في الفقرة ثانياً على: التصويت وحقوق الانتخاب: (1) كل مواطن رشيد له حق التصويت في الانتخابات دون تمييز. (2) كل مواطن رشيد له حق المشاركة في الإجراءات المقررة دون تفرقة أو تمييز للقيود الجدول الناخبين. (3) لا يحرم أي مواطن له حق الانتخاب من التصويت أو يستبعد قيده من جداول الناخبين إلا وفقاً لمعيار موضوعي يمكن التحقق منه، منصوص عليه في القانون بشرط أن يتماشى هذا الإجراء مع التزامات الدولة الواردة في القانون الدولي.

Annex 10: President's Statement (2005)

President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan's Statement on the 34th National Day of the UAE (2nd December 2005)⁴²¹

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, My dear countrymen and women, today we celebrate the 34th anniversary of a glorious day in the history of our nation. On December 2, 1971, we started the march towards these great achievements that have covered all parts of our dear nation. It was the day that saw the unity of our words and determination giving birth to the United Arab Emirates and all what we enjoy today: political stability, strong economy, educated and trained manpower resources, progress, prosperity and security, as well as diplomatic, trade, cultural and humanitarian relations which extend to all countries of the world, thus establishing a sound regional and international ties that are based on vision, moderation, balanced policy, support for the truth and justice, and non-interference in the internal affairs of others.

We remember on this blessed day, with deep regards and utmost appreciation, the history of the founders of our great federation. We remember with prayers the founder of this nation: the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the late Sheikh Rashid bin Maktoum Al Maktoum, the late Sheikh Rashid bin Humaid Al Nu'aimi, the late Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad Al Sharqi and the late Sheikh Ahmed bin Rashid Al Mualla (may their souls rest in perfect peace) and may Allah the Almighty have mercy and bless all those who had contributed in one way or the other in building this prosperous state.

The federation that we see today as a civil, political, social and economic reality did not come as a gift or grant nor did it come on a silver platter. It came as a result of good and strenuous efforts by our founding fathers, who translated the idea from their heart and mind to the reality that we live in today. They strived to build and consolidate the pillars of this nation, to build a system that entrenches the rule of law and due process. They strived to establish a federal system of governance capable of developing and living up to the test of time.

We owe them great respect and loyalty and to them we express our profound gratitude and appreciation for their tremendous contributions to the building of this prosperous nation. We pray for Allah's blessings and mercy on the souls of those who had departed this world. We also pray for good health and long life for those who still live and continue to give their utmost best to this nation.

The history of those great men is an important source from which this nation derives its pride, strength, aspirations, security and capability to face challenges. This is because any nation that does not honour its leaders is not worth dying for. Such a nation does not have a good future. Good nations maintain their identity and characteristics by preserving their history and heritage and seeking inspiration from the good works of their leaders. Achieving these objectives requires from us hard and well-organised work: all cultural, educational and academic institutions must actively participate in

⁴²¹ Source: UAE Interact.

teaching the young generations their ancestors' civil and cultural heritage and the great contributions these leaders made in the building of this great nation.

The federation that we celebrate today reflects loyalty, sense of belonging, responsibility, national identity, great efforts, selflessness and a reality of a living condition. It is an investment in our human resources which is the major target of our development and our programmes. This is in continuation of what our pioneers have begun. It is to consolidate the development that would judiciously tap the energy of the youth and urge them on to work in a good and creative way. The strengthening of our federation march and national unity, and our continuous pursuance of sustainable development require hard work to boost the existing strong cooperation between the local and federal authorities.

We also need to push forward for more fruitful coordination for our common good. This is to be done within the framework of mutual trust and highest level of cooperation. It also requires all federal institutions to play their national roles in facing with the highest degree of responsibility and transparency all forms of challenges and problems confronting the nation. Considering the developments in our region, which is now witnessing transformation and reforms, the years ahead in our blessed march require a bigger role for the Federal National Council by empowering it to be an authority that would provide great support and guidance for the executive arm of the government.

We shall work to make the Council more capable, more effective and more sensitive to the issues affecting the nation and the people. This would be done by ensuring a more participatory process and the entrenchment of "Shura" (consultations) policy. And through a gradual, organised course, we have decided to start activating the role of the FNC through electing half of its members through councils for each emirate and appointing the other half.

By doing this, we will embark on a march that culminates in more participation and interaction from all the citizen of the country. My dear countrymen and women, Today, we stand at a threshold of a new era, whose ultimate objective is to entrench the rule of law and due process, accountability, transparency and equal opportunity.

In order to achieve these objectives the years ahead require the rebuilding, restructuring, re-arrangement and rehabilitation of all existing government bodies and structures. We have already begun preparing for the new era by promulgating legislations, taking some regulatory measures on the existing departments, institutions, activities and relations. This is to tighten the loose ends, straighten the curves, put an end to wrongdoings, get rid of bad nuts, improve production and services and guide efforts in order to develop the institutions, structures and activities, and to encourage promising cadres. It is also to prepare the ground for a successful launch to the horizon of the 21st century.

It is high time for our political, religious, cultural, information, educational and civil society institutions to stand up to their responsibilities to instill in our society the values of love for work, to change the negative perceptions about vocational work. It is high time to make them understand the true meaning of work - that it means responsibility and reflects human, civil and religious values. These institutions also

need to work hard to diversify the skills of the national human resources, to raise productivity, encourage investment in human resources development, improve voluntary work and create awareness on this noble work and its significance to individuals and the society in general.

There is a need to improve the means and methods of voluntary works by encouraging and facilitating the establishment of specialised voluntary organizations that aim at bringing development to the society. There is also a need for the educational, media, cultural and sporting institutions to increase their level of attention and efforts in educating UAE nationals about the significance of voluntary works and to urge them on to get actively involved in this noble practice. This can be done by including voluntary work in the civic education curricula at the various educational levels.

In this regard, the media is also required to highlight on national issues and especially those affecting the people. The media need to spread awareness on the essence and significance of work as embodying religious, humanitarian, social and civic values for the development of individuals and the society in general. This is to be done in an atmosphere of responsible freedom and high-level professionalism that is built on accuracy and objectivity, professionalism that has great respect for the truth and common sense.

Fellow countrymen, Our foreign policy is grounded on firm basis and clear principles of mutual respect, good neighbourliness, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, building of relations that serve mutual interests, promotion of the spirit of cooperation, resolution of conflicts through peaceful means, commitment to Arab, Islamic and international conventions, promotion of global peace and stability and support for just causes. These are the values and principles that continue to guide our foreign policy in its four domains , namely the GCC, Arab, Islamic and international spheres.

On the GCC level, we will continue to coordinate and consult with our brethren, the GCC leaders, with the aim of reinforcing the efficiency of our organisation which is now about to celebrate its silver jubilee. We will continue our endeavors to enhance the role of the GCC in maintaining regional peace and also in reinforcing socio-economic and political integration in a manner that serves the best interests and aspirations of our peoples.

In this respect, we look forward to a successful 26th GCC summit which will be held in Abu Dhabi from 18-19th this month. It is our hope that the GCC leaders would be able to arrive at resolutions that would reinforce the inter-GCC cooperation and address current Arab and global challenges.

A common GCC vision and approach to problems will certainly add momentum to the role being played by the GCC within the wider regional Arab framework. On this occasion, we value and salute the sincere efforts of the GCC leaders to affirm the right of the UAE over its occupied islands. In particular, we value the support rendered to us by the GCC leaders for devising a mechanism for direct talks between us and Iran , so as to reach a just solution that would set the relations between countries of the region on a firm basis. This approach underscores our keenness to achieve regional and global peace and stability.

On the Arab level, we will continue to support common Arab cooperation through the Arab League and its specialised organisations. We are also keen to promote our bilateral relations with all Arab countries. In this context, we would like to re-affirm our support for the unity of Iraq and its people. We are deeply pained and concerned by the deterioration of the security situation and the continuous bombings, violence, terrorism, kidnappings and killings of innocent civilians.

It is our hope that recent political developments in the country –notably the endorsement of the constitution, the convening of the preliminary meeting for the national reconciliation conference and the upcoming legislative elections– would constitute the basis for a new united Iraq that would hopefully stage a strong comeback to Arab and international arena.

A united, stable and secure Iraq is not only an asset to Arab national security but also to global peace and stability. On the Palestinian question, we have closely been following recent developments, notably the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. We hope that this withdrawal would be followed by similar withdrawals from the occupied Arab territories so that the Palestinian people would have the opportunity to establish their own independent state with Jerusalem as its capital, as provided for in the UN resolutions and international peace initiatives, notably the Road Map and Arab Peace Initiative. We believe that these two plans constitute the framework for resolving the Middle East Conflict. To alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people, we launched our initiative to build a city in Rafah on the ashes of the Israeli settlement. This is in addition to other projects. On Sudan, the UAE supports the constructive efforts being adopted by Sudan which culminated in the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). We hereby re-affirm our full support to Arab and international efforts that are underway to rebuild the war-torn areas. We wish that peace, security and prosperity will prevail in that sisterly country. On our relations with Islamic countries, it must be noted that these relations are based on mutual respect, cooperation, unification of Muslim ranks and reaching out to those in need. It should also be noted that our readiness to reach out to brethren who need our support stems from our Islamic values. It is against this background that the UAE leadership and people stood by the side of their Pakistani brethren when a devastating earthquake hit that country recently. It was also in this context that I ordered our Armed Forces to urgently dispatch search and rescue teams in addition to urgent relief supplies. We are really proud of the role being played by our Armed Forces as well as by the Red Crescent Society (RCS) and other charity organisations to alleviate the suffering of those affected during the earthquake.

On the issue of terrorism, we have strongly condemned the vicious terrorist bombings that hit the sisterly and friendly countries of Egypt, Jordan and the United Kingdom.

We have expressed our full solidarity with the governments and people of those countries in the face of this menace. The threat of terrorism requires a strong stand so that it is decisively uprooted. It is a virulent threat that should be weeded out not only because it destabilises nations but also because it is inconsistent with all human values.

Our foreign policy is built on principles of mutual respect, understanding, dialogue and cooperation, condemnation of all forms of terrorism, violence and fundamentalism, and observance of all international laws and accords. We stand in support of every call for peace that can save the world from serious perils.

Fellow countrymen, I take the opportunity of this glorious occasion to congratulate and salute my brethren- Their Highnesses Supreme Council Members and Rulers of the emirates for transforming our federation into a viable entity. They succeeded in realising the aspirations of our people. I also congratulate our young men and women in uniform for their patriotism and dedication to protect their country. My congratulations also go to our security forces and the police for their vigilance so that our country remains an oasis of peace and security.

I also extend my congratulations and salutations to the UAE people and expatriate residents of friendly and sisterly countries whose sincere contribution in the development of our country is highly valued.

I conclude by reiterating that the formidable achievements that we have made over the years must be safeguarded through unity of ranks and tenacity to the spirit of federation. It is in this federation that our supreme interest lies. It is also to our federation that we owe allegiance. We pray to Allah the All Mighty to grace us with success so that we continue lead us people into greater and sustained prosperity.

Annex 11: Post-Arab Spring Detainees

	Name	Signed 3 rd March Petition	Date of detention	Sentence
1 st	Hassan Muhammad al-Hammadi	N/A	First detention: 4 th February 2011 Second: 30 th July 2012	10 years imprisonment
UAE 5	Ahmed Mansoor	Yes	10 th April 2011	3 years imprisonment Pardoned by Pres. Decree
	Ahmed Abdulkhaleq	No	July 2011	2 years imprisonment Pardoned - Deported
	Nasser bin Ghaith	No	10 th April 2011	2 years imprisonment Pardoned by Pres. Decree
	Fahad Salim Dalk al Shehhi	No	10 th April 2011	2 years imprisonment Pardoned by Pres. Decree
	Hassan Ali al-Khamis	No		2 years imprisonment Pardoned by Pres. Decree
UAE 7	Dr. Ali Hussain al-Hammadi	Yes	9 th April 2012	10 years imprisonment
	Muhammad Abdulrazzaq al-Siddiq	Yes	9 th April 2012	10 years imprisonment
	Prof. Shaheen al Hosani	Yes	9 th April 2012	10 years imprisonment
	Hussain al-Jabri	No	9 th April 2012	10 years imprisonment
	Hassan al-Jabri	No	9 th April 2012	10 years imprisonment
	Ibrahim al-Marzouqui	No	9 th April 2012	10 years imprisonment
	Ahmed Gaith al-Suweidi	No	26 th April 2012	10 years imprisonment
Cyber	Sultan bin Kayed al-Qasimi	Yes	20 th April 2012	10 years imprisonment
	Mohamed al Mansoori	Yes	16 th July 2012	10 years imprisonment
	Mohamed Abdullah al Roken	Yes	17 th July 2012	10 years imprisonment
Cyber	Abdullah al Hadidi	Yes	22 nd March 2013	Serving 10 months*
	Waleed al Shehhi	Yes	11 th May 2013	Awaiting trial*

List of UAE Current Political Prisoners⁴²²

*List of those currently being held by the authorities in the United Arab Emirates
in relation to political & human rights activism
(Last updated 07/10/2013)*

Convicted Political Prisoners – UAE 94 Trial

Serving 10 Year Prison Sentences

1. Saleh al-Dhufairi, aged 53, from Ras al-Khaimah, detained on April 29th 2012.
2. Mohamed Abdulrazzaq Alsidiq, aged 49, from Sharjah, detained on April 9th 2012.
3. Ahmed Ghaith al-Suweidi, aged 52, from Abu Dhabi, detained on March 26th 2012.
4. Ali al-Hammadi, aged 51, from Abu Dhabi, detained on April 9th 2012.
5. Shaheen al-Hosani, aged 51, from Sharjah, detained on April 9th 2012.
6. Husain al-Jabiri, aged 53, from Abu Dhabi, detained on April 9th 2012.
7. Hassan al-Jabiri, aged 52, from Abu Dhabi, detained on April 9th 2012.
8. Ibrahim al-Marzooqi, aged 42, from Abu Dhabi, detained on April 9th 2012.
9. Ahmed al-Zaabi, aged 47, from Abu Dhabi, detained on March 26th 2012.
10. Sultan bin Kayed al-Qasimi, aged 55, from Ras al-Khaimah, detained on April 20th 2012.
11. Salim Sahooh, aged 58, from Sharjah, detained on April 30th 2012.
12. Ahmed al-Tabour al-Nuaimi, aged 48, from Ras al-Khaimah, detained on May 18th 2012.
13. Abdulrahman al-Hadidi, aged 54, from Sharjah, detained on July 16th 2012.
14. Mohamed al-Mansoori, aged 55, from Ras al-Khaimah, detained on July 16th 2012.
15. Khalifa al-Nuaimi, aged 25, from Sharjah, detained on July 16th 2012.
16. Rashid Omran al-Shamsi, aged 34, from Sharjah, detained on July 16th 2012.
17. Khalid al-Shaiba al-Nuaimi, aged 61, from Ajman, detained on July 16th 2012.
18. Ibrahim al-Yassi, aged 51, from Ajman, detained on July 16th 2012.
19. Husain al-Najjar, aged 39, from Sharjah, detained on July 16th 2012.
20. Mohamed Abdulla al-Roken, aged 50, from Dubai, detained on July 17th 2012.
21. Essa al-Sari, aged 50, from Sharjah, detained on July 17th 2012.
22. Salim Hamdoon al-Shehhi, aged 32, from Ras al-Khaimah, detained on July 18th 2012.
23. Issa Khalifa al-Suweidi, aged 46, from Abu Dhabi, detained on July 19th 2012.
24. Juma Darwish al-Felasi, aged 48, from Dubai, detained on July 19th 2012.
25. Tariq al-Qasim, aged 48, from Dubai, detained on July 19th 2012.
26. Saif al-Egleh, aged 54, from Sharjah, detained on July 24th 2012.
27. Hamad Roqait, aged 61, from Sharjah, detained on July 24th 2012.
28. Tariq Hassan al-Qattan, aged 41, from Umm al-Quwain, detained on July 24th 2012.
29. Musabeh al-Rumaithi, aged 44, from Abu Dhabi, detained on July 24th 2012.

⁴²² Source: Emirates Centre for Human Rights (ECFHR) (2013, October 7).

30. Abdulrahmeem al-Zaroon, aged 43, from Um al-Quwain, detained on July 24th 2012.
31. Abdulsalam Darwish, aged 42, from Sharjah, detained on July 24th 2012.
32. Saeed Nasser al-Wahidi, aged 49, from Abu Dhabi, detained on July 25th 2012.
33. Ali Abdullah Mahdi al-Manie, aged 45, from Abu Dhabi, detained on July 25th 2012.
34. Khalid Mohammed Alyammahi, aged 34, from Fujairah, detained on July 30th 2012.
35. Hassan Mohammed al-Hammadi, aged 52, from Sharjah, detained on July 30th 2012.
36. Ahmed Saqer al-Suweidi, aged 47, from Ajman, detained on July 30th 2012.
37. Saif Aletr, aged 57, from Fujairah, detained on July 30th 2012.
38. Najeeb Amiri, aged 51, from Sharjah, detained on July 31st 2012.
39. Fuad Mohammed al-Hammadi, aged 49, from Sharjah, detained on July 31st 2012.
40. Ahmed Saif al-Matri, aged 47, from Fujairah, detained on July 31st 2012.
41. Abdulaziz Hareb, aged 45, from Dubai, detained on August 27th 2012.
42. Ali Abdulla al-Khaja, aged 47, from Abu Dhabi, detained on August 28th 2012.
43. Abdulla al-Jabri, aged 48, from Abu Dhabi, detained on August 28th 2012.
44. Rashid Khalfan bin Sabt, aged 42, from Um al-Quwain, detained on August 28th 2012.
45. Ali Salim al-Gawws al-Zaabi, aged 54, from Abu Dhabi, detained on August 31st 2012.
46. Ali Saeed al-Kindi, aged 36, from Sharjah, detained on September 9th 2012.
47. Hadif al-Owais, aged 54, from Sharjah, detained on September 11th 2012.
48. Mohammed al-Abdouli, aged 45, from Abu Dhabi, detained on October 11th 2012.
49. Abdulraheem Naqi, aged 59, from Ras al-Khaimah, detained on October 12th 2012.
50. Khaled Fadel Ahmed, from Abu Dhabi, detained on March 2nd 2013.
51. Salem Mousa al-Halyan al-Tuniji, from Ras al-Khaimah, detained on March 2nd 2013.
52. Ahmed Hajji al-Qobaisi, from Abu Dhabi, detained on March 2nd 2013.
53. Ahmed Hassan al-Rostomani, from Dubai, detained on March 2nd 2013.
54. Ahmed Kayed al-Muhairi, from Abu Dhabi, detained on March 2nd 2013.
55. Ismael Abdullah al-Hosani, from Sharjah, detained on March 2nd 2013.
56. Ali Mohammed bin Hajar al-Shehhi, from Ras al-Khaimah, detained on March 2nd 2013.

Serving 7 Year Prison Sentences

1. Omran al-Radhwan, aged 29, from Sharjah, detained on July 16th 2012.
2. Mahmoud al-Hosani, aged 32, from Sharjah, detained on July 16th 2012.
3. Abdullah al-Hajiri, aged 29, from Dubai, detained on July 17th 2012.
4. Mansoor al-Ahmadi, aged 27, from Dubai, detained on October 12th 2012.
5. Fahad Abdulqader al-Hajiri, from Dubai, detained on March 2nd 2013.

Sentenced to 15 Year Prison Sentences in Absentia

1. Mohamed Saqer al-Zaabi, from Abu Dhabi, currently residing outside the UAE. Sentenced to 15 years imprisonment.
2. Abdulrahman Khalifah bin Sobaih, from Dubai, currently residing outside the UAE. Sentenced to 15 years imprisonment.
3. Saeed Nasser al-Tunajji, from Ras al-Khaimah, currently residing outside the UAE. Sentenced to 15 years imprisonment.
4. Mohammed Jassim al-Nuaimi, from Ras al-Khaimah, currently residing outside the UAE. Sentenced to 15 years imprisonment.
5. Ahmed Mohammed al-Shaibah, from Ajman, currently residing outside the UAE. Sentenced to 15 years imprisonment.
6. Hamad Mohammed al-Shamsi, from Ajman, currently residing outside the UAE. Sentenced to 15 years imprisonment.
7. Jassim Rashid al-Shamsi, from Sharjah, currently residing outside the UAE. Sentenced to 15 years imprisonment.
8. Khalaf Abdulrahman al-Rumaithi, currently residing outside the UAE. Sentenced to 15 years imprisonment.

Acquitted Defendants in UAE 94 Trial

1. Fatima al-Salaqi, aged 52, from Ajman, interrogated by authorities on January 10th 2013.
2. Hadia Abdul Aziz, aged 43, from Sharjah, interrogated by authorities on January 2nd 2013.
3. Jameela al-Shamsi, aged 52, from Sharjah, interrogated by authorities on January 9th 2013.
4. Ameena al-Shaibah, aged 59, from Ajman, interrogated by authorities on January 9th 2013.
5. Huda bin Kamel, aged 51, from Sharjah, currently on bail.
6. Naeema al-Marzouqi, aged 52, from Abu Dhabi, interrogated by authorities on January 2nd 2013.
7. Naeema Yahya, aged 49, from Sharjah, interrogated by authorities on January 2nd 2013.
8. Najeeba al-Hashimi, aged 52, from Ras al-Khaimah, interrogated by authorities on January 14th 2013.
9. Hessa al-Dhufairi, aged 50, from Ras al-Khaimah, interrogated by authorities on January 9th 2013.
10. Mariam al-Dhufairi, aged 55, from Ras al-Khaimah, interrogated by authorities on January 9th 2013.
11. Majidah al-Faris, aged 51, from Fujairah, interrogated by authorities on January 2nd 2013.
12. Najeeba al-Refaie, aged 45, from Ajman, currently on bail.
13. Fatima Humaidan al-Zaabi, aged 50, from Abu Dhabi, interrogated by authorities on January 9th 2013.
14. Ahmed Mohamed Saleh al-Hammadi, from Sharjah, detained on March 1st 2013.
15. Adel Ahmed al-Zarouni, from Abu Dhabi, detained on March 1st 2013.

16. Tawfeeq Yousif al-Sheikh, from Abu Dhabi, detained on March 2nd 2013.
17. Khamis Saeed al-Sam al-Zyouidi, aged 45, from Fujairah, detained on September 9th 2012.
18. Ahmed Awad al-Sharqi, aged 47, from Abu Dhabi, detained on August 28th 2012.
19. Rashid al-Roken, aged 26, from Dubai, detained on July 17th 2012.
20. Mohamed Abdan al-Naqbi, aged 37, from Sharjah, detained on July 24th 2012..
21. Jamal Awad al-Sharqi, aged 41, from Abu Dhabi, detained on August 28th 2012.
22. Adnan Julfar, aged 45, from Dubai, detained on July 24th 2012.
23. Ali Humaid al-Nuaimi, aged 51, from Ras al-Khaimah, detained on July 31st 2012.
24. Bader Abdulrahman al-Hammadi, aged 48, from Sharjah, detained on July 31st 2012.
25. Mohammed Abdullah al-Shaami, from Sharjah, detained on March 7th 2013.

Charged/Convicted Under Cybercrimes Decree

1. Abdullah al-Hadidi, from Sharjah, detained on March 22nd 2013 and serving a 10-month prison sentence for comments made online.
2. Mohamed Salem al-Zumer, aged 18, from Sharjah, detained on December 5th 2012 and awaiting trial.
3. Waleed al-Shehhi, from Ajman, detained on May 11th 2013 and awaiting trial.

Other Emirati Nationals being Detained in Relation to their Political & Human Rights Activism

1. Naji Rashid al-Nuaimi, from Sharjah, detained on December 14th 2012, held at an unknown location.
2. Saeid al-Shehhi, detained on December 14th 2012, held at an unknown location.
3. Salem al-Baloushi, from Abu Dhabi, detained on December 16th 2012, held at an unknown location.
4. Abdullah al-Sayq, from Dubai, detained on December 17th 2012, held at an unknown location.
5. Saleh al-Naqbi, from Sharjah, detained on December 17th 2012, held at an unknown location.
6. Omaran al-Baloushi, from Sharjah, detained on December 17th 2012, held at an unknown location.
7. Ahmed Hassan al-Hammadi, from Sharjah, detained on December 17th 2012, held at an unknown location.
8. Saud Kulaib, from Ras al-Khaimah, detained on December 29th 2012, held at an unknown location.
9. Essa al-Baloushi, from Dubai, held at an unknown location.
10. Waheed al-Baloushi, from Dubai, held at an unknown location.
11. Mahmoud Ahmed Edrees, from Dubai, held at an unknown location.
12. Owais Ahmed Edrees, from Dubai, held at an unknown location.
13. Saleh al-Hajiri, from Abu Dhabi, held at an unknown location.
14. Abdullah al-Suraihi, from Abu Dhabi, held at an unknown location.

15. Khalifah al-Baloushi, from Sharjah, held at an unknown location.
16. Taher al-Tamimi, from Dubai, detained on March 25th 2013, held at an unknown location.
17. Saeed Abdullah al-Buraimi, detained on March 26th 2013, held at an unknown location.
18. Abdulwahid al-Badi, detained on March 26th 2013, held at an unknown location.
19. Obaid al-Zaabi, from Abu Dhabi, detained on July 1st 2013, transferred to al-Sader jail on July 7th 2013.
20. Hussain al-Ajlah, detained on July 1st 2013, held at an unknown location.
21. Hithem Jassim, detained on July 17th 2013, held at an unknown location.
22. Khalifah Rabia, from Fujairah detained on July 24th 2013, held at an unknown location.
23. Othman Ali al-Shehhi, from Ras al-Khaimah, detained on July 24th 2013, held at an unknown location.

Emirati Nationals & Stateless Persons Deported to 3rd Party Country

1. Ahmed Abdulkhaleq, stateless person, deported to Thailand on July 16th 2012.

Non-UAE Nationals Detained in the UAE

1. Ahmed Jaafer, Egyptian, detained on December 18th 2012, whereabouts unknown.
2. Ali Sonbul, Egyptian, detained in the UAE on December 19th 2012, whereabouts unknown
3. Mohammed Shahdah, Egyptian, detained in the UAE on November 30th 2012, whereabouts unknown.
4. Abdullah Ibrahim, Egyptian, detained in the UAE on December 11th 2012, whereabouts unknown.
5. Saleh Faraj, Egyptian, detained on November 21st 2012, whereabouts unknown.
6. Ibrahim Abdulaziz, Egyptian, detained on December 15th 2012, whereabouts unknown.
7. Ahmed Taha, Egyptian, detained on December 19th 2012, whereabouts unknown.
8. Murad Mohammed Hamed, Egyptian, detained on December 19th 2012, whereabouts unknown.
9. Salah Rezaq al-Meshad, Egyptian, detained on November 30th 2012, whereabouts unknown.
10. Abdullah al-Arabi, Egyptian, detained on November 30th 2012, whereabouts unknown.
11. Medhat al-Ajez, Egyptian, detained on November 30th 2012, whereabouts unknown.
12. Mohammed Abdul Muneam, Egyptian, detained on January 7th 2013, whereabouts unknown.
14. Mahmoud al-Jeedah, Qatari, detained on February 28th 2013, whereabouts unknown.
15. Ahmed Iabeb, Egyptian, detained on December 13th 2012, whereabouts unknown.

16. Abdulmune'm Ali Al Sayed Ateyah, Egyptian, detained on January 3rd 2013, whereabouts unknown.
17. Midhat Rajab Ammar, Egyptian, whereabouts unknown.
18. Hamdi Nassar, Egyptian, detained on June 3rd 2013, whereabouts unknown.
19. Mohammed Mousa, Egyptian, detained on June 4th 2013, whereabouts unknown.
20. Rajab Abdrabuh, Egyptian, detained on June 3rd 2013, whereabouts unknown.
21. Abdulhakam Mohammed Fathi, Egyptian, detained on June 4th 2013, whereabouts unknown.
22. Ezzat al-Namer, Egyptian, detained on June 4th 2013, whereabouts unknown.
23. Aiman Zahran, Egyptian, detained on June 4th 2013, whereabouts unknown.
24. Ahmed Essam Mahmoud, Egyptian, detained on June 4th 2013, whereabouts unknown.
25. Mohammed Refa'at, Egyptian, detained on June 4th 2013, whereabouts unknown.
26. Aiman al-Adawi, Egyptian, detained on June 4th 2013, whereabouts unknown.
27. Osama al-Far, Egyptian, detained on June 4th 2013, whereabouts unknown.
28. Harbi Mahmoud Harbi, Egyptian, detained on June 4th 2013, whereabouts unknown.
29. Osama al-Rwainy, Egyptian, detained on June 4th 2013, whereabouts unknown.
30. Mohammed al-Jumaily, Egyptian, detained on June 4th 2013, whereabouts unknown.
31. Ahmed Nasif, Egyptian, detained on June 4th 2013, whereabouts unknown.
32. Nasser Ibrahim, Egyptian, detained on June 4th 2013, whereabouts unknown.

Annex 12: UAE's Political Activism Images



A child asks his father about the meaning of the word “freedom;” the father shushes him and tells him it is inappropriate to mention it.⁴²³



“Justice for UAE detainees.”⁴²⁴

⁴²³ Source: http://www.emasc-uae.com/up_carec/8.jpg

⁴²⁴ Source: Khalifa Al-Nuaimi Blog <http://kalnuaimi.wordpress.com/>

Annex 13: Letter sent to UAEU students

(Last warning to female students not to give political lectures at the campus mosque).

UAEU



No. RC-27/10-064
Date: 27th October 2011

المحترمون / الاخوة والاحوات / موظفي الكلية السكنية والطالبات

الموضوع: تحذير نهائي

بناءً على ما وردنا من شكاوي بخصوص جماعة المسجد ومن ما يتم مناقشته من مواضيع سياسية خلال محاضراتهم الدينية. فعلية وفي حالة ورود أي شكوى أخرى بخصوص هذا الموضوع فسوف يتم وقف نشاط الجمعية المذكورة أعلاه ، مع إحالة الطالبات المخالفات للمسائلة والتحقيق من قبل إدارة الجامعة مما قد ينجم عنه تبعات أخرى .

شاكرين لكم حسن تعاونكم معنا،
وتفضلوا بقبول فائق الاحترام والتقدير ،



Dr. Ayesha Salem Al Dhaheri
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الكلية السكنية

ص.ب ١٧٥٥١، العين، الإمارات العربية المتحدة
ت +٩٧١ ٣ ٧١٣ ٦٠٢١ ف +٩٧١ ٣ ٧٦٧ ١٥٩٦
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