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The United Arab Emirates: Prospects for Political Reform

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THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE)—a federation of sheikhdoms in the lower Persian Gulf comprising oil-rich Abu Dhabi, as well as the international entrepôt of Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Fujairah, Ras al-Khaimah, and Umm al-Qawain—has for years enjoyed the highest economic growth rates in the Middle East.¹ It has built up enormous sovereign wealth funds² and has attracted impressive levels of foreign direct investment.³ Moreover, even though Dubai's attempts to experiment with real estate and tourism may now be coming unstuck in the wake of tightening global credit markets,⁴ Abu Dhabi's investments in heavy industries, renewable energies, and a knowledge economy will nevertheless ensure the long-term sustainability of the UAE's diversification strategy.

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Remarkably, this astoundingly successful development has been presided over by traditional political structures that have shown little sign of evolution. Certainly, politics in the UAE remain defined by an assortment of seemingly absolute hereditary monarchies that are loosely assembled under a central, federal government dominated by the two wealthiest emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai. There has been no real evidence of democratic opening, at least in the western sense. And far less tangible political reform has taken place in the UAE than in neighboring Gulf states, including even Saudi Arabia.⁵ Indeed, international non-governmental organizations regularly rank the UAE among the least free political systems in the world, and consistently place it behind Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman.⁶ Viewed through a lens of development scholarship, this is especially significant given that most of the distinguished modernization theorists writing in the mid-twentieth century—including Samuel Huntington, Karl Deutsch, and Daniel Lerner—predicted that such traditional polities, or political

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systems still dominated by patriarchal or patrimonial authorities, would eventually fail with the rise of modernization. Indeed, the modernization argument was considered especially pertinent for these monarchies given that most were on the cusp of great socio-economic growth due to substantial oil revenues. The rulers would soon have to develop schools, universities, hospitals, and formal government institutions, which would lead to the formation of a new middle class that would ultimately be dissatisfied with non-participatory political structures.⁷

EXPLAINING MONARCHICAL SURVIVAL

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How, then, can one account for the remarkable resilience of the United Arab Emirates' monarchies and this lack of political reform? Part of the explanation lies in the comprehensive, multi-dimensional, and much-discussed⁸ "ruling bargain" that continues to remain in place between the ruling families and their citizens. Essentially, this monarchical social contract has allowed the UAE's monarchs to trade a package of economic benefits and legitimacy resources in exchange for their national population's political acquiescence. In many ways, the UAE's version of the bargain has been stronger than those operating elsewhere in the Gulf, given that the UAE's population of passport-carrying nationals is so small.⁹ This allows the government to distribute wealth more easily to all and thereby preserve and enrich a distinct elite of rent-receiving or "rentier" citizens.¹⁰ Salaried expatriates, who for many years have made up the bulk of the population, can for the most part be dismissed as politically irrelevant: they have migrated to the UAE to earn higher wages over a temporary period, and in most cases remain disinterested in political participation. Furthermore, the relatively small size of the national elite has also allowed the UAE's ruling families to manage effectively all of the old patrimonial and tribal networks under a veneer of seemingly modern governmental institutions. Certainly, the UAE's polity is noteworthy for its ingenious methods of prolonging traditional political practices within what can now be best described as a hybrid, neo-patrimonial government. Undoubtedly, UAE politics remain based on direct, two-way lines of communication between citizens and rulers, and recent efforts to expand formal participation through semi-elected councils have yet to amount to much more than window dressing.

Nevertheless, genuine political liberalization is not impossible; the UAE's rapid economic development may soon serve as a catalyst for more meaningful political reform. Investors, entrepreneurs, and an increasing number of other stakeholders in the UAE economic miracle may soon demand greater transparency and accountability. Indeed, many of the economic reforms and the joining of international organizations that have been necessary in order for the UAE to kick-start its new non-oil sectors

and participate in the global economy have already led to a significant strengthening of civil society, or at least the emergence of relatively independent groups motivated by economic self-interest. Notably, by allowing free-zone activity—which permits foreign companies to operate in the UAE with no local sponsor—and by joining various international trade and labor organizations, the UAE has been obliged to permit workers' associations and play host to foreign companies with democratically elected boards. By constructing luxury condominiums and inviting foreign investment, the UAE cannot prevent the inevitable formation of residential associations. Furthermore, by promoting sectors that attract high technology research and development firms or higher educational institutions, the UAE has had little choice but to relax some of its controls over domestic media and the internet—the erstwhile blocks on free flowing ideas and information across the country.

THE HYBRID, NEO-PATRIMONIAL GOVERNMENT

Given the enormous number of institutions relative to its modest population size and the active mixture that exists between traditional and more formal powers, the United Arab Emirates provides one of the best examples of a hybrid, neo-patrimonial political system. At the apex of the emirate-level governments are the private offices and courts of both the rulers and the crown princes. They have their own staff; chamberlains and directors of these bodies are considered high-status positions, as they allow an individual to serve as an intermediary between the supreme, traditional power and the regular government and citizenry. Moreover, in the case of Abu Dhabi, which is by far the largest of the UAE members, the eastern and western regions of the emirate still have their ruler's representatives, and each have their own private offices and courts.

While it remains possible for unilateral decisions to be made by the ruler's office and then issued as "emiri decrees," most legislation is now crafted by each emirate's executive council before it is sent for approval to the ruler's office and then introduced as law. Of these councils, the Abu Dhabi Executive Council is unsurprisingly the most powerful, being more formal than those in Dubai and the other emirates:¹¹ it meets regularly, determines all public spending in Abu Dhabi, and has annual policy agendas that publicly list all of its goals for that year. As such, its chairman—Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince—is also effectively Abu Dhabi's prime minister, and a family's inclusion or exclusion from the council's membership is an accurate barometer of prestige and influence in the emirate. Subordinate to the Abu Dhabi Executive Council are all the regular government departments one would expect. Additionally, there are the influential Supreme Petroleum Council and three municipalities and three police forces (one for the capital and one for each of the two regions). Finally, there are a score of new bod-

ies, including the Abu Dhabi Education Council, the Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority and its Office of the Brand of Abu Dhabi, the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage, the Urban Planning Council, the Environmental Agency of Abu Dhabi, and the Executive Affairs Authority.

The United Arab Emirates provides one of the best examples of a hybrid, neo-patrimonial political system.

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Ostensibly providing the Abu Dhabi Executive Council with suggestions and feedback is the National Consultative Council (NCC). Again, compared to those in the other emirates,¹² Abu Dhabi's body is relatively more formal. Having been established by emiri decree in late 1971,¹³ the NCC has since been charged with considering draft laws, discussing "public subjects," and considering any petitions it receives.¹⁴ Traditionally, there have been six subcommittees that have worked under the council and

have been responsible for producing recommendations: interior and defense; financial and economic affairs; legislative and legal affairs; health, labor, and social affairs; education, agriculture, and information; and municipalities and public utilities. In addition, there also exists a committee to prepare the agenda for NCC meetings and committees for both the eastern and western regions. Given that it is not a decision-making institution and is supposed to represent the views of the general public, there have never been any members of the ruling family or other powerful tribes on the NCC. As a consultative council its usefulness is somewhat questionable, not least given that the Abu Dhabi Executive Council is not required to consider all of the recommendations it receives. Moreover, after 37 years of operation the NCC remains entirely appointive, with Article 3 of its founding law remaining unchanged: "the ruler will select, appoint, and accept the resignation of the members of the NCC by emiri decree." Furthermore, as per Article 4 of the law, "the term of the membership in the NCC will be for two renewable years...those members whose membership has expired can be reselected."¹⁵ In effect, this has meant that some members have been perpetually reappointed. Incredibly, only three of the current members were first appointed in the last eight years. None of the members are female, in contrast with the Sharjah council, which has 17 percent female membership.¹⁶

In some ways, the federal government of the UAE mirrors Abu Dhabi's emirate-level administration. There exists an all powerful but essentially traditional body, the Supreme Council of Rulers (SCR), which is made up of the hereditary rulers of the seven member emirates, as per the original federal agreements of 1971. While the provisional constitution did allow for an SCR presidential election to take place every five years,¹⁷ there has only been one such occasion in late 2004 when the ruler of Abu Dhabi succeeded his father. Indeed, for the time being, rulership of Abu Dhabi remains synonymous with the presidency of the UAE, not least because of Abu Dhabi's

single-handed financing of most federal development projects. Moreover, the SCR also reflects Dubai's status as the UAE's second wealthiest emirate by awarding only the rulers of Abu Dhabi and Dubai veto power in its meetings, as per Article 49 of the constitution,¹⁸ and by always appointing the ruler of Dubai as the vice president. Certainly, upon Sheikh Muhammad bin Rashid Al-Maktum's accession as ruler of Dubai in early 2006, he was automatically installed as vice president of the UAE. In support of the SCR, or more specifically the president, there exists a presidential office and a presidential court with its own staff. However, given the ruler of Abu Dhabi's similar emirate-level institutions, it is unclear if the two function independently.

Responsible for the federal government's decision making is the Council of Ministers (COM). Since its establishment in 1972, its composition has always reflected the relative power and influence of the member emirates, in much the same way that the Abu Dhabi Executive Council reflects the prestige of tribes and families. As a former minister explains of the COM's original cabinet, "There was a belief that wealth and family background alone would guarantee security and stability."¹⁹ Although originally made up of 11 ministers in addition to the prime minister, the COM was soon expanded to 19 positions as the other emirates began to supply their contingents of appointees.²⁰ The premiership transferred to the crown prince of Dubai, before a constitutional crisis in 1979 persuaded the ruler of Dubai himself to become prime minister as well as vice president. However, for much of this period Abu Dhabi held the lion's share of COM positions, including the deputy premiership, the ministry for the interior, the ministry for higher education, and the ministry for public works. Today, the COM's membership has increased somewhat, to 20 ministers and 5 ministers of state, but remains in favor of Abu Dhabi, with it controlling the ministry for foreign affairs, the ministry for presidential affairs, and a second deputy prime minister position. In total, there are now seven members of Abu Dhabi's ruling Al-Nahyan family serving as ministers, in addition to Abu Dhabi-based ministers for justice,²¹ the economy,²² and energy.²³ Furthermore, there are at least two additional ministers who are believed to be *de facto* members of the Abu Dhabi contingent.²⁴

Fulfilling the same role at the federal level as the NCC in Abu Dhabi, the Federal National Council (FNC) is a consultative body made up of contingents from each emirate. Comprised of 40 appointees, including an internally-elected speaker and two deputies, this chamber sits for sessions of two years at a time and has a similar number of subcommittees, most of which have identical titles to those of the NCC. Again, much like the COM, the more powerful emirates dominate, as per article 72 of the provisional federal constitution,²⁵ with Abu Dhabi and Dubai each supplying eight members, while Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah supply six, and the other three emirates supply just four.²⁶ In turn, these contingents are most often made up of senior representatives of

non-ruling tribes or sections. In recent years there has been mounting criticism of the FNC, with many of its members and other citizens claiming that it is largely ineffective. Certainly, while it has been successful in petitioning ministers on some rather banal subjects,²⁷ it has been incapable of making more substantive interventions,²⁸ and it has often been unable to elicit responses from ministers.²⁹

EFFORTS TO EXPAND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

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There is some evidence of fairly simple, uncontroversial measures being taken to reinvigorate or at least extend the lifespan of the old neo-patrimonial system. These have not really required any adjustment to the existing political structures. For example, an increasing number of informal “agents,” or chamberlains, are being appointed by members of the ruling family to serve as conduits between themselves and regular citizens. But these are invariably still viewed by UAE nationals as being part of the “old guard.” Moreover, there has also been a keen interest in various forms of “e-government” with the reasoning that websites and internet forums provide opportunities for government officials and even sheikhs to maintain at least some semblance of direct connection with the citizenry. Dubai has undisputedly pioneered such services, with a plethora of government electronic portals—all of which allow grievances to be filed online—and with even the ruler himself having an interactive website and a Facebook profile. Recently, Dubai has also begun a public service that allows members of the public to telephone or email municipality officials at designated times of the week.³⁰ Abu Dhabi is catching up, with a spokesperson for the current e-government project in the emirate explaining that they “sought to adopt the best standards and practices to meet the target of ranking Abu Dhabi among the best five governments worldwide.”³¹ Abu Dhabi is also innovative, with its municipality launching online videos on YouTube and Ikbis, an Arabic video website for children, both of which are very popular among young UAE nationals. These videos showcase the achievements of the municipality and, according to one of its directors, “We took this step so as to spread our views about our activities and get comments to build a stronger social structure and to make sure to be in contact with the public.”³² In total, there are now about 500 Abu Dhabi government services accessible online.³³

There have also been a number of experiments to reform the consultative councils, namely the Federal National Council. Unfortunately, the steps that have been taken to reform the FNC have thus far backfired and, if anything, have made the ruling establishment more wary of future adjustments. In early 2006, a new federal minister of state portfolio for Federal National Council Affairs was appointed and made responsible for strengthening the council.³⁴ The plan was to stage elections for

half of the 40 positions, but instead of allowing universal suffrage for the entire UAE national population, only those approved to join an “electoral college” were permitted to vote. By the time the elections were held in late 2006, it soon transpired that less than 6,700 nationals had been admitted to this electoral college, of which less than 1,200 were women,³⁵ thus delegitimizing the process in many people’s minds. Indeed, only 60 percent of the voters actually cast their ballots, and most observers considered the process a sham.³⁶ One prominent Abu Dhabi national³⁷ described the elections as “a setback that showed clear tendencies towards tribalism.”³⁸ Since then, the position of minister of state portfolio for Federal National Council affairs has been removed from the Council of Ministers.³⁹

It is unclear what the next step will be. It would seem that the United Arab Emirates has been in a transitional state since these elections, with different proposals being forwarded. Municipal councils have been introduced in the western region of Abu Dhabi, and elections to **There is some evidence of fairly simple, uncontroversial measures being taken to reinvigorate or at least extend the lifespan of the old neo-patrimonial system.** positions in the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce have now been occurring for some years.⁴⁰ But in both cases these only involve a limited number of persons. In 2007, it was suggested that the FNC would undergo a second round of elections in 2010, in which all 40 of the positions would be contested and the electoral college would be greatly expanded.⁴¹ However, this suggestion has met with only a lukewarm response and has received no further press coverage. Instead, it would appear that the FNC is being given a little more power. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, ruler of Abu Dhabi and president of the UAE, has publicly stated his commitment to making it a stronger bridge between the government and the citizenry,⁴² explaining that it will have a “bigger role...by empowering it to be an authority that will provide great support and guidance of the executive...the FNC will become more capable, more effective and more sensitive to the issues affecting the nation and the people.”⁴³ Since mid-2007, the FNC has begun to host a number of debates, many of which have criticized ministries and some of which have allowed non-FNC members to attend and participate. Current members of the FNC have claimed that they are more active than ever before, and that they feel they are “pushing at an open door” and are likely to soon have an even more expanded role.⁴⁴ Examples of such debates have included a lively session on federal education policies,⁴⁵ a session in which five ministers were collectively quizzed on their performance, and a session on how to best control the increase in personal loans. Perhaps the FNC’s most notable success has been its debate on a new commercial fraud law: this involved the participation of the federal minister for finance⁴⁶ and would seem to have led to the creation of a new credit database.⁴

With hundreds of branches of foreign companies establishing themselves in the United Arab Emirates' free-zone investment parks, a critical mass of corporate entities in the UAE is emerging that subscribe to democratic practices, or at the very least have elected boards and other transparent structures. With many of these companies employing local staff, their presence is now transcending the free-zone enclaves as they experience increasing interaction with the domestic economy and society. As such, it is possible that something of a demonstration effect may take place, with domestically incorporated companies and employees undoubtedly being provided with a blueprint for future local organizations, including civil society associations.

124 Moreover, for the new non-oil sectors to succeed in attracting foreign direct investment and building global partnerships, the UAE has been compelled to join a number of international economic organizations, including the World Trade Organization, to which it acceded in 1996. As with all other new member states, the UAE was obliged to agree to a roadmap towards an improved regulatory infrastructure and a commitment to international standards of good governance.⁴⁸ While there has been criticism in the UAE of the WTO requirements for the premature dismantling of some its monopolies, there nevertheless seems to be a consensus that transparency and accountability have increased in both the public and private sectors since accession. Of greatest impact, however, has been the UAE's joining of the International Labor Organization—another implicit requirement of WTO membership. Previously, federal law did not permit workers to engage in any form of collective bargaining.⁴⁹ For white-collar professions, employee


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.

associations were tolerated, and for some years these were allowed to raise collectively work-related issues and to file protests with the government.⁵⁰ For blue-collar workers, however, any attempt to remonstrate was normally

suppressed by the threat of imprisonment or deportation. Significantly, since the federal government's recent adherence to a range of ILO conventions,⁵¹ there have been several highly active informal workers' associations that have not been dismantled by the government. In most cases, these associations have been attempting to peacefully redress unfair practices (including deliberate delays in paying salaries and lack of compensation for injured employees),⁵² although in some cases there have been violent strikes that have severely delayed the completion of major construction projects. Between 2005 and 2007, more than 20 organized protests took place in Dubai alone,⁵³ as workers felt emboldened to press claims in a manner that would have been inconceivable for

earlier generations of expatriate workers.

Another key feature of civil society that may be emerging is the existence of residential associations. With wealthy investors and residents buying luxurious properties across the UAE, they have unsurprisingly begun to express concerns about the opaqueness of town planning as they fear that their investments and lifestyles may be adversely affected should the government construct new highways or tower blocks in the vicinity of their holdings. Certainly, in the last few years there have been instances of significant alterations to original blueprints and unannounced new developments being undertaken alongside existing projects.⁵⁴ While in some of these cases the initial investors were offered compensation,⁵⁵ the system has nevertheless often left buyers feeling very vulnerable. By forming associations which the government cannot reasonably object to, given that they are commonplace in real estate developments elsewhere in the world, UAE residents are effectively being allowed to form civil society organizations that may soon be powerful enough to lobby municipalities and other local government departments.

Finally, another 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. Since the 1970s, a much maligned Ministry of Information and Culture oversaw the censorship of all newspapers, magazines, and the internet since the late 1990s, in an effort to curb access to undesirable material including pornography, gambling, magic, and sensitive political information—including issues relating to democracy and human rights violations in the Gulf. In 2006, however, the ministry was disbanded, as it was viewed as being anachronistic and incompatible with the UAE's drive for global economic integration. Certainly, it was feared that tourists, investors, and other interested parties would balk at such repressive practices. As such, there is today certainly a greater feeling of freedom for local media. While journalists do continue to self-censor, there is nevertheless a more relaxed atmosphere than before, and a number of critical reports have recently been published that would not have been possible just a few years ago. Most tellingly, a new broadsheet quality English-language newspaper has been launched in Abu Dhabi that is funded by a government agency yet is staffed by western editors and has been given a genuine *carte blanche* to provide critical coverage of domestic affairs. Moreover, while there remains an internet proxy server that restricts access to certain websites, many of the new real estate developments, free zones, and universities are operating outside of this system and in practice have unfettered access to the internet. Within the next few years it is likely that this internet freedom will be extended to all residents of the UAE. 

NOTES

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1. The average GDP growth for the UAE for the period 2000–2006 was 8.4 percent, the highest in the Gulf. Oxford Business Group, *Abu Dhabi Report* (London: Oxford Business Group, 2007).

2. The assets of the Abu Dhabi Investments Authority are believed to be nearly \$900 billion—approximately three times greater than those of Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth funds. Jean-Francois Seznec, "The Gulf Sovereign Wealth Funds: Myths and Reality," *Middle East Policy* 15, no. 2 (2008): 97.

3. FDI flows into the UAE are thought to be about \$3 billion, the bulk of which flow into Dubai. Personal interviews, Dubai, March 2007; data from Inter-Arab Investment Guarantee Corporation, *Annual Report on the UAE 2007*.

4. Glen Carey, "Dubai Speculators Quit As Lending Drought Bursts Desert Bubble," *Bloomberg*, 4 December 2008.

5. In 2005, Saudi Arabia held municipal elections in which males over the age of 21 were eligible to vote. Steve Coll, "Islamic Activists Sweep Saudi Council Elections," *Washington Post*, 24 April 2005.

6. According to Freedom House, the UAE scores six for political rights and five for civil liberties (on a scale of one to seven, with seven being the worst). This compares unfavourably with other Gulf states, with Kuwait scoring four for both categories and with Bahrain scoring five for both categories. The UAE's score places it on a par with many African and Asian dictatorships. See Freedom House, *The Worst of the Worst: The World's Most Repressive Societies* (Washington, D.C.: Freedom House, 2007).

7. Examples of such modernization theorists would include: Karl W. Deutsch, "Social Mobilization and Political Development," *American Political Science Review* 55, no. 3 (1961); Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968); Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing in the Middle East* (Toronto: Free Press, 1964).

8. Christopher M. Davidson, *Dubai: The Vulnerability of Success* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 137–176.

9. There are about 875,000 UAE nationals. This estimate is based on a total UAE resident population of about 4.6 million, of which 19 percent are thought to be nationals. "United Arab Emirates," *CIA World Factbook* (2008).

10. A *rentier* is a citizen in receipt of distributed wealth or other economic privileges afforded by a state that has become enriched on economic rent and that does not normally rely on extractive practices such as direct taxation. See Hazem Beblawi and Giacomo Luciani, eds., *The Rentier State* (New York: Croom Helm, 1987).

11. The Dubai Executive Council is very informal. See Davidson, 158–159. The Sharjah Executive Council is considered quite strong—the ruler claims he cannot make decisions without a consensus from the Council.

12. Although there were discussions in 2003, no such body has been set up in Dubai yet. See Davidson, 159.

13. Law number 2 of 1971 concerning the establishment of the National Consultative Council.

14. Law number 2 of 1971 and Emiri decree number 39 of 1972.

15. Law number 2 of 1971.

16. Personal interviews, Exeter, July 2008.

17. See Najat Abdullah Al-Nabeh, *United Arab Emirates: Regional and Global Dimensions* (Claremont, CA: Claremont Graduate School, 1984).

18. Personal interviews, Abu Dhabi, March 2007; Easa Saleh Al-Gurg, *The Wells of Memory* (London: John Murray, 1998), 140; Joseph A. Kéchichian, *Power and Succession in Arab Monarchies: A Reference Guide* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2008), 284.

19. Abdullah Taryam, *The Establishment of the United Arab Emirates, 1950–1985* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), 118.

20. *Ibid.*, 206.

21. Hadeef bin Jouan Al-Dhaheri.
22. Sultan bin Said Al-Mansuri.
23. Muhammad bin Dhaen Al-Hamili.
24. Although Dubai-dwelling, the minister for education—Hanif Hassan Al-Qassimi—had previously been the deputy of Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al-Nahyan at the ministry for higher education.
25. Kéchichian, 285.
26. S. N. Asad Rizvi, "From Tents to High Rise: Economic Development of the United Arab Emirates," *Middle Eastern Studies* 29, no. 4 (1993), 665.
27. These have normally been over concerns that were already shared by the COM, such as the need for tightening anti-drug legislation and the need for further modifying the UAE's property laws. Al-Nahyan and Shamma bint Muhammad, *Political and Social Security in the United Arab Emirates* (Dubai: 2000), 122–123.
28. Especially in cases where the FNC's views were likely to diverge from the relevant minister's outlook, such as over the price of petrol or the cultural content of terrestrial television. *Ibid.*, 121.
29. There have been examples of the FNC's letters to ministers having remained unanswered for several months, and occasions when the FNC has been unable to persuade ministers to attend their sessions and answer basic questions on their policies. *Ibid.*, 178-179, 188.
30. *The National*, 6 August 2008.
31. *Gulf News*, 27 March 2008; *Oxford Business Group* "Abu Dhabi 2007: The Report," 16.
32. *Gulf News*, 7 August 2008.
33. *Oxford Business Group*, 16.
34. Anwar bin Muhammad Gargash from Dubai, *Khaleej Times*, 10 February 2006.
35. 6689 in total, of which 1189 were women.
36. Davidson, 165–166.
37. Jamal bin Sanad Al-Suwaidi.
38. *Gulf News*, 21 March 2007.
39. Anwar bin Muhammad Gargash was been reassigned to being federal minister of state for foreign affairs, under Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan.
40. *Oxford Business Group*, 17.
41. Personal interviews, Dubai, January 2007.
42. *Gulf News*, 21 December 2006.
43. *Gulf News*, 26 June 2008.
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Gulf News*, 7 May 2008.
46. Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al-Maktum.
47. *Gulf News*, 26 June 2008; Personal interviews, Abu Dhabi, April 2008.
48. Gary P. Sampson, ed., *The Role of the World Trade Organisation in Global Governance* (New York: United Nations University Press, 2001).
49. U.S. State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, *Annual Report on the UAE 2007*.
50. *Ibid.*
51. *Khaleej Times*, 2 December 2002. Citing the UAE Minister of Labour and Social Affairs speaking at the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
52. *Khaleej Times*, 2 October 2004.
53. U.S. State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.
54. A prominent example would include Nakheel's decision to squeeze more properties onto Palm Jumeirah, thereby reducing the footprint of each villa. In 2005, a new bypass road was constructed close to Emaar's Meadows project, much to the chagrin of residents.
55. Personal interviews, Dubai, June 2006.