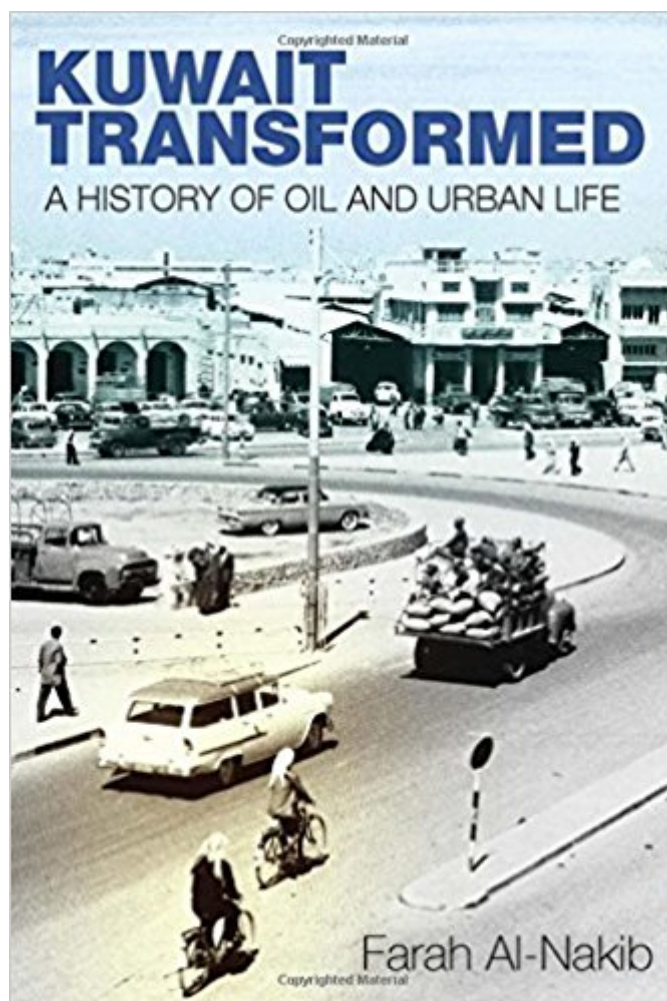


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Kuwait Transformed: A History Of Oil And Urban Life



Synopsis

As the first Gulf city to experience oil urbanization, Kuwait City's transformation in the mid-twentieth century inaugurated a now-familiar regional narrative: a small traditional town of mudbrick courtyard houses and plentiful foot traffic transformed into a modern city with marble-fronted buildings, vast suburbs, and wide highways. In *Kuwait Transformed*, Farah Al-Nakib connects the city's past and present, from its settlement in 1716 to the twenty-first century, through the bridge of oil discovery. She traces the relationships between the urban landscape, patterns and practices of everyday life, and social behaviors and relations in Kuwait. The history that emerges reveals how decades of urban planning, suburbanization, and privatization have eroded an open, tolerant society and given rise to the insularity, xenophobia, and divisiveness that characterize Kuwaiti social relations today. The book makes a call for a restoration of the city that modern planning eliminated. But this is not simply a case of nostalgia for a lost landscape, lifestyle, or community. It is a claim for a "right to the city"—the right of all inhabitants to shape and use the spaces of their city to meet their own needs and desires.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A fascinating and well-written book, and a very welcome addition to the field of urban history of the Middle East, which is normally focused on Cairo, French North Africa, or on the decadence of newer Gulf powers (Dubai and Abu Dhabi). Though Kuwait City was, in many ways, a forerunner and model for cities like Dubai, al-Nakib makes a strong case for the importance of understanding the conditions that led to their rapid rise and urbanization, as well as the trends they have experienced

since the Iraqi invasion in 1990/91. Students and interested readers of topics like the contemporary middle east, the role of oil in state building, and urban planning will all find al-Nakib's book to be valuable and insightful.

Very important book, powerful and well written

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