## Contents

1	Introduction: The Balancing Powers: A New Approach to Study Kuwait's History 1
2	Kuwait's Institutional Development until 1921 7
	Establishment of the Ruling System in Kuwait
	The Role of the Economy in the Relationship between Sheikhs and Merchants
	Mubarak al-Sabah's Rule (1896-1915)
	Mubarak's Coup in 1896: Prelude to the Balancing Powers' Roles
	Emigration of Leading Merchants in 1910
	The Pearl Industry and the Labour Force: The Balancing Powers in the Light of History
	Mubarak and the Opposition from the Religious Scholars
	The British Protection of al-Sabah's Throne
	The Reigns of Jabir and Salim (1915-1921)
	The Emergence of Institutions in Kuwait during the Reigns of Mubarak and his Sons
	Al-Muharakiyya School
	The Establishment of al-Jam 'iyya al-Khayriyya in 1913
	The Institutional Development in the Era of Salim bin Mubarak
3	The Emergence of Political Institutions 29
	Social Stratification and Divisions in the Pre-Oil Era
	Asil and Non-Asil
	Neighbourhoods
	Occupation and Economic Class
	1921 Shura Council (Majlis al-Shura)
	The First Written Constitution in Kuwait's History
	'Abd al-'Aziz al-Rushaid's Leading Role

The Development of Cultural and Administrative Institutions

Al-Maktaba Al-Ahliyya

Al-Nadi Al-Adabi (the Literary Club)

The Municipal and Education Councils

## 4 The 1938 Legislative Council

59

The Rise in Power of the National Bloc

Roots and Inspirations of the Bloc

The Impact of the Iraqi Media in the Establishment of the Legislative Council

Qasr al-Zuhur Radio

Ahmad al-Jabir's Reaction to the 1938 Merchants' Petition

The Election of the First Legislative Council in 1938

The 1938 Council's Reforms

The Dissolution of the Council

The British Attitude towards the 1938 Legislative Council

The Role of the Balancing Powers in the Outcome of the Struggle

Bedouins, 'Ajams, and Villagers Supporting the Ruler

The National Youth Bloc and the Intelligentsia: Supporters of the Legislative Council

The Second Legislative Council in 1939

The 1939 Council's Dissolution and the Execution of al-Munais

The Fate of the Political Detainees

Conclusion

## 5 Wielding Power: The Sheikhs' Domination on Kuwaiti Politics (1939-1956)

87

Power Dynamics within the Ruling Family between 1921 and 1938

The Rise of the Awlad Salim (1940-1950)

The 1950 Succession of Ahmad al-Jabir

'Abd Allah al-Salim's Challenged Consolidation of His Rule

The British Struggle with the Heads of Hereditary Institutions

6	The Balancing Powers during the Oil Era	107
	The Constitution of an Intelligentsia	
	Ideological Trends among the Intelligentsia: al-Shirbasi's Typology	
	The Intelligentsia as the Neo-Opposition	
	A New M'azib?	
	From Diving to Drilling	
	The Intelligentsia and Oil Revenues	
	The Distribution Policies and the Balancing Powers	
	Conclusion	
7	The Balancing Powers' Crucial Political Role, 1957-1962	127
	The Arab Nationalists' Involvement in External Affairs	
	The Apogee of the Arab Nationalist Movement	
	The Sheikhs Assert their Power (1957-1960)	
	The Balancing Powers' Role in Establishing the Nascent State – Kuwait's Independence and Qasim's Threats	
	The Return of the 1938 Majlis Movement's Merchants	
	The New Constitution: The Balancing Powers Sweep the 1961 Elections	
	The Direct Confrontation between the Balancing Powers and the Sheikhs	
	The Constitutional Committee: Negotiating the Balance of Power	
	Kuwait's Constitutional Framework	
	Conclusion	
8	Concluding Remarks	161
	Appendices	167
	Notes	181
	List of Sources	215