Review of International Studies (2011), 37, 167–184 *doi:10.1017/S0260210510000987*
© 2010 British International Studies Association
First published online 1 Sep 2010

Why monarchies persist: balancing between internal and external vulnerability

HILLEL FRISCH*

Abstract. Why have absolutist monarchies in the past three decades survived when so many succumbed to coups and revolution in the past? The rulers' use of divide-and-rule and balancing strategies as Lust-Okar and Jamal noted recently, served as a partial solution. Overlooked in the literature on the persistance of monarchies was how these mechanisms, which reduce the leader's domestic vulnerability, mar his offensive capabilities to cope with centralising, more effective and threatening neighbours. To cope with this trade-off between internal and external vulnerabilities, monarchs and leaders of other Third World states have been involved in a two-level game of 'omnibalancing' – allying with strong outside powers when possible while continuing to employ divide-and-rule and balancing techniques domestically. Only resource-rich or strategically located monarchies can enjoy such protection which is why most of monarchies that have persisted are located in the Middle East.

Hillel Frisch is Associate Professor in the Departments of Political Studies and the Middle East History, Bar-Ilan University. His latest book is *The Palestinian Military: Between Militias and Armies* (Routledge, 2008). He is currently writing a book on Israel's Arab citizens from an IR security perspective.

At the end of the twentieth century, one could count ten absolute monarchies in the world. Eight of them are located in the Middle East, concentrated in a land mass that represents less than ten per cent of the earth's surface and less than five per cent of the world population. All told, more monarchies in the Middle East have survived (8) than have succumbed to military coups or revolution (5). The monarchies that have survived are Morocco, Jordan, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. The monarchies that have succumbed to military coup or revolution are Egypt (1952), Iraq (1958), Yemen (1962) Libya (1969) and Iran (1979). These basic facts raise yield two questions: What explains the resilience of existing monarchies? And why is the Middle East, one of the more turbulent areas in the world, home to most of them out of all proportion to the area's demographic and physical dimensions?

Most of the answers to date have sought answers to these questions exclusively in the domestic arena. The persistence of monarchy is usually, though not

* The author would like to thank Ariel Ahram, Steven David, Jonathan Fox, Efraim Inbar, Benny Miller, Jonathan Rynhold, Shmuel Sandler and the anonymous reviewers for their comments and the Besa Center for Strategic Studies and the Truman Institue for Peace, the Hebrew University for funding research for this article.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510000987 Published online by Cambridge University Press

exclusively, explained by divide-and – rule and balancing strategies. Yet how can one discuss the monarchies' survivability as a one-level game when most of the monarchies that survived did so in the Middle East where they have been threatened so persistently by strong revisionist and centralising states? Both Syria and Egypt, (albeit through terrorism), threatened the Jordanian monarchy at the height of the Arab Cold War. In 1960, a bomb exploded in the Jordanian Prime Minister's office killing him and several of his staff. In September 1970, Syria attacked Jordan along its northern border just as the Hashemite Kingdom was quelling a PLO-led insurrection within the Kingdom.[1] Egypt helped destroy the Yemeni dynasty in the Arab Cold War between 1962–1968, centralising Iraq-occupied Kuwait in 1991 and threatened Saudi Arabia.[2] The Islamic Republic of Iran supported subversion amongst the considerable Shiite populations of Bahrain and Kuwait in the 1980s and bolstered its presence in the the Abu Musa and Tunb islands claimed both by Iran and by the United Arab Emirates.[3] Empirically these cases suggest a linkage between an internal policy of balancing, which solves the domestic security problem but creates vulnerability in the face of external centralising states. In short, the persistence of monarchies is not a one but two-level game.

The article is divided into four parts. The first part comprises a brief social and political account of the monarchies whose persistence or demise the article attempts to explain. Explanations found in the political science literature on the subject are presented and examined in the second part. I try to show how balancing and divide-and rule strategies were basically a solution to the domestic dilemma that Huntington identified. Explaining why the same balancing and divide-and-rule mechanisms, which help the monarch to maintain domestic peace, renders him vulnerable to neighbours that have centralised power is covered in the third part. The external solution to this dilemma is explained in part four.

Middle East monarchies: the database

Four of the five monarchies that succumbed to coups either centralised authority or in the case of Yemen lacked an alliance with an outside power to cope with a centralising power. None both promoted social and political pluralism **and** enjoyed an alliance with an outside power like the US. By contrast, all the monarchies that survived both promoted social pluralism **and** enjoyed an alliance with an outside power, mainly the US.

By far the most important monarchies to have succumbed to military coups were Egypt and Iraq. Egypt's last monarch, the dissolute 32 year-old monarch,

[1] Adam M. Garfinkle, 'US Decision Making in the Jordan Crisis: Correcting the Record', *Political Science Quarterly*, 100 (1985), p. 120.

[2] F. Gregory Gause, *Oil Monarchies: Domestic and Security Challenges in the Arab Gulf States* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1994), p. 94; Shahran Chubin and Charles Tripp, 'Iran-Saudi Arabian Relations and Regional Order', *Adelphi Papers*, 304 (London: IISS and Oxford, 1996), pp. 16–7.

[3] Chubin and Tripp, 'Iran-Saudi Arabian Relations and Regional Order', p. 17; Ed Blanche, 'Security and Stability in the Middle East – the Al-Khobar factor', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 136 (2001), pp. 33–4.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510000987 Published online by Cambridge University Press

who managed to antagonise his former British mentors as much as he did the officer class and the Egyptian political elite, was ousted in a blood-less coup in July 1952 by a highly organised group of young 'free officers'. Its leader, Jamal Abd al-Nasser became the symbol of the officer turned President in the Arab Middle East. It was the last successful coup to take place in Egypt ever since. Robert Vitalis has amply documented the centralising etatistic policies the Egyptian State pursued under the monarchy in sharp contrast to widely accepted views of a weak capitalist system.[4]

All the more palpable was the growing power of the Iraqi State in the decade prior to the monarchy's demise. Much of it was due to increasing oil revenues.[5] In addition to an expansion in the roles the state performed, there was a concommitant commitment to homogenising society through education under the banner of Iraqi nationalism, and finally in 1954, in the banning of all political parties.[6] A strong relationship between the Hashemite Kingdom and the Hashemites could not by itself prevent, and perhaps even hastened, the monarchic family's brutal downfall.

Forging the effective unification of Libya after the newly created monarchy formally secured its independence in 1951 became the monarch's primary task. It was no mean task given the attempts by Tripolitanians as late as the mid-forties to stave off being ruled by the Sanusi order that hailed from Cyrenaica on the eastern edge of the newly formed state.[7] Libya, it may be claimed, is at first glance an exception to the rule outlined above; Nevertheless, perhaps the meekest and personally most inept of the monarchs succeeded in maintaining his power base long after the monarchs of Egypt, Iraq and Yemen succumbed to coups, thanks to divide and rule strategies the King of Libya, Idris, employed in the army and in the domestic political arena coupled with a strong alliance with the US on the external front.

Contrasting the Yemeni and Iranian experiences is perhaps more instructive than analysing them separately; An indigent Yemen, almost equally divided by Sunnis and Shiis, was far too peripheral to secure its ruler an alliance with a foreign power.[8] He was later to became prey to an internal opposition that allied itself with Egypt. Foreign intervention determined the fate of dynastic rule more so than domestic factors. Iran under the Pahlevi Shah, by contrast, was a leading oil producer which with US help, transformed itself into a regional power. If Yemen succumbed to outside forces, Iran's fate was decided by a domestic wall-to-wall

[4] Rober Vitalis, *When Capitalists Collide: Business Conflict and the End of Empire in Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California, 1995), pp. 141–57.

[5] See, Malik Mufti, *Sovereign Creations: Pan-Arabism and Political Order in Syria and Iraq* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 40; on development in Iraq, see Edith and E. F. Penrose, *Iraq: International Relations and National Development* (London: Ernest Benn, 1978), pp. 163–96, chap. 7.

[6] 'Adil Ghafuri Khalil, *Ahzab al-Mu'arada al-'Ulniyya Fil-Iraq (1946–1954)* (Baghdad: Al-Maktaba al-'Alamiyya, 1984), pp. 11, 275.

[7] Ruth First, *Libya: The Elusive Revolution* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1974), pp. 58–9. As the author so aptly puts it, '[. . .] Libya was created a state from without, and only then she begin to try to assemble a nation from the parts which over centuries had been separated from one another by successive foreign occupations as well as her hostile geography.'

[8] F. Gregory Gause III, 'The Persistence of Monarchy in the Arabian Peninsula: A Comparative Analysis', in Joseph Kostiner (ed.), *Middle East Monarchies: The Challenge of Modernity* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), pp. 178–9.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510000987 Published online by Cambridge University Press

opposition forged by a state-led centralisation of authority.[9] The Shah did not make use of Iran's considerable ethnic and linguistic heterogeneity for divide and rule purposes. Sepehr Zabih notes how in the course of transforming the Iranian army from an instrument of suppression to an instrument projecting military might regionally '[. . .] servicemen rarely received training in crowd control, in dealing with internal guerrilla warfar, or controllng mass rallies, genral strikes, and different types of civil disoedience.'[10] After 1963, they were no longer trained in crowd control. 'Thus, for example, the new justication was that contiued build-up of the Iranian military, at least in the decade of the mid-1960s to the 1970s, was needed for external defense, especially the protection of the Persian Gulf, in view of the rising significanceof oil exports from Iranian and non-Iranian littoral states.'

Of all the surviving monarchies, Moroccan regime survial is probably the hardest to explain; it is the most populous monarchy with a population of over 30 million, has no oil, a low GNP *per capita* by the standards of most of the states in the Middle East and North Africa, and one of the most unequal distributions of income.[11] Morocco is a hetergenous state linguistically and culturally, mainly between Arabs and Berbers, and is characterised by vibrant forms of religious practice, orthodox Sunni as well as more popular forms (*zawiyyas*) both of which the monarchy assiduously cultivates.[12]

Jordan, the only other non-Gulf monarchy, has faced both severe political and economic problems including a Palestinian-led civil war against the monarchy in 1970–1971. It was a major challenge mainly because the Palestinians probably comprise the vast majority of Jordan's Palestine.[13] The monarchy has more than successfully met the challenges since then through techniques of counterbalancing between Palestinians and Jordanians of East Bank origins on the home front and a strong relationship with the US on the external front.[14] However, at the height of domestic and external crisis such as in 1967 and 1990, Jordan preferred to bandwagon rather than remain associated with the West.

Gulf monarchies experienced considerable variation in the threats they faced either from external powers or from within their borders. Kuwait was probably the most threatened externally; the 1990 Iraqi occuption was preceded by a similar attempt soon after it secured independence in 1962. Though Kuwait has a considerable Shiite population, estimated to comprise just under twenty-five per cent of the population, the Shiites by and large accepted the Sunni monarchic regime.[15] Qatar often aligns itself with Iran as a counterpoise to Bahrain's tacit

[9] David E. Long, 'The Islamic Republic of Iran', in David E. Long and Bernard Reich (eds), *The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1986), p. 65.
[10] Sepehr Zabih, *The Iranian Military in Revolution and War* (London: Routledge, 1988), pp. 4–5.
[11] Curtis R. Ryan, 'Peace Bread and Riots: Jordan and the IMF', *Middle East Policy*, 6 (1998), p. 54.
[12] Mohammad Tozy, 'Islam and the State', in I. William Zartman and William Mark Habeeb (eds), *Politics and Society in Contemporary North Africa* (Boulder: Westview, 1993), p. 107.
[13] One of the more recent assessments claims that Palestinians comprise 58.5 per cent of the Jordanian population. See, Ahmad Yunis, 'Al-Lajiyyun al-Filastiniyyun fil-Duwwal al-'Arabiyya al-Mujawara Li-Filastin – Al-Urdunn', *Al-Ard*, 31 (2003), p. 6.
[14] For an excellent demonstration of counterbalancing between Palestinians and Jordanians in the economic arena, see, Yitzhak Reiter, 'Economic and Political Power in Jordan: the Palestinian Transjordanian Rift', *Middle East Journal*, 58 (2004), pp. 72–92.
[15] Michael Herb, 'Subordinate Communities and the Utility of Ethnic Ties to a Neighboring Regime: Iran and the Shi'a of the Arab States in the Gulf', in Leonard Binder (ed.), *Ethnic Conflict and International Politics* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1999), p. 12, pp. 164–5.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510000987 Published online by Cambridge University Press

alliance with Saudi Arabia.[16] A long standing fued over territorial claims on and off shore betrween the two monarchs has presumably come to an end recently. The United Arab Emirates's fears emanated from external forces, mainly Iran, but from Iraq as well. Common to all Gulf states, though in varying degrees, was a fear of Iraq that prevailed from the end of the Iranian-Iraqi war to the invasion of Iraq in 2003; these were were assuaged by warm relations with the US, and even more critically, by a growing military presence in the area.

Existing explanations for the persistence of monarchies

Lisa Anderson is one of the first scholars to address the question why monarchies have persisted in the Middle East. According to Anderson, monarchies in the Middle East are not the traditional and religiously based monarchies, which had been swept away by political modernisation but new entities the West had created during the Age of Imperialism. She then claims that they represent a stage of state formation in the Arab word comparable to European State building during the era of Absolutism. Just as monarchies were the ideal regime then so do they play the same historical in the Arab world today.[17]

It would seem that Bashar's succession after the death of his father Hafez Asad in Syria in 1999 confirms Anderson's basic observation that we are indeed speaking of an absolutist regime.

The process of centralisation, however, does not explain monarchic persistence. To the contrary, the most centralised monarchy of all, Iran under the latest Shah, according to Anderson's explanation, should have persisted to this day instead of succumbing to an Islamic revolution. Iran was the epitome of a centralising regime; in the language policies it adopted, in its repression of ethnic differences, in the radical and massive 'white revolution' it tried implementing in the conservative countryside, and in the hostility it exhibited against the religious establishment.

In fact, according to Huntington, centralisation is the major culprit behind the monarch's downfall: 'On the one hand, centralization of power in the monarchy was necessary to promote social, cultural, and economic reform. On the other hand, this centralization made it difficult or impossible the expansion of the power of traditional polity and the assimilation into it of the new groups produced by modernization.'[18]

In his account, the centralisation and modernisation of the political system engenders resistance amongst the landowners and clergy who are the monarch's traditional allies. But the new middle class that emerges in the course of state-sponsored reforms typically does not reciprocate with gratitude. Often they will go even so far as joining a broad coalition against the reforming monarch that includes their enemies and the King's former allies, the landowners and clergy. Huntington cited at least two examples. The first were the Young Ottomans in the

[16] Ibid., p. 167.
[17] Lisa Anderson, 'Absolutism and the Resilience of Monarchy in the Middle East', *Political Science Quarterly*, 106 (1991), p. 4.
[18] Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 177.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510000987 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Ottoman Empire who overthrew the sultan in 1876 and then forced Abudulhamid II to adopt a constitution based on the Belgian model only to be repressed soon afterwards by Abdulhamid's counter-coup.[19] The second was the Persian constitutional movement of 1906 when Westernisers allied with warlords, clergy and landowners against the Shah.[20] In the 1970s, the conservative coalition of religious clergy and landowners was upset both by the Shah's veneration of Iran's pre-Islamic legacy, (reflected in the opulent festivities commemorating the 2,500th anniversary of the Persian Empire), and the land reform he executed as part of his 'white revolution'. The middle class were disappointed by the lack of meaningful political participation the Shah offered them.[21] In due course, he countered their combined opposition with outright repression. Despite the vast differences between these two segments of the population – the religious clergy and the liberal middle classes – both joined forces in toppling the Shah. Only after the revolution did the latter become the victims to the former in a manner that recalled the Bolshevik Revolution, when the more numerous but less organised Mensheviks succumbed to the organisational power and brutality of their numerically inferior Bolshevik opponents.

Huntington thirty years ago predicted the demise of monarchies in light of the monarch's dilemma, which centralisation and reform created. Faced with this dilemma he would become dependent on the army for maintaining his power only to become its victim. Existing monarchies, he reasoned, would disappear as they did in Europe and most other places in the world.

According to Michael Herb the persistence of the monarchies has little to do with the virtues or pitfalls of centralisation as it has to do with dynastic solidarity. Herb basically applied the idea that it takes a jama'a, a small loyal nucleus of closely intertwined people to rule a Middle Eastern state.[22] For Van Dam in Syria, it 'is the village that rules the state',[23] in Iraq it is the jama'a based on a tribe, and in the monarchies it is the family that 'allows this narrow regime coalition to channel family disputes into patterns of constructive competition'.[24] One can hardly doubt the importance of this particular iron law of oligarchy but once again does it really explain for example the fall of either the Shah or the Ethiopian emperor?[25]

The persistence of monarchs has been linked to wealth generated by oil. Anderson has suggested that oil-wealth might explain the lack of democratisation in the Middle East – a phenomenon with obvious implications on the persistence

[19] Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, p. 161.
[20] Ibid., p. 62.
[21] This disappointment reached its peak in June 1963 as thousands of middle class workers, bazaaris, clergy, students and unemployed Iranians took to the streets in protest of the Shah's reforms. See Ervand Abrahmian, *Iran: Between Two Revolutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 424.
[22] Michael Herb, *All in the Family: Absolutism, Revolution, and Democracy in the Middle Eastern Monarchies* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), p. 9.
[23] Nicholas Van Dam, *The Struggle for Power in Syria: Policies and Society under Asad and the Ba'ath Party* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1996), p. 1.
[24] Herb, *All in the Family*, p. 9. Quoted in Russell E. Lucas, 'Review Article: Monarchical Authoritarianism: Survival and Political Liberalization in a Middle Eastern Regime Type', *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 36 (2004), p. 109.
[25] On the inadequacy of Herb's explanation on the Iranian case, see Ellen Lust-Okar 'Review', *Political Science Quarterly*, 115 (2000), p. 465.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510000987 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of monarchies. Other scholars claim that oil states were able to buy domestic peace by creating elaborate welfare states.[26] Ample funds allowed the state to coopt the opposition. This is, however, an inadequate explanation, for it may be argued on the basis of the second Gulf War that increasing wealth makes for increasing external vulnerability. In any event, the Gulf monarchies had been characterised by rapidly declining incomes between the end of the oil boom in the mid-1980s and the resurgence of oil prices two decades later.[27]

Oil wealth, certainly does not explain the survival either of the Moroccan monarchy that rules over a population greater than Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states combined, or that of the Jordanian monarchy. Both are countries only modestly endowed by nature. Jordan is by world standards classified as a lower-middle class state with a *per capita* income of 1,300 dollars (significantly higher though if corrected for purchasing power parity) and Morocco with a 700 *per capita* GDP, is situated on the upper edges of the low-income countries. Both states have faced 'bread' riots, Morocco's riots being more frequent and more severe.[28]

By far the most common explanation for the persistence of monarchies in the Middle East is linked to the monarchies' continuous deployment of divide-and-rule tactics to keep their dynasties afloat at the expense of institutionalising the state. In one of the earliest and major works on modern monarchies in the Middle East, Waterbury analyses how the Moroccan monarch acts as the consummate arbiter who is constantly dividing and balancing his opposition and playing off sides.[29] In a much more recent work, Ellen Lust-Okar and Amaney Jamal show how monarchies consistently develop electoral regimes to achieve a fragmented but balanced array of political forces in their respective legislative or consultative assemblies.[30] Their pronouncement that 'monarchs want balanced, competing parliamentary blocks'[31] – backed by the finding that on average there are over three times more parties in the Moroccan parliament than in the Egyptian over time[32] – confirms Waterbury's basic thesis 'of the Monarch as arbiter' written thirty years earlier. In explaining the enigma of the political stability of the Gulf monarchies in one of the most regionally unstable areas in the world, Daniel I. Byman and Jerrold D. Green also mention 'divide-and-rule measures' as one of, albeit, six strategies they employ to maintain internal stability.'[33]

To avoid the centralisation trap, the monarchies encouraged both political and social pluralism. On the social level, the monarchy, unlike the radical nationalist

[26] Joseph Kostiner, 'Introduction', in Kostiner (ed.), *Middle East Monarchies: The Challenge of Modernity*, p. 9; Gause, *Oil Monarchies*, p. 4.
[27] Gary G. Sick, 'The Coming Crisis in the Persian Gulf', in Gary Sick and Lawrence G. Potter (eds), *The Persian Gulf at the Millennium: Essays in Politics, Economy, Security, and Religion* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), p. 17.
[28] For more, see Curtis R. Ryan, 'Peace Bread and Riots: Jordan and the IMF', *Middle East Policy*, 6 (1998), pp. 54–66; David Seddon, 'Winter of Discontent: Economic Crisis in Tunisia and Morocco', *MERIP Report*, 14 (1984), pp. 7–11.
[29] John Waterbury, *The Commander of the Faithful* (New York: Nicolson and Weidenfeld, 1972), pp. 267–74.
[30] Ellen Lust-Okar and Amaney Jamal, 'Rulers and Rules: Reassessing the Influence of Regime Type on Electoral Law Formation', *Comparative Political Studies*, 35 (2002), p. 338.
[31] Ibid., p. 355.
[32] Ibid., p. 351.
[33] Daniel L. Byman and Jerrold D. Green, 'The Enigma of Stability in the Persian Gulf Monarchies', *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 3 (1999), p. 2. Internet edition.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510000987 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and one-party regimes which tried to create a standardised 'new Arab socialist man', accentuated differences between social groups within society. On the political level, they encouraged a variety of political forces, often tolerated parliamentary life and when that was too threatening, permitted its continuation within professional and labour unions. By contrast the radical Republican states developed one-party systems. The promotion of social and political pluralism enables the monarchy to play off sides and stave off the crystallisation of broad-based coalitions against their rule. As John Waterbury, in his classic study on the Moroccan monarchy has demonstrated, the monarch is then able to play the role of arbiter between the various factions.[34]

Socially, monarchies have adopted policies that tolerated if not encouraged social differences and autonomy along ecological, linguistic, and religious lines. Jordan for a long time promoted Bedouin lore and culture, tolerated customary law even when in conflict with civil law, encouraged the Chechen minority to maintain Diaspora ties and even tolerated limited Palestinian national activity in its midst. As Lucas has noted, 'monarchs often present themselves as the defender of their kingdom's minorities (Christians, Berbers, etc.) and of tribal pluralism. Monarchies have generally encouraged multiple identities among their subjects while nationalist republics have demanded uniformity among the citizens of the nation.'[35] In Morocco, maintaining social pluralism is even enshrined in the constitution, albeit along with no small degree of centralisation:

> The king, Commander of the Faithful, supreme representative of the nation, symbol of its unity, guarantor of the perpetuity and continuity of the state, shall insure that Islam and the Constitution are respected. *He shall protect the rights and freedoms of citizens, social groups, and communities*.[36]

For the way monarchies encourage linguistic pluralism, one can compare, as Anderson has done, the language policies of Morocco and Algeria. Both states gained independence from French rule during which the elites became Francophone. Similarly both contain Berber-speaking minorities. The Algerian leadership championed arabisation (*ta'rib*) and openly discriminated against *Amazghit*. By contrast, the Moroccan monarchy, while by no means encouraging the Berber language, tolerated it. Repression in Algeria prompted Berber defiance; in Morocco both Arabs and Berbers continued to support the crown.[37]

The Moroccan monarchy had adopted a pluralist policy in religious life by continuing to encourage the Zawiyas or Sufi orders that permeate Moroccan life despite reformist and fundamentalist pressure at imposing a more normative 'Jacobin' Islam.[38] As in most Arab states, personal law, in substance as well as in form, is adjudicated in religious denominational courts assuring that basic denominational boundaries are firmly maintained. Just as monarchies differed from the pan-Arab nationalist secular regimes who tried creating the 'new Arab man', so does their pluralism stand in the way of the newer wave of religious

[34] Waterbury, *The Commander of the Faithful*, pp. 267–74.
[35] Lucas, 'Review Article: Monarchical Authoritarianism', p. 112.
[36] Waterbury, *The Commander of the Faithful*, p. 55. Emphasis added.
[37] Lisa Anderson, 'Dynasts and Nationalists: Why Monarchies Survive', in Kostiner (ed.), *Middle East Monarchies*, pp. 60–1.
[38] Emad Eldin Shahin, 'Under the Shadow of the Imam: Morocco's Diverse Islamic Movements,' *Middle East Insight*, 11 (1995), p. 40.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510000987 Published online by Cambridge University Press

fundamentalists who try creating the 'new-old Islamic believer'.[39] While fundamentalists typically attempt to impose normative standards on what often has been practiced as folk religion, the monarchies are interested in maintaining the traditional religious *status quo*.[40] Modern reformists or fundamentalists would like to use the modern state and the coercive power at its disposal to impose these standards.[41]

Morocco's efforts to maintain the plural nature of Moroccan society is also reflected in its civil service which is as much tribal as it is civil, especially in the lower rungs. Local officials are called *qaids* or tribal chiefs. These are terms that reflect to what extent they are rooted in traditional society.[42] The monarchy traditionally allocates positions in the local public bureaucracy with the aim of maintaining the segmented nature of Moroccan society.

In oil-rich monarchies, distributive policies were often used to maintain and promote social pluralism. Kiren Chaudhry claims that Saudi Arabia failed in its austerity programme after oil prices plummeted in 1985–1986 because 'during the boom years, these distributive policies created a new private sector that mirrored the tribal and regional composition of the bureaucracy, linking business and government through kinship networks, tribal loyalties, and business partnerships. During the recession, these primordial ties at once obscured the conflicting interests of business and the state provided an effective informal framework for opposing austerity measures.'[43]

Monarchies have also consistently promoted political pluralism to a greater extent than their radical republican counterparts. The monarchies of Jordan and Morocco tolerated, to some degree, opposition parties and multi-party competition if not within parliament as in Jordan, at least outside it.[44] Thus, when Jordan suspended parliament from 1967 to 1984, the state tolerated multi-party competition within the trade and professional unions. Morocco is noted in the Arab world for the strength and duration of its political parties. The Istiqlal (Independence) Party, the National Union of Popular Forces (NUPF) and the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (SUPF), an offshoot of the NUPF, were established in 1943, 1959 and 1972 respectively and have been active ever since.[45] The latter was markedly less tolerated by the monarchy than the other parties. Since 1997, however, Abd al-Rahman Yusfi, a founder of the SUPF and former opponent of

[39] For example in Morocco, the Istiqlal Party waged a militant campaign against Marboutisme in the first years of independence. See, Tozy, 'Islam and State', p. 103.

[40] Uri M. Kupferschmidt, 'Reformist and Militant Islam in Urban and Rural Egypt', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 23 (1987), p. 403.

[41] Itamar Rabinovitch, *Syria Under the Ba'ath 1963–66: The Army-Party Symbiosis* (Jerusalem: Israel Universities Press), p. 205.

[42] Jean-Jaques Perennes, *L'eau et les hommes au Maghreb. Contribution à une politique de l'eau en Méditerranée* (Paris: Karthala, 1993), p. 370. Perennes, borrowing from Remy Levau's *Le fellah marocain, défenseur du trône* (Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1976), shows how the Moroccan King soon after independence began to replace the local notables with a modern bureaucracy manned by middle class officials. However, he ended up reconstituting the local power structure as it existed during the protectorate.

[43] Kiren Aziz Chaudhry, 'The Price of Wealth: Business and State in Labor Remittance and Oil Economies', *International Organization*, 43 (1989), pp. 103, 126–7.

[44] Sami al-Khazendar, *Jordan and the Palestinian Question* (London: Ithaca, 1997), pp. 111–2.

[45] David M Mednicoff, 'Civic Apathy in the Service of Stability? Cultural Politics in Monarchist Morocco', *Journal of North African Studies*, 3 (1998), pp. 11–21. Note that the UNFP was the predecessor to the SUPF.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510000987 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the monarchy who had spent more time in prison than in parliament, serves as the Moroccan Prime Minister.[46] The liveliness of its Moroccan parliament, albeit suspended several times in the 1960s and 1970s, is unrivalled in the Arab world.[47]

Pressures in the 1990s, with the fall of the Soviet Union to liberalise have ironically reinforced mechanisms of fragmenting and of balancing forces, thus enabling the monarch to play his role of arbiter with even greater ease. Lust-Okar and Jamal, as was noted, show how monarchies adopt electoral systems that both maximise and balance the number of opponents. First-past-the-post electoral rules, smaller districts, more electoral seats proportional to the population and low thresholds, increase both the number of candidates contesting the elections as well as the parties to which they belong.[48] This is borne out by comparing Morocco and Egypt; in the 1997 elections in Morocco there were eight effective parties compared to two parties in Egypt in the 1995 elections. Once again, Lucas wryly notes that 'The opposition becomes just one among many social groups participating in politics. This allows the regime to pick and choose its partners from the diverse social field.'[49] Political participation in elections also acts as a safety valve. In Morocco, the leftist and nationalist opposition can cohabit with the royalist parties rather than fight them and the regime on the street.[50] Islamists in Jordan, by accepting the rule of the limited political liberalisation game, have preferred to 'enhance their public posture and influence without engaging the regime in a head-on confrontation that they were bound to lose.'[51]

The most important ramification remains balancing the opposition. In Morocco, it occurs between nationalists and socialists and royalists and independents, in Jordan between royalists, independents and Islamists, and in Kuwait the ruling family has succeeded in balancing nationalists and Islamists in the National Assembly against each other.[52] With increasing fragmentation and balancing 'potential opponents to the regime can be turned into mere opponents to the government of the day – not to the monarch.'[53]

Frequently, policies to promote social, electoral and party pluralism are intertwined. In Jordan, seats in the Parliament are allocated to Christians in the districts in which they reside, to the Circassian-Chechen minority who share the same Sunni religion as the overwhelming majority the Jordanian population, and

[46] Ahmad Diab, 'Al-Intikhabat al-Tashri'iyya al-Maghribiyya', *Al-Siyasa al-Dawliyya*, 132 (1998), pp. 193–6.

[47] For a chilling rebuttal of this perception of monarchic rule in Morocco under King Hassan II which he sees as being based on brute power and suppression, see, Henry Munson Jr., *Religion and Politics in Morocco* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), pp. 133–8. The description is based on John Pierre Entelis' *Comparative Politics of North Africa* (Syracuse: Syracuse University, 1980).

[48] Lust-Okar and Jamal, 'Rulers', pp. 348–50.

[49] Lucas, 'Review Article: Monarchical Authoritarianism', p. 113. Remy Leveau, 'The Moroccan Monarchy: A Political System in Quest of a New Equilibrium', in Kostiner (ed.), *Middle East Monarchies*, pp. 117–30.

[50] Remy Leveau, 'The Moroccan Monarchy: A Political System in Quest of a New Equilibrium', in Kostiner (ed.), *Middle East Monarchies*, pp. 117–30.

[51] Asher Susser, 'The Jordanian Monarchy: The Hashemite Success Story', in Kostiner (ed.), *Middle East Monarchies*, p. 109.

[52] Mary Ann T'treault, *Stories of Democracy: Politics and Society in Contemporary Kuwait* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), pp. 67, 168.

[53] Lucas, 'Review Article: Monarchical Authoritarianism', p. 113.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510000987 Published online by Cambridge University Press

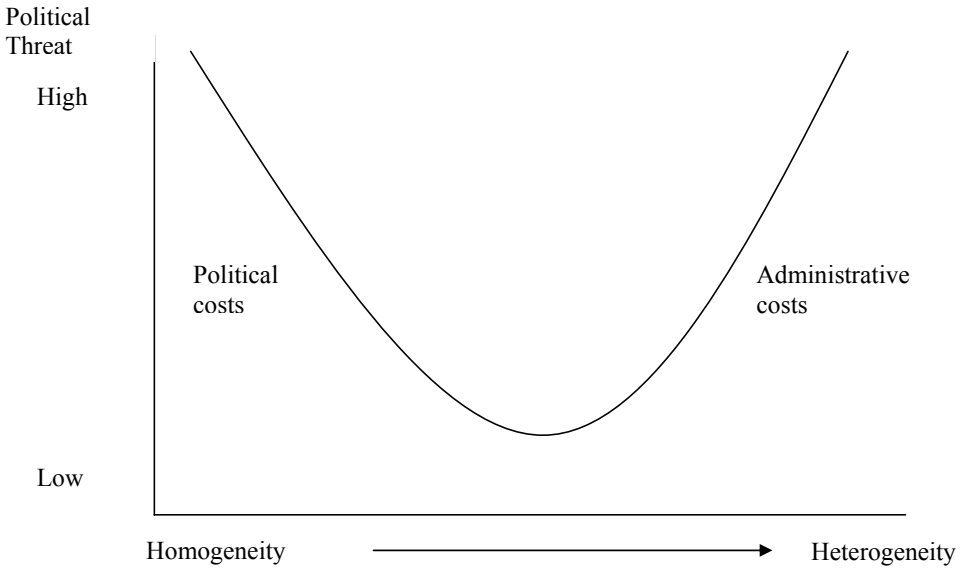


Figure 1. *The relationship between heterogeneity and domestic security threat to regime.*

to 'northern' and 'southern' Bedouin.[54] This calculated gerrymandering related to the Bedouin has been going on since Jordan was an emirate. To reinforce the balancing act, the Palestinians who comprise the majority of the population and reside in the big cities and towns are albeit, the most underrepresented in Parliament yet represented nonetheless.[55] In Egypt, Syria and Iraq where they can not play the balancing role so crucial to the King's function as arbiter, they are not citizens. In Bahrain, the Al-Khalifa ruling family skillfully exploits Sunni suspicion for the Shi'a in an attempt to contain the extensive violence that has taken place in the past decade.[56] Many Sunnis opposed to the Al-Khalifa have gradually withdrawn their support from the reform movement that demands the restoration of Parliament, for fear that the Shi'a will dominate it.

The policies implemented by the monarchies, particularly Morocco and Jordan, and the political rationale behind them, can be depicted graphically. (See Figure 1) The Y-axis measures the degree of internal security threat faced by any given state. The X-axis plots the degree of political and social homogeneity\heterogeneity in society. As society becomes more heterogeneous the internal security threat faced by society decreases, but only to a point where the marginal gain of fragmenting the potential opposition is offset by **the marginal cost** of administering this increasing heterogeneity.[57] From that point, fragmentation is detrimental. The

[54] Timothy Piro, 'Parliament, Politics and Pluralism in Jordan: Democratic Trends at a Difficult Time', *Middle East Insight*, 8 (1997), p. 39.
[55] Schirin H Fathi, *Al-'Amil al-Filastini fil-Iintikhabat al-Barlaminiyya al-Urdunniyya l'il-'Am 1989* (Jerusalem: PASSIA, 1990), pp. 3–4.
[56] Byman and Green, 'The Enigma', p. 6.
[57] On the economic costs of increasing administrative fragmentation in the Moroccan context, see Mohammad Naciri, 'Territoire: contrôler ou developer, le dilemme du pouvoir depuis un siécle', *Maghreb-Machreq*, 164 (April–June 1998), p. 27. The monarchy increased the number of provinces from 14 in 1959 to 53 in 1994 out of all proportion to demographic growth.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510000987 Published online by Cambridge University Press

curve produced is therefore U-shaped, depicting the relationship between pluralisation and internal security. The aim of the ruler is to achieve, through appropriate policy mechanisms, the level of pluralism where the marginal gain to domestic security is offset by the marginal cost of administrative costs and foregone development. The latter cost can quickly be transformed into a security threat to the regime in the form of bread riots.

Because the political benefits of pluralism are at some point offset by the administrative costs of increasing pluralism, the model is only suitable to relatively homogenous states such as Jordan, Morocco, and some of the Gulf states. The population of these states are overwhelmingly Sunni Islamic and Arab-speaking (many of the Berbers in Morocco have by now been Arabised) whose rulers possess the same distinguishing characteristics of the majority. The same can not be said of the population of Syria and Iraq. These states are not only more heterogeneous than Jordan and Morocco – in Syria only 65 per cent of the population is Sunni,[58] and in Iraq, the majority of the latter's population is either Shiite though Arab speaking, or Kurdish-speaking though Sunni Islamic – but the Syrian ruler belongs to a minority community as did the Iraqi leader until recently.[59] In terms of the model, states such as Iraq, Syria, Iran, India and Pakistan are naturally at the point where administrative costs outweigh the benefits of pluralism. These states, given their in-built social heterogeneity, might have had no choice but to centralise and engage in uniform nation building and run the risks of countering a united political front against them. This means graphically that while Jordan and Morocco have had to move forward along the continuum to maximise security, states such as Iraq, Syria, and Iran (where minorities comprise fifty per cent of the population), might have had to pull 'back' along the X-axis in order to achieve the same maximum. (The model might also explain partially why these states are so aggressive, as war make the state and the state makes war).[60]

The monarchies' external dilemma

Unfortunately for the monarch, the balancing and divide and rule tactics that reduce his domestic vulnerability increases his vulnerability to external centralising powers. Monarchs have to 'omnibalance' between these offsetting and competing external and internal needs. This is so because fragmenting security forces comes at the expense of offensive capabilities against an external threat.

According to Huntington, this trade-off hardly posed a problem. To the contrary, he asserted 'the principle threat to the stability of a traditional society [in Third World states] comes not from invasion by foreign armies but from the

[58] For a breakdown of the ethnic diversity in Syria, see, Nicholas Van Dam, *The Struggle for Power in Syria: Policies and Society under Asad and the Ba'ath Party* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1996), p. 15.
[59] On Ba'thist ideology in Iraq, see Amatzia Baram, 'Neo-Tribalism in Iraq: Saddam Hussein's Tribal Policies, 1991–96', *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 29 (1997), p. 2.
[60] Charles Tilly, 'War Making and State Making As Organized Crime', in P. Evans, Theda Skocpol and Dietrich Rueschemeyer (eds), *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 172.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510000987 Published online by Cambridge University Press

invasion of foreign ideas.'[61] However, he was wrong to dismiss the threat of external war and violence and its importance in explaining the persistence of monarchies.[62] Inter-state military confrontations, between 1950–1990, in Latin and Central America, the Middle East, and Central and East Asia, and even arguably in Africa, exceeded those in Europe even controlling for population.[63] No wonder Huntington failed to identify the real dilemma faced by monarchs – the trade-off between internal fragmentation and external vulnerability.

Modern political history is rife with examples both of states that pluralised society, or have fallen prey to militarily centralising powers, or states that promoted uniform society, but fragmented their security agencies performing poorly against states with more conventional armies. Muhammad Ali, widely known as the 'founder of modern Egypt' embarked in the second and third decades of the nineteenth century on a radical programme of centralisation and modernisation encompassing land registration, taxation, export-crop cultivation, the introduction of Western style education, and industry mainlyy to enhance his military capabilities. His achievements militarily were remarkable. In the course of 25 years, he and his son Ibrahim subdued the Sudan, routed the fundamentalist Wahhabiyya movement in areas now part of Saudi Arabia between 1812–1818, and finally almost destroyed the Ottoman Empire itself between 1831–1840. The Ottoman Empire was saved by British and French intervention when Muhammad Ali was forced to sign a treaty in 1840 where he agreed to retreat from all territory he conquered with the exception of the Sudan.[64]

A century later, Gamal Abdul Nasser, a leader who resembled Muhammad Ali in many ways including ignominy at the end of his political life, sent his forces in 1962 to rout the royalists in Yemen as part of the Cold War he waged against the Arab monarchic regimes.[65] Syria's occupation of much of Lebanon in the early years of civil war may be seen in much the same light. While Syria centralised under a regime that used the Ba'th party in much the same way Stalin used the Communist party, Lebanon institutionalised an extreme form of consociationalism where the parts (the religious denominations) were stronger than the whole (the state).[66] And though Syrian leaders fragmented the security apparatus, Syria nevertheless maintained a large and growing conventional army.[67] The imbalance between a centralising and plural state was played out in the early stages of the Lebanese war when Syria switched sides to support the Christian forces that

[61] Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Society*, p. 155. Huntington juxtaposes the unimportance of interstate conflict on state formation in Third World states to its overriding importance in the European context mentioned on pp. 122–3.
[62] See, Michael Barnett *Confronting the Costs of War: Military Power, State, And Society in Egypt and Israel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 5.
[63] Paul K. Huth, *Standing Your Ground: Territorial Disputes and International Conflict* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1996), pp. 27–9.
[64] For a full account of the life and conquests of Muhammad Ali, see Khaled Mahmoud Fahmy, *All The Pasha's Men: Mehmed Ali, His Army and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
[65] P. J. Vatikiotis, *The History of Egypt*, 3rd edition (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), pp. 402–3.
[66] Ian Lustick, 'Stability in Deeply Divided Societies: Consociationalism versus Control', *World Politics*, 31 (1979), pp. 332–3.
[67] Patrick Seale, *Assad of Syria: The Struggle for the Middle East* (London: Tauris, IB, 1988), p. 84.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510000987 Published online by Cambridge University Press

formerly fought the pan-Arab ideology Syria was promoting, and then occupied large parts of Lebanon. This situation has prevailed ever since.

External alliances and the persistence of Arab monarchies

To cope with this dilemma, many rulers, particularly monarchies and other Third World states have preferred to enter into enduring alliances with outside powers. As such, they serve as excellent examples of what Steven David defined as omnibalancing behavior in which 'leaders consider internal and external threats to the leadership, and, as a result, it fundamentally alters our understanding of why Third World leaders align as they do [. . .]'.[68] At first, the European powers bestowed such protection principally on the Gulf principalities. Later the US allied with the monarchies despite the deep seated ideological differences stemming from their radically different regimes.[69] A brief description of these alliances in the cases of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan and Morocco bear this out.

Saudi Arabia – The US and Saudi Arabia are mirror images of each other. Saudi Arabia emerged to turn the theocratic idea into monarchic reality. The US was formed with the intention of becoming the first modern Republic based on the separation of church and state.[70] Yet, Saudi Arabia allied with the West in order to provide itself with a safety net against centralising and predatory neighbours.

An early indication of US' resolve to maintain the Saudi regime may be seen in the crisis that brewed between Saudi Arabia and Egypt over the Yemen Arab Republic.[71] The latter came into being after 'free officers' headed by Abdullah al-Sallam, a member of the royal guard, overthrew Imam Muhammad al-Badr to form a revolutionary republic on 26 September 1962. Jamal Abdul Nasser, who had probably aided the revolutionaries to overthrow the Imam, quickly committed Egyptian troops to protect the fledgling republic against the royalist opposition who was backed by both Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Both the latter countries, having been the targets of vitriolic attacks at the time by the Egyptian controlled media, felt, not unreasonably, that Egypt was casting them for a similar fate unless it was checked in Yemen. Egypt, by contrast, eagerly sought a decisive victory in the struggle after its failure to prevent a coup in Syria that dissolved the United Arab Republic a year previously. The Kennedy administration accepted at face value Saudi Arabia and Jordan's assessment that Nasser posed a grave danger to them but balked at the idea that their fates were to be decided by the consolidation of the Yemeni Arab Republic. Kennedy, therefore, presented a plan that called for immediate cessation of external support to the royalists, phased withdrawal of Egyptian troops and assurances from both the YAR and Egypt that they would

[68] Steven David, 'Explaining Third World Alignment', *World Politics*, 43 (1991), p. 233; See also Michael Barnett, 'High Politics is Low Politics', *World Politics*, 42 (1990), pp. 529–62; Mohammed Ayoob, 'The Security Problematic in the Third World', *World Politics*, 43 (1991), pp. 257–83.
[69] Bruce Maddy-Weitzman, 'Why Did Arab Monarchies Fall? An Analysis of Old and New Explanations', in Kostiner (ed.), *The Middle Eastern Monarchies*, p. 48.
[70] For the evolution of Saudi Arabian government through the 20th century, see, Nadav Safran, *Saudi Arabia: The Ceaseless Quest for Security* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1985).
[71] Gause, 'The Persistence', in Kostiner (ed.), *Middle East Monarchies*, pp. 178–9.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510000987 Published online by Cambridge University Press

maintain correct relations with Yemen's neighbours in return of American recognition of the new republic. Prince Faisal, the real ruler of the kingdom expressed his anger at the plan's contents. He had to acknowledge, however, that it was only announced after 'making it obvious by naval and air visits to Saudi Arabia, (already promised by Kennedy to Faisal), that the independence and territorial integrity of the kingdom was vital and a long-established interest of the US.'[72] Indeed, when the Egyptian air-force began attacking Saudi territory in February 1963, the US promptly assured the Saudis of a US military presence, provided that Faisal cease completely his support for the royalists.[73] This commitment was made good in July 1963 when US Airforce flights deterred a possible Egyptian invasion.[74]

The American role in securing Saudi security during Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 was even more critical.[75] While it is true that Saddam Hussein's military strategy did not indicate any immediate plans to attack Saudi Arabia one could hardly discount the possibility that were he left undeterred in Kuwait he might be tempted to do so in the future. Remarkably, the Saudi leadership's first policy reactions were characterised more by appeasement than defiance as it attempted in vain to come up with an 'Arab' solution to the problem. Whether this was an externally induced form of bandwagoning or the fear of a domestic constituency should the Saudi leadership turn for direct help from the US is hard to tell. In any event, it did not last long. By 6 August, the Saudi leadership agreed to the American request to cut the Iraqi oil flow through their kingdom and invite the presence of American troops. Photos of massive concentrations of Iraqi troops on the Saudi-Kuwaiti borders US Defense Secretary Cheney had shown the Saudi leadership, followed by assessments by their own military that these Iraqi troops could overrun the country within three days, were sufficient to induce this radical change in policy.[76] So important was the American umbrella that an Egyptian and Syrian effort to replace it with a joint 'Arab' alternative in March 1991 immediately after the war, known as the Damascus Declaration, was politely rebuffed by the Saudis.[77] US troops continued to be stationed in the kingdom throughout the 1990s.[78]

Jordan

The US has regarded both Jordan and Morocco, for a variety of reasons, as being important to its interests. During the Arab Cold War between the monarchic and radical regimes, Jordan was considered an important asset in a region that was rapidly becoming hostile to the US. Thus, in 1958, the US was ready to undertake

[72] Parker T. Hart, *Saudi Arabia and the US: Birth of a Security Partnership* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), pp. 149–50. Hart served as US ambassador during most of the crisis.
[73] Ibid., p. 154.
[74] Ibid., pp. 195–8, 210.
[75] Jacob Goldberg, 'Saudi Arabia', *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, 16 (1990), p. 591.
[76] Ibid., p. 606.
[77] Joseph Kostiner 'Saudi Arabia', *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, 17 (1991), pp. 631–32.
[78] Josh Pollack, 'Saudi Arabia And The US, 1931–2002', *Middle East Report of International Affairs*, 6 (2002), p. 99.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510000987 Published online by Cambridge University Press

a massive air lift to protect Jordan when the US from a potential attack by the successful coup-makers who brought down the sister Hashemite monarchy in Iraq.[79] Similarly, during the September 1970 crisis, the US expressed its willingness, though it was not adequately prepared at the time, to come to Jordan's aid when Syrian troops crossed Jordan's northern border to join forces with PLO factions who were fighting government troops.[80] As the Arab Cold War subsided, and Jordan's informal membership in the conservative coalition lost its importance, the loss was more than offset by Jordan's importance as a buffer between Israel and its more radical eastern neighbours, Iraq and Iran-supported Syria. In the case of Jordan, the Western allies also doubled as a source of aid with which to co-opt and placate the domestic population.[81]

Yet Jordan, because it lacks so pivotal a resource as oil, and because of its size and positioning between powerful and often rival states, has also been forced to bandwagon rather than count on the protection of the US. In both the 1967 war and in the Kuwait invasion in 1990, Jordan felt itself compelled to side with threatening state neighbours against US interests. On both occasions, the US acknowledged Jordanian vulnerability, desisted from punishing the kingdom, and quickly restored traditionally close relations with the kingdom.

Morocco

Though it would be far-fetched to claim that Morocco's existence has been threatened by an outside power, its neighbour, Algeria, has been a potential threat.This was particularly true during the oil boom years in the decade following the 1973 war when large inflows of revenue coupled by warm ties with the Soviets changed the local balance of power in favour of Algeria compared to its oil-poor and financially-constrained neighbour. Much of the conflict between the two was played out indirectly in the Western Sahara when Algeria, particularly after the Moroccan invasion of the area in 1976, became the major supporter of the POLISARIO independence movement, against whom the Moroccans were fighting.

Deteriorating relations between Algeria and Morocco in the course of the 1970s coincided with increasing US concerns over the strategic placement and wellbeing of Morocco in the face of increasing Soviet involvement in Africa after the breakup of the Portuguese Empire. Two years after Algeria allowed the Soviets landing and refuelling for its planes in support of the MPLA in Angola in 1975, the Moroccans responded by permitting US planes to refuel in support of pro-Mobutu forces in Zaire.[82] The crystallisation of the US-Moroccan alliance against a Soviet-Algerian *entente* also had implications on how the US viewed the northern Sahara issue. The US naturally suspected the POLISARIO, supported by the Algerians, to be radical and pro-Soviet. As Kissinger bluntly put it, 'the US would not allow another

[79] 'Jordan', *The Middle East 1958* (London: Europa, 1958), p. 258.
[80] Adam M. Garfinkle, 'US Decision-Making in the Jordan Crisis: Correcting the Record', *Political Science Quarterly*, 100 (1985), p. 125.
[81] The latter point is Laurie A. Brand's central thesis in *Jordan's Inter-Arab Relations: The Political Economy of Alliance Making* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 81–3.
[82] Yahia Zoubir, 'Soviet Policy in the Maghreb', *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 9 (1989), p. 129.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510000987 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Angola on the east flank of the Atlantic Ocean'.[83] Zunes attributes US support for Morocco's territorial aggrandisement in southern Sahara, which contrasted sharply with the positions of other Western allies, to the strategic importance Morocco possessed in the eyes of key American decision-makers in the 1970s and 1980s. It was hardly surprising then that between 1950–1986, Morocco was the second largest recipient of aid in the Arab Middle East and in Africa.[84]

In neither of these three cases, nor indeed regarding the other monarchies, did US support assure these regimes' existence. The dilemma requires two policies – pluralisation, either of society or the armed forces, **and** maintaining an alliance with the US. This indeed is the lesson of the Shah's downfall. He allied with the US but embarked on reforms aimed at transforming Iran into a uniform society rather than maintaining its plural traditional character.[85]

Explaining monarchial survival as a solution to the external-internal security trade-off, also explains why most of the monarchies that did survive, are located in the Middle East. Few states possess the luxury of super power protection as do Middle East monarchies. The protection accorded by the US is a scarce public good. It is expensive to deliver, the costs of which are typically under considerable domestic scrutiny. It is therefore limited to states in areas regarded vital to US strategic interests. This is perhaps why absolute monarchies continue to exist only in the Middle East where 70 per cent of proven oil reserves are to be found.[86]

All the surviving monarchies are regarded as being important to the US national security interests. Six of them are oil-rich states whose oil is vital both for Europe and the US.[87] Less important, though significant, have been the massive arm purchases of US military arms and equipment these states have made.[88] There can be no better example of the US' commitment to these states than the American-led coalition to restore Kuwait to the Kuwaitis. The build-up of a half-a-million man force was the largest single military undertaking since the Korean War in the early 1950s.

[83] Stephen Zunes, 'The US and Morocco: The Sahara War and Regional Interests', *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 9 (1987), p. 424.

[84] Ibid.

[85] This point complements Benny Miller's model that systemic factors are responsible for movement from Cold War to cold peace but are unable to influence either the change from Cold War to hot war and cold to warm peace. Only US hegemony, a systemic factor can ensure the protection of these regimes from outside forces. See, Benjamin Miller, 'Balance of Power or the State-to-Nation Balance: Explaining Middle East War-Propensity', *Security Studies*, 15 (2006), pp. 658–705.

[86] 'For much of this time, all the Gulf States except Saudi Arabia were, in essence, British protectorates. Britain withdrew from the area in 1971. For the US and the entire industrialised world, stability in this region is vital. The relative share of Gulf energy is likely to grow in coming decades, as reserves elsewhere decline.' See Sick, 'The Coming', p. 15.

[87] In the early 1990s, the six monarchies in the Gulf alone accounted for 46.3 per cent of all proven oil reserves. See Gause, 'The Persistence' in *Oil Monarchies*, p. 176. He also discusses the American foreign policy debate whether a strong presence in the area is necessary to assure oil or whether market forces would ensure oil supplies. At least since the 1990s, it would be fair to say that the US has opted to be on the safe side by ensuring a sizeable military presence in the area.

[88] To gauge the Gulf states' importance for the US arms industry suffice to note that Saudi Arabian arms purchases alone amounted to 39.6 billion dollars between 1990–1999 while total US made arms sales for that period stood at 137.5 billion dollars. Figures derived from {www.deskbook.osdmil/reflib/ddod/001endoc.htm} and {www.fas.org/asmp/profiles/saudi_arabia.htm}.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510000987 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Conclusion

From the study of the persistence of monarchies in the Middle East, it is clear that Huntington captured the domestic, and in retrospect, 'easy' side of the dilemma. He posited that the monarch by withdrawing support from the traditional elements and by generating a new middle class through his reforms, would result in across-the board opposition to his rule. However, through policies of maintaining and reinforcing social religious and political pluralism, would-be reformers became just one more group against which the monarch could balance other forces. Playing the arbiter between liberal and fundamentalist groups has become an increasingly salient phenomenon in the past decade. Thus, by balancing and divide-and-rule strategies, monarchs were successful at fending off potential reformers and solved the internal dilemma, which Huntington identified.

Yet both Huntington and others overlooked the larger dilemma these types of domestic solutions created, namely, increasing external vulnerability to neighbouring centralising states. As monarchs and other Third World states such as Lebanon, divided and balanced society, their political forces, and frequently their armed forces, they became prey to more centralised neighbours. Successful monarchs and leaders of other Third World states have 'omnibalanced' in order to cope with this trade-off between internal and external vulnerabilities. If they did not play this two-level game wisely they lost their crown as the Iranian Shah learned the hard way. Obsessed to transform Iran into a regional power, he embarked on massive modernisation by centralising power and governance. He succeeded externally but lost out internally. The history of the Yemeni dynasty might illustrate the costs of the inability to play the two-level game from the other direction. The dynasty, because it could not count on the protection of powerful outside protectors like the US had attempted to bandwagon with Egypt in forming the United Arab States in 1958 to little avail.[89] Instead, it succumbed to a revolutionary leadership backed by Nasser's Egypt in September 1962.

Unfortunately, (for the monarchies that is), the opportunity to play the omnibalancing game is a privilege not a birth right, which not all monarchies in the past, possessed. Yemen, oil poor at the time, could not attract the support of a strong outside power even if it wanted. The surviving monarchies, however, because of either strategic location (Morocco and Jordan), oil wealth, or both (Saudi Arabia), had the opportunity to omnibalance and made the most of that opportunity in ensuring their survival.

[89] Hart, *Saudi Arabia and the US*, pp. 123–4.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510000987 Published online by Cambridge University Press