



All in the Family

**Absolutism, Revolution, and Democracy
in the Middle Eastern Monarchies**

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STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK PRESS

Front cover: Photo of Ibn Saud and his family. Courtesy of the archives of St. Antony's College, Oxford. Reprinted by permission of St. Antony's College.

Production by Ruth Fisher
Marketing by Nancy Farrell

Published by
State University of New York Press, Albany

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Printed in the United States of America

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For information, address State University of New York Press,
State University Plaza, Albany, NY 12246

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Herb, Michael, 1966–

All in the family : absolutism, revolution, and democracy
in the Middle Eastern monarchies / Michael Herb.

p. cm. — (SUNY series in Middle Eastern studies)

Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index.

ISBN 0-7914-4167-9 (alk. paper). — ISBN 0-7914-4168-7 (pbk. :
alk. paper)

1. Monarchy—Persian Gulf Region—Case studies. 2. Despotism—
Persian Gulf Region—Case studies. 3. Political stability—Persian
Gulf Region—Case studies. 4. Democratization—Persian Gulf Region—
Case studies. 5. Petroleum industry and trade—Government policy—
Persian Gulf Region—Case studies. 6. Petroleum industry and
trade—Political aspects—Persian Gulf Region—Case studies.
7. Persian Gulf Region—Politics and government—20th century—Case
studies. I. Title. II. Series.

JQ1840.H47 1999

321'.6'09536—dc21

98-47021
CIP

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



Introduction

One observer of monarchies in the developing world, writing in the late 1960s, concluded that their future was “bleak,” and that “the key questions concern simply the scope of the violence of their demise and who wields the violence.”¹ Three decades later eight Middle Eastern monarchies have defied this prediction, and other similarly bleak prognostications. The puzzle of monarchical persistence reveals the need for an understanding of the institutions of monarchism in the Middle East. How have these regimes survived, in a region hardly famous for political stability and in an age hostile to monarchism? How have some of these regimes successfully experimented with limited democratization, and what does this tell us about the prospects for continued liberalization—that is, the evolution of constitutional monarchy? In this work I explain why some forms of monarchism—even at the end of the twentieth century—display a remarkable vitality and resilience, and I argue that the survival of monarchism is not necessarily only a postponement of revolution, but instead offers the prospect of a gradual transition to a more liberal political order.

The survival of the monarchies into the last years of the twentieth century, with every prospect that they will soldier on well into

the twenty-first, raises fascinating questions about the capacity of traditional political institutions to adapt (or to be adapted) to the modern world.² The existing literature on the Middle Eastern monarchies goes only a modest distance toward explaining how monarchism persists, largely (and perhaps surprisingly) from a lack of attention to the issue.³ It has been thought a holdover, a form of regime soon to be the concern of historians, not political scientists. Even in the vast literature on revolutions in all parts of the world, only Iran's revolution, among those in the Middle Eastern monarchies, has elicited sustained comment. The survival of the rest of the Middle Eastern monarchies has gone virtually unnoticed; this despite the fact that they, of all the regimes ruling at the end of the twentieth century, certainly seem among the most unlikely of survivors and natural subjects of an inquiry into why some states do *not* have revolutions.

Dynastic Monarchy

The best explanation for the pattern of monarchical survival and failure in the Middle Eastern monarchies can be found in the nature of their regimes, and more specifically in the role of the ruling families in their regimes. Let us consider Libya and Kuwait, which have much in common: oil, language, religion, sand. The Al Sabah still rule Kuwait, but Libya suffered a revolution in 1969. In that year king Idris—the first and last king of Libya—had lived eight decades. He had sired no sons, had excluded his relatives from rule, and had made no provisions to ensure that the crown prince would inherit the kingdom. Instead the king lavished his favors on the family of his favorite courtier. The men of this family had no interest in defending the monarchy after Idris's death, for that would have meant the rule of the crown prince and their own precipitous fall from power. In 1969 the Libyan monarchy's days were numbered, and for one reason: no members of the ruling elite had an interest in defending the monarchy except the crown prince, and he lacked the power to do so.

In Kuwait, and in the other Gulf monarchies, we find an entirely different nexus between the ruling family and the state. There, the emir rules, surrounded by his relatives. This form of rule emerged only in this century, in response to the growth of the modern bureaucratic state in Arabia. The first such regime emerged in Kuwait in

1938, when the Al Sabah closed down a legislature set up by Kuwait's merchant notables. The emir had excluded almost his entire family from posts in the state, but after closing the parliament the shaykhs of the Al Sabah "fell upon all of the Kuwaiti departments and offices as if by agreement and without previous warning. . . . [T]he ruling family—the senior among them and the junior—divided up the presidencies of all the public departments."⁴ Since then, with the exception of Saddam's interlude, the shaykhs of the Al Sabah have not relinquished control—as a family—over the key state ministries, and to this we can attribute the resilience of the Kuwaiti monarchy and the others like it in the Gulf.

The shaykhs of the Al Sabah in 1938 invented a form of political regime previously unknown to the Gulf, but one now found in almost all of the oil monarchies of Arabia. The rise of these family regimes—I will call them dynastic monarchies—has had immense political consequences in Arabia. No regime of this type has fallen to revolution. Family domination of the state, more than anything else, explains why the oil wells of Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states remain in hands relatively friendly to the West. It is this, and not oil or illiteracy, that explains how the Middle Eastern monarchies, seemingly hopeless anachronisms and prime candidates for revolution, have managed to survive to the end of the twentieth century.

The existence of dynastic monarchism as a particular and distinct form of monarchy in the Middle East has only rarely been recognized. The oil wealth of these societies has, it seems, prevented a theoretical understanding of the governing institutions of these states as anything other than oil rich. The theory of the rentier state—the hegemonic theoretic framework in writings on the Gulf—predicts that rentier states will be authoritarian, but not *how* they will be authoritarian. Perhaps for this reason, questions about the differences among these regimes, while certainly discussed in the writings on the Gulf, do not receive adequate theoretical treatment.

In this book I will show how the ruling families have formed themselves into ruling institutions in control of the newly powerful bureaucratic states of the oil era. These families have not achieved this by means of mutual affection. These families must share among their members political power, and there are few things like disputes over power to rend asunder even the most elemental ties of

blood and birth. These families, nonetheless, have developed mechanisms to distribute and redistribute power among their shaykhs and princes, without drawing outsiders into family disputes. At the same time, these families preserve their tight grip over state power and maintain multitudinous contacts with their societies.

The survival of these monarchies has implications for the survival and failure of authoritarian regimes elsewhere. A ruling class which has a mechanism to regulate its own internal conflicts, which dominates a modern state, and which can attract at least some support within society, is extremely hard to overthrow. Few other regions of the world still feature ruling monarchies, but the lessons to be derived from the survival of the dynastic monarchies are not restricted to monarchies alone. Authoritarian regimes all must solve extremely difficult problems of the internal distribution of power—including the succession—and failure in this task very often leads to the failure of the regime itself.

Liberal Monarchy

Not only have many Middle Eastern monarchies survived, but some have even opened parliaments, suggesting that these regimes, once thought irredeemably anachronistic, might redeem themselves by making better progress toward democracy than the bulk of the region's ostensibly more politically advanced republics. The issue of constitutional monarchy has not often been raised in studies of the modern Middle East. When constitutional monarchy has been mentioned, it has suffered dismissal as impractical, as culturally inappropriate, or as an invitation to revolution. The lesson of the Shah's fall, in particular, appears to be that it is dangerous to encourage reforms in an absolutist monarchy.

There are however reasons for optimism. Studies of democratization in other parts of the world have found that democracy emerges most reliably not out of revolution, but when authoritarian elites and their challengers can reach a compromise that includes liberalizing elements.⁵ Monarchical political institutions, more than other sorts of authoritarianisms, lend themselves to such compromises. The political issue in a liberalizing monarchy is not necessarily the abolition of the throne but instead the incremental increase in the powers of the parliament and a decrease in those

of the palace. Small steps inspire less fear in authoritarian elites, and cost less; they are consequently easier to take. Such incremental steps led to the evolution of constitutional monarchy in some European states. We have reason to hope that the Middle Eastern monarchies might follow their example, and I seek in this work to discover the conditions under which they might be expected to.

The West and the Middle Eastern Monarchies

The stability of the monarchies is not only a concern to those who live in them, though they of course have the most at stake. The West, and the United States in particular, cares deeply about the stability and friendliness of the regimes that preside over the oil-rich sands of the Middle East. In the Middle East, as a general rule, monarchs are friendly to the West while presidents often are not. This is clearly the result of the character of these regimes. The alienation of Libya, Iraq, and Iran from the West dates to their revolutions. Monarchs, by contrast, have consistently evinced, if not always overt friendliness, at least a measure of cooperation with the West.

The United States has put little public pressure on the monarchies to liberalize. This stance arises out of a calculation that it is best not to try to fix things that are not broken: if the status quo is stable and serves Western interests, why upset it? The Shah was the last monarch encouraged to liberalize, and why recapitulate that experience elsewhere? Yet such a policy has costs. The maintenance of absolutism out of an economic imperative, while rationalized on the grounds of *realpolitik*, does not accord with American values. Such a policy saps American power by undermining its claim to moral authority.

American silence on democracy in the Gulf reflects a serious *underestimation* of the strength of the House of Saud and the other Gulf dynasties. These families do not eschew parliaments because they are weak and fear that a parliament will push them into the abyss of revolution (something, certainly, that American policy should seek to avoid). Instead, the Al Saud do not liberalize because they do not have to in order to survive. They can continue to treat their country as their own private property without, thus far, any serious risk of revolution. Western pressure on Saudi Arabia to

follow the Kuwaiti example may not induce the Al Saud to reform, but if it does it will not cause the collapse of their regime. Instead, it will set Saudi Arabia down a path that promises to combine stability with a more liberal political order. This would make the Al Saud more palatable allies than they are at present, and would consequently place the American alliance with the Al Saud on a surer footing, strengthening the American position in a region vital to its interests.

Explanations for Revolution

In this work I argue that it is the role of the ruling families that best explains the pattern of revolution and resilience in the Middle Eastern monarchies. In making my argument I will do two things: first, I will show the plausibility of my explanation with an in-depth exploration of the nature of dynastic rule in the monarchies. Second, I will examine, in a systematic way but more briefly, a number of contending explanations in order to demonstrate that they do not provide a better explanation for the puzzle. In other words, I am testing hypotheses. I have examined not only the monarchies that have survived but also those that have failed, in the expectation that a comparison between the two groups will reveal what it is that distinguishes survivors from failures.

There are several alternate explanations for the survival of the monarchies. The chief contending explanations are:

1. The spread of modern education makes monarchies less stable.
2. Poverty makes monarchies less stable, while generous amounts of rentier income, usually from oil sales, makes monarchies more stable.
3. Monarchies are more stable when the regime recruits the military from a group thought more likely to be loyal (in the Middle Eastern monarchies usually the bedouin).
4. A fairly elected parliament makes monarchies more stable; alternatively, it is also possible that parliaments make monarchies less stable.

5. The support of bedouin tribes makes monarchies more stable.
6. Kings skilled in the art of statecraft make monarchies more stable, while incompetent kings bring on revolutions.
7. An absence of (or comparatively lower level of) international pressure on the regime makes monarchies more stable.

In the conclusion I will evaluate in some detail each of these explanations. In this chapter I will discuss several of these explanations, including rentierism and education. These are the two most commonly cited explanations for monarchical resilience, and it is their failure to explain the issue that makes it interesting.

Dynastic Monarchy

Is it not a simple fact that in any form of government revolution always starts from the outbreak of internal dissension in the ruling class? The constitution cannot be upset so long as that class is of one mind, however small it may be.

—Plato, *The Republic*⁶

There is wide agreement today on the importance of states and elites in the making of revolutions. The solidarity of the ruling group (or its fractiousness) is one of the most important determinants of revolution.⁷

Many of those who write on the oil monarchies observe that the survival of the Gulf principalities and Saudi Arabia rests on the unity and solidarity of their ruling families. The stress on the importance of family unity is shared across ideological boundaries and among those with varying prognoses for the life expectancy of the regimes.⁸ There is, however, far less agreement on whether or not this makes these regimes strong or weak, for many argue that family unity is fragile, and prone to failure. A Saudi opposition group takes the view that,

Has the ruling class [the Al Saud] achieved its total monopoly of power because it was a united, active minority that strove diligently to consolidate its power base and maintained it with the co-operation of all its members?

The Al Saud Family can, in no way, be described as a co-operative minority. They are a decadent and decaying family with every member plotting to plunge the dagger into the other's back.

“A house divided against itself cannot stand.”⁹

For better or for worse the group is wrong about the unity of the Al Saud; dynastic monarchies prove remarkably stable. We can divide monarchical institutions in the Middle East into two groups: those, like Saudi monarchy, in which the family forms a ruling institution, and those in which the monarch rules alone, without the participation of his family in the cabinet. In what I have called *dynastic monarchies* members of the ruling families monopolize the highest state offices, including the premiership and the portfolios of Interior, Foreign Affairs, and Defense, the ministries known in the Gulf as the *wizarat al-siyada*, or ministries of sovereignty.¹⁰ The ruling families also distribute members throughout lower positions in the state apparatus, especially in the key ministries. The families have developed robust mechanisms for the distribution of power among their members, particularly during successions, and exercise a thus far unshakable hegemony over their states.

Table 1.1. Revolution and Dynastic Monarchy

	REVOLUTION	NO REVOLUTION
Dynastic Monarchy		Bahrain Kuwait Qatar Saudi Arabia UAE
Dynasty Allowed in the Cabinet		Jordan Morocco Oman
Dynasty Barred from the Cabinet	Afghanistan Egypt Iran Iraq Libya	

In the other type of monarchy the king, like the Shah, has a wide latitude in his choice of lieutenants, who serve, in Machiavelli's phrase, "by his grace and permission."¹¹ The irony of the situation of these kings is that while they enjoy more personal power, their regimes display far less stability. As Montesquieu noted, "in proportion as the power of the monarch becomes boundless and immense, his security diminishes."¹²

No dynastic monarchy has fallen to revolution, while all of the monarchies in which the constitution prohibits royal participation in the cabinet have collapsed.¹³ Three monarchies have survived in which members of the ruling family are allowed, by the constitution, to occupy high posts but do not monopolize them. In the case studies that make up most of this study I will look for several sorts of evidence that would tend to confirm or deny the argument that dynastic monarchism confers resilience:

First: If we pose a counterfactual question, would the revolution have occurred, in the failed monarchies, had the family had a greater role in the state? Can we attribute revolutions to disputes within the ruling elites that might not have occurred had the dynasty ruled?

Second: Do the surviving monarchies which are not ruled by dynasties (Jordan, Morocco, Oman) show more or less stability than the dynastic monarchies themselves? A lesser degree of stability supports the correlation between dynastic monarchy and stability.

Third: Is it plausible to argue that the surviving monarchies have developed a method of solving their collective action problems in a way that preserves family authority? Or is the absence of regime-threatening disputes among these families merely accidental?

I will devote considerable ink to the third point. I argue that disputes over political power do not threaten the political hegemony of these dynasties. Instead, and paradoxically, it is the self-interested competition for power among princes and shaykhs that created the dynastic monarchies in the first place, and which contributes to dynastic domination of the state today.

In the era before oil the dynasties chose the ruler from among themselves by family consensus. This led to a great deal of bargaining among members of the ruling families as various candidates for the rulership tried to build a consensus in their favor. These bargains did not include offices in the central administrations because offices appropriate for members of the dynasties did not exist. Oil made possible the rapid growth of state bureaucracies and the creation of cabinets. These new posts immediately came into play in intrafamily bargaining, and members of the dynasties claimed the overwhelming majority of posts in the early cabinets.

Today the succession rule in the dynasties remains the same as it was before oil—family consensus—and aspiring rulers still must build a family consensus to take power. Their relatives, who occupy key posts in the state, assert a right to determine the succession and have the power resources to defend that right. In return for their consent to the succession of a new ruler, these men demand that their positions be confirmed.

Members of the ruling families who are not in direct competition for the rulership will bandwagon and not balance, when succession disputes grow bitter: this bandwagoning ensures that the family does not split down the middle, thus exacerbating disputes and threatening the dynastic monopoly on state power. Able to regulate its own internal disputes, and indisputably in control of its state and national territory, such dynasties display a remarkable resilience. It is because of dynastic domination of the state that so many Middle Eastern monarchs still rule at the close of the twentieth century, a century that opened with most of the world under the sway of monarchs, and ends with few more than these survivors.

Rentier Income

The theory of the rentier state, which dominates the study of the Middle Eastern monarchies, predicts that rentier states will be authoritarian. It does not claim that rentier states are immune to revolution. No extended academic treatment attributes the resilience of the surviving Middle Eastern monarchies directly to oil revenues, the main source of rentier income in the region.¹⁴ Table 1.2 shows why.¹⁵ Some oil-rich monarchs have been overthrown

Table 1.2. Revolution and Rentierism

	RENTIER STATES	NONRENTIER STATES
Revolution	Iran Iraq Libya	Afghanistan Egypt
No Revolution	Bahrain Kuwait Oman Qatar Saudi Arabia UAE	Jordan Morocco

while a couple of particularly adept but poor kings have persevered. The Shah and the kings of Iraq and Libya lost their thrones only a handful of years after dramatic leaps in rent income.¹⁶

Gregory Gause, in a recent book on the oil monarchies, writes that “[oil] wealth and how it has been used, explains why these purportedly fragile regimes have been able to ride out the domestic and regional storms of the last two decades.”¹⁷ The qualification on the use of the money, and not simply its existence, is crucial. The key variable is not the mere presence of oil wealth but instead how political actors, in the context of existing political institutions, respond to the influx of oil revenues. In the Gulf, oil revenues permitted the construction of modern states at a lightning-fast pace. The existing political arrangements before oil placed the rulers’ relatives in a privileged position from whence they could seize and dominate the newly powerful petro-states. Thus dynastic monarchism occurs in its full-fledged form only in oil-rich countries. Nonetheless this sort of regime does not emerge every place that there is oil; and where it is absent—but oil is present—monarchies have proven fragile.

The Educated (or New) Middle Class

There is no danger for the state as grave as that of the so-called intellectual. It would be better if you were all illiterate.

—King Hassan of Morocco in 1965

In other words, the Royal Family can lay down the burden of a generation and let the Afghan educated class run the government.

—King Zahir of Afghanistan in 1963¹⁸

A decade after the Egyptian revolution, Manfred Halpern, in his influential book on the new middle class in the Middle East, saw few prospects for the surviving kings. The future, he said, lay with the salaried new middle class and the most powerful part of that class, the army.¹⁹ Many others have echoed his pessimism, arguing that the Middle Eastern monarchs cannot survive the spread of popular education and modern ideas. The opposition of the new middle class to monarchism makes up an important part of Huntington's 1968 terminal diagnosis of monarchism in the developing world.²⁰

In the Middle Eastern monarchies, however, there simply is no rule that the more educated the populace, the more likely the monarchy is to fall to a revolution. Chart 1.1 shows the UNESCO

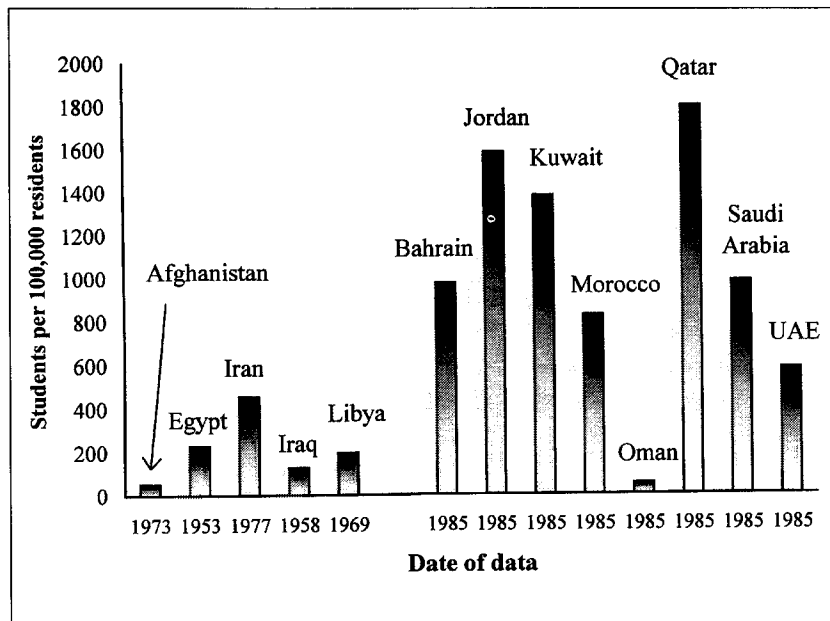


Chart 1.1. Enrollment in Postsecondary Education in the Middle Eastern Monarchies (students per 100,000 residents)

data series on enrollment of students in postsecondary education in the monarchies; this is the best available proxy for the size of the educated middle class in the Middle Eastern monarchies. I use 1985 data for the surviving monarchies in the interest of giving the test a conservative bias.²¹

The data are quite clear. The surviving monarchies have, on average, a far larger percentage of their populations enrolled in higher education than did the failed monarchies when they were overthrown.²² This is as true of Jordan and Morocco as it is of the oil rich monarchies of the Gulf.

The failure of these two hypotheses—oil revenues and education—to explain the pattern of revolution and resilience in the monarchies defines the central puzzle of this study, for these are the hypotheses that we might expect would go the furthest in explaining why some monarchs fall and others survive.

Political Participation and Revolution

You are a wise man, O Shaikh!, and must be aware that all over the world cases have occurred of demands which have been made on their Rulers by their people for reforms, which demands have been refused. The result has often been that in the end the Rulers have had to give much more than if they had given a little in the beginning, and in some cases the Rulers have even lost their thrones.

Briefly then, O Shaikh! . . . I can as your friend advise you to look carefully to the future, and to profit by the experience of other countries where early and generous reforms have deprived those who wished to oppose the Rulers of the popular support on which they relied.

—The Political Resident in the Persian Gulf
to the Ruler of Dubai, in 1938²³

When rulers face revolution, they often try to reform. Circumstances vary, but we can nonetheless state in the abstract the logic behind these efforts. Rulers need the support of key groups (whoever those may be) to hold off the wolves at the door (or perhaps they need to buy off the wolves). To appease these groups rulers promise to change their policies. Sometimes they promise to reform the institutions through which they govern, allowing representatives of the people to participate in the making of policy.

Of course, if it were always as easy as this, there would be no revolutions. Indeed, it appears that the very effort of reform has its own perils. Sometimes liberalization so weakens and confuses the political elite, and so emboldens its enemies, that it undermines the whole edifice of the *ancien regime* and brings it crashing down in a heap of rubble. The convening of the Estates General in 1789 is the prototype. Edmund Burke, who appreciated the virtues of both monarchs and parliaments, called the Estates of 1789 “the medicine of the state corrupted into its poison.”²⁴

The failure of reform harms not only authoritarian leaders, but also, in many cases, the process of democratization. A substantial literature in comparative politics argues that democratization emerges most reliably out of reform, not revolution. Terry Lynn Karl and Philippe Schmitter argue that transitions succeed most reliably when “traditional rulers remain in control, even if pressured from below, and successfully use strategies of either compromise or force, or some mix of the two, to retain at least part of their power.” Revolutions, they observe, do not result in transitions to stable democracy, and thus as a rule democratization is a question of reform, and is arrived at through negotiations between rulers and their challengers. The failure of reform frustrates democratization.²⁵

The King’s Dilemma. In *Political Order in Changing Societies* Huntington firmly comes down on the side of those who believe that political participation is necessary to avoid revolution, but impossible for modern monarchs to achieve.²⁶ Huntington assigns much of the blame for this to the new middle class which, by virtue essentially of its *ideology*, opposes the very concept of monarchism. He quotes an Ethiopian member of this educated middle class: “I wake up screaming in the night at the thought the Emperor might die a natural death. I want him to know a judgment is being enacted on him!”²⁷ If the monarch should open a parliament and permit political parties, the new middle class will hijack the parties and use the parliament as a forum to pummel the retrograde rule of the monarch; thus is closed the one path that leads to political stability under the aegis of the monarchy.

More recently Lisa Anderson has argued that monarchs have survived because the personalist, centralist, and absolutist qualities of the monarchs make them particularly well suited for bring-

ing their countries into the modern world, a process akin to the building of absolutist states in Europe. Yet, again, the expansion of political participation is not something the monarchs can undertake. The monarchs will persist, even thrive, while the task is to build states, but the second stage of modernization “is probably more easily negotiated by regimes with already established commitments to popular sovereignty.”²⁸

On a similar theme, a number of writers have argued that neopatrimonial—or Sultanistic—regimes fall easy prey to revolution precisely because, again, they find it difficult to reform. Not all neopatrimonial regimes are monarchies—by any means—but at least one classic case is: the Shah’s Iran. In neopatrimonial states the ruler organizes the regime around himself personally, maintaining other members of the elite in a relationship of dependence on his personal grace and good favor. Outside the elite, society is kept politically inchoate.²⁹

Neopatrimonial leaders find it difficult to reform the political system in a way that would preempt revolution, for reform undermines the patron-client network on which the regime rests. Faced with a choice of abdication or repression when revolutionary pressure builds, the leader represses. When the neopatrimonial ruler finally gives up and departs the scene (or dies) the regime collapses completely because the elite lacks the cohesion—which would be provided by institutions and rules—to choose a replacement.³⁰

Some derive a policy recommendation from this. It is said that American rhetoric about human rights and democracy undermine patrimonial regimes (when they are American clients) because their leaders cannot reform without risking the utter collapse of the regime and its replacement by one far less friendly. The United States, it is advised, should *not* encourage reform among those neopatrimonial leaders that it has made its clients.³¹ This is the lesson of the Shah’s fall.

The King’s Dilemma Escaped? There are reasons to think that this degree of pessimism on democratic reform in the monarchies is unwarranted, and that in the modern Middle Eastern monarchies a parliament, Burke’s “medicine of the state,” need not always be corrupted into its poison. Indeed, all other things equal, monarchism appears to provide a sound institutional base for the incremental emergence of democratic institutions.

One of the most important liberalizing steps in any authoritarian regime is the holding of free and fair elections. Elections, however, are very threatening for most authoritarian ruling groups—if a ruling group loses an election it also loses any semblance of legitimacy it may have previously enjoyed. Monarchs, by contrast, are born to their positions, not elected. Monarchs can hold elections and still be monarchs, so long as the elections do not return a large number of fire-breathing antiroyalists. This is not so high a hurdle, and thus is more likely to be attempted. Once a parliament is in place, the monarch and his challengers can negotiate a sharing of power between palace and parliament. The experience of the European monarchies and the Middle Eastern monarchies today shows that there are a multitude of ways to split the difference, and many methods of providing institutional guarantees that deals negotiated will be honored. This capacity to liberalize in small steps that have predictable outcomes lowers the cost of liberalizing moves (in comparison with the alternatives) and thus, other things equal, makes it more likely that monarchical elites will take these steps. Together these steps produce a characteristic monarchical path toward democracy, one traveled by some of the European states, and one that several of the Middle Eastern monarchies show signs of following.³²

These positive aspects of monarchical institutions do not mean that democracy will always emerge in monarchies, or that it will emerge smoothly. Empirically that is plainly not the case. Yet it does provide a counterpoint to the reigning pessimism on the issue of constitutional monarchy in the region.

The Scope of the Study, Theoretic Approach, and the Cases Examined

The fall of monarchical regimes at the hands of invading armies involves issues very different from the overthrow of monarchies by domestic political forces. I will restrict myself to explaining the latter.³³ I will, however, take into account the effect of external threats on the domestic politics of the monarchies. Thus while I would have had little to say about the fall of the Kuwaiti monarchy had Saddam's adventure succeeded, I have much to say about the impact of the Iraqi threat on politics within Kuwait.

In the case studies that make up the body of this book I examine not only the eight surviving monarchies but also (albeit at a lesser length) five monarchies that have fallen to revolutions. The intent is to determine what makes the first group different from the second. I have restricted these comparison cases to Middle Eastern monarchies in the postwar period, in an effort to keep variables of religion, culture, and region more or less constant. Within the universe of Middle Eastern monarchies that have existed in the postwar period I have excluded three cases. In Tunisia the monarchy did not endure for any significant period after the country won independence.³⁴ Neither did the various principalities of Southern Yemen after the British withdrawal in 1967 and, what is more, the capital, Aden, lacked a monarch altogether. I exclude North Yemen on the grounds that Egyptian intervention—a virtual occupation of the country with thousands of troops—made this, in large part, a case of revolution by invasion, and thus outside the scope of this work.³⁵

In this study I mean by revolution the end of a monarchical regime and its replacement by a republic. This definition has the virtue of clarity and ease of measurement. It is not, however, revolution as it is often understood in the literature on revolutions. Yet the five revolutions I discuss are indeed revolutions, by most meanings of the term, and certainly in their consequences. They differ from the usual definition largely in that, in four out of five cases, a great deal of violence did not precede the fall of the old regime. Real revolutions, it is often argued, come only after the death of

Table 1.3. The Cases

SURVIVING MONARCHIES	OVERTHROWN MONARCHIES AND DATE OF REVOLUTION	
Bahrain	Egypt	1952
Jordan	Iraq	1958
Kuwait	Libya	1969
Morocco	Afghanistan	1973
Oman	Iran	1979
Qatar		
Saudi Arabia		
United Arab Emirates		

multitudes.³⁶ Yet sometimes many die and nothing much changes, and other times (as in Eastern Europe in 1989–90) few die but everything changes. The association of the term both with great violence and with great changes in society and state leads to an assumption that the latter depends on the former: empirically they do not always come bundled together.

Theoretic Approach. My argument on the causes of revolution in the Middle Eastern monarchies can be falsified. The collapse of dynastic monarchies, as a result of revolutions made by domestic political forces, would falsify the argument.³⁷ In the case studies, which make up the bulk of the text, I make causal arguments that show that indeed it is this variable—dynastic monarchy—which best explains the pattern of resilience and failure among the Middle Eastern monarchies. These causal arguments employ rationalist assumptions about human motivations and explain political outcomes as the consequence of strategic choice. I seek, as Peter Evans wrote in a recent symposium on theory in comparative politics, to embed “game theoretic elements . . . in historically and institutionally complex arguments.”³⁸ I assume that political actors seek political power, and that they value offices in which power resides.³⁹ There is no shortage of evidence that monarchs, and their challengers, seek to gain and keep power. The Shah enjoyed being Shah: “Actually,” he once wrote, “I like my job tremendously.”⁴⁰ Perhaps King Hussein made the point best in his 1962 autobiography:

I had seen enough of Europe, even at seventeen, to know that its playgrounds were filled with ex-kings, some of whom had lost their thrones because they did not realize that the duties of the monarch are all-embracing. I was not going to become a permanent member of their swimming parties in the South of France.⁴¹

The Organization of the Book. In chapters 2 and 3 I will show how the ruling families captured the petro-states at the dawn of the oil age, and explain how they coalesced into tight ruling groups that prove extremely resilient in the face of any attempts to overthrow them. The story of the emergence of the dynastic monarchies is an original interpretation of the effect of oil revenues on states

and political regimes in the Gulf, and is the core of the empirical part of this work.

In chapters 4 and 5 I look at the ruling families individually, while in chapter 6 I examine opposition to the ruling dynasties and the strategies that they adopt in response. In chapter 7 I examine two monarchies—Libya and Afghanistan—in which a failure of family cooperation contributed to the fall of the monarchy. In chapter 8 I look at the remaining five cases. In chapters 9 and 10 I present my conclusions.

Notes

Chapter 1. Introduction

Epigraph: Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 230.

1. Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, 191.

2. Leonard Binder in *Islamic Liberalism* notes that “the challenging persistence of monarchy” in the region has gone largely unexplained, 79. The surviving monarchies, Huntington wrote in *Political Order*, pose “fascinating problems for the student of political development,” 153. Michael Hudson, *Arab Politics: The Search for Legitimacy*, 165–66.

3. Huntington made an extended effort to explain the instability of modern monarchies in *Political Order in Changing Societies*; recent works include Lisa Anderson, “Absolutism and the Resilience of Monarchy in the Middle East” and F. Gregory Gause, “The Persistence of Monarchy in the Arabian Peninsula: A Comparative Analysis.”

4. Khalid al-Adsani, *Muthakkirat Khalid Sulayman al-Adsani, rahimahu allah, sikritir majlis al-umma al-tashri'iyah al-awl wa al-thani*, 66. See also Jill Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar*, 63.

5. Robert A. Dahl, *Polyarchy*, 14–16, 36, 46–47.

6. Plato, *The Republic*, chapter 24, 268.

7. Tilly, *European Revolutions, 1492–1992*, 14; Jack A. Goldstone, “The comparative and historical study of revolutions,” 197; Rod Aya, *Rethinking Revolutions and Collective Violence*, 65.

8. F. Gregory Gause, *Oil Monarchies: Domestic and Security Challenges in the Arab Gulf States*, 160; Mark Heller and Nadav Safran, *The New Middle Class and Regime Stability in Saudi Arabia*; Gary Samore, “Royal Family Politics in Saudi Arabia (1953–1982),” 524; Ghassane Salameh, “Political Power and the Saudi State,” 22; Khaled bin Sultan [Al Saud], *Desert Warrior*, 48.

9. Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights (CDLR), *Monitor* 20.

10. In the United Arab Emirates the confederal nature of the cabinet confuses matters, but Abu Dhabi and Dubai are dynastic monarchies at the level of the emirate. In Oman, Sultan Qabus monopolizes the *wizarat al-siyada* for himself, and thus I do not call Oman a dynastic monarchy. Qabus does, however, delegate much authority to his relatives, so that in many ways Oman is a borderline case.

11. Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince and the Discourses*, 15.

12. Baron de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, vol. I, 124 (Book VIII, 7).

13. Afghanistan: Article 24 of the 1964 Constitution. Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 576. Egypt: Article 59 of the 1923 Constitution. Amos J. Peaslee, *Constitutions of Nations*, vol. 1 (1950), 726. Iran, Article 59 of the Supplementary Constitutional Law of October 8, 1907. Peaslee, *Constitutions of Nations*, vol. 3, Revised 3d ed. (1966), 465. Iraq: Articles 64 and 30 of the Basic Law of 1925, in Abd al-Razzaq al-Hasani, *Tarikh al-iraq al-siyasi al-hadith*, vol. 1, 229 and 225. Libya: Article 82 of the 1951 Constitution. Ismail Raghieb Khalidi, *Constitutional Development in Libya*, 87. Morocco: the Constitution of 1992 can be found in Ahmad Thabit, *Al-tahawwul al-dimuqratiya fi al-maghrif*, 119–42; the Constitution of 1972 can be found in Ahmad Jadira et al. *Al-tajriba al-dimuqratiya fi al-mamlaka al-maghrabiya*, 224–42. Jordan: Muhammad Salim Muhammad Ghazawi, *Al-wajiz fi al-tanthim al-siyasi wa al-dusturi lil-mamlaka al-urduniya al-hashimiya*, 107.

14. See the discussion in Eric Davis, “Theorizing Statecraft and Social Change in Arab Oil-Producing Countries,” 9–12.

15. I define rentier states as those countries in which the government receives 60 percent or more of its total revenues from nontax sources. All of the rentier states except Iraq fall well above 70 percent. Only Jordan, of the nonrentier states, is ambiguous—in some years grant income, along with nontax income, exceeds revenues from taxes. For the surviving monarchies I have consulted the most recent figures in the 1993 edition of the International Monetary Fund’s *Government Finance Statistics Yearbook*. No figures appear for Qatar or Saudi Arabia, but they certainly belong in the rentier state category. For the overthrown monarchies I have used data from the year with available information closest to the date of the revolution. République D’Égypte, *Annuaire Statistique 1954–1955, 1955–1956*; Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, 106–107; The Libyan Arab Republic, *Statistical Abstract 1968*, 324; United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, *Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific, 1974*, 22; International Monetary Fund, *Government Finance Statistics Yearbook*, 1982.

16. The charts in chapter 7 (for Libya) and 8 (for Iraq and Iran) show the increase in oil income in each of the three monarchies in the years before the revolution.

17. Gause, *Oil Monarchies*, 4.
18. John Waterbury, *The Commander of the Faithful: The Moroccan Political Elite—A Study in Segmented Politics*, 313; Louis Dupree, "An informal talk with King Mohammad Zahir of Afghanistan," 3.
19. Manfred Halpern, *The Politics of Social Change in the Middle East and North Africa*, 51–52, 253, 261.
20. See also Heller and Safran, *The New Middle Class*, Abstract. They discuss a "historical 'rule'" of middle-class revolution against monarchism.
21. UNESCO *Statistical Yearbook*, various years. I have given the figure for the year of the revolution or the closest preceding year with available information. Enrollment in postsecondary education has shown a strong and consistent upward trend over time in the monarchies.
22. On the educational achievements of the Gulf Arabs, and the underappreciation of this by Arabs outside the Gulf, see for instance Abd al-Haliq Abdallah, "Arab-Gulf relations" *Al-mustaqbal al-arabi*, 15.
23. Letter from T. C. Fowle, Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, to Shaikh Said bin Maktum, Ruler of Dubai, October 1, 1938 (IOR:L/P&S/12/3827, in *RF: the Emirates*, vol. I, 368).
24. Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 126.
25. Terry Lynn Karl and Philippe C. Schmitter, "Modes of transition in Latin America, Southern and Eastern Europe," 280; Dahl, *Polyarchy*, 47.
26. Huntington, *Political Order*, 87–92, 126–37, 168–91, 406.
27. *Ibid.*, 189.
28. Lisa Anderson, "Absolutism and the Resilience of Monarchy in the Middle East," 3–5.
29. The four standard cases are Iran, Nicaragua, Mexico in 1911, and Cuba in 1959. Before kings Hussein and Hassan reopened their parliaments, in 1989 and 1977 respectively, Jordan and Morocco seemed to bear all of the hallmarks of neopatrimonial regimes. The oil monarchies of Arabia, too, would seem candidates for this category, though the family nature of their regimes makes them somewhat less personalist than, say, the Shah's regime. Jeff Goodwin and Theda Skocpol, "Explaining Revolutions in the Contemporary Third World," 265–68; Jack Goldstone, "Revolutions and Superpowers," 40–44. Michael Bratton and Nicolas Van de Walle, "Neopatrimonial Regimes and Political Transitions in Africa," 455–56, 458. See also Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, 329–47.
30. Goodwin and Skocpol, "Explaining Revolutions," 268–70; Goldstone, "Revolutions and Superpowers," 44; Said Amir Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown: The Islamic Revolution in Iran*, 189–90.
31. Goldstone, "Revolutions and Superpowers," 45–47.
32. In *Polyarchy* Dahl argues that the traditional elites of the northwestern European monarchies established the rules and traditions of the

contestation of political power among themselves before they expanded the suffrage to other classes. A system of mutual guarantees facilitated democracy because it allowed elites—who might have adopted a policy of repression if threatened—to feel secure in their decisions to liberalize. The argument, he says, is generalizable: negotiated guarantees, and not revolution, provide the firmest foundation for polyarchy. Dahl, *Polyarchy*, 14–16, 36, 46–47. See also Bratton and Van de Walle, “Neopatrimonial Regimes,” 487; Larry Diamond, “Beyond Authoritarianism and Totalitarianism: Strategies for Democratization,” 144–48; Nancy Bermeo, “Rethinking Regime Change,” 364–67.

33. Gause discusses the importance of external factors in “The Persistence of Monarchy.”

34. Clement Henry Moore, *Tunisia Since Independence: The Dynamics of One-Party Government*, 38, 71–77.

35. A few members of the ruling family held cabinet posts at various times before the invasion. North Yemen, however, was not a dynastic monarchy. Dynastic monarchism occurs when the family coalesces into a ruling group commanding a powerful bureaucratic state that exercises an effective monopoly of power over the entire area of its national territory. This process had hardly begun in 1962.

36. Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*, 3–5, 290.

37. I am not arguing that dynastic monarchism is immortal. The decay of the institution of dynastic monarchism, followed by a revolution, would tend to confirm, not falsify, my thesis. I argue that the dynamic of dynastic monarchism discourages such decay, but I do not argue that it makes it impossible or even, in the long term, unlikely. The creation of a strong premiership, and the occupation of that post by someone other than the ruler or the heir apparent, is one possible cause of decay (see the discussions of Afghanistan and Bahrain). The rise of a very powerful parliament is another possible cause. The collapse of a strong dynastic monarchism such as that of the Al Saud today, however, would falsify the thesis.

38. “The role of theory in comparative politics: a symposium,” *World Politics* 48, no.1 (October 1995).

39. See Barbara Geddes, *Politician’s Dilemma: Building State Capacity in Latin America*, 7–11. My discussion of rulers and their strategies is influenced by Margaret Levi’s work on the “predatory theory of rule.” Margaret Levi, “A Predatory Theory of Rule”; Margaret Levi, *Of Rule and Revenue*.

40. Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, *Mission for My Country*, 319.

41. King Hussein, *Uneasy Lies the Head: The Autobiography of His Majesty King Hussein I of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*, 38.