



# ALL IN THE FAMILY

**ABSOLUTISM, REVOLUTION, AND  
DEMOCRACY IN THE MIDDLE EASTERN  
MONARCHIES**

MICHAEL HERB

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**SUNY series in  
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**Michael Herb**

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**To my parents,  
Frederick and Margaret Herb**

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# A Note on Titles, Names, and Conventions

## **Titles**

In Arabia, as in Europe, a monarch's title corresponds to the magnificence of his realm. Most of the Gulf rulers upgraded themselves from *shaykh* to *emir* around the time of independence. *Shaykh* roughly corresponds—in this sense—to *chief* in English. In Arabic *emir* corresponds the English *prince*; in Arabic as in English this title ranks below that of *malik*, or *king*. The rulers of Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain are thus princes, and not kings. Their families are ruling, and not royal. All of them, however, are monarchs, according to the common English definition of the term; I have also used the term *ruler* to refer to the monarchs.

In those states ruled by an *emir* the title of the other members of the ruling family is *shaykh*. In Saudi Arabia, ruled by a king, the title of the other members of his family is *emir*, or *prince*. Thus there is only one *emir* in Kuwait, but scores of them in Saudi Arabia. Nonroyals can bear the title *shaykh* in Saudi Arabia, while in the principalities the term *shaykh* is largely, though certainly not exclusively, limited to the ruling family. Outside of the Gulf *shaykh* is applied to religious leaders and venerated men in the more traditional parts of society: this can result in confusion for those who are familiar with Egypt or the Levant when they encounter a *shaykh* in the Gulf. There is a great deal of other nomenclature among the ruling families, especially outside the Gulf, that I have generally tried to avoid. What terms I do use I explain as they come up.

## **Names**

In Arabic an individual's given name is generally followed by his or her father's name; occasionally these two names will be followed by

the father's father's name. A family name may complete the set. Three different particles may come between an individual's name and that of his father: *bin*, *ibn* (both meaning "son of"), or *al-* affixed to the father's name. In some cases no particle at all is used. Thus all four of the following mean Saud, son of Faysal: *Saud bin Faysal*; *Saud ibn Faysal*; *Saud al-Faysal*; *Saud Faysal*.

Various versions of these are used in the different monarchies: the *bin* form seems predominant in the lower Gulf, while the *al-* form is widely used among the Al Sabah. I use the form most commonly used to designate an individual: thus I call Saud, the Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs and son of King Faysal, *Saud al-Faysal*.

The full name of Ibn Saud, the founder of the current incarnation of Saudi Arabia, is Abdalaziz bin Abd al-Rahman Al Saud. He is widely known however—in English and even in Arabic sources—as Ibn Saud, even though he is not literally the "son of Saud." I have followed the convention.

The proper names of the ruling families of Arabia generally take the form of the Arabic word *Al*, which means "family," followed by the name of the eponymous founder of the family (in Kuwait, for instance, the man named Sabah who ruled in the middle of the eighteenth century). Occasionally in Arabic texts an extra *al-* is prefaced to the name of this ancestor, resulting in, for instance, *Al al-Sabah*. In this instance and others like it I have dropped the intervening *al* in the full family name, preferring *Al Sabah* over *Al al-Sabah*. The latter is standard in English, and appears in many Arabic sources as well.

### **Genealogical Charts**

I have adhered to several conventions in the genealogical charts:

1. I have capitalized the names of all rulers, even if they had not yet come to the rulership at the particular historical episode illustrated by the chart. This is in an effort to give the reader a set of identifiable reference points across the various charts. Dates, unless otherwise specified, indicate the years of a ruler's reign.
2. In each chart I have omitted all members of the family who do not have a role in the episode or period the chart illus-

trates, or who do not provide a genealogical link to members of the family who do have such a role. The size of the ruling families makes this unavoidable.

3. As a general rule siblings are shown in order of birth, with the eldest on the left and youngest on the right.

### **Transliteration and Translation**

An effort has been made to follow a consistent system of transliteration of Arabic names, though I have readily given it up when the result was awkward, or where the person, idea, or thing is commonly known in English by a different transliteration. I have throughout erred on the side of readability rather than orthographic exactitude.

All translations from Arabic, unless otherwise noted, are the author's. As with any translation it has been necessary to chose between literalness and clarity, and I have generally given preference to clarity.

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I am no stranger to the faults and defects of the subverted government of France; and I think I am not inclined by nature or policy to make a panegyric upon any thing which is a just and natural object of censure. But the question is not now of the vices of that monarchy, but of its existence. Is it then true, that the French government was such as to be incapable or undeserving of reform; so that it was of absolute necessity the whole fabric should be at once pulled down?

—Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*

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## 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.”<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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."<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> 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*<sup>6</sup>

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.<sup>7</sup>

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.<sup>8</sup> 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."<sup>9</sup>

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.<sup>10</sup> 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
<b>Dynastic Monarchy</b>		Bahrain Kuwait Qatar Saudi Arabia UAE
<b>Dynasty Allowed in the Cabinet</b>		Jordan Morocco Oman
<b>Dynasty Barred from the Cabinet</b>	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."<sup>11</sup> 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."<sup>12</sup>

No dynastic monarchy has fallen to revolution, while all of the monarchies in which the constitution prohibits royal participation in the cabinet have collapsed.<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup> Table 1.2 shows why.<sup>15</sup> 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.<sup>16</sup>

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.”<sup>17</sup> 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.

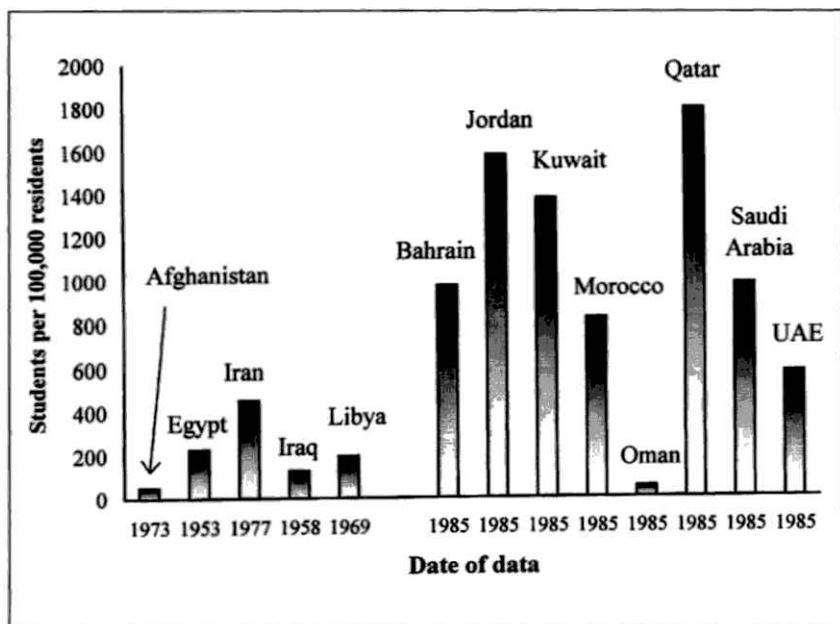
—King Hassan of Morocco in 1965

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 1963<sup>18</sup>

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.<sup>19</sup> 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.<sup>20</sup>

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.<sup>21</sup>

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.<sup>22</sup> 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 1938<sup>23</sup>

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 régime* 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.”<sup>24</sup>

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.<sup>25</sup>

*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.<sup>26</sup> 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!”<sup>27</sup> 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."<sup>28</sup>

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.<sup>29</sup>

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.<sup>30</sup>

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.<sup>31</sup> 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.<sup>22</sup>

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.<sup>23</sup> 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.<sup>24</sup> 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.<sup>25</sup>

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.<sup>36</sup> 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.<sup>37</sup> 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.”<sup>38</sup> I assume that political actors seek political power, and that they value offices in which power resides.<sup>39</sup> 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.”<sup>40</sup> 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.<sup>41</sup>

*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.

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## **The Emergence of Dynastic Monarchy and the Causes of Its Persistence**

Jill Crystal, in her work on Kuwait and Qatar, has shown that the formation of the family into a ruling institution is only as old as the modern state in the Gulf. Far from a traditional holdover, the Saudi paradigm of monarchy as family business is a recent innovation. “Political kinship,” Crystal notes, “normally considered a traditional vestige, was in fact a response to the oil-induced bureaucratic state.”<sup>1</sup>

This chapter examines the dynasties as the central political institutions of the Gulf and Peninsular states. I begin with the story of the families’ capture of the petro-states at the beginning of the oil age. I then discuss norms within the ruling families, marriage practices, and the role of dynastic consultation with other groups in society. The chapter concludes with a summation of how the dynasties resolve conflicts over the distribution of power among their members.

### **The Rise of the Arabian Dynasties**

The dynastic monarchies did not emerge because the rulers have always divided up their powers among their relatives. Before oil,

they rarely did, at least at the center. Nor did the ruling families take over the new bureaucratic states because rulers volunteered to share power with their families out of familial affection. Instead, dynastic monarchies emerged because the rulers' relatives, at the dawn of the oil age, had powerful bargaining resources which they could use to help rulers stay in power, to aid aspiring rulers in achieving power, or to attack and depose sitting rulers. Because the members of the ruling family posed such a threat, or possible source of succor, to rulers and aspiring rulers, a great deal of bargaining went on within the ruling families. Before oil this bargaining mostly concerned the splitting up of customs revenue and the distribution of fiefs. The sudden growth of the petro-states in Arabia added a new bargaining chip in intrafamily negotiations. The new states had a plethora of offices with bureaucratically defined authority; the innovation of cabinet government in particular created positions suitable for shaykhs and princes. Bargaining among shaykhs and princes led to the distribution of these offices to members of the ruling families, ensuring that the dynasties would dominate the emerging petro-states.

The strong bargaining position of members of the ruling dynasties against the rulers on the eve of oil grew out of several aspects of the pre-oil political order in Arabia:

1. Rule of a shaykhdom or emirate usually remained in the hands of a particular family through numerous reigns.
2. No firm principle specified which member of the ruling family had a right to rule.
3. Some of the ruler's relatives, from among those eligible to rule, had the resources to credibly threaten to usurp power.
4. To take office legitimately the ruler needed the *bay'a* of the leading members of his family.
5. No force outside the ruling family (except the British) could determine, on a sustained basis, which member of the ruling family would become ruler.
6. The British usually recognized the man chosen by the family as ruler.

## Kinship and the Rise of the Unitary State

In the language of political anthropology, the states of pre-oil Arabia were segmentary, rather than unitary. In the segmentary state the ruler directly administers only the central areas of his realm, through an administration of modest powers. In outlying provinces he delegates authority to lieges who rule in his name but through their own independent administrative machinery. Such states, by their nature, tend toward dispersion. In the unitary state, by contrast, the ruler directly administers the entire realm through an hierarchical administrative structure of agents chosen by him and under his direct authority. The transition from the segmentary to the unitary state thus entails the destruction of the autonomy of the subsidiary administrations, and their incorporation, or supplantation, by the central bureaucratic apparatus.<sup>2</sup>

The replacement of segmentary by unitary states occurred in numerous societies around the world, in response to the increase in the administrative and coercive power of the state over the past centuries. In tandem with this process, the practice of assigning state offices on the basis of birth has declined. The practice, however, has not declined in any strict relationship to modernity, development, or even bureaucratization (however these might be measured). Very often ascriptive elites, whose authority historically originates outside the king's bureaucracy, manage to capture posts in the bureaucratic state: that they succeed is hardly surprising, for the nature of elatedom provides these elites with resources they can deploy in an effort to adjust successfully to the new order.

In European nations the aristocracy, a group of separate lineages which before absolutism had enjoyed a largely autonomous social and political power, survived the rise of absolutist kings by winning an ascriptive right to offices in the new bureaucratic states.<sup>3</sup> In England the aristocracy severely circumscribed the authority of the Crown and became, in effect, the ruling elite. In other societies hereditary rulers at the center had a stronger bargaining position against other lineages. In these instances the kings often could simply elbow out ascriptive elites altogether, denying them any right—on the basis of birth—to places in the central administration. In

most Middle Eastern empires (outside the Peninsula) the growth of the unitary state did not result in the stable domination of the organs of the state by the royal clan or a legally defined aristocracy. In the oil monarchies of Arabia, however, the ruling families—and not lone absolutists, parliaments, aristocracies, officers, or clerics—successfully seized control of the unitary state when oil made its construction possible, and they have retained control in the decades since.

### **The Segimentary State in Arabia**

The rulers of Arabian states before oil presided over small, even minuscule, central administrations, but in those administrations shared little power with others. Lorimer described the ruler of Abu Dhabi at the turn of the century saying that "The present Shaikh . . . rules his principality absolutely within the limits to which his powers of coercion extend."<sup>4</sup> In a ruler's capital, in the town that he administered directly, he provided justice, maintained public order, and little more. Outside the town the ruler protected the trade of his merchants, defended his realm from attack by competing states, and tried to rein in the tendency of his lieges in subsidiary territories to escape his authority. He did not undertake to educate his subjects, nor to cure them of diseases, nor to build their houses and roads, nor most of the other myriad activities that concern modern rulers.

To enforce judicial rulings (issued by the rulers themselves, or by a *qadi*), to maintain order in the town, and to collect taxes, rulers employed or purchased bodyguards made up of slaves and servants. The bodyguards, which ranged in size from a dozen to several hundred, made up the only coercive forces in these societies not organized by kinship; the rulers commanded no organized armies or professional police forces.<sup>5</sup>

Rulers appointed men of prominent, noble families, including their relatives, to govern the various fiefs of their empires: only men of such background could exert authority over other men of good tribal stock. The ruler's lack of direct authority over his lieges posed several dangers to him, especially as their administrations resembled his, though on a smaller scale (or so he hoped). Should his power falter, fiefholders previously under his authority might rebel, denying him their submission or even waging war against him.

## The Ruling Family and the Segmentary State

The very modest size of the state, before oil, made it difficult for rulers to share power—in the center—with more than one relative. The participation of a relative in the administration tended toward the creation of a parallel state apparatus, not the legally defined sharing out of bureaucratic authority between members of the family. The “state” consisted of little more than a retinue and the willingness to issue and enforce orders, and the willingness of others to obey them. Often each of the two or three most important princes of the ruling family would command his own retinue, and a relative who began to judge cases and issue rulings soon began to usurp the ruler’s powers, and became a threat to him. Rulers sometimes allowed a favored son to assist him in governing his capital, but generally the ruler also expected this son to be his successor on his death.

Rulers did, however, share some power with other relatives. Instead of giving their relatives posts in the central administration, they often assigned them fiefs in outlying areas. This was often necessary to ensure that these areas remained under the control of the dynasty, but it also tended to produce intrafamily wars, especially on the death of an incumbent ruler.<sup>6</sup>

The replacement of one dynasty by another occurred in the shaykhdoms only as a result of the direct intervention of outside states. Lienhardt writes that when “ruling shaykhs were overthrown . . . they were invariably replaced by members of their own families.”<sup>7</sup> This does not appear to be something peculiar to the Gulf; Marc Bloch wrote of feudal Europe that, “Men believed in the hereditary vocation not of an individual but of a dynasty.”<sup>8</sup>

The relative security of the dynasty only increased the insecurity of the particular representative of the family who ruled. It did, though, make the nature of the threat clear, at least in some respects. Short of invasion and defeat at the hands of a hostile state, a ruler needed to fear his relatives first and foremost. A group of merchant families, or an outside state, who wished to see him gone would support another shaykh of his family against him. What was worse, for the ruler, his relatives themselves often possessed their own bodyguards or even their own peripheral administration only weakly subordinate to his own. A ruler had to worry even about his own sons, who like the rest of his family threatened his power, and

who might anticipate his death in their efforts to seize it. As a mirror for princes once put it:

One obedient slave is better  
than three hundred sons;  
for the latter desire their father's death,  
the former his master's glory.<sup>9</sup>

A ruler's relatives could overthrow him in several ways. A relative who governed a fiefdom could lead a territorial attack on the ruler, defeat his forces, and supplant him. Alternatively a member of the dynasty, with the help of his slaves or other confederates, could assassinate the ruler. Such assassinations bloody the history of the Gulf dynasties. Third, a member of the ruling family could simply assume the prerogatives of rule, building a bodyguard, judging cases, and demanding a share of the customs revenue, thereby gradually recreating a rival "state" and usurping the position of the ruler.<sup>10</sup>

### **The Bay'a and the Succession**

The rule of succession among the Arabian dynasties further strengthened the position of members of the ruling family against the ruler, especially against those who aspired to become ruler. According to the prevailing theory of legitimate rule in Arabia before oil, and indeed today as well, rulers take office only on receiving the *bay'a* (allegiance) of the leading men of the community. No specific rule determines who, or what category of people, must give the *bay'a*, and so in effect those who count are those who have the resources to obstruct the accession of a ruler.<sup>11</sup> In the Gulf before oil these men were largely, though not exclusively, of the ruling family itself. Since the emergence of the petro-state, these men have been members of the ruling dynasty virtually exclusively.

In Arabia, all males within the ruling sublineages of the families have a theoretic right to the rulership.<sup>12</sup> In practice the succession generally goes to those whose fathers ruled (though *not* necessarily to the sons of the most recent ruler). In a few cases the grandson of a former ruler may claim the succession if his father was prominent but died before he could take power. These general

guidelines leave a large number of shaykhs and princes eligible, especially if, as in Saudi Arabia or Kuwait, the succession has moved laterally to brothers and cousins instead of directly to the ruler's sons.

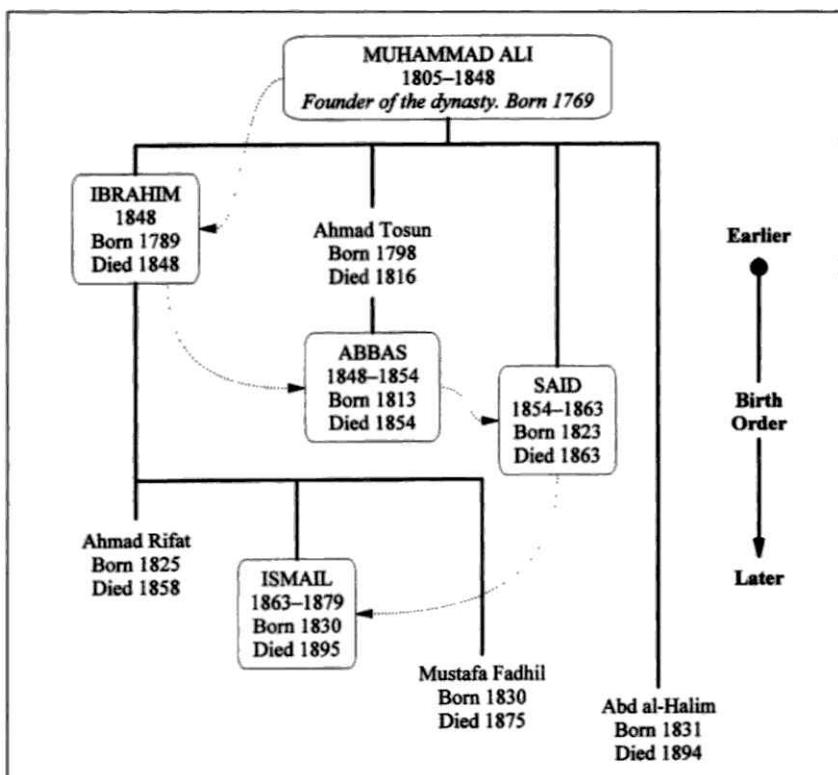
To understand the effect of this indeterminacy in the line of succession it is necessary to establish the boundaries of the ruling clans themselves. The ruling families are the descendants, in the male line, of a common male ancestor, whose name the family takes. This ancestor is not mythical nor is the chain of descent ambiguous, unlike many genealogical relationships between tribes and tribal segments in Arabia. The Al Sabah of Kuwait, for instance, descended from Sabah, the first of the clan to rule Kuwait (in the mid-eighteenth century). *All* of the descendants of this eponymous founder of the ruling family, but *only* in the male line, belong to the ruling family. A woman takes the clan affiliation of her father, but her children belong to the family of her husband. While a woman may, in a certain sense, marry into a family and become a member of it, men cannot. For the gender thought qualified to hold state offices the boundaries of the ruling family are distinct, and do not change.

Within the larger ruling family very commonly the succession is limited to a sublineage, the descendants of another male ancestor who is historically later in the genealogy than the founder of the dynasty as a whole. In Kuwait only the descendants of Mubarak the Great, who died in 1915, can rule. In Saudi Arabia only the descendants of Ibn Saud are eligible. Other cadet branches of the larger family enjoy a lesser status, but nonetheless belong to the dynasty. Those who connect to the family *before* the eponymous ancestor do not belong to the ruling family.

Middle Eastern monarchical systems have established various methods of choosing which among the eligible princes will rule. In the Ottoman Empire after 1617 the eldest living male of the dynasty succeeded, though this was not formalized legally.<sup>13</sup> The infamous Law of Fratricide enforced the principle: the sultan, on coming to power, had legal sanction to murder all of his male relatives, and sometimes in fact did so; in 1595, on the accession of Mehmed III, nineteen of his brothers proceeded from the palace in coffins, murdered on orders of the new sultan.<sup>14</sup> Succession in the Egyptian House of Muhammad Ali, which the Ottoman sultan

determined by decree (*firman*) legally passed to the eldest living male of the lineage, *as a fixed rule*, producing the succession pattern seen in figure 2.1.<sup>15</sup>

In the smaller Arabian states, with which we are more directly concerned here, no fixed principle emerged, apart from the requirement that the new ruler receive the *bay'a* on his accession to power. In Kuwait the ruler told the Political Agent in the 1930s that "The Arab idea . . . was that 'the best man' should win, after the death of the Ruler."<sup>16</sup> A conclave of the ruling family most frequently chose the "best man," while the second-best man (and third- and fourth-best and so on) dropped their claims in return for concessions of various sorts. Failing this the succession was determined by assassination, forced exile or, in the larger empires, by war.<sup>17</sup> More frequently, though less dramatically, rulers and aspiring rulers bar-



**Figure 2.1** Succession of the Eldest Male of the Lineage in the House of Muhammad Ali of Egypt

gained with their relatives, seeking support for the succession in exchange for payoffs. In the pre-oil era these payoffs took several forms: a ruler could give competitors for the succession allowances out of the revenue that accrued to him as ruler, the most important source of which was customs dues.<sup>18</sup> Second, if the ruler's emirate or shaykhdom included agricultural land (usually date palm groves) he could allot some of these to his relatives. Third, if the ruler's realm had dependencies, he could assign relatives to rule them. Finally, the ruler could agree that one of this competitors would inherit rule on his own death; the successful candidate thus sacrificed the right to pass rule directly to his own sons. Before oil, bargaining did not include executive posts in the bureaucratic state, because such a state did not exist.

### **The Role of Britain in Gulf Successions**

The right of the ruling clans to determine the succession depended, in the end, on their capacity to defend this prerogative from other groups in society or abroad which might have imposed their own will on the matter, and thus made the winners of succession battles indebted to themselves and not to the ruling clan. The merchants and the bedouin failed to impose themselves on the ruling families not because they lacked resources, but because they lacked any institutional means to bring their collective resources to bear on the ruling families in a permanent fashion. While a member of a ruling family might win a succession battle with the support of townsmen or bedouin, his supporters, once he assumed power, had no institutional means of dictating his actions (though they could threaten him from *outside* the state) and they had, certainly, no ability to make and enforce a long-standing rule governing the succession, one that would remove the decision from the arena of intrafamily competition.

Britain could have appointed rulers in the Gulf shaykhdoms, had it wished. Usually, however, it did not so wish. On occasion shaykhs sought British support in succession battles. British officials, as a matter of policy, threw the decision back to the ruling dynasty and dictated that Britain would support the man who won the backing of his family. In 1930 the shaykh of Qatar asked the British to recognize his son as heir apparent. The Political Resident wrote to his superiors in India:

I am in principle opposed to any declaration of this kind. If the son is the strongest man he will succeed without the necessity of any prior recognition by Government, if he is not the strongest man then any recognition given now might mean incurring possibly very inconvenient obligations later on.<sup>19</sup>

This policy followed directly from British aims in the Gulf: Britain did not wish to rule the Gulf emirates directly (with the partial exceptions of Bahrain and Oman) and recognized that installing a ruler against the wishes of his relatives incurred an obligation to support him against them, a potentially costly commitment.<sup>20</sup> Instead, the British recognized rulers chosen by their families, then coerced those rulers into cooperating in achieving Britain's limited objectives in the Gulf. The system, in practice, achieved the ends the British sought, at a modest cost in men and treasure.

### **Bargaining and the Creation of the Dynastic Monarchies**

The spectacular growth of the petro-state after oil created a plethora of new state offices and radically expanded the scope and power of the central administration in comparison with segmentary administrations. These state offices were valuable goods, and rulers (and aspiring rulers) handed out these posts to their relatives because they needed their relatives' support, more than that of any other group, to gain and keep power. The ruling family captured the new bureaucratic state in its infancy and its corporate authority, in comparison with other clans in society, grew at a dizzying pace alongside the explosive growth of the modern state, which the ruling families came to virtually own.

In many cases the distribution of offices took place as the result of a struggle between a ruler who exercised power in the traditional manner (that is, through advisers, and without a cabinet) and another senior member of the ruling family who sought to set up departments and a cabinet and built a family coalition on the basis of a distribution of state posts. In the next chapter I will trace in detail this process in all of the dynastic monarchies, as well in Oman, where it has not taken on a fully articulated form. In chapter 7 I will discuss the failure of dynastic monarchism in Libya, and how this laid the groundwork for the revolution.

**Table 2.1.** The Ruling Families' Share of Total Government Expenditure, in 1970

Abu Dhabi	25.7%
Bahrain	29.3%
Qatar	32.8%
Kuwait	2.6%
Saudi Arabia (1971/2)	12.0%
Libya (1967/8)	0.8%

*Source:* Kuwari, *Oil Revenues*

The same bargaining that led to a division of state offices among the members of the ruling clans also led to the division of the oil revenues, and just as the ruling clans got the most important state offices, they also got the largest shares of the oil money.<sup>21</sup> Ali Khalifa al-Kuwari has calculated the ruling families' shares of the oil revenues in the period before 1970 by comparing the published figures on oil revenues with the regimes' accounting of the eventual disposition of the funds. He assumes that sums unaccounted for ended up in the pockets of members of the ruling families.<sup>22</sup> His figures appear in table 2.1. In most Gulf states the take of the ruling family amounted to an enormous share of the budget, and Kuwari's figures perhaps underestimate the actual figures, for sizable sums in the budget, in this category or that, wound up in the pockets of princes or shaykhs. In Libya, not a dynastic monarchy, the family received a dramatically smaller sum.<sup>23</sup>

### **Norms within the Ruling Families**

Though the members of the ruling dynasties rarely discuss internal family issues with outsiders, Khalid bin Sultan, a prominent prince of the Al Saud, has set out what he calls the "characteristics which have contributed to the strength of the House of Saud." Several of his points relate to the internal organization of the family, and provide a short summation of some of its internal rules:

Respect by younger members of the family for their seniors, however small the age gap between them may be.

The allocation of some top government jobs to the most qualified members of the family, on the understanding that those with and those without jobs are entitled to equal respect.

Respect and appreciation for the King, the head of the family, who is considered the father of every single member of the family.

A determination to solve disputes within the framework of the family, and the nurturing of bonds between family members on the understanding that the interest of the family is greater than that of any individual member.<sup>24</sup>

Seniority, measured in terms of age and not generation, provides the basis for a system of precedence within the ruling families. Within the ruling families, and in these societies generally, there is a strong cultural tradition of deference to elders, and this forms a bedrock principle of organization within the ruling clans.<sup>25</sup> Khaled bin Sultan Al Saud identifies seniority as *the central rule of the family institution*:

If I had to name a single principle which unites this large family it is respect: essentially, respect for members older than oneself, even by a few weeks or months. In practice this means that if a difference of opinion arises between you and another member of your family—whether it be your father, your uncle, your brother, your cousin, or some other relative—there is always a line you cannot cross, a line imposed by deference.<sup>26</sup>

Seniority is not measured by generation, but instead by age; it is this principle that led to the intergenerational movement of the succession in the Muhammad Ali's lineage (figure 2.1). This deference to seniority does not entail an unconditional yielding to the opinion of older members of the ruling family; the dynasty makes its decision by consensus, and this need for consensus imposes on senior princes or shaykhs the obligation to consult and listen to the view of other family members. Should a member of one of the ruling families fail to do this he runs the risk that his relatives may form

a consensus to overlook his opinion, to deny him appointment to state posts, or even to remove him from posts in the regime.

### **Parallel Hierarchies of Family and State**

The men who hold the top posts in the Gulf monarchies are embedded in two parallel hierarchies of authority: the visible and familiar hierarchy of the state and the less obvious hierarchy of the ruling family. The two hierarchies overlap in those members of the dynasties who hold office in the government, yet the family hierarchy is by no means limited to office holders, but instead includes all males who belong to the ruling clan. The system of seniority within the ruling families operates with little reference to the posts in the government held by a shaykh or prince. Throughout the Gulf some of the most senior, and thus most influential, members of the ruling houses hold no positions in the state hierarchies whatsoever. Members of the dynasty who hold political office do not have automatic precedence in the hierarchy of the family. It is in defense of this principle that Khalid bin Sultan makes a point of saying that both those who hold offices and those who do not are "entitled to equal respect."

The details of governance are not the bailiwick of the family as a whole, but instead of those shaykhs or princes who hold posts in the government. Individual princes and shaykhs use their connections to advance their own particularistic interests, and the family as a whole makes the central policy decisions (such as opening a parliament) by consensus, but everyday policy making remains largely the responsibility of the shaykhs or princes who hold office. The head of state has the last say on these issues, though he may, like emir Jabir of Kuwait, delegate much of his authority to other shaykhs of the ruling family.

While the king or emir owes his position to his family—and knows this—the family nonetheless invests the post with a significant degree of authority, even over the family itself. While the king or emir cannot dismiss his relatives from their posts at will, he does have the strongest voice in promotions, dismissals, and the selection of the crown prince. He also has the power to impose sanctions on members of the family who misbehave, especially the younger ones. This ensures some modicum of discipline

over the family, though it operates best when misbehavior threatens the family's political power, and not when the abuse of that power afflicts injustices on those outside the family.

The constitutions or basic laws of these states recognize the authority of the family only in roundabout ways; none, for instance, specify that the minister of defense must be a prince or shaykh. Constitutional authority is instead lodged in the king or emir—in the case of Saudi Arabia, a reading of the Basic Law would give one the impression of a country ruled by a king with unfettered absolute powers. The dynasty forces the accountability of the king to the family through its control of the succession, not by any constitutional provisions.

### **Longevity in Office**

Formally, in all of the monarchies, the king or emir has the power of appointment and dismissal. In practice he can dismiss princes or shaykhs from the highest post only after securing a consensus of the family. Three types of events—in roughly declining order of frequency—cause cabinet reshuffles in the key posts:

- The death of an office holder;
- The dismissal of an office holder as a result of a dispute within the family;
- Voluntary retirement.

The result is very little turnover in these posts, so little that these ministers are among the longest-serving cabinet ministers in the world. This longevity recalls that of another system of collective rule, that found in the Soviet politburo, in which Gromyko, for instance, was foreign minister for decades.

### **Posts in the Military**

While the governments do not publish comprehensive rosters of their members in the armed services, it is well known that the dynasties distribute numerous princes and shaykhs throughout the officer corps. In the Saudi military Ghassan Salamé estimates their numbers in the hundreds. In Kuwait, where there are certainly

fewer, they nonetheless keep a watch out for any signs of disloyalty in the military, and man the guard that protects the emir.<sup>27</sup> The Al Khalifa of Bahrain dominate the top positions in their military, occupying eight of the first ten positions in the Bahraini armed forces in 1994.<sup>28</sup>

An opposition group in 1987 published a detailed account of the Al Saud's efforts to exert royal family control over the army, one of the few published documents on the subject in any of the Gulf militaries. It is based on an interview with a military expert identified as "A. Utaibi."<sup>29</sup> He reports that the Al Saud maintain an iron grip over the control structure of the armed forces, with princes in key posts. He says that

the Royal Family has arranged the Army's administration is such a manner as to rule out any hostile officer being able to rush any substantial military force into carrying out a coup operation or attempt. Given that the whole effort [of any prospective coup] will involve a small group equipped only with limited weapons, to confront it with other forces would be quite easy.<sup>30</sup>

The distribution of members of the dynasties throughout the military establishments provides the ruling families not only with reliable commanders, but also with what is, in essence, an effective spy network. Members of the ruling family occupy posts from which they can keep an eye out for any signs of incipient disloyalty or unusual activity. The profusion of shaykhs and princes in the military does not, by any means, contribute to the effectiveness of these militaries against external foes. Yet, at the same time, no dynastic monarchies have fallen to coups.

### **Succession after Oil**

The consolidation of the ruling families at the top of the states has led to one important elaboration on the pre-oil succession mechanism. It is now common practice—in some cases prescribed in constitutions—that the ruler upon coming to power will appoint a crown prince.<sup>31</sup> Since the inception of the dynastic monarchies no rulership has fallen vacant in the absence of a crown prince, the determination of succession in the Gulf is an issue, in the first

instance, of the appointment of crown princes. In some of the dynastic monarchies another post—deputy prime minister, or deputy president of the council of ministers—goes to the presumptive second in line to the throne. In most cases appointment as crown prince or second in line does not make the succession automatic: rulers take office only upon receiving the *bay'a*.

The ruler may appoint the crown prince after reaching a family consensus through informal consultation with the senior members of the ruling house or, in cases in which there is more dispute (as in Kuwait in 1978 after the death of Sabah al-Salim), a formal family council may be called. Formal councils include males of the ruling family, and no one else.<sup>32</sup>

### **The Influence of Outsiders over the Succession**

In the system of succession by *bay'a* it is not only the ruling families who must promise their allegiance to the rulers, but also the leading personalities among the people. The constitutions of the various states reflect a concern to achieve a broader sanction for the succession: in Kuwait, for instance, the heir apparent must receive the *bay'a* of the National Assembly. The Basic Law of Saudi Arabia states that the citizens must give the *bay'a* to a new king (though it also points out very directly that this obligates the citizens to obedience, in good times and bad).<sup>33</sup> A semiofficial account of the Saudi succession says that the *ahl al-hal wa al-aqd*, or “those who loose and bind,” a religious category encompassing the leaders of the community, must give the *bay'a* to a king, and have the ability to dismiss him should he violate the terms of the *bay'a*. The composition of the *ahl al-hal wa al-aqd* is identified, in order, as (1) the Al Saud, (2) the *ulema*, (3) the council of ministers, (4) and the *majlis al-shura*.<sup>34</sup>

In practice the ruling families chose the successor, then present the *ulema* and the *majlis* with their choice, requesting assent. Any who refuse place themselves in outright opposition to the new reign, without preventing it from coming to be. Yet the need for the *bay'a* of citizens outside the ruling family does put a constraint on dynastic choices, for should a *majlis al-shura*, or the *ulema* in Saudi Arabia, refuse, as a group, to give the *bay'a* to a new ruler, it would cause a crisis of a severe sort. This has not happened in the modern period in the oil monarchies. Yet it remains an institutional

mechanism through which outsiders to the ruling family might, in circumstances as yet unmet, interfere in the ruling families' control of the succession.

In a more general sense it appears that the ruling families, when they choose heirs apparent, do consider the popularity of different candidates and the reaction that their succession to the rulership would evince. The ruling families have a valuable franchise and do not want to unnecessarily expose it to threats, among them the difficulties that might accompany the elevation of a truly unpopular king or emir.

### **Marriage and Dynastic Monarchism**

It is sometimes argued that the marriage practices of the oil dynasties contribute to their resilience by tying the ruling families, by links of marriage and descent, to a large number of other clans in society. The dominant image is of Ibn Saud conquering Saudi Arabia then systematically marrying into the vanquished tribes, uniting his realm in the genes of his sons. In fact what systematic evidence exists on the marriage patterns of the dynasties suggests that marriage is used only sparingly to create links with other groups in society. Ibn Saud sired more sons by Armenian wives than by women of *all* the major Saudi tribes (excepting the Sudayri family), and this was not because Armenians are an important political constituency in Saudi Arabia.

The ruling families forbid their women to marry outside the extended family, a rule broken only rarely.<sup>36</sup> Partly as a consequence, men of the ruling families are encouraged to marry their cousins, and today endogamy is common. The marriages to outsiders that do take place tend to cluster in certain families (such as the Sudayri clan of Saudi Arabia), while a large number of the remainder are to women of families of no particular political or social consequence. The rule of female endogamy among the Gulf dynasties establishes a very clear social distance between the ruling dynasty and other lineages. Other families may marry their daughters to men of the ruling dynasties, but their sons will never marry women of the ruling family. In a culture where families are defined patrilineally, this defines a social hierarchy and reinforces the separation between the ruling dynasties and other traditional elites.

***The Al Sabah.*** The Kuwaiti elite, outside of the ruling family itself, traditionally consists of the Sunni merchant notable families. Alan Rush has written an extensive genealogy of the Al Sabah and the marriages he records, especially in more recent times, do not paint a picture of determined efforts by the Al Sabah to marry into the merchant families. The Al Sabah male descendants of Mubarak the Great (who died in 1915), in the 169 marriages Rush records, have betrothed around a dozen women from any of the Kuwaiti families who had representatives in the 1921 Majlis, in the 1938 Majlis, or on the first three Education boards in the 1930s; these institutions represented the Sunni merchant elite.<sup>36</sup> They have married but five members of the eight most prominent and venerable Sunni merchant families.<sup>37</sup> No daughters of the very prominent al-Saqr, al-Nisf or al-Adsani families appear as brides of Mubarak's descendants in the genealogy.

Who, then, have the shaykhs of the Al Sabah married? Of the 169 marriages of the male descendants of Mubarak the Great, 80 were within the Al Sabah. Especially in recent years, the shaykhs of the Al Sabah have mostly preferred to marry endogamously: shaykhs of older generations who married many wives chose at least one or two from the Al Sabah, while the shaykhs of later generations, who have more frequently contented themselves with one wife, have as a general rule found her among their relatives. When Rush gives only one wife for a shaykh, in fifty-three of sixty-one cases she too is of the Al Sabah.<sup>38</sup>

When the shaykhs of the Al Sabah have married outside the family, it has been to women of the noble tribes (around twenty-six, with the current emir accounting for at least ten, and not primarily for political reasons), foreigners (seven) and slaves/concubines (fourteen, in times past).<sup>39</sup> In short, it does not appear that the Al Sabah have used intermarriage in any systematic way to build political links with other elite families.

***The Al Saud.*** It is often said that Ibn Saud used marriage as a method to unite his kingdom. There is some truth in this: some of his marriages clearly served political purposes. Yet a close examination of his marriages reveals other patterns, ones that cast some serious doubt on the image of Ibn Saud systematically uniting his kingdom by impregnating as wide a variety of its citizens as possible. There is no full information on Ibn Saud's wives, or the mother

of all of his children; there is however complete information on the mothers of those of his sons who survived to adulthood.<sup>40</sup>

Women of families historically already closely associated with the Al Saud—the Sudayri and the Al al-Shaykh—along with the Al Saud itself, bore 45 percent of his sons.<sup>41</sup> These marriages did not create new alliances, but instead confirmed old ones, to families long in the service of the Al Saud. Women of foreign origin account for most of the rest of his wives, and for most of the sons born to Ibn Saud in the later years of his rule. These marriages had no political import, and were entered into for reasons having nothing to do with politics. The balance, six sons, have mothers of tribal origin. The marriage tie to the Shammar, which Ibn Saud entered into after he conquered the Rashid dynasty of Ha'il (which derived from the Shammar and had many Shammar tribal allies) is a clear example of the use of marriage to create links with former enemies. Yet even this, some argue, was done less for reasons of conciliation than for the purpose of eroding the tribal solidarity of the conquered groups.<sup>42</sup> We find no sons born of women from a long list of

**Table 2.2. Ibn Saud's Son-Producing Marriages**

ORIGIN OF WIFE	NUMBER OF SONS	PERCENT OF SONS	NUMBER OF WIVES
<b>The Al Saud</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Families long allied with the Al Saud</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>4</b>
Sudayri	13		3
Al al-Shaykh	1		1
<b>Tribes</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3</b>
Bani Khalid	2		1
Shammar	1		1
Ruwala	3		1
<b>Foreigners</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>8</b>
Armenian	7		3
Yemeni	3		2
Moroccan	1		1
Concubine of unknown origin	3		2
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>16</b>

Source: Samore, "Ruling Family Politics," 528–32.

prominent Saudi tribes: the Utayba, the Harb, the Al Murrah, the Qahtan, nor to notable families of the Hejaz.

**The Al Khalifa.** Fuad Khuri, in his study of Bahrain, found that endogamy prevails among the Al Khalifa, and is increasing over time. Outmarriage among males declined, he says, from 15 percent in the 1920s to 3.2 percent in the late 1970s, while monogamy increased from 65 percent to 92.4 percent. He further argues that among the Sunni tribal clans in Bahrain, only the Al Khalifa family still intermarries at a high rate. In the oil age, the Al Khalifa have grown ever more exclusive and tightly knit, while the secondary tribes in alliance with the Al Khalifa have begun to lose their internal solidarity, especially as measured by the propensity to marry within the clan.<sup>43</sup>

Systematic evidence on the marriage practices of the other Gulf dynasties is not available: little evidence, however, suggests that it is substantially different from that of the Al Saud, Al Sabah, and Al Khalifa. The evidence suggests that links between the ruling families and the rest of their societies, by marriage at least, are more limited than often thought. The families tend to marry endogamously, and most marriages outside the dynasties are made within a small circle of other families. This does not mean, of course, that the ruling families never marry other prominent families nor that these marriages are not politically important. Yet such marriages are infrequent, and the general picture is one in which the ruling families seek to limit, rather than enhance, the extent and importance of marriage links to other families.

### **Consultation and the Mediation of Dynastic Rule**

A tradition of consultation between rulers and ruled is deeply embedded in the political traditions of the Gulf states. The dynasties participate in this tradition, and enjoy multitudinous contacts with their societies. These contacts endow the dynastic regimes with a measure of stability they would otherwise lack. Yet, in itself, this tradition of consultation does not explain the stability of the Gulf regimes. The effectiveness of the regimes' efforts to create consultative channels is predicated on the nature

of dynastic domination of the state. While consultation is a tradition deeply embedded in these societies, consultation could not connect the regime with society in the way it does in the dynastic monarchies if the dynasties—as corporate groups—had not taken control of the state.

Efforts by the Arabian dynasties to consult with their citizens take three main forms. All, confusingly, are designated by or associated with the Arabic word *majlis* (the plural is *majalis*). The word has both the meaning of “council” and “meeting place.”

1. In its most basic sense a *majlis* is simply an informal social gathering of men, often held weekly in a special room built for the purpose; in Kuwait this is known as a *diwaniya*.
2. Members of the ruling dynasties and other important men hold more formalized versions of these meetings, which amount to audiences in which citizens can present complaints.
3. On a yet more institutionalized level, we find the appointed body known as the *majlis al-shura*, or “consultative council.”
4. Finally, the ruling families of Kuwait and Bahrain (though the latter only briefly) have set up parliaments whose members run for election. These are the *majalis al-tashri'i*, or legislative councils. The Kuwaiti parliament is formally known as the *majlis al-umma*, and in English as the National Assembly.

The dynasties have gone to great lengths to portray the *majlis*, in the sense of a personal audience with the ruler or other member of the ruling family, as a form of political participation, an alternative to—or substitute for—democratic institutions. When Emir Jabir of Kuwait closed the Kuwaiti parliament in 1986 he called on ministers to hold public *majalis* each week, so that the people would retain access to their leaders in the absence of the parliament.<sup>44</sup> We find the notion of the *majlis* as a replacement for democracy in abundance if we delve into the elaborately sycophantic books sponsored by (or at least written in the style of) certain Gulf ministries of information. The two quoted below are in Arabic, so we may surmise that they are intended for the home market.<sup>45</sup> A

chapter entitled “Desert Democracy” in a book on Shaykh Zayid of Abu Dhabi begins with an account of the historical roots of

a spontaneous democracy built upon the unity, of hands and hearts, between leaders and subjects . . . with nothing coming between the leader and the citizens except that which is between a father and his sons . . . in a social context which makes one family a framework for political action, one that conserves society’s authenticity in the face of all the material complications that have befallen the world:

The Shaykh of a tribe is in a tent with no doors, and the entire tribe has its doors open to him.

The Shaykh of a tribe is among his tribe the entire day, and the entire day his tribe is around him.

These are the inherited and ancient traditions, from which Zayid does not deviate, for he receives every day his sons and brothers of the people, with a store of affection which does not wane. He does not close the doors against them the entire day, confirming in this that democracy in the history of this people is a natural style of daily life in which there are no formalities or unnatural constraints.<sup>46</sup>

All of the Arabian ruling families draw on this principle of informal representation, if not always in such colorful terms. Sultan Qabus of Oman is famous for the expeditions around the Sultanate he undertakes yearly. He receives the complaints of the people, and the local press covers his travels exhaustively.<sup>47</sup> A hagiography of Qabus calls the annual tour the “open parliament of Oman,” and says that it is

the people’s opportunity to meet their leader anew each year and to connect between the leader and his people. During his yearly tour of the provinces of the Sultanate he feels the aspirations and hopes of his people in a special style linking the people to their leader without formalities or a restrictive protocol.<sup>48</sup>

The Gulf rulers, in their *majalis*, also survey the opinions of elites who have expertise on a particular issue or an interest at stake. Shaykh Sa’d, the prime minister of Kuwait, holds two such

audiences a week.<sup>49</sup> In such fora shaykhs and princes can consult with leading individuals in society so as to gain an impression of the effects of their policies and the possible consequences of changes in policy. Members of the ruling families also consult with each other, so that those consulted run the gamut of society, from those who have a simple bureaucratic complaint, to the powerful who can gain the ear of a prince by attending his *majlis*, or through less formal channels.

The tradition of consultation is not limited to rulers alone: many members of the ruling families hold regular audiences. The ruling families, and especially the Al Saud, use the size of the family to extend the *majlis* system to as many citizens as possible. The Al Saud have appointed princes as emirs of most provinces, with the goal of (among other things) allowing a geographically broad spectrum of Saudi society the opportunity to take their complaints to a member of the royal family.<sup>50</sup> Like American members of Congress the princes of the Al Saud act as intermediaries between citizens and the bureaucracy, earning personal credit for solving the problems that arise out of a bureaucracy that is, in the first instance, a creation of the Al Saud.

### **The Majlis al-Shura**

All of the Arabian dynasties, at one point or another, have set up consultative councils in an effort to further institutionalize the channels linking the ruling families with the citizens of their states and to meet criticisms of their lack of democracy. Like the less formal *majalis* held by individual princes or shaykhs, the regimes portray the consultative councils either as a substitute for democracy, or as a form of democracy more consonant with Arab, Islamic, and Gulf values. The ruling families tend to set up these consultative councils, or promise to set one up, in response to crises of one sort or another. Two events in the recent history of these monarchies account for most decisions to set up a *majlis al-shura* (or a *majlis al-tashri'i*, for that matter): the achievement of independence in 1971 (or in 1961 in Kuwait), and the wave of opposition to the regimes that broke out after the Gulf War.

As a rule the consultative councils have few formal powers. Most lack the authority to reject legislation submitted for review by the cabinet, meet behind closed doors, and have a membership wholly

appointed by the rulers. These restrictions, taken together, make these weak bodies indeed. Their importance is largely symbolic, and even their symbolic role is hampered by the absence of public airing of their debates. The head of the Saudi *majlis al-shura*, after its first year of operation, when pressed could not offer any substantive statement about what the council had done during the year.<sup>51</sup>

### **The Limits of Shura**

The books quoted above, on the “desert democracy” of Shaykh Zayid and the “open parliament” of Sultan Qabus, and others like them, deliberately recall, in their accounts of consultations between rulers and subjects, the practice of bedouin shaykhs in consulting with the men of the tribe before reaching a decision. Bedouin shaykhs had a pressing need to reach consensus because they lacked the means to enforce their decisions on dissenters within the tribe; if a decision was to stick, it had to have wide agreement.<sup>52</sup> Rulers of states, by contrast, can enforce their decisions on dissenters. Weber recognizes the difference when he cites an “Arabian Sheik” as an example of a traditional leader who rules by consensus; Weber gives the label *sultanism* to arbitrary rule resting on an administrative apparatus, where the ruler makes decisions and his myrmidons carry out his will.<sup>53</sup> The absolutist monarchies of the Gulf fall in the latter class, and make appeals to historical memories, or images, of the former.

The ruling families do not interpret the Quranic injunction upon rulers to consult with their subjects to mean that they should share authority in the actual making of decisions, which remains the prerogative of the rulers themselves.<sup>54</sup> As the head of the Saudi *majlis al-shura* put it of the king: “The *wali al-amr* [the king] to whom the people delegate their affairs by virtue of the *bay'a* is responsible in front of God . . . for his choices and for all of what he does, and all of the decisions he makes, and obedience to him is a duty according to the [religious] texts and the contract of the *bay'a*.<sup>55</sup> The ruler must consult, but after he consults he makes his own decision and must be obeyed; should he err, God—and not the *majlis al-shura*—holds him to account.

In practice, today, the *majlis* in Saudi Arabia is generally not more than an opportunity for citizens to petition members of the ruling family for redress of some bureaucratic wrong. The Saudi Basic Law itself does not claim that the *majlis* is much more; article 43 provides that, “The *majalis* of the king and the crown

prince are open to all citizens and to all of those who have a complaint or seek redress of an injustice. It is the right of every individual to address the public authority about his affairs.”<sup>56</sup> Even then, it is reported that access to the *majlis* of the king is quite difficult for ordinary citizens.<sup>57</sup> A leading figure of the Kuwaiti opposition compared Kuwait with Saudi Arabia by saying that Kuwaitis, when they want to make a political statement, go the parliament or mount a protest. Saudis, he said with disdain, must go on bended knee to the *majlis* of a prince.<sup>58</sup>

### **Shura and the Survival of the Dynasties**

The ruling families of the dynastic monarchies consult with their subjects a great deal. They consult far more than some other sorts of authoritarian leaders, and more indeed than kings in monarchical systems that place power in the hands of a man, and not a family. Shaykhs and princes are encouraged to tell their senior relatives what they hear from their associates and from those they work with in the bureaucracy. A high value is placed on the honesty and accuracy of this information, and a prince or shaykh has little to gain by developing a reputation as a liar within the councils of his family.<sup>59</sup> In a real way the family acts as a large intelligence-gathering network, ensuring that the princes and shaykhs who make policy have solid and reliable information on which to base their decisions, so that they may better defend the political hegemony of the family. That, in the end, is the meaning of consultation without any mechanism for the consultees to impose their will on the rulers.

### **The Resolution of Disputes within the Dynasties**

Ruling groups must devise some way of resolving their inner disputes, particularly disputes over the succession. Regimes that lack robust institutions to resolve such disputes rarely survive long past the death of their founder. The dynasties of Arabia do not resolve their disputes because they are families, bound by ties of affection. In the days before oil, family bonds did not prevent fratricide, patricide, and other varieties of intrafamily murder. Instead, the institutions of dynastic monarchism incorporate incentives that drive individual princes and shaykhs, in their pursuit of power, to take actions which contribute to the maintenance of family domination over the state.

It is sometimes argued that the indeterminacy in the succession is the Achilles heel of the ruling families, and certainly it crops up regularly in discussions of the perceived weaknesses of these regimes.<sup>60</sup> I argue instead that the indeterminacy of the succession was a necessary condition for the capture of the petro-states, at their conception, by the ruling families as corporate groups. After oil the indeterminacy of the succession has continued to provide the glue that holds the family together and guarantees its control of state power.

### **The Nature of the Collective Action Problem among Members of the Dynasty**

The problem of family cooperation in the dynastic monarchies has the nature of a prisoners' dilemma. Dynastic monarchy, in its sharing of power among the senior family members, limits the amount of authority enjoyed by any single member of the family. Power-seeking members of the ruling families have an outcome they prefer over the survival of the dynastic monarchy: their own rule, unfettered by their relatives. This includes not only those members of the family who fail to win high posts in the state, but all office holders, including the ruler himself. In other forms of monarchy authority lies with the ruler alone, not with the ruler and a bevy of his relatives. These paradigms of monarchy are well known, exist in other Middle Eastern monarchies, and provide a model for imitation by power-seeking members of the ruling families in the dynastic monarchies of Arabia. The preference ordering of a power-seeking member of the dynasty (we will call him Abdallah) is:

1. Abdallah rules *without* family participation in the cabinet.<sup>61</sup>
2. Status quo: Abdallah receives only the powers assigned him by the family.
3. Another member of the family rules without sharing state offices with Abdallah or the rest of the family.

While virtually every member of the family strongly prefers the maintenance of the dynastic monarchy over its destruction, many power-seeking shaykhs and princes (including and particularly sitting rulers) have as their first preference the end of family rule—

so long as they win more power in the new dispensation than the family allotted them in the old. The collective action problem within the dynasties, then, is to make it individually rational for members of the dynasty to cooperate in achieving each member of the family's second preference, the survival of family rule. This is not a hypothetical problem: in chapter 7 I will show how the Libyan and Afghani monarchs increased their personal power by dismissing their relatives from state offices, and how this set the stage for the collapse of their monarchies.<sup>62</sup>

### **The Resolution of Family Disputes**

Family disputes in the dynastic monarchies follow a fairly standard path to resolution.

1. Disputes begin when two or three shaykhs or princes, each with one or two family supporters, enter into a struggle over the rulership (or over the heir apparentcy). Each faction seeks the support of the rest of the family.
2. Over a period of time, usually a number of years, the family attempts to reach a compromise between the factions, sharing out power and wealth in a way that will satisfy the disputants.
3. If negotiations fail, and the disputants threaten family power, a dominant coalition forms and expels one faction from their posts in the state.

Bandwagoning against the renegade family faction is crucial in avoiding all-out family battles that threaten dynastic control of the state. Shaykhs and princes of the dynasties face consistent and strong individual incentives—which arise from the nature of family rule—to form large family coalitions against one side or the other in disputes over political power, when these disputes begin to threaten the family monopoly on political authority. Without these incentives to bandwagon, the endgames of family disputes would feature pitched battles between wings of the family, not the exile of a prince or two. The former threaten the institution of dynastic rule: the latter does not.

Strong incentives impel family members toward bandwagoning:

- Princes and shaykhs who are not contenders for the rulership have little to gain by supporting a faction that resorts to extreme measures in pursuit of power.
- Each faction, seeking the support of other family members, tends to offer similar deals to family members not actually seeking the succession. Factions promise continued tenure in their posts to senior shaykhs and princes, and lesser posts to junior family members. A faction that offered a deal that promised a wholesale upset of the existing balance of power would run into the difficulty that the family members in the more important posts—those whose support is most needed—stand to lose the most from widespread changes.
- The fortunes of members of the family not immediately involved in the succession dispute do not rest on the victory or defeat of their favored candidate, if indeed they have one. Members of the dynasties do not need to pick sides early and commit everything to their side's victory. While the dispute over the rulership is a winner-take-all game (or at least a winner-take-most game) for the two contestants, other members of the dynasty can waver, vacillate, and switch sides late in the game, and still keep their positions and privileges. The nature of the political game within the families does not encourage the hardening of factions, but instead the blurring of family cleavages.
- Bandwagoning is aided by the existence of norms and traditions that clearly define what sort of political actions are legitimate for family members and which are not. These norms set out guidelines and paradigms for the negotiated settlement of disputes within the family. The breaking of these norms provides a signal for dynastic bandwagoning against renegade family factions.

Nothing in the family rules, it should be emphasized, discourages an ambitious member of a dynasty from supporting his relatives' claims to state posts or state funds in return for their future support for his claim on the rulership. It is when this competition

for support violates the rules of dynastic politics that it is seen as illegitimate. It is in this sense that power seeking is a necessary element in the inner dynamic of the ruling dynasties: it is power seeking that drives ambitious members of the dynasties to seek their relatives' support, and to give them roles in the state.

### **Outside Actors**

The ability of the family to bandwagon in defense of the dynastic monarchy means little if a small dissident faction can ally with a very powerful outside actor and frontally defeat the rest of the clan. Today no domestic actors of such influence exist in the dynastic monarchies. Outside the borders of these states no international actor today has a combination of the capacity and the desire to destroy family rule in the dynastic monarchies.

Barring the intervention of an overwhelmingly strong outside power, losing factions cannot hope to prevail against a bandwagon of the remainder of their relatives. As we will see, several shaykhs and princes have tried to fight dominant family coalitions, and all have earned but exile for their efforts.

### **Consolation Prizes**

As Montesquieu pointed out:

There is a far greater incentive to ambition in those countries where the princes of the blood are sensible that if they do not ascend the throne they must be either imprisoned or put to death, than amongst us, where they are placed in such a state as may satisfy, if not all their ambition, at least their moderate desires.<sup>63</sup>

The rulers of Middle Eastern empires in the past sent out their sons to govern the provinces, and on the death of the rulers the sons fought it out for the succession. The losers could expect death. In other empires sometimes male relatives of the ruler were allowed to live: the ruler merely had their eyes seared out with a hot poker, leaving them blind and thus no longer a threat. This, as might be imagined, led to desperate measures to win the succession.

In the dynastic monarchies, by contrast, those who fail to win the succession receive compensation prizes, if they want them. They

can satisfy, in peace, "their moderate desires." When Jabir al-Ali Al Sabah failed in his bid for the heir apparentcy of Kuwait in 1978 he remained in his cabinet post for several more years, then retired. He remained, thereafter, one of the most prominent shaykhs of the Al Sabah, consulted weekly by the emir, and enjoyed considerable status, prestige, and a measure of power. The situation did not compel him to fight to the death for power and, being a reasonable man, he chose not to.

### **Conclusion**

Oil transformed the ruling families of Arabia into state elites that have shown an enormous resilience. The sources of this resilience are to be found, in the first instance, in the nature and internal organization of these dynasties, and not in other characteristics of the political or social structure of these monarchies. The families have developed a stable method of distributing power among their members and have worked out a stable succession mechanism. The dynasties have maintained a tight grip on state power through their monopoly of the key cabinet posts and the distribution of other family members throughout the state apparatus. The result is a ruling elite that is very difficult to overthrow: no Middle Eastern dynastic monarchies have fallen to revolution. It is dynastic monarchism, more than oil, or the role of the tribes, or a lack of education, that explains how the oil monarchs have avoided revolution.



## **Arabian Society and the Emergence of the Petro-State**

Oil wealth led to vast changes in the status, wealth, and political power of every group in Arabian societies. The rise of the petro-state produced one set of clear winners: the ruling families. As we have seen, fissiparous ruling families coalesced into cohesive ruling elites dominating the newly powerful bureaucratic states. In this chapter I will examine the effects of the age of oil on other groups in Arabian society.

1. The expansion of the power of the central state led to the displacement of the myriad other clans in Arabian societies which had exercised state power and enjoyed an autonomy that, before oil, was predicated on the weakness of the central state.
2. A new educated class emerged to fill the numerous posts in the new petro-states, posts which demanded technical skill,

specialized training or, at least, literacy. Those who received educations and took up these new state positions came from urban families.

3. The rural populations, and particularly the nomads of the desert, settled in the urban conglomerations of Arabia. Because the bedouin had far fewer educational achievements than urbanites, the bedouin came to make up a relatively disadvantaged class among the citizen populations.
4. The military potency of the bedouin collapsed in the face of the newly powerful central state. Yet the dynasties recruited the bedouin into new praetorian guards, in an effort to create forces which would check the revolutionary ambitions of parts of the new educated middle class.
5. Merchants took up state offices in those bureaucracies dealing with matters of business and state contracts. They did not interfere in the dynasties' monopoly of political power.
6. Millions of foreigners came to the oil monarchies in pursuit of work. They did not become citizens and, for all their demographic weight, foreign workers remained politically inert. In several states, however, foreigners did have a role in the security and military establishments, as mercenaries.

Of these changes it is the rise of the ruling dynasties to dominate the petro-states that best explains the survival of the monarchies. We cannot find, in the changes wrought by oil on other groups in Arabian society, the secret to the resiliency of the dynasties. Neither the role of the tribes, nor the merchants, nor the educated middle class, explains the survival of monarchism in the Middle East.

The purpose of this chapter, then, is primarily to provide a wider societal context for the discussions of the dynasties found in the previous and coming chapters. It has the further goal of clarifying the political role of the tribes in the Arabian monarchies. There is a strong relationship between birth, power, and wealth within the boundaries of the ruling clans; outside those boundaries the correlation fades.

### Ascriptive Status in Arabia

To understand the changes wrought by oil in Arabia it is first necessary to make a few prefatory comments on the social composition of Arabian society. In the Gulf and Najd the ascriptive elite consists of those who claim descent from a "pure," or *asil*, tribe.<sup>1</sup> This noble *asil* status is not a legal category, and does not confer specific legal privileges, as did nobility in Europe.<sup>2</sup> The special status of *asil* tribal lineage in Arabia originated in a distinction between higher status camel breeders and lower status sheep herders. The former ranged farther and, as a result of the nature of camel breeding, moved in larger numbers, thus gaining a coercive superiority among the nomads.<sup>3</sup>

*Asil* status inheres in those of recognized *descent* from noble tribes, however distant in the past. Settlement, for however many centuries, does not cause a loss of *asil* status, though before oil certain occupations did cause derogation.<sup>4</sup> It is difficult to avoid using the adjective "tribal" to describe the urban notables, for in the end they owe their high ascriptive status to their descent from

**Table 3.1. Social Terminology in the Gulf**

	TRIBAL, ASIL	TRIBAL, NONASIL	NONTRIBAL
Definition	Those of recognized descent from a noble (camel-rearing) tribe.	Those who trace their descent to a subordinate tribe.	Those who cannot trace their descent to a tribe.
Rural	Camel-rearing tribes.	Subordinate nomadic tribes, particularly those in derogatory professions.	(Very few.)
Urban	1. The ruling families and some other town notables. 2. <i>Asil</i> tribes of recent settlement.	Settled families of subordinate tribes.	Town dwellers of non-tribal descent: the Shi'a, those of African descent, Sunnis of forgotten tribal origin, immigrants (the <i>khadiri</i> ).

noble tribes. Yet the label obscures the fact that many of these families, even before oil, were entirely settled, and may have been so for hundreds of years. Most of the ruling families last herded camels for a living at a time lost in the mists of history; the Al Saud have a settled history of at least half a millennium.<sup>5</sup> It was an upper stratum of settled families of pure stock, and not the nomads themselves, who made up the ruling elite of Arabia and the Gulf in past centuries, and still do today in the form of the ruling families.

Economically, socially and politically the urban notables of *asil* tribal descent make up a group distinct from the bedouin. In Kuwait the settled bedouin make up a readily identifiable group, characterized by their residence in the farther out suburbs of Kuwait city, by their comparative lack of education, and by their generally less well-off economic circumstances. The bedouin can be distinguished by their accents, their headgear (wrapped around the head instead of the more usual style in which the cloth hangs straight down), and by the small Japanese pickup trucks many drive. They are not confused with *asil* urban notable families such as the al-Saqr and the al-Ghanim. The settled bedouin tend to vote by tribe, while the urban notables do not.<sup>6</sup> In terms of wealth, education and social prestige the urban notable families sit almost at the pinnacle of Kuwaiti society. The settled tribes, by contrast, make up the lower middle class.

Only some tribes are noble, or *asil*, and in some places non-*asil* tribes make up a substantial part of the population. In Kuwait in the 1992 elections 40 percent of the votes for tribally identified candidates (and thus around 20 percent of total votes) went to the Awazim and other tribes thought, according to the ascriptive caste system of traditional society, less than pure.<sup>7</sup> The proportion of these tribes in Kuwait, however, is probably higher than in the other monarchies. The non-*asil* tribes do not reap a status benefit from the championing of noble tribal heritage and the related discourse of pure descent, which reinforces their non-*asil* origins. Islam, it should be noted, provides no support for these distinctions, and that is widely recognized.<sup>8</sup>

As a general rule almost all nomads claimed tribal affiliation, while only some town-dwellers did. The heterogeneity of the urban populations is a result of the region's economic history. The coastal

cities survived through trading, and wide contact with other parts of the world gave their populations a cosmopolitan cast. The non-tribal settled populations come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Many are Shi'a, and most of the oil monarchies have sizable Shi'i minorities. In Bahrain the Shi'a are a majority.<sup>9</sup> Nontribal urban Sunnis (sometimes known as the *khadiri*) have a variety of backgrounds. They are described by a Saudi:

Those of *khadiri* status come from many different backgrounds and include people whose ancestors came into the area from other non-Arab places in the Middle East, whose ancestors were expelled from tribes or decided to leave the tribe, whose ancestors were forced to take up "impure" occupations out of economic necessity, and so forth.<sup>10</sup>

In Dubai at the time of a 1968 census about three quarters of the citizen population did not claim tribal affiliation of any sort. In Abu Dhabi, by contrast, a full 87 percent of the citizen population claimed tribal descent.<sup>11</sup> The two figures reflect the variant economic and social histories of the two shaykdoms; while Dubai sought (and still seeks) to make itself the dominant trading port of the area, little trade was carried out at Abu Dhabi, and it is probably the most tribal of all the Arabian principalities. In Kuwait only about half of those who voted in the 1992 elections cast their ballots for candidates of a specific tribal affiliation. Almost all of these candidates ran in the outlying districts (the *manatiq al-kharajiya*) populated by bedouin of relatively recent settlement.<sup>12</sup>

### Elite Clans

In Arabia, of the lineages that had enjoyed an hereditary control over state functions before oil, only *one* lineage successfully preserved its political power in the petro-state, the ruling clan itself. While in Europe the emergence of the absolutist state raised the representatives of a number of *separate* lineages above all others in society, in Arabia the emergence of the petro-state led to the rise of a single lineage.

Before oil a large number of clans throughout Arabia had a more or less hereditary claim on offices which performed state

functions. Emirs enjoying autonomous power ruled the towns; *qadis* tended to come from particular clans; rulers farmed out the customs to merchant families. The weakness of the central administrations presided over by the rulers left a great deal of room for these families to take on state, and statelike, functions, and to keep them within the family over a number of generations. When oil gave rulers the resources to build far larger, more powerful, and more extensively bureaucratized states, the central administrations arrogated many of the state functions previously dispersed among other clans. The bureaucratization of state functions brought men of these elite families into posts in the rulers' administrations as formal state employees. Yet the urban *asil* elite shared offices with men of nontribal background, both groups gaining positions on the basis of some combination of proximity to princes or shaykhs of the ruling families and educational achievement. While members of these families still hold posts in the state, their former autonomy has virtually disappeared. These families might be identified as a part of that class which makes up the beneficiaries of the monarchical order, but they do not form the core of its ruling elite.

Several of these subordinate clans are prominent, particularly those which, before oil, had close relations with the dynasties. Of the provincial governors listed in King Fahad's 1995 decrees, the only three not of the Al Saud were members of the Sudayri family, which claims descent from the Dawasir tribe. This, however, is a decline from previous years: in the nineteenth century a member of the family governed the Eastern Province, and in the 1950s Sudayris governed thirteen provinces.<sup>13</sup> In Qatar the Al Attiya have what appears to be a similar status in regards to marriage links with the ruling clan and the assignment of important posts in the state to men of the family. Yet it is said that members of the Al Attiya, in the great raids on the treasury at the beginning of the oil era by the shaykhs of the Al Thani, themselves claimed a right to allowances from the oil income. They did not receive them.<sup>14</sup>

The Al al-Shaykh of Saudi Arabia asserted, before and after oil, a certain family right to state offices in the religious institution.<sup>15</sup> The ancestor of this clan, Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab, cofounded the first Saudi empire with a member of the Al Saud in the eighteenth century. He had such and influence, indeed, that Philby describes him "co-regent."<sup>16</sup> Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab's de-

scendants, even before the rise of the petro-state, had far less political weight.<sup>17</sup> Today the Al al-Shaykh do not have a fixed right to the highest posts in the religious hierarchy in the sense that the Al Saud have asserted a thus far unassailable claim to the *wizarat al-siyada*.

In some instances the ruling families did not dismiss traditional ruling families of local towns from their posts, but instead built the new bureaucratic state around them. Altorki and Cole recount the process by which the Al Saud marginalized the emir of Unayzah: Ibn Saud extended his sway over this Nejdi town by striking a deal with the its emir, committing himself (and his progeny) to appoint a member of the emir's family as his successor in perpetuity. The Al Saud have kept their part of the bargain, but have also organized the administrative structure of Qasim—the province in which Unayzah lies—around the emir. The Al Saud located the provincial capital in the neighboring town of Burayda, although Unayzah might have been a candidate for the honor, and the Unayzah emir reports to the Burayda office of the Interior ministry, rather than directly to Riyadh.<sup>18</sup>

### The Merchants

Rulers' income, before oil, derived in large part from trade, and some writers have made persuasive revisionist arguments that the trade of the towns gave Arabian states their *raison d'être*.<sup>19</sup> The relationship between the rulers and the merchants before oil had the character of a protection racket: the merchants subsidized the rulers, while in turn the rulers protected the merchants' trade. This has been cited as a source of merchant influence, one that they lost when oil replaced trade as the main revenue source for the state.<sup>20</sup>

The merchants did not translate their economic power into institutions through which they could exert political control over the state. The merchants, in contrast to the various corporate groups of, say, fifteenth-century Europe, did not have a parliament through which they could bargain with rulers over the raising and spending of taxes.<sup>21</sup> Instead rulers levied the taxes and deputed their bodyguards to collect them; the merchants' most effective tactic against the rulers' exactions was that of capital anywhere—the threat of flight.

Merchant bargaining power lay in the mobility of their trade (and of pearlng) which allowed them to flee to a different shaykhdom if the rulers' exactions grew too heavy. The position of a ruler, at least in the smaller Gulf-side shaykhdoms, could not easily withstand a wholesale alienation of the merchant community, and rulers in any case had an interest in the prosperity of the merchant class. Jabir, a brother of Mubarak the Great, is said to have remarked after the imposition of a new round of taxes by his brother that "if an emir is a shepherd and his subjects sheep, he is entitled to shear their fleeces when they become too heavy."<sup>22</sup> Yet too much shearing of fleeces did the ruler little good if it ruined the merchants, or drove them to another shaykhdom.<sup>23</sup>

Levies of townsmen made up the bulk of the rulers' armies, which put a certain constraint on the rulers' war making. Merchants could also take sides in succession disputes among members of the ruling clan, so that a ruler had to worry that alienated merchants might seek a ruler more to their taste from among his relatives. Yet the merchants did not translate these bargaining points into a stable and institutionalized method of exerting political power over rulers.

Oil liberated the ruling families from dependence on the merchants' money. By the same token it also freed the merchants from the rulers' exactions. The net result was something of a decline in the political power of the merchant class against their rulers, but not any sort of collapse in their pre-oil status. The more important cause of the merchant decline, at least in relative terms, has been the rise of other groups in society, particularly the educated middle class, and also newer entrants into the business elite.<sup>24</sup>

The merchants, who before oil lacked any institutions through which to exert a steady political influence over the ruling families, lacked them after oil also. Although the radical expansion of the Gulf states during the oil boom brought many representatives of the merchant class into formal state offices for the first time, the merchants, in sharp contrast to the ruling families, have not been transformed wholesale into a state elite.<sup>25</sup> The merchant clans have their greatest presence in state offices in those parts of the bureaucracies that relate directly to their concerns, particularly ministries such as commerce, industry, electricity, in addition to the management of state corporations.

For a period after the Gulf War the Saudi government fell far into arrears to its suppliers and contractors, thereby essentially taking forced loans from them. By 1996 the Al Saud had paid back much of the overhang built up since the end of the 1991 war, but raised the money to do so partly by floating bonds on the Kingdom's capital market.<sup>26</sup> This dependence on borrowing from Saudi citizens has had little perceptible effect on the autocratic habits of the Al Saud.

### **The Rise of the Educated Middle Class**

The modern state demands specialized skills acquired through modern western-style educations. As elsewhere, in the oil monarchies this has resulted in rewards accruing to those of high educational achievement. In the Gulf the demand for skills in the first decades of the oil era was enormous, the supply of locals with these skills scanty, and the rewards handed out (in economic terms) quite generous. Those who had these new skills came almost exclusively from urban backgrounds. What they were not was bedouin.

Ibrahim al-Awaji, in a survey of the Saudi bureaucratic elite, found that three quarters of government officials came from cities. He discovered only two officials, of 271, who said that their fathers were bedouin.<sup>27</sup> Many of the courtiers who had the influence to place their cronies in state posts were not only not bedouin, but not even natives of Saudi Arabia.

The cabinet announced by King Fahad in 1995 illustrates the Al Saud's tendency to reward the educated. It is almost entirely composed of princes of the Al Saud lacking university educations, and "commoners" with Ph.D.s or MBAs.<sup>28</sup> There is here a certain parallel to Ibn Saud's corps of advisers. He hired mostly foreigners, for their skills and knowledge of the outside world; today his sons hire Saudis educated in America, for their familiarity with modern methods and technologies. The "Saudiness" of the administration has increased, the emphasis on skill remains intact.

### **The Relative Decline of the Bedouin**

In the new Gulf economy the average citizen survives on a salary received from a job in the public sector. In Kuwait, for example, in

**Table 3.2.** University Degrees of Members of the 1995 Saudi Cabinet

	POST	DEGREE	UNIVERSITY
Princes of the Al Saud	Prime Minister	None	
	Deputy Prime Minister	None	
	Defense and Aviation	None	
	Housing and Public Works	None	
	Interior	None	
	Foreign Affairs	B.A.	Princeton
Non-Princes	Agriculture and Water	Ph.D.	UC Irvine
	Commerce	MBA	Arizona
	Communications	Ph.D.	Arizona
	Education	Ph.D.	Oklahoma
	Finance and National Economy	Ph.D.	Colorado State
	Health	Ph.D.	(German Inst.)
	Higher Education	Ph.D.	Florida
	Industry and Electricity	Ph.D.	Harvard
	Information	Ph.D.	Duke
	Islamic Affairs etc.	Ph.D.	al-Azhar (Cairo)
	Justice	Ph.D.	Imam U. (Saudi)
	Labor and Social Affairs	MBA	Arizona
	Municipal and Rural Affairs	Ph.D.	Michigan State
	Petroleum	M.Sc.	Stanford
	Pilgrimage	Ph.D.	North Carolina
	Planning	Ph.D.	USC
	Post, Telegraphs, Telephones	Ph.D.	UC Berkeley

the early 1990s 97 percent of employed citizens worked for the Kuwaiti government or enterprises it controls; the situation in the rest of the Gulf is probably not quite so dire as this.<sup>29</sup> Gulf citizens who do not work for the state have access to free education, health care (of an indifferent quality), housing, and other benefits provided by the government, but very few outside the ruling families receive a generous state stipend unconnected to some sort of employment. Free services provided by the state do not substitute for a regular income, just as dependence on the welfare state, even in the more generous Western countries, does not make one rich. A paycheck is necessary for the majority of Gulf Arabs, and this paycheck usually comes from the state.<sup>30</sup>

The bedouin of the desert, no matter how noble their origin, have few resources or skills called for in the modern bureaucratic

states of the Gulf and Arabia, outside the military. The more recently a group was actually nomadic, it appears, the more debilitating its handicaps in competing in the modern Arabian world. Donald Cole, who has studied the Al Murrah, a tribe of particularly mobile bedouin, wrote:

The only channel of upward mobility open to the nomads is through the military, but even here they make up the mass of the troops and only a few of the officers. This means that the Bedouin, by default, do not actively participate in any government, academic, or private programs concerned with the modernization of Saudi Arabian society.<sup>31</sup>

In Bahrain Fuad Khuri shows that differences in education (and wealth) follow not sectarian or national lines, but instead correlate to urban residence. The older town families—Sunni or Shi'a, Arab or Persian alike—enjoy greater incomes and education than the rural (or recently urbanized) Sunni Arab tribal groups and Shi'i *baharna*; the urban groups occupy the better posts in the civilian bureaucracy and dominate the shaykhdom's commercial life.<sup>32</sup> There appear to be no similar statistics for the other oil monarchies, but a simple comparison of the neighborhoods in Kuwait populated by town families and the *manatiq al-kharajiya* settled by the tribes leaves little doubt as to the relative economic status of the two communities.<sup>33</sup>

The ruling families recruit the bedouin in large numbers into their military establishments. Many of the ruling families also actively seek to bring bedouin who have received some education into bureaucratic posts, in a sort of bedouin affirmative action policy. And bedouin shaykhs, and some others, receive various sorts of gratuities from the ruling families, sometimes quite valuable. None of this makes up for the underlying economic disadvantages suffered by the recently settled bedouin as a class. Those who reap the most rewards in the oil monarchies are those who have modern educations or who do well in business, two groups in which the bedouin are underrepresented and, until recently, virtually absent.<sup>34</sup> If we were thus to draw a pyramid of Arabian socioeconomic structure (excluding noncitizens), those of *asil* tribal descent would dominate both the top of the pyramid (in the form of the ruling families) and the bottom, which is composed largely of recently

settled bedouin, along with some Shi'a and others. In between lies the educated urban middle class, drawn largely from the urban families of the pre-oil era, tribal and nontribal alike.

### **The Bedouin in the Militaries**

Townsmen made up the most reliable part of rulers' armies before oil, largely because most of what the rulers did with their armies was protect the trade of the townsmen.<sup>36</sup> Bedouin displayed far less loyalty toward the rulers. An adviser at the Saudi court wrote:

As soon as it became clear that the Emir was going to be defeated, his Bedouin followers would be the first to turn and loot his army, justifying this by saying that they were his friends and that as he was going to be looted in any case, they had more right than his enemies to the spoils.<sup>37</sup>

Only in the age of oil and nationalism did the rulers find the bedouin trustworthy and build their armed forces around bedouin tribal structure. The goal, in the days when Nasser was the cynosure of the Arabs, was to create a counterbalance to the ambitions of the new educated urban class. Ironically, perhaps, the pioneer of the idea of the bedouin army as praetorian guard for Arabian thrones was an Englishman. In the 1920s John Bagot Glubb—later famous as Glubb Pasha—mobilized the bedouin to defend the southern marches of Hashemite Iraq against the attacks of Ibn Saud's *ikhwani*. Where Ibn Saud had made use of the bedouin by giving them an ideology and sending them, in unregimented hordes, against his enemies, Glubb instead organized the bedouin: he made a modern army out of them. "Never before," Glubb wrote in one of his books, "had any attempt been made to train or discipline bedouins. All the Arab governments I knew had accepted as an axiom that bedouins were militarily useless."<sup>38</sup> In 1930 Glubb left Iraq, with the end of the British Mandate approaching, and went to Jordan, where the Hashemites hired him to set up a similar bedouin corps for the same purpose, to defend the Jordanian frontier from the marauding of the Saudi tribes.<sup>39</sup> Glubb recruited a new force composed entirely of men of the nomadic tribes; he won the trust of the tribes, and soon "the sons of many of the leading shaikhs were struggling for admission."<sup>40</sup> By the end of the 1930s, with the dis-

pute in Palestine occasionally spilling over to the east bank of the Jordan, the British and the Hashemite monarchy began to realize the value of the relative political isolation of the bedouin from nationalist and urban ideas.<sup>40</sup>

Throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s the bedouin of the Arab world displayed little sympathy for Arab nationalism. In Kuwait, election returns provide some solid empirical evidence for this point, for the bedouin remained solidly loyal to the Al Sabah and the nationalists had little success in bedouin precincts. The bedouin, as we have seen, had little education and did not make up a part of the urban new middle class. The nationalists, by contrast, derived from urban groups, and many from nontribal families. The bedouin had good reason to oppose the outright seizure of power by these groups. While the dynasties did not send the bulk of the rewards of the oil era toward the bedouin, they nonetheless gave them a better deal than might have the urban nationalists.<sup>41</sup>

In more recent years the rise of political Islam as the dominant opposition ideology to the oil dynasties has changed the original calculations on which these bedouin praetorian guards were built. The bedouin display far more sympathy for Islamist opposition activities than they ever did for nationalism, and this throws into doubt the future political reliability of the bedouin.

### **Foreigners**

The massive growth in the wealth of the Arabian states in the oil boom, and the enormous need for both skilled and unskilled labor, led to the immigration of millions of foreign workers to these states. Foreign residents outnumber citizens in the Emirates, Qatar, and Kuwait. The monarchies do not grant citizenship to these workers, except rarely. This should not be surprising. In states that survive not on the basis of productive labor by their citizens but instead on the sale of a natural resource, adding to the citizen population has the effect of increasing the number of people among whom the fixed sum of oil wealth must be divided.

Foreign workers, as a rule, have virtually no political influence in the Gulf states. Many expatriate workers do not know Arabic well and work in the Gulf for only a few years. The regimes allow very little explicitly political activity among the expatriate communities,

and when they do the regimes keep this activity within strict bounds. Noncitizens lack substantial bargaining power against the regimes: as individuals they are subject to immediate deportation should they cause any political difficulties.<sup>42</sup> The citizen populations of the Gulf states do not recognize the legitimacy of claims by the expatriate communities to a voice in political affairs, and support their governments' policies of strict exclusion of foreigners from political life.

Foreigners, however, do have important political roles in one main respect: they occupy many posts in the Gulf militaries. These men do not have a political influence of their own—for they are mercenaries, and replaceable—but their presence in some of the Gulf armies is of political significance in terms of the relationship of the ruling families with their own citizens.

This is most true in Bahrain, where among the citizenry the Shi'a outnumber the Sunni by perhaps 70 percent to 30 percent.<sup>43</sup> The Al Khalifa, as part of their largely repressive strategy of rule, have constructed a resolutely minoritarian security apparatus: the ruling family relies on Sunnis of tribal origin and foreigners to stay in power. In the past decades the Al Khalifa have hired mercenaries from a wide variety of places, particularly Britain, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan, but also Yemen, Oman, and Iraq.<sup>44</sup>

In other Gulf militaries, foreigners, while often a substantial part of military manpower, do not have the same repressive role as the mercenaries of the Al Khalifa. Instead, in places like Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, the use of foreigners grows in part out of a reluctance to recruit from all segments of the citizen populations but also, more importantly, from the serious labor shortages in these countries.

### **Conclusion**

The most important of the multitude of changes wrought by oil on Arabian societies—in the political sphere—was the rise of the ruling families as a ruling group in command of the petro-state. Other elites, who had enjoyed a certain measure of autonomous power before oil, found their authorities circumscribed by the newly powerful bureaucratic states. The merchants, who had little role in the state before oil, gained appointments to some ministerial posts, but not to those touching on the core of the dynasties' political power.

The ruling families mobilized the bedouin into praetorian guards, which they used to check the ambitions of the newest entrant to the Arabian social structure, the new middle class. Yet the dynasties did not make the bedouin into a privileged stratum in these societies. In the end it is not the bedouin or any other social group that preserves dynastic rule, but instead the dynasties themselves.

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## The Dynasties: The Al Sabah and the Al Saud

Ambition must be made to counteract ambition. . . .

—James Madison, *The Federalist No. 51*<sup>1</sup>

The emergence of dynastic monarchism is a story of conflict over power among princes and shaykhs of the ruling families. So, too, is the story of how the ruling families have retained power since the emergence of dynastic monarchism. The structure of individual incentives within the regimes is such that actions taken by power-seeking family members very frequently reinforces, rather than weakens, the dynastic monopoly of political power. In this chapter and the next I will show how the various Gulf ruling families captured the state at the beginning of the oil era and how they have defended their power in the decades since. The monopoly of power by the ruling families is no accident, and it appears stable over time. If this were *not* the case, if family unity appeared accidental, my argument that the survival of the monarchies is due to

the role of the ruling families in the state would be disconfirmed.

I have organized the discussion by country, treating at once both the emergence of dynastic monarchism and subsequent family disputes: my hope is that this will allow the reader to better keep track of the profusion of shaykhs and princes, many with similar names, who populate these two chapters. To the same end I have also constructed a number of genealogical charts, which I hope will further clarify who had what post, and when.

These two chapters are not histories of the ruling dynasties. Such a project would involve a longer work than this, and one with a different intent. Instead I have discussed the episodes that led to the emergence of dynastic monarchism in each monarchy, and I have followed this with a discussion of subsequent disputes within the ruling families. Dynasties with more disputes have received more ink. There is nothing like family harmony to create a dearth of information on these dynasties. More than this, however, disputes are what we are interested in. I am arguing against the view that these dynasties are hostage to vagaries of personality or crises in family affection. I thus focus on family fights. That said, some family disputes receive more attention than others, and I have devoted far more space to those episodes concerning which we have enough information to draw firm conclusions.

### **The Al Sabah**

The first dynastic monarchy in Arabia emerged in 1938, the unintended by-product of an attempt by the Kuwaiti merchant class to seize political power by setting up a parliament. This parliament (the *majlis*) was the first of its kind in the Gulf shaykhdoms, and it forms a key part of the region's democratic tradition. The *majlis*, however, was not the only innovation of 1938, for that year also saw the introduction of dynastic rule to the Gulf, an event the significance of which has not been appreciated.

The story of the capture of the state by the Al Sabah in 1938 requires, at the beginning, an account of the relationship between merchants and rulers in Kuwait, for it was the merchants' attempt to regain influence they had lost at the turn of the century that led to the events of 1938. For much of Kuwaiti history—before Mubarak the Great took power in 1896—Kuwait's Sunni merchant notables

enjoyed a supremacy over the ruling family unusual in the shaykhdoms of the Gulf, not to mention the peninsular empires.<sup>2</sup> This arose in part out of the orientation of Kuwait toward the sea and its comparative lack of influence in the bedouin interior; the ruling families elsewhere, by bridging town and desert, gained a certain independence from both.<sup>3</sup>

The cornerstone of merchant predominance lay in their refusal to allow the Al Sabah to impose a direct tax on the customs. The Al Sabah rulers subsisted instead on voluntary donations from the shaykhdom's merchants, payments made in explicit exchange for services provided. If a merchant did not pay, the ruler could refuse protection, but he could not directly coerce payment.<sup>4</sup>

Mubarak seized power in 1896 (by the expedient of killing two of his brothers) and in 1899 he imposed a customs levy on the merchants.<sup>5</sup> Ever since, with the exception of a few months in 1938, the Al Sabah have controlled state revenues. Mubarak's reign, decades before the first oil exports, marks the decline of merchant political power in Kuwait. In 1896 Kuwait thus reverted to the political order common throughout the Gulf: rulers levied taxes, and merchants paid them. If they did not wish to pay, merchants could flee, but they did not directly supervise the rulers' expenditure of tax revenues nor the making of his policies.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Shaykhs of the Al Sabah in Mubarak's Reign and to 1938**

The other shaykhs of the Al Sabah did not share in Mubarak's new ascendancy. He ruled as a petty absolutist, unrestrained constitutionally or institutionally by the merchants or by his family. Lorimer wrote that his rule "is personal and absolute," and that "the heads of his departments are mostly slaves; his near relations are excluded from his counsels; even his sons wield no executive powers."<sup>7</sup>

Mubarak died in 1915; after him, two of his sons ruled briefly, each dying a natural death that concluded a short reign.<sup>8</sup> In 1921 two of Mubarak's grandsons, Ahmad al-Jabir and Abdallah al-Salim sought the succession (figure 4.1).<sup>9</sup> Ahmad al-Jabir won the rulership on the basis of seniority. In the early years of Ahmad's reign Abdallah exercised some governmental powers of the traditional sort: he sat in judgment of cases and issued orders over his own name. Yet this was not the sharing of powers defined by appointment to a specific office within a state hierarchy. Abdallah's exercise of these powers

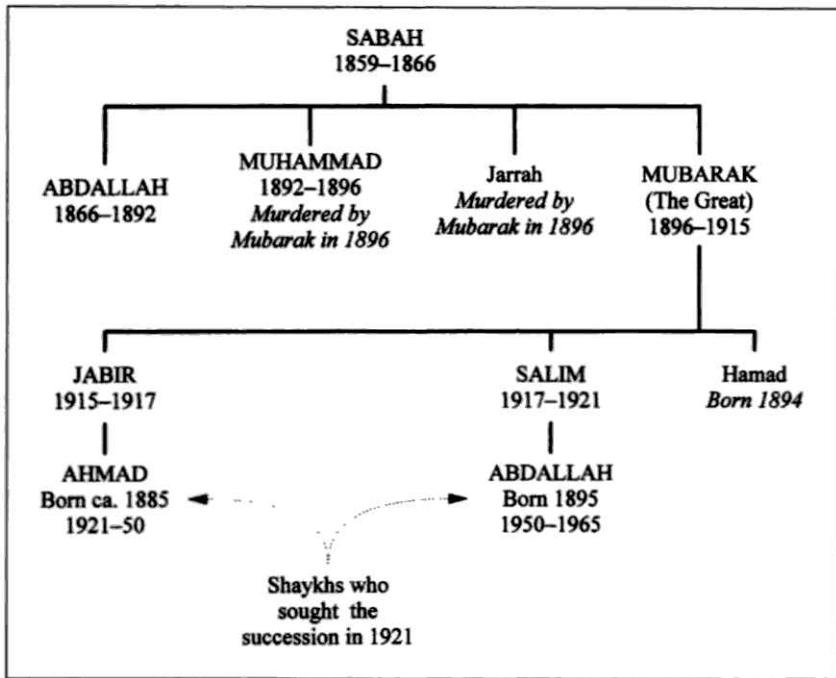


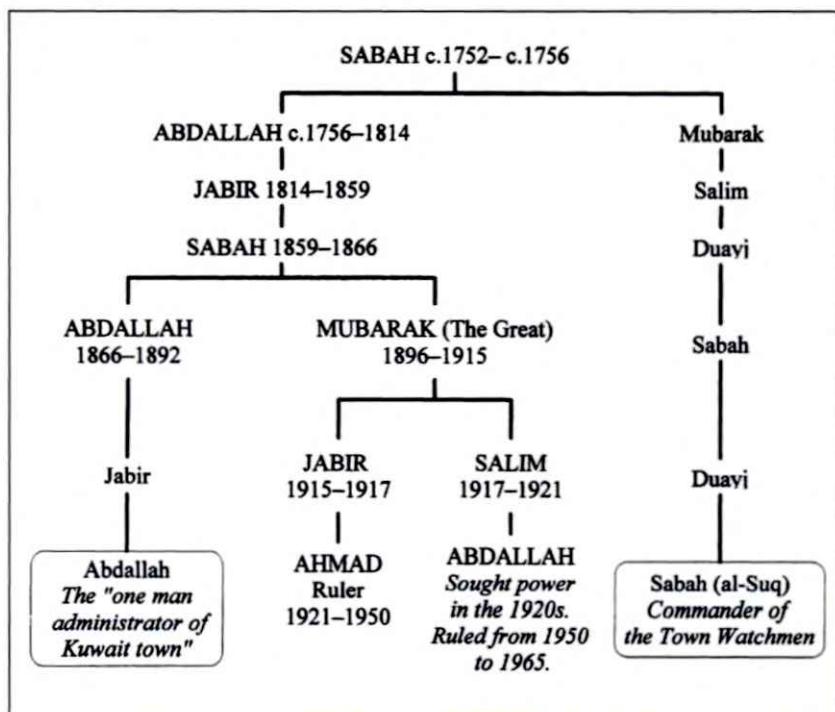
Figure 4.1 The Succession Dispute among the Al Sabah in 1921

tended toward usurpation. In 1921 the family met and told Abdallah to end his arrogation of Ahmad's authority, and two years later, after Abdallah tried and failed to gain control of the custom's revenue by means of a deal with Ibn Saud, he withdrew from politics until 1938.<sup>10</sup>

Ahmad, like his grandfather Mubarak, shared little of his authority with his relatives at his court. The Political Agent in 1927 wrote that it was, "the custom for Shaikhs of Kuwait to rule personally and autocratically, and to avoid all delegation of authority."<sup>11</sup> Ahmad employed two chief lieutenants. One, Mullah Salih, was his secretary. The secretary of the 1938 *majlis* wrote that, "Mullah Salih, the head of the ruler's clerks, or rather his first *wazir*, had the greatest influence and the last word in the ruler's palace, and thus in all of the affairs of state and the departments of the government."<sup>12</sup> Ahmad's second lieutenant, Abdallah al-Jabir Al Sabah, belonged to the Al Sabah but was not a direct descendant of Mubarak the Great, and thus had only a weak claim to the

succession (figure 4.2). Ahmad appointed Abdallah to head the state institutions that slowly emerged, largely under pressure from the merchants, in the 1930s. Abdallah also married the ruler's daughter. Abdallah Jabir does not seem to have had much of a role in the 1920s, but by 1938 De Gaury, the Political Agent, wrote that Abdallah "is Permanent President of the Municipality, Magistrate, Chief of Police, Director-General of Education, and Collector of Land Customs, and in fact is the one man administrator of Kuwait town, and therefore for practical purposes of Kuwait in general."<sup>13</sup>

Ahmad not only denied the other shaykhs of the Al Sabah posts in the administration, but also gave them little money; and it was money, before the bureaucratic state, with which rulers appeased their relatives. As the succession battle of 1921 receded, and the bargains struck grew stale, Ahmad cut his relatives' allowances. In 1937 Kuwari says that Ahmad took for himself 80 percent of state income and gave the rest of the family only 10 percent. All of the



**Figure 4.2** Shaykhs of the Al Sabah in State Posts at the Beginning of 1938

shaykhs were poor or “near poor” except Abdallah Jabir (Ahmad’s lieutenant) and Abdallah Salim, who inherited money from his father. On the eve of the events of 1938 a number of the leading shaykhs complained to the Political Agent of Ahmad’s miserliness. The Political Agent said some of the family received allowances as modest as the salary of a servant employed at the Political Agency in Kuwait.<sup>14</sup>

### The Majlis of 1938

By the latter part of the 1930s Ahmad had alienated both the merchants and his family. He might have weathered this unscathed, but in 1938 the British also decided that change was needed in Ahmad’s administration. The reasons for this are not completely clear; it appears that the British Political Agent in Kuwait personally disliked Ahmad, though it may be that the British simply thought some limited reforms would prevent problems in the future.<sup>15</sup> In June of 1938 the Political Resident advised the ruler to “associate yourself more both with your family and with your people in your administration,” and recommended that he set up a Council.<sup>16</sup> The *suq* learned of the contents of the Resident’s directive, and took its lead. Soon thereafter a group of merchants, with the support of Abdallah al-Salim’s dissident branch of the family, went to the ruler and demanded elections to a legislative assembly. Ahmad, faced with the combined pressure of most of his family, most of the merchant notables, and the British, had little alternative but to concede.<sup>17</sup>

The elections proceeded and the *majlis* convened: the merchant notables quickly took over the administration, including the customs, the police, and the courts. The merchants carried out the reforms they had pushed for throughout the 1930s, devoting the customs revenue, which the *majlis* controlled completely, to funding civic improvements. The *majlis* also set up Kuwait’s first organized police force. In short, the merchants laid the foundations of the modern Kuwaiti state.<sup>18</sup>

The merchants took other steps to curb Ahmad’s powers. Mullah Salih left for a forced exile, and the parliament took responsibility for the civil list, paying the various members of the Al Sabah their allowances from the customs revenue. Only the ruler’s income from the oil company (still less than the sum of other state revenues)

remained in his hands, due to British insistence. The *majlis* appointed two of its members to take over the presidency of the ruler's own court (the *diwan al-emiri*) extending their influence even to the ruler's own household.<sup>19</sup> Never before, and not since, has an elected body so thoroughly usurped the power of a Gulf potentate.

Merchant rule did not last long. A faction of the Sunni merchant class had allied with the ruler and his court from the beginning. The success of the *Majlis* provoked the opposition of the Shi'a, whom the merchants had excluded from the electorate: the *majlis* was very much an affair of the Sunni notables. Moreover the British too had serious second thoughts about the merchants' legislature: they wanted a moderation of the ruler's despotism, but not an end to it altogether.<sup>20</sup>

The dissident shaykhs of the Al Sabah (who had encouraged the merchants in the first place) also turned against the *majlis*. By curbing Ahmad's powers they had hoped to increase their own, but they had reaped little reward from the merchant's usurpation of power. Khalid al-Adsani (the secretary of the *majlis*) says that Fahad al-Salim Al Sabah strongly supported the merchants, but his ardor cooled when the *majlis* refused to appoint him to a position in the court as personal representative of the ruler. Fahad, his ambitions frustrated in that direction, then reached an understanding with his relatives and became an enthusiastic advocate of closing the *majlis*. Al-Adsani says he made the arrangements for the subsequent distribution of offices.<sup>21</sup>

When support for the *majlis* faltered, and particularly after the British expressed their reservations, the shaykhs of the Al Sabah saw their opportunity. On December 17, 1938 they recruited the support of some bedouin and other disaffected Kuwaitis, and closed the *majlis*.<sup>22</sup> That day they divided up the offices of the state among themselves, inaugurating dynastic monarchism in the Gulf. Adsani writes that, "After closing the first legislative *majlis* the members of the ruling family fell upon all of the Kuwaiti departments, as if by prior agreement and without warning."<sup>23</sup> Various shaykhs took over the arsenal, the town police, the security forces, and the port. Fahad al-Salim and the crown prince Abdallah al-Salim received treasury and customs. With the exception of Abdallah Jabir none of these shaykhs had previously held formal positions in the administration. Now they monopolized them (figure 4.3).<sup>24</sup>

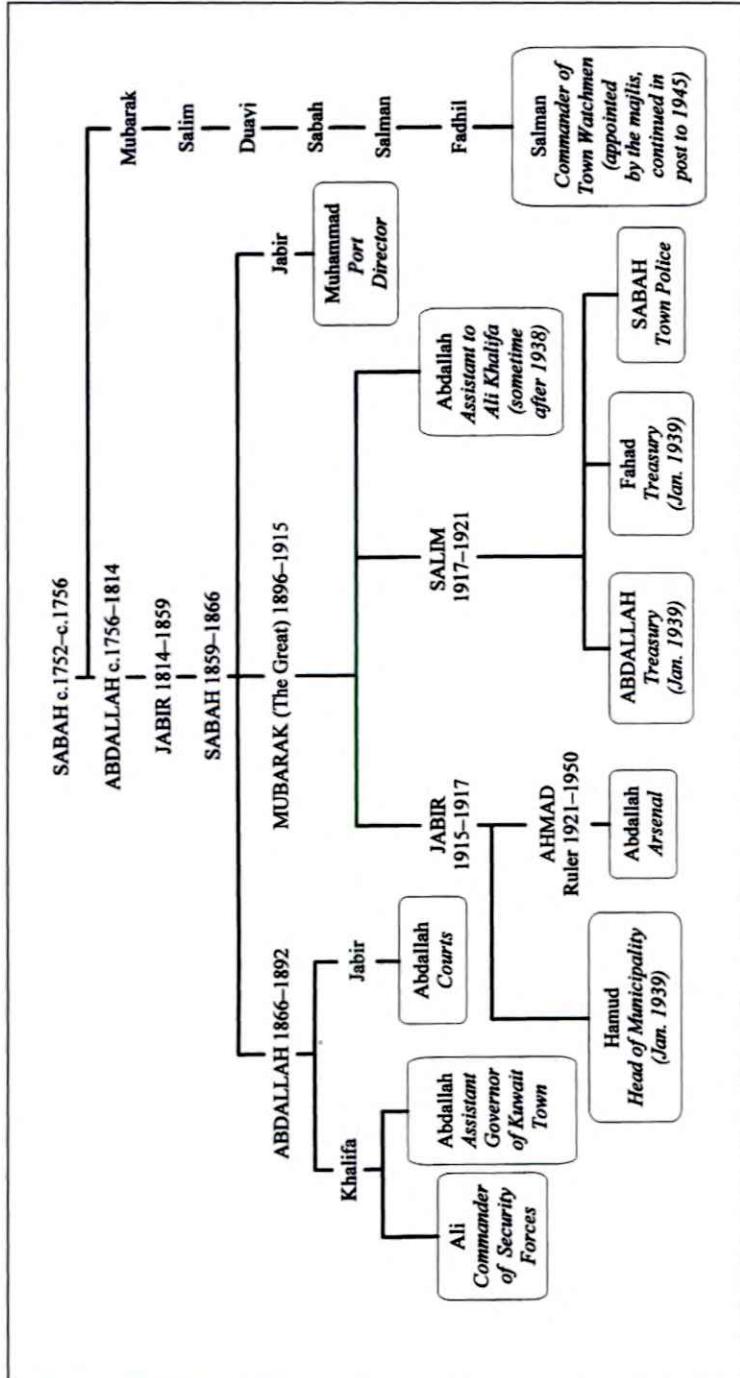


Figure 4.3 Shaykhs of the Al Sabah Who Took Up State Posts after the Closing of the 1938 Majlis

Khalid al-Adsani's final assessment of the ruling family's role in the rise and fall of the *majlis* is nothing if not bitter. He says that the *majlis* did not seek to depose the Al Sabah, that it treated them well, and indeed that the *majlis* (even while it sat) made things better for some shaykhs, those, "who had been forced to humble themselves before al-Mullah Salih al-Mullah in order to have him give them their right, or to have him intervene [with the ruler] for their allowances. . . ."<sup>25</sup>

When the shaykhs closed the *majlis* they found a formula for sharing power among themselves, making the family into a ruling institution, one that excluded others from control of the newly enlarged Kuwaiti state.<sup>26</sup> We can date the first Gulf dynastic monarchy to the day of the closing of the merchant's *majlis*—December 17, 1938—and it is the form of monarchical rule invented by the Al Sabah on that date that explains the resiliency of monarchy in Arabia, to the present day.

### **After 1938: The Persistence of Dynastic Rule**

Dynastic control of the Kuwaiti state has seriously faltered only once since 1938, and that was the work of Saddam; yet the autocracy of the ruling family, so evident in other Gulf monarchies, is in Kuwait tempered by the parliament. This, however, has not impugned the workings of the Al Sabah family institution, and the experience of the Al Sabah with their parliament, discussed more fully in chapter 6, shows that dynastic monarchism is not incompatible with the gradual expansion of political participation.

In the following section I will discuss disputes within the Al Sabah since 1938. Again, this is not a history of the family, but instead an effort to find general patterns in the nature of dynastic control of state offices by examining disputes within the family. I will discuss the following episodes:

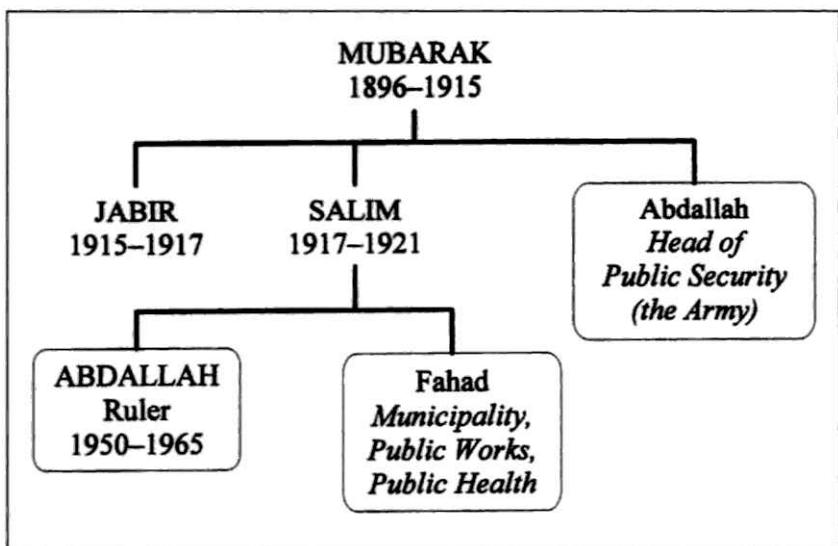
1. The dispute among Abdallah al-Salim, his brother Fahad, and their uncle Abdallah in the 1950s.
2. The appointment of heirs apparent in 1962, 1965, and 1978.
3. The Iraqi invasion and its aftermath.

### The Ruler, Fahad al-Salim, Abdallah Mubarak, and the British

When Emir Ahmad died in 1950 the previous pattern of alliances in the family fractured, creating a new three-cornered balance among the shaykhs (figure 4.4). Abdallah al-Salim, the new emir, faced two family rivals firmly ensconced in virtual fiefdoms within the state bureaucracy. His brother Fahad controlled development spending, while his uncle Abdallah Mubarak ran the army. Abdallah wished to check the independent power of both. The British, while less concerned with Abdallah Mubarak, strongly desired to impose their control over Fahad and the spending Kuwait's oil money.

By the end of the decade both of these relatives had seen their fiefdoms reduced or eliminated. It was not the British who accomplished this, but instead the emir and the rest of his family. The dispute in the 1950s led to the creation of a dynastic proto-cabinet and to the introduction of a new generation of shaykhs into government offices. The episode serves as a powerful illustration of the close link between family disputes and the furthering of dynastic hegemony over the state.

Kuwait's oil riches attracted the attention of the British, who wished to establish some control over how it was spent.<sup>27</sup> In 1951



**Figure 4.4** The Three Poles of Intrafamily Conflict among the Al Sabah in the 1950s

a British financial adviser came to Kuwait, charged with supervising the finances and spending; British advisers for the customs and a Development Board also arrived in Kuwait. This amounted to a frontal attack on the authorities of Fahad al-Salim, one of the three senior shaykhs. The ruler seems to have supported the British effort, hoping that the adviser would act as a "buffer between himself and his more powerful relations."<sup>28</sup> Between 1951 and 1954 Fahad al-Salim and the British advisers fought it out. Fahad won. He broke the monopoly of British firms over state contracts and forced them to conduct their business through local agents, mostly of the merchant class. This won Fahad a (temporary) popularity among the merchants.<sup>29</sup> It also frustrated the British, who pressed Abdallah to hire a secretary in the mold of Belgrave, who ruled Bahrain as the "personal secretary" of Salman bin Hamad. Winston Churchill personally put the request to the Kuwaiti ruler.<sup>30</sup> No Belgrave, however, came to rule Kuwait. Instead the cross pressures on the ruler by the British and his relatives led him to threaten abdication in October of 1953. The Political Resident commented that, "The advantages of financial control must seem to him hypothetical in comparison with the storm it is certain to cause amongst his family and against himself. . . . Pressure on the Ruler from us produces counter-pressure from the family."<sup>31</sup>

In 1954 the British gave up: the adviser in charge of development spending left Kuwait.<sup>32</sup> A few years later the Political Agent commented that, in contrast with the other Gulf shaykhdoms "and, indeed, some foreign countries, there are no British subjects in Kuwaiti employ through whom the Political Agent can exercise even an indirect influence on the Government."<sup>33</sup>

The departure of the British advisers left Fahad (along with Abdallah Mubarak) firmly ensconced in their departments. To curb the independent power of these two shaykhs Abdallah turned to junior shaykhs: in effect he formed a family coalition that he could use to rein in Fahad and Abdallah Mubarak. In 1955 the ruler appointed a proto-cabinet (the *majlis al-'ala*) composed entirely of shaykhs of the Al Sabah, including both the senior shaykhs whose power he wished to curb, and the younger shaykhs he sought as allies in this task (figure 4.5).<sup>34</sup> In the following years the ruler, with the junior shaykhs and through the *majlis al-'ala*, gradually checked the powers of Fahad al-Salim and Abdallah Mubarak. In a 1959 cabinet shuffle Fahad lost a several of his posts: control of

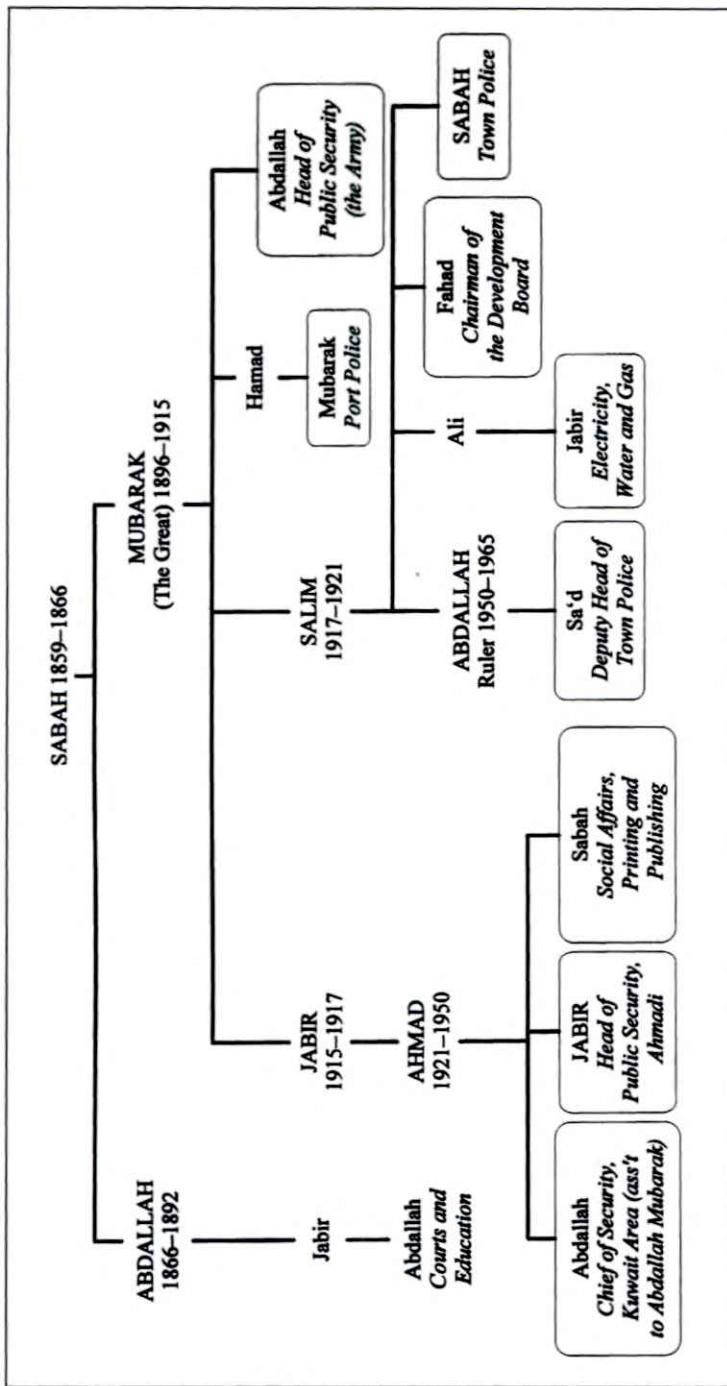


Figure 4.5 The *Majlis al-'ala* of 1955 (Abdallah al-Salim's Proto-Cabinet)

the finances went to Jabir al-Ahmad, while other shaykhs took over the department of health. This left Fahad with public works and the municipality. Faced with this reversal at the hands of his relatives, Fahad resigned from his posts. The British could not dislodge Fahad, but his family could.<sup>35</sup>

Not long after, the second recalcitrant shaykh met with defeat at the hands of the family council. Abdallah Mubarak was the youngest son of Mubarak the Great and thus the uncle of Abdallah al-Salim, Fahad al-Salim, and the deceased ruler Ahmad al-Jabir, although he was younger than all of them. Since 1942 he had busied himself making the public security force, inherited from Ali Khalifa, into an army which, although modest in itself, was a lot grander than the previous collection of retainers and dependent bedouin. Abdallah Mubarak's work, his status as Mubarak's son, and his seniority made him a candidate for the rulership after Abdallah, and much of the strife between him and the other shaykhs in the 1950s revolved around his ambition to be acknowledged as heir apparent, and their desire to avoid this.<sup>36</sup>

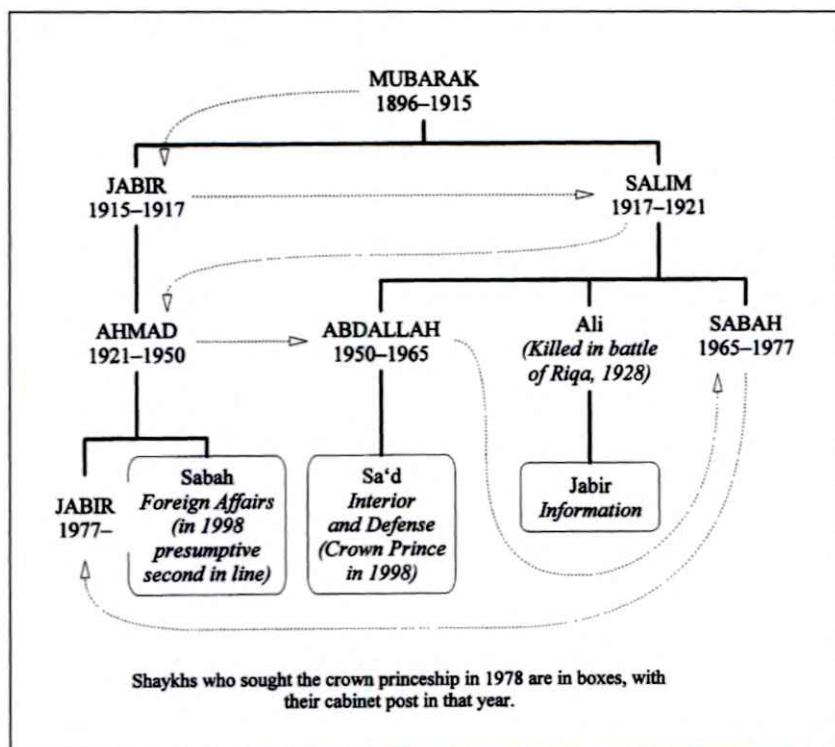
In 1961 the Al Sabah proto-cabinet curbed Abdallah Mubarak, as it had his nephew Fahad: the British reported that, "following detailed and outspoken criticism in the Supreme Council of his activities and administrative methods," Abdallah Mubarak resigned his posts and left for exile.<sup>37</sup> For neither Fahad nor Abdallah Mubarak was defeat sudden, total or ignominious: both might well have remained in their offices had they been willing to accept the family's limits on their authority. Abdallah al-Salim won his struggle with his two family opponents, but only by building a coalition of shaykhs of the Al Sabah and institutionalizing the family in the *majlis al-ala*. The episode is one of the most telling examples of the dynamic in which disputes within the dynasties leads not to a weakening of family control over the state, but instead to the reinforcement of dynastic power.

### **The Appointment of Heirs Apparent in 1962, 1965, and 1978**

In 1962, with Abdallah Mubarak out of the picture, Abdallah al-Salim appointed his brother Sabah heir apparent, but only after wide consultation within the family.<sup>38</sup> The British Political Resident earlier reported after a conversation with Abdallah al-Salim that

the position appears to be that the decision would not rest with him either as to whether there should be a successor nominated or as to who it should be. Both these matters would require a decision by the Family by a process which the Ruler merely described as "election."<sup>39</sup>

Abdallah al-Salim, when he made his younger brother Sabah crown prince, interrupted the alternation of the succession between the Jabir and Salim sublineages of the ruling family (figure 4.6). This alternation is sometimes presented as a succession rule among the Al Sabah, and certainly it provides a general guideline for the direction of the succession. Yet the most basic rule of the succession is that the family "elects" the ruler by consensus, based on the perception by family leaders of their own best interests. When Abdallah al-Salim appointed his brother Sabah crown prince he



**Figure 4.6** Alternation of the Succession between the Jabir and Salim Branches of the Al Sabah

passed over another leading candidate, a relatively young member of the Jabir branch, Jabir al-Ahmad Al Sabah. However, it was understood that Jabir al-Ahmad would follow Sabah, and when the ruler died in 1965 the new emir duly named Jabir al-Ahmad heir apparent, resuming the alternation between the Jabir and Salim branches.

On New Year's Eve of 1977 Sabah al-Salim died, and the appointment of a new crown prince was, for the first time since the days of Abdallah Mubarak, the subject of widespread dispute among the shaykhs of the Al Sabah. Jabir al-Ali, one of the two main contenders, was a member of the Salim branch of the family, a nephew of the emirs Abdallah al-Salim and Sabah al-Salim; his father, Ali al-Salim, died defending Kuwait from Ibn Saud's *ikhwan* in 1928. Abdallah al-Salim brought Jabir al-Ali into the government in the 1950s as part of his family coalition; Jabir's first post was head of the electricity and water department.<sup>40</sup> In 1975, in a move that suggested that he was second in line for the succession, Emir Sabah appointed Jabir al-Ali deputy prime minister.<sup>41</sup> Sa'd al-Abdallah, son of the former emir Abdallah al-Salim and a first cousin of Jabir al-Ali, was the other candidate. Like Jabir he joined the administration in the 1950s, yet he specialized throughout his career in security posts, and for many years held both the defense and interior portfolios.

At the family council called in early 1978 to pick the crown prince the new emir—Jabir al-Ahmad—announced three candidates for the position; Jabir al-Ali and Sa'd al-Abdallah, and also his own brother Sabah al-Ahmad, then and now minister of foreign affairs. Perhaps by previous arrangement, Sabah al-Ahmad withdrew his name and endorsed Sa'd Abdallah's candidacy. This, along with the support of the Emir for Sa'd, decided the issue in Sa'd's favor, and Jabir al-Ali with some supporters withdrew in protest. In Kuwait those sympathetic to Jabir al-Ali say that the family passed him over because his political inclinations were nationalist and liberal, and because he was popular in the *diwaniyas*. It is also said he had the force of personality to say "no" to the other shaykhs, and they preferred the greater pliability of Sa'd. Jabir al-Ali's detractors, on the other hand, question his judgment and wondered about the wisdom of his political leanings.<sup>42</sup>

After his defeat Jabir al-Ali remained in the cabinet until 1981, when he left the government permanently. Yet in resigning his

posts he did not lose his senior position in the family, nor his status in Kuwaiti society. Until his death in March 1994 he met weekly with the emir, and retained his position in state protocol directly behind the emir, but, by virtue of seniority in age, before Crown Prince Sa'd.<sup>43</sup>

### **The Al Sabah and the Parliament**

Alone among the dynastic monarchies, Kuwait has had extensive experience with an elected parliament. This has led to a gradual weakening of the dynastic monopoly of power that is characteristic of dynastic monarchism, but the increasing influence of the parliament has not proven incompatible with family rule. In Kuwait, it appears, the ruling family is gradually devolving some of its power to the parliament, without surrendering, thus far, its claim to the key cabinet posts. This demonstration of the compatibility of dynastic monarchism and parliamentary politics is of great importance not only for Kuwait, but also for the other Gulf monarchies, for it suggests a path they might follow, should their dynasties perceive the advantages of a more liberal style of rule.

In Afghanistan and, to a lesser degree, Libya, kings have used constitution writing as an opportunity to exclude their relatives from state offices. In Kuwait the timing of constitution, and of independence itself, had much to do with the triumph of the emir over his family rivals by 1961. Yet Abdallah al-Salim did not have the constitution written as a ploy to increase his own authority against that of the rest of his family, but instead sought to create institutions compatible with the rule of the family. To this end Abdallah gave his relatives a voice in the writing of the constitution: of thirty-one members of the constitutional convention, eleven were shaykhs of the Al Sabah.<sup>44</sup>

One risk of a parliament, in a dynastic monarchy, is that it will become involved in disputes within the ruling family. The dynasties do not tolerate the interference of outsiders in their internal disputes, for it is a recognized rule of these political institutions that the family, alone, sets dynastic policy.

In 1985 and 1986 the National Assembly became caught up in a dispute between the Jabir and Salim branches of the ruling family. Allies of Sabah al-Ahmad, the minister of foreign affairs and second in line to the emirship, used the assembly to attack allies

of Sa'd Abdallah, the crown prince and prime minister. One member of the cabinet, a shaykh and an ally of Sa'd, resigned his post under attack from the assembly, and another shaykh nearly lost his position as well.<sup>45</sup> This interference of the assembly with intrafamily politics (or, put differently, the use of the *majlis* by members of the ruling family in their internal battles) had a predictable result. The emir, in 1986, suspended the parliament. This was despite the fact that it was his own brother, Sabah al-Ahmad, who benefited from the attacks within the assembly on their cousin, Sa'd Abdallah. The lesson of the episode was that the parliament could not survive its insertion into intrafamily politics, and that efforts by opposition politicians to curb the powers of the Al Sabah by exploiting conflicts within the family would lead not to a weakening of the dynastic regime, but instead to an end to the parliamentary experiment.<sup>46</sup>

### **The Aftermath of the Invasion**

After liberation in 1991 two shaykhs of the Al Sabah left the cabinet under direct public pressure. This is unprecedented in the Gulf, where senior members of the other ruling families have lost posts after family disputes, but not as a consequence of popular criticism. This indicates a certain weakening of Al Sabah control of the state, though this is hardly surprising given the circumstances.

Shortly after liberation in February of 1991 a group of Kuwait army officers signed a petition calling for the removal of Nawwaf al-Ahmad and Salim al-Sabah from their posts. Nawwaf al-Ahmad, the ruler's brother and the minister of defense, ordered the Kuwaiti army not to fire on Iraqi troops in the days before the invasion, and indeed the Kuwaiti army did not put up a fight until the Iraqis got to army headquarters, located in the northeast suburbs of Kuwait city itself.<sup>47</sup> While a more sustained resistance would not have changed the outcome, it would have preserved some of the army's pride.

The second shaykh named in the petition, Salim al-Sabah, was minister of interior on the eve of the invasion. Opposition to him arose not only from things he did (or failed to do) during the invasion, but from two other factors. First, Salim al-Sabah directed the police to break up a prodemocracy gathering at a *diwaniya* in a suburb of Kuwait city shortly before the Iraqi invasion in 1990. In

this episode the Al Sabah took a hard line against their opponents, perhaps more than at any time in the previous several decades, and in it Kuwaitis saw the harbingers of a far more repressive policy by the Al Sabah.<sup>48</sup> Second, Salim al-Sabah comes from the Salim branch of the family, and thus the petitioners deliberately appear to have sought to maintain family balance in their shaykhly targets.

In the first cabinet appointed after liberation, in April 1991, one of these shaykhs (Nawwaf) suffered a demotion, but Salim al-Sabah won a promotion to deputy prime minister (figure 4.7).<sup>49</sup> Yet in October of 1992 the opposition won a victory in parliamentary elections, decisively defeating the progovernment candidates.<sup>50</sup> The opposition then renewed its demands for the removal of Salim al-Sabah and Nawwaf al-Ahmad from the cabinet, circulating a list of “undesirable names” of shaykhly cabinet members. Both Nawwaf al-Ahmad and Salim al-Sabah lost their posts in the postelection cabinet, and the more moderate foreign minister, Sabah al-Ahmad, returned to his old post of foreign minister and deputy prime minister; the assignment of offices was confirmed by an Al Sabah family council (figure 4.8).<sup>51</sup> The opposition won at least a partial victory in determining the character of the cabinet, but they did so in a way that maintained balance among family factions, and allowed the Al Sabah dynastic regime to continue its control of the Kuwaiti state, albeit somewhat weakened. More recently, after the government’s rebound in the 1996 parliamentary elections, Salim al-Sabah returned to the cabinet as minister of defense, replacing his younger brother Ali. Sabah al-Ahmad continued as deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs, despite his occasional statements of a desire to leave his posts as a result of strained relations with Sa’d.<sup>52</sup>

## Conclusion

In Kuwait, where dynastic monarchism emerged first, the ruling family exercises a less complete monopoly of state power, a result of the parliament and the liberal tradition in Kuwaiti politics. Nonetheless, the dynastic monarchy exists, with its traditions and rules intact, alongside the parliament. The institution of dynastic monarchism appears compatible with the gradual rise of a parliament. Kuwait led the Gulf in the development of family rule, and

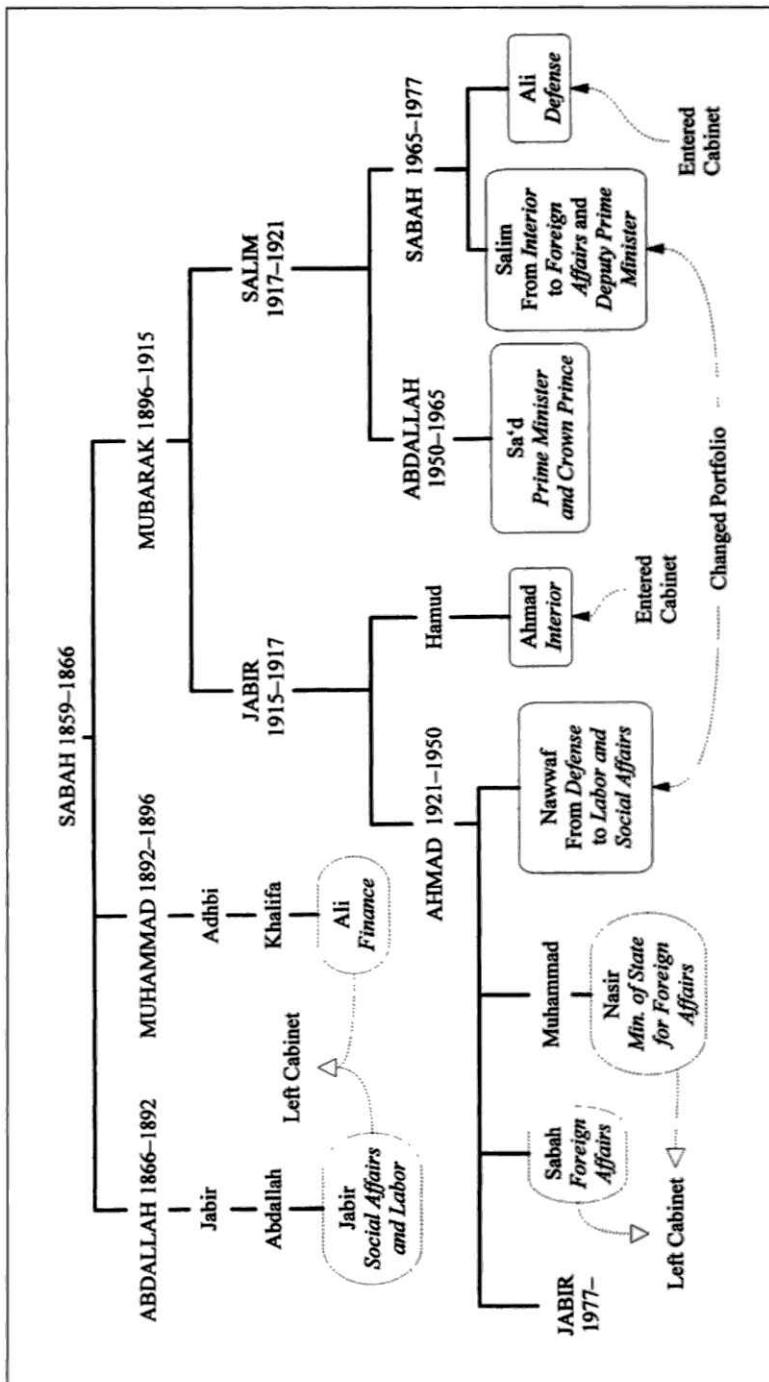


Figure 4.7 Shaykhs of the Al Sabah in the Cabinet Shuffle of 1991

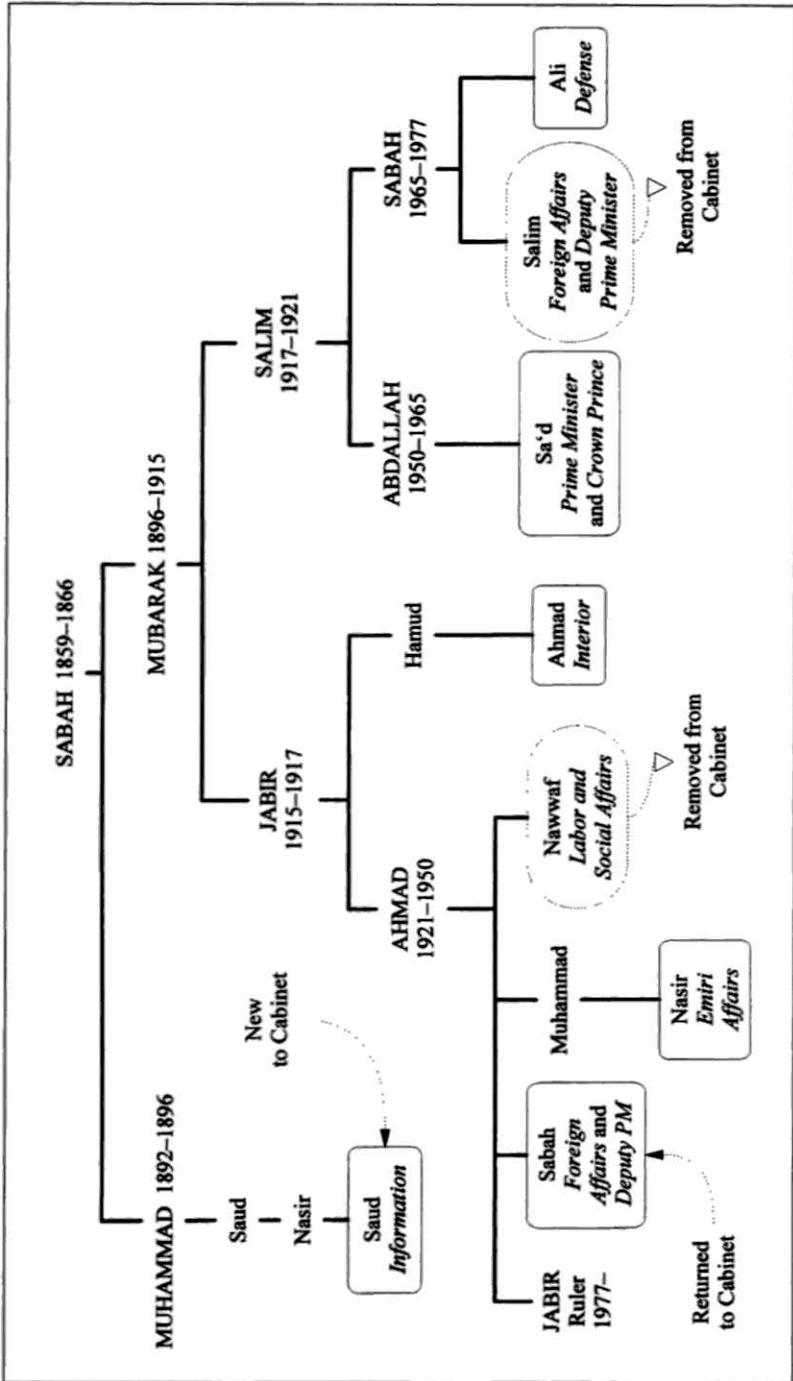


Figure 4.8 Shaykhs of the Al Sabah in the Cabinet Shuffle of 1992

today is farthest ahead in adapting dynastic monarchism in a more liberal direction.

### **The Al Saud**

In Kuwait dynastic monarchism emerged early, in 1938, as the result of the Al Sabah's reaction to the merchant notables' bid to seize control of the state. In Saudi Arabia dynastic monarchism emerged much later, in the 1950s and early 1960s, not under popular pressure but instead as the consequence of a dispute over power between the sons of Ibn Saud. In the end, however, the result in both countries was substantially the same: the dynasty coalesced into a ruling elite controlling the newly powerful petro-state.

Abdalaziz bin Abd al-Rahman Al Saud, better known as Ibn Saud, is the preeminent figure in the history of Arabia in the twentieth century; his achievement was to create Saudi Arabia virtually from scratch. His family had ruled much of Arabia in two separate periods in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but at the opening of the twentieth the second Saudi empire had collapsed and the remnants of the dynasty lived in exile in Kuwait. In 1902 Ibn Saud, with a band of relatives, supporters, and servants, recaptured Riyadh, the family seat. In the next decades he conquered the rest of Nejd, al-Ahsa, the Hejaz, and Asir. His reputation and his immense personal authority grew out of this remarkable feat.

The sons of Ibn Saud did not take over the Saudi state until just before their father's death in 1953. This was well into the oil era, and oil money already provided the resources for the construction of a modern state. Yet family rule could not take its full form while Ibn Saud lived; in dynastic monarchies princes share power among themselves, and such a system is not consonant with the personal charisma of a man such as Ibn Saud.

### **State and Family in the Reign of Ibn Saud**

At his court Ibn Saud ruled personally and absolutely, supervising matters large and small until age rendered him incapable in the early 1950s.<sup>63</sup> He delegated authority only to his *wazir* and to the viceroys and governors of the various provinces of his realm, the peripheral administrations of his segmentary state. At his court

Ibn Saud surrounded himself with advisers, many of them foreigners, but gave independent authority only to the man in charge of his finances, a Nejdi of a non-*asil* family named Abdallah Sulayman. This *wazir* leveraged his authority over his sovereign's finances into a "virtually undisputed sway over all branches of the Government."<sup>54</sup> Philby, Ibn Saud's English adviser, wrote of Abdallah Sulayman:

He alone enjoys the privilege of a body-guard and maintains a semi-regal state comparable with that of the king and the royal princes. And he alone, by reason of his close understanding with the king, enjoys a measure of administrative independence to which even the viceroys [Saud and Faysal] do not aspire.<sup>55</sup>

Toward the end of the reign, in the years of his decline, Ibn Saud came to depend on a second adviser, a Syrian Alawi named Yusuf Yassin, for advice on foreign affairs and other matters. Yusuf held the sundry titles of minister of state, secretary to the king, director of the diplomatic branch of the royal diwan (that is, the court), deputy minister of foreign affairs, and representative of Saudi Arabia to the Arab League. He was estimated, with Abdallah Sulayman and another adviser, Fuad Hamza, to be one of the three "most powerful nonroyal personalities" in the Kingdom.<sup>56</sup>

### **Provincial Governors**

In contrast to his appointments at court, Ibn Saud appointed men of prominent families of *asil* descent to govern the various peripheral fiefs of his state. His own relatives took many of these posts, along with men of a family long associated with the Al Saud, the Sudayri clan of the noble Dawasir tribe. Men of locally prominent families who Ibn Saud found it expedient to appease, rather than subdue, took up some of these posts as well.<sup>57</sup>

Ibn Saud's appointments of his relatives to governorships followed a distinct pattern driven by his concern that the succession go to his sons, not his brothers or nephews. When Ibn Saud conquered what became the Eastern Province in 1913 he had no grown sons. The province lay at some distance from Riyadh and thus required a governor with independent authority. Ibn Saud gave the

post to Abdallah bin Jiluwi, a man of a distant enough branch of the Al Saud that he did not have a strong claim to the succession (figure 4.9).<sup>58</sup> When he conquered the Hejaz in the mid-1920s Ibn Saud appointed his brother Muhammad governor of Mecca, but soon replaced him with his own son Faysal. To Muhammad's continuing dissatisfaction neither he nor his sons received another formal post.

In contrast to his stinginess in giving responsibilities to his brother and nephew, Ibn Saud gave his eldest sons roles while they were quite young. He deputed Faysal, still in his mid-teens, to represent him at the peace conference at the end of World War I.<sup>59</sup> He named Faysal viceroy of the Hejaz in 1926, and his eldest son Saud viceroy of Nejd in the same period. In Riyadh, in the presence of his father, Saud enjoyed little authority. Faysal in Jeddah had it better because he governed a fief geographically distant from his father's capital. Abdallah bin Jiluwi enjoyed a large measure of autonomy, for the same reason, as ruler of the Eastern Province.<sup>60</sup>

Ibn Saud's strategy in his appointments followed a familiar pattern in Middle Eastern empires. He placed his chosen heir, Saud, in a position at the center, where he could seize power on the event

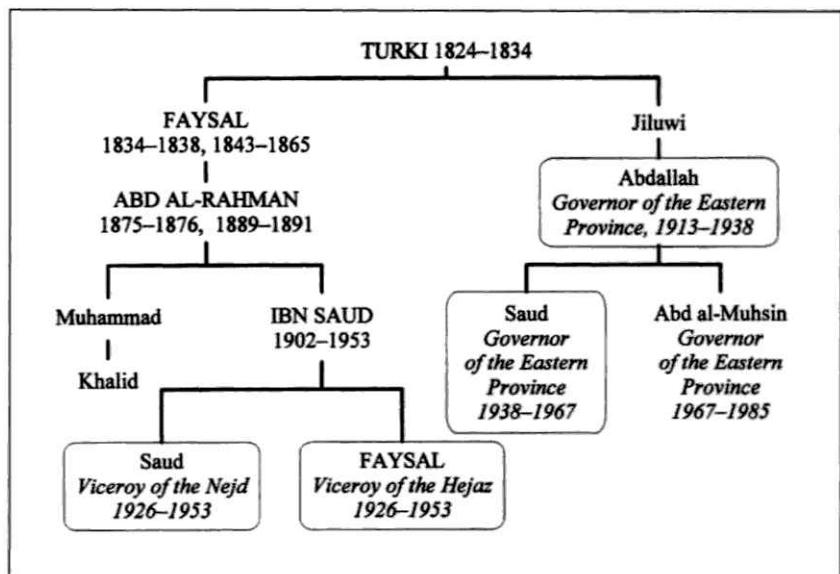


Figure 4.9 Provincial Governors in the Reign of Ibn Saud

of his death. The appointment of princes of the Al Saud to rule the provinces ensured that they would remain under dynastic control. Toward the end of Ibn Saud's reign it was sometimes suggested that the Hejaz and the Eastern Province would cleave off the empire at his death. The increase in the power of the central administration prevented this result. Ibn Saud's sons fought over their father's inheritance at the center, rather than waging a territorial war, each prince from his respective fief, in the type of dynastic war that rent so many Middle Eastern empires, and caused the collapse of the second Saudi state in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

### The Recruitment of the Junior Sons to State Posts

Despite the appointments of Saud and Faysal as viceroys, Ibn Saud's other sons generally held few posts before World War II. In 1939 the British legation at Jeddah reported that

Except for the King himself and the two eldest sons (and perhaps another son, Nasir . . . governor of the town of Riyadh), not a single one of the royal personages does any work. None of the King's sons has been educated. . . . What the Amir Saud will do, when he succeeds to the throne, with his useless and possibly dangerous younger brothers, it is difficult to imagine.<sup>61</sup>

Toward the end of the war a few more of Ibn Saud's sons took up posts in his administration. In 1944 Ibn Saud appointed a favorite son—born of an Armenian concubine—as minister of defense, ending Abdallah Sulayman's direct control of the army. When Mansur died in 1951, another son—Misha'al—took up his post. Sultan replaced Nasir as governor of Riyadh after the latter fell out of his father's favor.<sup>62</sup>

In the twilight of Ibn Saud's reign his sons moved in greater numbers into state posts. In the early 1950s Abdallah Sulayman's empire as *wazir* crumbled as the princes carved it up into independent ministries. In 1951 Abdalaziz named his grandson Abdallah al-Faysal minister of interior and health, and just before his death he appointed his son Talal minister of communications. In December 1953, a month after Ibn Saud died, Abdallah Sulayman's Finance

Ministry yielded up two additional ministries: Fahad became minister of education, and Sultan minister of agriculture and water.<sup>63</sup>

This spate of princely appointments stemmed from two factors: first, oil income paid for a radical expansion of the state, so there were new posts to fill. Second, only two classes of men had any sort of hope of claiming these offices: Ibn Saud's advisers, and his sons. The advisers—foreigners virtually to a man, except Abdallah Sulayman—derived their power from their royal patron, and not from groups within Saudi society. There is no suggestion that this motley group of foreigners and personal dependents of Ibn Saud ever had any hope of denying Ibn Saud's sons control of the government. No other political forces could contest control of the new bureaucratic state as Ibn Saud faded. The *asil* ruling class, which governed the towns of the realm by delegation from the center and by virtue of local support, had neither an institution (such as a parliament), nor the money, nor the military capacity, to seize power. There were no political parties, parliaments, trade unions or landed aristocracies; the Al Saud kept the military weak.<sup>64</sup> The religious institution did not raise objections or attempt to interfere in the succession, and the remnants of the *ikhwanī* movement remained quiescent.

### **The Evolution of Dynastic Monarchism: 1953–1964**

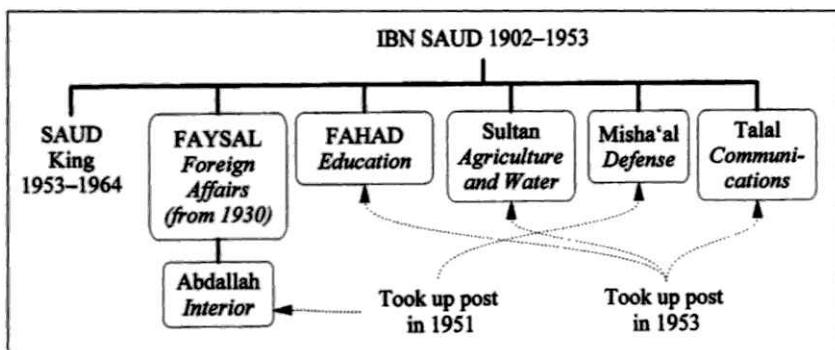
In many respects the Saudi state in 1954 resembled, or even was, a dynastic monarchy. The sons of Ibn Saud occupied the top posts in the state and exercised, together, a hegemony over the institutions of state power. Yet the paradigm of monarchical rule the princes looked to guide their behavior was not that of the Al Sabah, but instead the style of their father, who ruled absolutely from his court, surrounded by personal dependents. Up to around 1960, princes of the Al Saud experimented with various strategies in their efforts to vanquish each other: King Saud tried to concentrate power in his court, while his younger brother Talal attempted to gain popularity, and power, by proposing a liberal constitution that would have eroded the Al Saud's authority, but might have enhanced his own. In the closing years of the family struggle the two chief antagonists—Saud and his brother Faysal—both struck on the strategy of building family coalitions by distributing posts in

the state to key family supporters. Faysal's 1962 coalition met with greater success than did Saud's 1960 coalition. In 1964, with the greater part of the family on board Faysal's bandwagon, the Al Saud deposed King Saud.

### Court vs. Ministry

At the close of 1953, princes of the Al Saud, all sons or grandsons of Ibn Saud, dominated the key departments of the Saudi state, having earlier supplanted Abdallah Sulayman and the other court advisers. On his deathbed Ibn Saud, for the first time in the history of Saudi Arabia, organized the heads of the departments of the Saudi state into a cabinet, and in August of 1954 King Saud appointed its membership, with Faysal as premier (figure 4.10).<sup>66</sup> Saud, the new king, rather than concerning himself with the administration instead took a tour of his kingdom, receiving the *bay'a* from local notables and tribal leaders and dispersing large sums of money. In 1954 the British reported that Faysal ran the country and that the new regime was "firmly established under his premiership."<sup>67</sup>

Saud did not find Faysal's control of the state administration to his liking, and set about transferring the center of power from Faysal's cabinet to his own court, resuming his father's style of rule by supervising the administration of his empire from his household.<sup>68</sup> The king raised again to prominence the royal courtiers, some of whom had enjoyed influence under Ibn Saud, but who had



**Figure 4.10** Princes of the Al Saud in the Cabinet at Its First Meeting, March 7, 1954

found no place in Faysal's cabinet; Yusuf Yassin and Jamal Husseini, the latter of the Jerusalem family, had prominent roles at the palace. A third, by the name of Id bin Salim, began his career as a mechanic at the palace, rose to director of the royal garages, and parlayed this office into a dominant position at court. These men, and others, fought for the favor of the king and the ability to loot the treasury that came with it.<sup>68</sup> "These advisers," an American report said, "tend to function as in a medieval court, influencing the King by devious means, expediting his personal orders outside of the established government framework."<sup>69</sup>

The king's court was an enormous affair, and his palace in Riyadh, surrounded by a seven-mile wall, was said to consume as much water and power as the rest of Riyadh.<sup>70</sup> The court encompassed the king, many of his wives past and present, slaves, hundreds of guards, hangers-on, and the retinues of those of his sons who had reached adolescence. There were even court jesters. On a few memorable occasions the court picked up and removed to Europe and America, where it made a lasting impression. Saud regularly took his entourage on long trips through the deserts of his realm cultivating his relations with the various tribes, handing out large sums of money and marrying scores of new wives.<sup>71</sup>

Saud's brothers watched the spectacle of Saud's imitation of their father with great dissatisfaction. In 1955 Talal resigned from his post as minister of communications, partly over budget disputes with the king.<sup>72</sup> Saud limited Abdallah al-Faysal's authority as minister of the interior to supervision of only the Hejaz and Asir.<sup>73</sup> In the two years before 1958 Saud did not bother to formulate a budget but instead treated the Kingdom's income as that of his household. The court lacked any sort of regularized financial control, and by 1958 the Kingdom's merchants and ARAMCO hesitated to extend more credit. The riyal, despite Saudi Arabia's wealth, lost half its value.<sup>74</sup>

At the same time that he sought to center power at court, Saud also made an effort to colonize the cabinet by replacing his brothers with his sons. In late 1956 Saud named his son minister of defense, replacing Misha'al bin Abdalaziz.<sup>75</sup> In 1957 he made another son commander of the National Guard, the first prince to hold this position. He also gave key positions at court to his sons. Outflanked by Saud and having lost control of the administration, Faysal left

the country for medical treatment in April 1957, where he stayed for the rest of the year.<sup>76</sup>

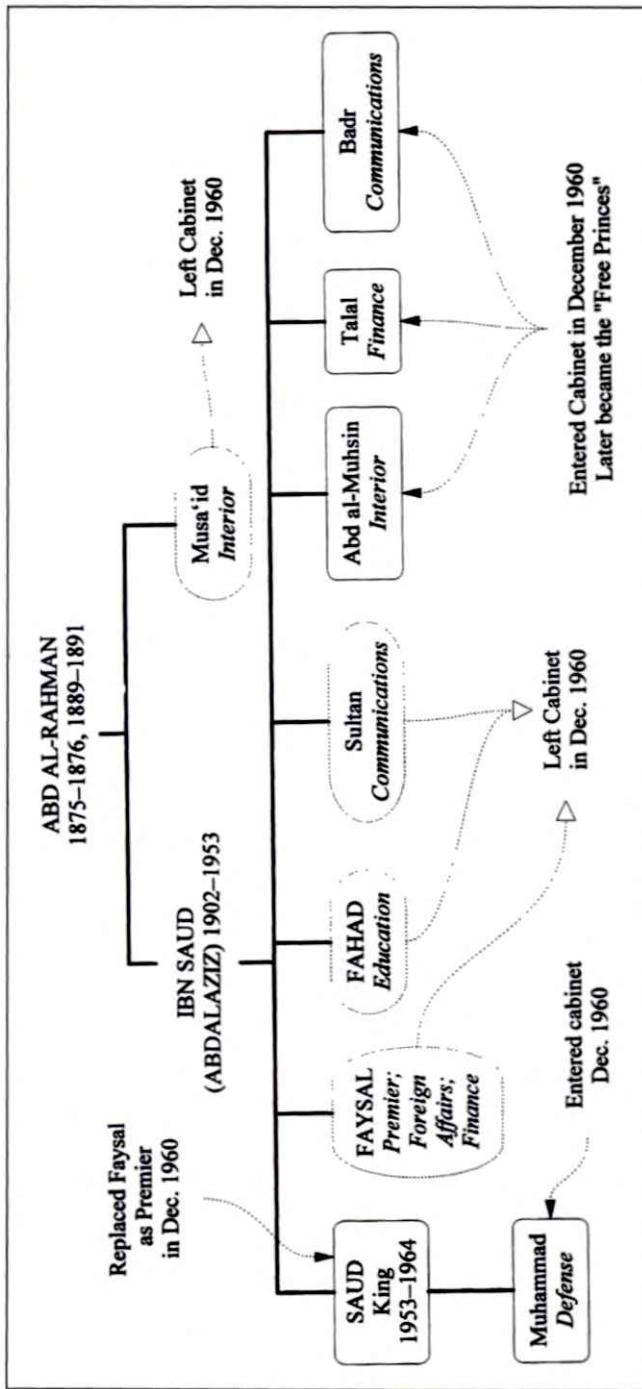
### **Saud Errs, and Recovers**

In March of 1958 Saud committed a blunder of truly momentous proportions, and as a consequence again lost control of the state to his younger brother Faysal. These were Nasser's salad days, only months after the union with Syria, and Saud apparently tried to have him assassinated. Given Nasser's popularity and power, this put the king, the Kingdom, and the Al Saud in a very bad place indeed. Two weeks after the plot was revealed a group of Saud's brothers demanded that he delegate his powers to Faysal; faced with a united front of princes and with no obvious defense for his adventure, the king yielded.<sup>77</sup>

Yet the family did not depose Saud in 1958, and by late 1960, with the Nasser fiasco in the past, Saud was able to regain his powers. Saud, who was generally a poor political strategist, stumbled onto the best strategy of monarchs who wish to keep power in emerging dynastic regimes. Instead of trying to center power on his court (or in addition to this), Saud formed a family coalition on the basis of a division of cabinet posts. The question after December 1960 was not really anymore whether a dynastic monarchy would emerge, but instead which princely faction would win the battle for control of the dynastic regime, a battle which likely would have had essentially the same result in terms of regime type regardless of which side won.

Saud's princely coalition consisted of his own sons and a group of his junior brothers, led by Talal (figure 4.11).<sup>78</sup> Talal had fiercely criticized Saud in previous years, and he had participated in the coalition of princes that nominalized Saud's powers in March of 1958. Saud sought to include some of his more senior brothers in the cabinet, but they refused.<sup>79</sup> A commoner, Ibrahim al-Suwaiyil, got Faysal's portfolio of Foreign Affairs. He was the first outside the Al Saud to hold this post, and thus far the last.

Saud built his coalition over a yawning gap between his expectations and those of Talal and his brothers. This coalition united the most backward-looking of the Al Saud with the most progressive, leaving Faysal's faction (which we might call the modernizing absolutists) on the sidelines. Talal and his group of brothers wanted



**Figure 4.11** Princes of the Al Saud in the December 1960 Cabinet Shuffle

a constitution, and on December 25, 1960, Mecca Radio actually announced the intention of the regime to grant one. A few days later Mecca Radio retracted the announcement.<sup>80</sup> Saud wanted to retake power from Faysal and needed the support of Talal and his faction to get it. But once in control he had no intention of allowing Talal to make a bid for power by promising the citizens a liberal constitution, which would have won for Talal the support of Saudis tired of Al Saud absolutism.

Talal kept his post as finance minister even after Saud nixed his constitutional plans. By early 1961 Talal acted as a "virtual prime minister" and clashed with the king over the budget. In Gary Samore's detailed version of family politics in the period, Saud sought to balance Talal and his faction against Faysal and the other senior sons of Abdalaziz. Faysal, it appears, refused to play along, and stayed out of the cabinet on the expectation that the coalition between Saud and Talal could not last. He was right.<sup>81</sup>

As early as February 1961 a group of senior princes petitioned Saud to get rid of his advisors and restore Faysal. Throughout the year negotiations continued between the brothers. In August Talal made an intemperate speech, and in September Saud dismissed him. Later he and the other "Free Princes" fled to Cairo, became Nasser's guests, and broadcast attacks against the king and the rest of the family.<sup>82</sup> Their departure left a vacuum at the center of the administration. Abdallah Tariqi, the commoner Minister of Petroleum, filled a part of it, and is even said to have become the "predominant influence" in the cabinet, something no outsider to the Al Saud has accomplished since.<sup>83</sup>

### **Faysal Redux**

In November 1961 Saud left the Kingdom to seek medical treatment for, among other things, an ailment of the liver.<sup>84</sup> On his departure he left the government in the hands of Faysal, who at that point was the only real alternative, the Free Princes now in exile, his own sons not old enough or qualified, and his palace advisers—Yusuf Yassin, Id bin Salem, and the rest—hardly capable of holding cabinet posts against the opposition of Faysal and the rest of the Al Saud.

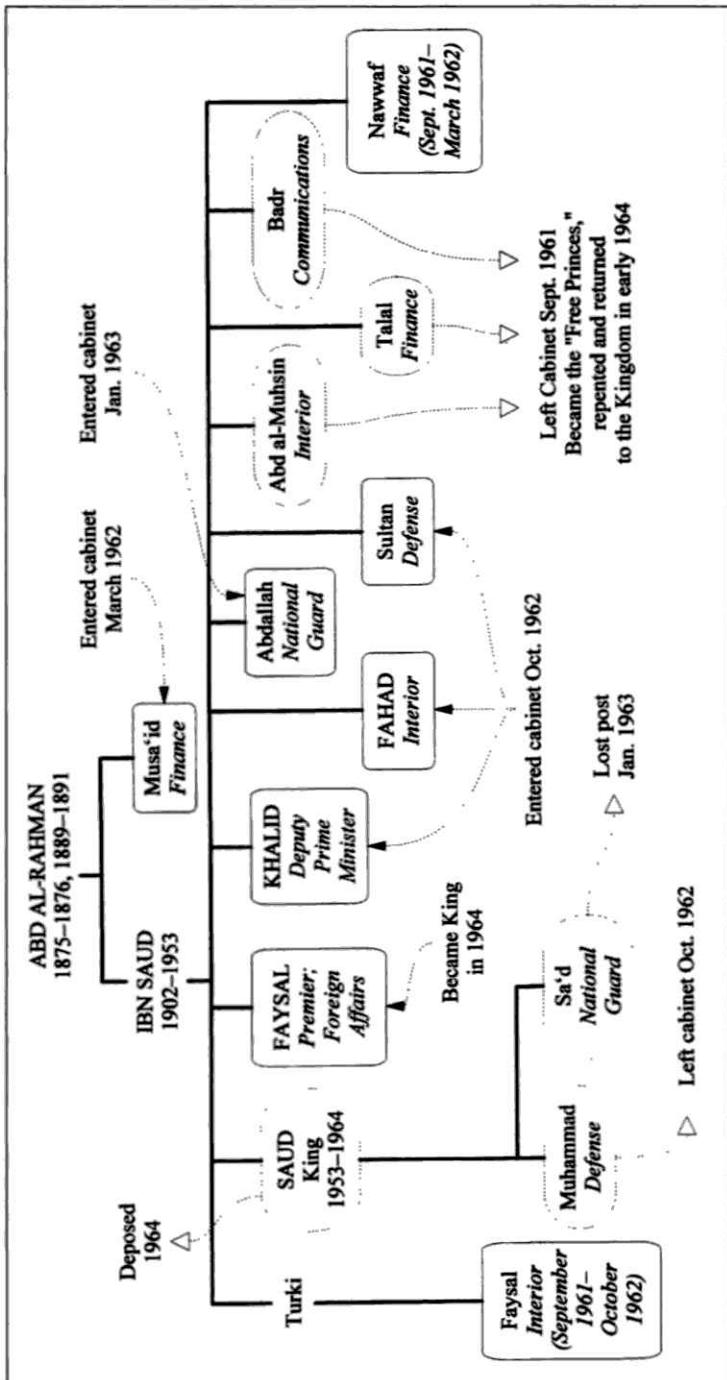
In March 1962 Saud returned to the Kingdom determined to resume his authorities. Yet now Faysal was not so easily dislodged.

When Saud asked for his powers back Faysal and the other princes not only refused but demanded a reallocation of offices, one that divided the available posts between Saud's and Faysal's coalitions. In the ensuing shuffle Faysal permanently regained the premiership and the portfolio of foreign affairs, while the commoner Tariqi lost his post at petroleum. In late September, revolution befell the Yemeni monarchy, and in October another cabinet shuffle cemented the position of Faysal and his (growing) coalition. Sultan replaced Saud's son at defense; Fahad took over interior, while Khalid became deputy prime minister, a post that put him third in line for the kingship. The latter appointment began the process of bringing Khalid and his older full brother Muhammad into Faysal's camp. In January 1963 Abdallah bin Abdulaziz replaced Saud's son Sa'd as head of the National Guard, bringing another important (and previously uncommitted) senior prince into the government and onto Faysal's bandwagon. By the middle of 1963 Faysal and his brothers had pushed all of Saud's sons out of their official positions, with the exception of Mansur bin Saud, commander of the Royal Guard (figure 4.12).<sup>85</sup>

In late 1963, with Faysal and his allies firmly in control of the government, Saud made a tour of the countryside distributing money to the tribes, with the hope of purchasing their support against his family rivals. In years past, before oil, such a tactic was a reasonable strategy in family battles, for the loyalty of the tribes could be bought—at least provisionally—and a large assortment of tribes could challenge a fractured state. In 1963, after oil, it was the last gasp of a king who had already lost the crucial battle. His tour had little effect except to enrich some bedouin shaykhs and to further alienate his brothers, who sought a decree from the *ulema* declaring Faysal the ruler and making Saud king in name only.<sup>86</sup>

### **The Denouement**

In March of 1964 the dispute between Faysal and Saud flared again. Saud barricaded himself in his palace in Riyadh and deployed the Royal Guard (an expanded bodyguard still under his control) around the walls. Faysal responded by sending the National Guard to surround the Royal Guard. No important members of the family—apart from Saud's own sons—and no tribesmen came to Saud's aid. Saud broke another family rule, however, by sending



**Figure 4.13** The Triumph of Faysal's Coalition, 1961-1963

a message to Faysal exclaiming: "When my enemy has his hands around my neck, then I strike at him with all my strength." Muhammad bin Abdalaziz stormed into Saud's palace, threw the message in his face, and told him never to threaten a member of the family again. Later, when asked why he sided with Faysal at this crucial juncture, Muhammad said, "I did not favor Faysal. If Faysal had sent Saud such a challenge I would have thrown it back in his face also. Challenges are not the way we settle our differences inside the Al Saud."<sup>87</sup>

In March of 1964 the princes met and stripped Saud of his remaining authority. To give an added dose of legitimacy to their action they sought the approval of the *ulema*. The issue put before the *ulema* by several senior princes was the permanent assignment of Saud's powers to Faysal; their agreement was secured after some wrangling. The Al Saud did not bring the *ulema* into their dispute until after the core issue of the control of state powers had been decisively decided in favor of Faysal and his fraternal coalition. The *ulema* addressed the issue of the succession only when summoned by the Al Saud, and they agreed with the family consensus once summoned. The next day some seventy princes, of various branches of the family, signed a petition stripping Saud of his powers (figure 4.13).<sup>88</sup> At this point, near the climax of the battle, the Al Saud bandwagoned in earnest—the petition included signatures from a wide variety of princes. Later in 1964 a group of senior princes met and decided that Saud was not taking well to his role as a figurehead king, and that he must be deposed. Saud went into a permanent exile, with several of his older sons.<sup>89</sup> Thus did the dynasty triumph over royal monocracy.

### **After the Deposition of Saud: The Family Institution Matures**

Politics within the Al Saud have grown far calmer since the tumult surrounding the deposition of King Saud. No splits in the dynasty have led to the removal of any of the key princes from their posts in the past three decades. A grandson of Ibn Saud assassinated Faysal in 1975, but this did not reflect any wider split within the royal family and did not disturb the equilibrium of the institution. In the 1980s the family split over Abdallah's appointment as crown prince, but this dispute has since died down, and the Al Saud agree that Abdallah will follow Fahad in the kingship.

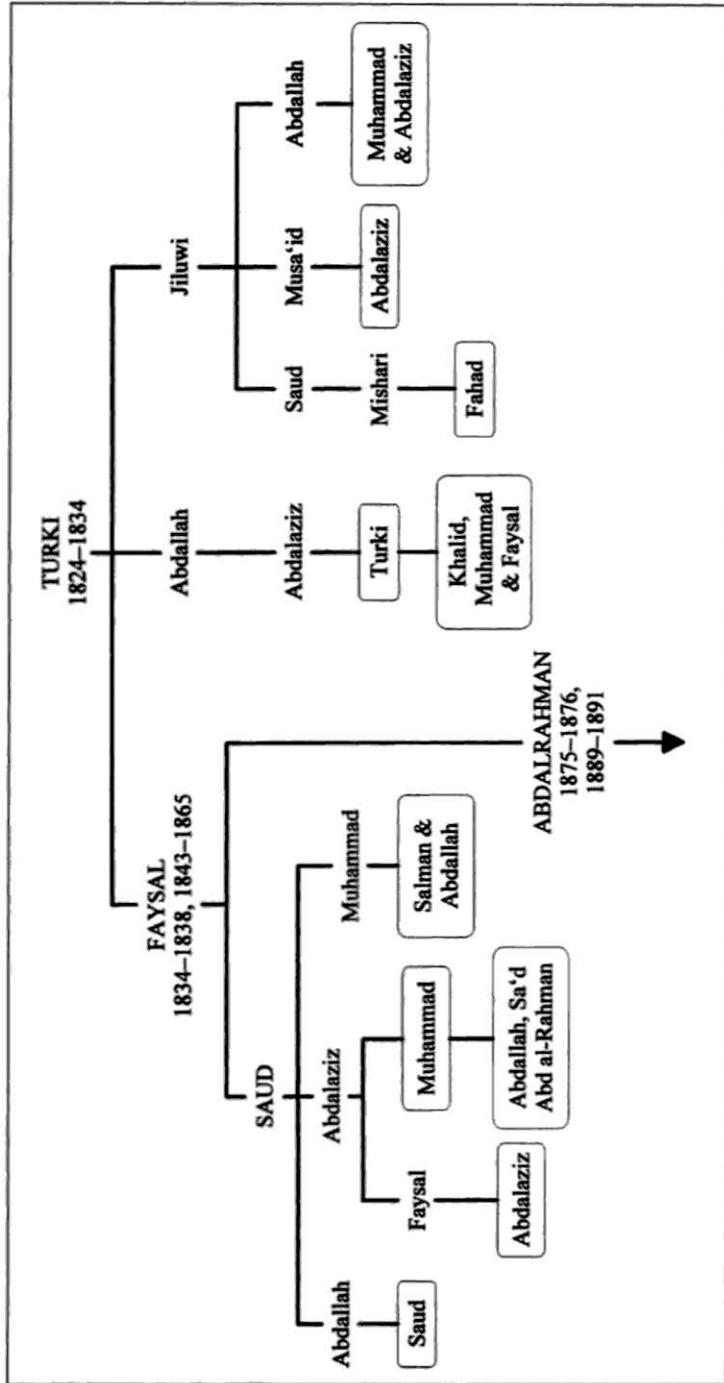


Figure 4.13 Princes of the Al Saud Who Signed the 1964 Petition in Favor of Faysal

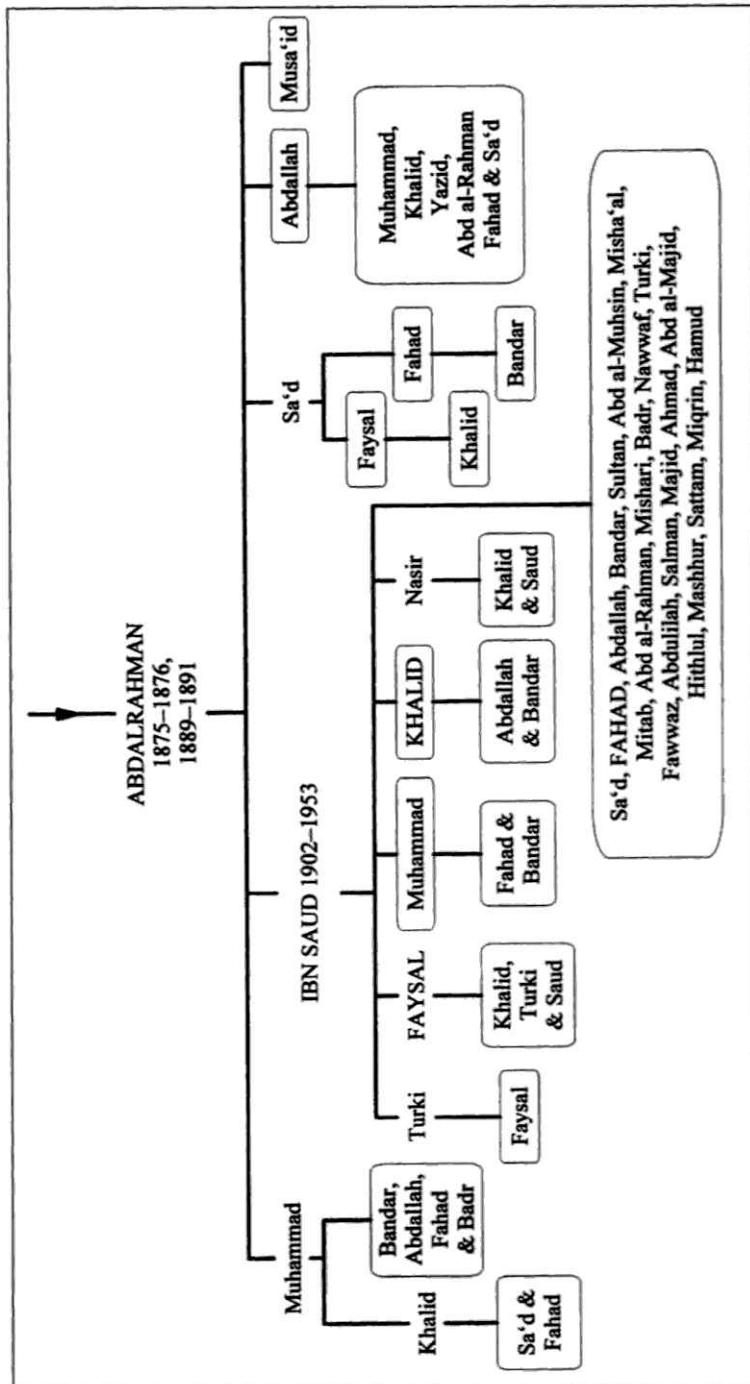


Figure 4.13 *Continued*

Shortly after deposing King Saud the royal family determined a line of succession two princes deep; in 1965 Faysal declared his brother Khalid crown prince, and in 1967 he appointed Fahad vice president of the council of ministers, and thus second in line to the throne. These appointments reflect the guideline the Al Saud follow in appointing their kings: Ibn Saud, the Al Saud say, decreed on his deathbed that the “eldest able” among his sons should be king.<sup>91</sup> Each of the princes who has ruled, or been in the line of succession, (Faysal, Khalid, Fahad, Abdallah, Sultan) is younger than his predecessor, yet the Al Saud have skipped over several intervening brothers. In 1965 Khalid was not the eldest of the sons of Ibn Saud after Faysal, a distinction belonging to his full brother Muhammad. Similarly the appointment of Fahad as second in line in 1967 skipped another two senior princes, Nasir and Sa'd. The appointment of Sultan as second in line skipped two more, Bandar and Musa'id (figure 4.14). Yet this rule of succession did not produce serious family splits; instead the family worked out a consensus on who was eldest and most able, and made that prince king.<sup>92</sup>

Muhammad bin Abdalaziz was a key prince in the coalition against Saud, and enjoyed a full measure of the authority deriving from his senior position among the ruling brothers. Yet the family chose not to make him king, for reasons suggested by his nickname, Abu Sharayn or “father of the two evils.” These were his bad temper and his drinking, which generally occurred together; he was also hard-headed. Muhammad himself seems to have had mixed feelings about his own suitability for the kingship.<sup>93</sup> Khalid’s candidature provided a solution to the various problems associated with the succession. Khalid was not a domineering personality, and was seen to have the makings of a suitable, if somewhat disinterested, king. Even more important, he was also the full younger brother of Muhammad, a crucial point given the tendency of the sons of Ibn Saud to divide up on the basis of common maternal parentage.

With his loss of a place in the line of succession Muhammad became one of Arabia’s outstanding examples of a prince with immense influence in the councils of his family despite his lack of a formal state office. One measure of Muhammad’s stature was his personal share of the Kingdom’s oil production, which he sold on the international market on his own account.<sup>94</sup> Another measure was his long-standing involvement in questions of succession, from the deposition of Saud through the deaths of Faysal and Khalid

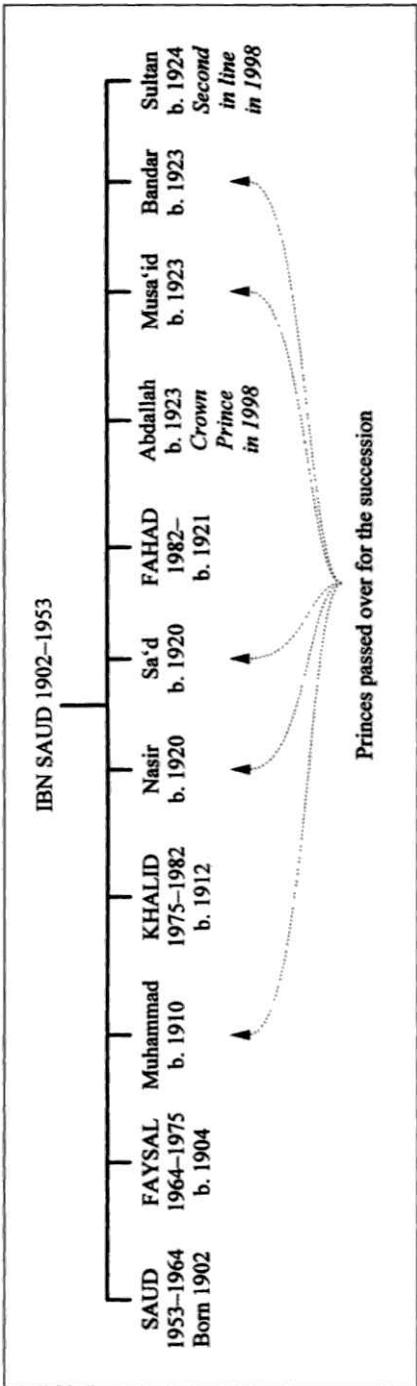


Figure 4.14 “Eldest Able”: Succession among the Sons of Ibn Saud

and into the reign of Fahad. He served on the committee of princes that oversaw the succession at Faysal's assassination, with an uncle and three brothers, and was second (after Ibn Saud's younger brother Abdallah) to give the *bay'a* to Khalid, and the first prince to give the *bay'a* to Fahad in 1982.<sup>95</sup>

Faysal's choice of Fahad as second in line to the throne in 1967 passed over another two senior princes, but these men lacked the authority of Muhammad in family councils. Nasir, of non-*asil* descent on his mother's side, tarnished his reputation in the 1940s when he hosted a drinking party at which several guests died of bad alcohol, inducing his father to throw him in jail. Sa'd had no discernible political ambitions. Nonetheless the Al Saud compensated both princes with the other main reward allocated by the family to its members—money—and both received large grants of valuable real estate. After Khalid's death in 1982 Fahad appointed Sultan second in line, skipping Bandar and Musa'id but causing no discernible dissension within family councils.<sup>96</sup>

Faysal's assassination revealed the strength of the dynastic regime in Saudi Arabia: he was shot by his nephew, Faysal bin Musa'id, yet the succession went smoothly and the episode in no way impugned the Al Saud's grip on power. The assassination led to no larger dispute within the family: the Al Saud united in condemnation of the assassin and had him beheaded in the gutter next to a mosque in Riyadh.<sup>97</sup> If the motive of the assassination was to fracture the family, it found no apparent resonance among other princes of the Al Saud.

### **The al-Fahad, Emir Abdallah, and Family Politics in the 1980s**

Khalid died of natural causes in 1982, and Fahad became king in a succession that followed the general trend of increasing smoothness. Khalid named Abdallah second deputy prime minister shortly after he became king in 1975, which placed him in line to become crown prince after Khalid died. This prospect was not universally popular among the entire family, and contention over Abdallah's succession was the main locus of disputes among the Al Saud during Khalid's reign.

In the monarchies, among brothers who share a single father but a number of different mothers, fraternal coalitions tend to form on lines of common matrilineal descent. This is not a hard and fast

rule, and half-brothers frequently ally, while full brothers sometimes do not, yet descent from the same mother forms a bond between brothers in a situation in which bonds of kinship undergird the very basis of the political system, and among men who may lack fundamental divisions of interest that would impel them into alternative coalitions.

Fahad and Sultan, in 1996 respectively king and second in line, are both sons of Hussa bint Ahmad al-Sudayri; with five other full brothers they are the al-Fahad, or "Sudayri Seven." Crown Prince Abdallah's mother, by contrast, was a woman of the Shammar tribal confederation whom Ibn Saud married after his conquest of the Rashidi state at Ha'il. Abdallah has no full brothers, nor indeed are there any other brothers with Shammar mothers.

While the Sudayri Seven are commonly known by their mother's family name, their power derives from their seniority as some of the elder living sons of Ibn Saud, from their high state posts, and from their tendency to stick together. Hussa bint Ahmad herself seems to have had a considerable political influence, if only through her efforts to maintain the sense of corporate feeling among her sons. Until she died in 1970 Hussa held weekly dinners at her house where her sons and their families met, thus maintaining the bonds between her subsection of the Al Saud; her daughters continue the tradition.<sup>98</sup>

After Khalid appointed Abdallah presumptive second in line in 1975 the al-Fahad apparently tried to replace him with Sultan, the second eldest of the seven brothers. On Khalid's death in 1982, however, Fahad declared Abdallah crown prince, despite the fact that Fahad led the family faction generally thought opposed to Abdallah. The 1992 Basic Law, issued on Fahad's authority as king, specifically names Abdallah as the heir apparent.<sup>99</sup> By the end of 1997, with Fahad's health seriously impaired, Abdallah was said to have taken over most of the responsibilities of rule.

The al-Fahad faction of the Al Saud remains very well represented in the state, given that its princes make up only about 20 percent of the sons of Abdalaziz. The ailing King Fahad belongs to this faction, as do his full brothers Sultan and Na'if, respectively the ministers of defense and the interior. Other full brothers of the king include Salman, governor of Riyadh, Abd al-Rahman, deputy minister of defense, and Ahmad, deputy minister of the interior.

Princes of the Al Saud who do not belong to the al-Fahad, however, also hold key posts in the state, chief among them Abdallah, the crown prince, who commands the National Guard. Saud al-Faysal, son of King Faysal, is minister of foreign affairs while Saud's brother Turki heads the main intelligence service. Several of Abdallah's sons hold positions in the National Guard (figures 4.15 and 4.16).<sup>100</sup>

The Saudi opposition in London finds several members of the al-Fahad particularly repugnant. This may be out of a strategy on the part of the opposition to encourage reforms by Abdallah, or it may be that the opposition actually finds Sultan and Na'if particularly abhorrent, the former for his thievery and the latter for his thuggery. Not all of the al-Fahad are as unpopular as Sultan and Na'if: Salman, the governor of Riyadh, appears to enjoy at least a measure of respect from the opposition.

Although the dispute between the al-Fahad and Abdallah's faction has dominated news on the internal workings of the Al Saud since the late 1970s, it is important to note the degree to which the dispute has remained within limited bounds. Though it is possible to discern two rival family factions, one oriented around the al-Fahad and the other defined essentially by *not* being full brothers of Fahad, these factions have not hardened. It is possible to find disputes among the al-Fahad, and the faction in support of Abdallah is sometimes hard to pin down.<sup>101</sup> We may attribute this to a lack of information about precise alignments, but it is more likely the result of the fact that alliances within the family have a certain fluidity to them, even within a sublineage such as the al-Fahad. While individual princes definitively opposed to each other certainly can be identified as enemies, the rest of the family does not feel compelled to rush to one side or another, at least not until the dispute gets out of hand and a bandwagon gets going to resolve it permanently.<sup>102</sup> Thus far the dispute between the Sudayris and their opponents within the Al Saud has not led to the sort of strife that would endanger the Saudi dynastic regime. No appeals to outsiders have been made, and few rumors of imminent resort to force have been heard. No expulsion of princes from their posts has been necessary. The constant maneuvering for advantage among princes and factions has, however, led to the placement of even more princes in state posts, as various family members seek to win allies, or to placate potential opponents.<sup>103</sup> Thus is further strengthened the grip of the House of Saud over their namesake kingdom.

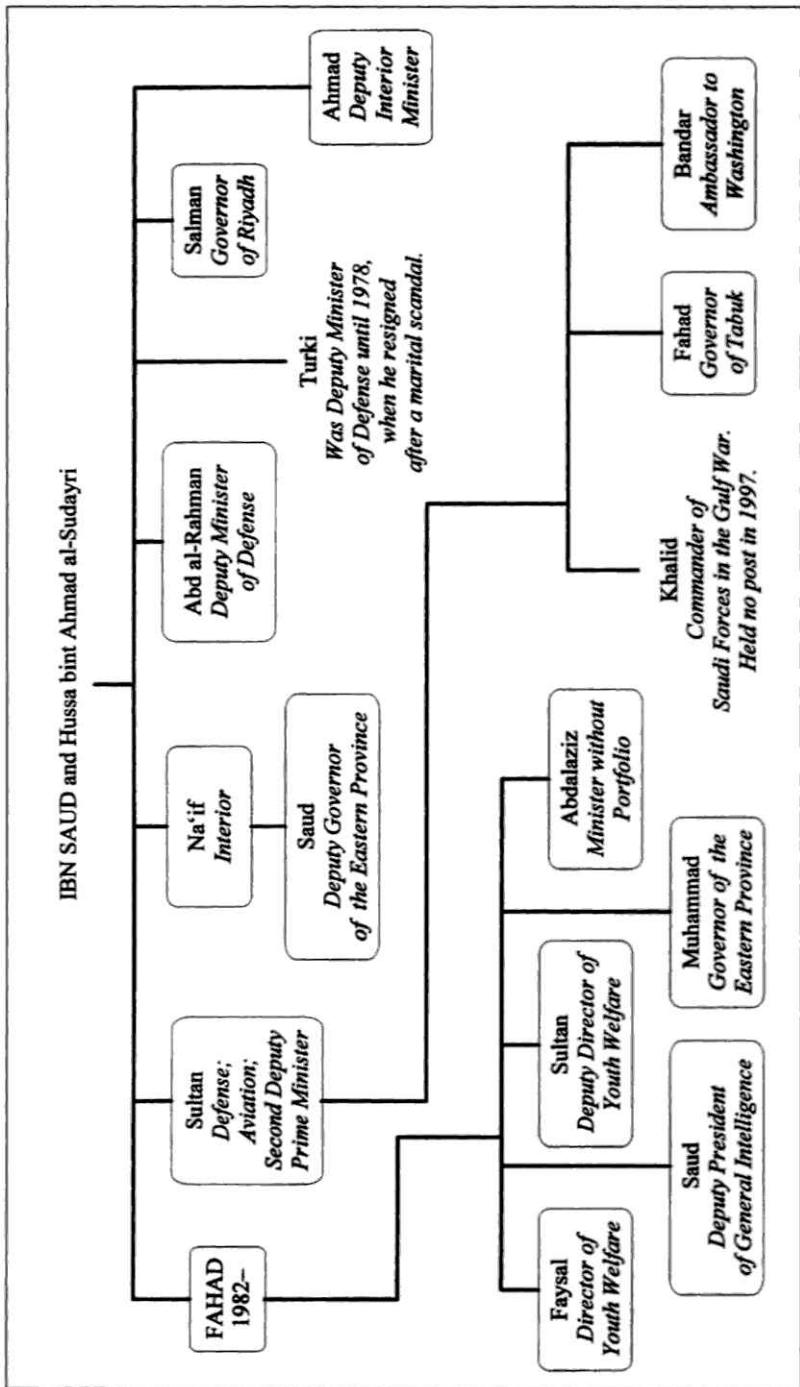


Figure 4.15 Princes of the al-Fahad (the “Sudayri Seven”) Who Held High State Offices in 1997

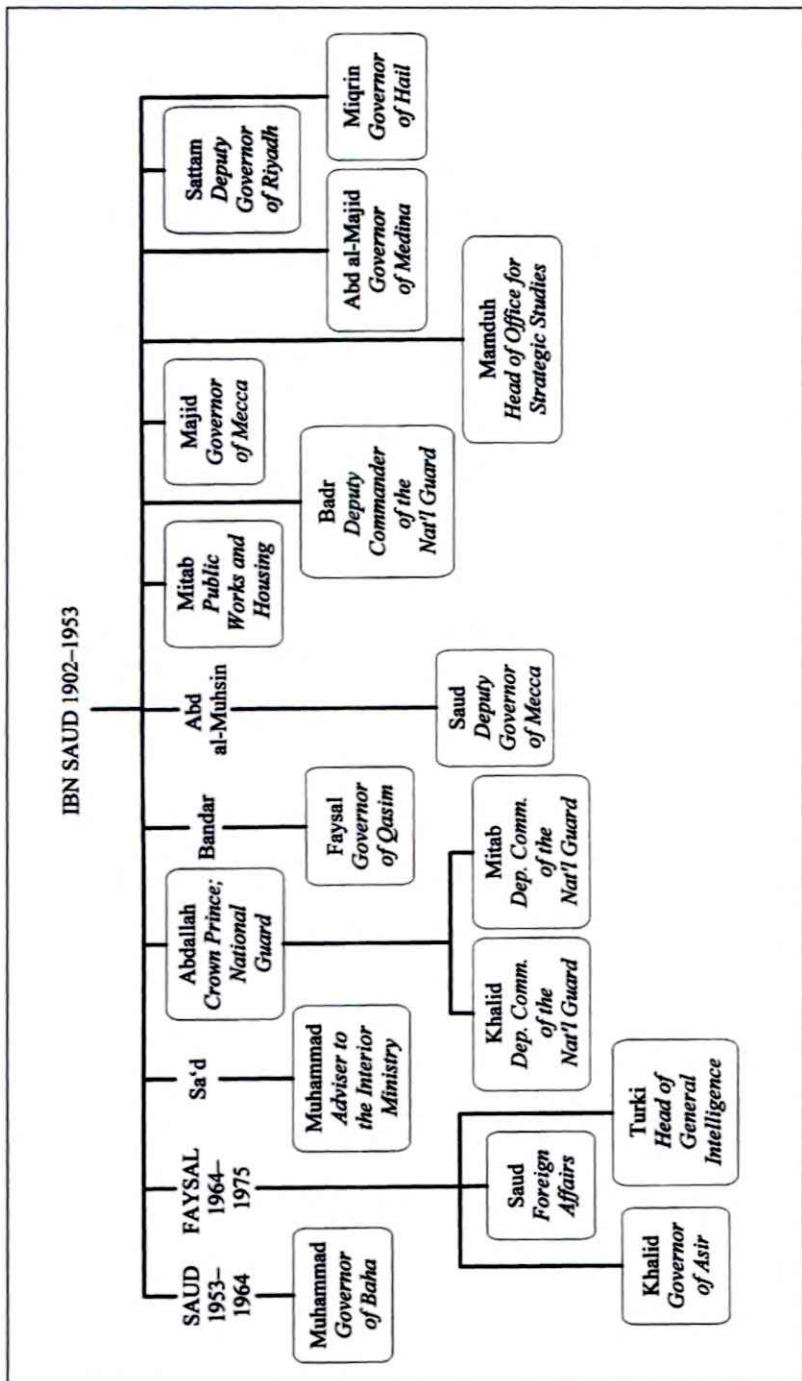


Figure 4.16 Princes of the Al Saud Who Held High State Offices in 1997, Except the al-Fahad



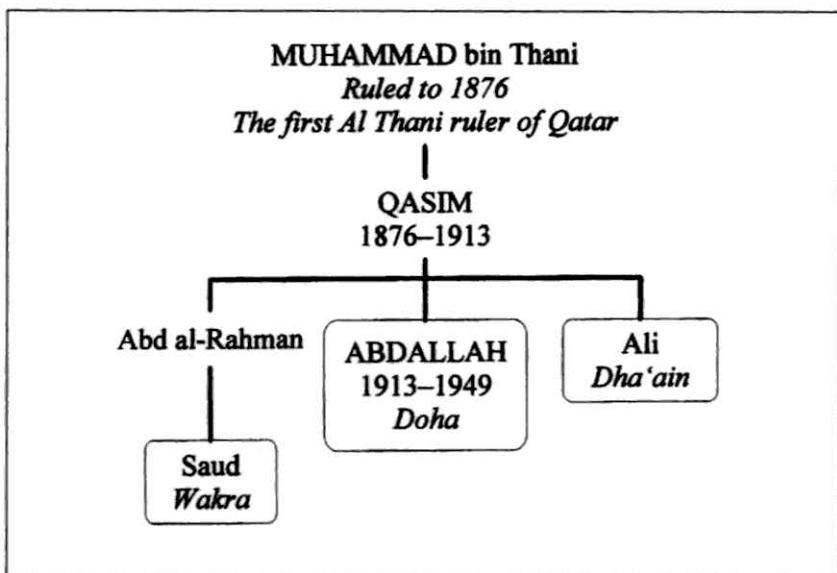
## **The Dynasties: The Al Thani, Al Khalifa, Al Nahayan, Al Maktum, and Al Said**

### **The Al Thani of Qatar**

If dynastic regimes are susceptible to strife and ill will among the members of the ruling families, the Al Thani, the ruling family of Qatar, should have fallen from power long ago. Instead the regime has survived numerous feuds among its shaykhs and the deposition of two emirs since independence. All of this intrafamily jousting has led only to the further dynastic penetration of the state, and in mid-1997 no fewer than fourteen shaykhs of the Al Thani held ministerial rank.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Al Thani and the Dawn of the Oil Era in Qatar**

Before 1949, in the British view, Qatar had "no real administration."<sup>2</sup> Members of the Al Thani ruled several towns outside Doha as nominal fiefs of the ruler, and separate clans ruled several other settlements on the peninsula, asserting their independence of the Al Thani suzerainty recognized by the British (figure 5.1).<sup>3</sup> Qatar



**Figure 5.1** Fiefs of the Al Thani in the 1930s

supported no agriculture and its merchant community carried on only modest trade. While Kuwait in the same period was a reasonably prosperous trading port (and Saudi Arabia a vast, if rather empty, empire), Qatar was little more than a barren expanse of sand jutting out into the Gulf, its chief town, Doha, a dusty street lined with decrepit mud houses.<sup>4</sup>

When oil made the ruler of Qatar rich, in 1949, his relatives descended on him, demanding their shares of the spoils, which they defined generously. His response, and that of his successors, vividly illustrates the power that members of the Al Thani held over the ruler; or, better, it indicated the seriousness of the threat unhappy relatives posed to the ruler's health. In 1949 the British reported that the shaykhs "secretly stirred up trouble in the Suq and forced the Sheikh to give them more money."<sup>5</sup> The ruler, under constant siege from his relatives, hit upon clever strategy for avoiding the demands of his relatives: he abdicated, and took the treasury. The British said that "The old Shaikh has handed over nothing to his son and successor. He has sent most of his money out of the country, has retained all his cars and has given the beautiful launch he received from [the oil company] to Abdalla Darwish."<sup>6</sup> He left it

for his son to deal with the importunities of the relatives. When further oil revenues reached the new ruler's bank accounts the British told him to spend it on public services or put it in reserve. Instead, he gave much of it to the shaykhs, who plagued him with demands for ever larger allowances. By mid-1952 the Al Thani received a third of the revenue, and shortly thereafter the ruler raised allowances again. In 1958 the Al Thani shaykhs received, it is reported, a stunning 45 percent of revenues.<sup>7</sup> The British pressured the ruler to resist the prodigal greed of his relatives, but he protested that it was not in his power to resist the shaykh's demands. As Jill Crystal puts it: "The shaikhs were heavily armed and often took the law into their own hands, on several occasions shooting, and from time to time killing, other Qataris in various quarrels. This proclivity reinforced Ali's tendency to acquiesce."<sup>8</sup>

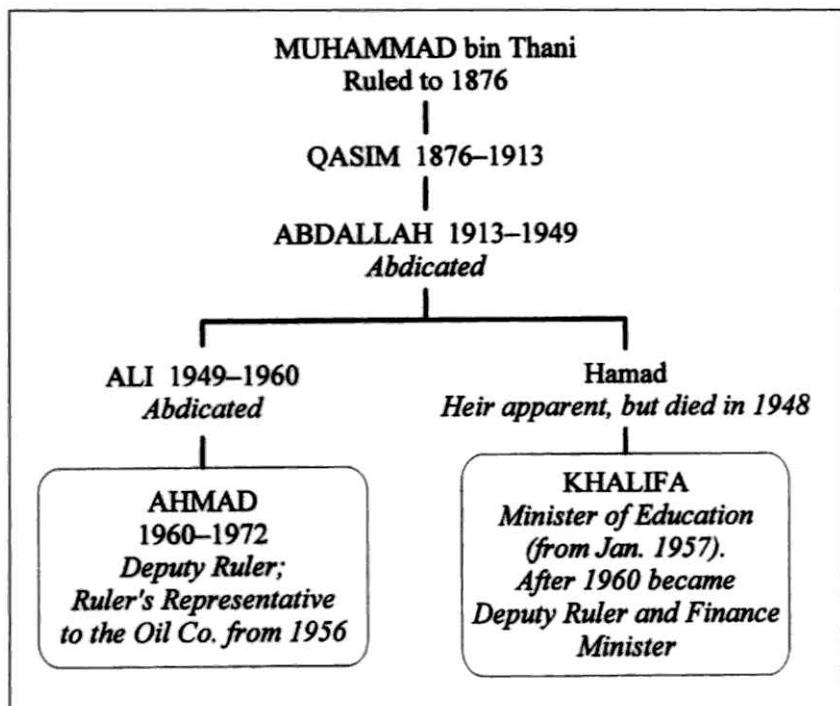
While the shaykhs of the ruling family demanded and won much of the rulers' oil wealth from the beginning, the ruler allowed his secretary to control both the emerging state administration and the rapidly reviving commercial life of Doha. This *wazir*, Abdallah Darwish, parlayed his closeness to the ruler into a pervasive influence over the shaykhdom. The British in 1954 described him as "the only outsider, that is the only man not a member of a Shaikhly family, to have aimed at and achieved political power [in the Gulf]."<sup>9</sup> In the mid-1950s some of Darwish's allies (who were not of the Al Thani) directed customs and immigration, while Abdallah Darwish's brother headed the Education Council, the latter the first nontraditional state institution outside the direct control of the British.<sup>10</sup> In 1956 the British reported that Darwish "had for long been cordially disliked by almost all the Ruling Family, who agreed on this point as on practically nothing else, largely on account of his excessive influence over the Ruler."<sup>11</sup> Al Thani hostility to Darwish parallels that of the Al Sabah toward Mullah Salih, Ahmad al-Jabir Al Sabah's secretary who used his influence to control Kuwait's economy before 1938,<sup>12</sup> or the dislike directed at Abdallah Sulayman, Ibn Saud's *wazir*, from the princes of the Al Saud.

The Al Thani solved the problem of Darwish's influence in their own characteristic way. A shaykh of the Al Thani found Darwish while they were both visiting Lebanon in 1956, waved a pistol at him and threatened his life should he step foot in Qatar again. Darwish's political career in Qatar came to an abrupt end, and the

ruler lost his main buffer against his family's efforts to usurp control of the state.<sup>13</sup>

After the expulsion of Abdallah Darwish the Al Thani split up the posts that he had controlled. The ruler's son Ahmad took over Abdallah Darwish's position as ruler's representative to the oil company, while his nephew, Khalifa bin Ahmad, replaced Abdallah's brother Qasim as head of the education department in January 1957. These two shaykhs, Ahmad and Khalifa, represented the two dominant branches of the Al Thani at the time and throughout the 1950s they maneuvered against each other for the right to succeed the ruler (figure 5.2).<sup>14</sup> One result of their struggle was that neither camp within the family could resist the demands of other shaykhs for yet more generous allowances.<sup>15</sup>

The shaykhs of the Al Thani did not gain complete control of the state by expelling Darwish, for British advisers supervised the police and the ruler had a British secretary, whose position re-



**Figure 5.2** Contenders for the Succession among the al Thani in 1960

sembled that of Belgrave in Bahrain, though much diluted in its authority. This was the same period in which the British tried to assert their control over the Kuwaiti administration with advisers; they succeeded in Qatar where they had failed in Kuwait because they sent in their advisers before the family took control of the departments (indeed, before there were departments). The British presence, in Qatar as in Bahrain, delayed full dynastic control of the administration, for the shaykhs could not be rid of the British as simply as they were of Darwish.

After the Suez crisis of 1956, and the popular protests against Belgrave in Bahrain, the British began to rethink their policy toward the ruling families, and began to appreciate the advantages of direct shaykhly rule in the style of the Al Sabah. In 1958 the British political resident suggested to the Qatari ruler that he adopt the Kuwaiti system of rule. That is to say, the British became promoters of dynastic monarchism. The political resident, B. A. B. Burrows, noted the change in policy:

As a striking example of this evolution, it was my first task when I arrived here [in the Gulf] in 1953 to reinforce with the Ruler of Kuwait the representations which had been made to him by the Prime Minister during his visit to London that he should take a British Adviser, (my efforts were unsuccessful); three years later I was authorised to persuade the Ruler of Bahrain to get rid of his British Adviser; five years later I was instructed to recommend to the ruler of Qatar that he should institute in his State a system of government similar to that in Kuwait.<sup>16</sup>

The British told the ruler of Qatar that involving his relatives in rule would “blunt the edge of the succession issue,” so that “the ambitions of powerful or unruly members of the Ruling Family may be moderated by the responsibility of administering departments.”<sup>17</sup> The family did not act on the British suggestions immediately (Ali in fact wanted a pledge of British support *against* his relatives, which was not forthcoming),<sup>18</sup> but the resolution of the succession dispute of 1960 followed the lines of the British suggestion, though more from the logic of intrafamily competition than compliance with British wishes.

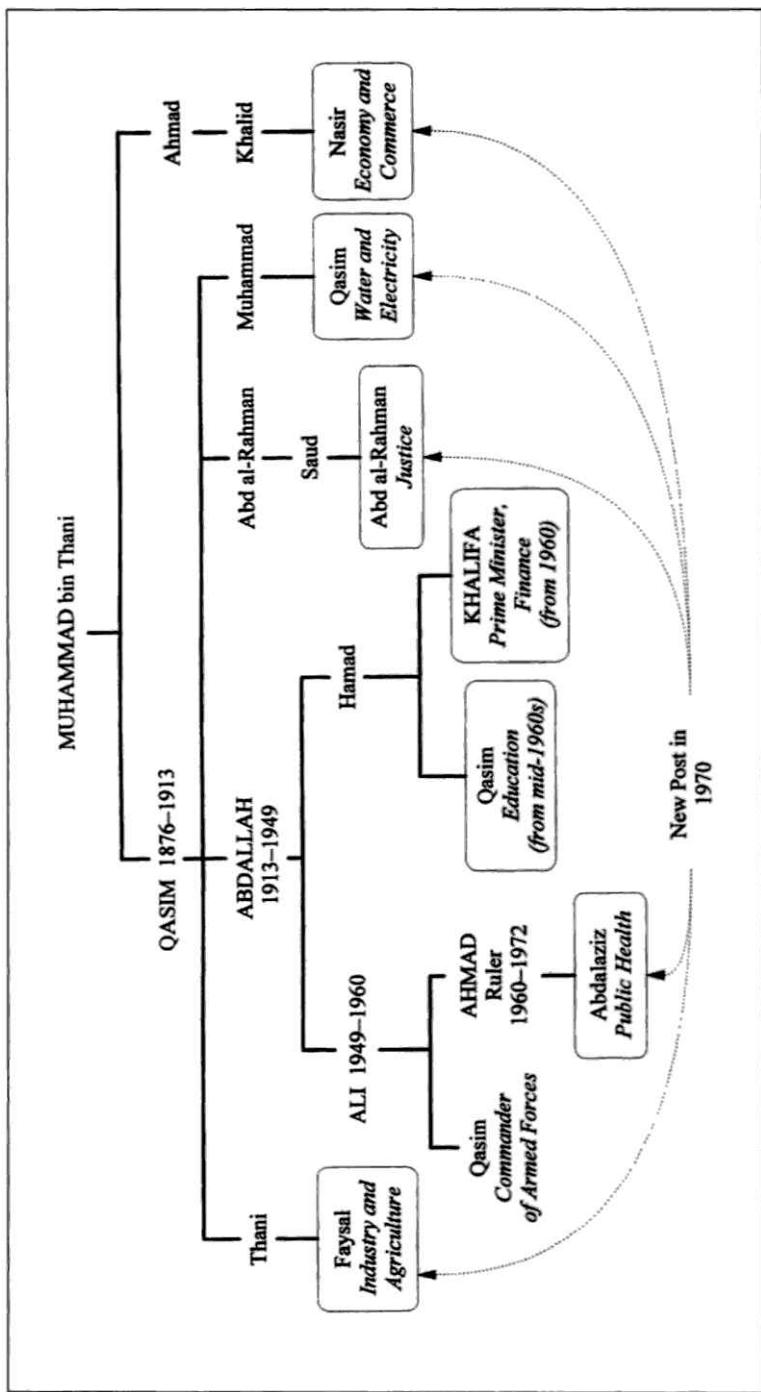
## The Abdication of the Ruler in 1960

In 1960 the ruler abdicated, the second abdication in eleven years. Two shaykhs sought the succession, the ruler's son Ahmad and Khalifa bin Hamad, Ahmad's cousin (figure 5.2). The latter claimed the rulership on the basis of promises made to him when his grandfather (the one who took the treasury) had abdicated in 1949. A British report said that their adviser in Doha thought that the opposition of Khalifa to Ahmad's succession "would have to be bought off by the Ruler, and [the Adviser] thought that the price was bound to be very high indeed."<sup>19</sup>

Khalifa settled not only for money, but also demanded a share of the new ruler's power. Ahmad bin Ali named Khalifa crown prince and appointed him deputy ruler with broad authority, including the finances. Khalifa made the most of his new powers as deputy ruler, and set to work reorganizing and enlarging the Qatari administration. The British adviser left Doha and Khalifa brought in an Egyptian in his stead. He appointed his brother minister of education in the mid-1960s. Ahmad bin Ali's own brother Qasim, however, "supervised" the army, alongside its British commander, Ronald Cochrane.<sup>20</sup> In 1964 Khalifa made a first effort to form a family proto-cabinet by announcing a *majlis al-shura* of fifteen shaykhs of the Al Thani. It never met, for reasons that are not known.<sup>21</sup> By 1970, however, under pressure from his family and the British, the ruler announced a cabinet of ten, including seven shaykhs; it reflected a balance between the ruler's own branch of the family and that of Khalifa bin Hamad (figure 5.3).<sup>22</sup>

## Ahmad Deposed

In 1972, shortly after independence, Khalifa overthrew Ahmad. Khalifa had built up the Qatari administration in the 1960s while Ahmad had continued to rule in the style of a traditional Gulf shaykh. The ruler's obstructionism and long absences from the country prepared the way for his overthrow: his failure to bother himself to leave the comforts of Geneva to attend independence celebrations in Qatar gave Khalifa a fitting excuse to remove him.<sup>23</sup> Khalifa's new government reflected the family coalition that had brought him to power: the coalition drew heavily on his brothers and sons, and excluded the former emir's immediate relatives. The



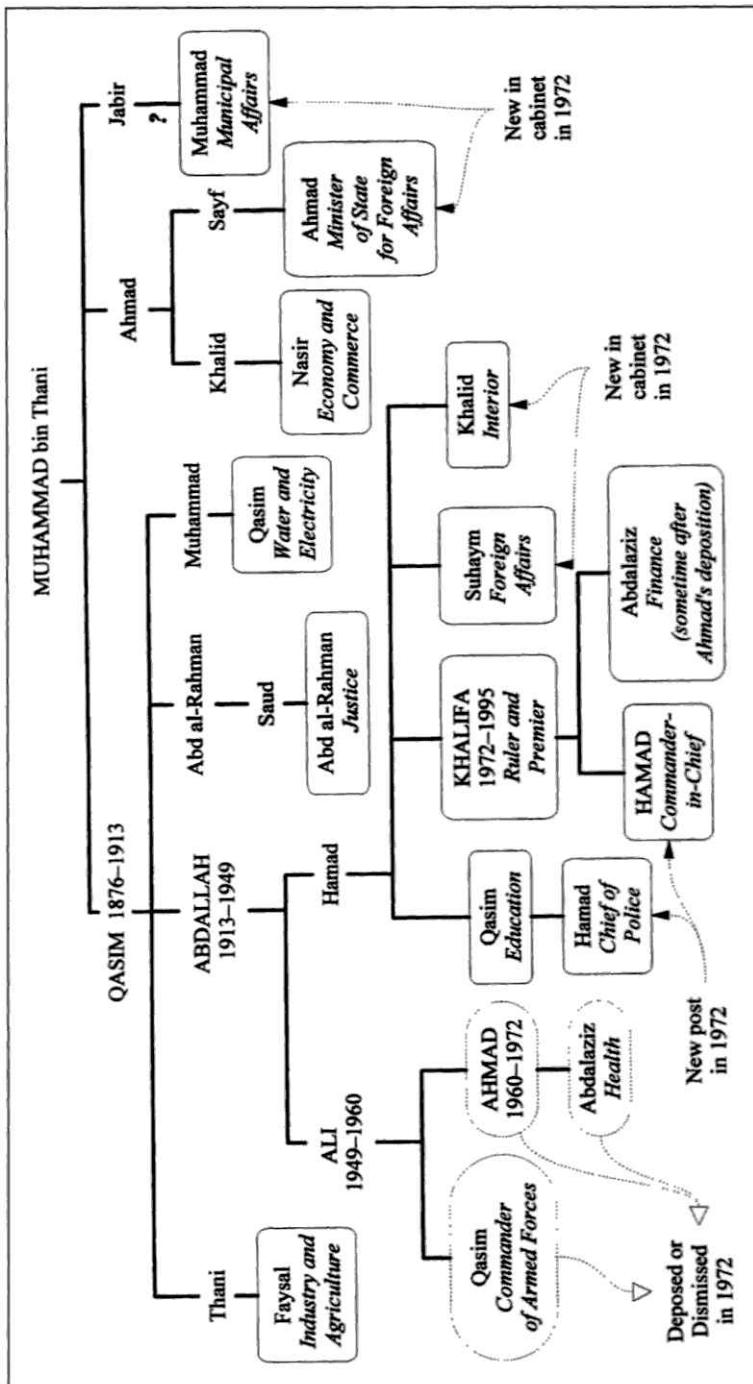
**Figure 5.3** Shaykhs of the Al Thani in the First Qatari Cabinet, 1970

ex-emir's brother, who commanded the army, lost his job, as did his son the minister of public health. Khalifa retained the representatives of farther-flung branches of the family in the cabinet and added an additional two cabinet members from outside the core lineages. Khalifa dismissed the two British advisers who ran the army and the police and replaced them with his son and his nephew (figure 5.4).<sup>24</sup>

The family coalition that Khalifa assembled to overthrow the ruler in 1972 had at its core two of his brothers, Khalid and Suhaym, and two of his sons, Hamad and Abdalaziz. Khalifa apparently promised Suhaym—his brother—that he would appoint him both crown prince and premier. Instead he appointed him only minister of foreign affairs. In 1977 Khalifa appointed his eldest son Hamad as his heir apparent. Suhaym, it is reported, acquiesced to this on condition that Khalifa name him—as he had promised earlier—prime minister. Khalifa again broke his promise, though he apparently repeated his pledge yet again in 1979. Suhaym, in fact, never won the premiership. In the years preceding his death (of a heart attack, in 1985) it was rumored that Suhaym had stockpiled weapons in the northern part of the Qatari peninsula and had sought Saudi support.<sup>25</sup> Most sources on the dispute between Khalifa and Suhaym suggest some level of Saudi involvement on Suhaym's side. When Khalifa appointed his son Hamad crown prince in 1977 he did so only after his first choice, his son Abdalaziz, was nixed by the Saudis and Suhaym: Hamad was a compromise choice satisfactory to all sides, including the Saudis.<sup>26</sup> In the following years, when Khalifa continued to deny Suhaym his promised role in the regime, the Saudis apparently continued to support Suhaym. To the degree that this support was real, it was limited both in its seriousness and certainly in its efficacy, if the goal was anything more than to keep things stirred up among the Al Thani.

### **Khalifa Deposed**

Khalifa, we can safely surmise, now regrets his efforts to favor his son Hamad: in 1995 Hamad overthrew his father. Like the removal of Ahmad bin Ali, or King Saud in 1964, this deposition was years in the making. In the dynastic monarchies bandwagons move slowly, and shaykhs take their time about jumping on. Two cabinet shuffles, in 1989 and 1992, preceded the 1995 coup; in both Hamad gradu-



**Figure 5.4** Shaykhs of the Al Thani in State Posts after the Deposition of Ahmad in 1972

ally consolidated his hold over the state and placed family allies in important posts.

It is said that Hamad “prompted” the cabinet shuffle of 1989 though it is not clear if Khalifa agreed to it out of pressure from the family, or because he and others did not foresee the eventual result.<sup>27</sup> Four of the eight Al Thani shaykhs lost their cabinet seats. Such a wholesale removal of members of the ruling family from the cabinet of a dynastic regime is rare, and the only precedents for it go back to the cabinet turnover associated with the fight between King Saud and his brothers. Three of the shaykhs dismissed in 1989 had held their posts since the formation of Khalifa’s 1972 cabinet, and thus were a part of the original coalition that brought him to power (figure 5.5, see page 120).<sup>28</sup>

Five shaykhs joined the cabinet in 1989, and most formed part of the coalition that backed Hamad when he deposed his father six years later. This coalition included Hamad’s brother Abdallah (the new minister of the interior) and a shaykh from a more distant lineage, Hamad bin Qasim bin Jabir. Hamad dismissed two uncles in 1989, but gave cabinet posts to the sons of two other (by then deceased) uncles, restoring family balance. Hamad’s brother Muhammad was appointed under-secretary of finance and petroleum, where we can safely assume that he was set to watch Hamad’s brother Abdalaziz, who was one of the few prominent shaykhs firmly in the camp of their father Khalifa. For the first time in the history of Qatar the portfolio of foreign affairs did not go to a shaykh of the Al Thani. This situation lasted until 1992 and is one of the rare instances in the dynastic monarchies of anyone other than a member of the ruling families occupying that post.

Three years later, in 1992, a second cabinet shuffle further consolidated Hamad’s coalition. His brother—and his father’s chief family ally—Abdalaziz bin Khalifa, lost his job as minister of finance and left the country to reside permanently in Paris (figure 5.6, see page 122).<sup>29</sup> Three other shaykhs joined the cabinet in 1992: Hamad’s own son Ahmad, Hamad’s nephew (a son of Abdallah bin Khalifa, a key member of Hamad’s coalition), and another first cousin, son of the former interior minister.

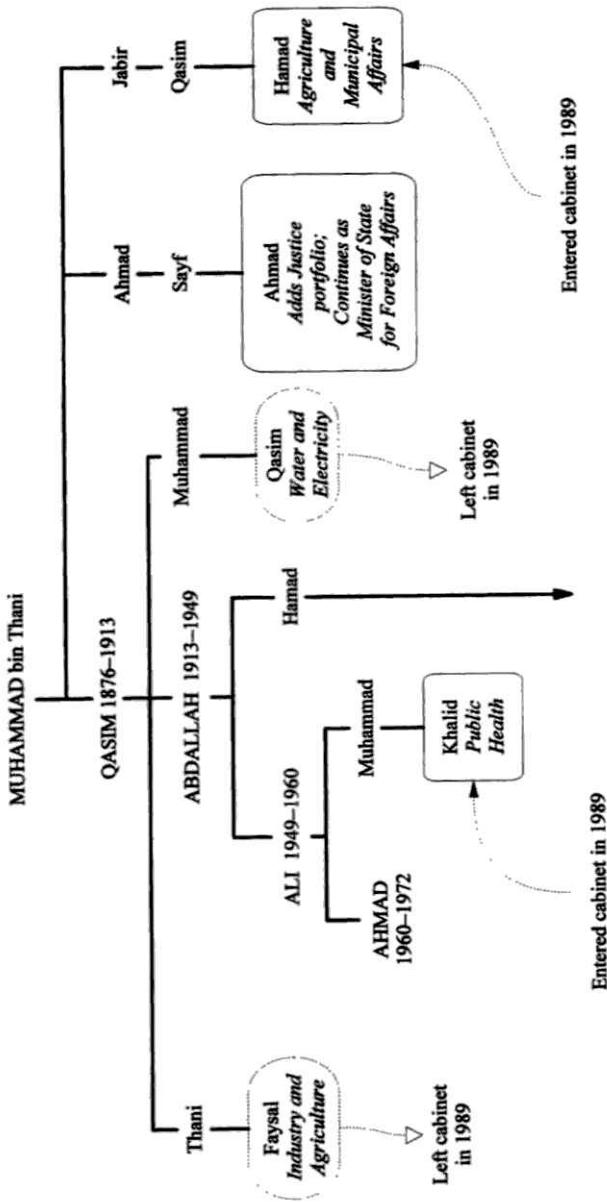
The 1992 government cemented Hamad’s hold on the Qatari state, and he is widely agreed to have done most of the governing in the three years between 1992 and the final deposition of his father. There nonetheless remained a great deal of tension between

father and son. Khalifa still controlled state finances and used his authority to obstruct Hamad, leading to a partial paralysis in the governing of the country. Khalifa also wanted to bring his son and ally Abdalaziz back to Qatar from Paris, a step Hamad staunchly resisted.<sup>30</sup> The persistence of the conflict between Hamad and Khalifa, which continued for half a decade, eventually forced the family to choose between the two men, as they certainly showed no signs of coming to a negotiated resolution to the distribution of powers.

The coup itself occurred while Khalifa was on a trip to Geneva. The *Washington Post* reported he was undergoing treatment for alcoholism there, while the Arab press, which treats these matters more circumspectly, nonetheless noted the inability of his entourage to say precisely where he was staying in Geneva at the time of the coup and immediately afterwards.<sup>31</sup> The shaykhs of the Al Thani were the first to give the *bay'a* to the new emir, foremost among them his brothers Abdallah and Muhammad. A few shaykhs were tardy in giving the *bay'a*, suggesting that they had reservations.<sup>32</sup> Foreign powers, Western and Gulf, raised nary an objection to the style of Hamad's removal of his father, recognizing at least implicitly the consensus of the ruling family—expressed in the ceremony of the *bay'a*—as the legitimate method of appointing Qatari rulers.<sup>33</sup>

### **The Aftermath of the Coup**

Hamad announced a new cabinet two weeks after the coup; it included, at ministerial rank, no fewer than thirteen members of the Al Thani (figure 5.7, see page 124).<sup>34</sup> The deposed emir did not take his deposition well. Like King Saud of Saudi Arabia after his expulsion from power in 1964, Khalifa circulated around Arab capitals trying to drum up support for his claim to the emirship, receiving a measure of support that arose, at least in part, out of irritation in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states over Hamad's maverick foreign policy. In February of 1996 some of Khalifa's supporters, part of a force of three thousand bedouin he had recruited as a private army during his reign, tried to make a coup against Hamad. The regime, which later claimed to have known of the effort beforehand, arrested a group of men at the Saudi-Qatari border.<sup>35</sup> The goings-on had little apparent affect on Hamad's control of Qatar,



**Figure 5.5** Shaykhs of the Al Thani in the 1989 Cabinet Shuffle

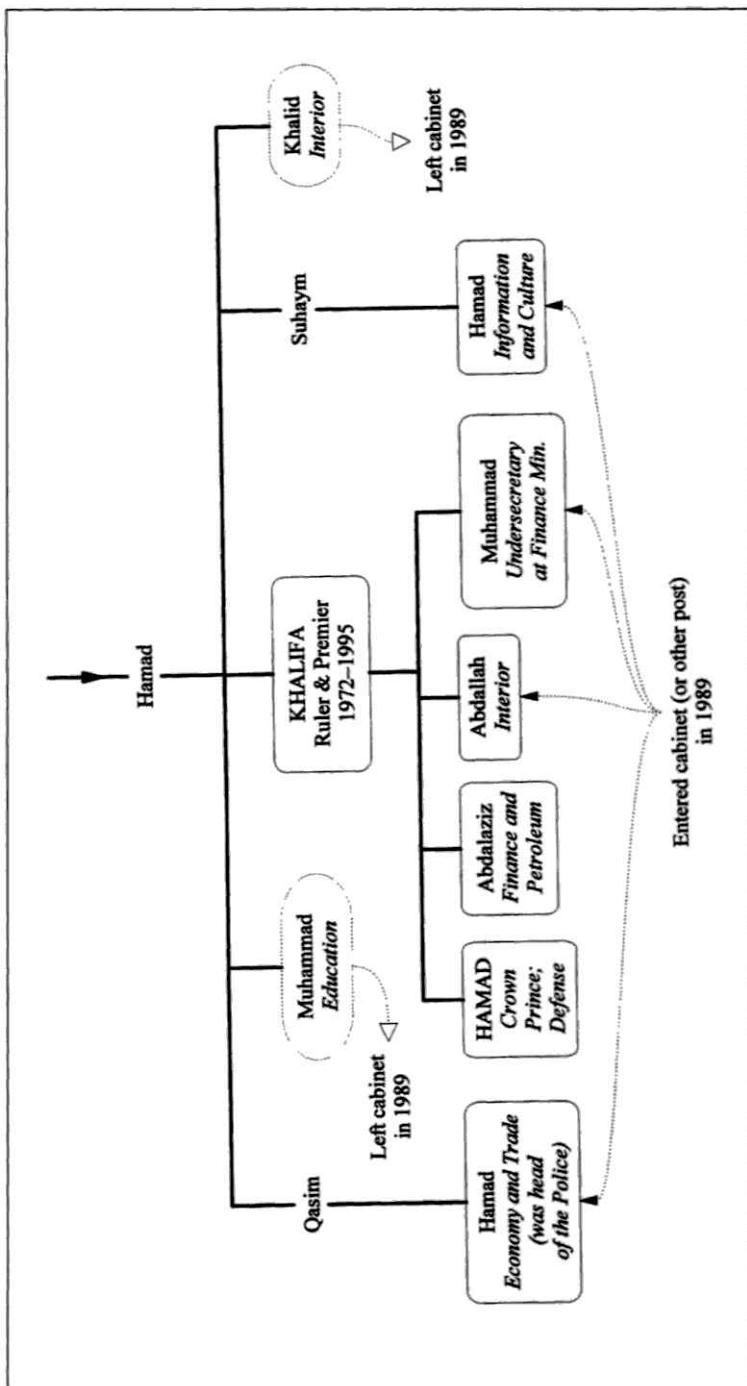


Figure 5.5 *Continued*

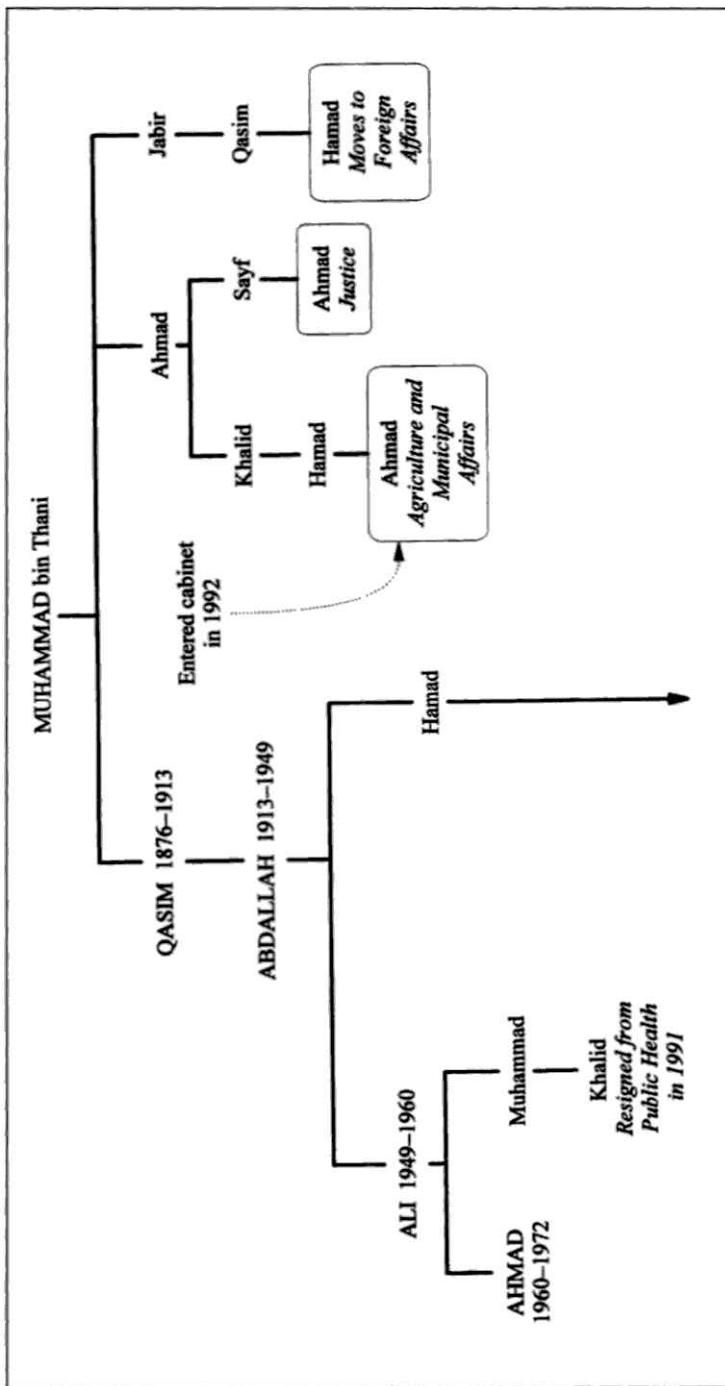
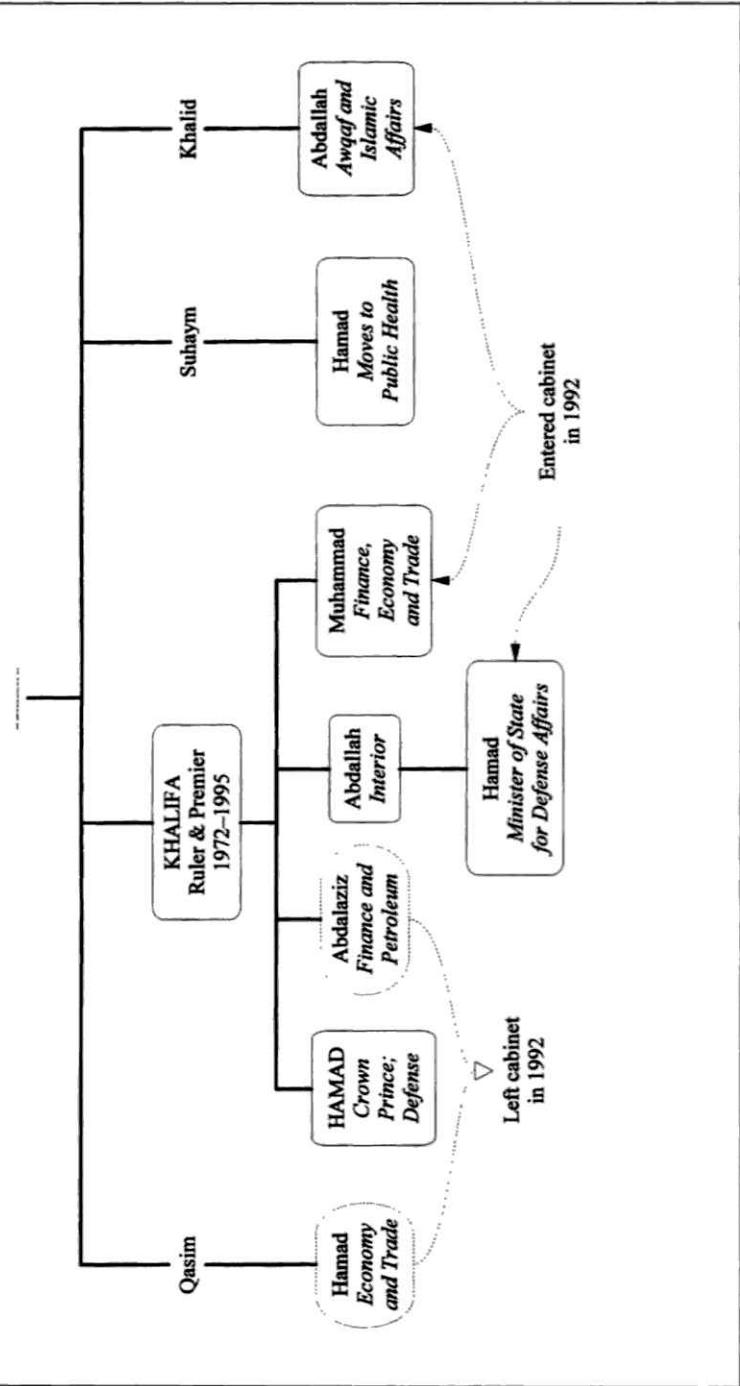
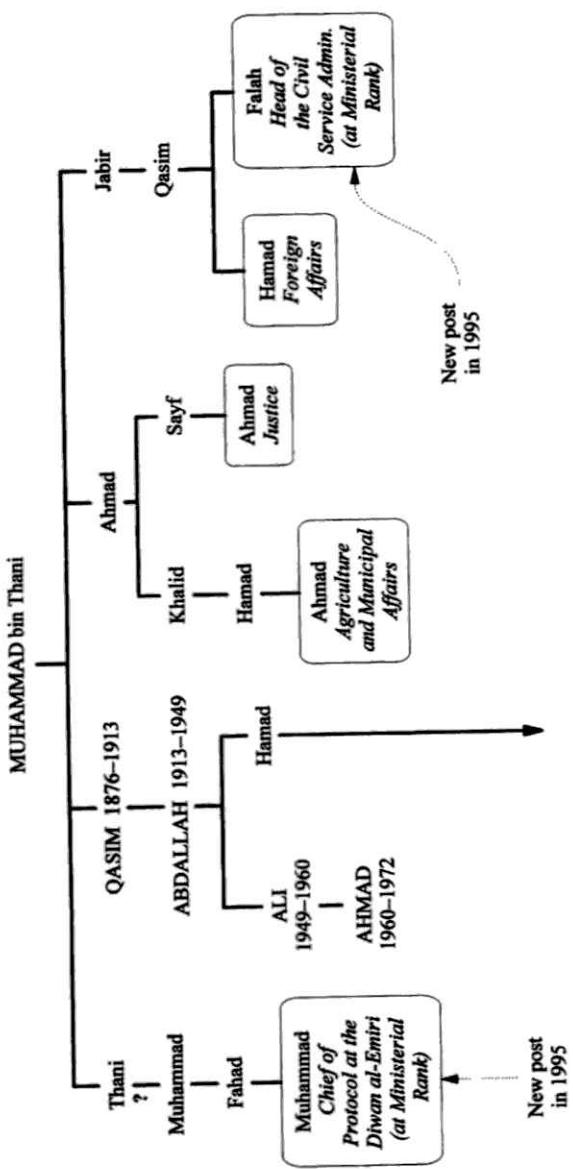


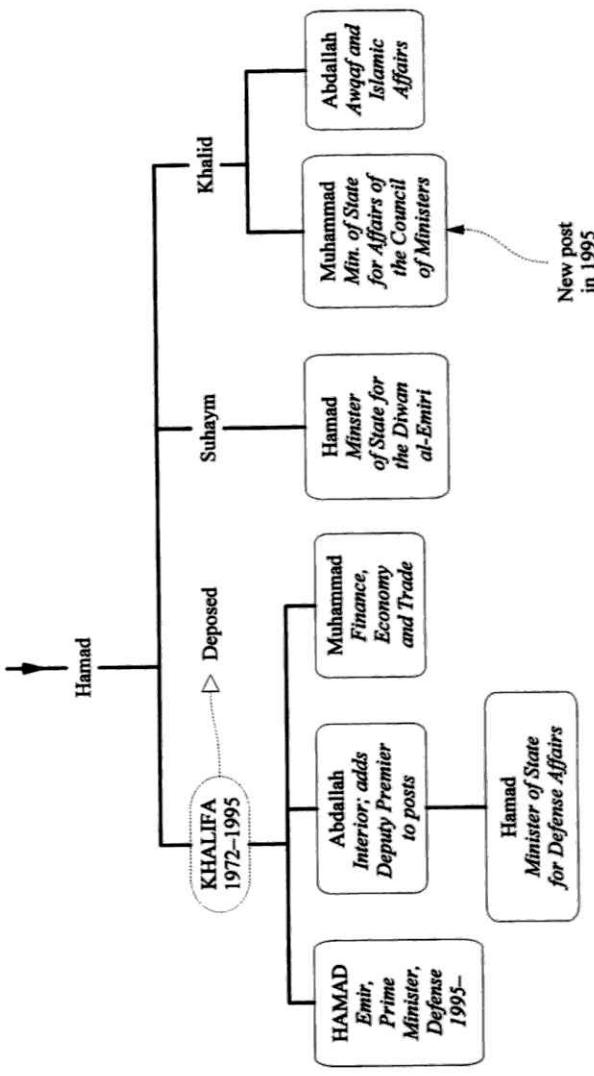
Figure 5.6 Shaykhs of the Al Thani in the 1992 Cabinet Shuffle



**Figure 5.6** *Continued*



**Figure 5.7** Shaykhs of the Al Thani in State Offices in 1995, after the Deposition of Khalifa



**Figure 5.7** *Continued*

and it appeared that the family coalition he had formed in the decade past both supported his rule and was firmly in charge of the Qatari state.

In October of 1996 Hamad, as part of a resolution of the conflict with his father (which had included a lawsuit to recover funds held by Khalifa abroad), announced a series of governmental changes. Hamad appointed his third son, Jasim, crown prince. This accorded with a change to the constitution announced soon after the 1995 coup, in which he announced that he had changed the constitution—something accomplished through emiri decree—to specify that the succession would go “from the father to one of his sons,” while it had previously only said that the succession would be within the Al Thani at large.<sup>36</sup> The new crown prince, while he is Hamad’s third son, is also the first son of his wife Moza, who has, by Gulf standards, an unusually public political role.<sup>37</sup> Jasim also graduated from Sandhurst, which enjoys a powerful cachet among the Arabian dynasties.<sup>38</sup>

At the same time, Hamad also bestowed the post of prime minister on his younger brother Abdallah.<sup>39</sup> This post had heretofore been held by the emir, and the appointment of Abdallah represented a further step toward the routinization of dynastic authority over the state. In decades hence, however, this separation of the authority of the premiership from the crown principeship may lead to succession problems: in Bahrain a similar separation exists and creates serious tensions within the ruling family.

Hamad’s new reign has also seen a major political liberalization in the emirate. Thus far this has resulted mostly in a dramatic freeing of restraints on the emirate’s press. Municipal elections are promised, and Hamad has made numerous verbal commitments to broader political participation. This liberalization appears to be part of an effort by Hamad to secure his authority after overthrowing his father: popular support supplements support from within the dynasty. More generally, the dispute between Hamad and his father powerfully demonstrates the resilience of the dynastic monarchies. Half a decade of family strife, and the deposition of the emir by his son, led only to a further entrenchment of the Al Thani in the Qatari state. The Al Thani completely dominate the Qatari cabinet, and intrafamily disputes show no sign of threatening dynastic monarchism in Qatar.

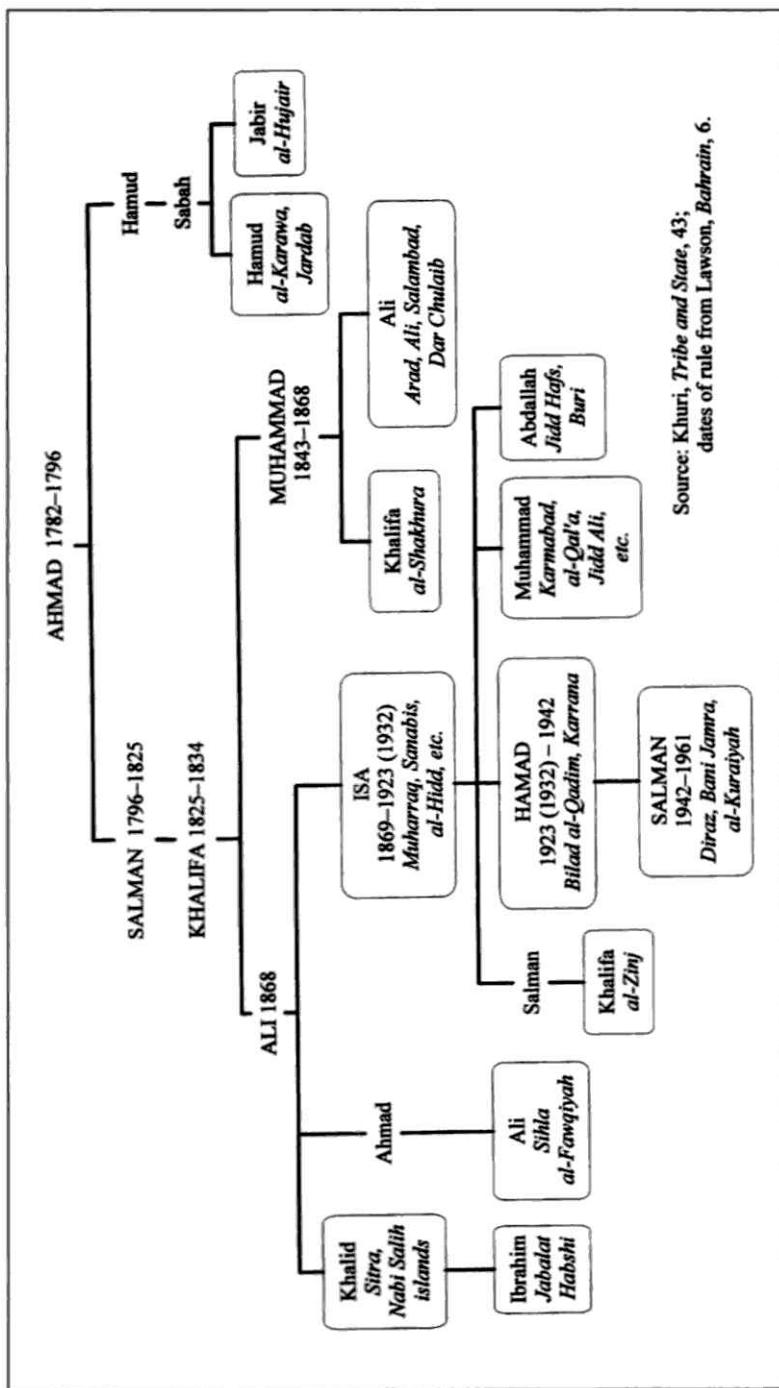
### **The Al Khalifa of Bahrain**

Pressure from outside the ruling family, rather than a succession dispute within it, led to the emergence of dynastic monarchism in Bahrain. While Qatari rulers gave positions to their relatives because they feared the wrath of unappeased shaykhs, Al Khalifa rulers gave posts to their relatives in an effort to avoid a surrender of power to the people. Thus the emergence of dynastic monarchism in Bahrain resembles the process in Kuwait—where popular pressure also had a role—far more than in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, or, as we shall see, the Emirates, or Oman. Dynastic monarchism in Bahrain is distinguished by another factor, something found in no other GCC state. Only in Bahrain does the constitution specify that the succession will pass by primogeniture. While this has not yet had any appreciable effect on the stability of the monarchy, it removes one of the key ingredients in the cohesion of dynastic monarchism.

### **The Al Khalifa and the Reforms of the 1920s**

The Al Khalifa relied on two chief sources of income before oil: taxes levied on trade and pearling, and agricultural income from date plantations. The customs receipts belonged to the ruler, though he tended to share them out with his relatives. The ruler distributed the date gardens among his family as fiefs, resumable, in theory and often in practice, on the death of their holder, and at the start of a new reign (figure 5.8). Each of the leading shaykhs had manorial rights on his estate and an armed retinue. The ruler's administration, such as it was, consisted of an adviser or two and a bodyguard. The other shaykhs had similar bodyguards, and at the turn of the century Lorimer reported that the family had 540 men, divided among the ruler, his brother, and his sons.<sup>40</sup> This led to a serious dispersion of authority among the shaykhs; the ruler often lacked the ability to impose his will on recalcitrant members of the Al Khalifa.<sup>41</sup>

In the Gulf monarchies the modernization of the rulers' administrations usually took place only after oil made possible a radical expansion in the activities undertaken by the state. Kuwait is something of an exception to this rule, for the merchants in 1938—before oil became the mainstay of the economy—institutioned major



Source: Khuri, *Tribes and State*, 43;  
dates of rule from Lawson, *Bahrain*, 6.

**Figure 5.8** Fiefs of the Al Khalifa at the End of the Nineteenth Century

reforms in the Kuwaiti state. Bahrain, however, is a greater exception, for the British decided in the 1920s to reform the Bahraini administration by fiat, against the wishes of the ruling family. Before the British could undertake their reforms, they had to gain control of the Bahraini administration. To accomplish this end the British selected a weak candidate for the shaykhship (the ruler's son Hamad) and installed him in power *despite* the protests of the ruling family.<sup>42</sup> While elsewhere in the Gulf the British avoided this, precisely because they did not want to have to prop up a weak ruler, in Bahrain, where they in fact wanted to rule more directly, the British installed a ruler who, lacking family support, would of necessity depend on aid from the Political Agency, and would in fact be a puppet.<sup>43</sup>

In the early 1920s the British modernized the Bahraini administration, reducing the autonomy of the Al Khalifa in their various fiefdoms.<sup>44</sup> The Al Khalifa did not take kindly to Daly's usurpation of what they perceived to be their right to chose the ruler, nor his destruction of their baronial autonomy. Hamad lacked even the support of his son Salman who, it was said, "has definitely thrown in his lot against his father, and is bitterly opposed to all idea of reform in the administration."<sup>45</sup>

Nonetheless within a few years the family accepted the inevitable and began cooperating with the ruler and with the British.<sup>46</sup> Abdallah, the shaykh who was set to succeed his father as ruler until the British stepped in and installed Hamad in his place, became the first Bahraini minister of education by 1930. In 1939 another shaykh, Hamad's cousin, returned from police training in India and took command of the police force. Other members of the Al Khalifa served as judges on the courts, a traditional shaykhly duty now considerably more institutionalized by the British. The British hoped to involve other shaykhs in more responsible jobs in the administration, but despaired of their lack of education and of desire to work.<sup>47</sup>

After the 1920s, and with Belgrave thoroughly in charge of the administration, the British ceased their direct interference in succession issues. When Hamad died in 1942 his son Salman took power with the support of the two senior shaykhs in the family, his uncles Abdallah and Muhammad. Even in the late 1930s, Abdallah—the shaykh the British passed over in favor of Hamad—had not surrendered his ambitions to rule. The public disturbances of 1938

owed something, at least initially, to efforts by Abdallah and Salman to seek support for their rival claims to the shaykhship. Yet, in the event, Abdallah did not make a bid for rule in 1942. Not at all surprisingly, however, he and his brother Muhammad wound up with by far the largest allowances among the Al Khalifa, apart from that of the ruler himself.<sup>48</sup>

### **The Fall of Belgrave and the Emergence of Dynastic Rule**

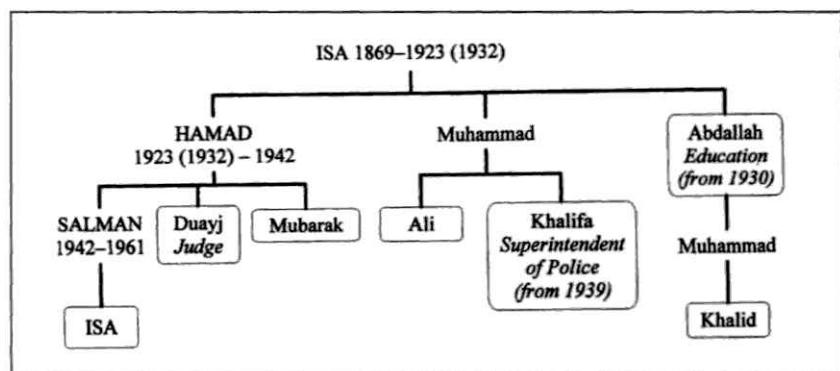
In the other Gulf monarchies the ruling families took over the state at its inception, so that the rise of the dynasty is coterminous with the rise of the petro-state. In Bahrain, by contrast, the British built the state—and ran it—for several decades before the emergence of an Al Khalifa dynastic monarchy. The de facto ruler of Bahrain in the decades between the mid-1920s and the mid-1950s was Sir Charles Belgrave, who held the position of the ruler's "personal secretary" and ruled as his *wazir*. Throughout the period the shaykhs of the Al Khalifa, while they held some posts, remained at least a step away from the center of authority, which was Belgrave's office.

In the mid-50s, however, Belgrave's rule faltered and then collapsed, destroyed by a Bahraini nationalist movement that protested pervasive British influence in the administration. The days of pacific direct rule by the British, even in a relative backwater like the Gulf, had come to an end. The prospect of Belgrave's departure (he did not actually leave until 1957) left the ruler with several choices: (1) he could bring the opposition into the regime through parliamentary institutions; (2) he could seek the support of his relatives and share power with them; or (3) he could try to rule alone, through the agency of men dependent on him personally. The first appeared to place his prerogatives, and even the monarchy, in jeopardy; going it alone would have alienated both the opposition and his family at the same time, also a risky course.<sup>49</sup> In a gradual way, over the course of the later 1950s, Salman drew on the support of his relatives.

Salman's turn to his relatives followed a brief effort to placate the opposition by offering its leaders a voice in the conduct of the administration. In 1955 the ruler agreed to hold elections to several independent committees which would have authority in the areas of health, education, and the municipalities: half the members of the committees would win their seats through election, while the ruler

would appoint the other half. The opposition won the elections for the first of these committees with 97 percent of the vote. Faced with this overwhelming display of support for the popular opposition, Salman seems to have decided to sabotage the committees. The opposition then boycotted the committees and they faded away. In late 1956, days after the attack on Suez and consequent anti-British rioting in Bahrain, the British and the Al Khalifa arrested the leaders of the opposition and put them on trial.<sup>50</sup> This ended any further efforts to create broader institutions of popular participation until a decade and a half later, after the Al Khalifa had definitively formed a dynastic regime at the top of the Bahraini state.

While the ruler continued to negotiate with the opposition, he took a first step toward institutionalizing dynastic control over the state, turning to his relatives in the face of demands to share his powers more popularly. He appointed three shaykhs, and three other government officials, to an Administrative Council whose task it was to supervise the departments of the state.<sup>51</sup> Early in 1957, not long after the trials of the leaders of the opposition, the ruler appointed three more shaykhs to the Administrative Council, bringing the representation of the Al Khalifa to six; Abdallah, the ruler's uncle and the second shaykh in the realm, chaired the council (figure 5.9).<sup>52</sup> In this council we find the origin of the Bahraini cabinet, for through the rest of the 1950s and 1960s—as its shaykhly element grew in prominence—the council gradually metamorphosed into a more and more cabinetlike body, until the ruler declared it as such at independence.



**Figure 5.9** Shaykhs of the Al Khalifa on the Administrative Council in 1957

At the end of the 1950s the shaykhs of the Al Khalifa, despite the institutionalization of dynastic control over the state in the Administrative Council, still held relatively few departmental directorates. After Isa bin Salman succeeded his father without incident in 1961, a number of shaykhs moved into the administration, and the Administrative Council increasingly took the nature of a cabinet. By 1965, with the appointment of Isa's brother Khalifa as finance minister and head of the council, the Bahraini dynastic regime took full form (figure 5.10).<sup>53</sup> In 1970 the Emir converted the Administrative Council into a Council of State and appointed his son to head the ministry of defense and a first cousin as minister of foreign affairs. Following independence Isa named another first cousin minister of the interior.

In the quarter century since independence no changes of any import have taken place in the key ministries because no one has died and family disputes have not led to the resignation or dismissal of cabinet ministers. The emir's brother, Khalifa bin Salman, is prime minister. The emir's son Hamad, who supervised the creation of the Bahraini army after independence, is commander-in-chief and heir apparent. He was also minister of defense until he turned that post over to a relative in the 1980s. Isa's cousins at foreign affairs and interior still hold their posts (figure 5.11).<sup>54</sup>

### **Primogeniture**

Alone among the Gulf ruling families, the Al Khalifa pass the succession according to a fixed rule. The constitution specifies that the eldest son of the ruler shall succeed him.<sup>55</sup> The system of succession by family consensus is the glue that holds the dynastic monarchies together, and that glue is missing in Bahrain. Yet shaykhs still dominate the state and assert a collective right to state offices. Primogeniture is words on paper, in Bahrain a clause in a constitution that the Al Khalifa do not show any great respect for otherwise. The surrounding states do not pass the rulership by primogeniture and the Al Khalifa operate in a regional milieu in which rulers cannot come to power without the consent of their families. Should a Bahraini emir attempt to remove his relatives from rule, or otherwise displease his family to the degree of a King Saud or an Emir Khalifa of Qatar, the constitutional provision that calls for primogeniture might prove weaker than the combined

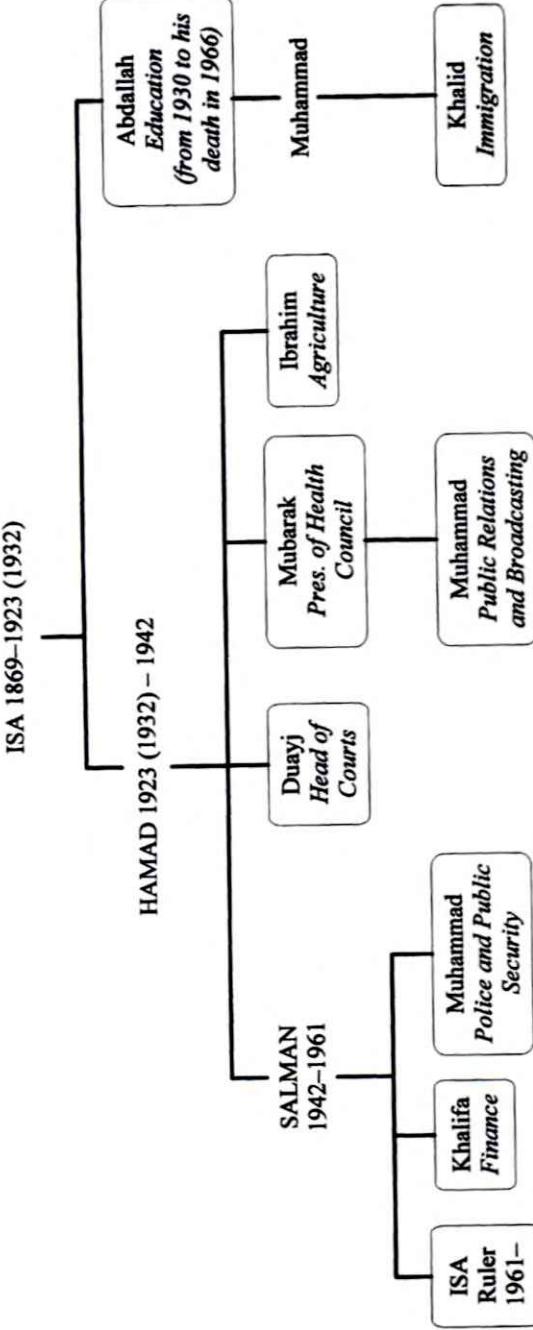
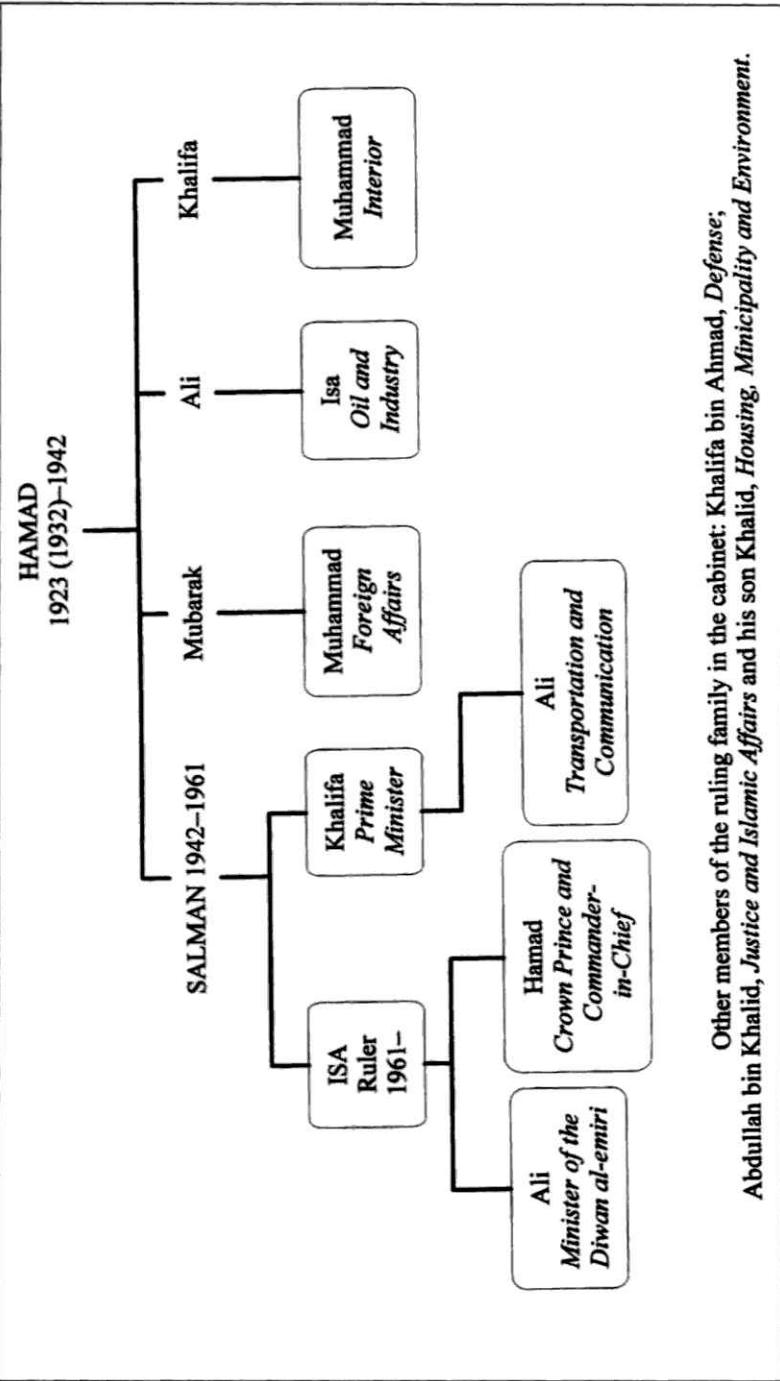


Figure 5.10 Shaykhs of the Al Khalifa in State Offices in 1965



Other members of the ruling family in the cabinet: Khalifa bin Ahmad, Defense; Abdullah bin Khalid, Justice and Islamic Affairs and his son Khalid, Housing, Municipality and Environment.

Figure 5.11 Shaykhs of the Al Khalifa in the Cabinet in mid-1998

weight of the ruling family united in a consensus that the emir should be deposed. The danger, however, lies in the prospect of a gradual erosion of dynastic presence in the cabinet, especially if a new emir should exert efforts toward the gradual displacement of his relatives from their positions: he, unlike other Gulf rulers, would not be quite so bound to his family, because he would not be obliged to make as many compromises to secure the rulership.

Thus far primogeniture has had no discernible effect on the Bahraini dynastic monarchy. The most recent succession, however, was in 1961, before the family settled on primogeniture. Yet there are some serious warning signs. The current prime minister, the emir's brother, has a great deal of authority, ruling while the emir reigns. In the other Gulf monarchies he would also be the heir apparent so that the death of the emir would reunite actual power and formal authority in the same person, as it will be when the current Saudi and Kuwaiti rulers die. In Bahrain, by contrast, the death of the current emir will bring to power his son who, if he wishes to wield the authority that his title gives him, would have to take it away from his uncle.

It is a point in Hamad's favor that he created the Bahraini army: in Afghanistan, where a cousin of the king overthrew the monarchy, it was the cousin and not the king who had spent his career in the army. Nonetheless the logic of the tension between the two still operates: in Bahrain the heir apparent and his uncle are said to have strained relations. The Bahraini opposition calls them "arch rivals."<sup>56</sup> They also disagree on fundamental policy issues: the prime minister takes a hard line toward the opposition, while the crown prince favors a more conciliatory approach.<sup>57</sup> Al Khalifa rule would be more stable if the posts of crown prince and prime minister were held by the same shaykh.

### **A Note on The Emirates**

The United Arab Emirates is a collection of seven separate principalities tied together into a confederation. This confederalism complicates the discussion of dynastic monarchism in the United Arab Emirates, for the federal cabinet is not, like those of the other GCC members, dominated by a single ruling family, but by seven of them. Yet the UAE is very much a confederation: power lies not at

the federal level but instead in the ruling families of the larger emirates, especially Abu Dhabi and Dubai. At this level—that of the individual emirate—the Al Nahayan of Abu Dhabi and the Al Maktum of Dubai have formed their own dynastic regimes.

The smaller emirates of the UAE, despite their best efforts and greatest hopes, have yet to strike enough oil to make themselves—or their ruling families—rich. Information is scarce on these emirates; none built a modern state before independence because none could afford to, and the ruling families could not take over a state that did not exist. Even today while Abu Dhabi and Dubai can afford to support a wide array of state institutions at the emirate level, including separate military establishments, several of the other emirates are not much more than villages living on the beneficence of the ruler of Abu Dhabi.<sup>58</sup>

### **The Al Nahayan of Abu Dhabi**

Dynastic monarchism emerged in Abu Dhabi virtually overnight in 1966, when shaykh Zayid of Abu Dhabi promised his relatives state offices in exchange for their support in overthrowing the ruler, who was at the time his older brother Shakhbut. Few of the posts that Zayid promised to his relatives actually existed in 1966, for Shakhbut had discouraged virtually all efforts at development despite the oil riches that started to flow into his coffers in 1962. In 1966 Zayid had a great advantage that allowed him to build his family coalition entirely on speculation: he and the rest of his family had the models of the other Gulf emirates and Saudi Arabia to imitate, not only in terms of hurtling Abu Dhabi into the modern world at a breakneck pace, but also in forming the ruling family into a ruling group at the pinnacle of the new bureaucratic state. The Al Nahayan, in 1966, did not have to invent dynastic monarchism, but instead could imitate what others had already built.

Shakhbut ran a central administration on very modest (but by now familiar) lines; he had no *wazir* even in the style of Mullah Salih, Abdallah Sulayman, or Abdallah Darwish. The important fief in his realm, the Buraimi (or Al Ayn) oasis, he parceled out to his brother Zayid, who ran it as “his own desert kingdom.” Shakhbut’s miserliness made him unpopular among his family and the tribes. When he spent money, he spent it on his sons, funding

their “carnal and alcoholic indulgences.” His parsimony with everyone else led to serious unhappiness among the shaykhs of the Al Nahayan, as well as to the emigration of important tribes out of Abu Dhabi, mostly to the (comparatively) greener pastures of Qatar.<sup>59</sup>

Zayid, like other Gulf rulers before him, sought the support of his family in removing Shakhbut, and on coming to power rewarded them with the most important state offices. Zayid’s family coalition in 1966 consisted mostly of the sons of his cousin Muhammad bin Khalifa (figure 5.12).<sup>60</sup> The prominence of this branch of the family dated from a succession struggle in the 1920s in which the succession went to Sultan, the father of Zayid and Shakhbut, rather than to Sultan’s brother Khalifa. Khalifa’s son Muhammad and his sons in turn were important shaykhs in Abu Dhabi throughout Shakhbut’s reign, retaining a residual claim on the rulership.<sup>61</sup> One had headed, or been a commander in, a weak police force under Shakhbut, while another governed Das island, the site of the oil company.<sup>62</sup> In return for their support in 1966 Zayid named no fewer than six of these cousins to important posts in the prospective administration. His coalition also included his brother Khalid, who was appointed deputy ruler after the coup. Zayid’s own son took over the Al-Ayn oasis. A day or two after the coup Shakhbut’s second son reportedly declared his support for Zayid from abroad.<sup>63</sup> The bandwagon had virtually everyone on it except Shakhbut and his eldest son. In addition to the distribution of posts, Zayid reversed the miserliness of his brother Shakhbut in handing out the oil wealth among the shaykhs of the Al Nahayan, and by 1970 they received, by one calculation, no less than 25 percent of the total revenues.<sup>64</sup>

The British supported Zayid’s coup and the Al Nahayan takeover of the new state. Shakhbut’s miserliness had not pleased the British, if only because it lessened the commercial opportunities available for British firms, which by this time was an important aspect of British policy in the Gulf. A British official in fact carried the message from Zayid and the other shaykhs of the Al Nahayan to Shakhbut asking him to surrender power.<sup>65</sup>

### **The Al Nahayan after the Takeover of the Petro-State**

In 1973, Abu Dhabi disbanded its cabinet, reverting back to a system of departments in an effort to strengthen the federal cabinet

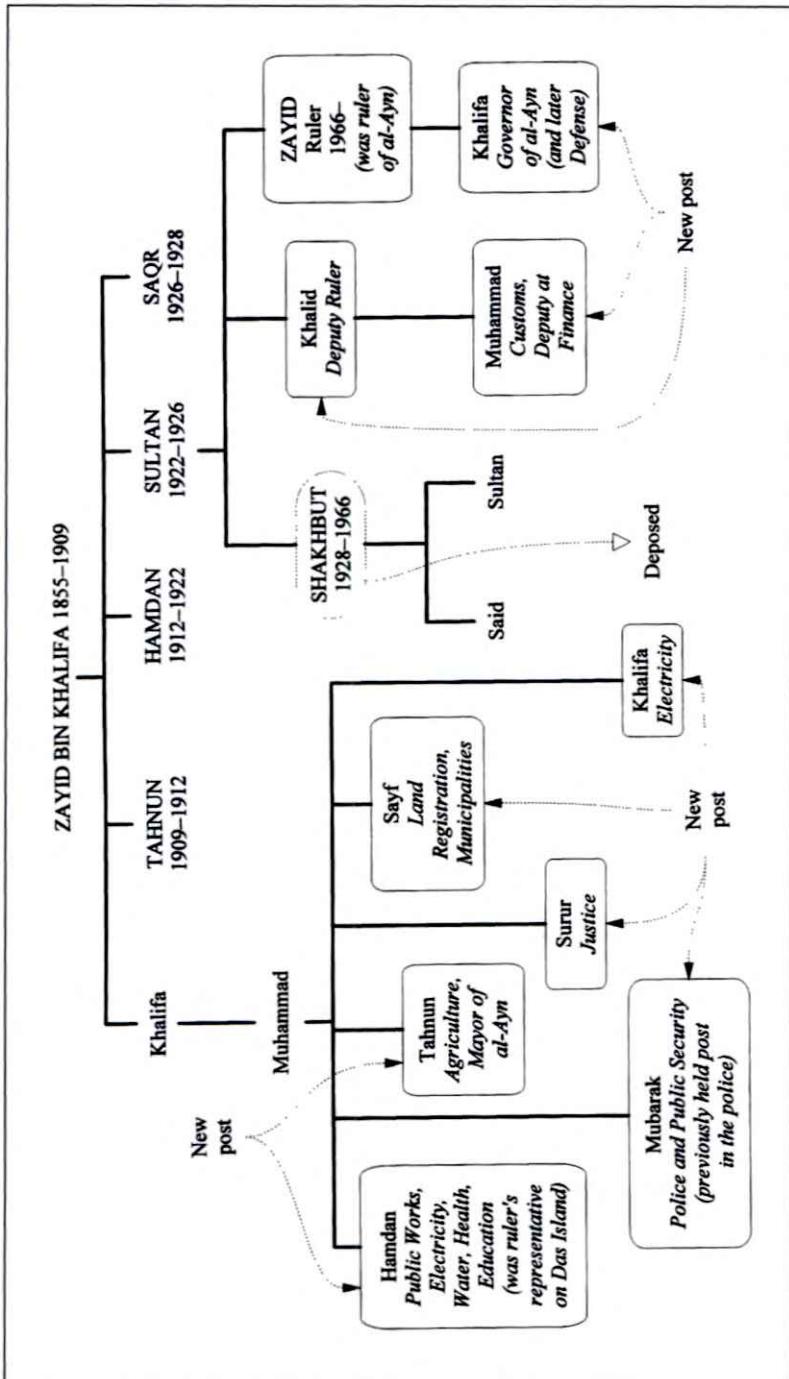


Figure 5.12 Shaykhs of the Al Nahayan Appointed to State Posts after the Deposition of Shakhbut in 1966

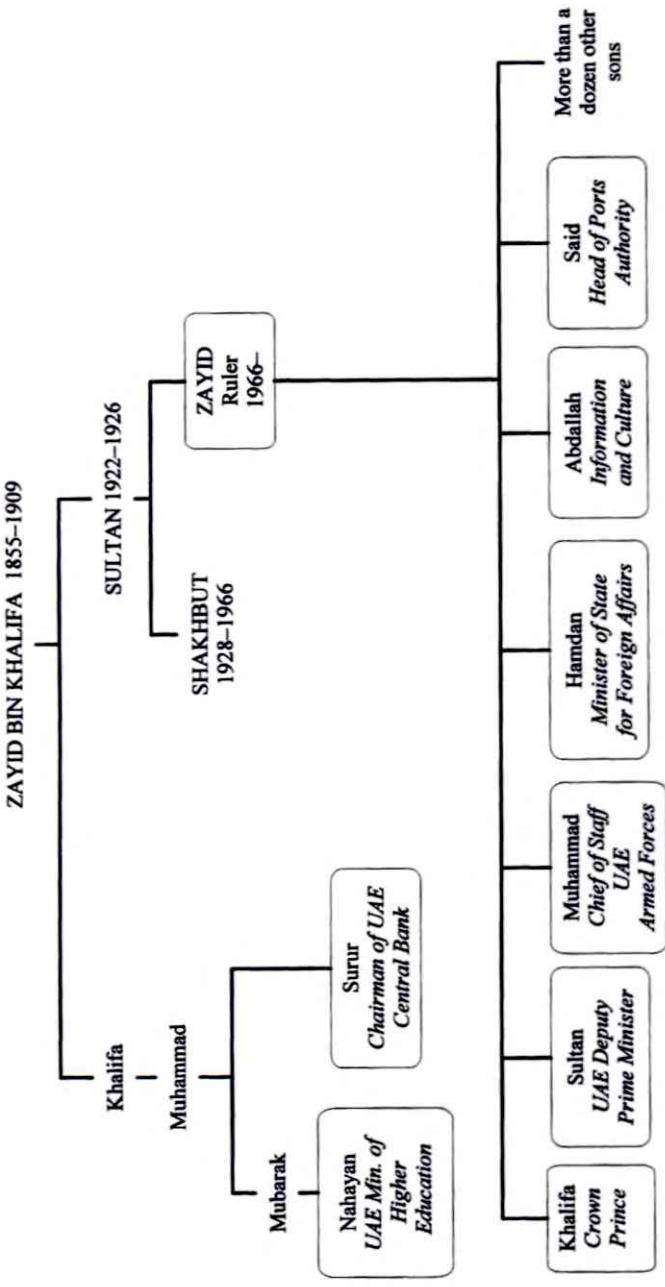


Figure 5.13 Some Shaykhs of the Al Nahayan in State Posts in the mid-1990s

of the newly founded UAE.<sup>66</sup> The Bani Khalifa—Zayid's cousins—had the most to lose from the Abu Dhabi cabinet's disbanding, and an observer says that the move was “bitterly opposed by the incumbent ministers, particularly those among the Ruler’s relatives.”<sup>67</sup> Nonetheless most of the Al Nahayan ministers received compensatory posts: three of the Bani Khalifa took up posts in the federal cabinet, one was named head of the Abu Dhabi national oil company, and a fifth received the title of “chamberlain to the presidential court.” Zayid continued to provide the Bani Khalifa with the other currency of intrafamily politics, liberal stipends.<sup>68</sup>

In the 1970s the shaykhs of the Al Nahayan who held positions in the Abu Dhabi or UAE governments were mostly of the Bani Khalifa, with the exception of Zayid himself and his crown prince and eldest son Khalifa; this created a certain imbalance within the family, as the line of succession was in a branch of the family numerically outnumbered in state institutions by the Bani Khalifa, the descendants of Zayid’s uncle. Yet Zayid, like several other Gulf potentates, has a penchant for siring children: he has, according to one count, twenty-four sons and twenty-two daughters.<sup>69</sup> While in the early 1980s none but the eldest, Khalifa bin Zayid, had an active role in politics, in recent years Khalifa’s younger brothers have moved into positions of prominence in Abu Dhabi and in the federal government (figure 5.13).<sup>70</sup> Zayid, born in 1908, is well advanced in age, and after his passing it appears very likely that his sons will share powers among themselves.<sup>71</sup> None will be able to individually fill the shoes (or sandals) of their father, for Zayid, like Ibn Saud, is a singular figure of immense charisma: his sons will routinize the authority he leaves them, on the pattern of the dynastic regimes throughout the Gulf.

### The Al Maktoum of Dubai

Dynastic monarchism emerged in Kuwait after the Al Sabah banded together to close the merchants’ *majlis* in 1938. A *majlis* also opened in Dubai in 1938, yet it differed dramatically from that in Kuwait. In Kuwait the *majlis* was an affair of the merchant notables, while in Dubai it was a conclave of a dissident faction of the ruling family, so that the Dubai *majlis* was far more of a ruling family proto-cabinet than a budding legislature. The rulers quashed both

*majlises*, but in Kuwait the family *as a group* emerged the winner. In Dubai, by contrast, the ruler and his immediate relatives routed the larger Al Maktum clan. The events of 1938 created dynastic monarchism in Kuwait, and defeated it (for several decades) in Dubai.<sup>72</sup>

In the years from Said bin Maktum's accession in 1912 to 1938 a number of his cousins had challenged his right to rule, and made several attempts to replace him (figure 5.14).<sup>73</sup> The struggle between the two factions went through a number of stages, the details of which I will spare the reader, until in 1938 the dissident shaykhs took over half of the town and forced the ruler to capitulate to demands for a *majlis* and reforms in the administration.<sup>74</sup> While in Kuwait the *majlis* was composed of merchants, in Dubai the fifteen members of the council (the "principal people in Dubai") were, it seems, all shaykhs of the dissident branch of the Al Maktum. In correspondence with the ruler they referred to themselves as the '*ailat al-hakima*, or ruling family.<sup>75</sup>

In March of 1939 the ruler's son Rashid married a woman of the ruling family of Dubai.<sup>76</sup> Many bedouin attended the festivities, and Rashid led them on an attack on the dissident branch of the family, some of whom were killed, others of whom fled to permanent exile in Sharjah.<sup>77</sup> The vanquishing of the dissident Al Maktum left the ruler, his wife, and their son Rashid in undisputed control of Dubai.

### **The Challenge from the Ruler's Brother in 1955**

In 1955 Said bin Maktum still lived, but his son Rashid conducted the affairs of state in his father's old age. Rashid's uncle, Juma bin Maktum, had sided with him in the 1930s, but in 1955 Juma with his sons mounted a challenge to Rashid (figure 5.15).<sup>78</sup> The British reported that Juma and his six sons

bedeviled and obstructed Rashid's administration and set his authority at naught, both internally and externally. They had threatened visitors to Rashid's Majlis, over-ruled the decisions of his courts, imposed their own system of taxation and issued title deeds for the purchase of land which were totally illegal. . . . Matters were brought to a head in early May when Juma threatened Rashid personally and

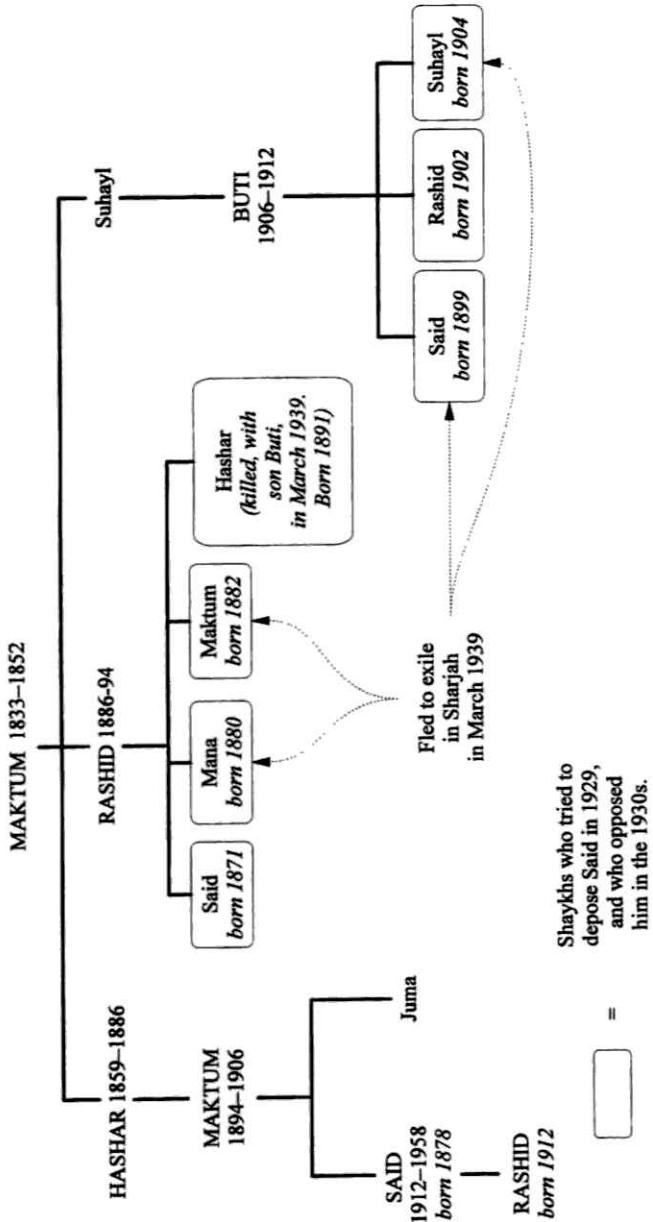


Figure 5.14 The Al Maktum in the 1930s

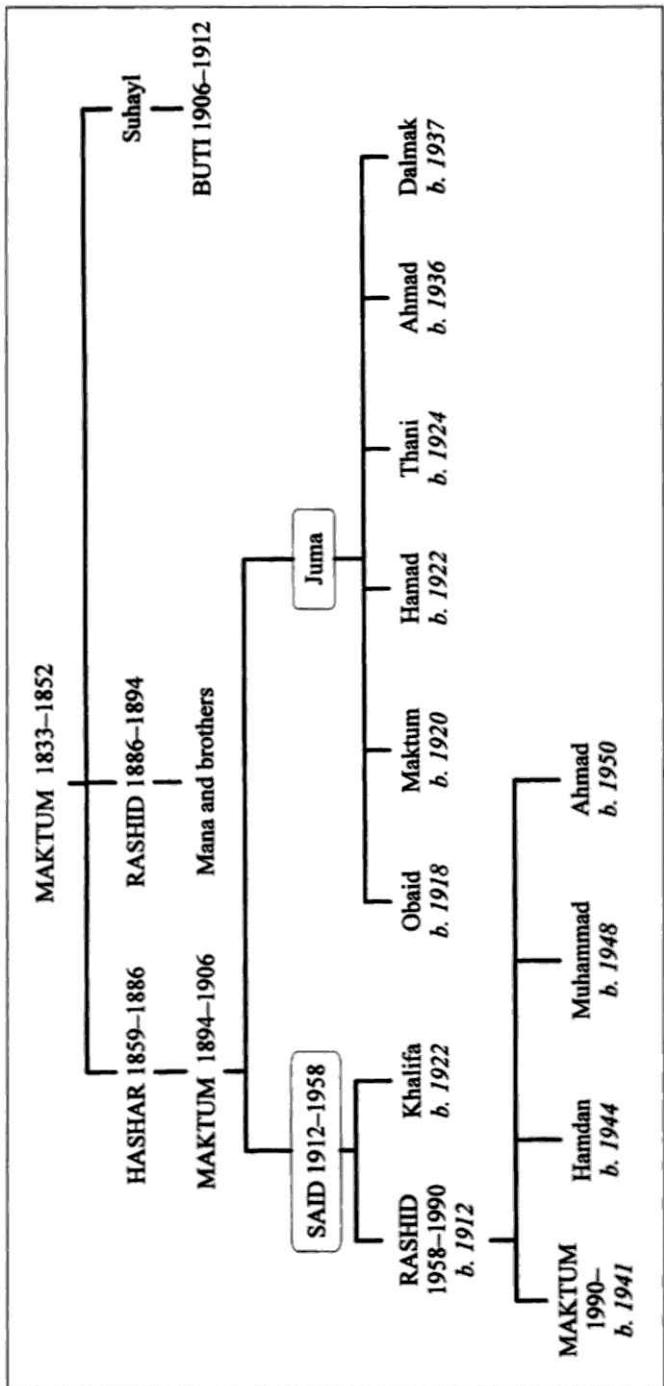


Figure 5.15 Said bin Maktum al Maktum, His Brother Juma, and Their Sons, in Dubai in 1955

presented him with a series of proposals which amounted to a demand that his faction should take control of the State.<sup>79</sup>

This amounted to the sort of usurpation of power common in the Gulf before the petro-state, in which a relative (or in this case a number of them) set up a parallel state and gradually took over the ruler's prerogatives. Juma enjoyed a position of strength in that he had six grown sons. Rashid's own eldest son was in his mid-teens in 1955, and he had only one brother, whom the British once described as a "non-entity." Yet Rashid—instead of reaching a deal with Juma and his sons—persuaded the British to send Juma into exile, an operation aided by mobilization of the British-controlled Trucial Levies on the outskirts of town. This secured Rashid's position and ended the challenge from Juma. Little stood in the way of Rashid's assumption of the rulership on his father Said's death in 1958.<sup>80</sup>

### **The Reign of Rashid and the Delayed Emergence of Dynastic Monarchism**

Following his father's death in 1958 Rashid resumed in earnest the administrative reforms that the *majlis* had started two decades earlier. He set up a municipality, imported a British officer to turn the ruler's guards into a proper police force, and began a program of civic improvements; all of these were the standard initial steps in the process of building a modern bureaucratic state in the Gulf. Even before oil made Dubai wealthy, from 1969, Rashid had effected a number of civic improvements, both by means of aid from other already rich Gulf states and through his enormous commercial acumen, which made Dubai into the premier entrepôt in the Gulf.<sup>81</sup>

Rashid had four sons, of whom the eldest was eighteen in 1958. As his sons matured Rashid placed them in the most important posts in the Dubai administration. In 1960 he appointed the eldest of his sons, Maktum, to head the land department, the office responsible for registering real estate (a position of some importance). He appointed his next son chairman of the Dubai municipality and head of the finance department; in following years the third headed the Dubai police. After the formation of the UAE federal cabinet in

1973 Rashid's sons took up various posts in the federal cabinet, in addition to their position in the Dubai administration. Ahmad, the youngest, served as UAE minister of defense for a period.<sup>82</sup>

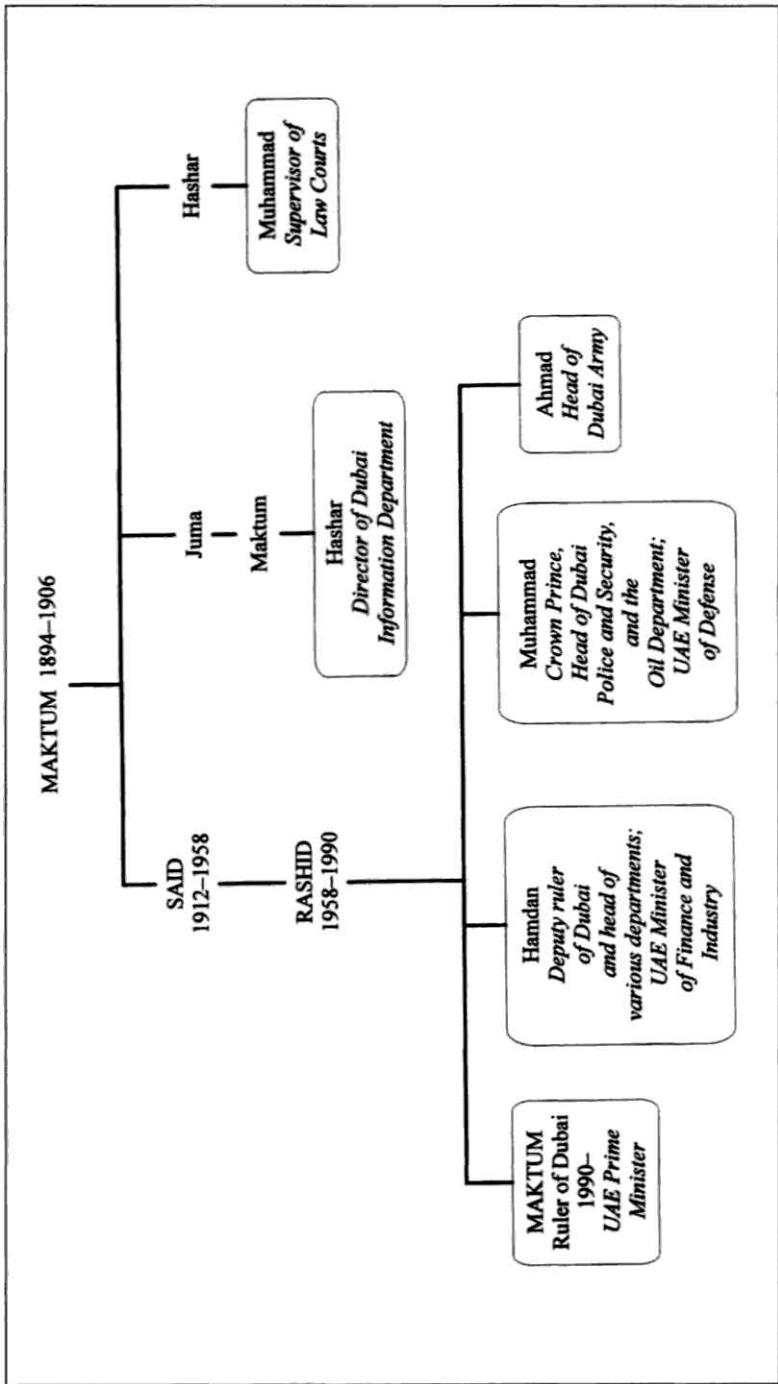
When Rashid died in 1990 his eldest son Maktum became ruler, yet Maktum, unlike his father at his accession three decades earlier, had to contend with three of his brothers who held important posts in the administration (figure 5.16).<sup>83</sup> In early 1995, five years after Rashid died (and presumably after extended intrafamily bargaining) Maktum appointed his brother Muhammad crown prince, and made another brother, Hamdan, deputy ruler. This division of duties reveals the political power of Maktum's younger brothers, who could ensure that the succession would pass among themselves, rather than to their nephew, Maktum's son.<sup>84</sup> Dynastic monarchies emerge out of bargaining among the members of the ruling family—while this bargaining did not occur in 1938 or in the 1950s, by the 1990s a bargaining process led to the emergence of mature dynastic monarchism in Dubai.

### **The Al Said of Oman**

Sultan Qabus, the ruler of Oman, holds more than a few posts in his own government: he is prime minister, minister of defense, minister of foreign affairs, minister of finance, and chairman of the Central Bank.<sup>85</sup> While the Al Saud rule Saudi Arabia, and the Al Sabah Kuwait, Qabus rules Oman. Dynastic monarchism involves a sharing of authority and state offices among members of the ruling family. Qabus has not shared much power, and thus Oman is not fully a dynastic monarchy.

The preeminent position of Qabus can be traced back to his assumption of power in the 1970 coup against his father, a coup he made with the support of Britons and non-Al Said Omanis, not at the head of an Al Said family coalition. Nonetheless, since 1970 Qabus has not made an effort to exclude his relatives from office (as did the kings of Libya and Afghanistan), but has given them important state posts. Thus Oman, while not a full-blown dynastic monarchy, nonetheless shares in most of the characteristics of dynastic monarchism.

The British interfered in the matters of the ruling family of Muscat more than in the affairs of any other ruling family in the

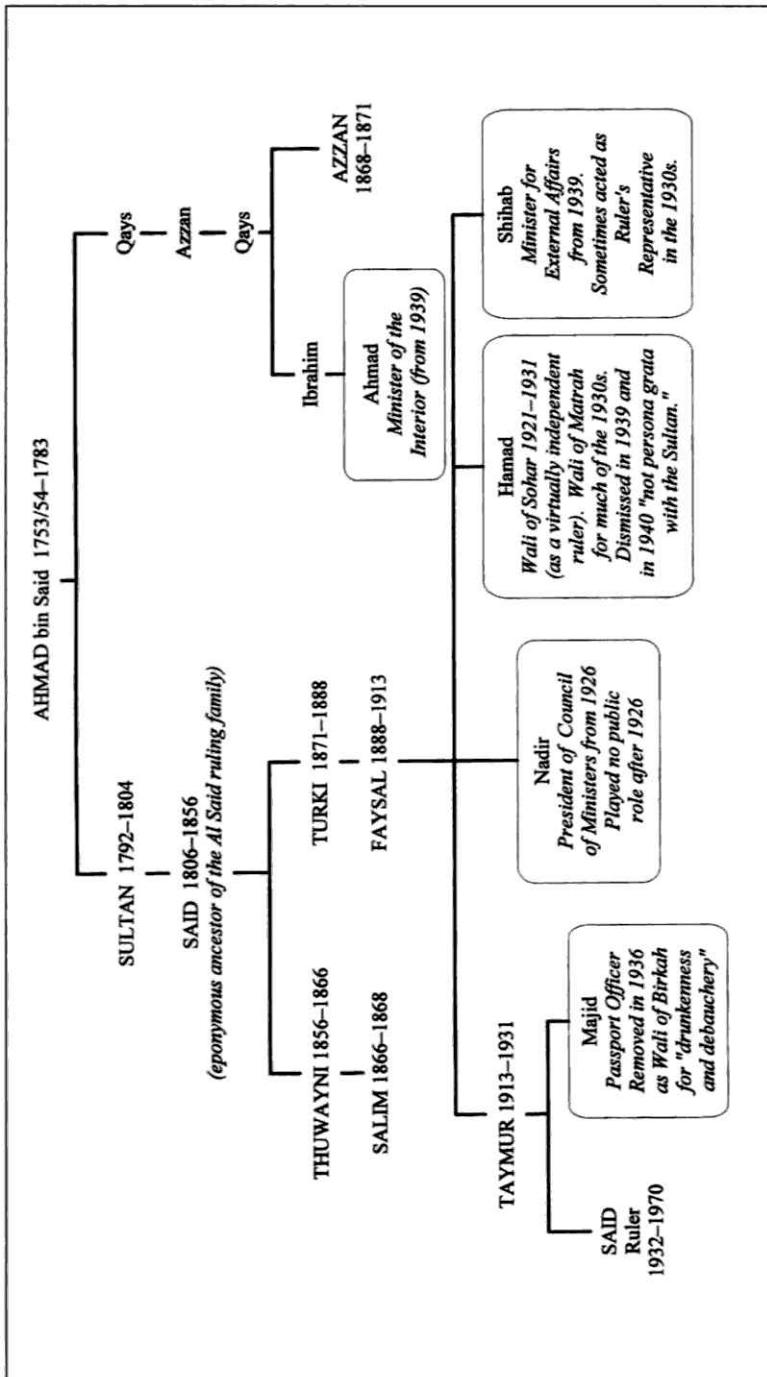


**Figure 5.16** The Al Maktum in the mid-1990s

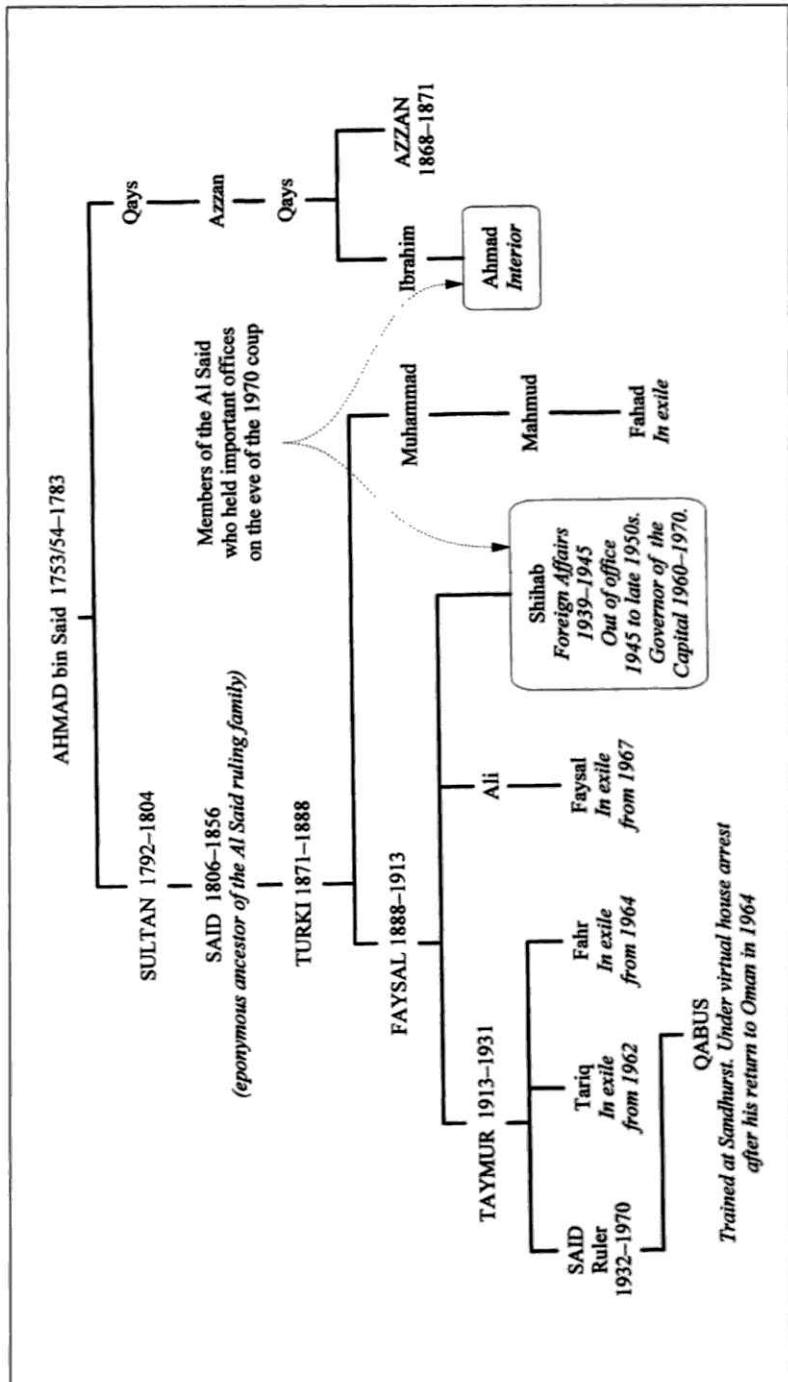
Gulf, with the exception of the Al Khalifa of Bahrain. In the nineteenth century, rulers in Muscat frequently appointed close relatives to govern provinces, a practice that predictably led to chronic rebellions against the ruler in Muscat by his relatives in the provinces. Yet in the first decades of the twentieth century the Al Said had lost control of most of the country outside of Muscat and the Batinah while at the same time falling under the influence of the British, who guaranteed the capital from attack from the hinterland. Increasing British involvement in Muscat soon brought them to the point of supervising the appointment and dismissal of sultans.<sup>86</sup> By the 1920s the British, having thoroughly involved themselves in the affairs of Muscat, took some steps to advance its administration, and in the process drew some of the sultan's relatives into positions in a somewhat reformed administration. In 1920 two of the ruler's relatives were appointed to a four-man government council. Nonetheless the British made the major decisions, and this body did not constitute the sort of family proto-cabinets seen in other Gulf states in later periods.<sup>87</sup>

When Said bin Taymur took power in 1932 he abolished the four-person council and replaced it with three departments directly subordinate to himself.<sup>88</sup> By 1939 the British observed that it was "doubtful if any of the Sultan's close relatives . . . have any influence, even in local affairs."<sup>89</sup> From 1939, and for most of the rest of his reign (which lasted to 1970) Said employed only two relatives in high posts in his administration. Ahmad bin Ibrahim, of a distant branch of the family, was the minister of internal affairs, and Said's uncle Shihab held various posts, governing the capital toward the end of the reign (figure 5.17).<sup>90</sup>

Ahmad and Shihab exercised authority in the name of the sultan and as his clear subordinates; members of the ruling family who showed any particular initiative or independence were chased out of the country by Said. Said's brother Tariq bin Taymur returned to Muscat in 1945 after completing a police training course in India; he briefly led the army, but departed the sultanate for exile in 1962. He subsequently announced plans to invade Oman from Iraq. Another brother, Fahr bin Taymur, went into exile in 1964, and several other relatives were also in exile by 1970. Said educated his only son, Qabus, at Sandhurst, but on his return to the sultanate in 1964 he placed him under virtual house arrest in Salalah (figure 5.18).<sup>91</sup> Perhaps most indicative of the ascendancy of Said over his



**Figure 5.17** Prominent Members of the Al Said of Oman in the 1930s



**Figure 5.18** Prominent Members of the Al Said on the Eve of the 1970 Coup

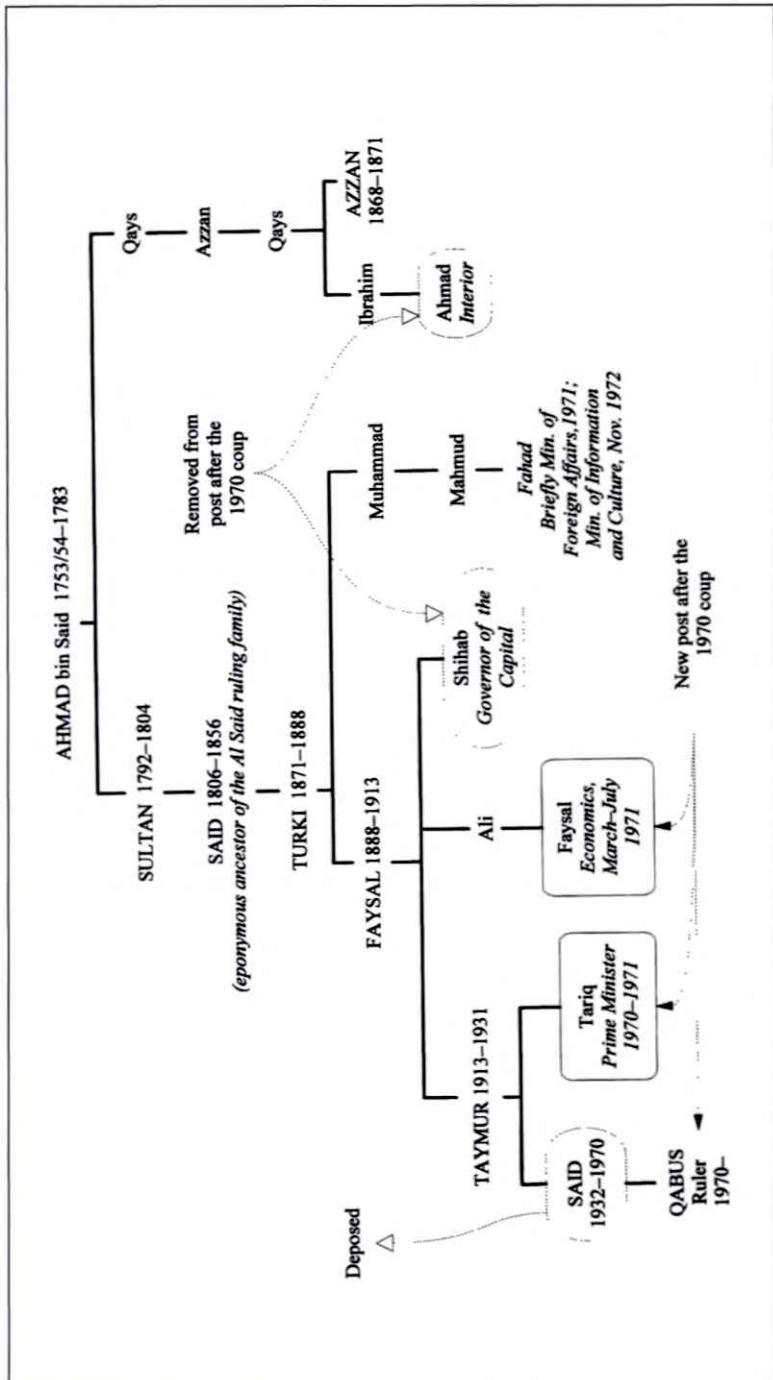
family is that the share of the ruling family's allowances in the budget fell from around a third in the 1920s and 1930s to all of 2.4 percent in 1968.<sup>92</sup>

To escape his family, and the threat it posed to his rule and to his person, Said spent most of his reign in Salalah, a town hundreds of miles south of Muscat on the Indian ocean coast. In the last twelve years of his rule Said lived permanently in Salalah, ruling the country by means of a wireless set; a select few with access to the wireless (and thus to the sultan) ruled the country under his instructions.<sup>93</sup> Without British support Said would have quickly lost control of Muscat to a relative; the British, however, ran the military and much of the administration and protected Said's position against any threats. With the state securely in British hands, and in Salalah far away from his relatives, Said could ignore their demands for money and position; when that did not suffice, he chased them into exile. Thus by 1970 the relations within the ruling house of the sultanate clearly had taken an entirely different turn from those of the other ruling families of the Gulf. While other pre-oil Gulf rulers barred their relatives from participation in their administrations, none came even near Said's accomplishments in fracturing and weakening the dynasty; the best comparison, indeed, is to King Idris of Libya.

### The 1970 Coup

Qabus made his coup against his father with the help of British expatriates and nonroyal Omanis. No members of the ruling family, apart from Qabus himself, participated. They were in exile and out of the political picture; Qabus *never met* his uncle Tariq before the 1970 coup, so thorough was his father's success in dividing the Al Said.<sup>94</sup>

Following the coup several of Said's British advisers, who had not been in on the coup, lost their positions, along with Ahmad bin Ibrahim and Shihab bin Faysal. In their stead Qabus relied on a mix of British expatriates, members of the ruling family, a few other Omanis, and Arabs from outside Oman. Members of the ruling family did not flood into positions in the state as they had in the wake of other depositions in the Gulf monarchies, and little evidence showed the sort of bargaining among the family that accompanied those depositions.<sup>95</sup> Qabus's uncle Tariq was the main entrant



**Figure 5.19** Members of the Al Said in the Cabinets after the 1970 Coup

of the Al Said into the cabinet: he returned from exile in Germany and took up the post of prime minister. By 1971 Tariq, however, was out of the cabinet, victim of pervasive misunderstandings with Qabus, who might have found Tariq's presence useful, but not necessary (figure 5.20).<sup>96</sup>

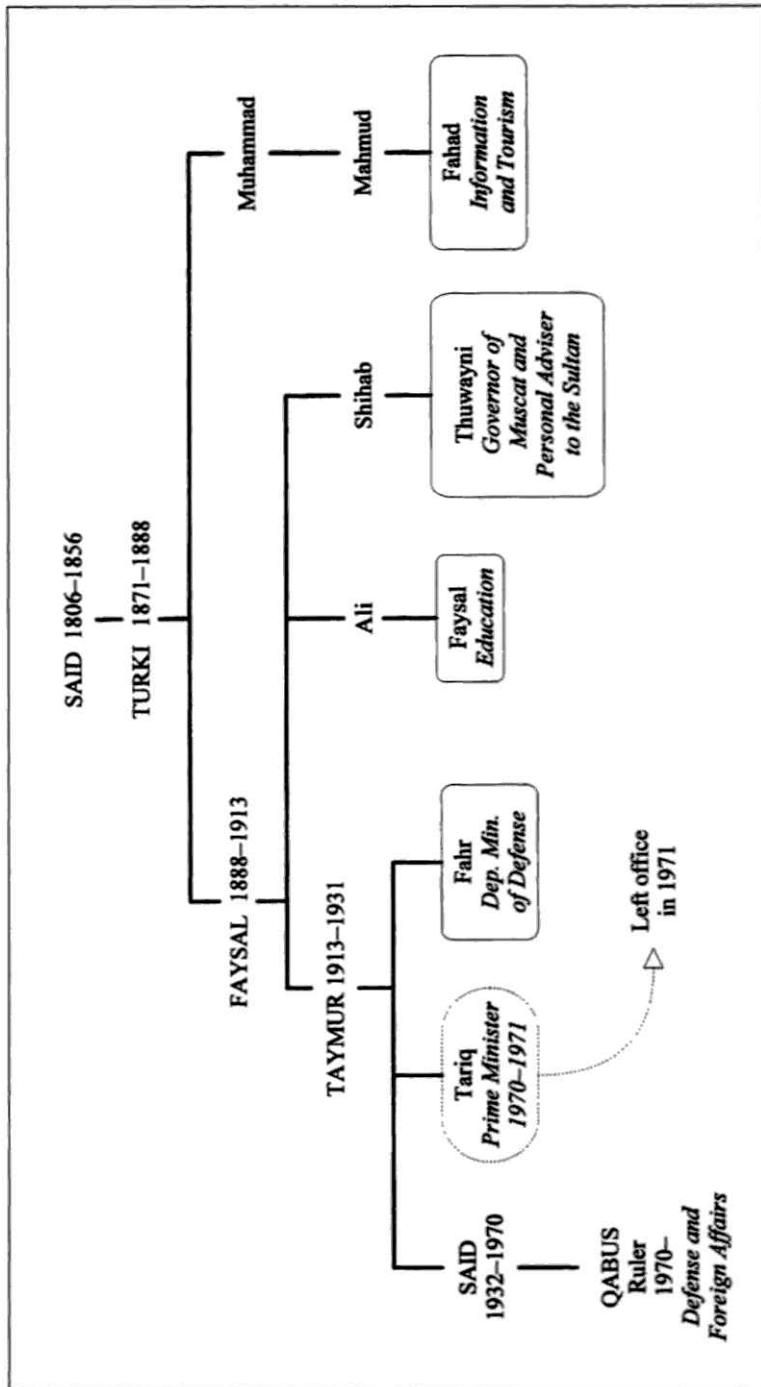
By the time he appointed a new cabinet in 1974, however, Qabus had begun to place an increasing number of relatives in state posts, including an uncle and some cousins, among them the son of Shihab bin Faysal, the former governor of the capital. This cousin, Thuwayni bin Shihab, was in Qabus's inner circle, though he shared this distinction with a number of others, including Arabs from outside Oman, Britons, and an American.<sup>97</sup>

In the late-1990s the cabinet included a number of members of Al Said, giving it a resemblance, at least on the surface, to the cabinets of its fellow GCC members (figure 5.21).<sup>98</sup> Yet Qabus himself occupies the lion's share of the key cabinet posts, and several men not of the ruling family have key positions in the government. The regime itself appears much more oriented toward one man—Qabus—than dominated by the ruling clan.

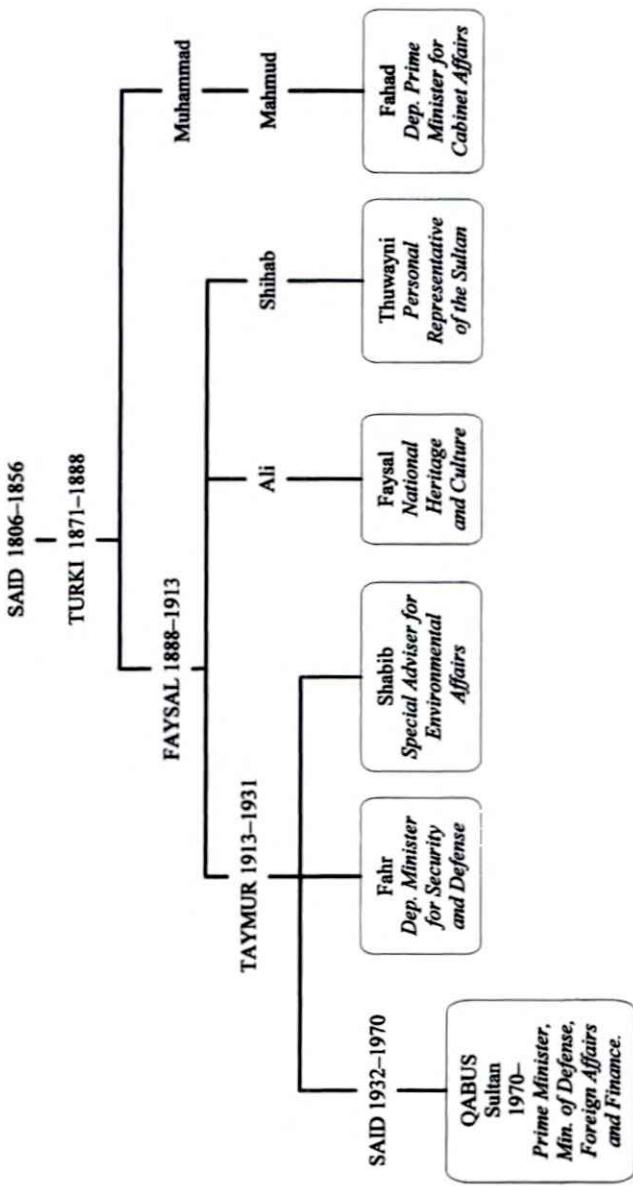
Qabus has sired no children, and displays no inclination to do so in the future. The Basic Law issued in 1996 specified that the royal family would meet and choose a successor: in addition, Qabus has also said that he has written down the names of two possible successors, in descending order, and placed them in sealed envelopes in two different places in the Sultanate.<sup>99</sup> His hesitance in declaring his choice openly can reasonably be assumed to grow out of a concern that an appointed predecessor would become, in his own lifetime, a potential competitor. The relatives that Qabus has placed in positions of power do not quite dominate the state in the style of the Al Saud, the Al Thani, or the Al Maktum, but they do have considerable authority. It seems at least possible, and perhaps even likely, that something akin to dynastic monarchism may emerge when Qabus departs the scene.

### Variations in the Capture of the Petro-States by the Dynasties

The Gulf states did not all follow the same path to dynastic monarchism, though in several key respects the process worked similarly in all of them, and in all except Oman the end result is clearly



**Figure 5.20** Members of the Al Said in the 1974 Cabinet



**Figure 5.21** Members of the Al Said in the Cabinet in July 1996

identifiable as a particular and distinct sort of monarchical regime. This type of monarchical institution is one different in quality from the variety of monarchy in which the king rules alone, without his relatives, or from the type in which the king rules surrounded by an aristocracy that represents the heads of a number of separate lineages.

The emergence of dynastic monarchism featured, in most cases, a king or emir who attempted to rule in the style of his forebears, with a modest administration and without his relatives in posts in the central administrations. Often this ruler was replaced—or had his powers curbed—by another member of his family who took advantage of the enormous expansion of the bureaucratic state to build a countercoalition in his family by distributing these posts to his relatives.

Bahrain and Oman differ from the general pattern, and it is not at all coincidental that the British involved themselves in dynastic politics far more in these two principalities than elsewhere in the Gulf. In Bahrain the ruler appointed his relatives to positions in the state under pressure from the opposition more than from within the family itself. In Kuwait, too, popular pressure had a role in the emergence of dynastic monarchism, but in Kuwait we see more clearly the emergence of a family coalition against the ruler, in tandem with the merchant's *majlis*.

Oman differs even more from the general pattern. Said, Qabus's father, chased most of the active members of his family into exile, and when Qabus made his coup in 1970 he did so with the aid, in the first instance, not of his relatives but of British expatriates and Omanis from outside the ruling clan. Thus he did not begin his reign at the head of a family coalition, though he later brought a number of his relatives into state posts.

After the construction of the petro-state and the emergence of dynastic monarchism, we find a number of instances in which disputes within the dynasties have led to coalition building and to the induction of additional members of the ruling families into posts in the state. In Kuwait in the 1950s, in Saudi Arabia in 1964, in Qatar in 1972 and 1995, large family coalitions have formed on the basis of the distribution of offices to dozens of family members. In Qatar, with the most disputations of the ruling dynasties, conflicts have led to a cabinet with a high proportion of shaykhly members.

In all of these cases we find evidence of bandwagoning among the ruling families. A bandwagon, of course, does not include everyone, and we find dissidents. Yet when the family has resolved its conflicts through a deposition, or by curbing the power of a dissident shaykh, it has done so by building a coalition that the loser cannot challenge, and we find no instances of anything but the most abortive efforts by losers to challenge, by violent means, a winning coalition.

In both the emergence of dynastic monarchism and in the family struggles that have led to the further entrenchment of the dynasties in the states, the succession mechanism of family consensus has been the key to the internal dynamics of the families. Rulers and aspiring rulers need to construct family coalitions to gain and keep power, and to do this they distribute posts to their relatives. Counter to what is commonly thought of these monarchies, the indeterminacy of the succession rule is not a threat to the power of the dynasties, but instead the indispensable mechanism that keeps them in power. Similarly, disputes over power within the dynasties, so threatening to their political hegemony at first glance, are instead necessary to their survival, for it is through these disputes that coalitions are built and members of the family appointed to offices in the state.

Nowhere in the dynastic monarchies, with the exception of Kuwait in 1986, has opposition from *outside* the ruling families interacted in a strong manner with intrafamily conflicts—though the emergence of dynastic monarchism in Kuwait and Bahrain occurred in tandem with popular pressure against the ruler. In the next chapter I will turn to opposition movements and the strategies that the dynasties have adopted toward their critics, strategies which differ in their content far more than do the institutions of dynastic monarchism.



## **Strategies of Regime and Opposition in the Dynastic Monarchies**

The dynastic monarchies of the Gulf are of a type, sharing a distinct sort of political regime that operates according to a common dynamic. Yet in the relationship of the ruling family to the rest of society we find great variation across the monarchies. In Kuwait we find elections, a parliament, a relatively free press, and a style of politics that might be called consensual. In Bahrain we find, at the other extreme, absolutism: a dynasty that rules its country as its own fief and against the vehement and sometimes violent opposition of many of its subjects.<sup>1</sup>

These differences in the relationship of the regimes with their oppositions are not a crucial part of the dynamic of politics within the ruling families, at least thus far, and consequently are not a key element in the explanation of how these regimes have survived. That is to say, dynastic monarchy in its malign form in Bahrain proves—thus far—as stable as its more benign counterpart in Kuwait.

No opposition strategy yet devised has led to the fall of a dynastic monarchy. Thus there is an argument for making this chapter

very short, and moving on. Yet there are also reasons for examining in some detail the strategies of regimes and oppositions. The regime strategy of absolutism, while it has proven safe in the past, may not remain so indefinitely. Opposition to the regimes could increase, or groups previously loyal, especially in the military or security forces, might waver in their loyalty. Despite their refusal to liberalize, most of these regimes have, thus far, attempted to soften the burden of their absolutism by making limited concessions. The nature of the dynasties' rule makes it somewhat easier for the regimes to attract support than is the case among more conventional sorts of monarchies: the dynasties consult with their subjects, and the dynasties can constrain the more egregious mistakes of their monarchs. Thus far, with the possible exception of Bahrain, these regimes have not become mere engines of repression.

It is, however, also the case that an increase in the level of opposition, and a repressive response, could strip the dynasties of the various degrees of active or tacit support they now enjoy, and expose them to dangers they have not so far faced. History provides copious examples of unrepentant authoritarianisms surviving for long periods of time, long enough to put paid to any idea that all regimes must benefit from widespread legitimacy to survive. Yet at the same time such regimes cannot last indefinitely, and often they end in a sanguinary explosion. If in the future a sustained policy of absolutism proves untenable, *it is of great importance whether or not the dynasties have a viable alternative strategy in liberalization.* It is this question that is the main concern of this chapter.

## Kuwait

Since independence Kuwaiti politics have displayed a civility, absence of violence, and relative openness that is—or ought to be—the envy of its neighbors.<sup>2</sup> No organized group in Kuwait expresses a desire to overthrow the monarchy, or to employ violence to change the status quo. There is in Kuwait today no threat of a revolution from the armed forces, from political Islam, nor from any other quarter.

Can we attribute this to the liberal strategy of the Al Sabah? One way to answer this is to compare Kuwait with its neighbors. Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, which lack parliaments, have seen con-

siderable opposition directed at their regimes, some of it violent, and there is reason to believe that in both cases opening a parliament might redirect some of this opposition in a more peaceful direction. In Oman the regime recently uncovered a coup conspiracy aimed at overthrowing the monarchy. Yet in Qatar and the UAE the regimes have experienced little overt opposition, despite the lack of political participation, and this is not attributable to a simple lack of opportunity to express dissent. It is thus not possible to argue that *only* a parliament can prevent the emergence of a serious antiregime opposition in Gulf monarchies. Yet by no means does this foreclose the possibility that the consensuality of Kuwaiti politics is attributable in large part to the parliament.

There is, however, another explanation—apart from the parliament—for the relative stability of domestic politics in Kuwait: fear of Iraq. The Al Sabah, who have ruled Kuwait for better than two hundred years, provide a powerful symbol of Kuwaiti independence, a fact widely recognized by Kuwaitis of all political stripes. Since virtually all Kuwaitis have a direct and strong interest in the survival of their country it may be that they refrain from outright opposition to the Al Sabah because anything that weakens the position of the ruling family weakens the sovereignty of the emirate.

The real importance of the Iraqi threat, however, lies not in giving Kuwaitis a reason to put up with their ruling family, however despotic, but instead because it increases the value of a power-sharing compromise for both the Al Sabah and the opposition. That is to say, the Iraqi threat gives the opposition a reason to moderate its attitude toward the Al Sabah, but it does not cause the opposition to simply roll over in the face of Al Sabah autocracy. By the same token the Iraqi threat gives the Al Sabah a reason to share power with a parliament, but not to simply give it all away.

Often a foreign threat gives an authoritarian regime an excuse to demand a closing of ranks and an end to any expressions of opposition. In Kuwait, because it is so small and defenseless, the Iraqi threat produces a different effect. The Al Sabah are fully aware that Kuwait cannot hope to defend itself against Iraq. The foreign powers upon whom Kuwait must rely for its defense—the United States, other Western nations, and other Arab regimes—protect the emirate out of considerations of *realpolitik*, to deny Iraq the prize of Kuwait's oil fields. These countries, though, find it easier to defend Kuwait (and the Iraqis have a more difficult time

finding an excuse to invade it) when the Kuwaitis present a united face to the world, and when the Al Sabah can claim popular support. In the parliament the Kuwaitis can express their lack of desire to be ruled by Iraq (without it they could not do this clearly or convincingly) and the parliament allows the Al Sabah to claim that they are not merely retrograde absolutists, but enlightened dynasts willing to allow some popular participation in rule.

We find much evidence that many Kuwaitis—though certainly not all, and in the past not clearly a majority—predicate their support for the Al Sabah on the condition that there be elections and a parliament convened under the 1962 constitution. A Kuwaiti author, in a book published shortly after liberation, put it thus:

There are deep-rooted rules which govern—or ought to govern—the relationship between the ruler and the people. First and foremost there is the fact, clear to all, that the maintenance and support of the ruling family is the best option, for there is no one who wants to change the regime. . . . The logical conclusion that we must derive from this fact is that it is necessary that the ruling family feel secure, for there is no internal threat to the regime and there has never been such a threat at any time in the history of Kuwait. This feeling of security, which it is necessary that the ruling family have, must be used in the interests of the people. Public service does not mean only the distribution of amenities, but instead adherence to the type of government provided for in the constitution without any attempt to overturn it or to rob it of its meaning.<sup>3</sup>

The book closes with what amounts to a direct caution to the Al Sabah that further autocracy on their part would lead to instability, and that “We want the ruling family to realize that if society—today—is unstable, the future will be extremely uncertain.”<sup>4</sup>

### **Designing Political Institutions: The 1962 Constitution**

The Kuwaiti constitution of 1962 provides a powerful counter-argument to any assertion that monarchic and popular authority do not mix because monarchical institutions are not flexible enough to encompass both dynastic and popular modes of authority. The

proceedings of the constitutional convention, summarized in Muhammad al-Jasim's 1992 book, offer a fascinating insight into how determined constitution writers can modify institutions developed in other times and places in a way that suits existing political arrangements and the distribution of power in their own societies. In Kuwait it was necessary to accommodate dynastic monarchism in a semidemocratic monarchical constitution. In certain respects the drafters of the constitution borrowed the institutions of twentieth-century parliamentarism from Europe and reverse engineered them back to their nineteenth-century forms, sharing authority between the monarchy and the parliament.<sup>5</sup>

The 1962 constitution makes the cabinet responsible to the emir, not the parliament. The parliament can, however, vote its lack of confidence in *individual* ministers (excepting the prime minister) but not the cabinet as a whole.<sup>6</sup> The drafters of the constitution devised this compromise to overcome the objections raised by the Al Sabah, and specifically shaykh Sa'd al-Abdallah, to a standard procedure for the withdrawal of confidence in the cabinet. Sa'd refused the principle of full cabinet responsibility to parliament on the grounds that it would destabilize the politics of the shaykhdom.<sup>7</sup>

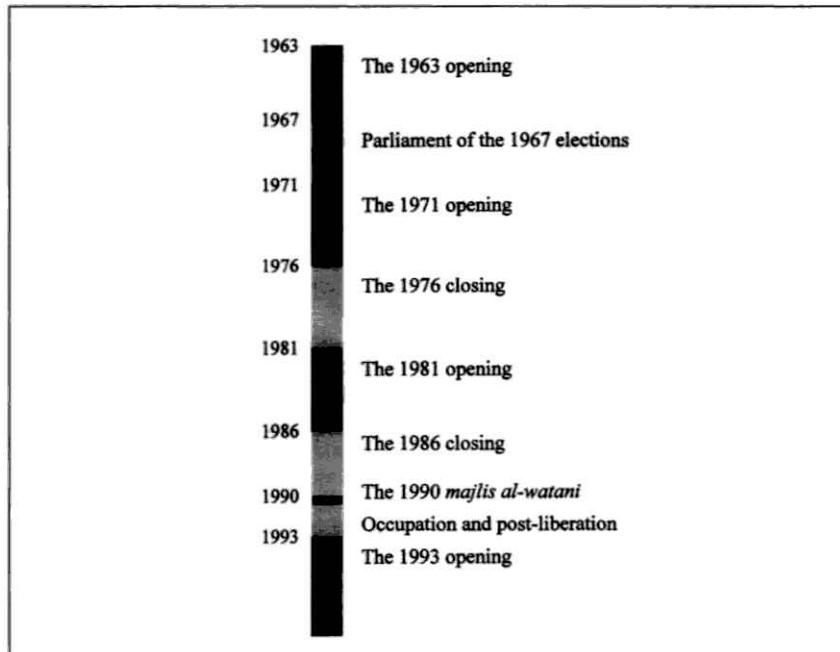
The constitution was crafted specifically to allow the monopoly of key cabinet posts by the ruling family that is the defining characteristic and prerequisite of dynastic monarchism. At the constitutional convention Ahmad al-Khatib, the leader of Kuwait's Arab nationalists then and now, argued that all ministers should be elected members of the assembly. The shaykhs of the Al Sabah did not plan to subject their authority to election, and thus this requirement would have excluded them from cabinet posts. Jabir al-Ali Al Sabah (Sa'd's cousin) asked if the shaykhs were "treacherous plotters" deserving of exclusion from the cabinet, and demanded the council decide the matter in favor of the shaykhs, "or else," he said, "we have another option."<sup>8</sup> The *majlis al-ta'sisi* (constitutional council) settled on language that allowed the prime minister to appoint ministers from both inside and outside the parliament, thus allowing the shaykhs to participate in the cabinet.

The constitution provides that *all* members of the cabinet vote in the parliament—those who are elected members of parliament and those who are not. This allows the ruling family to control a number of votes in the parliament and gives those members of the

ruling family who hold cabinet posts the right to vote in the legislature without submitting to election.<sup>9</sup> The Kuwaiti Assembly is unicameral, and this provision in the constitution, in a roundabout way, replicates the function played by noble upper houses in European constitutional monarchies by giving the ascriptive elite (the Al Sabah) voting rights without subjecting them to election, and without being quite so frank about it as to simply create a separate upper chamber.

### **Using the Parliament against the Opposition**

Since the first parliament of 1963 the Al Sabah have repeatedly opened and closed the parliament. Except in 1962 and 1992 the cycle is not explained by direct Iraqi threats, and neither have openings and closings corresponded closely to the level of internal opposition to Al Sabah rule. Instead, the pattern of openings and closings is best understood as a strategy by the Al Sabah to retain the support of moderate public opinion, while isolating radicals. When the Al Sabah have closed the assembly, they have generally



**Chart 6.1 Openings and Closings of the Kuwaiti Parliament**

been able to muster the support of the moderate middle for the closure, the direct result of the immoderation of the parliamentary opposition and its alienation of the middle. Yet support for the 1962 constitution and the parliament runs deep in Kuwait, and any permanent closure of the parliament exposes the Al Sabah to the risk of serious opposition, as that seen in the months immediately before the 1990 invasion, in the 1950s, or in 1939 (when the opposition asked the Iraqi army to invade).

The opening of the parliament in the early 1960s can be traced directly to the resumption of Iraqi claims on the emirate. The decision to liberalize also owed much to Abdallah al-Salim's liberal leanings and to expectations attendant upon the achievement of independence.<sup>10</sup> Agitation in the 1950s for popular participation also had a role, and the Al Sabah could not have forgotten that the opposition of 1939, in the end, called on Iraq to invade Kuwait.<sup>11</sup>

Parliamentary politics in Kuwait got off to a rocky start in 1963. The elections returned a body of a composition found in other monarchical parliaments in the Middle East: a rock-ribbed conservative majority facing a relatively radical minority, and between them a comparatively weak center. The Arab nationalist bloc, twelve deputies strong (of fifty), entered the 1963 parliament under the slogan "*izalat haybat al-sulta*," or (very) approximately, "doing away with awe of the regime," an exhortation hardly designed to calm the ruling family, or reassure them that they had made the right move in opening the parliament.<sup>12</sup> Abdallah Nafisi, a prominent member of the opposition, described the first *majlis* as "A minority seeing everything but unable to do anything, and a majority seeing nothing and able to do everything."<sup>13</sup>

By 1965 the Al Sabah had decided that the radicals in the parliament had begun to threaten the stability of the emirate and that, as importantly, the nationalists had isolated themselves from moderates. After Abdallah al-Salim died in 1965 the Al Sabah took a harder line against the opposition, and rigged the 1967 elections to exclude the nationalists.<sup>14</sup>

The docility of the 1967 parliament, while it freed the Al Sabah of the attacks of the nationalists in parliament, also left the opposition out of the political game, something that apparently made the family leadership uncomfortable. In 1971 the prime minister, Jabir al-Ahmad Al Sabah, explicitly invited the nationalists to re-enter parliamentary life, absent any notable pressure from inside

or outside Kuwait. The 1971 elections proceeded without obvious rigging by the regime, and with the participation of the nationalists. Yet the Al Sabah also prepared for the new assembly by naturalizing thousands of bedouin from tribes in the neighborhood of Kuwait in an effort to increase the electoral weight of supporters of the ruling family. The bedouin made up the dynasty's most loyal voting bloc, and the nationalists had virtually no successes in penetrating the bedouin districts.<sup>15</sup> Remembering the experience of the first *majlis*, and their subsequent years outside the parliament, the nationalist opposition did not enter the assembly with the goal of "doing away with the awe of the regime."<sup>16</sup>

In 1976 the Al Sabah again closed the political system, suspending the parliament outright for the first time. A number of factors contributed to this, including a threatened parliamentary override of the emir's veto of a law on the judiciary, which would have set a precedent the Al Sabah wished to avoid.<sup>17</sup> To the great frustration of the opposition, the suspension of the parliament met with substantial public support, or at least acquiescence.<sup>18</sup> Abdallah al-Nafisi, reflecting this frustration, wrote:

The regime put into the minds of the people . . . that the *majlis* did not serve the public good and that it rent asunder "the united family" (*al-usra al-wahida*). . . . Many people on the eve of the suspension of the National Assembly were thinking in this way because they were victims of the campaign to smear the image of the National Assembly undertaken by the regime through the various means available to it. It was the regime who gouged out the eye of the Assembly from the beginning and then ran behind it hurling insults, clapping its hands, and shouting out: cripple . . . cripple. . . .<sup>19</sup>

Others might hold the opposition, too, responsible in part for the collapse in comity between the opposition and the government, for it went out of its way to be combative; the important point is that the closing fit in well with the Al Sabah's overall strategy of domesticating the opposition by turning public opinion against it.

The Al Sabah held elections again in 1981, according to a promise made when they suspended the *majlis* four years earlier. The dynasty attempted to rewrite the constitution before the elections,

but gave up in the face of opposition. The Kuwait branch of the Muslim Brothers, which had supported the dissolution of 1976, came out against constitutional revisions under pressure from younger and more politicized members.<sup>20</sup> The 1981 elections returned a relatively compliant assembly, though it also saw the emergence of an Islamist opposition.<sup>21</sup> Yet the elections for the next assembly, in 1985, returned the least tractable group of deputies since the 1939 *majlis*. In its sixteen-month existence the 1985 parliament became involved in a dispute between two branches of the ruling family and forced the resignation of a shaykh of the Al Sabah from the cabinet (though he was of a distant lineage). In the same period the unofficial Kuwaiti stock market—the Suq al-Manakh—crashed, leaving some forty billion dollars in uncovered debts. The wounding of the emir in an assassination attempt in 1985 did nothing to calm the situation, nor did the Iranian capture of the Iraqi Faw Peninsula, which lay only kilometers from Kuwait. The Kuwaiti public accepted the dissolution of the parliament with little immediate protest.<sup>22</sup>

The closure of the assembly in 1986 gave the prospect of being much more permanent than the closure a decade previous, and indeed it appears that the Al Sabah seriously entertained eschewing the parliamentary game altogether, and ruling in the style of the rest of the GCC dynasties. The emir did not announce a date that the parliament would reconvene, and the regime came down far more heavily on the opposition and on the press than it had in 1976. Nonetheless, within a couple of years the opposition regained its feet and began to agitate for a resumption of parliamentary life. Before the invasion a group of Kuwaitis gathered thirty thousand signatures on a petition demanding the resumption of the constitution. An increasing number of moderates moved into the opposition.<sup>23</sup>

In June of 1990 the Al Sabah conceded a little to their critics, and held elections to a new assembly. The ruling family, however, unilaterally rewrote the rules. The new body—called the *majlis al-watani* rather than the *majlis al-umma*—had twenty-five appointed members, in addition to fifty elected. The opposition, with a wide spectrum of Kuwaiti opinion, took a dim view of the regime's feint, and boycotted the elections. Some left the country so as to avoid the embarrassment of being asked by the Al Sabah to serve in the *majlis* as an appointed member.<sup>24</sup> Saddam, it is sometimes said, misinterpreted this dissent as potential support for an Iraqi

takeover, though in the event he received the aid of virtually no Kuwaitis whatsoever.

### **The Invasion and its Aftermath**

The invasion of 1990, rather than further separating the ruling family from the opposition, instead threw them together. Both sides had a pressing interest in reaching a compromise that would allow the Kuwaitis, united in their statelessness, to present a single front to the world. At the 1990 Jeddah conference the ruling family and representatives of all parts of the Kuwaiti political spectrum made the obvious deal (though it took some bargaining to reach): Kuwaitis would support the Al Sabah, and in their turn the ruling family promised to restore the 1962 constitution.<sup>25</sup> As in 1962, the Iraqi threat pushed both sides toward a compromise based on a division of power between the ruling family and an elected parliament.

The Kuwaiti opposition trounced the ruling family's loyalists in the 1992 elections. Candidates who had served in the *majlis al-watani* of 1990, many of whom ran in the 1992 elections, generally met with defeat, as did many of those known, as a result of their connections to the government and ability to secure patronage, as the *nawab al-khidmat*, or ("services deputies").<sup>26</sup> Perhaps most important, a number of traditionally loyalist bedouin districts returned opposition candidates to the National Assembly, a premonition, perhaps, of the ruling family's permanent loss of its reservoir of die-hard royalists.<sup>27</sup>

The attitude of the opposition in the 1992 parliament differed from that of its predecessors. While before 1985 the opposition was in the minority, in 1992 the various opposition blocs won a majority. Yet the opposition victory led to greater cooperation between the ruling family and the parliament, at least in contrast to the dismal record of the 1985 parliament. Quite consciously the opposition tried to avoid the confrontational attitude of their predecessors in earlier parliaments, who, as minorities, used the parliament to posture (*tasjil al-mawaqif*) rather than to participate in governing.<sup>28</sup> It is on this basis of this sort of moderation among the opposition, combined with electoral success, that constitutional monarchy can find a firm basis.

In the parliamentary elections of 1996 the government rebounded from its defeat in 1992. The *majlis* of 1992, in the eyes of

many Kuwaitis, had accomplished little, spending far too much of its time on petty disputes and political maneuvering. The 1996 *majlis* witnessed a resurgence of the mildly progovernment middle: “service deputies” did better in the elections, Islamists held about even, and the liberal/left suffered something of a setback.<sup>29</sup> The parliament, however, by no means blindly follows the Al Sabah’s lead: it is an expression of the broad middle of Kuwaiti political opinion, which finds both the parliament and the ruling family to be useful political institutions.

### **The Assembly and the Stability of Al Sabah Rule**

In the first three decades of independence the Al Sabah used the parliament as a means of managing the opposition. The shaykhs calculated that the costs of outright opposition, especially given the Iraqi threat, were high, and that they could use the parliament to tame the opposition, rather than suppress it. Was it necessary for the Al Sabah to adopt this strategy? The Iraqi threat made it dangerous not to, but it is not clear, to this writer at least, that the Al Sabah would have met insurmountable *domestic* obstacles to an absolutist policy in the style of the Al Saud or the Al Khalifa, at least before the 1992 invasion.

Yet other factors also militate against—but do not prevent—the adoption of an absolutist strategy. The Al Sabah have not, since 1939, tried to adopt a thoroughgoing policy of repression against their people, of the sort that would be required, sooner or later, should they permanently adopt an absolutist strategy. After three and a half decades of parliamentarianism, and the crucible of the 1990 invasion, it is not clear that a decision to repress opposition would find sufficient support among Kuwaitis, including those in the army and police.

Recent inroads of the opposition in the bedouin precincts raises the further possibility that the group with traditionally the greatest allegiance to the Al Sabah is perhaps less willing than it might have been in the past to support an absolutist policy. There is an emerging elite of bedouin parliamentarians whose status derives not from traditional tribal leadership but instead from the parliamentary process. In the unlikely event that the Kuwaiti ruling family wished to adopt a strategy of repression, it might find some bedouin groups lining up against it, rather than for it.

The Al Sabah have shown parliamentary life compatible with dynastic monarchism, and with political stability. In Kuwait the parliament has not destabilized the monarchy, and much evidence indicates that it (along with the unifying effect of the Iraqi threat) explains the lack of any revolutionary sentiment among the Kuwaiti citizenry, or any attempts to change the current order by violent means. Kuwait has since 1992 successfully combined monarchical and parliamentary forms of political authority in a way that allows the ruling family to retain much of its authority while at the same time opening the way for a fairly and competitively elected parliament to have a real voice in the affairs of government. It is not democracy, but neither is it absolutism: it is akin to the constitutional monarchies of nineteenth-century Europe. In it, we can at least hope, we can find the foundation of a more liberal political order and a model for the other dynastic monarchies of the Gulf and peninsula.

### **Saudi Arabia**

**"He who raises his head, his nose shall we hammer."**

Attributed to a prince of the Al Saud<sup>30</sup>

Saudi Arabia is one of the late twentieth century's most tightly controlled polities. The royal family is both very much in control of its territory and its people, and very unwilling to allow public manifestations of dissent. Yet the Al Saud do not rely only on repression to stay in power: they have carrots as well as sticks, and they make use of both. When pushed, the Al Saud will modify their policies to answer their critics; they also have tried, sometimes with success, to buy off their opponents. What the Al Saud will not do, however, is share any of their political power. The princes draw a sharp line between adjusting their policies (or spending money) to quell dissent, and diluting the family's political hegemony. The former they do frequently, the latter they have resolutely resisted.

The absolutism of the Al Saud has engendered various sorts of opposition movements and groups, but none has seriously threatened the lock of the dynasty on state power. While opposition in recent years has come increasingly from institutions and areas

previously thought loyal to the dynasty, this has not led to any apparent weakness in the regime. This strongly suggests that the basic source of the resilience of the monarchy is not the support of any particular group in society but, instead, the internal cohesion of the dynasty and its control of state power.

The most serious coup conspiracy in the dynastic monarchies, at least that is known of, occurred in Saudi Arabia in 1969. The regime uncovered it before the plotters moved, and many argue that the Al Saud seriously overreacted to what was in fact a modest threat. The Al Saud arrested three hundred individuals, of whom perhaps a dozen actually had a hand in the conspiracy; some of the plotters, and many of those arrested, were Air Force officers, and clearly hoped to overthrow the monarchy, however inept their preparations.<sup>31</sup> A few reports have discussed other coup conspiracies in the Kingdom. An American intelligence report in 1955 described a plot in the military modeled after Nasser's Revolutionary Command Council.<sup>32</sup> Rumors have surfaced of other coup conspiracies but the little that is known of them does not indicate that they posed any danger to the survival of the monarchy.<sup>33</sup>

### ***The Majlis al-Shura***

In 1993 The Al Saud made a minor concession to demands for popular accountability, opening a wholly appointive *majlis al-shura*.<sup>34</sup> The Al Saud have recurrently promised to appoint a *majlis al-shura* when the regime has felt threatened, or in need of public support, enough so that these promises make up sort of a roster of regime crises of one sort or another. Saudi kings have announced plans to open consultative councils after the deposition of Saud and the revolution in Yemen in 1962, on the accession of Khalid in 1975, after the Mecca crisis in 1979, and on the accession of Fahad in 1982.<sup>35</sup>

If the Al Saud rule on the basis of an alliance with tribal leaders the 1993 *majlis al-shura* does not reflect this alliance. No one on the council could be described as a traditional tribal leader. The Al Saud, while they aimed for a broad tribal and regional representation, clearly made education and not traditional leadership status the prerequisite for admission to the *majlis*. The head of the council, Muhammad bin Jubayr, admitted as much: "The people are not meant to be represented in the Majlis al-Shura. . . . If we left it to voters, they would not choose members qualified to offer

the king advice—they would elect tribal chiefs unable to read or write. Instead, we have educated men, real experts.”<sup>36</sup>

The *majlis* has a low public profile and its actual influence on policy, while difficult to measure, is modest. The Al Saud, however, appear to recognize that the expression of political opinion, in non-public forum, is something of value to the dynasty.<sup>37</sup> The *majlis* helps to maintain contacts between the dynasty and the people. It also contributes a measure of legitimacy to the rule of the Al Saud, providing some defense against those who advocate greater democratization (along Kuwaiti lines) and those who favor the rule of the Wahhabi *ulema*.

### **Political Islam and the Al Saud**

In Saudi Arabia in recent years the most determined challenge to the regime has come from Islamist groups that criticize its deviations, as they see it, from Islamic teachings. There is some irony in this, for the Al Saud, more than any of the other Gulf dynasties, have employed Islam as a legitimizing formula for their rule. The Al Saud, who started as the rulers of a small town near Riyadh, rose to prominence in the eighteenth century as the champions of a particularly puritanical brand of Sunni Islam conventionally known as Wahhabism. The dynasty, however, does not claim descent from the Prophet; its claim to Islamic legitimacy is not based on any ascriptive attribute, but instead on the services the family has performed for Islam, and the Hanbali *mathhab* in particular.

In the age of Nasser the Al Saud found Islam useful in legitimizing their rule, an ideology seemingly consonant with monarchism but not with Free Officers.<sup>38</sup> The Al Saud deferred, or at least listened closely to, the opinions of the *ulema*, seeking approval for the introduction of modern innovations. In recent years, however, and especially since the second Gulf War, the strategy of the Al Saud to seek legitimacy by imposing a particularly thorough Islamicization of Saudi life has backfired. The Al Saud, by favoring the religious establishment and its imposition of a rigorous interpretation of Hanbalism on Saudi life, have not moved so far to the right as to be immune to challenge from the Islamists, but instead have reinforced the ideology of political Islam without convincing those who take it most seriously that the royal house is worthy to rule.

The Islamic challenge announced itself to the House of Saud in an especially dramatic form in 1979 when a band led by Juhayman al-Utaybi seized the Grand Mosque in Mecca. Juhayman hailed from the Nejdi village of Sajir, founded in the days of Ibn Saud as a *ikhwani* settlement of the Utayba tribe.<sup>39</sup> Some of Juhayman's supporters came from the same village and others descended from a variety of important Saudi tribes: the Qahtan, the Shammar, the Harb.<sup>40</sup> Dislodging the rebels from the mosque required a large-scale military operation, and it was reported that elements of the National Guard refused to fight, or did not fight well, because of the common tribal affiliation of some of the rebels and the National Guard personnel.<sup>41</sup> Juhayman attacked the Al Saud on a flank they thought secure. He used Islam against the regime, and his supporters included a large number of men of tribal descent. Yet the revolt did not portend a wave of greater bedouin protest against Al Saud rule: Juhayman's protest had no imitators in the 1980s.

Islamic opposition to the Al Saud came to the forefront again after the second Gulf war (1990–1991) when a large part of the Kingdom's religious establishment went into overt opposition to the regime. In May 1991 a group of *ulema* sent a petition to the king calling for the opening of a *majlis al-shura* and for other reforms. Another, far more detailed petition followed later in the year—the *muthakkirat al-nasiha*, or memorandum of advice—signed by a number of men prominent in the Kingdom's religious establishment. By Dekmejian's reckoning most signers of both petitions were Nejdies and, given their educations, origins, and occupations, he concludes they are from “non-tribal, urban middle-class backgrounds.”<sup>42</sup> The bedouin of Juhayman's band, by contrast, came from poorer and more bedouin origins, though Dekmejian also points out that the *salifyun* of the recent wave of Islamist opposition have drawn support from recently urbanized bedouins, whose disadvantaged position among those of longer urban origin make them fertile ground for recruitment to the Islamist opposition.<sup>43</sup>

The writers of the *muthakkirat* did not call for elections, and little in their program could be described as liberal. Instead they called for the systematic control of the institutions of the state by the religious establishment. In this aspect, at least, the *muthakkirat* bears some resemblance to Khomeini's doctrine of the *wilayat al-faqih*.<sup>44</sup>

The Al Saud showed little tolerance for this open display of dissent, and moved to bring the *ulema* more thoroughly under regime control. The regime demanded that the members of the *hay'a al-kubar al-ulema*, the senior group of Islamic jurists in the Kingdom, repudiate the *muthakkirat*. Seven of the seventeen members of the body refused, claiming ill health, and the king dismissed them from their posts.<sup>45</sup> Their refusal betrayed the breadth of support for the *muthakkirat* among the *ulema*. The dismissal of the dissident *ulema*, however, also demonstrated the institutional subordination of the religious establishment to the Al Saud. Though the *ulema* are often cited as an integral part of the ruling elite in Saudi Arabia, when they came out against the royal family the Al Saud demonstrated that they, and not the *ulema*, rule the Kingdom.

The Al Saud took a number of steps after the first Islamist petition (which preceded the *muthakkirat*) toward mild reform, including the promulgation of the Basic Law and a decree calling for a *majlis al-shura*, both of which were seen as efforts to appeal to the Kingdom's liberals. These efforts by the Al Saud to reduce the numbers and vehemence of their critics appeared to have had some effect by the late 1990s—the Al Saud have ridden out the storm without making significant reforms and without altering the fundamental character of dynastic rule.

### **The Stability of the Regime**

In states that punish the expression of political ideas it is difficult to judge the actual level of dissent and, thus, the danger it poses to the regime. Kuran Timur has pointed out that masking of preferences is characteristic of authoritarian regimes and that the timing of the revelation of these preferences makes revolutions difficult to predict.<sup>46</sup> The opposition does its best to portray the Kingdom as seething with dissent against the Al Saud, and there are frequent reports of the circulation of large amounts of opposition literature inside the Kingdom.

The wave of dissent in the mid-1990s seemed to strike much closer to those groups traditionally more loyal to the regime. Burayda, center of the “intifada” of 1994, is a town in Qasim, a Nejdi area to the north of Riyadh; it is thus, if not precisely the geographic heart of the Saudi regime, quite close to it. The religious establishment in the past generally sided with the regime: now much of it is in oppo-

sition. This does not, however, mean that the regime is necessarily doomed. Except for Juhayman's 1979 adventure few signs have emerged that Islamist sentiment has seriously penetrated the military or the other security organs. The royal family does not rely, in any permanent way, on the support of any particular group in society, but survives by balancing various groups against each other, and by maintaining its iron grip on state power.

Thus far, at least, the absolutist policy of the Al Saud has sufficed. Opposition to the regime, however, clearly exists under the surface, and in quarters where the regime previously enjoyed support. This does not, by any means, make revolution imminent, but it does raise the possibility that the Al Saud will go down the road of the Al Khalifa, progressively losing the veneer of legitimacy they have enjoyed (at least in some parts of society) in the past. Should this legitimacy dissipate, the dynasty will be faced with the task of controlling the Kingdom through unmasked coercion. This is well within the capabilities of dynastic monarchism in the medium run, but perhaps not in the long run.

### Bahrain

The Al Khalifa, who rule the only GCC state with a Shi'a majority, have adopted a resolutely repressive policy toward their vociferous opposition. This gives Bahraini politics a different feel from those of the other Gulf states (except perhaps Saudi Arabia), for in Bahrain the Al Khalifa, clearly lacking any legitimacy among a substantial part of the population, rule through force. There are no signs, nonetheless, of imminent regime failure. The Al Khalifa remain in control of the state, and determined to stay in power. The security forces have not shown signs of defection to the opposition. A revolutionary outcome seems improbable in the short and medium term—in the long term we must entertain doubts about the wisdom of a strategy so long on coercion and so short on concessions.

### The Parliamentary Experiment of the Early 1970s

The Al Khalifa in the early 1970s, immediately following independence, experimented with a parliament. The experiment failed. The causes of the failure are important, for in them we might find the reasons for the ruling family's current refusal to resume

parliamentary life under the 1973 constitution. Bahrain's constitution, modeled after Kuwait's 1962 constitution, provides for a legislative assembly of thirty elected members. As in Kuwait the entire cabinet has *ex officio* membership, and in 1973 this resulted in a parliament of a total of forty-four members.<sup>47</sup>

The elections of 1973 returned two opposition blocs, one rural and Shi'i, the other nationalist, composed of both Shi'a and Sunnis. Together they composed just under half of the elected members of the body, while generally progovernment deputies made up the remainder.<sup>48</sup> The loudest opposition to the regime in the parliament did not come from the Shi'a deputies from the villages but, instead, from the largely urban Sunni-Shi'a nationalist bloc.<sup>49</sup> The Al Khalifa closed the parliament in 1975, less than two years after it opened. The immediate cause was the imminent loss by the government of a vote on a restrictive public security law.<sup>50</sup>

The failure of the parliamentary experiment in the early 1970s did not stem from any fundamental inability of the ruling family to work out a power-sharing compromise with the parliament. The 1973 constitution ensured that the Al Khalifa would retain control of the state. The regime did not need the public security law—the issue over which they closed the parliament—to stay in power. The parliament did not threaten the regime's control of the streets nor did it make a bid for control of the army. While the opposition, especially the nationalists, did not itself always display a measured moderation, the ruling family displayed even less.

Most importantly, the sectarian issue did not cause the failure of the parliament. Shi'a deputies were split between the three groups—the nationalists, the religious bloc, and the government deputies—and did not make any effort to use the parliament to make a revolution against the Al Khalifa, nor to call on Iranian support.

The parliamentary opening failed, instead, because the Al Khalifa seem to have decided that they did not want to pay the moderate cost of sharing some of their power with the parliament. They were under no particular compulsion in 1973 to open the parliament in the first place, and seem to have calculated that an absolutist policy would not threaten their regime, and would rid them of the need to pay attention to the parliament.<sup>51</sup> The Saudis, moreover, urged the Al Khalifa to close the parliament and gave the family another subvention afterwards.<sup>52</sup>

## The Nature of the Opposition to the Al Khalifa

Opposition to the regime crosses sectarian lines. Bahraini Sunnis do not monolithically support the Al Khalifa, and in fact opposition movements against the Al Khalifa have received very significant support from Sunnis, though more in the nationalist era than since. The Sunni community itself is split between those of tribal origin, who generally support the Al Khalifa and who can be found in the army and security forces, and other urban nontribal Sunnis, who have a more tempered attitude toward the Al Khalifa. Opposition groups have directed their ire at the regime—the Al Khalifa and, in the past, the British—and not at the other sectarian community.

Before the Iranian revolution of 1979 Bahraini opposition generally had a nationalist coloring, and often was associated with the island's labor movement.<sup>53</sup> The Iranian revolution led to the eclipse of the previously dominant nationalist and leftist opposition by religiously motivated Shi'a groups inspired by the 1979 revolution. Some were relatively moderate, but one of the more radical of these groups, the *Jabha al-islamiya lil-tahrir al-bahrain*, in 1981 attempted a coup against the Al Khalifa, with help from Tehran; the coup did not involve the Bahraini military (for there are very few Shi'a in that institution) and the regime foiled it without displaying any signs that the conspiracy had threatened its hold on power.<sup>54</sup>

In the mid-1990s opposition to the Al Khalifa exploded, in the most serious dissent directed at any of the dynastic monarchies. By mid-1996 rioting had taken dozens of lives and led to mass incarcerations. Those who expressed their dislike of the regime on the streets belonged largely, if not completely, to the Shi'a majority, and mostly came from the *baharna* of the villages.<sup>55</sup>

Sunni Bahrainis, while they have not apparently participated in violence against the regime, have hardly lined up in a monolithic bloc behind the Al Khalifa. Sunnis have contributed their signatures to several petitions that various opposition groups have circulated, including one signed by twenty-five thousand Bahrainis.<sup>56</sup> The individuals who organized that drive are described in opposition literature as "comprising all tendencies and sections of Bahrain society. They included Shi'a Islamists . . . , Sunni Islamists . . . , and patriotic [nationalist] activists."<sup>57</sup>

Though the goal of the rioters may not be the restoration of the 1973 constitution, this is the primary declared goal of the moderate opposition, who include many thousands of petition signers, some of the leaders of the opposition in Bahrain, and the Bahrain Freedom Movement, a group based in London that makes every effort to stress its moderation, sectarian neutrality, and desire to reach an accommodation with the regime and claims that a major part of the opposition in Bahrain shares these goals.<sup>58</sup>

### **The Issue of the 1973 Constitution Today**

The ruling family has responded to the current unrest with only very limited steps toward the expansion of political participation. In late 1992 the emir appointed a *majlis al-shura* (encouraged by Saudi steps in the same direction) and the regime apparently met with many refusals among those asked to serve on the *majlis al-shura*.<sup>59</sup>

Resuming parliamentary life, in the current circumstances, offers the Al Khalifa a way—perhaps the only way—of drawing the moderate opposition to their side and isolating, at least somewhat, the saboteurs of the Shi'a villages. Certainly the problem is not the absence of a moderate opposition, for the petitions submitted to the ruler, signed by many thousands, make the resumption of the parliament the centerpiece of their demands and explicitly eschew any desire for revolution. The parliament itself, with its near balance between appointed and elected members, and limited authorities, is not a direct threat to the survival of the monarchy. Opening the parliament would not herald a Shi'i revolution.

There are two reasons which might explain why the Al Khalifa have failed to reopen the parliament. The first is that failure to do so does not seem likely to lead to revolution. The security forces (which include many foreigners) appear secure, and Saudi Arabia would intervene with force to put down any situation that got out of the control of the public security forces (though this would result in the further descent of the Al Khalifa into Saudi vassalage, a prospect one would think they would hope to avoid). Opening a parliament, and the accompanying political liberalization, would force the Al Khalifa to temper their absolutism and to submit to some parliamentary oversight. The Al Sabah, while they may look at the predicament of the Al Khalifa today and be glad that they

have adopted a far more conciliatory strategy toward their opposition over the decades, nonetheless have lost a measure of their power because of parliamentary politics, something the Al Khalifa clearly wish to avoid.

The second reason that the Al Khalifa do not liberalize is Saudi aversion to parliaments. Bahrain has less oil than any of the other Gulf states and relies on Saudi subventions to shore up its economy. The Al Saud subsidize the Al Khalifa to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars annually. The opposition and much foreign reportage on Bahrain repeatedly cite the attitude of the Al Saud as a major impediment to any liberalization in Bahrain, and even official statements allude to it.<sup>60</sup> The Al Saud, of course, have to make their own calculations in this matter, for the persistence of unrest in Bahrain unsettles the Gulf generally, and an outright Saudi occupation of Bahrain would have enormous costs for the House of Saud. Furthermore, while the Al Saud can plausibly threaten to make the Al Khalifa poorer should they choose to liberalize, they cannot impoverish them, for the stability of Bahrain, parliament or no, remains a paramount security concern for the Kingdom.

The Al Khalifa have progressively driven more and more Bahrainis into the opposition and deprived their regime of much of the support that other dynastic monarchies seek to gain through concessions and flexibility. While there is a temptation to assert that the long-term survival of the regime positively demands the resumption of parliamentary life, that may not be the case. It is nonetheless true that the absolutism of the Al Khalifa has engendered more opposition to their rule than that encountered by any dynastic monarchy in the Gulf. Furthermore, because of primogeniture and the resultant tensions between the prime minister and the crown prince, dynastic monarchism is structurally weaker—more subject to a very serious family split—than anywhere else in the Gulf. The continued absolutism of the Al Khalifa amounts to an experiment in the repressive capacity of dynastic monarchism, and the outcome of this experiment is far from certain.

### **Qatar**

Until recently, any discussion of formal channels for popular participation in Qatar would have been very short indeed. The current

emir, however, initiated a substantial political opening after consolidating his rule in late 1996, following the coup against his father in 1995. This liberalization initially took the form of a dramatic loosening of restrictions on press freedoms. The Qatari press, once somnolent, has emerged as one of the freest in the Arab world. Hamad plans to hold direct elections to the municipal council, and his public statements suggest that he is willing to take additional steps toward expanding political participation.

This liberalization did not arise out of overwhelming public pressure: Qatar has seen only modest outbreaks of political dissent, largely labor protests in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>61</sup> Instead, it appears to be an effort by the new emir to further consolidate his rule, and to head off any potential problems in the future. Hamad is undertaking the liberalization from a position of strength—nothing he has done threatens his or his family's political preeminence in the medium term.

Hamad's liberalization is not wholly unprecedented in Qatar. Shortly after overthrowing his cousin in 1972, Hamad's father Khalifa issued a "Temporary Basic Law" (still in effect) that calls for direct and secret elections to a *majlis al-shura*. The constitution, however, also provided that the first session of the *majlis* would have a membership appointed by the emir, thus effectively postponing elections. The emirs have since extended the life of the first—appointive—body, filling vacancies by appointment as they arise, thereby avoiding the constitutional provision for elections.<sup>62</sup> As some Qataris have pointed out, the real test of Hamad's liberal leanings will be the issue of direct parliamentary elections under the existing Basic Law.<sup>63</sup>

### **The Emirates**

The rulers of the United Arab Emirates, like the Al Thani of Qatar, have faced little serious opposition to their rule. The National Council, albeit appointive, nonetheless seems to involve a considerable level of public debate and airing of ideas and opinions. Its sessions are open to the public and its members display a certain independence in their debates, which the newspapers report and which have a real political impact. The effect of this is to open up a space, albeit limited, for public discussion in the Emirates, and

it is in the Emirates that the argument that the appointive *majlis* can substitute for democracy has the most plausibility.<sup>64</sup>

Moderate demands for reform have occasionally surfaced, most notably in 1979 when cooperation flagged between the rulers of Abu Dhabi and Dubai. The entirely appointive Federal National Council (along with members of the federal cabinet) stepped into the vacuum at the federal level and issued a memorandum to the seven rulers calling for "real democracy."<sup>65</sup> The episode illustrated the degree to which demands for democracy emerge not always according to some underlying dynamic in society but, instead, in response to displays of weakness in the regime itself.

The rulers of Abu Dhabi and Dubai, in response to these demands, ironed out their differences and resumed control of the federal institutions. Since then other demands for greater democracy have been heard (though not very loudly).<sup>66</sup> More radical forms of opposition have been scarce, and in general opposition has been far more subdued than in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, or Bahrain. Again, as in Qatar, there are few grounds on which to doubt the stability of the political system.<sup>67</sup>

### Oman

In the 1970s Oman was the scene of the most serious rebellion against any Gulf monarch in the postwar period. Yet the rebellion, in the southern province of Dhufar, was a regional uprising of a sort not found in the Gulf monarchies since oil gave dynasties the resources necessary to build modern state apparatuses, including armies.

Since the rebellion in Dhufar the sultanate has seen little overt opposition to Qabus's rule, though there is at the same time no public arena in which dissent can be legally expressed. In 1994 the regime discovered a coup conspiracy that included some high-ranking government officials, and which was said to be Sunni, Islamist, and to have ties with groups outside Oman. The regime put 131 on trial, but Sultan Qabus a year later gave pardons to all those convicted, including those sentenced to death.<sup>68</sup> The high level of some of those implicated in the coup conspiracy indicated its seriousness, but few other signs of overt Islamist opposition activity have appeared.

In the early 1980s Qabus appointed a consultative council, Oman's first such body.<sup>69</sup> In the years since, he has gradually expanded the powers of this body and changed the method of selecting its members from outright appointment to a system that combines appointment with election. The novel method of selecting members, while not particularly democratic, illustrates the institutional flexibility of Arabian monarchs in designing institutions of popular representation. Deputies win their seats through a process in which "the notables of each wilayat and those of opinion and expertise in it," elect three candidates, of whom the Sultan chooses one to represent the wilayat.<sup>70</sup> In the end we may be sure that the Sultan retains control over the process, but it nonetheless is an improvement over the outright appointment of the Saudi *majlis al-shura* and like bodies elsewhere in the Gulf. Perhaps the main virtue of the selection mechanism is in the promise of further changes to come: the Sultan has gradually liberalized the *majlis* over the years, and has created the impression that further improvements will follow, in time.

While the general lack of political freedom in Oman, and the relatively high levels of repression, make it possible that there is a significant amount of discontent bubbling beneath the surface, the regime faces perhaps a more serious threat in problems within the regime. Western reports on Qabus's style of governance over the years have consistently mentioned his isolation and the corruption of those around him. While corruption is nothing that makes Oman any different from the other Gulf states, the isolation of the regime is. In the dynastic monarchies of the rest of the Gulf the ruling families have multitudinous contacts with their societies, and these contacts connect the regimes (that is, the dynasties) with their people. In Oman, where the dynasty as a ruling institution is weaker, the regime appears to be less well connected with society. The lack of a fully consolidated dynastic monarchism also gives some cause to wonder if there may be problems with the succession. Qabus has said that the family should choose his successor, according to the traditions of Arabian ruling dynasties. Yet Qabus has concentrated much power in his own hands, and shared less with his relatives than is common elsewhere in the Gulf. When he dies, a large vacuum will appear at the center of the Omani political system, and it is not entirely clear who will fill it.

## Conclusion

While the level of opposition to the Gulf monarchies varies from one state to the next—as does the character of their response—the regimes all appear stable, at least in the medium term. In none of the monarchies have opposition movements seriously threatened the survival of the regime. We do not find a correlation between crises in the regime and outbreaks of opposition. Dynastic struggles proceed, by and large, according to the rhythm of mortality among the top princes, not as a consequence of attacks on the regime from outside.

In Bahrain and Saudi Arabia the dynasties have experienced high levels of opposition without taking significant liberalizing steps. In Kuwait, by contrast, the Al Sabah have dealt with their opposition by opening—and sometimes closing—the *majlis al-umma*. All three regimes have survived, and none show imminent signs of collapse. Both absolutist and liberal strategies have thus far proven workable.

Yet should absolutist strategies prove untenable in the future, the success of the parliamentary experiment in Kuwait suggests an alternate strategy is possible. The domination of the state by the dynasty is not irreconcilable with the constitutionalization of dynastic authority in political institutions that share authority between an elected parliament and the ruling family. This is of great significance, for it suggests that these regimes have the flexibility needed to liberalize gradually in response to demands for greater popular participation. Kuwait provides a model exportable to the rest of the Gulf, a way for these regimes to relinquish absolutism and move toward a greater level of political participation. Others in the Gulf, certainly, have noticed the Kuwaiti success, and one hears calls for its emulation.<sup>71</sup> When, or if, absolutism fails, the Kuwaiti model provides a path away from absolutism.

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## **Libya and Afghanistan**

In seven of the thirteen monarchies that I consider in this work the ruling family did not form a corporate institution that exercised hegemony over state power. Instead a single monarch, sometimes with the help of a relative or two—but often not—bore (or bears) the responsibilities of rule on his shoulders alone. Of these seven monarchies, five had failed.

In Libya and Afghanistan the issue of dynastic participation in state power arose in this century, and was resolved in favor of the monarch, not the dynasty. In both of these monarchies we can trace the revolution to succession conflicts within the ruling elite. In Libya the absence of dynastic monarchism explains why Qaddafi, and not a king, rules the country today. Afghanistan does not closely resemble the Gulf monarchies. Yet its royal house ruled Afghanistan in a style surprisingly reminiscent of the dynastic monarchies of the Gulf. The monarchy fell as a direct consequence of fighting within the ruling family, and the story of its fall offers a fascinating counterpoint to the experiences of the Gulf dynastic monarchies.

### **Libya**

Libya provides an excellent comparison with the Gulf monarchies: it is small, oil-rich, and bedouin. If the monarchy had survived, it

would be thought of together with the Gulf principalities, and its stability attributed to plentiful oil revenues and the force of tradition. Instead it fell to a revolution—with disastrous consequences—and I will argue that the crucial difference between Libya and the Gulf monarchies is the absence of a Sanusi dynastic regime.

The similarities between Libya and the Gulf monarchies run deep. They begin, first and foremost, with oil. The oil income common to both the Gulf monarchies and Libya gives their economies a similar aspect: little development took place before oil, and oil exports, once they began, quickly became the mainstay of the economies. If bounteous rentier income has a stabilizing effect on regimes, we would expect to find this effect precisely at the time when the Libyan monarchy fell, for it was then that the regime had massive increases in its income for years on end, so that in each successive budget the regime could devote additional spending toward buying new allies (see chart 7.1).

***The Tribes.*** The dominant tribes of Cyrenaica, the region of the Libyan monarchy's historical base, trace their origins to the Arabian Peninsula itself and share with its tribes many common tra-

**Table 7.1 Libya, the Gulf Monarchies, and Saudi Arabia Compared**

	GULF STATES	SAUDI ARABIA	LIBYA
Dynastic regime	Yes	Yes	No
Parliament	No, except Kuwait and, briefly, Bahrain	No	Yes
Bedouin in military	Militaries largely bedouin or foreign	Bedouin National Guard	Bedouin Cyrenaican Defense Force
Colonial power	Britain; Ottoman Empire	None	Italy; Britain (the UN); the Ottoman Empire
Location	Gulf	Peninsula \Gulf	North Africa
Religious basis of the monarchy	Islam generally	Associated with Wahhabism	Head of Sufi order

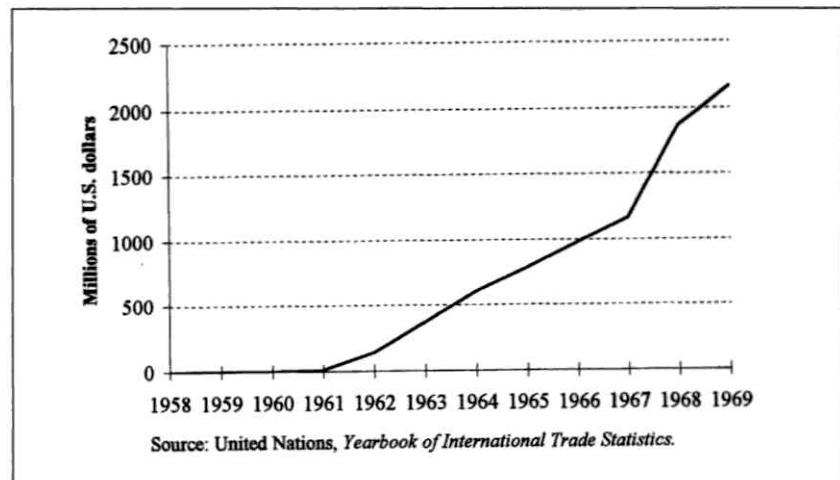


Chart 7.1 Libyan Annual Oil Revenues in Millions of U.S. Dollars

ditions, despite their transection by the distinctly different Arab civilization found in the Nile Valley.<sup>1</sup> These noble tribes migrated to North Africa in the eleventh century and reduced the resident Berber and Arab tribes into a state of vassalage, creating an ascriptive status distinction echoing that between *asil* and non-*asil* tribes on the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>2</sup>

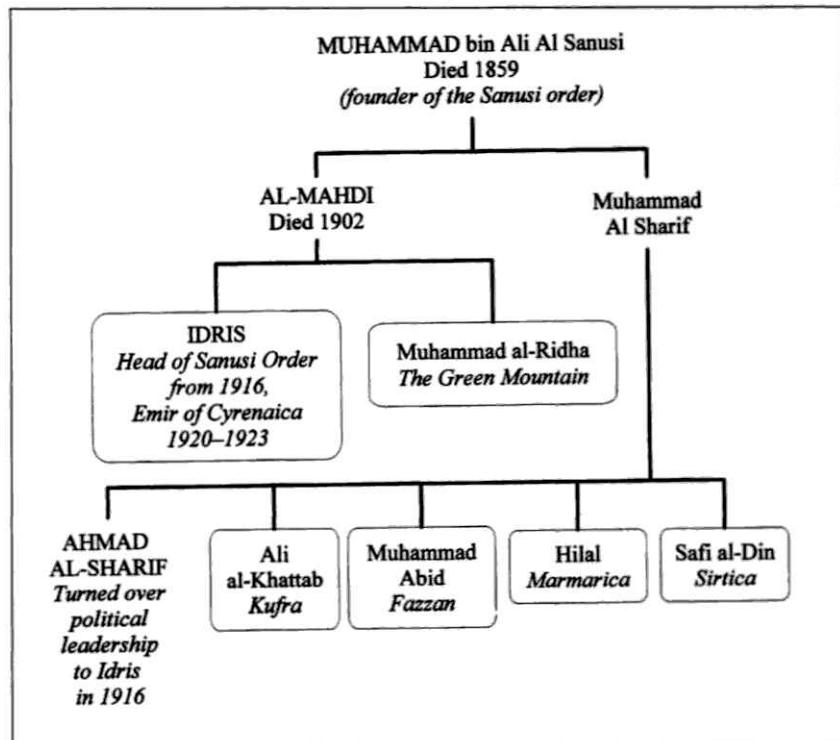
In the monarchical period, from 1951 to 1969, the larger tribes of Cyrenaica had a political role similar to that of the tribes of Arabia. Indeed, if it differed it was in the greater political role of the Cyrenaican tribes, for the absence of the ruling family at the top of the Libyan regime left a political vacuum filled by those close to the royal house, some of whom were tribesmen.<sup>3</sup> The monarchy found its firmest supporters among the bedouin, for this was in the period in the Arab world when the bedouin consistently cleaved to monarchs. Parliamentary elections returned rural bedouin royalists.<sup>4</sup> In 1955, when the king entertained a proposal to convert the monarchy into a republic, the tribes of Cyrenaica descended on his palace demanding that he reject republicanism. Their protests ensured that the monarchy did not end, at least then, from a lack of royal will to preserve it.<sup>5</sup>

***The Military.*** The role of the tribes in the Libyan military echoed that of the bedouin in the Gulf military establishments. The tribes of Cyrenaica manned the Cyrenaican Defense Force, the monarchy's praetorian guard that had a role vis-à-vis the Libyan army corresponding that of the Saudi National Guard toward the Saudi army. Even the procurement policy of the military in the last few years of the monarchy reminded observers of that of the Gulf monarchies: big on expensive technology, small on manpower.<sup>6</sup>

***The Origins of the Monarchy.*** The Sanusi family itself does not trace its descent from one of the noble tribes of Cyrenaica, though it does claim descent from the Prophet.<sup>7</sup> None of the Gulf ruling families had a religious role similar to that of the Sanusis (though the Al Saud are associated with Wahhabism), yet this difference does not appear to provide any explanation for why Libya had a revolution and the Gulf states did not. As we shall see in greater detail below, the pattern of succession struggles within the Sanusi clan—struggles for political power—followed the pattern of those in the Gulf dynasties.

Muhammad ibn Ali al-Sanusi, the ancestor of the Sanusi lineage, rose to prominence not in politics but instead in religion: he founded a Sufi religious order rather than a political state. Yet by the beginning of the twentieth century the Sanusis had become political leaders, responsible for rule in the hinterlands of Cyrenaica under the Ottomans and then, after World War I, the Italians.<sup>8</sup> The Sanusi family, like several of the Gulf dynasties, divided up its realm among the members of the family, according to the logic of segmentary states; figure 7.1 shows the distribution at the beginning of the World War I.<sup>9</sup>

***The Parliament.*** Libya under the monarchy had a parliament, something largely absent in the oil monarchies of Arabia and the Gulf, with the exception of Kuwait. Yet the revolution can hardly be blamed on the parliament, which played no role whatsoever in the fall of the monarchy. Perhaps a stronger parliament might have filled the power vacuum created by Idris's age and the weakness of the crown prince. In any case nothing in Libya's parliamentary experience suggests that it is there that we can find the explanation for why the Sanusi monarchy fell, and the Gulf monarchies survive.



**Figure 7.1** Areas Governed by Members of the Sanusi Family Around 1916

**Foreign Powers.** Neither can we find a clear explanation for the failure of the Libyan monarchy in the actions of outside powers. Both the United States and Britain had military bases on Libyan soil in 1969. The Western connection, indeed, resembles that of the surviving Gulf monarchies with their Western protectors, and thus does not serve as an explanation for the failure of the monarchy.

**Geography.** Libya borders on Egypt, ground zero of republican sentiment in the Arab world in the 1950s and 1960s. Yet Kuwait and Saudi Arabia border on Iraq, hardly a better neighbor than Egypt, while Oman and Saudi Arabia bordered on the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen when it was the Arab world's only thoroughgoing Marxist-Leninist state. Egypt did not meddle in Libyan politics to a degree that can explain why Libya, and not the other monarchies, suffered a revolution.

**Opposition.** The volume and vehemence of the opposition to the monarchy in Libya does not distinguish it from the surviving Gulf regimes; Bahrain and Saudi Arabia currently suffer from far more expressed opposition to the ruling houses than did the Sanusi monarchy before the revolution. Libya experienced two major bouts of unrest under the monarchy, in 1964 and 1967. The first led to the death of between two and eight students at the hands of the CDF.<sup>10</sup> No other major public protests occurred, and the regime recovered from those of 1964 and 1967 without running any apparent risk of collapse or revolution.

The regime was anything but ruthless in its repression of its enemies. The chief group of political prisoners under the monarchy, a number of Ba'athists army officers, received light prison sentences on their convictions in 1964.<sup>11</sup> Even the most hyperbolically critical accounts of the monarchy come up, in the end, with only garden-variety political offenses.<sup>12</sup> One writer says that pamphlets attacking the king appeared, for the *first* time, in August of 1969. The revolution did not come at the climax of a wave of opposition, and the same writer describes "the apparently satisfied face of society in 1969."<sup>13</sup>

Nonetheless, if the regime had not aroused a virulent opposition, neither had it convinced most Libyans that its survival was in their best interests. In part, it did not try, for few at the top displayed much interest in perpetuating the monarchy. In the intellectual and political atmosphere of 1969 change had an attraction to many Libyans, especially change in a populist, republican direction. Abd al-Hamid al-Bakkush, a former prime minister, wrote in 1995: "The truth is that most Libyans welcomed the revolution with rejoicing, since they were under the influence of the wave of Arab coups, of which they had not yet heard of the tragedies."<sup>14</sup>

### **The Sanusi Family**

The crucial difference between Libya and the Gulf regimes, the difference that explains why the former fell and the latter survive, is the absence of the ruling family in the Libyan state and the related failure to solve the problem of the succession. In Libya the crown prince—the "man without a shadow"<sup>15</sup>—had little influence. King Idris was around 80 in 1969, and few thought the monarchy likely to survive his death. This uncertainty set off a scramble for

power among the leaders of the regime, and it also led to a fatal relaxation of monitoring of the military for political reliability. Both created the conditions for the rise of Qaddafi to power, and neither are imaginable in the otherwise similar circumstances of the Gulf monarchies, where it is scarcely conceivable that the dynasties would so carelessly allow power to slip from their grasp.

King Idris's relatives did not fail to capture posts in the Sanusi state from lack of effort. Like members of the Gulf dynasties, the Sanusis felt entitled to a share of political authority and fought to achieve it. They failed because, in a momentous family battle, Idris successfully removed them from their posts in the administration of Cyrenaica in 1949 and 1950, and then had a provision written into the Libyan constitution barring the family from the cabinet.

The family disputes of the late 1940s and early 1950s went back to a succession contest that began in 1902. When the leader of the Sanusi movement died in that year, his eldest son Idris (later the king) was still a minor. According to the established traditions of Arabian dynasties the family decided to make Idris's first cousin Ahmad, who was an adult, leader of the dynasty (see figure 7.2).<sup>16</sup> Ahmad, however, forfeited leadership of the Sanusi state during World War I, when he got on the wrong side of the British by leading an attack on Egypt.<sup>17</sup> Yet Ahmad's surrender of political power to Idris did not resolve the issue of who Idris's successor

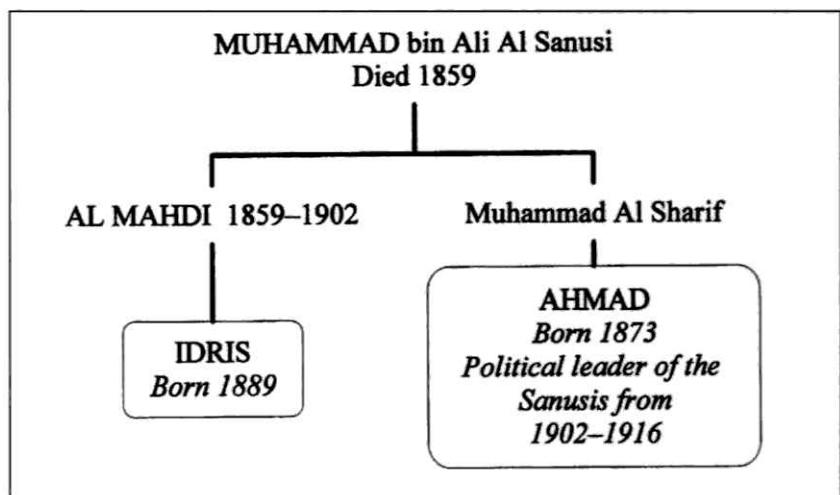


Figure 7.2 Candidates for the Sanusi Succession in 1902

would be. Idris apparently promised the succession to one of Ahmad's sons, though Idris later claimed that this was contingent upon a German victory in the war—Ahmad's sons, unsurprisingly, denied any such conditionality, and long harbored a conviction that Idris had disinherited them.<sup>18</sup>

In the 1920s the Sanusis and their succession dispute went into exile when the Italian Fascists destroyed their emirate and subjugated Libya to a brutal colonization. Libya remained under direct Italian rule until the desert battles of World War II. After the war the Allies, who neither wished to rule Libya themselves nor to give it back to Italy, decided to turn over their newly acquired impoverished expanse of sand to the United Nations, in anticipation of independence. In the crucial years before independence the British ruled the important parts of Libya, Cyrenaica, and Tripolitania, while the French occupied Fezzan.

Following their general practice the British sought to rule under the cover of a local potentate, and to this end invited Idris back to Cyrenaica. The British administered Cyrenaica separately from Tripolitania and installed Idris as emir of Cyrenaica, the historical base of the Sanusi family, before Libyan independence. The crucial period of the contest between Idris and his relatives was the span of time after the British defeated the Axis in North Africa but *before* the unification of the three regions of Libya—Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, and Fezzan—under a Sanusi king in 1951.

Idris's relatives, in a pattern familiar from the dynastic monarchies of the Gulf, made determined efforts to secure positions in the administration of Cyrenaica. The Sanusis, however, had a competitor in their efforts to secure posts in the state. In exile in Egypt Idris had acquired a personal adviser, Ibrahim al-Shalhi, to whom he had grown close. Mustafa Ben Halim, the former Libyan prime minister, writes:

For more than forty years Ibrahim al-Shalhi supervised the king's daily affairs, from his food to his clothing and residence, and supervised his finances, and it was he who saw the king first in the morning and last at night. The king grew accustomed to depending on his personal minister totally, to the degree that Ibrahim al-Shalhi became for the king one of the necessities of life, and he came to treat him as a devoted son and a faithful and intimate friend.<sup>19</sup>

The favoritism shown to Ibrahim al-Shalhi roused a virulent jealousy among the sons and grandsons of Ahmad. The hostility between Ibrahim al-Shalhi and the Ahmad al-Sharif side of the family resembles, more than a little, the battles between shaykhs and courtiers that occurred during the emergence of dynastic monarchism elsewhere. In Libya, however, the courtier won.

One of Ahmad's sons—known as Abu Qasim—arrived in Cyrenaica in 1943, several years before Idris. The British appointed him governor of Benghazi and then secretary of the interior in the Cyrenaican administration.<sup>20</sup> After Idris returned in 1947 Abu Qasim became vice president of a new appointive legislative body called the *mu'tamar al-watani* (a Cyrenaican and not Libyan body), while Idris named his brother Muhammad al-Ridha its president (see figure 7.3).<sup>21</sup> Other Sanusi family members in the various parts of Cyrenaica built up retinues of followers, which made Idris doubtful of their intentions, while Abu Qasim exploited his post in the interior department to seek tribal support. By July of 1949 Idris was discussing with the British a plan to bar his relatives from the administration, and in December he stripped Abu Qasim of his authority over the tribes.<sup>22</sup> Early in 1950 the dispute within the Sanusi family spread to the *mu'tamar al-watani*; a faction led by Abu Qasim attacked the government, and in response Idris dismissed him from his posts.<sup>23</sup> Before the close of 1950 Idris issued a "Sanussi Family Law" which barred his relatives from jobs in the administration and politics generally.<sup>24</sup> Idris then placed limits on his family's movements and had his interior minister—a commoner and Ibrahim al-Shalhi's son-in-law—admonish them to refrain from involvement in politics.<sup>25</sup> This marked the definitive failure of the formation of a Sanusi dynastic regime, and from this point forward Idris ruled independent of the constraints of his family.

The Sanusi dynastic regime failed because Idris did not need the support of his relatives to gain or to keep political power. The British gave him his position as emir of Cyrenaica, occupied the country with British troops, and controlled the administration.<sup>26</sup> The British had little reason to defend Idris's relatives claim to state posts, especially given the imminent unification of Cyrenaica with Tripolitania. The United Nations supervised the writing of the 1951 constitution and the accompanying negotiations over unification and independence. Neither the Tripolitanians nor the UN overseers of Libyan independence had any reason to favor the

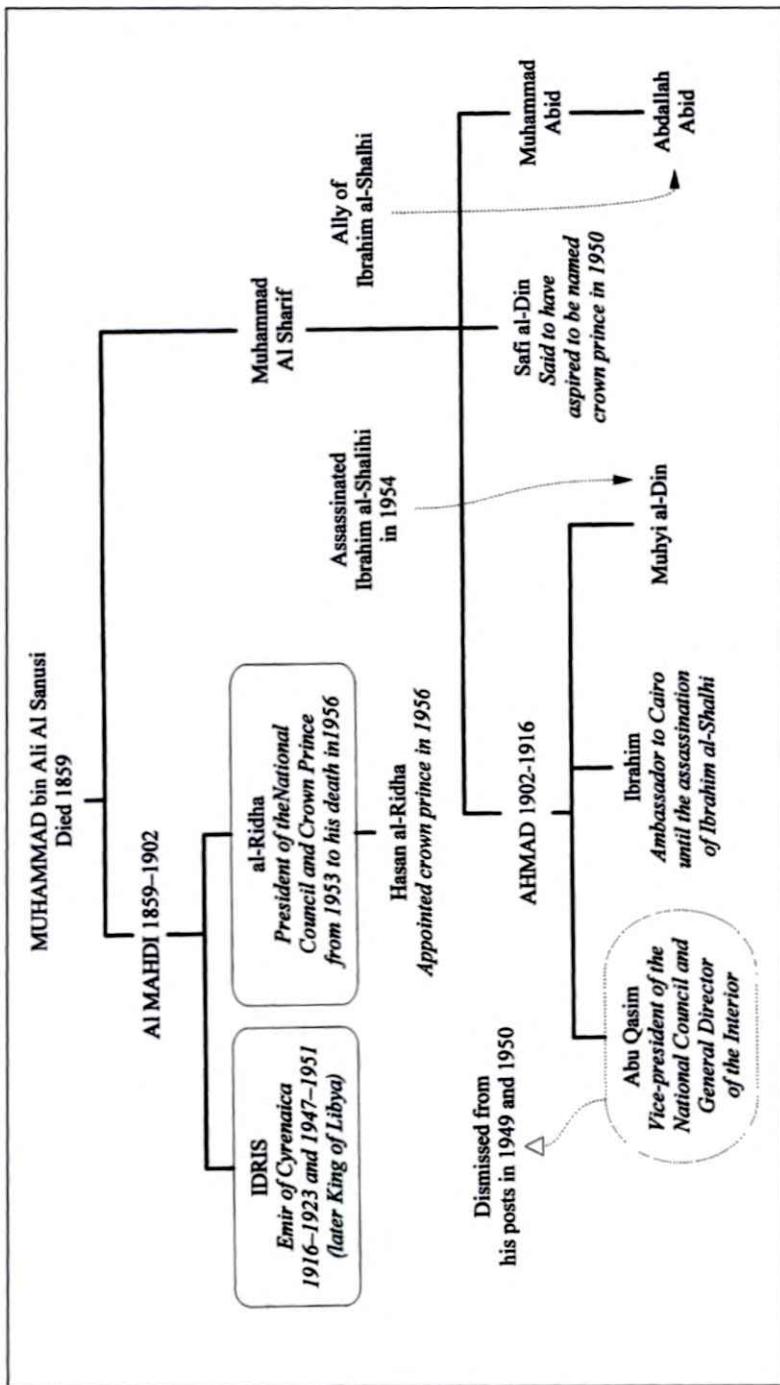


Figure 7.3 The Sanusis in the 1940s and 1950s

disinherited Sanusis, and the Sanusis lacked the resources to contest the provision of the 1951 constitution that barred them from state posts.

The Sanusis did not disappear after their expulsion from state posts. Idris felt constrained to compensate his relatives with the other currency of intrafamily bargaining, one that recurs in the accounts of dynastic battles in the Gulf. The British reported that as a consequence of the Family Law, those who left the government were "granted allowances from the Civil List in compensation" and that Idris had "increased the allowances of the heads of the six branches of the family to enable them to maintain their position in a state of suitable dignity."<sup>27</sup> In the first years of independence Abu Qasim and other members of the Sanusi family directed their energies toward business, and indeed a heated commercial competition seems to have developed between Abu Qasim and Abdallah Abid—Ibrahim al-Shalhi's main ally among the Sanusi clan, apart from the King himself.<sup>28</sup>

In 1954 the Sanusi family battle came to a bloody end when an embittered son of Ahmad al-Sharif assassinated the man whom he and his relatives thought most culpable in their exclusion from power: Ibrahim al-Shalhi. Idris, who had a genuine affection for Ibrahim, lashed out at the Sanusis, threatening to deport them from Libya; in the end he relented, but issued an order redefining the royal family to include only the king, the queen, the king's sons (of which there were none), and the heir apparent. More significantly he showed where he affections lay, and appointed Ibrahim al-Shalhi's son al-Busayri to his father's position as head of the court.<sup>29</sup> The Ahmad al-Sharif branch of the Sanusis thereupon faded from the political scene, and had little role in the politics in the rest of the monarchical period.

### **The Sanusi Succession**

The defeat of the Ahmad al-Sharif branch of the Sanusi family did not solve the issue of the succession, which festered throughout the period of the monarchy; at the end of his reign Idris was around eighty years old. Idris's appointed heir, his brother Muhammad al-Ridha, died in 1955. The prime minister, Mustafa Ben Halim, thereupon proposed that the regime be converted to a republic, and that Idris be named president for life. Idris accepted in principle, but

the Cyrenaican tribes descended on his court, demanding that he repudiate the notion, and he did.<sup>30</sup> After the tribes nixed republicanism, Idris tried a different tack, marrying a second wife; this marriage also failed to produce an heir. Opinion then settled on the appointment of his nephew Hasan al-Ridha as heir apparent.<sup>31</sup> Yet, as Ben Halim tells it:

Unfortunately everyone ignored the education and training of Hasan, but instead some hypocrites [*munafiqin*] began praising the wisdom of the crown prince! and his great cleverness and his wide intelligence. Then Hasan surrounded himself with a group of failed politicians and began criticizing the work of his uncle in his private *majlis*, and naturally the news of this traveled quickly to the ears of the king . . . who began to ignore his crown prince and did not concern himself with his education or training . . . then the king began to feel that he had erred in his choice of a crown prince.<sup>32</sup>

An historian writes that, at this point, “it was apparent to many that the monarchical regime would not last after the passing of al-Sayyid Idris because it was a one-man regime.”<sup>33</sup>

### **The Monarchy Founders**

That Idris thought of Ibrahim al-Shalhi as his son, and Ibrahim’s sons as his grandsons, is remarked by most who write on the peculiar place of the al-Shalhi clan in Idris’s affections.<sup>34</sup> Had he sired sons Idris might have shifted his affections from Shalhi and his offspring to his own, and Idris’s sons would have had far more reason to defend the monarchy than did the sons of Ibrahim al-Shalhi (who could have had little interest in its survival). But he did not, and instead placed the al-Shalhi brothers in important posts at court and in the army. After Ibrahim’s assassination in 1954 Idris appointed his son al-Busayri to take the place of his father as chief courtier. Al-Busayri died in 1964 and his brother Umar assumed his post.<sup>35</sup> Another brother, Abdalaziz, was named head of the Committee to Reorganize the Army after the 1967 war; his influence was such that he is commonly said to have been the commander-in-chief, though this post actually belonged to a mem-

ber of the Sanusi family, Sanusi Shams al-Din. This member of the royal clan, however, had married a sister of the Shalhi brothers and was closely allied with them.<sup>36</sup> These brothers, through their control of the palace and their positions in the army, wielded a great deal of power under the monarchy. Salih al-'Aqad, an historian, mentions the severe pressure brought to bear by Idris and the Shalhis in their desire to force a marriage between Umar al-Shalhi and the daughter of a Cyrenaican notable family, and comments that "there is no doubt that the control of this family over the palace alienated many loyal elements who might have taken action in the event of a revolution."<sup>37</sup>

In June of 1969 King Idris left Libya for a vacation abroad, "quite possibly anticipating untoward developments."<sup>38</sup> Copious evidence points toward preparations on the part of Abdalaziz al-Shalhi to overthrow the monarchy around the same time as Qaddafi's successful coup.<sup>39</sup> The first words of the crown prince on being taken prisoner during the coup was "Are you from al-Shalhi's group?"<sup>40</sup> Nasser, too, anticipated a coup by Abdalaziz al-Shalhi, and when the coup plotters failed to identify themselves he had no idea who was behind it. Muhammad Hassanein Heikal, sent to

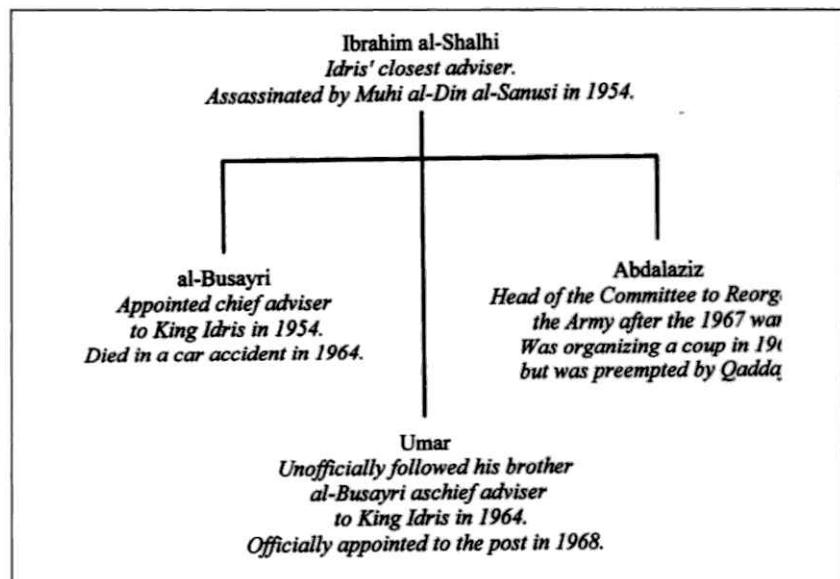


Figure 7.4 Ibrahim al-Shalhi and His Sons

Libya to find out what had happened, is reported to have disembarked from his plane at Benghazi and asked, "Where is Abdalaziz?"<sup>41</sup> Even the king, when told of the coup, said it was an event "of no importance": perhaps he, too, thought the coup the work of Abdalaziz al-Shalhi.<sup>42</sup>

How did Qaddafi manage to preempt Shalhi's coup? There seem to be several explanations, among them the sort of fortuitous luck that often determines the outcome of this sort of situation. Qaddafi led a group of middle-ranking officers from tribes and families peripheral to political power under the monarchy, and the threat from his group seems not to have been taken seriously.<sup>43</sup> The existence of two (and perhaps more) coup plots at the same time caused a certain amount of confusion exploited by Qaddafi and his group. Hinnebusch says that the higher-ranking officers, also planning a coup, unwittingly cooperated with Qaddafi's men.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore monitoring of the military for political loyalty—never much of a priority under the monarchy—further deteriorated in 1969. Qaddafi's group was not secret from those higher up in the army, nor were his political leanings. In a regime more concerned with its own survival Qaddafi would not have remained an officer.<sup>45</sup> Abd al-Hamid Bakkush, another former prime minister, says that the coup occurred because of the king's generosity, and his refusal to act against those of suspect loyalty in the military: he quotes Idris, who responded to one warning saying that "these soldiers and officers are our sons and I will not accept dismissing any one of them unless an accusation warranting dismissal is proven, and as for a purge [*tasfiya*] I will not countenance it."<sup>46</sup>

Even had the regime foiled Qaddafi's coup the monarchy had few prospects: the crown prince, the man with a stake in saving it, had little authority, and those with authority had little interest in the survival of the monarchy. Libya's was a conventional monarchy: it was what the Gulf monarchies would be if the dynasties did not monopolize the top posts in the regime, and its fate was what theirs likely would have been, but for dynastic monarchism.

### **Afghanistan**

The failure of the Afghani monarchy, like that of the Libyan monarchy, vividly illustrates the crucial importance of ruling-family

dynamics in the survival of monarchical regimes. Pressure from outside the regime did not lead to its destruction, but instead a power struggle within the ruling family itself. Afghanistan does not very closely resemble the Gulf monarchies: it is populous, impoverished, and not Arab. Yet in the 1930s and 1940s the Afghani royal family occupied the most important state offices and ruled Afghanistan in a style reminiscent of the dynastic regimes of Arabia. In 1964, however, a new constitution prohibited royals from holding cabinet offices. A decade later the king's cousin, a former prime minister whose political career had been stymied by this constitutional provision, overthrew the monarchy.

I will examine two questions concerning the Afghani monarchy and its fall. First, is it plausible to argue that the monarchy would have survived if the family had cooperated? Second, why did cooperation within the royal family fail, and what lessons does this hold for the survival of the dynastic monarchies of the Gulf?

### **The Afghani Monarchy in a Comparative Perspective**

The last Afghani dynasty came to power in 1929 after the previous king, from another branch of the family, launched an ill-conceived Ataturkist program of rapid modernization. This king—Amanullah—had most of the ambitions but little of the ruthlessness or military might of Ataturk or Reza Shah.<sup>47</sup> The succeeding dynasty, after it put the pieces of Afghanistan back together, learned the appropriate lesson, and from 1929 to 1979 the government in Kabul tread carefully in its relations with rural Afghanistan, mindful that it could crush rebellions here and there, but that 1929 might happen all over again if the provinces erupted all at once.<sup>48</sup> Nonetheless Afghanistan had an administration with most of the attributes of Southall's description of a unitary state; in this it differed from North Yemen, for instance, before the 1962 revolution. The Afghani army successfully kept the peace and the administration had a presence throughout the country. The dynasty did not send out immediate relatives of the king to govern the provinces, thus avoiding the emergence of independent fiefdoms that accompanied this practice in other monarchies, and in Afghanistan itself before 1880.

*The Economy and the Urban-Rural Split.* Afghanistan's poverty, coupled with the presence of a reasonably strong and stable regime

in Kabul, produced a sharp split between the capital and the rest of the country. Kabul had a university, modern amenities, and contact with the larger world. The rest of Afghanistan, by and large, remained mired in poverty. This, however, was not because the capital exploited the provinces. The regime levied taxes on imports and exploited its geopolitical position to collect aid funds from world powers. Direct taxes on the rural areas did little more than pay for local administrations.<sup>49</sup>

In the capital, among the newly educated, modern ideologies gained a foothold in the decades before the revolution.<sup>50</sup> Given the period, these ideas tended to be leftist, though this made Afghanistan not different from any of the other monarchies. In Afghanistan, if anything, the educated class was smaller in scope because the resources of the country did not support massive efforts to extend education to the far corners of the realm. Leftist agitation was essentially a phenomenon of Kabul that emanated, in a limited way, out to the provinces. The regime resided amid these groups in Kabul, and while the monarchy had strong defenses against rural rebellion it proved much more susceptible to the attacks of urbanites.

***The Parliament.*** The regime allowed—indeed, apparently made a serious effort to encourage—fair elections to the parliament in rural areas in the decade before 1973. The regime took a different stance toward the educated opposition elements of Kabul, and largely excluded them from the parliament. The parliament was more than a rubber-stamp, but neither did the rural elites seriously or continually circumscribe the authorities of the monarchy. Certainly the parliament did not set off agitation that led to the revolution, and it had no appreciable role in the fall of the monarchy.<sup>51</sup>

***Opposition.*** In Kabul a 1965 protest led to several deaths and the resignation of the cabinet; another bout of discontent occurred in 1968.<sup>52</sup> In comparison with the other monarchies the degree of opposition was hardly exceptional. Neither was the fierceness of regime response to this opposition; like the Libyan monarchy the Afghani regime did not freely tolerate expression of dissent, but neither did the regime terrorize its opponents as a matter of policy.

***Tribes and the Military.*** The monarchy had its origins in the Pushtun tribes, to which the royal family itself belonged. In its first

decades the Muhammadzai monarchy recruited army officers from Pushtun tribal leaders, but by the 1970s Pushtuns of lesser backgrounds, along with ethnic minorities, made up the larger part of the officer corps, partly as a result, it seems, of the efforts of the king's cousin Daud to build an officer corps loyal to himself.<sup>53</sup>

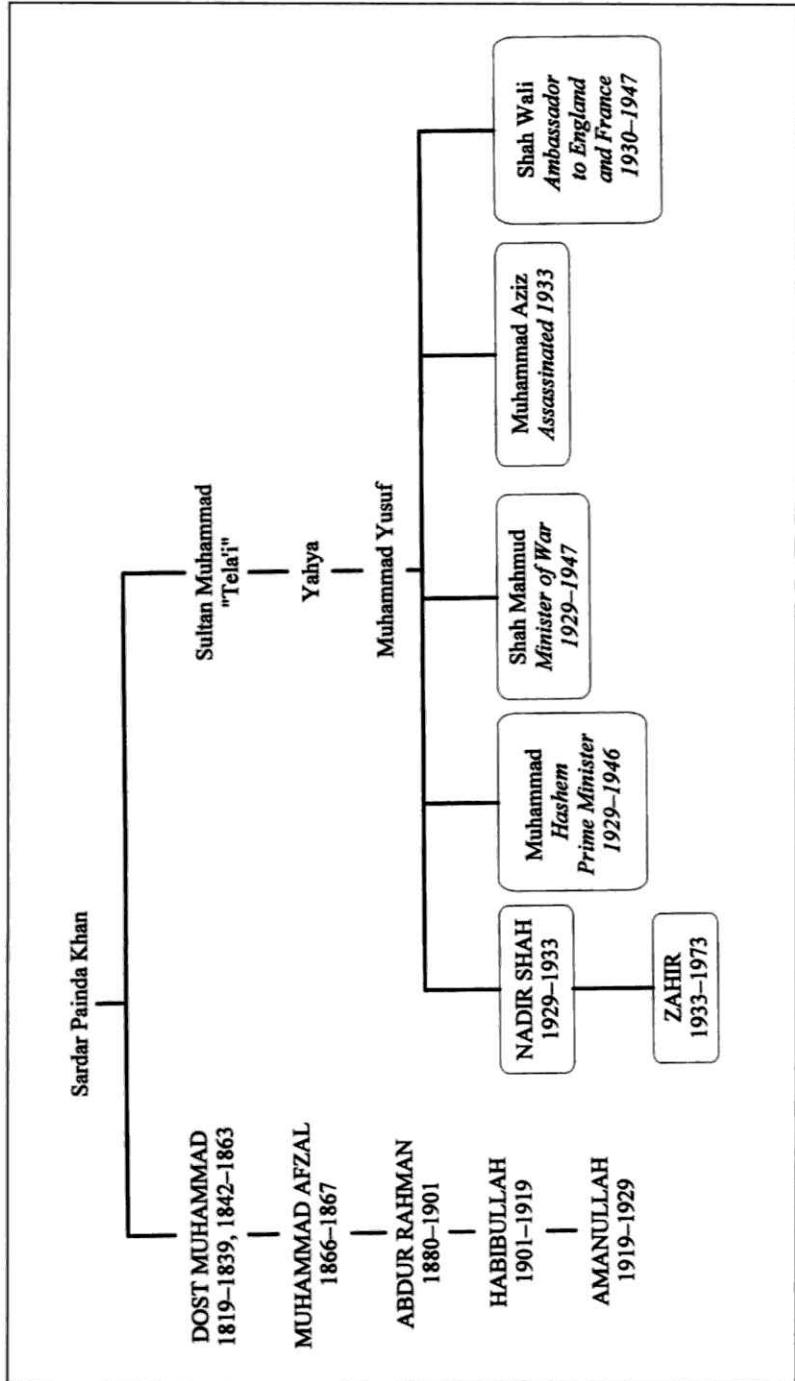
### **The Muhammadzai Dynastic Monarchy**

In its first decades the Muhammadzai dynasty resembled the dynastic monarchies of Arabia in the thoroughness of dynastic domination of the state. Nadir Shah founded the dynasty in 1929, after a countrywide revolt ended the reign of a related branch of the family. Several of Nadir Shah's brothers provided crucial support in founding the dynasty, and three of these royal brothers shared out the leading state offices among themselves: Nadir Shah, the eldest, became king, his brother Muhammad Hashem prime minister, and Shah Mahmud minister of war. Two other brothers went to Europe as ambassadors.<sup>54</sup> The sharing of offices among the brothers both reflected the coalition that brought Nadir Shah to power and reflected his dependence on his siblings as his firmest supporters against the former king and his branch of the family.<sup>55</sup> As in the Arabian dynastic monarchies, the king needed his relatives to seize power, and once there he needed their support to keep it. To secure this support he gave them prominent posts in the state.

Nadir Shah was assassinated in 1933 and his son Zahir came to the throne. For the next twenty years the king's uncles ruled, while he reigned. A State Department report said: "Afghanistan is ruled by a family council in which the elders play the predominant part." The same report concluded that five people ruled Afghanistan: the king's three uncles, his mother, and the king himself.<sup>56</sup> Of these five individuals the king's senior uncle, the prime minister Muhammad Hashem, had the most influence. The family met weekly at dinner and in this forum made policy; this family conclave—more than the cabinet—governed Afghanistan and reserved the authority to appoint and dismiss royals to state offices.<sup>57</sup>

### **The Erosion and Failure of Dynastic Domination of the State**

In many ways the Afghani royal family, in its traditions and customs, resembled the Arab ruling families of the Gulf: governance



**Figure 7.5** Nadir Shah and His Brothers

was not the affair of the king alone or with his courtiers, but instead the prerogative of the dynasty as a corporate group. Yet in several other aspects the nexus between dynasty and state differed in Afghanistan. In the dynastic monarchies of the Gulf the dynasties monopolize the *wizarat al-siyada*. The premiership and the portfolios of defense and the interior have never been held by someone outside the ruling dynasty in the Gulf dynastic monarchies. In Afghanistan the royal family did not exert a monopoly over any of these posts except the premiership (see figures 7.6 and 7.7).<sup>58</sup> Only four princes of the core lineage—two of Zahir's uncles and two of his cousins—held any of the key four posts at any time between 1929 and 1964.

The failure of the Muhammadzai clan to monopolize the key cabinet posts is a symptom of the failure of dynastic rule in Afghanistan, not its cause. Why, then, did dynastic rule fail in Afghanistan? The greatest contrast between the dynastic regimes of the Gulf and that of Afghanistan is that the former are rich in oil and the latter are not. This immediately suggests that a lack of money lay behind the progressive erosion of the Afghani dynastic regime from 1929 to 1964. Yet it is not clear how the events that led to Zahir's constitutional coup in 1964 can be attributed to the weak revenue base of the Afghani state. While Afghanistan was and is a very poor nation, there is no suggestion that the royal family lacked money: some of its members, for instance, were said to control lucrative import monopolies.<sup>59</sup> Sources do not mention money as a locus of disputes among the members of the family; instead they argued over power.

The most plausible explanation for the failure of dynastic domination of the state in Afghanistan is the decision by the dynasty to make Zahir a figurehead king, reigning while the strongest and most senior member of the family ruled as prime minister. This concentration of power in the premiership continued through the rule of two of Zahir's uncles and then his cousin. If Zahir wished to be something more than a figurehead he needed to destroy the power of the premiership. In the dynastic monarchies of the Gulf we do not find this sort of separation of the formal powers of the monarchy from the actual authority to govern. In the Gulf as a rule (1) the king or emir has ultimate authority in matters of policy; (2) if the prime minister exercises power he is also the crown prince, so that the death of the ruler reunites formal and actual authority;

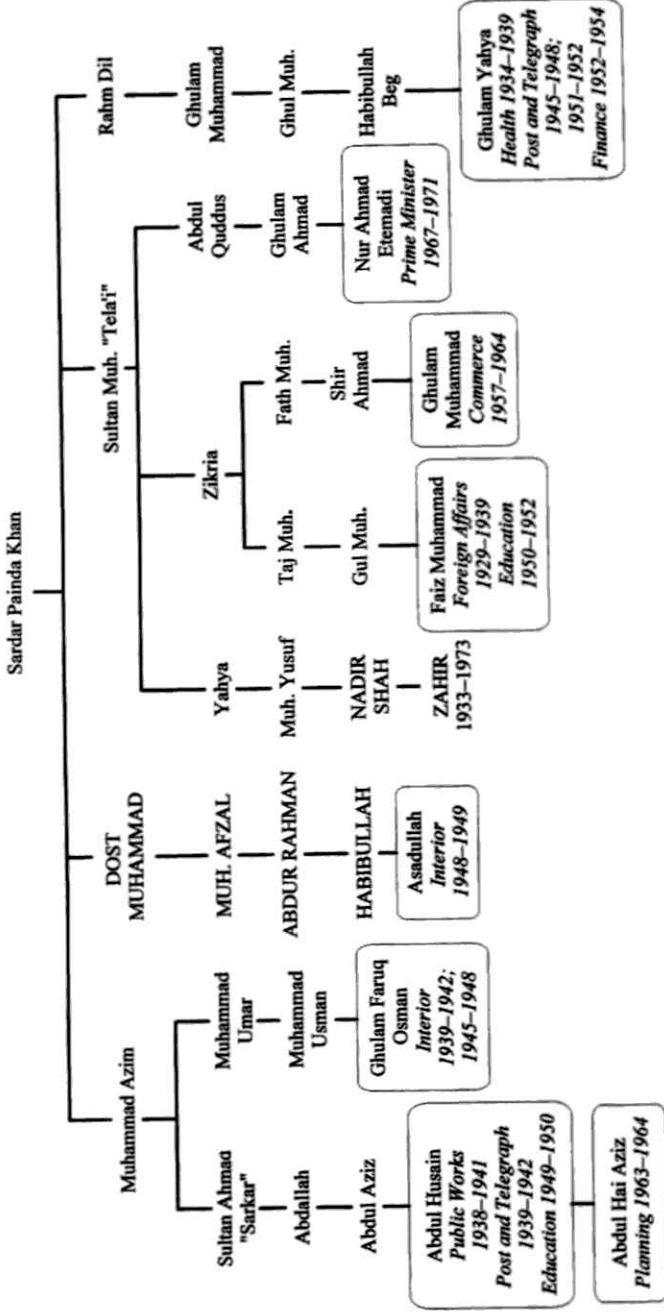
**Table 7.2 Holders of the Four Key Ministerial Posts in Afghanistan to 1963**

PRIME MINISTER		WAR/DEFENSE	
FOREIGN AFFAIRS	INTERIOR		
<b>MUHAMMAD HASHEM</b>	1929–1946	<b>SHAH MAHMUD</b>	1929–1947
<b>SHAH MAHMUD</b>	1946–1953	<b>DAUD</b>	1947–1948
<b>DAUD</b>	1953–1963	Muhammad Umar	1948–1952
		Muhammad Aref	1952–1958
		<b>DAUD</b>	1958–1963
<b>Faiz Muhammad</b>		<b>MUHAMMAD HASHEM</b>	1929–1930
<b>Zakaria</b>	1929–1939	Muh. Gul Mohmand	1930–1939
<b>Ali Muhammad</b>	1939–1952	<b>Ghulam Faruq</b>	
<b>Sultan Ahmad</b>		<b>Usman</b>	1939–1942
<b>Sherzoy</b>	1952–1953	Muhammad Nauruz	1942–1945
<b>NAIM</b>	1953–1963	<b>Ghulam Faruq</b>	
		<b>Usman</b>	1945–1948
		<b>Asadullah</b>	1948–1949
		<b>DAUD</b>	1949–1951
		Abdul Ahad Malikyar	1951–1955
		Abdul Hakim Shah-	
		Alami	1955–1958
		Sayyid Abdullah	1958–1963

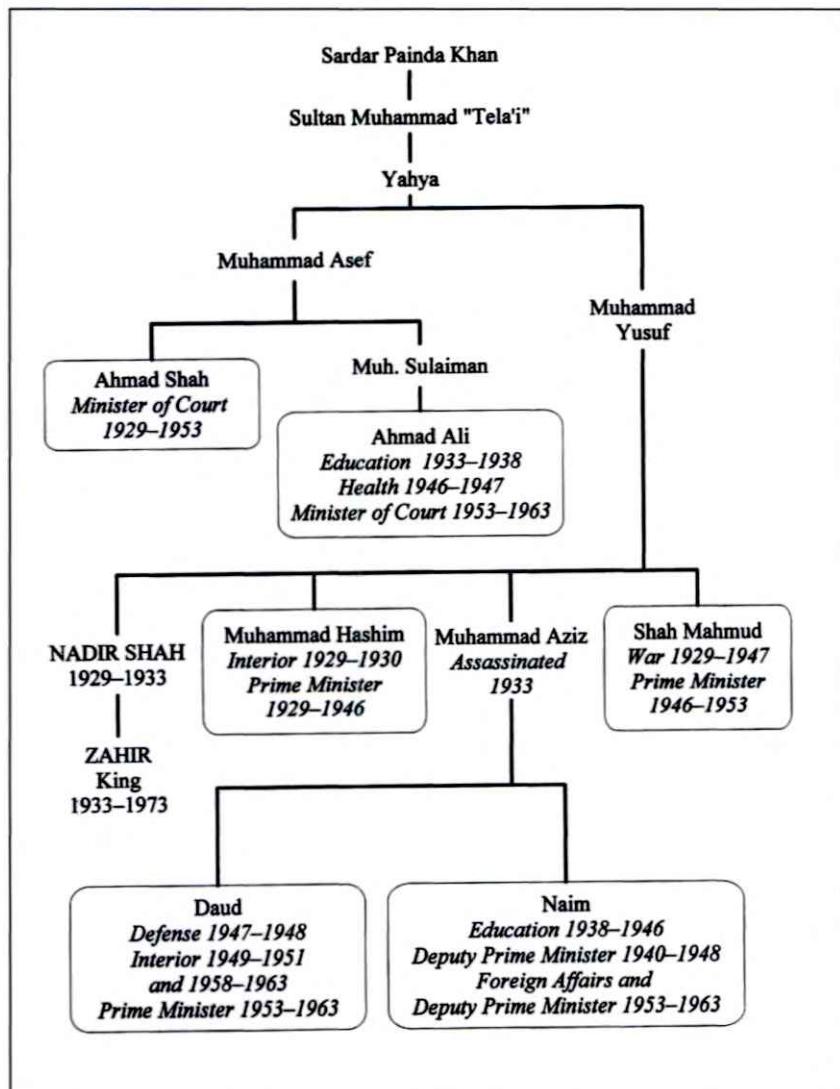
Members of the core ruling lineage of the dynasty are in **CAPS**, other members of the royal family are in **bold**, and commoners are in regular type.

(3) when the king or emir delegates most of his authority to his premier this has the nature of a retirement, and does not amount to a regency for a ruler in his minority.

King Zahir exercised his constitutional authorities to dismiss prime ministers in 1946, 1953, and 1963 (see figure 7.8, page 205). Zahir's uncles did not rule until they died or became incapacitated, as do members of the Gulf ruling families. The first, the strongman Muhammad Hashem, ruled to 1946. The tenure of the second, Shah Mahmud, lasted but seven years, from 1946 to 1953. He launched a liberalizing experiment, including the holding of Afghanistan's freest elections to that date. By 1952 the dynasty found the liberalization more disturbing than anticipated. Under attack from his relatives, and particularly from the younger generation—his nephew the king, along with Daud and Naim—Shah Mahmud resigned.<sup>60</sup>

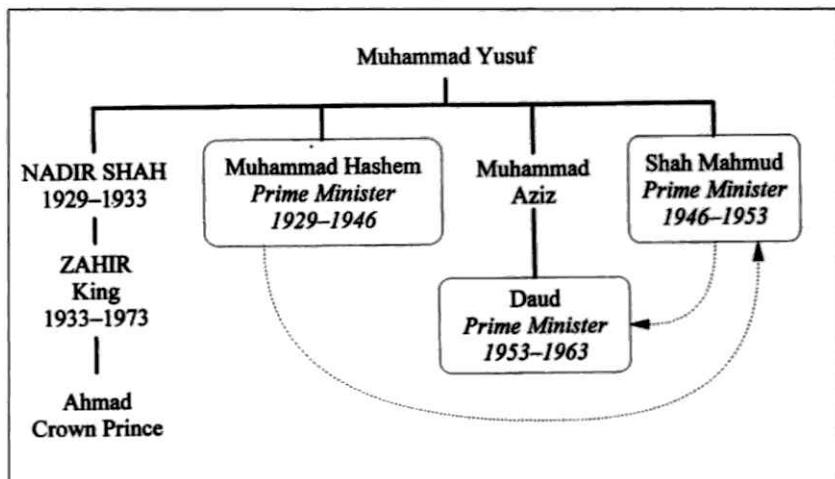


**Figure 7.6** Cabinet Officers of the Afghani Royal Clan *Outside* the Ruling Lineage in the Monarchical Period



**Figure 7.7 Cabinet Posts Held by Members of the Ruling Lineage of the Afghani Royal Family in the Monarchical Period**

In Shah Mahmud's place Zahir named Daud to the premiership. There was still no prospect of reuniting the formal authority of the kingship with the actual authority of the premiership without the dismissal of Daud or his appointment as crown prince (an idea of which we hear no suggestion, and which would have violated the



**Figure 7.8** Prime Ministers of the Afghani Royal Family

constitution). To make the situation yet worse, the crown prince, Zahir's eldest son, described in 1959 as a "non-entity," played no discernible role in Afghani politics in the period of Daud's premiership, or even in the remainder of the monarchical period.<sup>61</sup>

### Daud's Rule and Zahir's Coup

Daud adopted a much more autocratic attitude toward rule and the country's efforts at development; it was said he took Ataturk and Nasser as models.<sup>62</sup> He centered power in the premiership and introduced men from outside the traditional elite into the cabinet. He removed "dead wood" from the administration, dismissing members of the ruling family, among others, from comfortable sinecures.<sup>63</sup> Daud's autocracy won him enemies inside and out of the royal family. Among other things Daud proposed a constitutional change that would have formalized the existing distribution of power that favored the premiership over the throne.<sup>64</sup>

Daud's fall came when his government ran into a political crisis over relations with Pakistan. By this time a tradition had grown up of the removal of prime ministers over political issues—a tradition absent in the Gulf, where prime ministers are promoted to the rulership or die in office. In 1963 Daud resigned, as did his brother Naim, the minister of foreign affairs. Their departure left the cabinet devoid of members of the dynasty. Zahir then appointed, for the

first time in the modern history of Afghanistan, a commoner to the prime ministership. Yet Daud remained one of the most influential men in Afghanistan. By some measures, he rivaled the king in influence, for Daud had presided over the modern development of the Afghani military. Observers noted at the time of his dismissal that the officer corps retained a personal loyalty to Daud and that his failure to contest his removal from the cabinet was a matter of choice, not capacity. Daud does not seem to have regarded his resignation from the cabinet as the permanent end of his political career, but instead anticipated a return to political life.<sup>66</sup>

Shortly after dismissing Daud, King Zahir appointed committees to draft a new constitution, seeking, as it soon became clear, to use the process of constitution writing to exclude Daud from any further political role. The final version of the constitution included an article that prohibited members of the royal family from holding cabinet posts. This provision "shocked" Daud, its target, as it foreclosed the possibility of his constitutional return to power.<sup>67</sup>

With this the royal monopoly over the highest posts in the government came to an end and Afghanistan made a transition to a more common model of monarchism. After 1964 the monarchical regime took on a form, in a comparative perspective, not at all propitious for the survival of royal rule.<sup>67</sup> In an interview in 1964 Zahir acknowledged what he had done, saying that "the Royal Family can lay down the burden of a generation and let the Afghan educated class run the government."<sup>68</sup>

### **Daud's Countercoup and the Denouement**

In 1973 Daud resumed power through the only route available to him, destroying the constitution and with it the monarchy. Zahir's government ran into a crisis in 1973, as had Daud's a decade previous, and Daud took advantage of it to make his coup. The particular difficulty in 1973 was a drought that had caused famine in parts of the countryside, and the government's inept and sometimes corrupt response. Yet this did not lead to the coup in any direct way. No peasants marched on the capital, nor did they even revolt in the countryside. In Kabul no demonstrators threatened the regime in the street; indeed, no demonstrators were on the streets at all. If Middle Eastern monarchs could not endure such periods of political difficulty, there would be none left anywhere.

Nineteen seventy-three was the end of the monarchy, but not of Muhammadzai rule of Afghanistan: that waited another five years, until 1978. The army officers and leftist political organizations who put Daud into power, once having been invited into politics, were not so eager to leave. In 1978 Daud and more than a dozen members of his family were slaughtered in another coup.<sup>69</sup> The new regime then launched reforms that offended rural elites to a degree not seen since 1929. When rural uprisings threatened their clients in Kabul the Soviets invaded to save communism in Afghanistan, with consequences truly cataclysmic. Afghanistan, heretofore inching toward the edge of its abyss, now fell into it.

### **The Lessons of the Failure of the Afghani Monarchy**

One lesson of Afghanistan's experience for the Gulf monarchies and Saudi Arabia is clear: the gradual erosion of dynastic presence in top state offices—the replacement of dynastic monarchism by a more conventional sort of royal rule—invites revolution. The failure of dynastic monarchism in Afghanistan can be blamed most plausibly on family's separation of the constitutional power of the throne from the actual power of the premiership. By 1964, thirty-one years after his uncles raised him to the kingship, Zahir subordinated the premiership to the throne, but only at the cost of destroying dynastic domination of the state. Among the dynastic monarchies of the Gulf, those in which the prime minister is also the crown prince are clearly best positioned to avoid the sort of problems that beset the Afghani dynasty. These include Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. In Bahrain, by contrast, we find the ruler's brother governing as prime minister, while the ruler's son is the appointed crown prince. There are reports of tensions between the two men. The death of the ruler could be expected to set off a serious struggle for power between the new ruler and the prime minister. In the currently unsettled situation in Bahrain, this could be dangerous indeed for the dynasty.

### **Conclusion**

While the Afghani dynasty faced serious challenges from outside the regime, so have all Middle Eastern monarchies; in a comparative perspective the threats to the Afghani monarchy from outside

the ruling group were not greater than those encountered by other monarchies. The same can be said of Libya. Had dynastic control of the regime endured in Afghanistan and emerged in Libya in the 1950s, it is reasonable to suppose that these regimes might have survived, as have the dynastic monarchies of the Gulf.



## **Five Nondynastic Monarchies**

In none of the five monarchies dealt with in this chapter did the issue of dynastic monarchism arise in the twentieth century. In three cases—Iraq, Jordan, and Iran—the dynasties were new. The founding kings of the dynasties did not come to power with the aid of their relatives, and their relatives did not exercise a corporate influence over them. In the other two cases—Egypt and Morocco—the colonial powers interfered in the succession to a degree that the dynasties lost any influence, as a group, over who would be king.

My treatment of these monarchies will be brief. Those who specialize in these countries will find that I have left out much that is relevant. It proved impossible to give these five cases the treatment they deserved while keeping the work to a reasonable length and while maintaining the focus on the dynastic monarchies. I have therefore kept the cases short, discussing the implications of the cases for the argument as a whole while avoiding (as much as possible) entanglements in historical controversies or excessive detail. It is my hope that the treatment of these cases will be seen in light of their contribution to the central thesis of this work, and not as an attempt to reinterpret the histories of these monarchies.

**Egypt**

In its basic form the Egyptian constitutional monarchy resembled other large agrarian monarchies in which the landed nobility did not exercise an institutionalized hegemony over state power. A king, with his cronies at the palace, ruled, and presided over a corrupt parliamentary system. The army waited in the wings. In these respects it bore no small resemblance to the monarchies of Southern Europe, while they stood. The most glaring weakness of the monarchy—setting aside for a moment the temperament of its last king—lay in the composition of its officer corps, which was recruited from the urban educated middle class, not from the landowning elite. To this, however, we must add the problem of the last king. Faruq was incompetent, and the sort of monarchy that Egypt was could not tolerate, for long, incompetence on the throne.

**The Officers.** Many monarchs have lived out long and prosperous lives in happy disregard of the opinions of their subjects. Yet few kings have done so without enjoying the loyalty of the military. The landlords and emerging Egyptian bourgeoisie, the elites sustained by the Egyptian *ancien régime*, did not send their sons to serve in the army, where they might have defended the privileges of the monarchical elite.<sup>1</sup> Muhammad Neguib, the frontman for the Free Officers, wrote:

Except for the royal family, there was no aristocracy, and the landowners' and traders' sons who might have led the Armed Forces were too busy enjoying their wealth to be bothered with military service. The officers' corps in consequence was largely composed of the sons of civil servants and soldiers and the grandsons of peasants. . . . We officers, though no longer peasants ourselves, were deeply in sympathy with the plight of the peasants whose sons made up our ranks.<sup>2</sup>

Up to 1936 the government, and the British, had kept the officer corps "a strictly limited aristocratic bastion for the less intelligent sons of the rich."<sup>3</sup> After 1936 a *Wafd* government opened the military academy to secondary school graduates, men of modest social background but some educational achievement. Most of

the officers who overthrew Faruq in 1952 entered the officers' school in the first year of the relaxed regulations.<sup>4</sup> The divorce of those who profited from the standing order, and those who defended it, could only bode ill for the monarchy.

*The Parliament.* Constitutional monarchy, in the best of worlds, can reinforce the legitimacy of a monarchy by allowing the people, through their elected leaders, a voice in the making of policy. In Egypt the parliamentary system, while not as hopeless a failure as Iraq's, was seen by much of the public as little more than an arena in which politicians divided up, and fought over, the spoils of rule.

The weakness of the monarchical parliament, in its formative years, lay partly in the strength of its dominant party, the *Wafd*. In the early years, the party could win an overwhelming majority in any free election.<sup>5</sup> The leaders of the *Wafd* thought, not unreasonably, that their electoral success earned them a preeminent political role. The Egyptian kings thought otherwise—the electoral dominance of the *Wafd* threatened to reduce the monarchy to a political cipher, an ornament on a one-party regime. The kings, to prevent the erosion of their power, subverted the parliament and corrupted the electoral process. The struggle between the *Wafd* and the crown sapped the strength of the parliament, the parties and ultimately the monarchy.<sup>6</sup>

*Faruq.* Monarchies of the Egyptian sort place a great deal of power in the hands of one man. When primogeniture governs the succession, as it did in Egypt, no institutional mechanism exists to insure that the man who inherits power will use it wisely.<sup>7</sup> Faruq started his reign auspiciously, riding a wave of popularity. He used this popularity to his advantage in the battle against the *Wafd* in 1937, and retained it, in some measure, past the end of World War II.<sup>8</sup> In the Egypt of the 1930s and 1940s monarchism was not, in the eyes of much of the public, a hopeless bastion of reaction. It was Faruq (and Israeli armies) who deprived the monarchy of its supporters, not any inevitable rule of historical development. By the late 1940s Faruq's personal inadequacies had become a major political liability for the throne. Prominent historians have lain the fall of the monarchy at the door of his bad character: "It is clear," one has written, "that his private life represented a bottomless abyss into which the monarchy fell."<sup>9</sup> The defeat in 1948 dealt the

final, mortal blow to the regime. It exposed the incompetence of the senior officers with whom Faruq had good relations, and embittered the junior officers who suffered for the failings of their sovereign and his generals.<sup>10</sup>

The Egyptian monarchy did not lose its defenders through some general principle of monarchical fragility in the postwar era. The cynicism of parliamentary politics had a part in weakening the *ancien régime*; so did the 1948 war. Unable and unwilling to appeal to the electorate through the parliament, Faruq had to rely on other methods to seek support for his rule, and to prevent a situation in which officers could mobilize support within the army for his overthrow. He failed, and so did the monarchy.

### Iraq

Of the three monarchies that did not fall as a consequence of succession problems—Egypt, Iraq, and Iran—only in Iraq does the revolution have an air of inevitability. Faruq might have done far more to save his throne, and the Shah, as we shall see, brought on the revolution that overthrew him. In Iraq, in retrospect, the rulers made mistakes, but at the same time it is not clear what available strategy might have saved the regime. The monarchy's dilemma was stark: sons of the educated middle class staffed the officer corps, while the regime represented the landed elite and a wealthy stratum of politicians. Even oil wealth could not save the regime. In this respect, Iraq is a further illustration of the limited efficacy of oil in preserving monarchical rule.

***The Dynasty.*** Britain bears most of the responsibility for the invention of the Hashemite monarchies of Iraq and Jordan in the 1920s. The new kings, two sons of king Hussein of the Hejaz, ruled on the basis of British support. Their families had little role in Iraqi or Jordanian politics at the foundation of the monarchies, and in neither case did collateral members of the Hashemite house attempt to assert a dynastic right to determine the succession and to occupy high posts in the cabinet.

Three Hashemite kings reigned in Baghdad, beginning in 1921: Faysal bin Husayn, his son Ghazi, and his grandson, also named Faysal (see figure 8.1).<sup>11</sup> The succession passed by primogeniture,

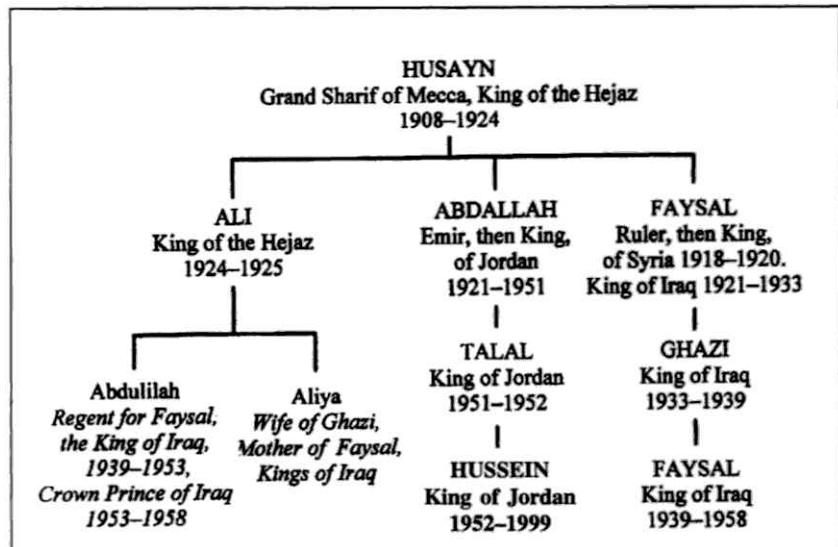


Figure 8.1 The Hashemite House of the Hejaz, Iraq, and Jordan

according to the constitution.<sup>12</sup> The last Iraqi Hashemite king came to power as a minor. His uncle, Abdulilah, ruled for more than a decade as regent, to 1953. He remained the power behind the throne until the revolution in 1958. Had the young King Faysal asserted his authorities against his uncle the resulting power struggle would have shaken the regime to its foundation. Faysal, however, never did seek to curb his uncle's authority, and the throne fell for reasons unrelated to dynastic conflicts.

**The Officers.** The Hashemite house recruited the officer corps of its army not from the sons of the landed elite but instead from the educated middle class, a group far more likely to be infected by the prevailing spirit of popular hatred against the regime in the 1950s. In a parallel with the influx of educated but middle class elements in the Egyptian army after 1936, the officers who overthrew the Iraqi monarchy, with one exception, all attended the Military Academy after 1934, the year that the admissions requirements were changed to require a secondary school education.<sup>13</sup>

The regime harbored a reasonable suspicion of the army and took extensive precautions to neuter it as a political threat. The regime gave army units very little ammunition, kept them stationed

away from Baghdad, and had a plan to blow up bridges and block roads in order to prevent the army from moving on the capital.<sup>14</sup> Abdulilah and Nuri al-Said also tried to buy the loyalty of the officer corps, offering the officers good salaries and valuable privileges. Yet money alone could not overcome the other factors that impelled the army into politics: the officers had a model (the 1952 revolution in Egypt) and an ideology in Arab nationalism. They resented the regime's attachment to Britain, especially its joining the Baghdad Pact after the 1956 attack on Egypt. A coup, it was thought, would serve the interests and honor of the army and the nation.

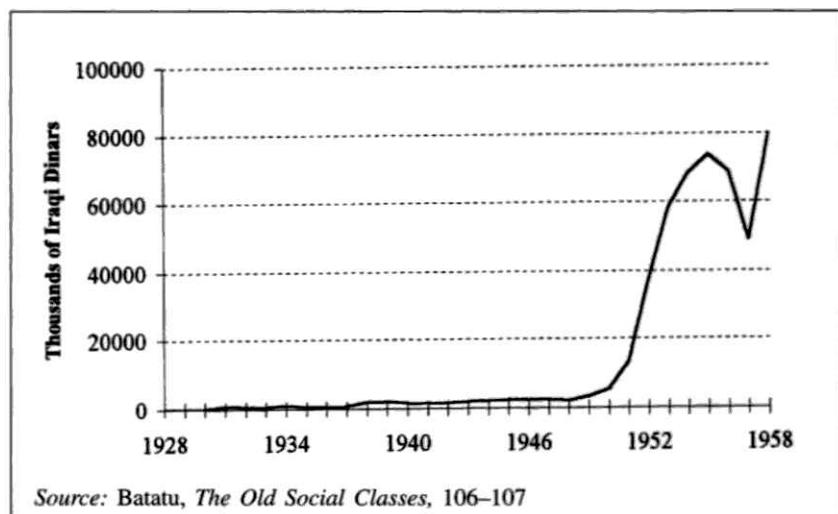
*The Regime.* The personal histories of the men who led the regime made the problem with the army, already quite difficult, even less tractable. Perhaps the defining episode in the history of the Iraqi monarchy came in 1941. In that year a nationalist coup brought to power a junta with Axis connections. The regent and a number of politicians (including Nuri al-Said) fled Iraq, returning only after the British invaded the country. The episode had far-reaching consequences on the stability of the monarchy, for the men the British returned to power in 1941—through the most obvious sort of British coercion—ruled Iraq all the way to 1958. The monarchical elite was indelibly associated with the British, and this made it far more difficult for the monarchy to get on the right side of nationalist opinion.<sup>15</sup> When nationalism and anti-British feeling reached a crescendo in the mid-1950s these men could not reorient the regime in a direction that would keep the army in the barracks.<sup>16</sup>

After 1941 the monarchy closely associated itself with the landed elite, in an alliance that did much to make the regime unpopular among educated urbanites and in the army. Landowning tribal shaykhs took a significant share of seats in parliament and the king's uncle Abdulilah married the daughter of a prominent shaykh. Many monarchical politicians, who themselves did not come from the landlord class, joined it by exploiting their offices to acquire extensive landholdings. This alliance between the political and landed elites came at the expense of those who worked the land. The political and economic elite together presented to Iraqi society a front of hard reaction. As Barrington Moore found in other countries this arrangement of political forces was barren ground for the growth of liberal politics.<sup>17</sup>

Iraq, like Egypt, had a parliamentary constitution dating to the 1920s, though the parliamentary experiment in Iraq proved even less successful than in Egypt. Elections reflected little but the will of the government that rigged them, and as a result no popular political parties could develop. The function of the parliament, indeed, was not to represent public opinion but instead to enrich the political class. It was recognized as such, and contributed nothing to the legitimacy of the monarchy.<sup>18</sup>

**Regime Strategy.** In the mid-1950s the Iraqi regime's survival strategy was (1) to buy off the army; (2) to render the army impotent to overthrow the monarchy through such devices as denying it ammunition; (3) to react to dissent in the cities with repression; and (4) to hope that oil revenues might improve the situation in the future.

In 1956 Nuri confessed to a British official, after mentioning the future benefits of oil: "If only we can get through the next five or six years successfully all will be well. . . . By then we shall see the results of what we have done for the people and there will be great prosperity."<sup>19</sup> Yet the regime could not simply purchase the loyalty of its people with oil. The monarchy tried to buy the allegiance of the officers, and failed.<sup>20</sup> Oil revenues, however, could



Source: Batatu, *The Old Social Classes*, 106–107

**Chart 8.1** Iraqi Government Revenues from Oil Sales, in thousands of Iraqi dinars

have solved the problem of the regime's alliance with the landlord class, and it was, in part, this alliance that made it difficult for the monarchy to try to adjust its policies in a direction more congenial to its nationalist opponents. In democratic Venezuela and monarchic Iran, by way of comparison, the regimes used oil revenues to defuse class conflict by buying out landed elites.<sup>21</sup>

The other strategy available to the regime—but one that it chose not to adopt—was to sharply adjust its policies in a direction more congenial to its critics, and to the army. The close link between the monarchical leaders—Abdulilah and Nuri al-Said—and the British made such a strategy enormously difficult.<sup>22</sup> The young king, Faysal, was in a far better position to initiate a liberalization. He was not compromised in public opinion, and Middle Eastern publics have shown a willingness to assume the best from young and not yet sullied kings. But he never emerged from behind the shadow of his uncle Abdulilah.

In July of 1958, the Iraqi army slaughtered the royal family: Nuri al-Said, too, was found and killed.<sup>23</sup> The vehemence of Baghdad's welcome of the new regime reflected the unpopularity of the old. The regime's strategy of repression, combined with efforts to buy off the army, met with a resounding failure. While it is clear, in hindsight, that this strategy produced just about the worst possible results, from the point of view of the regime and the nation, neither is it clear that the regime had another better strategy. It would have been difficult indeed for Abdulilah and Nuri al-Said to have radically reoriented the regime away from its former allies, the British and the landed class, and toward urban nationalists. This, however, is what the regime needed to do if its officer corps consisted of urbanites of modest backgrounds, and in the end the divergence of its policy from that which might have satisfied the army led to the monarchy's fall.

### Iran

The Iranian revolution is unlike any other in the Middle East, for the *ancien régime* collapsed while its leader, the Shah, retained control of the organs of the state. The army did not rebel, as it did in Iraq and in Egypt; nor did the regime split, as it did in Afghanistan and Libya. Street demonstrations and strikes, absent any mutiny within the army or fracture in the regime, overthrew the monarchy.

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the Iranian monarchy failed only after a long series of terrible miscalculations by its leader. These started with his utter lack of political sense in forcing political and economic reforms on his people in the 1970s.<sup>24</sup> Oil may have induced hubris, but oil did not force the Shah to use his considerable powers to so alienate his people that in the end he could only rule by ruthlessly repressing popular opposition. Yet when his policies bore their bitter fruit he did not ruthlessly repress, despite the urgent pleas of his generals to defend the regime. Only thus could a regime facing no threats from within the organs of the state, nor from armed insurgency, nor from foreign powers, fail in the face of demonstrations in the streets.

**The Dynasty.** Reza Khan, who founded the Pahlavi dynasty in the 1920s, did not belong to a current or former royal family, nor to a clan of tribal chieftains, nor to a clan famous for its religious learning, nor even to an urban notable family. He was instead a military officer who overthrew the previous dynasty and founded a new one in its stead. He did not come to power with the aid of his relatives, and he did not share power with them after founding the dynasty.<sup>25</sup> His brothers, cousins, and uncles figure hardly at all in studies of Iranian politics.

**The Officers.** In other monarchies the unpopularity of the regime has given army officers an opportunity to step into politics and depose their monarchs, knowing that they will win the plaudits of the people. Yet the Iranian military, far from exploiting the Shah's problems, remained remarkably loyal even as the regime crumbled.

The second Pahlavi Shah went to great lengths to monitor the military for any signs of incipient disloyalty. His methods were thorough and (after the Musaddiq episode) his success complete. Unlike the kings of Egypt and Iraq the Shah had his agents firmly under his control; indeed, he seems to have been a master at designing institutional arrangements that guaranteed the loyalty of his officers.<sup>26</sup> The Shah's endeavors succeeded to such a degree that when the monarchy tottered and fell, the military could not organize itself to protect its own interests against the revolution.<sup>27</sup>

**Absolutism in Iran.** The Shah had an early brush with revolution, in 1953. Had he lost his throne then, rather than in 1979, the

end of monarchism in Iran would be less puzzling, for the circumstances for stable monarchism were far less propitious in 1953 than they were two and a half decades later. Nationalists dominated the urban political scene and the loyalty of the army was suspect. Yet the Shah survived 1953, only to lose his crown permanently in 1979 after a revolution caused not by an ineluctable king's dilemma, but instead by his own avoidable errors.

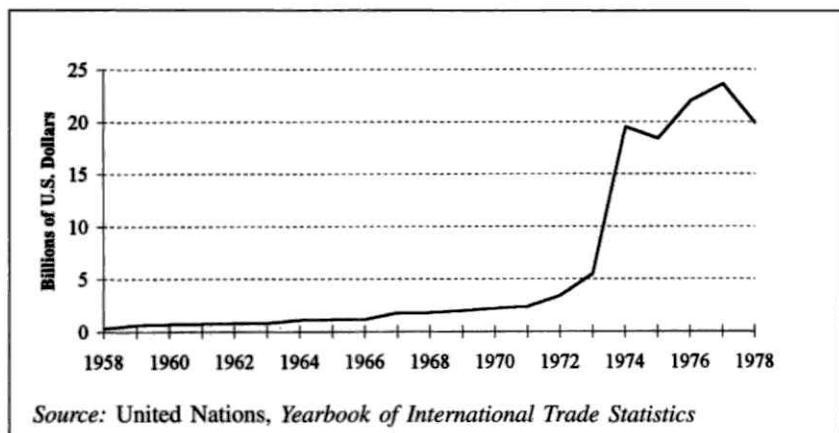
One of the lessons the Shah seems to have drawn from his experience in the 1950s was that he might do well to coopt the reformist program. The Shah's subjection of the parliament and his ministers to his will, along with the loyalty of the military, gave him a great degree of autonomy to pursue reforms, and oil wealth gave him the resources he needed to plan ambitiously. Yet rather than pursue reforms that would buttress political support for his regime, the Shah instead used his oil wealth to pursue his own fantastic vision of modernization from above. In the 1960s and especially the 1970s the Shah reorganized sections of Iranian life with blithe disregard for the opinions of his people or for the damage they might do him when riled; the Shah clearly saw himself as a modernizing monarch on an historical mission, and viewed opposition as so much reactionary carping.

The Shah's version of modernity did not involve sharing power with, or even seeking the advice of, his people. The last Iranian election under the monarchy that could claim even a relative openness was in 1961.<sup>28</sup> The Shah's efforts to create political participation were little more than determined expressions of autocracy. In the mid-1970s he set up the *Hizb-i Rastakhiz*, which some have suggested was inspired by Huntington's work on political participation.<sup>29</sup> If he and his advisers did not actually read Huntington they certainly made the same errors. The Shah modeled the *Hizb-i Rastakhiz* after parties in single-party authoritarian regimes, and shared with Huntington the conviction that single-party systems answer demands for political participation, regardless of the actual degree of popular input into the party.<sup>30</sup> Rather than mobilizing the participation in support of the regime, the *Hizb-i Rastakhiz* mobilized Iranians against the Shah's arrogance, alienating those whom it might have left neutral, and creating a situation rich in potential for the efforts of his sundry enemies.<sup>31</sup>

**The Revolution.** By 1977 the Shah began to realize the deepness of his unpopularity, and in the next year and a half tried to save his rule. Given the Shah's solid control over the state and its coercive instruments, his problem in this year and a half was to find, or create, a moderate middle that would support his rule, or at least not actively oppose it, and to split the opposition along the great fault line that divided it between leftist and religious groups, which later led to so much bloodshed after the defeat of their common enemy.

From 1977 on the Shah took steps toward a liberalization of Iranian politics and dropped the more noisome elements of his reforms. The trickle of liberalization that started in 1977 became a torrent in 1978. In August of 1978 he declared that upcoming parliamentary elections would be "one hundred percent free."<sup>32</sup> Yet each new concession, instead of garnering the Shah the support of the moderate middle, seemed an admission of weakness to the opposition elites on the left and on the right who correctly gained the impression that more and greater pressure would induce a collapse. In Iran in 1978 the Shah did not convince the leaders of the opposition that they needed to bargain.<sup>33</sup> The Shah, while he could have used the army to clear the streets, did not.<sup>34</sup> The Iranian monarchy fell because the Shah unnecessarily provoked his people, then would not defend his regime from them.

**Explanations of the Revolution.** Revolution rarely befalls a regime sure in its unity, possessed of the loyalty of its armed forces, unscathed by defeat in war or even of a crisis in state finance. The fall of the Shah is thus puzzling.<sup>35</sup> Some efforts to explain the puzzle have tried to shoehorn the revolution into broader theories that, on the face of it, the revolution contradicts. Thus one collaborative work that tries to develop a general theory of revolution finds both a fiscal crisis of the Iranian state and a failure of military loyalty. The debt level of the Iranian regime, it is argued, posed a "serious economic problem."<sup>36</sup> Certainly the economy in 1979 had encountered problems, yet no fiscal crisis as such existed, only the distempers of an overheated economy. Oil revenues had exploded in 1973, and in 1978 they still were far above their level before the oil crisis (see chart 8.2).



**Chart 8.2** Iranian Oil Revenues, in billions of U.S. dollars

The nature of the religious establishment, and of Shi'i doctrine, explains why the fall of the monarchy led not to the triumph of the leftists and nationalists but instead to the rule of Khomeini. Yet the particular characteristics of the Iranian religious establishment do not explain why the monarchy collapsed in the first place. Skocpol says that the fall of the Shah, "can only be explained by reference to the extraordinarily sustained efforts made by urban Iranians to wear down and undercut the Shah's regime."<sup>37</sup> These efforts, she explains, gained their strength from the organizational advantages of traditional parts of society, and from the peculiar willingness of Shi'i Muslims to "risk death at the hands of the army," "accepting casualties much more persistently than European crowds have historically done."<sup>38</sup> The Shah, in fact, did not wield the full strength of his army against his people. Had he followed the lead of his generals from the beginning, and had the army remained more or less intact, neither the organizational advantages of the *ulema* and the *bazaaris*, nor the willingness of Shi'a to invite death by walking into machinegun fire, would have sufficed to overthrow his regime.

Jimmy Carter's tempered criticisms of the Shah's human rights record at the beginning of his administration, and the often inept and confused American response to the erosion and collapse of the Shah's regime in 1978 and early 1979, are sometimes cited as contributing causes of the Iranian revolution. Yet such criticism could hardly bear responsibility for the failure of a regime that enjoyed

the full support of its army and security forces, maintained its internal unity, and controlled its national territory. Carter's concern with human rights, at most, provided a signal for the opposition to challenge the regime. That the monarchy, in the end, did not survive this challenge had everything to do with the regime itself and little to do with Jimmy Carter.<sup>39</sup>

Finally, the Iranian revolution is often explained in terms of the neopatrimonial nature of the Shah's rule. In one sense the emphasis on the personalist nature of the regime is crucial in understanding the revolution, for the ability of the Shah to paralyze the state and the army, denying anyone else the chance to take charge, contributed to the revolution. Yet popular hatred of the Shah that came to dominate the Iranian political scene did not emerge as the consequence of any inescapable condition which made it impossible for the monarchy to gain some measure of public support. The Shah created the hatred directed against him, and he did not have to.

Reform, often thought beyond the reach of neopatrimonial leaders, was not impossible for the Shah. In the mid-seventies, when he launched the *Hizb-i Rastakhiz*, he might instead have inaugurated a limited parliamentary opening in the style of the kings of Jordan or Morocco.<sup>40</sup> Even later, in 1977 and early 1978, the Shah might have made his moves toward liberalization not an admission of weakness—as they were seen—but instead an invitation to negotiate, if he had brought the protests under control. In the latter half of 1978 such a strategy still might have saved the monarchy, though by then the cost in lives would have become immense and the prospects for success uncertain. The weakness of the Iranian personalist—or neopatrimonial—monarchy did not lie in its *incapacity* to reform, but instead in the choice of its leader not to reform when he enjoyed a position of strength.

### Morocco

The fortunes of the Moroccan monarchy, in the period since independence, reached their nadir in 1972 when a Moroccan air force pilot almost shot down the king's airplane. The pilot shot out two engines on Hassan's Boeing, but missed the third. Had the pilot enjoyed better aim the monarchy would likely be no more, for the

monarchy lacked the strength to recover from the assassination of its king.

Dynastic monarchies do not suffer from close calls of this sort. The survival of the Moroccan monarchy is by no means merely accidental, but the nature of its monarchical institutions has made its survival dependent, to some degree, on the vagaries of fate: the wisdom of its kings, the moderation of the opposition, the bad aim of air force pilots.

It is to the events of the early 1970s that we can trace the general outlines of the monarchy's survival strategy in the past quarter century. This strategy involves a careful balancing of the political game in which the monarchy allows a measure of political participation, but never so much that its existence and ultimate authority is challenged. It is a game that has enabled the monarchy, since the early 1970s, to keep the army in the barracks.

***The Dynasty.*** The Alawi house, which has ruled Morocco for centuries, lost control of the country and its own dynastic fortunes during the period of French rule. When the French gave Morocco its independence in 1956 the royal house recovered its influence and triumphed in a struggle with other political forces to gain control of the Moroccan state. The success of the throne owes much to the political positioning of the monarchy by the Muhammad V. He made himself a symbol of Moroccan nationalist aspirations before 1956, and the French went so far as to briefly depose him in the early 1950s.<sup>41</sup> Muhammad began the era of independence as a living symbol of nationalist aspirations, and no Moroccan political group—much less a member of his family—successfully challenged his supremacy. His popularity, in the same decade that the Egyptian and Iraqi monarchs lost their thrones, belies any argument about an inevitable popular distaste for monarchism in this era in the Middle East.<sup>42</sup>

Members of the larger Alawi clan have held a couple of posts in the cabinet in the decades since independence, and no constitutional provision prohibits royals from holding cabinet portfolios. Yet the king's relatives do not maintain any sort of monopoly over the key cabinet posts.<sup>43</sup> The constitution specifies that the throne will pass by primogeniture, but gives the king the freedom to appoint a son other than the eldest heir apparent if he wishes.<sup>44</sup> Hassan

devotes much energy to training his eldest son and heir; indeed, he is famous for this as far away as the Gulf.

***The Coup Attempts and a New Strategy.*** In the first decade and a half of independence the Moroccan monarchs did little to encourage parliamentary politics and the parties. A parliamentary opening in 1963–1965 failed as a consequence of intransigence on both sides.<sup>45</sup> From 1965 to the early 1970s King Hassan relied increasingly on the loyalty of the largely Berber officer corps to enforce his autocracy. In 1971 and 1972 the military rebelled. The reasons are murky—perhaps the best explanation is that the officers saw the corruption and rot in the regime close up, and decided that they should preempt a coup by lower-ranking Arab officers.<sup>46</sup>

In the aftermath of the coup attempts, King Hassan reoriented his regime in a direction more congenial to urban and Arab (as opposed to Berber) opinion. The effort had two main thrusts: Hassan rallied nationalist opinion behind the throne (by making a claim on the former Spanish Sahara) and he initiated a political opening. In 1977, as the climax of his effort to place the regime on a firmer footing, the king held elections to a new parliament. The parties, chastened by the absolutist period and cowed by the king's newfound popularity, adopted a more conciliatory line toward the monarchy and won a sizable minority of the seats.<sup>47</sup>

In his 1970 *Commander of the Faithful* John Waterbury wrote that the Moroccan system, in its incarnation of the time, “cannot continue for too much longer.” By the early 1980s, however, observers were commenting on the newfound stability of the Moroccan monarchy.<sup>48</sup>

***Parties, Palace, and the Political Game.*** Political scientists tend to describe Moroccan politics in terms of a game of balancing. The king plays the role of arbiter and balancer, even by his own admission: he has written of his role that “As [the king] stands above political parties, he can judge and sanction with complete impartiality, and without being accused of favouring one clan to the detriment of another.”<sup>49</sup> Waterbury went so far as to view Moroccan politics as an extension, or a legacy, of the politics of segmentary opposition as set out by Evans-Pritchard, with the various sections of the political elite balancing against each other. The king, at the

top, maintains the balance of the segmentary system: "The function of arbiter has been consciously and publicly adopted by independent Morocco's two monarchs."<sup>50</sup>

After the coup attempts, and especially in the latter part of the 1970s and since, the king has realized that the political game plays best, or most securely, when the political parties are in the game and have real connections to society.<sup>51</sup> Hassan does not exclude the opposition parties from the spoils of participation in the game. Nor does he try to separate the parties from their popular bases: the king recognizes that an organized opposition, with which he can deal, is less threatening than inchoate rioting in the streets. At the same time Hassan is hardly willing to allow these parties to take over power, and he does not handle the parties with kid gloves.

The opposition parties, for their part, must balance between the rewards of playing the game, the demands of their cadres, and the need to maintain a popular base (by which they maintain their value in the game). They appear to recognize that they do not have the capacity to end the game in their own favor, and that its end by someone else would hardly be in their interests.<sup>52</sup>

Cynicism is the danger of this sort of political game. When everyone recognizes that it is a game, they cease, or may cease, to think that the parliament provides a method of constraining the power of the elite—monarch and party leaders alike—in a way that impels this elite to pay some heed to the interests of others in society. In the Iraqi monarchy the cynicism of the parliamentary game went to an extreme, and it was hard to even pretend that the parliament was more than a means toward the further enrichment of an isolated elite. In Egypt the parliament was not so debilitated, but it did not, toward the end, encompass large parts of the political spectrum. The Southern European monarchies suffered from similar problems of chronic dishonesty in the elections and the failure of the parliament to inspire much beyond cynicism.

It cannot be said, by any means, that the Moroccan monarchy has avoided the danger of this sort of cynicism in its parliament. The interior ministry plays a major role in the elections, and it is said of the 1977 and 1984 elections that the parties and palace met beforehand to decide upon a suitable division of the seats in the forthcoming parliament. Turnout for Moroccan elections is relatively low, and many protest ballots are cast.<sup>53</sup> A 1996 referendum on a new constitution, one that reformed the parliamentary system

in a way more favorable to the opposition, passed with a 99.65 percent yes vote, throwing the credibility of the entire exercise into doubt. Yet the trend in parliamentary elections has been positive. The elections of 1993 were the fairest that Morocco has seen to that point, though in the end the regime ensured that it received a parliamentary majority through the third of the seats not filled by direct election. The 1996 amendment to the constitution abolished indirectly elected seats in the lower house of parliament, and the 1997 elections maintained the advances of 1993. Islamists made their first organized appearance in the parliament, with 12 Islamist deputies (of 325).<sup>54</sup> In March 1998 the king appointed a government headed by the leader of an opposition party, a former political prisoner who had spent 15 years in exile. The "ministries of sovereignty," however, remained safely in the hands of the king's men and were not turned over to the opposition.<sup>55</sup>

*The Survival of the Monarchy.* It is perhaps most revealing to set Hassan's survival against the Shah's fall.<sup>56</sup> The Shah, awash in oil, did nothing to build political organizations—a parliament and parties—that could create support for his regime. Instead, he tried to build a single-party monarchy, and failed. King Hassan, poorer but wiser, might play a cynical game with his parliament, but at least he plays it. The Shah thought himself above such things, but found out he was not. In the absence of dynastic monarchism kings must be politicians, and good ones: they must strive to make themselves useful and popular among their people.

### Jordan

King Hussein's long reign has seen more than its share of drama. Most of it has been produced by events outside the borders of the state which threatened, in one way or another, the longevity of the Hashemite throne in Jordan. It is surprising that the monarchy has survived these international events. It is also not the direct concern of this work, which focuses on the failure of internally generated revolutions.

With this caveat in mind, we may identify the mid-1950s as perhaps the formative political experience of the postwar Jordanian monarchy, in terms of domestic political arrangements. When Hussein took up his constitutional powers in May of 1953, Glubb

Pasha, a Briton, commanded the army with a number of other British officers. Yet this situation, in the superheated politics of the Arab world in the mid-1950s, made Hussein a tool of the British in the eyes of neighboring Arab powers and his own people. In 1956 Hussein decided to step out from behind the protection of the British and try to survive on his own. He dismissed Glubb Pasha and Arabized the top command of the army.

Within a year, the army tried to make a coup against the throne. It failed largely because Glubb Pasha had left behind a valuable legacy: he had recruited bedouin (rather than townspeople or Palestinians) into the ranks of the combat units. The rank and file chose their king over their officers in 1957.<sup>57</sup>

In the next three decades Hussein ruled autocratically. He forswore elections—or free elections—and reorganized his regime around bedouin and East Bank Jordanian elements.<sup>58</sup> The allegiance of these groups to the monarchy allowed Hussein to repress, rather than try to reach a compromise with, his nationalist and Palestinian opponents. The importance of the support of East Bankers for the monarchy, and against the Palestinians, was clearest in the 1970 civil war, when Hussein's army defeated rebelling Palestinian militias that had taken over parts of Jordanian territory.

If we turn to broader issues of comparison, it is not clear that the unequivocal lesson of the Jordanian experience is that specifically *bedouin* armies make Middle Eastern monarchical regimes more stable. The Gulf states have bedouin armies, and they have created these armies often in a deliberate attempt to frustrate the revolutionary ambitions of nationalists. Yet, except in Bahrain, the distinction between bedouin and nonbedouin does not coincide with a larger political division such as that between the East Bankers and Palestinians in Jordan. In the coup attempt of 1957 we can reasonably argue that the bedouin—specifically—saved the Jordanian throne. In 1970 however the East Bankers (and not specifically the bedouin) preserved the monarchy from the militias.

*The Erosion of East Bank Support.* Hussein's reliance on bedouin and East Bank support allowed him to survive three decades of more or less absolutist rule. In 1989, however, the foundations of his rule began to show signs of serious erosion. Several towns in southern Jordan exploded in riots against the government's IMF-

inspired economic policies, forcing the army to intervene and leading to a number of deaths. The riots were worst in traditionally royalist cities such as Ma'an, Kerak, and al-Tafilah; Palestinians as a group did not riot.<sup>59</sup> The upheaval threatened Hussein's regime in a way quite different than had the civil war against the Palestinian militias in 1970.

Hussein responded to the 1989 riots with a controlled political liberalization, part of an effort to broaden the base of his regime's support in the face of the weakening of its main pillar. Two political scientists, citing the rentier state theory, have explained this opening primarily as a response to the economic pressures on the Jordanian state, arguing that the crisis in state revenues led to the decision to broaden political participation.<sup>60</sup> While the riots clearly had an economic motivation, the regime reacted with a liberalization, instead of repression, because of who was rioting.<sup>61</sup>

Hussein's decision to liberalize was made easier—or possible—because he could do so from a position of relative strength, and because there was little immediate risk that the parliament would run out of his control, as it had in 1957. Nationalism, as a political force, had little of the influence it enjoyed in the mid-1950s, and the Palestinians had shown a certain moderation by not participating in the 1989 rioting. In broadening the base of his regime, however, Hussein did not turn his back on his traditional supporters: it is no coincidence that the drawing of electoral districts favored Kerak, Ma'an, and al-Tafilah more than any other districts in Jordan (see chart 8.3).<sup>62</sup>

Following the elections Hussein convoked a national conference to draft a pact setting out the rules of the political game: the opposition acknowledged the preeminent place of the king, while the king promised to respect political pluralism and parliamentary political life.<sup>63</sup>

In the later 1990s, the political climate in Jordan has shown a marked deterioration from the cooperative atmosphere of the early 1990s. Hussein has responded to deep opposition to the peace treaty with Israel largely by ignoring it. The main Islamist group, along with several leftist parties, boycotted the 1997 parliamentary elections, a clear and significant blow to the vitality of parliamentary politics in the kingdom. Yet the institutional framework for further political openings remains in place. Political openings in the Middle

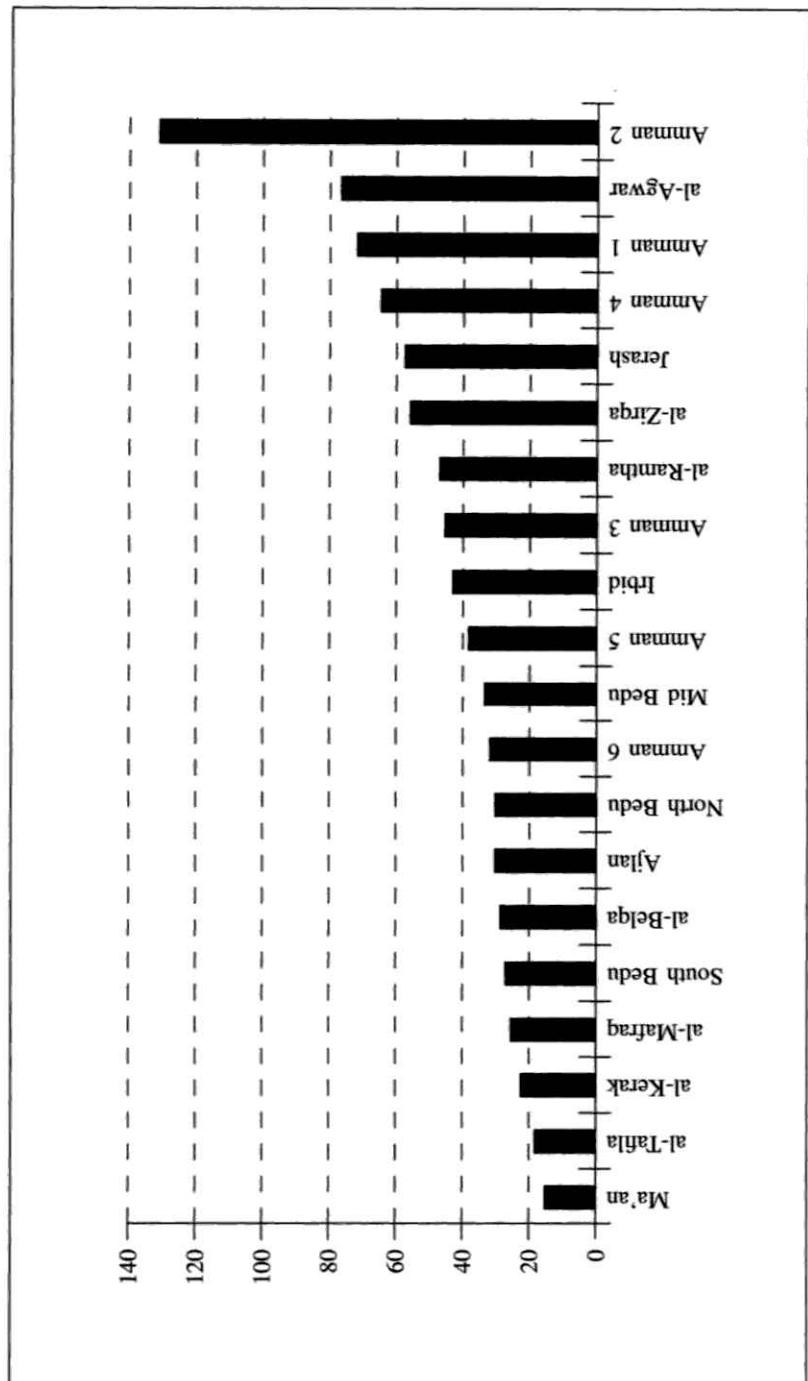


Chart 8.3 Voters per Seat by District in the Jordanian Elections of 1989 (thousands of voters)

East monarchies happen cyclically, and there is at least reason to hope that the next cycle may prove more enduring, and achieve deeper gains, than the last.

**The Dynasty.** The Hashemite house is from the Arabian peninsula, and shares a common cultural inheritance with the dynasties of the Gulf and Saudi Arabia. A dynastic monarchy did not emerge in Jordan at least in part as a result of the lack of collateral Hashemites in the emirate in the early years. The Hashemite presence in Jordan was very thin in the first decades of the monarchy: Hussein's grandfather Abdallah appointed only one relative to a post in his first governments (see figure 8.2).<sup>64</sup> He had only two sons, to whom he gave little authority. During the dynastic crisis of the early 1950s (after Abdallah's assassination, and during the reign of his mentally unstable son Talal) the Hashemites virtually disappeared from the Jordanian political scene: there were, at one point, no males of the house in Amman.<sup>65</sup>

Even in this situation, however, the dynasty still asserted a right to control the succession. In the dynastic crisis of the early 1950s the Hashemite dynasty's most active member, the regent for

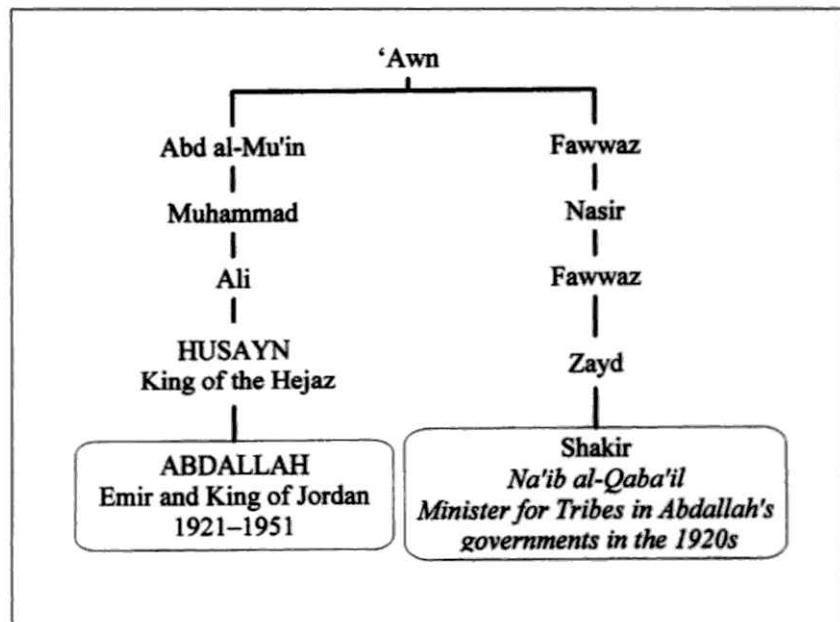
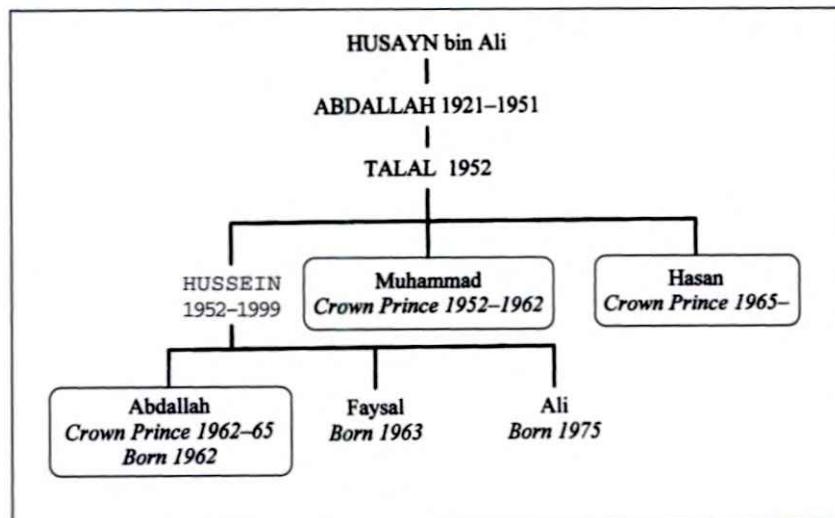


Figure 8.2 Hashemites in the Trans-Jordanian Governments of the 1920s

the Iraqi king Abdulilah (and Talal's first cousin, see chart 8.1) appeared in Amman. He came, "not as Regent of Iraq but as senior member of the Hashemite family."<sup>65</sup> He was rebuffed, but he and his family did not doubt their right to interfere in the issue.

In recent years Hussein has shown what appears to be an explicit desire to recreate in Jordan a succession mechanism that resembles that of the dynastic monarchies. The Jordanian constitution specifies primogeniture as the succession mechanism, and includes the usual highly detailed description of who succeeds should the king have no sons, or no brothers, or no uncles, and so forth.<sup>66</sup> King Hussein, however, appears to have recognized the dangers posed to Middle Eastern monarchies by the issue of the succession, and by the system of primogeniture. Hussein appointed the current crown prince, his younger brother Hassan, on the basis of his qualifications to rule and his ability to pick up the reins of government on short notice (see figure 8.3).<sup>67</sup>

In 1994 Hussein expressed his desire, in a speech to the nation, that the Hashemites should abandon primogeniture altogether, saying "the descendants of Husayn bin Ali will choose among themselves and will give the *bay'a* to whomever they think capable."<sup>68</sup> This is the succession mechanism of the dynastic monarchies of the



**Figure 8.3** King Hussein's Crown Princes

Gulf. While its adoption by the Hashemites (which requires a modification of the constitution) is unlikely to make Jordan a dynastic monarchy, it ensures that future kings will have the qualifications necessary to defend the interests of the dynasty.

*The Survival of the Monarchy.* The most important factor that Middle Eastern monarchs must take into account in choosing their policies is the need to keep the army in the barracks. Usually this entails avoiding widespread popular discontent with the monarchy. In Jordan, however, the division between East Bankers and Palestinians, and the presence of the former in the army, has made it possible for the monarchy to adopt, at times, a highly repressive policy toward many of its citizens.

In the absence of dynastic monarchism the prospects for the monarchy in the medium or long run are hardly certain. King Hussein had done much to try to avoid a succession crisis—one of the main threats to Middle Eastern monarchies—after his passing. Beyond this, Hussein and his successors must ensure that a sufficient number of Jordanians, especially in the military, calculate that they are better off with than without a Hashemite monarchy. The November 1997 elections did not provide reassurance in this regard, and there are increasing rumblings of dissent even among traditional supporters of the throne. Nonetheless, few are willing to imagine Jordan without its monarchy. The task of Jordanian kings, in the future, is to avoid any missteps that would change this.

In early 1999, as this book was going to press, King Hussein died. On the eve of his death, in a political upset that surprised and transfixed observers, he appointed his son Abdallah as his heir. He explained his actions in a long and sometimes rambling letter to his brother in which he took Hassan to task for his opposition to the notion of a family council. In Hussein's vision the council would have had a role in appointing the new crown prince after Hassan became king. Hussein clearly expected such a family council to return the succession to his line. Hassan, by opposing the idea, signaled that he intended to appoint his own eldest son crown prince after Hussein's death, even against the wishes of Hussein and the larger Hashemite clan.

Abdallah, when he became king, chose his brother Hamza as crown prince, reportedly after a family council ratified his father's

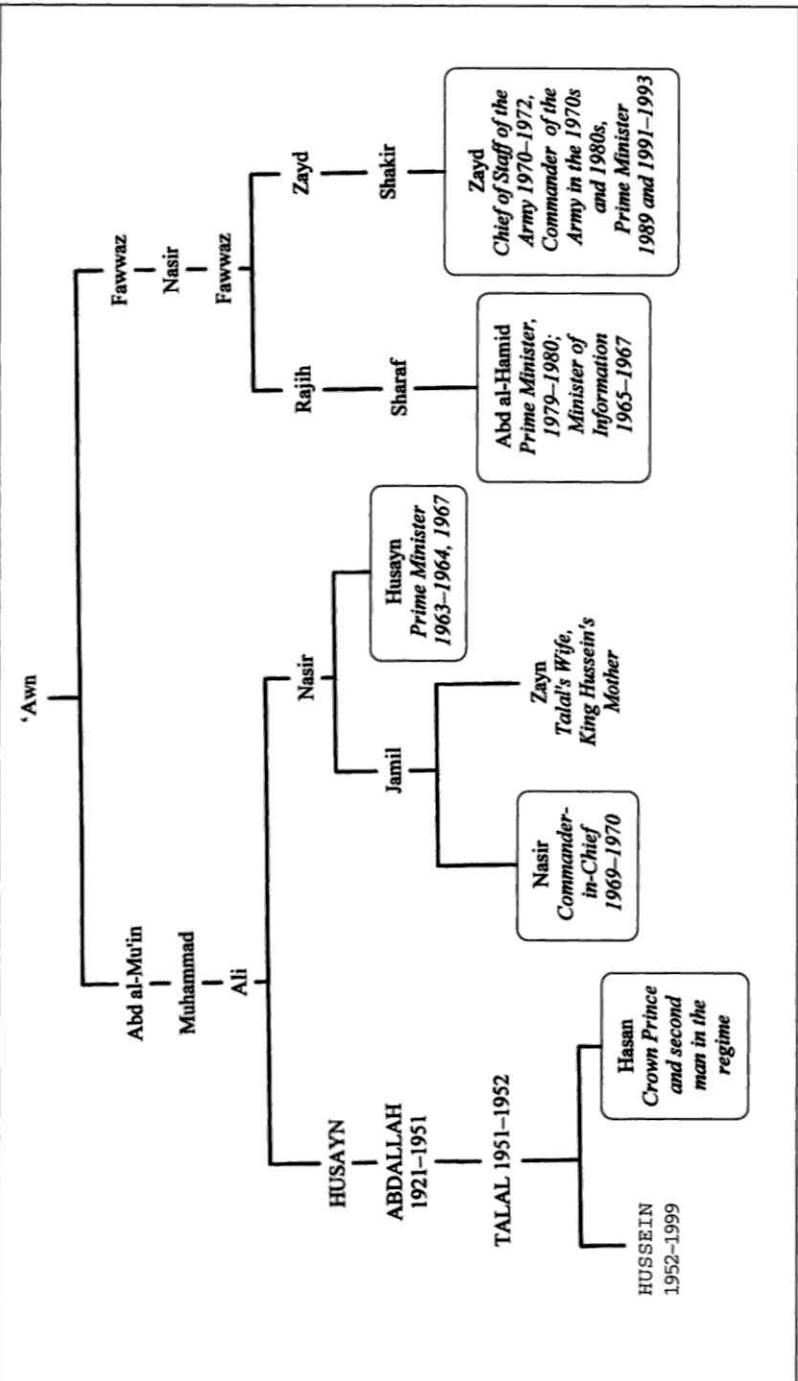


Figure 8.4 Prominent Hashemites in State Posts During Hussein's Reign

wishes in this regard. Abdallah may well be able to contain the palace intrigue that accompanied his father's illness, and an increased role for the family council may aid in this. But Jordan is not a dynastic monarchy, and a family council alone will not make it one: the top posts in the cabinet are not monopolized by the Hashemite clan, and Jordan lacks the sort of self-regulating mechanism within the dynasty that has kept the Gulf regimes in power. Given the weakness of the dynastic institution, the new king would do well to devote energy to creating strong institutions of political participation.

### Conclusion

The absence of dynastic domination of the state made the five Middle Eastern monarchies I discuss in this chapter presumptively fragile, but it did not foreordain revolutions. The Moroccan and Jordanian monarchies have survived, but only by a thin margin.

In Egypt and Iraq the monarchical regimes fell to coups made by their militaries, by men who had little allegiance to the agrarian landlords and emerging bourgeoisies who benefited from the monarchical old regimes. In both cases a comparison may be made with the agrarian monarchies of Europe: in most European monarchies, especially in the north, the landed nobility—a separate legally defined caste—dominated the officer corps and ensured that the army would play a conservative political role.

In Egypt, and less so Iraq, the quality of the king's statecraft must be cited as a contributing factor to the revolution. In Iran the role of political expertise is even more pronounced. The Shah persevered through the most difficult part of his reign, in the early 1950s, only to induce—through his own hubris—an otherwise unnecessary revolution in the 1970s. In the dynastic monarchies the strength of the ruling institution insulates the regime from the foibles of the men who lead it (or ensures that those inclined to foibles do not rule). In monarchies that lack this institution, or one with a similar effect, the strategic choices of the monarchs take on a far greater importance, because these kings have a much smaller margin for error.

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## **Dynastic Monarchism and the Persistence of Hereditary Rule**

There are two distinct forms of monarchism in the Middle East. One is resilient, and the other is not. Any effort to understand why some Middle Eastern monarchies survive and others fail must begin with an understanding of the differences between these two sorts of monarchical institutions.

In the dynastic monarchies the ruling family forms itself into a ruling institution, monopolizing the key offices in the state. The dynasty reserves the right to choose the monarch by family consensus, and this succession mechanism gives these regimes their inner dynamic, structuring incentives within the ruling group so that individual shaykhs and princes have positive reasons to take actions that preserve the political hegemony of the family as a corporate group.

The other brand of monarchism found in the Middle East is much more familiar to us than dynastic monarchism. In these regimes the king rules, with his courtiers and palace politicians. The king maneuvers among various forces—the army, the parliament, and the parties—and when he loses his balance the monarchy falls.

## Dynastic Monarchy

The succession mechanism is the key to the resilience of the dynastic monarchies. Rulers and aspiring rulers need to build family coalitions to gain and keep power, and to do this they must offer their relatives valuable goods. When the bureaucratic state emerged in Arabia at the dawn of the oil era rulers and aspiring rulers distributed offices in the state to their relatives as a part of intrafamily bargaining. This distribution of posts created a dynastic domination of the new petro-state. And it is precisely this monopoly of high state posts by members of the dynasty that ensures the reproduction of dynastic monarchism. The dynasty, by virtue of its control of the state, has the power to ensure that the family, and no other group, selects the monarch. To achieve the rulership an aspiring shaykh or prince must confirm the tenure of his relatives in their posts, and thus is perpetuated dynastic monarchism.

When disputes among contenders for the succession grow serious—as they sometimes do, for the rulership cannot be divided—the other members of the ruling family bandwagon on the side of one contender. Were wings of the dynasties to balance we would see potentially destructive battles that would split the ruling elite and the state apparatus into separate warring camps. While we see occasional balancing in low-level disputes, when arguments threaten dynastic power the family will eventually choose, by consensus, one faction over the other, resolving the dispute.

### The Evidence

There is a strong positive correlation between dynastic monarchism and the resilience of monarchies in the Middle East. All dynastic monarchies have survived, all monarchies in which the constitution explicitly forbade members of the dynasty from holding cabinet posts have failed. This, however, leaves three intermediate cases, Jordan, Morocco, and Oman. In chapter 1, I argued that we should expect to see less stability in these countries than in the dynastic monarchies. In one case, Oman, we see few real threats to the monarchy, but Oman also much resembles the dynastic monarchies of the other GCC states. The two other intermediate cases, Jordan and Morocco, clearly exhibit less stability than any of the surviving monarchies. King Hussein's regime had a dangerous brush with

revolution in 1957. Had the Moroccan Air Force pilots who tried to shoot down King Hassan's Boeing in 1972 disabled all three, rather than only two, of the engines on his plane, the Moroccan monarchy would not have survived. None of the dynastic monarchies, by contrast, have ever faced imminent failure as a result of threats from domestic challengers.

We can identify several plausible reasons to think that dynastic monarchies might be more stable than other sorts of monarchies: that is, going beyond a simple correlation, there are good reasons to think that dynastic monarchism actually causes resilience.

*The Monopoly of State Power and the Difficulties of Coup Making.*

In dynastic monarchies shaykhs and princes occupy the most important posts in the regime. Outsiders find it very difficult—indeed, thus far impossible—to use state institutions to overthrow the ruling families. The most sensitive positions in the regime—the ones from which it would be easiest to muster the resources to make a revolution—are held by members of the dynasty, who do not allow outsiders to build up positions of independent power at the top of the regime. What is more, the sheer profusion of shaykhs and princes with important roles in the regimes makes it immensely difficult to launch a coup, for there are too many of them to reliably capture or kill in one blow. These are not, as was once said of the Shah's Iran, "one-bullet" regimes.

*The Succession and the Quality of Leadership.* In *The Social Contract* Rousseau commented on the dilemmas of various methods of choosing kings:

Thrones have been made hereditary within certain families, and an order of succession has been established to forestall dispute when a king dies. . . . The risk of having children, monsters, or imbeciles for rulers has been deemed preferable to the conflicts involved in choosing a good king.<sup>1</sup>

Like most fixed rules of succession primogeniture makes the selection of the ruler a lottery of birth. Efforts may (or may not) be made to form the character of the man, but the raw material is a given, and often it is found that gold cannot be made of lead. The dynastic monarchies, by contrast, avoid both sides of Rousseau's

dilemma. They chose, from among themselves, kings who are qualified (not "children, monsters, or imbeciles"), yet at the same time they also contain the resulting disputes over the succession. As a consequence Gulf leaders are usually of a reasonable, if not always sterling, quality, at least from the point of view of the other members of the dynasty.

***The Transfer of Power.*** Succession by dynastic consensus avoids damaging struggles for power upon the accession of a new ruler. Usually the family chooses the second most powerful man in the realm to be heir apparent. Rule never goes to children or men who lack political support within the family. A new king does not need to wrest power from men who have wielded it in his name in his minority, or who accumulated authority under the reign of his predecessor.<sup>2</sup>

***Accountability of the Ruler to the Dynasty.*** Should a ruler in a dynastic monarchy adopt policies that the family feels endangers its core interests, the family has the authority to remove the monarch and replace him with another member of the dynasty. In 1978 the Shah's wife told James Bill that her husband no longer listened even to her advice, and that there was virtually no one left who could tell him things he did not want to hear.<sup>3</sup> In dynastic monarchies there is always a member of the ruling family who can tell the king or the emir things that do not please him. If he does not listen, the family can remove him. The Iranian, Egyptian, and Libyan monarchies would have done well to have had someone with the power to call the monarch to account in the name of preserving the regime.

***The Dynasty as an Information Network.*** The dynastic monarchies, by virtue of the size of their ruling families, their wide distribution throughout state and society, and the tradition of consultation in these societies, do not lose touch with their subjects. The families act as information networks, and those who make decisions have the information necessary to adjust ruling family policies in ways that reinforce the allegiance of its supporters while dampening the ire of its enemies. The dynasties organize politics around the ruling family, fracturing society (outside the dynasties themselves) into a pyramid of clientelistic relations.

## Counterfactuals

Can we plausibly argue that the overthrown monarchies, had their dynasties dominated the state, would have survived, and that the dynastic monarchies, had the kings and emirs excluded their families from rule, would have fallen to revolutions?

In Libya the counterfactual is plausible, and it is in Libya that we find the strongest evidence that it is indeed the role of the dynasty in the state that makes the Gulf monarchies resilient. Libya strongly resembles the Gulf monarchies, in its economic structure, in the origin of its tribes, in its modest population, and in the expectation of the members of the dynasty that they should have a share of the king's power. Yet King Idris, unlike the Gulf monarchs, successfully foiled the attempts of his relatives to assert a right to state offices. The result, in 1969, was a succession crisis and revolution. Had the ruling family dominated the state in the style of the dynastic monarchies, and had the family determined the succession by consensus, we can reasonably suppose that a king would still rule Libya.

In Afghanistan too the counterfactual has a great deal of plausibility. In the first decades of the Muhammadzai dynasty—which was founded in 1929—the royal family occupied the key state offices. Yet the family did not choose the king by consensus, and thus the family lacked the mechanism with which the dynasties of the Gulf perpetuate their hold on state power. By 1964 the king had expelled his relatives from the state and had put in place a new constitution that barred his relatives from cabinet posts. A decade later the king's first cousin, a former prime minister, overthrew the monarchy and declared a republic. The failure of the Afghani monarchy came about as a direct consequence of the king's exclusion of his relatives from state power.

The counterfactual question—would the revolution have succeeded had the dynasty dominated the state?—has a good deal of plausibility in the cases of Libya and Afghanistan. In other monarchies it seems somewhat out of place, for the issue of dynastic monopoly of state offices did not arise in Iran, Egypt, or Iraq in this century. Yet the counterfactual still throws some light on the weakness of the Iranian and Egyptian monarchies. The apparent reliance of these regimes on the judgment and character of one man can be understood through something other than a “great man”

theory of history, as something other than an accident: the political institutions of these monarchies place an enormous amount of influence in the hands of one man, chosen by a lottery of birth. In Egypt the lottery yielded Faruq, a man hardly capable of bearing the responsibility of his own fate, much less that of a nation. Neither was Iran lucky with its last Shah, a man who somehow forgot that a king, like any ruler, must pay some heed to maintaining the allegiance of his people.

Is it plausible to reverse the counterfactual, and argue that the dynastic monarchies, if the family did not share in rule, would have fallen to revolutions? Certainly there are a number of threats to which these monarchies would have been exposed, threats they avoid as a result of family involvement in the state. Listing them is redundant: they are the obverse of the causes suggested above for the stability of dynastic monarchism. We may, however, get a flavor of the possibilities if we imagine Faruq and his palace clique ruling Saudi Arabia.<sup>4</sup>

### **Other Explanations**

A number of the hypotheses, adduced at the beginning of this work, have not proven good explanations for the pattern of monarchical resilience and failure in the Middle East. Foremost among these are oil revenues and education, both intuitive explanations for the puzzle of monarchical survival: their failure defines why the question is interesting. Other proposed explanations, such as the composition of the military, help us to understand why some monarchies survive and others fail, but do not have the explanatory power of the distinction between dynastic and nondynastic monarchies.

### **Education**

In chapter 1, I showed the lack of correlation between the size of the new middle class and the incidence of revolution (see chart 1.1). I do not argue, however, that education is irrelevant. Ideas are important. Republicanism, in its various forms, is a powerful ideological alternative to monarchism throughout the region, and this is a result of the spread of modern ideas and education. Whether or not the intellectual challenge to hereditary rule succeeds, how-

ever, has everything to do with the strength of regimes, and little to do with the demographic weight of the group that has received advanced educations.

### **Rentierism, Revolution, and Resilience**

The variable that I find most convincing in explaining why some monarchies survive and others do not—dynastic monarchism—occurs only in states with plentiful oil revenues. I have shown how the dynasties captured the petro-states at the dawn of the oil age, inaugurating their current political predominance. Oil is important—how could it not be in these states?—but only as an intervening variable. Oil explains nothing about politics until we understand how it effects existing political institutions. When we understand that, then we can explain why some oil-rich states have revolutions and why others do not, or, for that matter, why some have parliaments and others do not.

In chapter 1, I observed that few academic treatments of the monarchies make any extensive attempt to attribute their resilience solely to oil revenues. Nonetheless one finds frequent offhand explanations of the survival of the Gulf monarchies that cite oil, and the notion that the rulers “buy off” dissent comes up in virtually every conversation I have had on the topic. The intuitive attraction of the explanation is strong. Let us set aside, for a moment, the kings who have lost their thrones even while rich beyond the dreams of, well, kings, and instead ask whether or not the logic of the “buy-off” theory of stability makes sense.

(1) It is sometimes suggested that the citizens of the oil monarchies feel gratitude to their rulers for giving them money, and that this gratitude translates into political support. Yet gratitude results from the receipt of a gift. The Gulf Arabs, however, think that they themselves, as citizens, own the oil, *not* the ruling families. Even the Saudi Basic Law of 1992, which unapologetically gives the king virtually absolute political power, concedes that the Kingdom’s natural resources belong to the state, and that “the public funds are sacrosanct, and it is the duty of the state to preserve them.”<sup>6</sup> Few are particularly grateful on receipt of something they think is theirs in the first place. Indeed, in the oil monarchies the strongest complaint against the dynasties—shared across ideological boundaries—is that

they waste and squander the oil wealth, a complaint with more than a little cause.<sup>6</sup> Everywhere in the Gulf (except Dubai) the ruling families have shown themselves to be at best indifferent stewards of the public fisc. The ruling families waste and steal truly staggering sums through fraud, kickbacks, inefficiency, poor planning, and inattention.

(2) Oil kings have a great deal more money than do other rulers. This, it might be supposed, allows them to buy larger amounts of support, purchasing allegiance wholesale rather than retail. Yet the price of support is not fixed: it is subject to inflation. At the beginning of the oil era rulers, perhaps, had enough money to meet what the people perceived to be their legitimate needs. The perceptions of Gulf citizens of their reasonable needs, however, rapidly caught up to the actual level of oil revenues, and then exceeded them. Outsiders compare the living standards of the Gulf Arabs with those of their parents and grandparents, or to what they would be without oil. This is misleading. The Gulf Arabs feel an entitlement to their share of their countries' oil wealth. From this vantage point the relevant comparison is not with the poverty of their grandparents, but with the astounding wealth of the ruling clans.

(3) There is some attraction to the argument that oil revenues have stabilizing effects not in relation to their absolute size but, instead, to the degree that they show increases from previous years. When revenues are rising, oil kings can satisfy more demands as time goes on and avoid falling too far behind the curve of growing expectations. Yet even this thesis meets with difficulties. The Iraqi, Libyan, and Iranian monarchs all lost their thrones in eras of increasing revenue.<sup>7</sup>

(4) It is still the ruler, and his relatives, who determine how the money is spent, and by diverting it in the right directions the dynasty might make the regime more stable. The family can selectively distribute rewards to its followers in an effort to build political loyalty, or to its opponents in an effort to buy out their opposition. Yet those who do not receive a substantial piece of the pie often know it and do not like it. The distribution of money by the ruling families thus has not only the potential to create support for the regime but also to make enemies; in a sense the one is a direct consequence of the other if those who get a smaller share of the pie realize their comparative misfortune and cannot attribute this to any principle of fairness in the distribution of awards.<sup>8</sup>

(5) When squeaking wheels get grease, all wheels have an incentive to squeak. A consistent policy of buying off opposition tends to breed more of it. Rentier kings must be able to plausibly threaten to repress dissent. This requires loyal security forces and a loyal army.

(6) A rentier king, unlike some other rulers, can always make the payroll of his army, can pay his officers well, and can equip them with the latest in weaponry. Rentier kings need not fear, as did their forebears, the disintegration of their realms as a result of weakness at the center. So long as the army remains loyal the king can suppress, repress, and kill most of those who would seek to take his wealth and position away. But the rentier king cannot always count on the loyalty of his army; for this cannot simply be purchased. The Iraqi regime tried this before the 1958 revolution, and failed. Opportunism is a problem money cannot eliminate.

Rentier wealth does not absolve rentier kings of the concerns that bedevil poorer rulers. All rulers must allocate a finite number of resources in a way that allows them to keep a hold on political power. Gulf rulers have more money to spend than most, but they face far higher expectations. They can meet the payrolls of their armies on a regular basis, but this does not necessarily buy the affection of their officers, especially if those officers compare their thousands with their rulers' billions, and wonder if they could not do a better job spending those billions. Rentier kings must worry about many of the same problems as their poorer counterparts—albeit in nicer palaces—and if they rely on oil alone to keep their thrones, they will likely lose them.

### **Opposition**

The level of expressed opposition is not a reliable measure of actual sentiment about a regime, for the expression of opposition depends very much on the expected reaction of the regime itself.<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, if there were a strong correlation between expressions of dissent and the failure of monarchism, or if we could make a good guess at *actual* opinions about regimes and correlate negative feelings with revolution, we might doubt a central argument of this work, which finds the reasons for the success or failure of monarchies inside their regimes. In fact, there is no strong correlation

between opposition and revolution. The Libyan and Afghani monarchies endured no particularly remarkable expressions of dissent (that is, compared to the other monarchies) before their revolutions, though in other cases heartfelt hatred or contempt for the regime preceded its fall, in Iraq and Iran. Some of the surviving monarchies—Jordan, Morocco, Bahrain—have weathered determined efforts by their enemies to make a revolution, and in others—Saudi Arabia—unexpressed dissent with the regime, as far as can be determined, seems to run deep, but has found limited room for expression due to regime vigilance. In the UAE and Qatar, however, the ruling families have not met with strong opposition, nor is there reason to think it is bubbling below the surface in great amounts. In sum the level of opposition is mixed enough across the cases that it does not threaten the viability of the other explanations adduced here for monarchical resilience and failure.

### **The Composition of the Military**

There are good reasons to think that the composition of the military *ought* to matter in the survival of the monarchies. In the Middle East the survival of some monarchies has been attributed to the loyalty of their militaries,<sup>10</sup> and four of the five failed monarchies dealt with in this study fell to military coups.

The evidence from the cases, however, is decidedly mixed. In several cases the failure or survival of the monarchy clearly owes much to the composition of the military; yet in other cases the composition of the military appears to dictate against the actual outcome, be it survival or failure.

It is in the cases of Egypt and Iraq, and especially the latter, where the composition of the military appears to contribute most directly to revolutions. The urban educated middle class manned the officer corps and had both the skills needed to run a modern state and an ideology to justify their assumption of rule. In neither case did the class and social origins of the officers corps give the officers any particular attachment to the *ancien régime*. Had the landed upper classes or the sons of the big bourgeoisie manned the officer corps of the monarchical armies we can reasonably suppose that royal rule might have survived. We can think of other monarchies (particularly in Northern Europe) in which the landed

elite staffed the officer corps, and which proved a good deal more resilient than the Iraqi and Egyptian monarchies. The counterfactual has some plausibility to it.

In Jordan we find the clearest instance in which we can attribute the *survival* of a monarchy to the composition of its military. Glubb Pasha, the father of bedouin armies in the Middle East, recruited the Arab Legion from the bedouin of the East Bank, and this group proved its loyalty to the monarchy in several crucial episodes.

The other monarchies, however, offer far less support for the hypothesis that the composition of the military is crucial in the preservation of monarchies.<sup>11</sup> The most revealing evidence of the limits of the utility of bedouin armies comes from Libya. The Libyan monarchy recruited the noble bedouin of Cyrenaica to the Cyrenaican Defense Force, an organization whose composition and mission strongly resembled that of the Saudi and Kuwaiti National Guards. This did not save the monarchy, which fell as a consequence of disputes within the ruling elite. In Afghanistan one member of the ruling family—Daud—tried to recruit a military loyal to himself personally, but he used his military allies to overthrow the monarchy in 1973. Efforts to recruit a loyal military do no good at all if members of the ruling elite do not figure out how to share power among themselves, and if they resort to coups to solve their differences.

In Morocco we find the most conspicuous failure of selective recruitment. From independence to the early 1970s the Moroccan monarchs—King Hassan and his father Muhammad—recruited their senior officers from men of Berber origin who had fought in the army of the French Protectorate. Thus on two counts—personal history and ethnic identification—these men appeared particularly ill-suited to make a coup. But in 1971 and 1972 these officers nonetheless tried to overthrow the monarchy, and very nearly succeeded, in the most flagrant failure of selective recruitment to the military in any of the Middle Eastern monarchies.

In Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, and the lower Gulf states the regimes, often in imitation of the Jordanian Arab Legion, have recruited many bedouin to their armies and national guards. Throughout the heyday of Arab nationalism the bedouin had little to gain from overthrowing their monarchs: they could not easily adopt the ideology of the nationalists (who generally came from the

urban educated), and without some other ideology the end of the monarchy would probably in any case mean the victory of the nationalists. Yet today, when Islamist movements pose the greatest challenge to the monarchs, the bedouin look far less reliable. Political Islam has real appeal to the recently settled bedouin lower classes of the suburbs of the major Gulf cities, and this casts some doubt on the argument that the bedouin in the militaries are as loyal today as they were in the days of Nasser.<sup>12</sup>

The clear attractions of explaining the fall of the Egyptian and Iraqi monarchies—and the survival of the Jordanian—in terms of the composition of their militaries makes it impossible to dismiss this as an important variable in the survival and failure of monarchies. Yet the Libyan and Afghani cases make it clear that efforts to recruit a loyal military will come to naught if the impetus for coups comes from within the ruling elite itself. The decline of Arab nationalism and the rise of political Islam, two ideologies that evoke very different responses from the bedouin, illustrate that the circumstances that give rise to the political reliability of a particular group can change over time, perhaps more quickly than the regime can adapt. And the coup attempts in Morocco in the early 1970s and Hassan's recovery in the later part of that decade suggest that a policy of selective recruitment can fail, spectacularly, but that an effort to enhance the popularity of the monarchy, especially in nationalist opinion, can keep the military in the barracks.

### **Tribe and Kin as Inclusionary Political Institutions**

Pastoral nomads, or recently settled bedouin, have a greater political role in the surviving Middle Eastern monarchies than in the failed monarchies. This is because dynastic monarchism tends to arise in societies with weak pre-oil state structures in which bedouin have a relatively greater demographic weight. The key variable in explaining resilience, however, is the presence or absence of dynastic monarchism, not the presence or absence of bedouin. We can see this most clearly in the case of Libya. The tribes of Cyrenaica supported the monarchy and had a prominent place in the political order of the monarchical regime. The Libyan monarchy, however, was not a dynastic monarchy, and it fell to a succession dispute despite the support of the tribes.

The ruling families may make appeals to tribalism to legitimate their rule, but it should not be supposed that tribal descent unites all of their subjects. Indeed, we often find that the ruling families couch their appeals for calm and order using the phrase "*al-usra al-wahida*" or the "one (united) family."<sup>13</sup> This is an appeal to an image of the monarch as father of the nation (regardless of the genealogical origins of the citizens) as much or more than it is an evocation of the ruling family as the leading family in a collection of genealogically related tribes. Other monarchs can and do claim to be the father of the nation, as do republican leaders.

The bedouin (and recently settled bedouin) make up the less advantaged part of the citizen populations in terms of education and wealth. The dynasties, when they seek the support of the bedouin against the new middle class, have not created a society in which the rich ally with the regime against the poor. Instead, the dynasties seek the support of the less-well-off against the better-off. Such a strategy is hardly doomed to failure, and in some circumstances might be the strategy most likely to keep the dynasties in power. It is, however, a somewhat trickier strategy to maintain than one in which the ruling elite allies with the privileged parts of society and distributes to them economic rewards and positions in the state and military, as did European monarchs to their landed aristocracies.

In the past decade or so, as the bedouin have settled, and as political Islam has replaced nationalism as the main opposition ideology to the dynasties, the political sympathies of the bedouin have become far less sure than they were in the Nasserist era. While the Islamist opposition is, in its origins, primarily urban, it has an apparent appeal to the bedouin that Arab nationalism lacked, and its spread in the future threatens to weaken bedouin support for the regimes. Yet it is far from clear that the regimes find the support of any particular group in society indispensable for their survival. The resilience of the regimes even after the rise of the Islamist challenge suggests that the dynasties' base of support in society is found first and foremost in the dynasty itself, and that the dynasty is not bound in a permanent way to the bedouin, or to the religious establishments. The dynasties, rather than resting on one pillar, can adjust their policies in a way that allows them to balance among different social groups.<sup>14</sup> In the past the dynasties balanced nationalists against conservatives; now they balance Islamists against liberals and leftists.

## Foreign Powers

Many monarchies, in Europe especially, have fallen victim to foreign invasion. Western powers have saved most of the surviving Middle Eastern monarchies from this fate, sometimes very directly; most of these monarchies—and indeed most of these states themselves, as independent sovereignties—would not exist but for the protection of the West. The question I am asking here, however, is whether outside powers have caused or prevented revolutions made by *domestic* political forces. If we look at the two groups of cases, the overthrown and the surviving monarchies, do they differ in terms of the attitude of outside powers to their regimes, in a way that explains the survival of some and the failure of others?

To begin, we can make three observations. First, interstate war, or the threat of war, had a role in only one of the five revolutions—the fall of the Egyptian throne in 1952 at the hands of officers who had served during the 1948 defeat. This was not the greatest military reverse suffered by Middle Eastern monarchs in the period, however: both the Jordanian and Kuwait ruling houses suffered far more catastrophic military defeats, in 1967 and 1990. Second, the smaller monarchies are more subject to the vagaries of regional politics and the enmity of regional powers than are the larger monarchies. This is not, however, reflected in their rates of survival, for larger monarchies have a higher fail rate than smaller. Third, Western powers today will not send their own troops to defend the monarchies from revolution—to reverse a coup or to suppress street demonstrations. Western powers, wisely, did not do this after any of the successful revolutions. These regimes have no American guarantee of their survival against their own people.

The monarchs make good allies of the West, and Western powers, as a rule, have not encouraged the removal of monarchs from power. In 1952, it is true, the United States did not support Faruq, but in 1952 Faruq had few supporters of any sort. By 1958, however, the West—and Britain in particular—wanted no more Free Officers, and supported the Iraqi Hashemites to their sanguinary end. Close ties with Britain did nothing to protect the Iraqi monarchy, but only provoked the army: the regime would have done better without the British tie and the Baghdad Pact—or, at least, in hindsight it could not have done any worse.

The Libyan monarchy resembled those of the Gulf in many ways, not least in the character of its relations with the West, and the reaction those ties elicited from regional powers and local nationalists. This relationship—ties to the West, and criticism from regional powers and local opponents over these ties—makes Libya similar to the Gulf monarchies, which have survived, and thus does not provide a good explanation for the 1969 revolution. The smaller Gulf monarchies suffer the same difficulties as the Libyan: their ties to the West are needed—indeed, far more than in the Libyan case—but this provokes opposition both from neighboring powers (from whom they are protected) and from their domestic oppositions, nationalist in the past and Islamist today.<sup>15</sup>

In the mid-1970s Jimmy Carter expressed some reservations about the Shah's human rights record. Yet Carter's criticisms did not directly threaten the resources the regime needed most to stay in power: loyalty of the military, control of the national territory, money to fund the state. That his comments contributed to a revolution says more about the peculiar weaknesses of the Shah's regime—and the Shah—than it does about the necessity of unconditional American support for the survival of monarchical regimes in the region.

In sum, while Western support is useful to the surviving monarchies (and sometimes indispensable against *external* enemies), the surviving Middle Eastern monarchies have not proven resilient simply because they have friends in the West, nor have the failed monarchies suffered revolutions because of the actions of Western nations. The difference between the surviving and fallen monarchies are to be found inside, and not outside, their borders.

### Parliaments

At first glance the evidence from the Middle Eastern monarchies appears to support the view that parliaments weaken, not strengthen, monarchies. All five overthrown monarchies had extensive experience with parliaments. Five of the eight survivors have avoided parliaments (see table 9.1). It is of no small importance if parliaments cause revolution, for the implication is this: the oil monarchies should avoid parliaments for fear of instigating revolution, and

**Table 9.1 Parliaments and Revolution**

	REVOLUTION	NO REVOLUTION
Little or No Parliamentary Experience		Bahrain Oman Qatar Saudi Arabia UAE
Moderate to Extensive Parliamentary Experience	Afghanistan Egypt Iran Iraq Libya	Jordan Kuwait Morocco

those with influence in the Gulf who desire the stability of these regimes for various reasons and who support democracy for other reasons should similarly fear parliamentarization.

There is, however, another interpretation of the data. Lack of a parliament correlates with the variable that I find most important in explaining revolution, the role of the family in the state (see table 9.2).<sup>16</sup> The causal relationship, I argue, runs in a different direction: strong monarchies do not need parliaments because they do not feel compelled to bargain with their people over political participation.

**Table 9.2 Dynastic Monarchy and Parliaments**

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

Such an explanation, however, leaves the issue of the relationship between resilience and parliaments open: weak monarchs may open parliaments, but it is not clear whether by doing so they undermine their rule. They actually may reap some reward, just not one big enough to save their thrones. The evidence of monarchial experience with parliaments in the Middle East, however, suggests that opening a parliament tends to stabilize thrones, so long as it is done through negotiation. The dynastic monarchies, difficult to overthrow in any circumstances, have little need of the stabilizing effect of parliaments, and tend to avoid them for that reason.

In the next chapter I will consider in more detail the costs and benefits facing a monarch contemplating a liberalization—it is in the result of this calculation, in large part, that we can discern the prospects for further parliamentary experiments in the monarchies.

### **Statecraft**

Of the seven monarchies in which the dynasty did *not* rule, only two survive, Morocco and Jordan. In these regimes the strategies adopted by monarchs matter far more than in the dynastic monarchies, for these kings enjoy a great deal of power, power not constrained by their relatives. They have more room for error, while at the same time they lack the support provided by the presence of other members of the dynasty in myriad state offices. What sort of strategies, then, prove sound for these monarchs? What counsel would we find in a modern-day mirror for princes?

To begin, kings must make provisions for the succession. King Idris did not, and the Sanusi monarchy fell largely as a consequence. Beyond the seemingly simple (but oft fumbled) issue of the succession, what other strategies preserve the thrones of kings?

Middle Eastern kings, who generally face the greatest threat from coups, must give particularly close attention to their army officers and avoid any situation that would give them an excuse to leave the barracks and march on the palace. The experience of the seven nondynastic monarchies suggests that a king's deftness in adopting his policies to appease his military has an effect on stability at least as important as the composition of the military itself. The example of King Hassan strongly suggests that if the military

is drawn from the urban majority, the best way to keep the military out of politics is to make the monarchy popular in public opinion. We might refer again to our muse, who counseled that, "one of the most potent remedies that a prince has against conspiracies, is that of not being hated by the mass of the people; for whoever conspires always believes that he will satisfy the people by the death of their prince; but if he thought to offend them by doing this, he would fear to engage in such an undertaking."<sup>17</sup>

For some monarchs the task of winning a measure of popularity among their people, or among the more important groups of citizens, may be beyond the best efforts or the wisest strategy.<sup>18</sup> One thinks, in particular, of the enormous efforts the Iraqi monarchy would have had to have made in order to reorient its policies in a direction more congenial to the military. Any king in Faruq's shoes, too, might have faced a situation difficult to rescue: yet Faruq clearly did not do everything we might reasonably expect a king to do in order to preserve his throne.

While there is a real risk of error in explaining events by falling into an excessive voluntarism there is at the same time an equal or even greater risk of error in imagining that all that happens must be inevitable, that some immutable law of history, or of political development, dictated that the Egyptian throne should fall and the Moroccan stand. Some monarchies have institutions that can survive miscalculations by their leaders. Other monarchies, however, do not, and their failure or survival has much to do with the strategies chosen by their kings.

In this regard, let us consider the Shah. His fall vividly illustrates that kings are, or must be, politicians, that they must give some heed to who their policies please and who they anger. Nothing in the situation of the Iranian monarchy in the 1970s dictated that it must fall. The army was loyal. Other monarchs have survived challenges from Islamic militants. Other monarchs have avoided spending their way to a revolution. The Peacock Throne failed because the Shah, first, unnecessarily alienated most of his people and, second, because he reacted with weakness and vacillation when his people rose in protest against his autocracy. The first omission was worse than the second. In the early and mid-1970s the Shah might have listened to his people, liberalized in a measured manner, and given his rule a sound footing, all at the modest cost of giving up some of his more fantastic visions of moderniza-

tion from above. In 1977 and 1978 he might have used the army against protesters in a determined manner, but only at enormous cost and with uncertain results.

### **The Lessons of the Dynastic Monarchies**

The dynastic monarchies of Arabia appear *sui generis*; and efficient—as opposed to dignified—monarchism is scarce outside of the Middle East. Yet the dynastic monarchies still hold lessons for the study of political institutions elsewhere, for their survival, and the failure of other monarchies in the Middle East, brings to the fore the importance of the internal organization of ruling groups—and in particular the resolution of succession disputes—in the survival of regimes.<sup>19</sup>

Revolution is a perennial topic in comparative politics: every region and every age (if not every region *in* every age) has had its revolutions, and comparativists have expended a great deal of ink in trying to explain why some regimes fall to revolutions and others survive. The monarchies of Arabia have remained almost entirely outside this debate. They are seen as anomalies that cannot be usefully compared with other regimes in other parts of the world. It is assumed, it appears, that their oil wealth renders them stable, or at least so odd that they are beyond the pale of comparison. Rentier wealth, however, does not make monarchies stable, as the citizens of Libya have learned to their regret. If the possibility that resilience does not derive from oil is entertained, the survival of the Arabian monarchies appears all the more puzzling. These dynasties ruled the Arabian principalities in the days of wooden boats and camel caravans. How have they survived the utter transformation of their societies in the space of a few years, a transformation that yanked these societies into the modern age faster than virtually any other societies on the planet, and certainly with less preparation, warning, or indigenous effort?

It is the ability of the ruling elites of the Arabian monarchies to solve internal disputes without threatening their control of the state that makes them stable. Of the various hypotheses advanced in the literature on revolutions, the survival of the Arabian monarchies gives strong support to only one. That is the argument frequently alluded to with a quote from Plato's *Republic*: "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."<sup>20</sup>



## **The Theory of the Rentier State and Constitutional Monarchy in the Middle East**

Twenty years ago a man . . . on examining the British constitution, declared: "I see there a king, I step back in horror." Only ten years ago some anonymous individual pronounced the same anathema against republican governments: so true is it that in certain times it is necessary to run the whole gamut of follies to return to reason.

One needs an absurd party spirit and a profound ignorance to wish to reduce to simple terms the choice between republic and monarchy. . . . Reduced to these terms, the one does not ensure peace, while the other cannot grant liberty.

—Benjamin Constant, 1814<sup>1</sup>

When modernization theory dominated the study of the developing areas the central issue of comparative politics was how traditional societies become modern. This way of conceiving the central theoretic problem of comparative politics has fallen out of favor, but

today we find the question—or part of it—rephrased as the issue of democratization. This restating of the issue preserves many of the values and much of the liberal teleology of modernization theory.

In the Middle East we find, in the monarchies, the survival of political institutions of a distinctly traditional cast to the eve of the twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> In the parliamentary experiments in some of these countries we find a suggestion that these monarchies may be able to combine their traditional institutions with ones more modern—or more liberal—than those found in most other countries in the region. This raises questions about the role of monarchical institutions in political development in the Middle East. How do these traditional political institutions adapt themselves to the exigencies of the modern world? Is revolution—the destruction of these institutions—a necessary step toward political development in the region? Is it possible that political development can occur in the Middle East as it did in some places in Europe, through the adaptation and evolution of traditional institutions, rather than through their destruction? These are, of course, some of the classic questions of the field of comparative politics in studies of the non-Western world, and indeed in the history of modernity in the West itself.

### The Theory of the Rentier State<sup>3</sup>

I argue that the dynastic monarchies of Arabia lack parliaments because they suffer little threat of revolution. The far more common explanation, however, is that they do not have parliaments because they do not tax their citizens.<sup>4</sup> The rentier state theory, while it has recently come in for some rethinking, remains the dominant theoretical paradigm in the study of the Middle Eastern monarchies. Its core argument is neatly summed up in the aphorism “no representation without taxation.”<sup>5</sup>

A central argument of the rentier state theory is that parliaments arise out of bargaining between rulers and subjects. The argument in its origins is by analogy with the European experience, and more specifically England’s. Robert Bates makes the point in a strong form: “Even a casual reading of the literature on the origins of parliaments reveals that these institutions arose as arenas in which monarchs bargained with citizens over taxes.”<sup>6</sup>

The perceived historical lesson of the democratic effects of taxation in Europe has been imported into the study of the Middle Eastern politics, and has taken root there with a vengeance. The staggering resources available to the state, many argue, render it (or its rulers) immune from any need to bargain with their citizens. Lisa Anderson writes:

[Oil] revenues release the state from the accountability ordinarily exacted by domestic appropriation of surplus. In countries like Kuwait and Libya, the state may be completely autonomous from its society, winning popular acquiescence through distribution rather than support through taxation and representation.<sup>7</sup>

Giacomo Luciani, Theda Skocpol (writing on Iran), Jill Crystal (on Kuwait and Qatar), and John Davis (on Libya) give variations on the theme.<sup>8</sup> Surveys of democracy world-wide echo the explanation: the lack of democracy is noted, oil is proffered as the culprit, “no representation without taxation” cited as the mechanism, and the matter is closed.<sup>9</sup>

The rentier state theory does not predict that rentier states will be resilient, only that they will not democratize. If we examine the logic of the theory, this is puzzling. Why do not monarchs, when faced with threats that might lead to a revolution, attempt to bargain with their people, offering to share their power in a parliament?

It may be that bargaining models of the emergence of democracy are not empirically sound, but this cannot be used as a defense of most versions of the rentier state theory. A bargaining model, at least implicitly, lies at the core of the rentier state theory (or most of its versions), one in which rulers, or the “state,” trade participation for tax revenue.

The difficulty with the rentier state literature is that only *one* threat will induce a ruler to offer a liberalization to his people, and that is the threat to withhold taxes. Why is this? It may be that the particular sorts of threats that led to the fall of the oil-rich Middle Eastern monarchs could not have been alleviated by the opening of a parliament. I do not think the evidence supports this. Yet we need not debate, in this regard, particular cases, for the rentier state theory (at least in its underlying logic) is categorical on this point: no threat that might lead to revolution (or otherwise impose

costs on a monarch) will be countered by a strategy of opening a parliament, unless that threat grows directly out of taxation. My point is not that all who employ the rentier state theory make arguments this strong, but instead that this is the central theoretic claim of the literature, as summed up in the phrase “no representation without taxation.”

We find few convincing explanations of why it is that rentier rulers, when faced with threats to their regimes *unrelated to taxation*, do not offer a parliament in an effort to appease their opponents. Giacomo Luciani argues that in a rentier state

there is always an opposition, but the opposition will not be any more democratic than the ruler. Democratic methods will not appear as the most promising means to achieving the desired goal, simply because all groups will have a particularistic agenda, which is not conducive to the organization of consensus and majority support.<sup>10</sup>

Yet fiscal politics in Western democracies (for it is only in fiscal politics that rentier states—as a type—could be different) also have a highly particularistic nature. Indeed, it is difficult to think of fiscal issues that are *not* particularistic. Nor is it easy to conceive of why it is that divvying up oil revenues is less conducive to “the organization of consensus and majority support” than the divvying up of tax revenues.

Another writer, in an analysis of the Iranian revolution, argues that because of oil “the population itself gave up political claims on the state, since it was not being taxed.” But, in the same paragraph, it is argued that “When [social classes] did come into conflict with the state, opposition took the form of rejecting the state in its totality, rather than first pressing it for meaningful reforms.”<sup>11</sup> The second statement contradicts the first and leaves us without an explanation for why citizens reject reform when they are not taxed. Certainly the Iranian opposition in the late 1970s pressed for revolution rather than reform. The question, however, is whether this was an inevitable result of rentierism or the consequence of strategies adopted both by the Shah and by his opposition in the particular circumstances of Iran in the 1970s. I would argue the latter.

In Kuwait the Al Sabah have allowed room for political participation. The opposition, in consequence, supports the rule of

the Al Sabah within the framework of the 1962 constitution. Explanations for the Kuwaiti parliament, within the framework of the rentier state theory, require that we explain how it is that in some cases rentierism can lead to a result in which the rulers ("the state") appear quite well connected to their societies, a situation that runs frontally against the chief theoretic claim of the theory itself.<sup>12</sup>

Is it reasonable for citizens of the Gulf states to place a null value on a parliament? The economies of the Gulf states depend entirely on rentier income. Today it is clear to everyone that oil and the income it generates are finite resources, and the only way that the Gulf Arabs can maintain the first-world standard of living that they have come to expect is through careful conservation of rentier income. The uncertain price of oil and exploding citizen populations make this all the more true. One way for the citizens of these countries to ensure that they get their share of the oil revenue, and that they and their children will avoid a precipitous fall in living standards in the future, is to impose political accountability on their ruling families.<sup>13</sup> Certainly, except in Kuwait, they have not succeeded; my argument here is simply that they have just as much reason as people who pay taxes to *want* their rulers to govern wisely and in their interests. Many of the citizens of these countries think—with reason—that democratic institutions can accomplish this.<sup>14</sup> The logic, for individual citizens, behind the desire for wise expenditure of state revenue is the same whether or not the government's main activity is "tax and spend," "borrow and spend," or "sell oil and spend." In short, the formula "No representation without taxation," needs a decent burial.

### **When Parliamentary Liberalizations Succeed**

Parliaments circumscribe the power of monarchs and dynasties, and they will not open parliaments unless there is some sort of pressing need to do so. We can identify two conditions that must hold for there to be a successful parliamentary opening in the Middle Eastern monarchies. First, the opposition must place a positive value on liberal monarchy. Second, the balance of power between the monarch and the opposition must be such that both sides see value in a negotiated compromise.

### The Preferences of the Opposition

Edmund Burke once pointed out that "Kings will be tyrants from policy when subjects are rebels from principle."<sup>15</sup> Huntington said that the new middle class scorns what compromises monarchs offer; it has a preference ordering that finds liberal monarchism equally as abhorrent as unvarnished absolutism. It thus will not enter into negotiations over a parliament, at least not in good faith.<sup>16</sup> Yet if the new middle class, or a monarch's opponents more generally, place a positive value on liberal monarchism, the attitude of the opposition need not foreclose the possibility of a negotiated compromise between throne and people. Those with a preference ordering of *liberal monarchy > revolution > absolutism* certainly make good negotiating partners for liberalizing monarchs, for a liberalization will remove any desire on their part to make a revolution. Yet even those with a preference ordering of *revolution > liberal monarchy > absolutism* still might bargain with their monarch. We have assumed that the monarch's preference ordering is *absolutism > liberal monarchy > revolution*, and the two sides might well agree on a compromise that yields both their second preference. The attitude of the opposition poses an insurmountable barrier to bargaining in one situation only, when liberal monarchy is the worst result in the eyes of the opposition or, as Huntington suggests, if the opposition draws no distinction between absolutism and liberal monarchy, finding both equally abhorrent; that is, if the opposition has a preference ordering of *revolution > absolutism > liberal monarchy, or revolution > liberal monarchy/absolutism*.

### The Relative Bargaining Positions of the Monarch and the Opposition

A second condition must hold if bargaining between a monarch and his opposition is to result in the opening of a parliament. The bargaining positions of the monarch and his opposition must be in rough balance: the opposition must have the resources to impose costs on the monarch if he pursues an absolutist policy, while the monarch must have the ability to convince the opposition that failure to negotiate is risky.

If the opposition has a preference ordering of *revolution > liberal monarchy > absolutism*, the monarch must convince the opposition that the costs of achieving revolution are very high, or indeed

that revolution is not possible, and that the opposition should settle for their second preference, a liberalization that preserves the position and much of the power of the monarchy. This is the message Jabir al-Ali Al Sabah conveyed at the Kuwaiti constitutional convention when he told the drafters that the Al Sabah “had other options” if the constitution did not come out to the family’s liking. The Shah failed to do this in the last years of his rule. In the mid-1970s he had spurned any sharing of power with his people, deciding instead to create a one-party monarchy with the *Hizb al-Rastakhiz* and otherwise ruling in a way virtually designed to offend his people. Yet having driven most of urban Iran into the opposition and after making himself the virtual embodiment of the arrogance of power, the Shah promised liberalization. While this might have appealed to many of the moderates he had earlier driven into the opposition, the Shah did not convince his more trenchant foes that they should settle for liberal monarchism, giving up their first preference of revolution. He did not show that he was willing to pay the (enormous) costs of preventing a revolution. His liberalizing moves thus appeared an admission of weakness to his foes, those on the fence, and his supporters alike.

In such a situation, the opposition, even if it has a preference ordering of *revolution > liberal monarchy > absolutism*, has an incentive to reject and sabotage any efforts by the monarch toward liberalization, for cooperation makes a revolutionary outcome, otherwise likely, less likely. It is largely due to this calculation, rather than a preference ordering of *revolution > absolutism / liberal monarchy*, that we can attribute the immoderation of some parliamentary oppositions in the Middle Eastern monarchies.

In Jordan in 1957, in Iran in 1953, in Kuwait in 1938, and—to a lesser degree—in Egypt in 1937, the opposition tried to use the parliament to overthrow the monarchy (or to suddenly and drastically curb its powers). In all four cases the opposition failed. We might blame the result on the preferences of the opposition: disdaining liberal monarchy, it saw no value in compromise. Yet it is probably more accurate to see the efforts to use the parliament to overthrow or curb the monarchy as a failed gamble by the opposition that it could achieve something closer to its first preference, the enfeeblement of the monarchy or revolution. The failure of the gamble denied the opposition not only their first preference, but their second as well. In three of the four cases the

opposition won nothing through their efforts but several decades of absolutism.

### **Absolutism as a Consequence of Monarchical Strength**

It is also possible that the bargaining power between monarchs and oppositions can too strongly favor the palace. For liberal monarchy to emerge from bargaining, kings need a reason to bargain. They must want a parliament: preferably, they must have a pressing need for one. Otherwise they will not have any interest in tempering their autocracy. In Kuwait the Iraqi threat motivated the Al Sabah to open a parliament. In Jordan riots among the regime's East Bank supporters in 1989 placed pressure on the monarchy, while in Morocco the army nearly overthrew the regime. These threats gave the regimes good reasons to seek a compromise with moderates.

In the dynastic monarchies of the Gulf, ruling family hegemony over the state makes these regimes very resilient, so resilient, indeed, that they do not need to liberalize in response to popular pressure. The stability the dynastic monarchism has, thus far, inoculated these regimes to revolution and thus removed one of the main threats that impels democratization. It is in the balance, when the opposition values liberal monarchy and when the monarch needs the public support, or some other benefit, that a liberalization provides, but can control the scope of such a liberalization, that parliamentary experiments succeed.

### **The Flexibility of Monarchical Institutions in Accommodating Democratic Compromises**

If the conditions discussed above are present, the institutions of monarchy provide a fertile ground for the negotiation of power-sharing compromises between a monarch and his people. Indeed, monarchical political institutions prove *more* amenable to power-sharing compromises than virtually any other sort of authoritarian regime. Liberal monarchism has a genius for satisfying Dahl's requirement that authoritarian elites and their oppositions work out a system of "mutual security" that lessens the risks of liberalization.<sup>17</sup>

While monarchical power and popular sovereignty may contradict each other *ideologically*, as it is intellectually simpler to settle

on one principle of political authority, *institutionally* the two principles combine quite easily. It is the peculiar virtue of monarchism—for gradual liberalization—that kings do not claim their offices by virtue of a popular mandate. Instead, the mechanism by which they achieve power is institutionally independent of the popular will, expressed through elections or otherwise. Kings are born to power, not elected to it. Monarchs can hold free elections and allow the people a voice in the conduct of the government without surrendering their thrones, or all of the power that goes with them. Other sorts of modern authoritarian rulers, by contrast, claim a popular mandate to rule; elections that express the will of the people threaten their power. The rulers of single-party or military regimes, without holding elections might claim that they know and serve the general will, or they might hold elections, but rig them. Yet they are rarely so bold as to hold free parliamentary elections, but at the same time assert their *permanent* right to retain control of executive authority regardless of the outcome of the elections. Nineteenth-century European monarchs did this, as do the liberal monarchs of the Middle East today.

Monarchs have a wider latitude to negotiate with their challengers over the sharing of power. For authoritarian leaders of the populist variety, elections must be won; for monarchs, elections must merely return deputies reconciled, resigned, or even moderately opposed, to the presence of the monarch. The latter is a far lower hurdle than the former. When monarchs come under pressure to liberalize, they consequently find it much easier to negotiate parliamentary openings. The Kuwaiti constitution—to pick one example—is a remarkable pastiche of compromises between the ruling family and the parliament, the product of negotiated concessions of power another sort of authoritarian regime would have found impossible. The institutions of liberal monarchism have a particular genius in providing guarantees for the existing authoritarian elites while at the same time expanding political participation in an honest manner.

### The Importance of Free Elections

It is of the greatest importance, in the liberalization of absolutisms, that the elections to the parliament are fair, or largely fair. The monarch may choose to exclude some of his more trenchant critics

(at the cost, of course, of failing to co-opt them), but he gains little legitimacy from a parliamentary opening if he allows the complete falsification of the electoral process. This most often happens when the king comes to rely on a clique of nonroyal politicians as premiers and ministers. Monarchs have created these men, in Iberia and Italy as well as Egypt and Iraq, by allowing premiers to pack the parliament with supporters by rigging the elections.<sup>18</sup> This serves to coopt a section of the political elite, and avoids the threat to the monarch's power of a government that enjoys strong electoral support. If, however, the elections come to mean nothing much at all, as they did in Iraq and to a large degree in Egypt, the parliament loses its value in winning the monarchy public support. In the worst case the monarchy becomes dependent upon the politicians, or a prisoner of them. This forecloses the possibility of a monarchic liberalization, for while the king might survive fair elections—and benefit from them—palace politicians very likely will lose their positions. If these men have the power to veto a liberalization they can force the political system into paralysis.

Kuwait, because it is a dynastic monarchy, suffers little from this problem. Kuwaiti politicians come in two flavors: members of the ruling family and men who have won parliamentary seats in comparatively fair elections. When the Al Sabah do not wish to hold fair elections, they usually hold none at all. In Morocco the regime has manipulated the elections in a way that preserves seats for opposition parties but which, at the same time, creates the impression that the whole process is fixed. The trend, at least at the moment, is toward an improvement. The health of liberal monarchy in Morocco depends on the further cleaning up of the electoral process, or at least the avoidance of steps backwards; the parliament cannot be allowed to become merely a cynical game between palace and politicians.

### **The Absolutisms and Western Policy**

I have argued that one of the conditions for the emergence of parliaments is that the regime must *need* a parliament to blunt some threat to its power. The five absolutist dynastic monarchies do not liberalize because they are strong. Jealous to preserve their pre-

rogatives and to continue their abuses of power, the dynasties do not liberalize because their people cannot overthrow them.

If that is the bad news, there is also good. Liberalization cannot succeed if it threatens to push the monarchies down a slippery slope to revolution. The dynasties of the surviving absolutisms have too tight a grip on state power to lose control of the state by holding elections to a Kuwaiti-style parliament.

Pressure on these states from within, at least thus far, has not induced steps towards a political opening. Might pressure from without? These regimes are dependent on the protection of democratic powers. These powers have strong interests in the survival of these regimes, and certainly should not tamper with their stability if that risks revolution. Yet the sort of arrangement seen in the Kuwaiti constitution of 1962 does not risk revolution. The United States can safely place far more pressure on these regimes to liberalize, and it ought to do so.

Perhaps, however, I have overestimated strength of these regimes, or underestimated the risks of parliaments. Why try to fix something that does not appear broken? From a *realpolitik* point of view, why not accept the status quo, and be content? There are, however, immediate and future costs to cozying up to regimes such as that of the Al Saud. American rhetoric on democracy is heard in the Middle East, and the overt hypocrisy of talking democracy while basing policy on an alliance with Fahad, Sultan, Na'if, and the rest hardly goes unnoticed, and the cost is not merely one of occasional discomfiture. America's authority is moral as well as military and economic. The American alliance with the Al Saud, accompanied by a virtual silence on the uglier aspects of the dynasty's despotism, compromises American power.

There is another reason that American silence on democracy in the Gulf does not serve its own interests. I argue in this work that the resilience of these regimes does not rest on the consent of their people. My argument instead is that the dynasties, come what may, are hard to overthrow. These regimes can repress for an extended period and stay in power. Yet at the same time these regimes have generally sought to lessen the burdens of their despotism, distributing the oil wealth, consulting widely, and making token efforts toward expanding public participation. In short, they lessen the cost of acquiescence to the way things are.

Pressure for change, however, is building in several of these regimes. In Bahrain the refusal of the Al Khalifa to compromise with the opposition threatens to strip dynastic monarchism of the softening accoutrements by which those who exercise power can make it tolerable. This does not make revolution likely, for it does not directly alter the things which make a dynastic monarchy resilient. It is, at the same time, an experiment, and silence from Washington only encourages it. There is more risk in such unvarnished absolutism than there is in the Kuwaiti model of constitutional monarchy.

### **Monarchy and Political Development**

Constitutional monarchy, which at the end of the twentieth century is generally understood as a parliamentary democracy decorated by royalty, in the nineteenth century denoted a system in which a constitution limited but did not abolish the powers of the king.<sup>19</sup> Belgium was a constitutional monarchy, Russia was not.<sup>20</sup> The evolution of the meaning of the term parallels the democratic transformation of the institution of monarchy in Europe.

Constitutional monarchism appealed to many only as a technique of achieving liberalism. Others, most notably perhaps Edmund Burke, saw the power of the monarchy and the division of society into orders as having a positive value, one not limited to its use in facilitating a transition to a fuller liberalism.<sup>21</sup> Many looked to England and saw in its institutions a happy, and imitable, compromise between the exigencies of the present and the virtues of the past. The Belgian constitution of 1831, oft imitated elsewhere, divided power between the crown and the parliament and embodied a nineteenth-century mean of good government, a safe if lukewarm compromise between czarist reaction and radical upheaval.

In nineteenth-century Europe monarchy proved an institution highly amenable to liberal reform. Over the course of the century a number of absolutists adopted constitutions, and toward the end a number of constitutional monarchies had achieved the larger part of a transition to democracy. Throughout the century ruling elites expanded the electorate, in incremental steps, to encompass ever larger segments of the population.<sup>22</sup> In a parallel, though often less noted, process, over the course of the nineteenth-century parliaments and

kings struggled over the principle of cabinet responsibility. Kings sought to retain control over their ministers while parliaments sought—after the style of the House of Commons—to establish the principle of government responsibility to the legislature.

In the Middle East eight monarchies survive, and nothing says that they will take the gradualist road to liberalism through the progressive devolution of monarchical authority to the people. War may intervene, as it did in Europe.<sup>23</sup> Jordan and Morocco, not particularly resilient sorts of monarchies, could face crises and fall. The dynastic absolutisms of the Gulf may abjure compromise until, one day, revolutions prove that they too are mortal.

Yet Kuwait, Jordan, and Morocco have started down a path that leads to the emergence of democracy via the adaptation of monarchic political institutions. While nothing dictates that they will take the path to the end, nothing says that they must fail. Elections are held in these countries, often quite fair, and parliaments sit. In Jordan, Morocco, and Kuwait the issue of cabinet responsibility is, in an institutional sense, essentially the same as it was in much of nineteenth-century Europe, even if the franchise is much broader. The people elect parliaments, but governments remain accountable to the throne. Democracy lies in the gradual establishment of the principle, in fact and not only in theory, of cabinet responsibility to the parliament. These monarchies, in the end, may not travel this path, but it is one well worn.

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# 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'iya 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 Raghib Khalidi, *Constitutional Development in Libya*, 87. Morocco: the Constitution of 1992 can be found in Ahmad Thabit, *Al-tahawwul al-dimuqratiya fi al-maghrib*, 119–42; the Constitution of 1972 can be found in Ahmad Jadira et al. *Al-tajriba al-dimuqratiya fi al-mamlaka al-maghribiya*, 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 under-appreciation of this by Arabs outside the Gulf, see for instance Abd al-Haliq Abdallah, "Arab-Gulf relations" *Al-mustaqqbal 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 north-western 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.

## Chapter 2. The Emergence of Dynastic Monarchy and the Causes of Its Persistence

1. Crystal, *Oil and Politics*, 12, 62–63. Crystal's discussion of the Al Sabah and its relation to the petro-state forms the starting point for my analysis of the Arabian ruling families. Few others, besides Crystal, have commented extensively on the relationship between the growth of bureaucracy and the emergence of the dynastic monarchies, but see Khaldoun Hasan al-Naqeeb, *Society and State in the Gulf and Arab Peninsula: A Different Perspective*, 103.
2. Aidan W. Southall, *Alur Society: A Study in Processes and Types of Domination*, 246–63.
3. Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (1974); Michael Bush, *Noble Privilege*; George Rude, *Europe in the Eighteenth Century: Aristocracy and the Bourgeois Challenge*, 85–102, 175–85; Dominic Lieven, *The Aristocracy in Europe, 1815–1914*; Samuel Clark, *State and Status: The Rise of the State and Aristocratic Power in Western Europe*; Franklin L. Ford, *Robe and Sword: The Regrouping of the French Aristocracy after Louis XIV*.
4. J. G. Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman, and Central Arabia*, volume II, part 1, 409.
5. The occasional irregular town guards constitute a minor exception, and Ibn Saud's *ikhwan* a more important one.
6. In the Islamic empires outside of Arabia these battles among the king's sons decided the succession—indeed, these contests often were the succession mechanism. Such a system ensured the vigor of the new leader but wreaked havoc on the realm before the issue was decided. See A. D. Alderson, *The Structure of the Ottoman Dynasty*, 52, 22–23. On Afghanistan, see Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 344–67, 420, 428.
7. Peter Lienhardt, "The Authority of Shaykhs in the Gulf: An Essay in Nineteenth-Century History," 63.
8. Quoted in Jack Goody, "Introduction," 24.
9. Nizam al-Mulk, *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings*, translated by Hubert Darke, 117.
10. Abdallah al-Salim of Kuwait began to issue orders over his own name after losing the succession battle of 1921: a family conclave ordered him to cease. In Bahrain in the later 1910s the ruler's favorite son (the son of his favorite wife), also named Abdallah, similarly began to assume the trappings of rule in anticipation of taking power formally on his father's death.
11. See E. Tyan, "Bay'a," in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, 1113–114.
12. The Al Khalifa of Bahrain are the exception, for the Bahraini constitution specifies primogeniture as the succession rule.

13. Alderson, *The Structure of the Ottoman Dynasty*, 12–13. J. C. Hurewitz reviews succession across the Middle Eastern empires in *Middle East Politics: The Military Dimension*, 18–27.
14. Alderson, *The Structure of the Ottoman Dynasty*, 23–31.
15. Sources for the dates in chart 2.1 are the genealogies at the end of Emine Foat Tugay, *Three Centuries: Family Chronicles of Turkey and Egypt*.
16. H. R. P. Dickson, Political Agent Kuwait, to T. C. Fowle, Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, February 14, 1935 (IOR:R/15/1/513, in *RF: Kuwait*, 261).
17. This lack of determinacy in the succession is not an oddity of Islamic societies. Instead primogeniture appears to be the exception. Jack Goody writes that “despite the western idea that the automatic next-of-kin procedure is the normal type [of hereditary succession mechanism], dynastic election is in fact far more widespread.” Goody, “Introduction,” 13.
18. See the agreement between Abdallah bin Isa Al Khalifa and his brother Hamad in 1922 (July 22), resolving the former’s claim to the succession with a fixed monthly payment. (IOR:R/15/2/229, in *RF: Bahrain*, 147). The brothers of Mubarak the Great made a similar, though less successful, effort to buy him off before he murdered them and seized power in 1896. Yusuf bin Isa al-Qana’i, *Safahat min tarikh al-kuwayt*, 26.
19. H. V. Biscoe, Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, to the Government of India, August 18, 1930 (IOR: L/P&S/11/222 in *RF: Qatar*, 326).
20. When the British in the early 1920s decided that they wanted to rule Bahrain directly, they brought the ruling family to heel precisely through the expedient of forcing the succession of a weak shaykh who then depended on the British.
21. Only members of the ruling clans asserted a right to fixed allowances from the treasury. In Qatar the al-Attiya, a family closely associated with the Al Thani, made a bid for fixed allowances, but were refused. Crystal, *Oil and Politics*, 129.
22. Ali Khalifa Al-Kuwari, *Oil Revenues in the Gulf Emirates*, 159, method of calculation discussed on pages 72–75.
23. In Kuwait the Al Sabah, by Kuwari’s reckoning, received only a minor portion of the emirate’s oil income. This may be due to the constraints imposed by the constitution, though it also seems likely that the shaykhs got their cut (along with some other Kuwaitis who are not of the Al Sabah) through the immense sums that the government has spent purchasing land from private Kuwaiti citizens, sums the government included in its regular budget but which Kuwari does not count toward ruling family income. *Al-Tali'a* (the Kuwait newspaper) November 24–30, 1993, May 11–17, 1994.

24. The other four points have less to do with the internal organization of the family.

- "First and foremost, strict adherence to and defense of Islam, as a faith and as a legal system."
- Dedication to public service and to raising high the name of the Kingdom in the world.
- Concern to husband the Kingdom's wealth, to spread its benefits widely among the citizens, and put it to the best possible use in the internal development of the country, which has resulted in the great lead forward of recent years.
- The application of the Shari'a to members of the family on the same basis as it is applied to the Saudi population as a whole."

Princes of the Al Saud, as a point of fact, are subject only to punishments meted out (or allowed to be meted out) by family seniors. The State Department reports that "judges do not have the power to issue a warrant summoning any member of the royal family." U.S. Department of State, *Saudi Arabia Human Rights Practices, 1995*, section 1.e. Khaled bin Sultan, *Desert Warrior*, 48.

25. H. St. John Philby, *Arabian Jubilee*, 223 and *Sa'udi Arabia*, 297.; Gerald de Gaury, *Faisal: King of Saudi Arabia*, 51–52; Interviews in Kuwait, spring 1994.

26. Khaled bin Sultan, *Desert Warrior*, 47.

27. Ghassan Salamé, *Al-siyasa al-kharajiya al-saudiya munthu 'am 1945: dirasat fi al-alaqat al-duwaliya*, 334, 337–38. Interviews in Kuwait, fall 1993 and winter 1994.

28. As listed in the 1994 *Defense and Foreign Affairs Handbook*.

29. The Utayba are a large and important Sunni tribe of Nejd.

30. "A Military Expert in the Saudi Army: The Army Is Capable of Toppling the Saudi Dynasty," *Makka Calling* 38 (January 1987): 15–25. The text of the interview, which is generally gloomy on the prospects for successful coup making, does not support the optimism of its title.

31. Bahrain is the exception: its constitution specifies primogeniture. I will discuss Bahrain in chapter 5. On "eldest able," see Samore, "Ruling family politics," 84. In Saudi Arabia the multiplicity of Ibn Saud's wives and the lack of birth records gives rise to debate not only on the question of ability, but also of age.

32. The ruling families do not meet as a formal group on a regular basis, but instead to decide issues of crucial importance such as the succession, the opening of a parliament, or the dismissal of a senior member of the family from office.

33. Article 6 of the Saudi Basic Law, in *Al-quds al-arabi*, March 2, 1992.

34. Ahmad Hasan Ahmad Dahlan, *Dirasat fi al-siyasa al-dakhiliya lil-mamlaka al-arabiya al-saudiya*, 116–20. The author of this treatise identifies the *ahl al-hal wa al-aqd* from the speech Faysal gave upon his accession. In 1964, on Faysal's accession, the *majlis al-shura* that originated in the Hejaz still survived, at least formally, and thus its mention.

35. Fuad I. Khuri, *Tribe and State in Bahrain*, 147; Alan Rush, *Al-Sabah: History and Genealogy of Kuwait's Ruling Family 1752–1987*, 190. There are occasional exceptions to this rule in the Gulf. In Morocco, a different type of monarchy, endogamy, is not imposed on the women of the royal family and the king has brothers-in-law from outside the family. Waterbury, *Commander of the Faithful*, 151.

36. Rush, *Al-Sabah*, 198. I have compiled figures only on the descendants of Mubarak because this is the ruling lineage of the Al Sabah, and because Rush's information is far more complete on this branch of the family. Members of the assemblies can be found in Abdallah Khalid al-Hatim, *Min huna bada'at al-kuwayt*, 53, 219–20, and Khalid al-Adsani, *Muthakkirat*, 6–11, 68.

37. Identified by Abdul-Reda Assiri and Kamal Al-Monoufi in "Kuwait's Political Elite: The Cabinet," 49–50.

38. One suspects that some marriages outside of the family went unreported, but probably not marriages to women of prominent *asil* families, marriages considered entirely acceptable and legitimate by both families and which could hardly go easily unremarked.

39. Jabir al-Ahmad, the emir in 1997, accounts for at least ten of the twenty-six marriages to tribal women himself. The Al Sabah marry women of the noble tribes only.

40. This is presumably a good sample of his marriages: the sample size is large for both wives and children, and there is not particular reason to think that the likelihood of producing a son with a particular wife is anything other than a function of the comparative amount of attention lavished on her by Ibn Saud. Information on Ibn Saud's marriages and sons is from Samore's charts in "Ruling Family Politics," 528–32.

41. The wife of the Al Saud is daughter of Ibn Jiluwi, who Ibn Saud appointed to govern the Eastern Province at a time when he had no sons. The fact that this was his only marriage to one of the Al Saud strongly suggests that Ibn Saud tried hard to avoid entangling himself with his closer relatives through marriage.

42. "Marriages were orchestrated in such a way as to foster the dependency, marginalization, and above all the breaking of the internal cohesion of the tribes." Madawi Al-Rasheed and Loulouwa Al-Rasheed, "The politics of encapsulation: Saudi policy towards tribal and religious opposition," 105.

43. Khuri, *Tribe and State*, 238–39.
44. Crystal, *Oil and Politics*, 106.
45. Sources not beholden to the regimes also argue that the *majlis* serves as a substitute of sorts for democratic institutions. The *majlis* in the UAE is given serious treatment in *Al-mujtama' al-madani wa al-tahawwul al-dimuqrati fi al-watan al-arabi, taqrir al-sanawi 1993*, 202–203.
46. Hamdi Tamam, *Zayid bin Sultan Al Nahayan: al-qā'id wa al-masira*, 124.
47. Ian Skeet, *Oman: Politics and Development*, 119.
48. Khalid bin Muhammad al-Qasimi, 'Uman: masirat qā'id..wa iradat sha'b, 74–75.
49. Interview in Kuwait, spring 1994.
50. Samore, for example, mentions the appointment of additional princely provincial governors in Saudi Arabia after the Mecca incident of 1979. "Royal Family Politics," 462.
51. *Al-wasat* 155 (January 16, 1995).
52. For a vivid description by an anthropologist of decision making among the bedouin see Lancaster, *The Rwala Bedouin Today*, 87–89.
53. Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, 346–47.
54. The exception, of course, is Kuwait.
55. *Al-wasat* 155 (January 16, 1995).
56. Saudi Basic Law, Article 43, in *Al-quds al-arabi*, March 2, 1992.
57. U.S. Department of State, "Saudi Arabia Human Rights Practices, 1994," Section 3. See also Lacey, *The Kingdom*, 510.
58. Interview in Kuwait, fall 1993.
59. Interviews in Kuwait, spring 1994.
60. Heller and Safran, "The New Middle Class," 22.
61. On two conditions: first, that Abdallah has more power than expected in the status quo; second, that he expects the new regime to prove durable.
62. A monarch might realize that the exclusion of his relatives from rule will make the monarchy less stable. A revolution, however, is not unavoidable immediately upon the conversion of the regime from a dynastic monarchy to a more conventional form of monarchism. The monarch may be willing to take his chances, especially if he heavily discounts the future.
63. *Spirit of the Laws*, vol. I, 67.

### **Chapter 3. Arabian Society and the Emergence of the Petro-State**

1. See Lancaster (*The Rwala Bedouin Today*, 24–35) on the role of myth and reality in genealogical links among the bedouin. He observes

that beyond a few generations actual genealogical links become quite fuzzy.

2. Except for the *ashraf*, who are descendants of the prophet, there was no noble class with legally defined and inheritable privileges on the Arabian peninsula; even the ruling families did not clearly gain this status until oil. While the *ashraf* had a political role in Yemen, ruled the Hejaz, and formed a part of the bureaucratic elite in Iraq, in the areas between they played no collective role in politics, except, occasionally, as one clan group among others. None of the current Gulf ruling families claim descent from the prophet Muhammad. The Hashemite dynasty, which does, lost its kingdom in the Hejaz to the Al Saud in the 1920s, and now rules only Jordan. On the *ashraf* in Iraq see Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes*, 153–60; in Arabia see Lorimer's *Gazetteer*, vol. II part 1, 178; in Yemen see Abd al-Malik al-Muqarrami, *Al-tarikh al-ijtima'iya lil-thawra al-yamaniya*, 175–85.

3. On various aspects of this ascriptive categorization, and for various descriptions of it, see: H. R. P. Dickson, *The Arab of the Desert*, 108–13; Soraya Altorki and Donald P. Cole, *Arabian Oasis City*, 23; Hafiz Wahba, *Arabian Days*, 21–22; Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes*, 63.

4. Altorki and Cole, *'Unayzah*, 24.

5. Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, 8.

6. See Abdallah al-Nafisi's discussion of the composition of Kuwaiti electoral districts and his identifications of the various deputies returned to the parliament from each district. *Al-kuwayt: Al-ra'y al-akhar*, 74–90.

7. Percentages are derived from Khaldoun al-Naqeeb's tabulations in "Tahlil al-mu'ashirat al-siyasiya wa al-ihsa'iya li-nata'iij intikhabat uktubur 1992," *Al-qabas*, November 15, 1992.

8. Saad Eddin Ibrahim and Donald P. Cole, *Saudi Arabian Bedouin: An Assessment of Their Needs*, 16–18.

9. James A. Bill, "Islam, Politics, and Shi'ism in the Gulf," 6.

10. Altorki and Cole, *'Unayzah*, 58, also pages 23–24, quoting a Saudi of *khadiri* background.

11. Figures compiled from discussions of the official, unpublished 1968 census in three sources: Ali Mohammad Khalifa, *The United Arab Emirates*, 97; K. G. Fenelon, *The United Arab Emirates*, 7, 126; Yusuf Abu al-Hajaj, ed., *Dawlat al-imarat al-arabiya al-muttahida*, 262.

12. Khaldoun al-Naqeeb, *Al-qabas*, November 15, 1992. The inner districts, populated by the families who made up the urban population of Kuwait, have a mix of Shi'a, Sunni of nontribal origin, and notable Sunnis families of *asil* descent; the latter are very much distinct from the bedouin and identify with their families more than with their tribe.

13. *Al-riyadh*, July 27, 1995. Philby, *Arabian Jubilee*, 268–71.

14. Crystal, *Oil and Politics*, 154.

15. On the family see Abd al-Rahman bin Abd al-Latif bin Abdallah Al-al-Shaykh, *Mashahir 'ulema al-najd wa ghayrihim*.
16. Philby, *Sa'udi Arabia*, 41, 63, 77.
17. When oil led to the growth of the bureaucracy the *ulema* and the rest of the religious establishment were bureaucratized. The power of the Al al-Shaykh and the *ulema*, already subordinate to the Al Saud, became more so. Ayman Al-Yassini, *Religion and State in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, 67; Ibrahim Mohamed Al-Awaji, "Bureaucracy and Society in Saudi Arabia," 120–22.
18. Altorki and Cole, *'Unayzah*, 91–92.
19. Mishary Abdalrahman Al-Nuaim, "State Building in a Neo-Capitalist Social Formation: The Dialectics of Two Modes of Production and the Role of the Merchant Class, Saudi Arabia 1902–1932," 19–34. He writes that "The unification process [by Ibn Saud, as he built his empire] within Najd followed the lines of the trade routes," 293. See also Al-Naqeeb, *Society and State*, 7–8.
20. Crystal, *Oil and Politics*, 6–12.
21. In Kuwait before 1898 the Al Sabah did not impose taxes on the merchants but instead subsisted on voluntary donations from them. This was unusual in Arabia, and it dramatically strengthened the bargaining position of the merchants against their rulers. See chapter 4.
22. Wahba, *Arabian Days*, 77.
23. For an interesting argument on the political effects of the mobility of the merchant class see Ellis Goldberg, "Private Goods, Public Wrongs, and Civil Society in Some Medieval Arab Theory and Practice."
24. On the merchants in Kuwait see also Shafeeq al-Ghabra, *Al-kuwayt: dirasat fi alyat al-dawla al-qutriya wa al-sulta wa al-mujtama*, 51–53.
25. Before oil the merchants did not occupy state offices, though they often performed some services for the ruling families in an informal capacity, especially in relations with the outside world. See Michael Field, *The Merchants*, 107–11.
26. *MEED* March 21, 1997; see also Fareed Mohamedi, "State and Bourgeoisie in the Persian Gulf," 35–37.
27. The sample, understandably, was not randomly selected. Al-Awaji, "Bureaucracy and Society in Saudi Arabia," 169–78.
28. Information from the Royal Saudi Embassy's Web page, ([www.saudi.net](http://www.saudi.net)).
29. This figure was widely reported in the Kuwaiti press and was attributed to a World Bank study. See also Gause, *Oil Monarchies*, 58–60. On the Kuwaiti economy see Jasim al-Sadoun's weekly reports issued through his Maktab al-Shall, and in *al-Qabas* 28 April 1994 and *al-Tali'a* 27 April–3 May 1994.

30. Employment in the private sector (as distinct from owing a business) holds little attraction for most Gulf citizens, at least in the richer emirates. Pay scales in government jobs discriminate between foreigners and citizens, and the latter receive very generous compensation for what is usually a modest effort. In the private sector employers have little reason—short of government coercion or subsidy—to employ citizens in the place of cheap, skilled, and hungry imported labor.

31. Donald Powell Cole, *Nomads of the Nomads: The Al Murrah Bedouin of the Empty Quarter*, 143. He adds that “the younger princes [of the Al Saud], most of whom have studied abroad, and the young Bedouin know little of each other.”

32. Khuri, *Tribe and State*, 142.

33. See Shafeeq Ghabra’s discussion of the Kuwaiti bedouin in *Al-kuwayt*, 53–60.

34. This has changed over time as bedouin have settled, set up businesses, or gone to universities, but there can be no doubt that as a group the bedouin have had a late start.

35. Al-Nuaim, “State Building,” especially 288–306.

36. Wahba, *Arabian Days*, 128.

37. John Bagot Glubb, *War in the Desert*, 225–27, quote 227.

38. James Lunt, *Glubb Pasha: A Biography*, 60.

39. John Bagot Glubb, *The Story of the Arab Legion*, 103.

40. Lunt, *Glubb Pasha*, 96.

41. Donald Cole, *Nomads of the Nomads*, 109; Ibrahim and Cole. *Saudi Arabian Bedouin*, 16–18.

42. The greatest exception to the general principle that the foreigners have little political influence was the Palestinians of Kuwait. Before Saddam’s invasion perhaps 400,000 Palestinians lived in Kuwait, and they had a certain, carefully circumscribed, political weight. The invasion led to the expulsion of the Palestinians from Kuwait and to the permanent end of their political influence.

43. Bill, “Islam, Politics, and Shi’ism in the Gulf.”

44. Faysal Marhun, *Al-bahrayn*, 90–107; Anthony H. Cordesman, *After the Storm*, 633–34; Khuri, *Tribe and State*, 114–15, 238; *Los Angeles Times*, 26 June 1995.

#### Chapter 4. The Dynasties: The Al Sabah and the Al Saud

1. James Madison, “The Federalist No. 51,” 262, 263.

2. Abdalaziz al-Rashid, *Tarikh al-Kuwayt*, 90; Sayf Marzuq al-Shamlan, *Min tarikh al-kuwayt*, 117.

3. Ismael argues that the Al Sabah even before Mubarak had responsibility for relations with the tribes in the desert around Kuwait: she notes, however, that the evidence of any extensive Al Sabah influence before Mubarak is not overwhelming. Jacqueline S. Ismael, *Kuwait: Social Change in Historical Perspective*, 27, 35, 179 note 16; Lorimer observes that the influence of the ruler, in the 1860s, extended eight to ten miles outside Kuwait town. *Gazetteer*, vol. I, part 2, 1011.

Kuwaitis went to war by sea until Mubarak's time. The characteristic response to the threat of an attack from the desert was to load up all of the town's movable wealth on boats and prepare to sail away should the battle go badly. See Rashid, *Tarikh*, 110–11, 118–19, 120–21, 125. See also Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, vol. I, part 2, 1008. Mubarak seems to have been the first shaykh of the Al Sabah to wage extensive campaigns on land. Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, vol. I, part 2, 1016; Rashid, *Tarikh*, 133–34; al-Shamlan, *Min tarikh*, 135–36.

4. Al-Rashid relates the story of a merchant who refused to provision the emir's household. When he was later robbed in the market, he went to the Shaikh for justice. Shaikh Jabir refused to set his men after the thieves. al-Rashid, *Tarikh*, 123–25. On revenues see Husayn Khalaf al-Shaykh Khaz'al, *Tarikh al-Kuwayt al-siyasi*, vol. II. 'Asr al-Shaykh Mubarak, 296; *Arabian Gulf Intelligence: Selections from the Records of the Bombay Government. New Series*, no. XXIV, 1856, 109 and 296 (from reports dated originally 1845 and 1854); Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, vol. II, part 1, 1011.

5. Khaz'al, *Tarikh al-kuwayt*, 296–97; Futuh Abd al-Muhsin Khatrush, *Tarikh al-'alaqat al-siyasiya al-britaniya al-kuwaytiya* 1890–1921, 37.

6. Commerce, however, thrived under the patronage of the newly powerful Al Sabah ruler. Al-Rashid writes that "The government became an autocracy and a great tyranny when Mubarak took the reins of power. . . . But on the other hand Mubarak softened the burden of his despotism in what he undertook for the interests of his subjects and for what his subjects won in security and equanimity." al-Rashid, *Tarikh*, 91.

7. Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, vol. II, part 2, 1074–75.

8. Under Mubarak his eldest son Jabir had been "Deputy Governor in Kuwait," while Salim had handled relations with the tribes. For this reason, it would appear, Salim had the influence to ensure that the succession would go laterally. On their respective posts under Mubarak see Rush, *Al-Sabah*, 94; Telegram from Sir Percy Cox to the Arab Bureau, Cairo, February 16, 1917 (IOR:R/15/5/17, in *RF: Kuwait*, 156).

9. Unless otherwise noted in the genealogical charts, dates of rule, dates of birth, and genealogical relationships are from Rush, *Al-Sabah*.

10. Report on Kuwait prepared by the Political Agent, 1927 (IOR:R/15/504, in *RF: Kuwait*, 233–34); Crystal, *Oil and Politics*, 43.

11. Report on Kuwait by the Political Agent, 1927 (IOR:R/15/1/504, in *RF: Kuwait*, 233).
12. al-Adsani, *Muthakkirat*, 25.
13. Kuwait Situation July, 8 1938, Report by de Gaury, "Administration in Kuwait" (R/15/5/205, in *RF: Kuwait*, 303–304); Atiya Husayn Afandi, "Al-tatawwur al-siyasi li-imarat al-kuwayt (1914–1945)," 255. Abdallah al-Jabir, however, was not mentioned in a report of 1927 by the Political Agent (IOR:R 15/1/504, in *RF: Kuwait*, 233–35).
14. J. C. More, Political Agent Kuwait to the Political Resident, "Discontent against the Shaikh of Kuwait," October 23, 1926 (IOR:R/15/1/504, in *RF: Kuwait*, 230); al-Adsani, *Muthakkirat*, 17; Express letter from de Gaury to the Political Resident, 19 March, 38 (IOR:R/15/5/205, in *RF: Kuwait*, 286); Al-Kuwairi, *Oil Revenues*, 15.
15. al-Adsani, *Muthakkirat*, 17; Alan Rush interviewed de Gaury on the topic of the 1938 *majlis* and his role in it: see *Al-Sabah*, 57.
16. Letter from the Political Resident to Ahmad al-Jabir, June 18, 1938. (IOR:R/15/5/205, in *RF: Kuwait*, 293).
17. al-Adsani, *Muthakkirat*, 21–22; de Gaury to the Political Resident, July 6, 1938; T. C. Fowle, Political Resident to the India Office, London, July 18, 1938 (IOR:R/15/5/205 in *RF: Kuwait*, 297–301, 311–18).
18. Khalid Sulayman al-Adsani, *Nisf 'am lil-hukm al-niyabi fi al-kuwayt*; al-Adsani, *Muthakkirat*, 32–33.
19. Oil revenue amounted to a good deal less than customs revenue in 1938: al-Adsani, *Nisf 'am*, 26; Crystal, *Oil and Politics*, 55. On the *diwan al-imiri* see al-Adsani, *Muthakkirat*, 42.
20. Crystal, *Oil and Politics*, 48–50. The *majlis* movement did not unite all of the merchants; some had profitable business dealings with Mullah al-Salih, the ruler's secretary. Thus leaders of the opponents of the *majlis* came from some of the most prominent of the Kuwaiti merchant families. Al-Adsani blames the fall of the *majlis*, in the end, on the withdrawal of British backing. See al-Adsani, *Muthakkirat*, 38, 22–23, 54.
21. al-Adsani, *Muthakkirat*, 58 and 66.
22. "An account of the Political Situation in Kuwait," December 1938, (from the papers of H. R. P. Dickson, in *RF: Kuwait*, 335–40); al-Adsani, *Muthakkirat*, 56–60; Crystal, *Oil and Politics*, 49–50.
23. al-Adsani, *Muthakkirat*, 66.
24. Sources for figure 4.3: Rush, *Al-Sabah*; al-Adsani, *Muthakkirat*, 66, 85; "Administration Report for the Kuwait Political Agency for the Year 1941" (in PGAR); Political Agent to Political Resident, March 28, 1941 (IOR:R/15/5/194, in *RF: Kuwait*, 241–43); "An Account of the Political Situation in Kuwait" (from H. R. P. Dickson's papers, in *RF: Kuwait*, 338); a who's who of the Al Sabah, probably from 1942 (in *RF: Kuwait*, 236–37).

25. al-Adsani, *Muthakkirat*, 60. De Gaury noted, at the beginning of the *majlis* episode, that the ruler had delegated the administration of the family estates in Iraq (the source of much of the family's wealth) to Mullah Salih, who ran them with "little or no reference to the family." (Document in *RF: Kuwait*, 308, probably July 9, 1938, IOR:R/15/5/205).

26. See Crystal, *Oil and Politics*, 62–63. The *majlis* episode did not end in December of 1938. Early in 1939 the merchants held new elections and convened a new *majlis*. Yet this new *majlis* never regained the power of its predecessor, for now the shaykhs had a tight grip on the state departments. The *majlis* dragged on for a few months until the Al Sabah closed it again. The radicals among the deputies appealed to the Iraqi king to save them by sending his army to annex Kuwait to Iraq. See al-Hatim, *Min huna bada'at al-kuwayt*, 220–21; al-Adsani *Muthakkirat*, 96; Crystal, *Oil and Politics*, 50.

27. Glen Balfour-Paul, *The End of Empire in the Middle East*, 108–109.

28. Persian Gulf Annual Report 1951 (FO 371/98323, in PGAR).

29. Crystal, *Oil and Politics*, 69–70; Kuwait Administration Report for 1951; Persian Gulf Annual Report 1953 (FO 371/98323 and FO 371/109805 in PGAR); Letter from Burrows, Political Resident, to Anthony Eden, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, October 26, 1953 (FO/317/104264); L. A. C. Fry, Minute of the Foreign Office, November 23, 1953 (FO/371/104270).

30. Balfour-Paul, *End of Empire*, 109. He notes that, "The chance had indeed been missed in 1938," when the ruler's "spontaneous request for a 'Belgrave' had been turned down."

31. C. J. Pelly, Political Agent Kuwait, to B. A. B. Burrows, Political Resident, October 19, 1953 (FO/371/104264).

32. Persian Gulf Annual Report 1954 (in PGAR).

33. Halford, Political Agent Kuwait, to Selwyn Lloyd, August 13, 1959 (FO 371/140083).

34. Sources for figure 4.5: Political Agent Kuwait to the Foreign Office, April 17, 1956; "Principal Officials of the State of Kuwait," extract from a Political Agency Memorandum, July 1954 (FO 371/120550 and 371/114588 in *RF: Kuwait*, 553 and 531); Rush, *Al-Sabah*. The *majlis al-ala* was preceded by a Higher Executive Committee appointed in 1954 that included, with three non-Al Sabah, Jabir al-Ali, Sabah al-Ahmad, and Khalid al-Abdallah. Translation of Decree Number 1 for 1954 by the Ruler of Kuwait, July 19, 1954 (FO 371/114588 in *RF: Kuwait*, 536).

35. Fahad died, unexpectedly, later in 1959. A. S. Halford, Political Agent Kuwait, to Sir George Middleton, Political Resident, February 11, 1959 (FO 371/140081, in *RF: Kuwait*, 604–608), and February 26, 1959

(FO 317/1420082); A. S. Halford Political Agent Kuwait to R. A. Beaumont, Foreign Office, June 18, 1959 (FO 371/140286, in *RF: Kuwait*, 622–23). Rush, *Al-Sabah*, 89.

36. See Rush, *Al-Sabah*, 115.

37. Political Agent Kuwait, June 11, 1961 (FO 371/156825); Rush, *Al-Sabah*, 115.

38. Abdallah in January 1963 appointed Sabah, the new crown prince, to head the government as prime minister, inaugurating a convention still in effect. The value of this for a smooth succession is apparent, for no one is better positioned than the prime minister to take power quickly and decisively on the ruler's death.

39. B. A. B. Burrows, Political Resident, to D. M. H. Riches, Eastern Department of the Foreign Office, March 17, 1959 (FO 371/127007, in *RF: Kuwait*, 571–73).

40. *Al-qabas*, March 28, 1994.

41. Kamal Manufi, *Al-hukumat al-kuwaytiya*, 61.

42. Interviews in Kuwait, fall and spring 1993–1994.

43. Interviews in Kuwait, fall and spring 1993–1994. Sa'd was born in 1930, Jabir al-Ali in 1927 (Rush, *Al-Sabah*, 48, 85).

44. The shaykhs, however, declined to vote in the proceedings. Muhammad Abd al-Qadir al-Jasim, *Al-Kuwait... muthallath al-dimuqratiya*, 47–49 and 273; Manufi, *Al-hukumat al-kuwaytiya*.

45. J. E. Peterson, *The Arab Gulf States: Steps toward Political Participation*, 49–50.

46. Crystal, *Oil and Politics*, 105; Rush, *Al-Sabah*, 7.

47. *New York Times*, May 24, 1991; *Washington Post*, March 21, 1991.

48. Interviews in Kuwait, fall 1993; *Los Angeles Times*, March 21, 1991; Ahmad al-Baghdadi and Falah al-Madirs, "Dirasa tahliliya l-itijahat al-ra'y al-'am al-kuwayti hawla mukhtalif al-qadaya al-siyasiya al-mahaliya," 91.

49. Sources for figure 4.7: *New York Times* April 21, 1991; *Los Angeles Times*, April 21, 1991; CIA, *Chiefs of State*.

50. al-Naqeeb, "Tahlil," *Al-qabas*, November 15, 1992.

51. *Al-hayat* October 15 and 16, 1992; Shafeeq Ghabra, "Democratization in a Middle Eastern State: Kuwait, 1993," 114.

52. *Al-wasat* October 14, 1996 (no. 246), *Al-hayat* October 9 and 10, 1996.

53. Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, 340–41; Salamé, *Al-siyasa al-kharajiya al-saudiya*, 58–59.

54. Philby, *Arabian Jubilee*, 231.

55. *The Middle East Intelligence Handbooks, 1943–1946: Western Arabia and the Red Sea*, 322. The same passage appears in Summer Scott Huyette,

*Political Adaptation in Sa'udi Arabia: A Study of the Council of Ministers*, 59, quoted from Philby's papers.

56. J. Rives Childs, American Legation, Jeddah, to the Secretary of State, March 11, 1948 (890F.01/3-1148, in *Documents on the History of Saudi Arabia*, volume 5, *Saudi Arabia Enters the Modern World: Secret U.S. Documents on the Emergence of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a World Power, 1936-1949*, edited by Ibrahim al-Rashid, 158).

On Ibn Saud's advisers, see also Khayr al-Din al-Zirikly, *Shibh al-jazira fi ahd al-malik abdalaziz*, volume 3-4, 1012-14; Mohammed Almana, *Arabia Unified*, 191-99.

57. The Sudayri family toward the end of Ibn Saud's reign held no fewer than thirteen governorships in various towns in the realm. Philby, *Arabian Jubilee*, 271, 268.

58. Dates of rule and genealogical relationships in the genealogical charts of the Al Saud are based on Samore, "Royal Family Politics."

59. Salamé, *Al-siyasa al-kharajiya al-saudiya*, 74-75.

60. In 1930 Faysal also received the portfolio of Foreign Affairs, the first formal ministry, by virtue of the fact that Jeddah, the main seaport of the Hejaz, was the Kingdom's window to the rest of the world. Zirikly, *Shibh al-jazira*, 1405, 358, 459-62; Salamé, *Al-siyasa al-kharajiya al-saudiya*, 68-69; Samore, "Royal Family Politics," 78.

61. Sir R. Bullard, British Legation in Jeddah, to Lord Halifax, November 30, 1939 (FO 371/23271, in *RF: Saudi Arabia*, vol. II, 13). See also Philby, *Sa'udi Arabia*, 297 and *Arabian Jubilee*, 242: "under existing conditions most of them have nothing to do."

62. Alexander Bligh, *From Prince to King*, 52; Huyette, *Political Adaptation; Middle East Intelligence Handbooks: Western Arabia and the Red Sea*, 327.

63. Huyette, *Political Adaptation*, 59-60.

64. In 1955 a number of army officers apparently conspired to overthrow the Al Saud, but their plot achieved nothing.

65. Huyette, *Political Adaptation*, 65-67; Samore, "Royal Family Politics," 88.

66. Phillips, Jeddah, to Anthony Eden, Foreign Office, September 18, 1954 (FO 371/110098, in *RF: Saudi Arabia*, vol. II, 536).

67. Samore, "Royal Family Politics," 75.

68. "Émigré advisers to King Saud," (FO 371/120790, in *RF: Saudi Arabia*, vol. II, 602-603); José Arnold, *Golden Swords and Pots and Pans*, 36, 222-27.

69. "Saudi Arabia: A Disruptive Force in Western-Arab Relations," Intelligence Report 7142, U.S. Department of State, Office of Intelligence Research, quoted in Samore, "Royal Family Politics," 103.

70. Lacey, *The Kingdom*, 300.
71. Arnold, *Golden Swords*, 67, 76–102.
72. H. Phillips, Jeddah, to the Eastern Department, May 14, 1955 (FO 371/114874, in *RF: Saudi Arabia* vol. II, 559); Samore ("Royal Family Politics," 94–95) attributes the resignation to tension between Talal and his brother Misha'al.
73. U.S. Department of State, Office of Intelligence Research, Intelligence Report No. 7692, "Background and Implications of the Conflict within the Saudi Ruling Family," April 1, 1958. In O.S.S./State Department Intelligence and Research Reports Series, vol. 12, *The Middle East, 1950–1961*, Supplement (1979), Reel 3.
74. Safran, *Saudi Arabia*, 87 and 109.
75. Intelligence Report No. 7692. Faysal, apparently dissatisfied with Misha'al's performance, or politics, supported the dismissal.
76. Samore, "Royal Family Politics," 97–99.
77. Lacey, *The Kingdom*, 317, 321–22; de Gaury, *Faisal*, 93.
78. Huyette, *Political Adaptation*; Samore, "Royal Family Politics," 141.
79. Samore, "Royal Family Politics," 142–43.
80. Lacey, *The Kingdom*, 336.
81. U.S. Department of State, Office of Central Reference, Report on Talal bin Abdalaziz, February 11, 1965 (M 5617, in *RF: Saudi Arabia*, vol. II, 560–62); Samore, "Ruling Family Politics," 151.
82. Samore, "Royal Family Politics," 149–56; Bligh, *From Prince to King*, 71–75.
83. Lacey, *The Kingdom*, 338.
84. Some say it was alcoholism. (See David Holden and Richard Johns, *The House of Saud*, 218.) Others are more circumspect: Lacey mentions a "recurrent liver complication," that had, "defied medication for many years." *The Kingdom*, 338.
85. Samore, "Royal Family Politics," 161, 173–76, 179; Huyette, *Political Adaptation*, 72–73, 82 notes 23 and 24 (she says that Khalid did not become deputy prime minister until 1965); Holden and Johns, *The House of Saud*, 218–19.
86. Samore, "Ruling Family Politics," 181–82; Lacey, *The Kingdom*, 349, 353.
87. Lacey, *The Kingdom*, 352; Samore, "Royal Family Politics," 183–88; Holden and Johns, *The House of Saud*, 238. In Lacey's account this episode occurred in December 1963—others place it in March 1964.
88. Sources: Varying versions of the princes who signed the petition are listed in the *Middle East Journal* 18, no. 3 (Summer 1964), 353–54, *Al-thawra al-islamiya* 83 (February 1987), 50–54, and Wahba, *Arabian Days*,

180. It has not been possible to establish the precise identity of all signatories. Of the nine sons of Abdalaziz who did not sign the petition, two were Faysal and Saud themselves, three were at school, and one was Talal, who refused to participate in politics in any form after his return from exile in Cairo. Musa'id refused to sign. Samore, "Royal Family Politics," 189–92; Lacey, *The Kingdom*, 354.

89. Samore, "Royal Family Politics," 193–97 and 236–37; Lacey, *The Kingdom*, 356.

90. Samore, "Royal Family Politics," 455.

91. *Ibid.*, 84.

92. The table does not show the sons of Ibn Saud who died before the issue of their appointment as crown prince or second in line could come up, notably Turki (1900–1919) and Mansur (1922–1951). Dates are from Samore, "Royal Family Politics."

93. Lacey, *The Kingdom*, 360.

94. Saïd K. Aburish, *The Rise, Corruption and Coming Fall of the House of Saud*, 297.

95. Bligh, *From Prince to King*, 85–90; Samore, "Ruling Family Politics," 321, 481.

96. Samore, "Royal Family Politics," 326–31, 529; Lacey, *The Kingdom*, 433.

97. Some years before 1975 the Saudi police, on Faysal's orders, had shot and killed the assassin's brother when he and a group of confederates attacked the Riyadh television station on the grounds that television was against religion. It is not clear that the assassin sympathized with his dead brother's views, merely thought his death needed avenging, or had some other motive. Lacey, *The Kingdom*, 370, 431.

98. Khaled bin Sultan, *Desert Warrior*, 55; Lacey, *The Kingdom*, 445.

99. Saudi Basic Law, in *Al-quds al-arabi*, March 2, 1992.

100. Sources: figures 4.17 and 4.18 show princes of the Al Saud who appeared in the decrees issued by King Fahad in July 1997 renewing the terms in office of senior officials in the Kingdom. *al-Hayat*, July 7, 1997. Two of Abdallah's sons have been added: Metz, *Country Study* (1993), 262.

101. On tensions, for instance, between Khalid bin Sultan and his uncle Abd al-Rahman (a full brother of Fahad and Sultan) see the *Washington Post* March 15, 1992.

102. Samore notes the problems faced by outside analysts in discerning the outlines of family coalitions. Of one spate of appointments he notes that, "Saudi watchers . . . agreed that the appointments were designed to 'balance' royal factions, but as usual, they disagreed on who was balancing whom." "Royal Family Politics," 354.

103. Samore, "Royal Family Politics," 489.

## Chapter 5. The Dynasties: The Al Thani, Al Khalifa, Al Nahayan, Al Maktum, and Al Said

1. United States, CIA, *Chiefs of State*, July 5, 1997.
2. Persian Gulf Annual Report, 1949, page 61 (FO 371/82003, in PGAR); Adil al-Tabtabai'i, *Al-sulta al-tashri'iya fi duwal al-khalij al-arabi*, 121.
3. A. F. Williamson, Notes on Qatar, January 14, 1934 (IOR R/15/2 411, in *RF: Qatar*, 404–405); Crystal, *Oil and Politics*, 129–30; Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, vol. II, part 2, 1535. When oil came, the Al Thani rulers of the capital, Doha, asserted their control over the entire peninsula, against the objections of both previously independent towns, and of other branches of the Al Thani family who ruled in subsidiary towns, particularly Wakrah.
- The genealogical relationships in the Al Thani family trees are based on Family Tree #7 in *RF: Family Trees*, “Arabic tree of Al-Thani family.”
4. Crystal, *Oil and Politics*, 114–17; Rupert Hay, *The Persian Gulf States*, 107–12; Abdalaziz Muhammad al-Mansur, *Al-tatawwur al-siyasi li-qatar 1916–1949*, 15–39.
5. Telegram from Jakins, Bahrain, to the Foreign Office, August 16, 1949 (FO 371/74944, in *RF: Qatar*, 523–24).
6. Rupert Hay, Political Resident, to A. B. Burrows, Foreign Office, September 13, 1949 (FO 371/74944, in *RF: Qatar*, 547).
7. Administration Report for the British Agency, Doha, for the year 1950 (FO 371/91258, in PGAR); W. R. Hay, Political Resident, to Anthony Eden, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, April 12, 1952; Letter from W. R. Hay, Political Resident, to Shaikh Ali bin Abdullah al-Thani, Ruler of Qatar, August 27, 1952 (both from FO 371/98463, in *RF: Qatar*, 567–71); J. S. R. Duncan, Political Agent Doha, to Sir George Middleton, Political Resident, December 28, 1958 (FO 371/140064, in *RF: Qatar*, 695). One member of the family, it was reported, “threatened the life of the Ruler and Abdallah Darwish because his allowance was not to his liking” (page 3 of the report).
8. Crystal, *Oil and Politics*, 132.
9. B. A. B. Burrows, Annual Report for the Persian Gulf 1953 (FO 371/109805, in PGAR); C. J. Pelly, Political Agent Bahrain, to Rupert Hay, Political Resident, December 11, 1949 (FO 371/74946, in *RF: Qatar*, 550); Roderic Owen, *The Golden Bubble*, 130–31.
10. The director of customs was Darwish's brother-in-law: Field, *The Merchants*, 258; Annual Reports for Qatar, 1955 (page 6) and 1956 (page 5) (FO 1016/518 and FO 371/126869 in PGAR).
11. Persian Gulf: Annual Review for 1956 (FO 371/126869, in PGAR).
12. The chief difference lies in the initial role of the Sunni merchant community in destroying the power of Mullah Salih, for in Qatar Darwish was himself the better part of the merchant community. Crystal discusses

the importance of the relative weights of the merchant communities of Kuwait and Qatar in *Oil and Politics*.

13. Field, *The Merchants*, 260–61; Annual Report for Qatar, 1956 (FO 371/126869, in PGAR).
14. Annual Review for 1956 and Annual Report for the Persian Gulf, 1957, including the "Chronological Summary of Events in Qatar during 1957" (FO 371/126869 and FO 371/132748, in PGAR).
15. Annual Review of Events in the Persian Gulf for 1959 (FO 371/148896, in *Foreign Office Annual Reports from Arabia* vol. 4, 461).
16. B. A. B. Burrows, Valedictory, October 25, 1958 (FO 371/132533, in *Foreign Office Annual Reports from Arabia* vol. 4, 381).
17. Foreign Office to B. A. B. Burrows, Political Resident, September 20, 1958. See also correspondence of June 10 and July 23, 1958, B. A. B. Burrows, Political Resident, to D. M. H. Riches, Foreign Office (FO 371/140064, in *RF: Qatar*, 689–91, 651, 668).
18. J. S. R. Duncan, Political Agent Doha, to George Middleton, Political Resident, December 28, 1958 (FO 371/140064, in *RF: Qatar*, 694–95).
19. Foreign Office note by D. M. H. Riches, August 19, 1958, with record of discussions with the Ruler of Qatar, August 15–16, 1958 (FO 371/140064, in *RF: Qatar*, 676–84, quote p. 682). Ali disavowed the deal that had made Khalifa heir apparent on the basis that he had signed it under duress.
20. The family signed a document making Khalifa bin Hamad the crown prince and the deputy ruler. See the translated text of "A proclamation by the Representatives of the people in installing His Highness Shaikh Ahmad bin Ali bin Abdullah bin Qasim Al-Thani, as Ruler and His Excellency Shaikh Khalifa bin Hamad Al Thani as Heir apparent and Deputy Ruler," October 24, 1960 (FO 371/149172, in *RF: Qatar*, 739–40); Mahmud Sinan, *Tarikh qatar al-'am*, 106–109; Husayn Muhammad al-Baharna, *Duwal al-khalij al-arabi al-haditha*, 115–17; *The Middle East*, 1962 and *The Middle East and North Africa, 1965–1966; Middle East Record*, 1961, 458; Nyrop, *Area Handbook for the Persian Gulf States* (1977), 269.
21. Tabtaba'i, *Al-sulta al-tashri'iya*, 134; Sinan, *Tarikh qatar*, 109–10, text of law, 245–51.
22. *The Middle East and North Africa, 1970–1971*, 584; *Arab Report & Record*, 16–31 May 1970. See also J. B. Kelly, *Arabia, the Gulf and the West*, 189.
23. Riad Najib el-Rayyes, *Sira' al-wahat wa al-naft*, 220–23; Crystal, *Oil and Politics*, 155–56; Kelly, *Arabia*, 189. There were widespread rumors that the ruler wished to appoint his son heir apparent, violating the 1960 family agreement that Khalifa would follow him as ruler. John Duke Anthony, *Arab States of the Lower Gulf*, 86–87; *Arab Report & Record*, February 16–29 and March 1–15, 1972.

24. *The Middle East and North Africa, 1972–1973*, 586; *Arab Report & Record*, February 16–29, 1972; Anthony, *Lower Gulf*, 77; Nyrop, *Area Handbook* (1977), 269; *Al-mawsu'a al-qatariya*, vol. I, 322.
25. Khalifa reserved the premiership for himself and appointed no crown prince in the first five years of his rule. *Middle East Contemporary Survey* vol. 1, 1976–1977, 354; Crystal, *Oil and Politics*, 157; Cordesman, *After the Storm*, 93, 640–41; *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, 1976–1977 and subsequent years; Metz, *Persian Gulf States*, 190.
26. *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, 1976–1977.
27. *MEED*, October 20, 1989.
28. Sources for figure 5.5: United States Central Intelligence Agency *Heads of State*, July/August 1989 and September/October 1989; *Middle East Contemporary Survey, 1989 and 1991*; *Al-mawsu'a al-qatariya*, vol. I; *MEED* October 20, 1989. A Khalid bin Muhammad bin Ali appears in *RF: Family Trees*, number 10, "Genealogical table of Al-Thani Family, 1953," and thus would have been Ahmad's nephew. This shaykh, though, was reported to have resigned in 1991. *MEED* October 4, 1991.
29. *Al-wasat* 179 (July 3, 1995). Sources for figure 5.6: Economist Intelligence Unit, *Country Report*, nos. 3 and 4, 1992; *Al-wasat* 179 (July 3, 1995); *Al-mawsu'a al-qatariya* vol. I; "Arabic Tree of Al-Thani family," in *RF: Family Trees*, Family tree no. 9; Metz, *Persian Gulf States* (1994), 184.
30. Salim Nasir in *Al-hayat* July 1, 1995, *Al-hayat* July 3, 1995; *Al-sharq al-awsat* June 28.
31. *Washington Post*, June 28, 1995; *Al-hayat* June 28, 1995.
32. *Al-sharq al-awsat*, June 28 and July 6, 1995.
33. Issues of *Al-sharq al-awsat* and *Al-hayat* in the week after the coup covered in detail the recognition of foreign powers of the new regime.
34. *Al-sharq al-awsat* July 12, 1995; CIA, *Heads of State*, July 11, 1995.
35. *Reuters*, February 20, 1996, "Qatar forces on alert after plot, security beefed," and February 21, 1996, "Qatar's emir cements power ahead of coup anniversary," May 15, 1996; *Al-wasat*, April 29, 1996 (no. 222).
36. *Al-sharq al-awsat* July 12, 1995.
37. Scott Peterson, "A First Lady Gently Shakes Qatar," *The Christian Science Monitor* January 1, 1998.
38. *Al-wasat* October 28, 1996 (no. 248).
39. *MEED*, November 8, 1996.
40. Khuri, *Tribe and State*, 52, 114; Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, vol. II, part 1, 252.
41. Lorimer, *Gazetteer* vol. II, part 1, 248–51 and 391–96; Khuri, *Tribe and State*, 41–45.
42. The British installed Hamad bin Isa in control of the administration, though he did not formally replace his father as ruler. Isa had earlier

appointed Hamad, his eldest son, heir apparent, but by the late 1910s Hamad's younger brother Abdallah had risen to prominence, partly on the basis of energy and intelligence, and partly on the basis of the support of his mother, who exerted a deep influence over his father the ruler. When the British interfered in the late 1910s and early 1920s Abdallah clearly had supplanted Hamad as the effective heir apparent. Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, vol. I, part 2, 927; Administration Reports for Bahrain, 1921 (pages 62–63) and 1922 (pages 51–52) (in PGAR); Daly, Political Agent's report, April 1924 (IOR:R/15/5/73, in *RF: Bahrain*, 168–69); Khuri, *Tribe and State*, 91–95.

43. The British used the same tactic to take control of the administration of Zanzibar—ruled by the Al Said dynasty of Oman—at the end of the nineteenth century. Michael F. Lofchie, *Zanzibar: Background to Revolution*, 57.

44. Khuri, *Tribe and State*, 85–108; Mahdi Abdalla Al-Tajir, *Bahrain 1920–1945: Britain, the Shaikh and the Administration*. A municipality, modeled after those of Iraqi cities where Major Daly, the Political Officer, had earlier served, was one of the main reforms introduced, and it had a powerful demonstration effect throughout the Gulf, illustrating the beneficial effects of increased state involvement in civic improvements, and it inspired the Kuwaiti merchant class to demand a municipality in their town. Administration Reports for the Bahrain Political Agency for the Years 1919 (page 64) and 1920 (page 70), in PGAR.

45. Administration Report of the Bahrain Political Agency for the year 1923 (page 67), in PGAR..

46. One element in the reconciliation of the shaykh's to Hamad's rule was distribution of much of state revenue to the shaykhs of the Al Khalifa, and a written compact between Hamad and Abdallah fixing a generous allowance for the latter. The civil list as a percentage of public revenue, in the later 1920s and early 1930s, ranged between 35 percent and 60 percent. Al-Kuwari, *Oil Revenues*, 11–13; Agreement between Abdallah and Hamad on July 22, 1922 (IOR:R/15/2/229, in *RF: Bahrain*, 147).

47. Administration Report of the Bahrain Agency for 1930 (page 45), in PGAR; Administration Report of the Bahrain Agency and the Trucial Coast for the year 1939 (page 30) in PGAR; Political Agent to Political Resident, May 14, 1930 (IOR:R/15/2/134 in *RF: Bahrain*, 206–209).

48. Muhammad Rumayhi, "Harakat 1938 al-islahiya fi al-kuwayt wa al-bahrayn wa al-dubay," 43; Weightman, Political Agent Bahrain to Fowle, Political Resident, December 3, 1938 (*RF: Bahrain*, 362–63); Note by Belgrave on the death of Hamad bin Isa, February 26, 1942 (*RF: Bahrain*, 406–14); E. B. Wakefield, Political Agent Bahrain, to the Political Resident, March 13, 1942 (IOR:R/15/1/368 in *RF: Bahrain*, 423–31); Note by Wakefield February 4, 1942, and accounting of salaries and civil list payments, January 1943 (IOR:R/15/2/198, in *RF: Bahrain*, 437–41).

49. The British had mixed feelings about reform, recognizing its dangers but also wondering about the costs of a policy of repression. In 1957, however, the British helped to suppress the opposition, casting their lot with repression. C. T. E. Ewart-Briggs, Bahrain Situation, Foreign Office Minutes, October 3, 1955 (FO 371/114587, in *RF: Bahrain*, 519–21).

50. G. A. Gault, Annual Review of Bahrain Affairs for 1956 (FO 371/126869, in *PGAR*); Husayn Musa, *Al-bahrayn: al-nidal al-watani wa al-dimuqrati 1920–1981*, 63–64; Khuri, *Tribe and State*, 211–14.

51. Musa, *al-Bahrayn*, 64; James H. D. Belgrave, *Welcome to Bahrain*, 5th ed. (1965), 13.

52. In early 1958 the ruler announced to a family council that his son Isa was his choice of heir, and this met with the family's approval. Salman's cousin Muhammad bin Khalifa himself sought the rulership, and it is to this that the Political Agent, in part, attributes Salman's decision to reinforce the council with more shaykhs in February of 1957. Political Agent Bahrain to Political Resident, May 21, 1957; Bahrain monthly report for the period ending February 28, 1958; M. C. G. Man, Political Resident to Foreign Office, July 23, 1959 (FO 371/126897, FO 371/140080 and FO 371/132750 in *RF: Bahrain*, 553–56, 565, 586–87).

53. Sources for figure 5.10: Belgrave, *Welcome to Bahrain*, 5th ed., 21–23; Musa, *al-Bahrayn*, 90. For a list of offices held by shaykhs in the 1950s, see James H.D. Belgrave, *Welcome to Bahrain*, 4th ed. (1960), 46.

54. United States, CIA, *Chiefs of State*, June 1996.

55. The constitution sets out primogeniture as the succession mechanism but specifies that the emir, during his lifetime, can appoint a different son crown prince (Section 1, Article 1). The 1973 law of succession, however, leaves no such loophole, but instead specifies, in detail, the line of succession. This law does, however, also set up a formal family council with broad power over members of the ruling family. The Constitution is reprinted in al-Baharna, *Duwal al-khalij*, 377–423. The law of succession is reprinted in Marhun, *Al-bahrayn*, 43–49.

56. Bahrain Freedom Movement, May 24, 1996, ourworld. compuserve.com/homepages/Bahrain; *Gulf States Newsletter* 20, no. 519 (September 11, 1995).

57. The *Economist* December 6, 1997. Shaykh Zayid of Abu Dhabi apparently encouraged crown prince Hamad to bargain with the opposition, a move opposed by Hamad's uncle Khalifa.

58. Much has been written on the Emirates and its rather odd confederal system. See Khalifa, *The United Arab Emirates*; Heard-Bey, *From Trucial States to United Arab Emirates*; Abdullah Omran Taryam, *The Establishment of the United Arab Emirates 1950–1985*.

59. Hugh Boustead, *The Wind of Morning*, 227–34; K. G. Fenelon, *The Trucial States*, 45–48. Quotes: M. S. Buckmaster, Political Agent Sharjah,

to the Political Resident, May 28, 1952 (FO 1016/168, in *RF: The Emirates*, 170); Trucial States Annual Report for 1956 (FO 371/126869).

60. Hawley, *Trucial States*, 255, 352; *Abu Dhabi*, 72–73.
61. Anthony, *Lower Gulf*, 128–30.
62. *Who's Who in the Arab World, 1993–1994*, 11th ed.; Heard-Bey, *From Trucial States*, 109.
63. *Arab Report & Record*, August 1–15, 1966. Anthony says that Khalid died in 1958. *Lower Gulf*, 129.
64. Kuwari, *Oil Revenues*, 159.
65. *The Times* of London, February 13, 1989, Shakhsbut's obituary, reprinted in *RF: The Emirates*, 231.
66. Khalifa, *Unity in fragmentation*, 60–61.
67. Anthony, *Lower Gulf*, 125.
68. *Who's Who in the Arab World, 1993–1994*; Anthony, *Lower Gulf*, 129–30, 147.
69. Tamam, *Zayid*, genealogical figure in the overleaf.
70. Richard F. Nyrop, *The Persian Gulf States* (1984), 291–92; *Gulf States Newsletter* 20, no. 519 (September 11, 1995).
71. Hawley, *The Trucial States*, 353.
72. On the 1938 councils in Kuwait and Dubai, see Rumayhi, "Harakat."
73. The shaykhs who tried to depose Said in 1929 are listed in The Residency Agent, Sharjah, to the Political Resident, April 21, 1929 (IOR:R/15/1/241, in *RF: the Emirates*, 316); their birth dates are in: Gordon Loch, Political Agent Bahrain to Political Resident, November 7, 1934 (IOR:R/15/1/285, in *RF: the Emirates*, 328); dates of rule from Hawley, *The Trucial Coast*, 354; names of those who fled: Administration Report of the Bahrain Agency and the Trucial Coast for the year 1939, in *PGAR*.
74. See Muhammad Rumayhi, "Harakat 1938;" Rosemarie Said Zahlan, *The Origins of the United Arab Emirates*, 150–61.
75. Zahlan, *Origins*, 160; Salah al-'Aqad, *Al-tiyarat al-siyasiya fi al-khalij al-arabi*, 282.
76. Zahlan, *Origins*, 160. The Al Maktum and the Al Nahayan are of the same tribe, the Bani Yas. Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, vol. II, part 2, 1932.
77. Zahlan, *Origins*, 160–61; Trenchard Fowle, Political Resident, to the India Office, London, April 20, 1939 (L/P&S/12/3827, in *RF: the Emirates*, 374–78).
78. Source for figure 5.15: Genealogical chart of the Al Maktum in *RF: Family Trees*, "Genealogical tables of the ruling families of the Emirates, to 1953, from *Persian Gulf Historical Summary, 1928–1953*.
79. B. A. B. Burrows, Political Resident, to Harold Macmillan, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, May 31, 1955 (FO 1016/401, in *RF: the Emirates*, 389–95).

80. Ibid.; Telegram from Tripp, Dubai, to Bahrain, August 16, 1955 (in *RF: the Emirates*, 402), telegram from Dubai to Foreign Office, September 12, 1958; D. F. Hawley, Political Agent Dubai, to B. A. B. Burrows, Political Resident, October 9, 1958 (no FO numbers supplied, *RF: the Emirates*, 425 and 427–32).
81. Heard-Bey, *From Trucial States*, 259.
82. Abbas Abdullah Makki, *Rashid: The Man Behind Dubai*, 47, 56; Hawley, *The Trucial States*, 247–48; Arab Report & Record February 15–28, 1973; *Who's Who in the Arab World, 1993–1994*; CIA, *Heads of State*, July 11, 1995; Nyrop, *Persian Gulf Country Studies* (1984), 294; Anthony, *Lower Gulf*, 157; *Who's Who in the Arab World 1993–1994*.
83. Figure: *Al-Wasat* 154 (January 9, 1995); *Who's Who in the Arab World 1993–94*; CIA *Heads of State* July 11, 1995, March 4, 1996. A 1990 book on Rashid reported that "Most of the important sectors of political life in the emirate are controlled by members of the Ruler's immediate household." Makki, *Rashid*, 59.
84. *Al-wasat* 154 (January 9, 1995).
85. CIA, *Heads of State*, July 11, 1995.
86. T. Hickinbotham, Political Agent Muscat, to the Political Resident, October 15, 1940 (IOR:R/15/6/216, in *RF: Oman* vol. 2, 405–406). Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, vol. II, part 2, 1418–21; J. E. Peterson, *Oman in the Twentieth Century*, 29, 45–65.
87. Peterson, *Oman*, 76–77. In 1920 the British wrote of the Sultan that "though as a puppet Sultan in name he did not mind being controlled by us, he did not like the idea of being controlled financially above all, by his relations." Foreign Department Note on an Interview with the Sultan, September 8, 1920 (IOR:R/15/6/52, in *RF: Oman*, vol. II, 87).
88. Peterson, *Oman*, 78.
89. Administration Report of the Political Agency, Muscat, for the Year 1939 (page 39), in *PGAR*.
90. Administration Report of the Political Agency, Muscat, for the year 1939 (page 41), in *PGAR*; T. Hickinbotham, Political Agent Muscat to the Political Resident, (with enclosures) October 15, 1940 (IOR:R/15/6/216, in *RF: Oman* vol. II, 403–10); Peterson, *Oman*, 220; John C. Wilkinson, *The Imamate Tradition of Oman*, 14.
91. Peterson, *Oman*, 64, 201; Calvin H. Jr. Allen, *Oman: The Modernization of the Sultanate*, 81, 125; Skeet, *Oman*, 38–39; *Who's Who in the Arab World, 1997–1998*.
92. Peterson, *Oman*, 89–90.
93. Qabus visited Muscat, for the first time in his life, only after he overthrew his father. Peterson, *Oman*, 80–81, 203; Ian Skeet, *Muscat and Oman: End of an Era*, 168–70; John Townsend, *Oman: The Making of a Modern State*, 69–72.

94. Townsend, *Oman*, 74–80; Skeet, *Oman*, 39; Peterson, *Oman*, 201–203.

95. *Middle East and North Africa* 1971–1972; *Middle East Record* 1969–1970; Townsend, *Oman*, 124; *Who's Who in the Arab World*, 1997–1998. The cabinet also included two members of the Al Bu Said. They were thus from the larger genealogical group from which the Al Said form a sublineage: either members of the Al bu Said tribe, or from branches of the royal family which do not descend from Said bin Sultan, who ruled 1806–1856 (Peterson, *Oman*, 59).

96. On the relations between Qabus and his uncle see: Townsend, *Oman*, 77–94; Skeet, *Oman: Politics and Development*, 40–41, 52–62; el-Rayyes, *Sira' al-wahat wa al-naft*, 256–59; Peterson, *Oman*, 209.

97. Peterson, *Oman*, 207, 215 footnote #24; *Middle East and North Africa*, 1973–1974, 1974–1975; Allen, *Oman*, 85.

98. CIA, *Heads of State*, July 11, 1996.

99. Judith Miller, "Creating modern Oman: an interview with Sultan Qabus," *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 3 (May–June 1997).

## Chapter 6. Strategies of Regime and Opposition in the Dynastic Monarchies

1. Throughout this work I use the term *absolutism* in the following sense: An absolutist monarchy is one that does not have a constitution that divides power between prince and people or an elected parliament that makes this division real. The opposite of an absolutist monarchy is a constitutional monarchy, or liberal monarchy. The Al Saud are absolutist, and the Al Sabah are constitutional; the intended historical parallel is with the division of Europe in the nineteenth century between the absolutism of the East and the constitutional monarchies of the West.

2. The period immediately following liberation of Kuwait from Iraq saw an outbreak of political violence by Kuwaitis directed largely at Palestinians; once the regime regained its feet this came to an end.

3. al-Jasim, *Al-kuwayt... muthallath al-dimuqratiya*, 266–68.

4. Ibid., 270. I have translated *arkan al-hukm* as "ruling family," which is what is meant.

5. For another analysis of the Kuwaiti constitution, one that sees less good in it than I do, see Ahmad al-Baghdadi, "Al-juthur al-dusturiya."

6. If the parliament finds it impossible to work with the prime minister it can force the emir to choose between new elections or appointing a different prime minister. Should elections return a parliament that declares again its refusal to work with the same prime minister, the emir must choose another. Articles 100–102 of the 1962 constitution, in Mahmud Hilmi, *Dustur al-kuwayt*.

7. al-Jasim, *Al-kuwayt*, 56–57.
8. Ibid., 167–76, quote page 176.
9. Articles 56 and 80.
10. Al-ittihad al-watani li-talabat al-kuwayt, *Al-hayat al-dimuqratiya fi al-kuwayt*, 9; Crystal, *Oil and Politics*, 81–83; Ahmad al-Baghdadi, “Tajribat al-dimuqratiya fi al-mujtama’ al-kuwaytiya,” 15–17; Ahmad al-Baghdadi, “Al-juthur al-dusturiya li-masirat al-dimuqratiya fi al-kuwayt,” 28; Rush, *Al-Sabah*, 42.
11. Al-Hatim, *Min huna bada’at al-kuwayt*, 220–21; al-Adsani *Muthakkirat*, 96; Crystal, *Oil and Politics*, 50.
12. Baghdadi, “Al-tajribat al-dimuqratiya,” 20; Naseer H. Aruri, “Kuwait: A Political Study,” 336–37.
13. al-Nafisi, *Al-kuwayt: al-ra'y al-akhar*, 94.
14. Aruri, “Kuwait,” 337, 339. Nafisi, *Al-kuwayt*, 92–115; Baghdadi, “Tajribat al-dimuqratiya,” 23; al-Tabtaba'i, *Al-sulta al-tashri'iya*, 333.
15. al-Ghabra, *Al-kuwayt*, 58–59; Crystal, *Oil and Politics*, 88–89.
16. al-Baghdadi, “Tajribat al-dimuqratiya,” 26.
17. Shafeeq Ghabra, “Voluntary Associations in Kuwait,” 205; al-Tabtaba'i, *Al-sulta al-tashri'iya*, 338–48; Crystal, *Oil and Politics*, 92.
18. al-Nafisi, *Al-kuwayt*, 116–17.
19. Ibid., 117.
20. Ghabra, “Voluntary Associations in Kuwait,” 206–207.
21. al-Baghdadi, “Tajribat al-dimuqratiya,” 37.
22. Peterson, *Steps*, 46–51; Crystal, *Oil and Politics*, 105–106; al-Jasim, *Al-kuwayt*, 74–78.
23. Falah Abdallah al-Madirs, *Al-tajammu'at al-siyasiya al-kuwaytiya*, 6–7; al-Baghdadi and al-Madirs, “Dirasat tahliliya,” 91; *al-Tali'a*, December 8–14, 1993 and January 5–11, 1994; Peterson, *Steps toward Political Participation*, 51, 60–61.
24. al-Baghdadi and al-Madirs, “Dirasat tahliliya,” 90; Interviews in Kuwait, fall 1993.
25. *Watha'iq al-mu'tamar al-sha'b al-kuwayti*, 34–40.
26. Shafeeq Ghabra, “Democratization in a Middle Eastern State: Kuwait, 1993,” 112. The Islamists were split between several blocs, among them the Shi'a, the Kuwaiti branch of the *ikhwan al-muslimin*, and the Kuwaiti *salafiyun*.
27. Khaldoun al-Naqeeb, *al-Qabas*, November 15, 1992; Ghabra, “Democratization in a Middle Eastern State;” *Al-hayat* October 7, 1992.
28. Interview with Dr. Ismail Shatti, deputy in the National Assembly, in Kuwait May 1994.
29. This has led to better relations the liberal/left and the Al Sabah, in a clear case of balancing by the ruling family against the dominant political current. In the past, the Al Sabah cooperated with the Islamists

against the nationalists. On election results see *Al-wasat* October 14, 1996 (no. 246) and *Al-hayat* October 9, 1996.

30. Comment attributed by the Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights (CDLR) to the Emir of the Eastern Province, King Fahad's son. CDLR, *Weekly Newsletter Monitor* 13 (August 25, 1994).

31. Holden and Johns, *The House of Saud*, 277–79; Lacey, *The Kingdom*, 381–82; Metz, *Country Study* (1993), 249.

32. U.S. Department of State, Office of Intelligence Research, Intelligence Report 7144 January 18, 1956, "Saudi Arabia: A disruptive force in Western-Arab relations;" Lacey, *The Kingdom*, 312–13.

33. Metz, *Country Study* (1993), says that apart from the 1969 coup attempt the officer corps "has been free of serious conspiracies against the regime," 249. For some rumors, see Nadav Safran, *Saudi Arabia*, 81, 429.

34. It was not the Kingdom's first *majlis al-shura*, for Ibn Saud had actually held elections to one from among the notables of Mecca after he conquered the Hejaz in the 1920s. Ibn Saud, a man who usually had little truck with elected councils, declared at the time that some councils "are more illusionary than real. They are made only to be said that there are councils. . . . I do not want illusions but I want facts." After cementing his hold on the Hejaz he reverted to his more usual autocratic ways, though the *majlis* survived formally until well after World War II. Soliman A. Solaim, "Constitutional and Judicial Organization in Saudi Arabia," 9–11.

35. Riad Najib El-Rayyes, *Riyah al-sumum: al-sa'udiya wa duwal al-jazira ba'da harb al-khalij*, 152; Samore, "Royal Family Politics," 448–51.

36. Quoted in Milton Viorst, "The storm and the citadel," 104.

37. For a perspective analysis of the *majlis*, see R. Hrair Dekmejian, "Saudi Arabia's Consultative Council."

38. See Salamé, *Al-siyasa al-kharajiya*, 644–54, on the efforts of the Al Saud to use Islam to defend themselves from nationalism in the international arena.

39. Sayd Zahran, "Thawra fi qalb makka." This document is included in *Muluk wa umra al-dawla wa al-din fi al-saudiya*, an Arabic translation of Ayman Al-Yassini's *Religion and State in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, 313, 327.

40. Samore, "Royal Family Politics," 439; Lacey, *The Kingdom*, 483.

41. James Buchan, "Secular and Religious Opposition in Saudi Arabia," 123; Samore, "Royal Family Politics," 456; Holden and Johns, *The House of Saud*, 514, 524; Lacey, *The Kingdom*, 481, 487. A list of Saudi military personnel killed and wounded in the operation, many of tribal affiliation, including the Utayba, Mutayr, Qahtan, and others, can be found in Abd al-Azim al-Mat'ani, *Jarimat al-'asr..?!? Qissat ihtilal al-masjid al-haram, rawayat shahid 'iyan*, 131–51.

42. R. Hrair Dekmejian, "The Rise of Political Islamism in Saudi Arabia," 635.
43. Ibid., 629–31.
44. *Muthakkirat al-nasiha*, 21, 46. The *muthakkirat* also calls for members of the religious establishment to nominate candidates for appointment to the Kingdom's highest religious authority, the *hay'a al-kubar al-ulema* (the Committee of Senior Religious Jurists). The selection of members of the *hay'a* from among the candidates would be according to "the agreement of the community (*al-umma*), and their impartiality in the law." There is at least a hint of popular election in this (19, 35–36). The quote, in Arabic, is "*'ala asas qabul al-umma lahum wa tajarrudhum al-shari'ya*," 19. Imam Khomeini, "Islamic Government," in *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations*, translated and annotated by Hamid Algar.
45. Dekmejian, "The Rise of Political Islamism," 634.
46. Timur Kuran, "The Inevitability of Future Revolutionary Surprises."
47. Emile A. Nakhleh, *Bahrain: Political Development in a Modernizing Society*, 128; al-Tabtabta'i, *Al-sulta al-tashri'iya*, 172–74; Peterson, *Steps*, 72; Khuri, *Tribe and State*, 219. The Bahraini constitution can be found in al-Baharna, *Duwal al-khalij*, 377–423.
48. Khuri, *Tribe and State*, 219–30; Peterson, *The Arab Gulf States*, 74–75.
49. Emile A. Nakhleh, "Political Participation and the Constitutional Experiments in the Arab Gulf," 169–70.
50. Musa, *Al-bahrayn*, 116–32; Khuri, *Tribe and State*, 230–32.
51. Iran renounced its claim to the island shortly before independence, and thus the Al Khalifa, unlike the Al Sabah, were not faced with a direct challenge to the sovereignty of their state at independence. (Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *The Persian Gulf: Iran's Role*, 45–56.) The threat of an Iranian attack on Bahrain is, in any case, less than that of an Iraqi attack on Kuwait, for Bahrain and Iran do not share a land border. See Nakhleh, *Bahrain*, page 149, on motivations for the opening of the parliament.
52. A sum of \$350 million. Adeed Dawisha, "Saudi Arabia's Search for Security," 20.
53. On the opposition in the 1950s see: Musa, *Al-bahrayn*; Khuri, *Tribe and State*, 196–214.
54. The *Jabha al-islamiya* itself sponsored a book on the coup, Rashid Hamada, *'Asifa fawq mayat al-khalij: qissat awl inqilab al-'askari fi al-bahrayn*.
55. *Al-wasat*, March 25, 1996.
56. "Leading personalities issue a statement [on the arrest of Ahmad al-Shamlan]," March 5, 1996. This statement and other information on the

current unrest, including a log of protest events, can be found at the Bahrain Freedom Movement's web site ([ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Bahrain](http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Bahrain)).

57. Note, by the Bahrain Freedom Movement, to a statement issued by The Committee of the Popular Petition (CPP) on February 3, 1996.

58. Various statements by the Bahrain Freedom Movement, including statements made by Abdul Amir Al-Jamri, a leading religious figure in the opposition.

59. *Al-mujtama' al-madani, al-taqrir al-sanawi 1993*, 190. The *majlis* consists largely of businessmen, with an even sectarian split. U.S. State Department, *Bahrain Human Rights Practices, 1994*, section 3.

60. *Al-Wasat*, the weekly owned by Khalid bin Sultan Al Saud, asked rhetorically, "What about developing the political system [that is, opening the parliament]? Political circles contacted by *al-Wasat* in Manama believe that developments must evolve gradually and naturally and take into account the Gulf atmosphere as a whole. They pointed to a statement by the crown prince . . . discussing the geographic, political and social links of Bahrain with the states of the Gulf, particularly Saudi Arabia." Number 170 (May 1, 1995).

61. Crystal, *Oil and Politics*, 139–45, 153–55. More recently, after the end of the Gulf War, rumblings in favor of an elected *majlis* with legislative powers were heard. *Middle East Contemporary Survey, 1991*, 611; Gause, *Oil Monarchies*, 98; U.S. Department of State, *Human Rights Practices: Qatar, 1994*, section 3.

62. al-Tabtabta'i, *Al-sulta al-tashri'iya*, 184–85. The constitution can be found in al-Baharna, *Duwal al-khalij al-arabi al-haditha*, articles 41, 45, 46, pages 364–65.

63. *Al-hayat*, June 5, 1997; *New York Times* July 10, 1997.

64. Peterson, *The Arab Gulf States*, 97–99; *Al-mujtama' al-madani, al-taqrir al-sanawi 1993* and 1995; *MEED* May 7, 1993.

Abu Dhabi has its own *majlis al-istishari*. In the past its membership consisted of tribal leaders, and it appears that the tribes nominated their leaders to sit in the *majlis*. The Al Nahayan intended for the *majlis* to create a channel of political participation by institutionalizing the traditional kinship structure of society. In 1994, however, the Al Nahayan expanded the membership of the *majlis al-istishari* to include not only the tribes of the emirate, but also the urban families who had lacked a place on the council previously. These new members had educations, and reflected the "new era." *Al-wasat* 147 (November 21, 1994); Peterson, *Steps*, 99–100.

65. Text of the memorandum in Ghanim Ghabbash, *Fi al-siyasa wa al-hayat*, 97. See also Frauke Heard-Bey, *From Trucial States*, 397–401; Cordesman, *The Gulf and the Search for Strategic Stability*, 601–602.

66. Gause, *Oil Monarchies*, 99.

67. One caveat is the confederal nature of the system, which now and again leads to serious tensions between the emirates, particularly Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

68. Sunnis are a minority in Oman, where the Ibadhi sect predominates. *Al-hayat*, August 29, 1994 and November 6, 1995; U.S. Department of State, *Oman Human Rights Practices, 1994*; Abdullah Juma al-Haj, "The politics of participation in the Gulf Cooperation Council States: The Omani Consultative Council."

69. Eickelman, "Kings and People: Oman's State Consultative Council."

70. *Marsum sultani* no. 91/94, section 2. In Oman, *Al-watha'iq al-khasa bi-majlis al-shura "al-fitra al-ula."*

71. For example, *Al-thawra al-islamiya* 75 (June 1986) 50: "many of the educated in our country [Saudi Arabia] when they look at the Kuwait experiment . . . feel resentment at the corrupt Saudi ruling family and its despotism which goes over every bound." See also Ghabbash, *Fi al-siyasa wa al-hayat*, 258.

## Chapter 7. Libya and Afghanistan

1. E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, 46–47.
2. Ibid., 51; Ali Abdullatif Ahmida, *The Making of Modern Libya*, 76–79, 16–17.
3. Husayn Maziq, a prime minister, was one of the most prominent tribal politicians of the monarchical era. On the role of the tribes see Salaheddin Salem Hasan, "The Genesis of the Political Leadership of Libya 1952–1969," 167–91, 423–24.
4. Ibid., 165–67, 171–73, 287–88; Mustafa Ben Halim, *Safahat matwiya min tarikh libya al-siyasi*, 106; Majid Khadduri, *Modern Libya*, 215–20.
5. Ben Halim, *Safahat*, 126–30; Khadduri, *Modern Libya*, 264–67.
6. Ruth First, *Libya: the Elusive Revolution*, 94–96.
7. Hasan, "The Genesis of Political Leadership," 55.
8. Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, 97–100, 113–16, 148; Nicola A. Ziadeh, *Sanusiyah: A Study of a Revivalist Movement in Islam*, 123–25.
9. Sources for figure 7.1: Hasan, "The Genesis of Political Leadership," 65; Evans-Pritchard, *Sanusi*, 26, 128.
10. John Wright, *Libya* (1969), 260–62; *Al-hayat* April 3, 1993. Wright, *Libya: A Modern History*, 102–103.
11. Ibid., 96.

12. Sami Hakim, *Hathahi Libya*. This is an exhaustive account of the regime's crimes, which becomes, in the end, after a quarter century of Qaddafi, almost an advertisement of its virtues.
13. Wright, *Libya: A Modern History*, 114; First, *Libya*, 96; Wright, *Libya*, 264.
14. *Al-wasat* 194 (October 16, 1995).
15. Wright, *Libya: A Modern History*, 82.
16. Ziadeh, *Sanusiyah*, 65–66.
17. Evans-Pritchard, *Sanusi*, 128; Ben Halim, *Safahat*, 76–77; Ahmida, *The Making of Modern Libya*, 122–23.
18. King Idris, "Memoirs of King Idris: a Definitive Clarification of the Political History of Libya," 207–14; Ben Halim, *Safahat*, 113–15.
19. Ben Halim, *Safahat*, 89.
20. Khadduri, *Modern Libya*, 45, 76.
21. Khadduri, *Modern Libya*, 70, 76; Mr. Hopper, Financial Adviser, Cyrenaica, Record of a conversation with the Emir, April 27, 1950 (FO 371/81090).
22. *Haqiqat Idris: watha'iq wa suwar wa asrar*, 93; Khadduri, *Modern Libya*, 76–77.
23. Ibid.; *Haqiqat Idris*, 65–68.
24. T. C. Ravensdale, Cyrenaican Annual Review, February 6, 1951 (FO 371/90314) 1951.
25. *Haqiqat Idris*, 99; Ben Halim, *Safahat*, 113.
26. Ibid., 33.
27. T. C. Ravensdale, Cyrenaican Annual Review, February 6, 1951 (FO 371/90314).
28. Khadduri, *Modern Libya*, 233, 248.
29. Hakim, *Hathahi Libya*, 15, 55; Ben Halim, *Safahat* 121 and 494–95.
30. See note 5.
31. Ben Halim, *Safahat*, 134; Khadduri, *Modern Libya*, 267.
32. Ben Halim, *Safahat*, 135.
33. Salah al-'Aqad, *Libya al-mu'asira*, 106.
34. Khadduri, *Modern Libya*, 250 note 9; Hasan, "The Genesis of the Political Elite," 95; Ben Halim, *Safahat*, 112.
35. Hasan, "The Genesis of the Political Elite," 93–94.
36. Ibid., 339–40, 344.
37. al-'Aqad, *Libya al-mu'asira*, 139; Hakim, *Hathahi Libya*, 249–50.
38. Wright, *Libya: A Modern History*, 115.
39. In addition to the various sources discussed below see also Sami Hakim, in *Hathahi Libya* (250).
40. Interview with Abd al-Mun'im al-Hawani in *Al-wasat* 188 (September 4, 1995).

41. Fathi al-Dib, *Abd al-Nasir wa thawrat libya*, 11; Salah El Saadany, *Egypt and Libya from Inside*, 6.
42. Wright, *Libya: A Modern History*, 121; Ben Halim says that Idris's wife Fatima told his own wife that Idris was calm and everything was going fine (*kan radd al-malika fatima an al-malik murtah wa an al-umur ala ma yaram*), 541.
43. On army officers and their backgrounds see Hasan, "The Genesis of the Political Leadership," 337–41; First, *Libya*, 115.
44. Raymond A. Hinnebusch, "Libya: Personalistic Leadership of a Populist Revolution," 204.
45. Wright, *Libya: A Modern History*, 125–26.
46. *Al-wasat* 194 (October 16, 1995).
47. Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 451; Leon B. Poullada, *Reform and Rebellion in Afghanistan, 1919–1929*; W. K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central and Southern Asia*, 212–13.
48. On the relationship between Kabul and the provinces see Anwarul-Haq Ahady, "Afghanistan: State Breakdown," 166–67; Thomas J. Barfield, "Weak Links in a Rusty Chain: Structural Weaknesses in Afghanistan's Provincial Government Administration."
49. Barfield, "Weak Links in a Rusty Chain," 177.
50. Nazif M. Shahrani, "Introduction: Marxist 'Revolution' and Islamic Resistance in Afghanistan," 37–40. On the development of leftist parties see Anthony Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism*, 15–44. Arnold describes the Parcham and the Khalq, the two parties that (united as the PDPA) overthrew Daud in 1978, as a "tiny sliver of the population," 63.
51. John C. Griffiths, *Afghanistan* (1967), 99–109; Richard S. Newell, *The Politics of Afghanistan*, 164–80; Ralph Magnus, "The Constitution of 1964," 47–48; and Leon Poullada, "The Search for National Unity," 58–70; Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 589–93, 648–54.
52. Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 590–97, 619–23; Newell, *Afghanistan*, 165–72.
53. Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism*, 49; Ahady, "Afghanistan," 182; Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 556.
54. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan*, 227, 237, 240; Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 477. In 1938 the government devoted 20 percent of its revenues to foreign affairs, a sum that probably included a compensation prize for Shah Wali. C. Van H. Egert, Charge d'Affaires, Legation of the United States in Tehran, to the Secretary of State, "Afghan Budget for 1937/8," February 9, 1938 (890H.51/11, in United States, Department of State, *Records of the Department of State relating to internal affairs of Afghanistan, 1930–1944*, National Archives Microfilm Publications [1982]) This source is hereafter cited as *Records of the Department of State*.

Name spellings for members of the Afghani ruling family and other Afghans follow those in Ludwig Adamec's *Historical and Political Who's Who of Afghanistan*.

55. Fraser-Tytler, Afghanistan, 238–39.
56. American Legation Tehran, to the Secretary of State, July 24, 1941, "Internal Affairs of Afghanistan," 20 (890H.00/209, in Records of the Department of State).
57. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan*, 316; Donald N. Wilber, *Afghanistan: Its people, Its Society, Its Culture*, 160; C. Van H. Engert, U.S. Legation, Kabul, March 20 1943, "The Afghan Royal Family" (890H.0011/11, in *Records of the Department of State*, Roll 4).
58. The source of table 7.2 and figures 7.6 and 7.7 is Adamec's *Who's Who in Afghanistan*. The Afghan royal family is extremely large and its members are not clearly identified in Adamec. It is possible that I have listed as nonroyal someone who belongs to one of the farther-flung branches of the royal family.
59. Louis Dupree, "A Note on Afghanistan," 21.
60. Harvey H. Smith et al. *Area Handbook for Afghanistan*, 196–97; Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan*, 316; Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 494–98.
61. U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, "Intelligence Report No. 8068: Outlook for Afghanistan," August 13, 1959 (In *The Middle East, 1946–1976*, ed. Paul Kesaris).
62. Magnus, "The Constitution of 1964," 55; Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 507.
63. Dupree, "A Note on Afghanistan," 28.
64. Magnus, "The Constitution of 1964," 55.
65. Dupree, *Afghanistan*, (1980 edition), 556, 759.
66. Ibid., 565–87, 759; Smith, *Area Handbook*, 183. Nur Ahmad Etemadi, from a more distant branch, later held the premiership; the constitutional bar applied to the king's closer relatives.
67. Only two members of the dynasty occupied posts of central importance in the regime: the king himself, and his cousin, commander of the Central Forces in Kabul. Louis Dupree, "The New Republic of Afghanistan: The First Twenty-One Months," 6.
68. Louis Dupree, "An Informal Talk with King Mohammad Zahir of Afghanistan."
69. Anthony Arnold, *Afghanistan: The Soviet Invasion in Perspective*, 57, 69–73.

## Chapter 8. Five Nondynastic Monarchies

1. For a theoretical analysis of the role of the Egyptian army in the revolution, in a neo-Marxist framework, see Ellen Kay Trimberger, *Revolution from Above* (1978).

2. Mohammed Neguib, *Egypt's Destiny* (1955), 13.
3. Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot, *Egypt's Liberal Experiment* (1977), 193; Abd al-Azim Ramadhan, *Al-jaysh al-misri fi al-siyasa: 1882–1936* (1977), 218–20.
4. Anouar Abdel-Malek, *Egypt: Military Society* (1962), 44, 206; P. J. Vatikiotis, *The Egyptian Army in Politics* (1981), 45.
5. Tariq al-Bishri, *Dirasat fi al-dimuqratiya al-misriya*, 119; Vatikiotis, *History of Egypt*, 277–78, 281–85; Marsot, *Egypt's Liberal Experiment* (1977), 85, 89.
6. On the failure of Egyptian constitutional monarchy, and the role of the struggle between the *wafd* and the crown in this failure, see al-Bishri, *Dirasat* (1987).
7. By the period of the constitutional monarchy, from 1922, the succession rule was primogeniture, as set out in a decree by the ruler. The 1923 constitution positively prohibited members of the ruling family from holding cabinet posts.
- The Egyptian house of Muhammad Ali was a century and a half old in 1952. Ruling family coalitions and countercoalitions had a central role in regime politics up to the reign of Ismail, in 1863. As a matter of law, up to the World War I, the Ottoman Sultan determined the succession rule. Starting in 1879 the British took to interfering in the succession, setting on the throne pliable rulers. On family politics in the mid-nineteenth century, see Abd al-Rahman Rafi'i, *Asr Ismail*, volumes I (19–21, 45) and II (302) (1982); Ilyas Ayyubi, *Tarikh Misr fi ahd al-khidiw ismail basha*, vol. I (1923), 35–36, 66; Amin Sami, *Taqwim al-nil*, vol. III, part 1 (1936), 72, 180.
8. When the *Wafd* proposed to the British in the 1930s that they depose Faruq and replace him with another member of the royal family the British demurred, at least in part because they thought Faruq more popular than the *Wafd* itself. Latifa Muhammad Salim, *Faruq wa suqut al-malikiya fi misr* (1989), 24–26, 66–72, 91–92.
9. Ibid., 983; see also Marsot, *Egypt's Liberal Experiment*, 190.
10. Yet more damaging, it came to light that the palace coterie and Faruq himself had profited from sales of defective weaponry and ordnance to the Egyptian army. Salim, *Faruq*, 865–68; Anwar El Sadat, *Revolt on the Nile* (1957), 91–92.
11. Sources for figure 7.9: Hikmat bin al-Hasan bin Abdallah bin Musa bin Umar bin Bakir, *Abna'Awn* (1992), 41–42; Gerald de Gaury, *The Rulers of Mecca* (1991), 261, 272.
12. Article 20 of the Basic Law of 1925, in al-Hasani, *Tarikh al-iraq al-siyasi al-hadith*, vol. 1, 222.
13. Batatu, *Social Classes*, 764–65, 778–83.

14. Batatu, *The Old Social Classes*, 796. On the palace guard, see the first-hand account by Falih Hanzal in *Asrar maqtal al-a'ila al-malika fi al-iraq* (1971), 56.
15. Phebe Marr, *Modern History of Iraq* (1985), 86–87. “The second occupation indissolubly linked the ruling circles of Iraq, and especially the regent and Nuri, to the British.”
16. Batatu mentions some of the difficulties in *The Old Social Classes*, 351. We might draw a comparison with a different, more successful monarchy: Muhammad V of Morocco won an enormous amount of personal popularity when the French sent him into exile and made him a symbol of nationalist aspirations.
17. Batatu, *The Old Social Classes*, 32, 101–102, 133, 353, 358–59. Barrington Moore, *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (1966), 420–26.
18. On the problems of parliamentary politics in Iraq, see al-Hasani, *Tarikh al-iraq al-siyasi al-hadith*, vol. 3, 214–22, 234–36, 256.
19. Gerald de Gaury, *Three Kings in Baghdad* (1961), 172.
20. Batatu, *Social Classes*, 31, 764; Marr, *Modern History of Iraq*, 120.
21. Terry Lynn Karl, “Petroleum and Political Pacts: The Transition to Democracy in Venezuela” (1986), 200–201.
22. The regime made one attempt to liberalize, in 1954. The motives for the opening are not entirely clear, though they seem to derive from tensions between Abdulilah (who initiated the opening) and Nuri al-Said. In any case the leading men of the regime seemed to have united in the opinion that an opening was dangerous, and they soon put an end to it. Abd al-Karim al-Uzri, *Tarikh fi thikrayat: al-iraq 1930–1958*, vol. I (1982), 426–27, 520–24; Marr, *Modern History of Iraq*, 105, 114–15, 122–24.
23. The regime had knowledge that a coup was in the works, but did not act. It is not clear whether this amounts to a failure of monitoring the military other, more vigilant, kings would have avoided, or if Nuri and Abdulilah lacked the information to appreciate the danger. Tawfiq al-Suwaydi, *Muthakkirati* (1969), 594–97; Hanzal, *Asrar*, 47; King Hussein, *Uneasy Lies the Head*, 193–95.
24. Leonard Binder, *Revolution in Iran* (1980), 25.
25. The relevant comparison is with Nadir Shah, who founded his dynasty in Afghanistan in 1929. He needed the support of his relatives to establish the dynasty, and he gave them positions once he had succeeded.
26. Robert E. Huyser, *Mission to Tehran* (1986), 27; James Bill, *The Politics of Iran* (1972), 43–44; Fred Halliday, *Dictatorship and Development* (1979), 68; Marvin Zonis, *The Political Elite of Iran* (1971), 112.
27. Huyser, *Mission to Tehran*, 60–63, 69.
28. Nikki Keddie, *Roots of Revolution* (1981), 151–54.

29. Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions* (1982), 441.
30. Jerry D. Green, *Revolution in Iran* (1982), 52–59.
31. Binder, *Revolution in Iran*, 25, 30.
32. Halliday, *Dictatorship and Development*, 291.
33. See chapter 10 for a more detailed discussion of these incentives.
34. Huyser, *Mission to Tehran*, 78; Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown*, 120, 190–91.

35. Arjomand notes this in his analysis of the difficulties of fitting the Iranian revolution into more general theories of revolution. *The Turban for the Crown*, 191.

36. Ted Robert Gurr and Jack A. Goldstone, "Comparisons and Policy Implications," 325–26. See also Farrokh Moshiri, "Iran: Islamic Revolution Against Westernization," 123–24. Both pieces are in *Revolutions of the Late Twentieth Century*, ed. Jack A. Goldstone, Ted Robert Gurr, and Farrokh Moshiri (1991).

37. Theda Skocpol, "Rentier State and Shi'a Islam in the Iranian Revolution" (1982), 270–71.

38. Ibid., 271–75, quotes page 275.

39. Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown*, 129–33. Others, including the Shah himself, take the view that the CIA actually overthrew the Shah. *Answer to History* (1980), 14, 22, 146, 170.

40. For a discussion of the Shah's strategy, and a comparison with Morocco, see Alan Richards and John Waterbury, *A Political Economy of the Middle East* (1990), 318–20.

41. Just before independence they replaced Muhammad V with a relative, Muhammad Ben Arafa. Before the French gave up Morocco they restored Muhammad V to the throne. Ben Arafa's precise degree of consanguinity with Muhammad warrants no mention in the sources I have consulted. Douglas E. Ashford, *Political Change in Morocco* (1961), 74, and chapter 3 generally.

42. One author writes that, "The indescribable rejoicing over the return of Mohammed Ben Youssef made it impossible . . . to make even the slightest critical remark regarding the institutions of the new state." Ashford, *Political Change*, 125.

43. Hassan's brother Abdallah is a large landowner. For a brief description of the clan, see, Waterbury, *Commander of the Faithful*, 151–54. For a list of cabinet members see Fatima Abou el Karam, *Repertoire des Gouvernements du Royaume du Maroc: 1955–1988* (1988).

The Alawi royal family of Morocco traces its descent to the Prophet, making it, with the Hashemite house, the only surviving ruling families in the Arab world to bear this distinction. Yet the mere fact (or claim) of descent from the Prophet does not inure Middle Eastern monarchs from

revolution—witness the fate of the Iraqi Hashemites, the Imam of Yemen, or King Idris of Libya.

44. Article 19 of the Constitution of September 13, 1996. A discussion of the regency council and the succession mechanism in previous constitutions—which also have specified primogeniture—can be found in Jadira, “Al-milwar al-dusturi: dasatir 1962–1970–1972,” 38.

45. Waterbury, *Commander of the Faithful*, 262. Another source comments that the party’s goal was to “destroy the parliamentary experiment from within.” Muhammad Habib Talib, “Halat al-istithna,” in *Al-tajriba al-dimuqratiya fi al-mamlaka al-maghribiya*, 130.

46. Muhammad V at independence inherited the bulk of his army from the French, who had recruited heavily from Morocco’s Berber minority. Some of these units had actively fought Moroccan uprisings against French colonial rule in the period of the king’s exile. Hassan, who commanded the army under his father, patronized these Berber officers and gave them the highest posts in the army. The main lesson of the coups, in terms of this study, is that selective recruitment of the military cannot guarantee the loyalty of the officer corps.

Harold D. Nelson, *Morocco: A Country Study* (1985), 77–78, 339, 327; John Waterbury, “The Coup Manqué,” 397–98. Waterbury plays down, to some degree, the importance of the rebel’s Berber ethnicity, 405; Frank H. Braun, “Morocco: Anatomy of a Palace Revolution that Failed” (1978); Octave Marais, “Berbers and the Moroccan Political System after the Coup” (1972), 431–32.

47. Nelson, *Country Study*, 388.

48. Waterbury did not mean by this a prediction of revolution, only instability. *Commander of the Faithful*, 319. Jamal Benomar, “The monarchy, the Islamist movement and religious discourse in Morocco” (1988), 539; Dale F. Eickelman, “Royal Authority and Religious Legitimacy: Morocco’s Elections, 1960–1984” (1986), 181–82; George Joffe, “Morocco: monarchy, legitimacy and succession” (1988), 215–16.

49. King Hassan II, *The Challenge: the Memoirs of King Hassan II of Morocco* (1978), 140.

50. Waterbury, *Commander*, 145. Waterbury makes the argument for the relevance of the politics of segmentary opposition—which Evans-Pritchard used to describe societies with weak or absent states—not on the basis of analogy, but of cultural residue: Moroccan politicians in the past thought in terms of balance and opposition, and so too do their sons today. See pages 1–10, 61–63, and page 8 especially.

51. I. William Zartman, “Opposition as Support of the State” (1988), 64: “Thus parties and organisations have established a role in providing members of the political elite and in helping to mediate ties between the

king and his people. This role is not to the king's liking, no doubt, but it is tolerated because the events of the preceding decade (1963–1972) showed that without such organisations of support, the system was vulnerable to direct challenges from within and without."

52. Zartman, "Opposition as Support of the State," 64–73.
53. Eickelman, "Royal Authority and Religious Legitimacy," 188–89; Clement Henry Moore, "Political Parties" (1993), 46–47. Thabit, *Altahawwul al-dimuqrati fi al-maghrib*, 95–98, 105–106. "Al-maghrib wa altahaddi al-dimuqratiya: halqa niqashiya," *Al-musta'qbal al-arabi* 181 (March 1994), 108–10.
54. *Al-hayat*, November 14–18, 1997 and July 6, 1998.
55. *Financial Times*, May 13, 1998, and CIA, *Chiefs of State*; for analyses of recent events in Moroccan politics, see Guilain Denoeux and Abdelam Maghraoui, "King Hassan's Strategy of Political Dualism" and Gregory White, "The Advent of Electoral Democracy in Morocco?"
56. See the discussion in Richards and Waterbury, *A Political Economy of the Middle East*, 320.
57. P. J. Vatikiotis, *Politics and the Military in Jordan* (1967), 110–11, 124–34; Abbas Murad, *Al-dur al-siyasi lil-jaysh al-urduni* (1973), 81–86; James Lunt, *Hussein of Jordan: A Political Biography* (1989), 36.
58. For a detailed discussion of the backgrounds of cabinet members see Clinton Bailey, "Cabinet Formation in Jordan" (1977).
59. *New York Times* 20 and 22 April 1995; Rex Brynen, "Economic Crisis and Post-Rentier Democratization in the Arab World: The Case of Jordan" (1992), 90.
60. Laurie A. Brand, "Economic and Political Liberalization in a Rentier Economy" (1992), 184; Brynen, "Economic Crisis," 70.
61. The 1990 pact explains the opening as the result of a number of pressures, some economic, which led to the principal cause, the "events of the south." *Al-mithaq al-watani al-urduni* (1990), 23.
62. Source for chart 8.1: al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, *Intikhabat 1989: haqa'iq wa arqam*, *Silsilat al-mujtama' al-madani wa al-hayat al-siyasiya al-urduniya* (1993), 15.
63. *Al-mithaq al-watani al-urduni*, 25–34; Hanna Y. Freij and Leonard C. Robinson, "Liberalization, the Islamists, and the Stability of the Arab State: Jordan as a Case Study" (1996).
64. Hikmat bin al-Hasan bin Abdallah bin Musa bin Umar bin Bakir, *Haqa'iq wizariya: 1921–1992* (1993), 9. Sources for figure 8.1: Hikmat bin al-Hasan, *Abna Awn*, pages 167–69; de Gaury, *Kings of Mecca*, 261, 272.
65. Telegram from Baghdad to Foreign Office, text of statement made by Abdulilah, June 6, 1952 (FO 371/98866, in *RF: Jordan* vol. II, 133–34).
66. Telegram from Baghdad to the Foreign Office, June 2, 1952 (FO 371/98900, in *RF: Jordan* vol. II, 117–18).

67. Article 28 of the Jordanian constitution. The text can be found in Muhammad Ghazawi, *Al-wajiz*, 192–214.

68. Ghazawi, *Al-wajiz*, 100–101; Lunt, *Hussein*, 70, 75, 156.

Chart 8.4 shows posts in the Jordanian family held by members of the Hashemite family in the past decades. Sources for the chart: Bin Bakir, Abna Awn, 159–66, 169–74; Bin Bakir, *Haqa'ib al-wizariya; al-Hayat*, November 6, 1993; Lunt, *Hussein*, 123–27.

69. *Al-wasat* 148 (November 28, 1994).

## Chapter 9. Dynastic Monarchism and the Persistence of Hereditary Rule

1. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, 63.

2. As noted in chapter 5, in Bahrain the very influential prime minister is not the crown prince. This departure from the Kuwaiti and Saudi model decreases the stability of the Al Khalifa dynastic monarchy. Qatar also recently moved in a similar direction when the emir named his brother prime minister and his son crown prince.

3. James Bill and Robert Springborg, *Politics in the Middle East*, 205 note 53.

4. Such a thing is not fanciful: dynastic monarchism could not have developed in Arabia if outside powers had, as a point of policy, supported rulers against their relatives.

5. Articles 14 and 16 of the Saudi Basic Law, in *Al-quds al-arabi*, March 2, 1992.

6. I asked an Emirati student once—a little too bluntly—about democracy in the UAE and received the strongest version I have heard from a citizen of the region of the argument that “my government takes care of me, why would I want democracy?” The student, however, on mention of the BCCI scandal (in which the ruler of Abu Dhabi lost some billions of dollars) conceded that some accountability would be a good thing.

7. See the charts in chapter 7 (Libya) and chapter 8 (Iraq and Iran).

8. It is for this reason, in part, that neopatrimonial regimes, based on clientelistic pyramids, are thought less stable than other sorts of political systems.

9. See Timur Kuran, “The Inevitability of Future Revolutionary Surprises.”

10. Amin Awad Mahna Bani Hasan, *Al-tahaduth wa al-istiqrar al-siyasi fi al-Urdun*.

11. The evidence from Iran does not provide strong support for or against the hypothesis. The officers’ defense of the monarchy against Musaddiq is not hard to explain, for while we might conceive of the officers

leading a nationalist coup themselves, they had little reason to support Musaddiq (who did not have good relations with them) against the shah. The failure of the officers to launch a conservative coup in 1978, however, does not seem explicable except by citing the Shah's success in focusing his officers on his person, paralyzing any independent action.

12. In Jordan and in Bahrain the loyalty of the army rests, in part, on a political division other than that between bedu and townsmen: in Jordan East Bankers make up a minority of the population, and in Bahrain Sunnis are a minority. Distinctions with a similar political effect—mirrored in the composition of the military—are not found in the other monarchies.

13. The Bahraini Prime Minister in *Al-wasat* 217 (March 25, 1996); al-Nafisi, *Al-kuwayt*, 117.

14. Al-Naqeeb, *Society and State*, 108–109.

15. The Jordanian monarchy has usually had a similar relationship with the West, but King Hussein repudiated these ties twice, in 1956 and 1990–1991. Morocco, which is larger than the other surviving monarchies and in less need of protection for external enemies, has accordingly maintained a somewhat more distant relationship with France and the United States.

16. Oman does not offer strong contradictory evidence despite its location in the table: it is in many respects a dynastic monarchy, and it also has more of a parliament than the norm in the Gulf. The real outlier is Kuwait, which is both fully a dynastic monarchy and the most democratic monarchy in the Arab world, and thus a case of particular interest.

17. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 67–68.

18. Yet, at the same time the position of the Moroccan monarchy in the early 1970s looked grim. If Hasan had died in 1972 and had the monarchy fallen we would have concluded that he, too, faced an unsalvageable position, regardless of the strategies that he chose.

19. On the importance of succession see Robbins Burling, *The Passage of Power: Studies in Political Succession*, 8–9, 262–67.

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

## Chapter 10. The Theory of the Rentier State and Constitutional Monarchy in the Middle East

1. Benjamin Constant, "The Spirit of Conquest and Usurpation and Their Relation to European Civilization," trans. Biancamaria Fontana, 85.

2. The use of the word *traditional* in the same paragraph as a discussion of modernization theory may evoke some of the debate over the use of that term. I think, however, we might reasonably describe monarchies

that survive to the end of the twentieth century as instances of the successful adaptation of traditional political institutions.

3. The state, rather than the ruler, is the actor in most versions of the rentier state theory. In the original formulation of the theory, Mahdavy used state to mean country; subsequent writers have used it to denote the collectivity of government institutions, and have invested the state with the properties of an actor. See H. Mahdavy, "The Patterns and Problems of Economic Development in Rentier States: The Case of Iran," 428.

4. Eric Davis, "Theorizing Statecraft," 8–12; Gause, *Oil Monarchies*, 78–84; John Waterbury, "Democracy without Democrats? The Potential for Political Liberalization in the Middle East," 29–30. In two pages Waterbury briefly surveys the evidence for a link between taxation and democracy: it is startling to realize that these two pages constitute one of the most rigorous tests of the theory in the literature.

5. Giacomo Luciani, "Allocation vs. Production States: A Theoretical Framework," 75–76; Hazem Beblawi, "The Rentier State in the Arab World," 89; Lisa Anderson, "The State in the Middle East and North Africa," 10; Crystal, *Oil and Politics*, 6–7, 10; John Davis, *Libyan Politics: Tribe and Revolution*, 251–52; Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave*, 65.

6. Robert H. Bates, "The Economics of Transitions to Democracy," 24. For a more formal version of the argument see Robert H. Bates and Da-Hsiang Donald Lien, "A Note on Taxation, Development, and Representative Government."

7. Lisa Anderson, "The State in the Middle East and North Africa," 10.

8. Giacomo Luciani, "Allocation vs. Production States," 75–76; Skocpol, "Rentier State and Shi'a Islam in the Iranian Revolution," 269; Davis, *Libyan Politics*, 250–52, 264–68. See also Mahdavy, "Rentier States," 466–67.

9. Huntington, *The Third Wave*, 65.

10. The argument is not elaborated. The Kuwaiti parliament is dismissed on the grounds of its limited electorate (144). The European parliaments that invented parliamentary politics had, of course, far more limited franchises than Kuwait's. Giacomo Luciani, "The Oil Rent, the Fiscal Crisis of the State and Democratization," 132.

11. Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Depoliticisation of a Rentier State: The Case of Pahlavi Iran," 215–16.

12. Some versions of the rentier state theory argue that crises in state revenue will lead to liberalization, even in rentier states. This is not a theory of why democracy cannot exist in rentier states but is instead a crisis-based explanation for the emergence of liberalization, one that assigns a very great weight to the importance of economic crises, in distinction

to all others. See Laurie Brand, "Economic and Political Liberalization in a Rentier Economy," and Rex Brynen, "Economic Crisis and Post-Rentier Democratization in the Arab World."

13. Gause, *Oil Monarchies*, 81–82.

14. The best argument that the ruling families make in favor of their autocracies has nothing to do with economics: the ruling families point to the political instability endemic to the region and argue, with some plausibility, that their rule holds back the deluge.

15. Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 172.

16. Parliamentary openings do not succeed when the opposition threatens to use the parliament to overthrow the monarchy, as in Jordan in 1957, Iran in 1953, Kuwait in 1938, and Egypt in the 1920s and 1930s during the battles between the palace and the *Wafd*.

17. Dahl, *Polyarchy*, 14–16, 36, 46–47. See also Karl and Schmitter, "Modes of transition in Latin America, Southern and Eastern Europe," 280; Diamond, "Beyond Authoritarianism and Totalitarianism," 144–48; Bermeo, "Rethinking Regime Change," 364–67.

18. On southern European monarchies see H. V. Livermore, *A New History of Portugal*, 297; Richard Herr, *Spain*, 115; Denis Mack Smith, *Italy and Its Monarchy*, 138, 167.

19. Weber wrote that, "So-called 'constitutional monarchy,' which is above all characterized by appropriation of the power of patronage including the appointment of ministers and of military commanders by the monarch, may concretely come to be very similar to a purely parliamentary regime of the English type. Conversely, the latter by no means necessarily excludes a politically gifted monarch like Edward VII from effective participation in political affairs. He need not be a mere figurehead." *Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, 420.

20. By this measure Kuwait, Jordan, and Morocco are constitutional monarchies, while Saudi Arabia—with a Basic Law issued on the authority of the king's signature—is not.

21. Montesquieu was an antecedent of this train of thought: he argued for the limitation—but not the destruction—of the power of the throne by the aristocracy and nobility, and his argument retained its attraction even as the governing elite grew beyond the limits of the aristocracy as such. On the idea of constitutional monarchy in the nineteenth century, see: Frederick B. Artz, *Reaction and Revolution: 1814–1832*, 89–97; Benedetto Croce, *History of Europe in the Nineteenth Century*, 97–102; Benjamin Constant "The Spirit of Conquest and Usurpation and Their Relation to European Civilization"; Walter Bagehot, *The English Constitution*; Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.

22. For a summary of the process of the expansion of the suffrage in a variety of European states, see Stein Rokkan, "The Comparative Study

of Political Participation: Notes Toward a Perspective on Current Research," 75.

23. Monarchism failed in Europe most often as a result of the inability of monarchies to stand the strain of defeat in total war.

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**Abbreviations found in the footnotes for collections of archival materials:**

**RF: Kuwait:** Ruling Families of Arabia: Kuwait: The Ruling Family of Al-Sabah.

**RF: Bahrain:** Ruling Families of Arabia: Bahrain: The Ruling Family of Al-Khalifa.

**RF: The Emirates:** Ruling Families of Arabia: United Arab Emirates. In two volumes.

**RF: Jordan:** Ruling Families of Arabia: Jordan: The Royal Family of Al-Hashim. In two volumes.

**RF: Qatar:** Ruling Families of Arabia: Qatar: The Ruling Family of Al-Thani.

**RF: Saudi Arabia:** Ruling Families of Arabia: Saudi Arabia: The Royal Family of Al-Sa'ud. In two volumes.

**RF: Family Trees :** Ruling Families of Arabia: Family Trees.

(All of the above collections were edited by A. de L. Rush. N.p.: Archive Editions, 1991.)

**PGAR:** The Persian Gulf Administration Reports 1873–1957. In eleven volumes. N.p. Archive Editions, 1986, 1989.

**In most cases the definite article al- has been ignored in alphabetizing authors.**

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# ALL IN THE FAMILY

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DEMOCRACY IN THE MIDDLE EASTERN  
MONARCHIES

MICHAEL HERB

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