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The American University in Cairo

Political Science Department

**SURVIVING THE ARAB UPRISINGS: POLITICAL REGIMES AND STATE
RESPONSES**

A Thesis Submitted to
the Department of Political Science

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

By Hood Ahmed

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(under the supervision of Dr. Nadine Sika)

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Abstract

The Arab uprisings threatened authoritarian states across the Arab world with unprecedented levels of mobilization. The nature of these challenges, the states' responses and the outcomes have been, however, markedly uneven. In accounting for this divergence, while some approaches have examined the structural preconditions for transitions, others have emphasized the impact of interactions between different political actors. This thesis draws on both approaches through examining how the state's institutional structure shapes the opportunities and constraints of states in employing different authoritarian strategies. It examines why and how different regimes have used different authoritarian strategies to survive and stabilize. In responding to threats of instability, some states use measures of legitimation through concessions and accommodations, others use measures of cooptation through including strategic actors into the regime elite, while some resort to repression, whether through physical violence or restrictions of political and civil rights. The thesis uses Michael Herb's regime typology and uses Saudi Arabia, Morocco and Egypt as its cases to examine how different institutional structures reinforce the choice of strategy. Through comparing state responses across cases and across time for each case, the thesis explains how authoritarian strategies vary across different regimes and across time for each regime. The thesis concludes by analyzing the costs and benefits of different authoritarian strategies and how they contribute to different patterns of stability.

Introduction

The Arab uprisings threatened authoritarian states across the Arab region with unprecedented levels of oppositional mobilization. The nature of these challenges, the states' responses and their outcomes have been, however, markedly uneven. *The thesis structurally examines why and how different regimes use different authoritarian strategies to survive and stabilize.* While accounting for the role of societal actors, the thesis focuses on how state institutions and politics from above shaped different elite response, resulting in different patterns of stability. The thesis, therefore, asks how *regime types*, as an independent variable, condition the state's *survival strategy*, as a dependent variable, thereby creating path dependencies which influence the state's capacity to stabilize when confronted with challenges.

The thesis takes the Arab uprisings as a critical juncture, since they constitute the most series recent challenge to the survival of states across the Arab world. The thesis analyzes the historical survival strategies used by different regime types and how the state's structural institutional structure influenced the choice of strategy. The thesis then examines how states reflecting different regime types responded to protests during the Arab uprisings. This examination of the intraregional variation of authoritarian survival strategy allows for a comparison between strategies across different regime types, as well as a comparison of survival strategy within each regime prior to and after the uprisings. In addition to identifying how regime types are significant in influencing different patterns of stabilization, by linking different regime types with different survival strategies, this thesis contributes to examinations of which regimes use which mechanism of authoritarian reproduction and why. The thesis shows that the choice of survival strategy is guided by the incentives and constraints involved in using the strategy, which are, in turn, shaped by the thesis's independent variable of regime type.

For survival strategies, the thesis relies on the theoretical framework used by Gerschewski in which states use a mixture of repression, cooptation and legitimation for survival.¹ Authoritarian states have traditionally relied on repression for achieving stability. However, with pressures to democratize, authoritarian states have adopted measures that legitimize their rule through measures of limited liberalization as well as greater concessions and accommodation. Authoritarian states have also used measures of cooptation to include potentially threatening actors within the political system actors to limit their opposition. While some sources use cooptation and legitimation interchangeably, Gerschewski's framework separates them, which can provide a more refined analysis. The thesis shows that states need to maintain their adaptability in this repertoire of strategies in order to achieve stability.

For regime type, the thesis uses the typology of Lucas and Herb.² Previous studies have examined the issue of monarchical exceptionalism during the Arab uprisings as monarchies have been confronted with limited challenges relative to republics. This thesis goes beyond traditional explanations of monarchical resilience that focus on culture and rentierism to examine the impact of the institutional structure of the state on mechanisms of survival. Moreover, while the distinction between monarchies and republics has been previously explored in the literature,³ there has been a gap in examinations of variation within the monarchies themselves. This thesis tests whether the assumption of the homogeneity of monarchies in the region holds when examining the different strategies adopted during the Arab uprisings or, instead, whether the distinction proposed proves

¹ Gerschewski, Johannes. "The three pillars of stability: legitimation, repression, and co-optation in autocratic regimes." *Democratization* 20, no. 1 (2013): 13-38.

² Herb, Michael. *All in the family: absolutism, revolution, and democracy in Middle Eastern monarchies*. SUNY Press, 1999; Lucas, Russell E. "Monarchical authoritarianism: Survival and political liberalization in a Middle Eastern regime type." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 36, no. 1 (2004): 103-119.

³ Lucas, Russell E. "Monarchies and protests in the Arab uprisings: Path dependencies or political opportunities?." *Journal of Arabian Studies* 4, no. 2 (2014): 195-213.

that significant differences within monarchies need to be considered. Accordingly, using Herb's typology, this thesis divides monarchies into two categories: dynastic and linchpin monarchies. This typology reflects different economic and institutional structures. Using this typology, the thesis will examine how Gerschewski's three strategies of repression, cooptation and legitimation correspond to each of the three regime types of republics, linchpin and dynastic monarchies.

Methodology and Case Selection

This thesis uses a comparative case-study approach and relies on macro-historical data. The thesis builds most substantially on analyses by De Mesquita and Smith, Scheitzer, Brownlee et al., Bellin, Josua & Edel and Lacroix et al..⁴ The thesis adopts a macro-level focus with states as the unit of analysis. The thesis sets a framework for countries that witnessed protests across the Arab region and examines the state's response to analyze the cost-benefit analysis guiding the decision to control the challenge to its stability. The thesis examines the historical survival strategies of regimes in the region as well as survival strategies during 2011-12, which is when several Arab states were confronted with varying levels of protests and had to implement measures to contain them.

⁴ De Mesquita, Bruce Bueno, and Alastair Smith. "Leader survival, revolutions, and the nature of government finance." *American Journal of Political Science* 54, no. 4 (2010): 936-950;
Gerschewski, Johannes. "The three pillars of stability: legitimation, repression, and co-optation in autocratic regimes." *Democratization* 20, no. 1 (2013): 13-38
Scheitzer, Bertold. "Modelling Mechanisms of Democratic Transition in the Arab Uprisings," *Middle East Critique* 24, no. 1 (2015), pp. 44-66;
Josua, Maria, and Mirjam Edel. "To repress or not to repress—regime survival strategies in the Arab spring." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 27, no. 2 (2015): 289-309
Brownlee, Jason, Tarek E. Masoud, and Andrew Reynolds. *The Arab Spring: Pathways of repression and reform*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2014
Lacroix, Zoltan Barany Stéphane, Peter M. Lewis, Sheri Berman, and Stephan Ortmann. "Comparing the Arab Revolts." *Journal of Democracy* 22, no. 4 (2011)
Bellin, Eva. "The robustness of authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in comparative perspective." *Comparative politics* (2004): 139-157.

Even though the framework constructed by the thesis can be applied to many of the Arab states that were challenged by protests, the thesis selectively focuses on three cases, which reflect the different regime types. Building on Herb's typology, the first category is that of dynastic, oil-monarchies, which includes the Gulf kingdoms of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the UAE. For an oil-based, dynastic monarchy, the thesis focuses on Saudi Arabia. Despite the relative proliferation of oil-monarchies in the region, only a handful of oil-monarchies – Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait - witnessed protests. Furthermore, contrary to republics, and, except for Bahrain, those who witnessed protests experienced only minor challenges. This, in addition to demonstrating the uneven spread of revolutionary unrest, suggests that cultural, geopolitical, and institutional factors explain this monarchical resilience and the low level of mobilization they faced. Even though Bahrain has witnessed protests on a more massive scale than Saudi Arabia, stability in Bahrain was achieved through the impact of external intervention. Since this thesis focuses on the role of the state's own survival strategies, the case of Bahrain will not serve its purpose. Furthermore, Bahrain stands as an anomaly among dynastic monarchies given its status as a minority-dominated political system, which has resulted in relatively low levels of legitimacy for the monarch.

The second category is that of non-oil, linchpin monarchies and it includes the kingdoms of Jordan and Morocco, with Oman falling in between these two categories. From this category, the thesis focuses on Morocco. Both cases of linchpin monarchies share a variety of similarities in the nature of protests as well as in the state's response to the protests. In this category, the monarch, rather than the royal family as in the first category, plays the leading role in decision-making and in balancing between different institutions. Even though there are similarities between these two categories of monarchies such as their use of religious legitimacy in delegitimizing the opposition,

this classification can enable the examinations of the role of oil as well as different institutional settings within shaping how the state responds to protests.

For the third and final case of republics, the thesis explores Egypt. Unlike monarchies, several republics have witnessed major protests, which are: Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria, Algeria, Iraq, and Sudan. For Libya, Yemen and Syria, the outbreak of civil war demonstrates the breakdown of survival strategies. Since cases of civil war represent different contextual and institutional settings, the thesis uses republics that have not experienced civil wars. By focusing on these cases, and while accounting for the different levels of threat, the thesis can disaggregate and analyze how differences in these regimes led to different choices of survival strategies.

Conceptualization and Operationalization

For the independent variables, in defining “regime”, rather than referring to the leader or government in power, the thesis uses it to indicate the sets of formal and informal rules and institutions that are used to select leaders and policies.⁵ A regime, therefore, goes beyond formal institutional arrangements to refer the rules of the political game. Regimes can be altered when the leader or government change, but they can also survive through a change in leadership. Since regimes impact patterns of governance, they also shape the state’s mechanisms for the reproduction of power. In examining how different regimes produce different political structures, this thesis focuses on variables of rentierism and dynasticism as the main paradigms explaining the monarchy-republic distinction.

While each of these paradigms offers explanatory leverage in explaining different patterns of stability, they suffer from inconsistencies which stems from failing to study how they impact

⁵ Dahl, Robert A. *Regimes and oppositions*. No. 320.9 R4. 1973.

stability. For example, Herb has argued that non-dynastic monarchies are potentially unstable. In explaining how linchpin monarchies have survived previous challenges, he has ascribed them to elements of luck. However, the continuing success in stabilization strategies of Morocco and Jordan's suggests that further research is required. Similarly, the rentierism theory has emphasized the role oil contributes to authoritarian resilience. However, there is a number of oil-rich states such as Iraq and Libya suffer from instability despite their abundant rent revenues, which suggests that rentierism requires further mechanisms to establish stability. Through combining the two approaches, this thesis provides a more nuanced account for how these different variables interact and how different regimes stabilize.

Furthermore, in defining a monarchy as oil-rich, this thesis relies on the definition of Beblawi & Luciani.⁶ According to their definition, a rentier state refers to a state that accrues its revenues predominantly from rent relative to the domestic productive sector. In such a state, the working population is excluded from the generation of rent, leaving the state as the primary recipient of this revenue.

For the dependent variable of authoritarian strategy, the thesis relies on that of Gerschewski who synthesizes different strands of research on autocracies to propose an analytical framework that captures the mechanisms that explain the resilience of autocracies⁷. According to him, there are three pillars that autocratic regimes develop to stabilize their regimes. The first pillar, legitimation, can be achieved through appeals to norms and values of a society, but it can also include measures of partially liberalization and concessions. The second pillar, cooptation, defines "the capacity to

⁶ Beblawi, Hazem Al and Luciani, Giacomo, 1990, *The Rentier State in the Arab World*, in Luciani, G., *The Arab State*, London, Routledge, p. 87-88

⁷ Gerschewski, Johannes. "The three pillars of stability: legitimation, repression, and co-optation in autocratic regimes." *Democratization* 20, no. 1 (2013): 13-38.

tie strategically-relevant actors (or a group of actors) to the regime elite.”⁸ Whether through formal or informal channels, cooptation can include actors through the distribution of material resources well as diffusion of political power.⁹

Finally, for the third pillar, repression refers to incidents of one-sided use of violence by the incumbent government to increase its likelihood of survival.¹⁰ Repression encompasses a broader variety of actions than violence. More than the use of physical force, repression can involve threats and can be achieved through institutional means as well. In defining the non-physical aspects of repression, Wintrobe defines repression as:

*"restrictions on the rights of citizens to criticize the government, restrictions on the freedom of the press, restrictions on the rights of opposition parties to campaign against the government, or, as is common in totalitarian dictatorship, the outright prohibition of groups, associations, or political parties opposed to the government."*¹¹

Repression, by definition, is exercised by legitimate actors of the government such as the military, police, and mercenaries. Repressive behavior also often violates human rights and is considered as human rights abuse. Moreover, even though repression has been used synonymously with coercion, coercion need not be repressive since coercion can be used to deter violence.

⁸Gerschewski, Johannes. "The three pillars of stability: legitimation, repression, and co-optation in autocratic regimes." *Democratization* 20, no. 1 (2013): 13-38.

⁹Gandhi, Jennifer, and Adam Przeworski. "Cooperation, cooptation, and rebellion under dictatorships." *Economics & Politics* 18, no. 1 (2006): 1-26.

¹⁰Bove, Vincenzo, Jean-Philippe Platteau, and Petros G. Sekeris. "Political repression in autocratic regimes." *Journal of Comparative Economics* 45, no. 2 (2015): 410-428.

¹¹Wintrobe, Ronald. *The political economy of dictatorship*. Cambridge University Press, 2000.

In operationalizing repression, it is most commonly disaggregated into high-intensity, or harsh, and low-intensity, or soft repression.¹² High-intensity repression focuses on visible instances of violent coercion used against mass demonstrations, campaigns against dissidents and so on. This includes acts of imprisonment, killing, forced disappearances, and house arrest. On the other hand, low-intensity repression focuses on non-violent, more subtle restrictions of civil and political liberties, such as restricting assembly and freedom of expression, surveillance, harassment, and intimidation. While the two forms of repression are interlinked, they serve different purposes. Whereas low-intensity repression raises the costs of collection action and can have a preemptive effect, high-intensity repression is targeted at those who have a high capacity of collection action and are identified as immediate threats.

Chapters Overview

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter begins by situating the concept of authoritarian survival strategies within the broader theoretical approaches to authoritarianism. It follows by applying this theoretical framework to the Arab world while examining traditional paradigms explaining authoritarian resilience in the region. The next three chapters examine the historical patterns of survival strategies employed by each case. They then examine the nature and level of the protests in the selected cases, how they were shaped by regime's institutions and how the state has responded. Finally, in chapter five, the thesis concludes by examining the implications and limitations of the thesis's findings and whether the Arab uprisings changed the traditional tools of survival in the region.

¹² Way, Lucan A., and Steven Levitsky. "The dynamics of autocratic coercion after the Cold War." *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 39, no. 3 (2006): 387-410.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

1.1. Theoretical Approaches to Authoritarianism

This chapter begins by situating authoritarian survival strategies within the broader theoretical literature on authoritarian regimes. This is followed by examining the impact of regime types on survival strategies. The chapter then applies these frameworks to the Arab world while the following chapters examine how each regime type within the Arab world reflects different repertoires of strategies.

Recent years have witnessed a resurgence in theoretical and methodological approaches to examining authoritarian regimes.¹³ However, while much of this resurgence has focused on authoritarian political institutions, there continues to be a gap in explaining mechanisms guiding the behavior and decision-making patterns of authoritarian states. In integrating historical approaches explaining the endurance of authoritarian regimes, Gerschewski identifies three research waves of research on autocracy, each reflecting the configuration of autocratic regimes of its time.¹⁴ The first is the totalitarianism paradigm, which started in the 1930s and lasted until the mid-1960s. This paradigm focused on the role of ideology and terror as the main characteristics of totalitarian states.¹⁵ By the 1960s, the totalitarianism paradigm was fading as the changing nature of authoritarian states created a need for a new paradigm. Linz conceptualized authoritarianism as a distinct form of regime type that is neither a democratic nor a totalitarian

¹³ De Mesquita, Bruce Bueno. *The logic of political survival*. MIT press, 2005; Gandhi, Jennifer, and Adam Przeworski. "Cooperation, cooptation, and rebellion under dictatorships." *Economics & Politics* 18, no. 1 (2006): 1-26; Levitsky, Steven, and Lucan A. Way. *Competitive authoritarianism: Hybrid regimes after the Cold War*. Cambridge University Press, 2010; Geddes, Barbara. "What do we know about democratization after twenty years?." *Annual review of political science* 2, no. 1 (1999): 115-144; Acemoglu, Daron, and James A. Robinson. *Economic origins of dictatorship and democracy*. Cambridge University Press, 2005.

¹⁴ Gerschewski, Johannes. "The three pillars of stability: legitimation, repression, and co-optation in autocratic regimes." *Democratization* 20, no. 1 (2013): 13-38.

¹⁵ Arendt, Hannah. *The origins of totalitarianism*. Vol. 244. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1973.

state¹⁶. Despite critiques on its drawbacks,¹⁷ Juan J. Linz's definition of authoritarianism has become a reference point in debates within the field. According to Linz, a state is authoritarian if it has:

*limited, not responsible, political pluralism, without elaborate and guiding ideology, but with distinctive mentalities, without extensive nor intensive political mobilization, except at some points in their development, and in which a leader or occasionally a small group exercises power within formally ill-defined limits but actually quite predictable ones.*¹⁸

While the second wave spawned several approaches, its main explanatory variables were socio-economic factors, with the use mainly of small-N comparisons and case studies. Thus, in examining military regimes in Latin America, O'Donnell theorized that bureaucratic elites have emerged from import substitution policies.¹⁹ With collusion between the military and bureaucratic elites, authoritarian states were consolidated as they formed a coup coalition that stabilized the regime. Similar frameworks were used to explain authoritarianism in other regions. In the Arab world, authoritarianism was attributed to the emergence of neo-patrimonial rule and a "social contract" between the rulers and the ruled.²⁰

While this strand persisted, by the 1990s, influenced by rational choice and neo-institutionalist approaches, the third paradigm was examining the emerging role of institutions and strategies of

¹⁶ Linz, J.J. (1964) "An Authoritarian Regime: Spain," in *Cleavages, Ideologies and Party Systems: Contributions to Comparative Political Sociology* (eds E. Allardt, Y. Littunen). Helsinki: Transactions of the Westermarck Society, pp. 294–341.

¹⁷ Snyder, Richard (2006) "Beyond Electoral Authoritarianism: The Spectrum of Non-democratic Regimes," in *Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Competition* (ed. Andreas Schedler). Boulder, CO : Lynne Rienner, pp. 219–231; Hadenius, A., and J. Teorell (2006) *Authoritarian Regimes: Stability, Change, and Pathways to Democracy, 1972–2003*. Notre Dame, IN: Kellogg Institute for International Studies.

¹⁸ Linz, Juan José. *Totalitarian and authoritarian regimes*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000.

¹⁹ O'Donnell, Guillermo A. Bureaucratic authoritarianism: Argentina, 1966-1973, in comparative perspective. Univ of California Press, 1988.

²⁰ Beblawi, Hazem, and Giacomo Luciani, eds. *The rentier state*. Routledge, 2015.

repression and cooptation in stabilizing authoritarian regimes. With the shortcomings of democratic consolidation in third-wave countries, the transition paradigm's assumption that democratization is inevitable came under attack as empirical reality showed otherwise.²¹ With partial liberalization, rather than democratize, authoritarian regimes used institutions such as parties, elections, and so on to mediate intra-elite conflicts and coopt opposition, thereby consolidating and stabilizing their rule.²² This has been demonstrated in the Arab world. Despite Arab states being defined as authoritarian regimes, most have had political parties, held regular elections, and enjoyed some degree of liberal freedom since the 1980s²³.

Given the increasing sophistication with which authoritarian leaders employed different strategies to prolong their rule, a growing debate emerged to classify regimes in the grey zone between democracy and authoritarianism. Several scholars have devised typologies that can be used to explain patterns of stability in different types of authoritarian states. For example, Geddes, focusing on the state's institutional structures and actors, has distinguished authoritarian regimes into single-party, military, and personalist regimes.²⁴ She demonstrated the significance of regime type through her findings that single party regimes are more robust than military regimes or personalistic regimes, as parties seem to have a stabilizing effect on autocratic rule. The relationship between regimes and authoritarian strategies is examined further in the next section.

²¹ Carothers, Thomas. "The end of the transition paradigm." *Journal of democracy* 13, no. 1 (2002): 5-21.

²² Gandhi and Przeworski, "Authoritarian Institutions", 1293; also see Gandhi, *Political Institution under Dictatorship*.

²³ Bakis, J. Karakoç, and Jülide Karakoç. *Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Before and After the Arab Uprisings*. Springer, 2015.

²⁴ Geddes, Barbara. "What do we know about democratization after twenty years?." *Annual review of political science* 2, no. 1 (1999): 115-144.

1.2. Regimes and Authoritarian Strategies of Survival

Influenced by third wave approaches, various theories have examined the incentives and constraints facing authoritarian regimes in maintaining stability. According to Gerschewski, authoritarian states maintain stability through a combination of repression, cooptation, and legitimation. In examining their choice of strategy, Davenport argues for examining the factors that “influence the political leader’s cost-benefit analysis”.²⁵ The choice of survival strategy, therefore, relies on the country's given set of opportunities and constraints. Different types of authoritarian regimes face different sets, which derive from the regime’s political and economic structure shaping the leader’s perception of stability and his/her cost-benefit analysis. While there are several variables that frame this set of opportunities and constraints, this thesis focuses on the role of regime type as the primary factor that shapes the state’s institutional structure.

Regimes are products of complex processes of historical evolution and structural conditions. While several studies have examined the impact of regimes on economic performance, there continues to be a gap in theorizing on the relationship between regimes and survival strategies. This gap in the literature may be attributed to the difficulty involved in examining the decision-making processes within closed regimes. Moreover, whereas extensive research has been conducted on the differences in stabilization strategies between democracies and authoritarian regimes, fewer research has examined this variation within different types of authoritarian regimes. Thus, there continues to be a gap in examining the connection between different state institutions and the incentives and constraints for different tools of stabilization.

²⁵ Davenport, Christian. "State repression and political order." *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.* 10 (2007): 1-23.

Given that the state's defining feature is in its legitimate use of coercion,²⁶ repression represents the basic, rational strategy for the maintenance of control, staying in power and perpetuating the status quo and is most often used in quelling popular dissent. This is derived from the axiom that governments seek to remain in office and often face a high risk of being deposed.²⁷ Repression is particularly used when the regime faces an overt challenge or a threat to its survival, particularly internal dissent. While there are challenges other than popular mobilization such as coups or even non-oppositional threats such as elections, repression has been used most specifically in subduing internal dissent, given its immediacy and its likelihood of spreading and escalating into a revolution. According to Ritter and Conrad, repression can be preemptive or responsive.²⁸ If the government can repress preemptively, then dissent isn't observed. However, if repression is responsive, then dissent is observed.

In contrast to the repressive abuse in totalitarian regimes, Acemoglu and Robinson argue that repression is used strategically until an "optimal" degree, after which it becomes counterproductive for stability²⁹. Moreover, they argue that, if there is a credible threat of revolution, then the elite may democratize, which would lead to a commitment to redistribution for the masses.³⁰ This account, however, should also recognize the possibility of cooptation as a viable strategy for the government to delay democratization. Thus, in addition to repression, governments use different accommodative measures in dealing with internal dissent such as cooptation, which would bring

²⁶ Weber, Max. *Politics as a Vocation*. Fortress Press, 1965.

²⁷ Tullock, Gordon. *The logic of the law*. Basic Books, 1987.

²⁸ Ritter, Emily Hencken, and Courtenay R. Conrad. "Preventing and responding to dissent: The observational challenges of explaining strategic repression." *American Political Science Review* 110, no. 1 (2016): 85-99.

²⁹ Acemoglu, Daron, and James A. Robinson. *Economic origins of dictatorship and democracy*. Cambridge University Press, 2005.

³⁰ Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. A. *Economic origins of dictatorship and democracy*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

the opposition into the political system, thereby altering the status quo.³¹ Cooptation can legitimize the government and guarantee the support of interest groups, particularly the elite, as well as the population.³²

In accounting for the variation in the effectiveness of repression in leading to stability, Hafez as well as Mason and Krane have argued that repression is effective in reducing protest when it is used selectively and pre-emptively.³³ Furthermore, Khawaja has found that the use of repression indiscriminately can challenge its effectiveness.³⁴ According to Wintrobe, states repress when cooptation doesn't suffice or if the state doesn't have the sufficient capacity to coopt.³⁵ The government can also implement negotiations with the opposition, grant pardons, reshuffle administrative personnel, release prisoners and so on. However, while these strategies can help the regime seek legitimation and contain the threat, these strategies are considered costly since they tax the state's time and resources.³⁶ Moreover, concessions in the form of accommodation can be viewed as a sign of weakness, thereby leading to escalation and more radical demands, as variously seen the Arab uprisings.³⁷

³¹ Gamson, William A. *The strategy of social protest*. 1975; Rasler, Karen. "Concessions, repression, and political protest in the Iranian revolution." *American Sociological Review* (1996): 132-152.

³² Egorov, Georgy, and Konstantin Sonin. "Dictators and their viziers: Endogenizing the loyalty–competence trade-off." *Journal of the European Economic Association* 9, no. 5 (2011): 903-930; Sekeris, Petros G. "Endogenous elites: power structure and patron-client relationships." *Economics of Governance* 12, no. 3 (2011): 237-258.

³³ Hafez, Mohammed M. *Why Muslims rebel: Repression and resistance in the Islamic world*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003; Mason, T. David, and Dale A. Krane. "The political economy of death squads: Toward a theory of the impact of state-sanctioned terror." *International Studies Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (1989): 175-198.

³⁴ Khawaja, Marwan. "Repression and popular collective action: Evidence from the West Bank." In *Sociological Forum*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 47-71. Kluwer Academic Publishers-Plenum Publishers, 1993.

³⁵ Wintrobe, Ronald. *The political economy of dictatorship*. Cambridge University Press, 2000.

³⁶ Ginkel, John, and Alastair Smith. "So you say you want a revolution: A game theoretic explanation of revolution in repressive regimes." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 43, no. 3 (1999): 291-316.

³⁷ Acemoglu, Daron, and James A. Robinson. "Democratization or repression?." *European Economic Review* 44, no. 4-6 (2000): 683-693.

Unlike concessions, repression, however, is cheap and can impose a cost on the target while deterring specific activities. Repression can potentially raise the costs for political protest and deter would-be challengers and their supporters.³⁸ While repression can be a complement to accommodations, Della Porta and Ritter see repression as an alternative to accommodations.³⁹ Since repression can preclude the government from the need to offer accommodations, it can be regarded as the more appealing strategy, since it offers the same benefits as others in providing stability, but at a lower cost.⁴⁰

However, repression has several constraints and drawbacks which often makes it a last resort. It can make the regime lose legitimacy, which decreases the likelihood of its long-term survival. In examining the impact of repression on legitimacy, the distinction between high and low-intensity forms is useful. While high-intensity repression reduces legitimacy through creating popular resentment, the impact of low-intensity repression is milder. Thus, the higher the level of repression, the greater the cost for legitimacy. This can be observed in the Egyptian and Tunisian revolutions, where repression led to further decline in the regime's legitimacy as well as greater divisions within the regime itself.

Furthermore, repression does not address the roots of contestation and popular grievances, which potentially makes it only a short-term strategy rather than a long-term one. Social movements scholarship has theorized on the potential escalation effect of repression through strengthening the

³⁸ Bueno de Mesquita, B., Smith, A., Siverson, R.M., et al. (2005). *The Logic of Political Survival*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

³⁹ Della Porta, Donatella. "Social movements and the state: Thoughts on the policing of protest." (1995); Ritter, Emily Hencken. "Policy disputes, political survival, and the onset and severity of state repression." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 58, no. 1 (2014): 143-168.

⁴⁰ Francisco, Ronald A. "The relationship between coercion and protest: An empirical evaluation in three coercive states." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 39, no. 2 (1995): 263-282; Charles, T. I. L. L. Y. "From mobilization to revolution." *Reading, Addison-Wesley Publishing* (1978).

opposition, which would render repression counter-productive.⁴¹ In addition to escalation, repression can also lead to the diffusion of challenges, tactical adaptation, among other alternatives for mass mobilization.

From an economic perspective, repression is costly since it drains available resources through expenditure on security and intelligence forces, weaponry, training and so on. These costs increase when the population is large, and the threat level is high. It also reduces the society's level of prosperity through destruction of assets and human losses.⁴² From an external perspective, repression can lead to international isolation through sanctions, which can also be counterproductive through destabilizing the regime.⁴³

Given these downsides, there is little empirical evidence that suggests that repression works, especially in the long-term, in achieving regime stability. There is evidence that regimes, therefore, use repression only when there is no alternative and when the benefits of repression outweigh its costs. In linking different economic and political structures to these benefits and costs, the next section reviews the literature on authoritarian resilience in the Arab region to examine the survival strategies that have historically been used to stabilize Arab states.

1.3. Arab Exceptionalism and Authoritarian Strategies

Having reviewed theoretical approaches to authoritarianism, this section analyzes the theoretical literature on authoritarianism within the Arab world to examine the region's traditional survival strategies. In the 20th century's last quarter, trends in several world regions, referred to as the "third

⁴¹ Francisco, Ronald A. "The relationship between coercion and protest: An empirical evaluation in three coercive states." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 39, no. 2 (1995)

⁴² Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. A. (2006). *Economic origins of dictatorship and democracy*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

⁴³ Escribà-Folch, Abel, and Joseph Wright. "Dealing with tyranny: International sanctions and the survival of authoritarian rulers." *International Studies Quarterly* 54, no. 2 (2010): 335-359.

wave”, were signaling the decline of authoritarianism and the potential universalization of democracy. However, despite limited liberalization in the Arab world in the 1990s, authoritarianism remained robust as states reinvented their strategies of survival.⁴⁴ In examining the persistence of authoritarianism in the region, a variety of explanations have been put forth to account for the region’s authoritarian resilience. Several internal and external factors account for authoritarianism in the Middle East, though there is little consensus regarding them.

Historically, some of the explanations for Arab authoritarianism focused on culture, arguing for the incompatibility of Islam with democracy, as well as the weakness of civil society and associational life. However, these explanations have come under critiques due to their orientalist biases. For example, Anderson has argued that explaining Arab authoritarianism through political culture frames the region in essentialist terms while dismissing resistance as an abnormality.⁴⁵

With the emergence of the second and third waves of autocracy research, as was examined in the last section, the literature on the puzzle of "Arab exceptionalism" has focused on examining the nature of political and economic governance within Arab states. Several paradigms have been proposed to account for the mechanisms of authoritarian resilience in the region.

Building on Gerschewski, Scheitzer explains that, to maintain their stability, clientelist political elites in the region have traditionally used the three pillars of stability: legitimation, cooptation, and repression.⁴⁶ As part of the authoritarian bargain, the region’s regimes have historically

⁴⁴ Lust, Ellen. "Missing the third wave: Islam, institutions, and democracy in the Middle East." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 46, no. 2 (2011): 163-190.

⁴⁵ Anderson, L., 1995. *Democracy in the Arab world: a critique of the political culture approach*. In: R. Brynen, B. Korany, and P. Noble, eds. *Political liberalization and democratization in the Arab world: theoretical perspectives*. Vol. 1. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

⁴⁶ Schweitzer, Bertold. "Modeling Mechanisms of Democratic Transition in the Arab Uprisings." *Middle East Critique* 24, no. 1 (2015): 55-66; Gerschewski, Johannes. "The three pillars of stability: legitimation, repression, and co-optation in autocratic regimes." *Democratization* 20, no. 1 (2013): 13-38.

institutionalized their rentier economies to provide the populations with their economic needs, in exchange for their loyalty and complacency towards the regime's lack of freedoms, accountability, transparency and pluralist participation. However, for those segments of society that dissented, repression has been continuously deployed to limit threats.⁴⁷ This section examines these mechanisms, while the next chapters will account for how the distinction between monarchies and republics can impact the choice of strategy. This lays the foundation for analyzing the uneven levels of unrest and state responses within the Arab uprisings in the next chapters.

Cooptation

With the emergence of the third wave of autocracy research in the 1990s, several scholars have emphasized the role of elections and political parties in sustaining Arab authoritarian states. Given the neopatrimonial nature of Arab countries, states have traditionally used cooptation as a tool for widening the state's power base. Cooptation has been used to include economic as well as political actors as the state has used formal and liberal institutions such as elections, parliaments, NGOs, and others to sustain itself.⁴⁸ In theory, these measures were meant to legitimate the state through the diffusion of power and gradual liberalization. In practice, they were used to quell opposition, control voters and manage incumbent elites.⁴⁹

Cooptation limited the capacity of opposition movements to contest elections since the political elite didn't allow for political contestation to risk the safety of its power. If opposition groups were to become threatening, they would be banned, disqualified or repressed. Hence, states didn't allow

⁴⁷ Kamrava, Mehran, ed. *Beyond the Arab Spring: The evolving ruling bargain in the Middle East*. Hurst & Company Limited, 2014.

⁴⁸ Albrecht, Holger, and Oliver Schlumberger. "'Waiting for Godot': Regime change without democratization in the Middle East." *International political science review* 25, no. 4 (2004): 371-392.

⁴⁹ King, Stephen Juan. *The new authoritarianism in the Middle East and North Africa*. Indiana University Press, 2009.

for elections that were free and fair, which allowed for vote rigging and political manipulation⁵⁰. While cooptation has taken on various shapes in different states, its primary purpose was to stabilize the ruler through intra-elite competition, which prevents any certain elite from becoming threatening.

Repression

In addition to cooptation, the study of repression is central to understanding the authoritarian resilience of regimes across the Arab world. In arguing against popular explanations of exceptionalism, Bellin explains that, rather than cultural and socioeconomic explanations, the Middle East's authoritarian exceptionalism lies in the state's unrestrained repressive capacity.⁵¹ Examining repression, or the lack thereof, is, therefore, central to understanding how revolutions unfold. Bellin argues that "democratic transition can be carried out successfully only when the state's coercive apparatus lacks the will or capacity to crush it. Where that coercive apparatus remains intact and opposed to political reform, democratic transition will not occur."⁵² Both Bellin and Brownlee cite Skocpol's thesis that revolutions can't succeed unless the security apparatus loses its capacity and will to repress.⁵³

In examining the dynamics of coercive apparatus in the Middle East, Bellin traces the strength of the coercive apparatuses to structural factors such as resource endowments, access to rent, neopatrimonialism, and low institutionalization. Authoritarian countries in the region prioritize

⁵⁰ Brownlee, Jason. *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*. Cambridge University Press, 2007; Levitsky, Steven, and Lucan Way. "The rise of competitive authoritarianism." *Journal of democracy* 13, no. 2 (2002): 51-65

⁵¹ Bellin, Eva. "The robustness of authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in comparative perspective." *Comparative politics* (2004): 139-157.

⁵² Bellin, Eva. "The robustness of authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in comparative perspective." *Comparative politics* (2004): 139-157.

⁵³ Skocpol, T. (1979) *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Brownlee, Jason. *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*. Cambridge University Press, 2007.

military expenditure to strengthen their security apparatus. The Homeland Security Research Center explains that, even though China and the United States are the greatest absolute spenders on their militaries, in terms of relative share to GDP, Middle East countries spend from 2 to 4 times as much as the international superpowers.⁵⁴ Arab states, therefore, spend relatively more on their security apparatuses than any other region.

This financial base provides them with the necessary capacity to repress. To guarantee the loyalty of its elite and its members, the state must provide adequate financial support, financed through rent revenues, for its security apparatus. With neopatrimonialism, low institutionalism as well as limited pressure by external patrons, repression becomes a convenient tool for rulers to limit potential challenges from opposition and civil society.

Legitimation

While cooptation and repression play distinctive functions in the inner logic of authoritarianism in the Arab region, Hudson and Schlumberger argue that these factors alone cannot explain the survival of authoritarian regimes since authoritarian stability requires legitimacy.⁵⁵ While repression presents a useful strategy, it is seen as too costly to maintain stability in the long-run.⁵⁶ Repression, thus, can be used as a last resort when there is a threatening legitimacy deficit.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Homeland Security Research Center (2014) *Global Homeland Security & Public Safety Market (2014–2022)*. Washington, DC.

⁵⁵ Hudson, Michael C. *Arab politics: The search for legitimacy*. Yale University Press, 1977; Schlumberger, Oliver. "Opening old bottles in search of new wine: On nondemocratic legitimacy in the Middle East." *Middle East Critique* 19, no. 3 (2010): 233-250.

⁵⁶ Wintrobe, Ronald. "Dictatorship: analytical approaches." *C. Boix and S. Stokes* (2007).

⁵⁷ Schlumberger, Oliver. "Political liberalization, authoritarian regime stability, and imitative institutionbuilding: Towards a formal understanding." In Fifth Mediterranean Social and Political Research Meeting of the Robert Schuman Centre, European University Institute, Florence, Italy. 2004.

Authoritarian states, therefore, need non-democratic sources of legitimacy. Schlumberger and Albrecht distinguish between internal and external dimensions of legitimation.⁵⁸ While internal legitimation refers to that of the local populace, external legitimation refers to the legitimacy derived from regional and international powers, whether governments or international organizations. In further disaggregating legitimation strategies, Schlumberger further identifies four components of legitimacy that are used in the region: religion, tradition, ideology, and welfare gains as main sources of such legitimacy.⁵⁹

One of the most widely used paradigms in explaining legitimation in the Arab world has been the rentierism theory. In the 1960s and 1970s, in parallel with the second wave of authoritarianism research, and influenced by Lipset, modernization theorists focused on the socioeconomic basis of democratization, thereby emphasizing the relations between democracy and socioeconomic underdevelopment, the lack of a market economy, low literacy levels, and a small middle class.⁶⁰ While economic explanations are still used by many scholars, the focus has often shifted away from development to the source of revenues and the class structure.

Given the prevalence of neopatrimonial and clientlist states in the region, several scholars have examined the role of rent as a tool that is particularly used by oil-rich monarchies to coopt citizens and to maintain stability. According to Beblawi & Luciani, substantial rent has precluded states in the region from taxing the population, while allowing them to distribute rents in exchange for political loyalty.⁶¹ Thus, access to large revenues, that is accrued not from production or taxes but

⁵⁸ Albrecht, Holger, and Oliver Schlumberger. "'Waiting for Godot': Regime change without democratization in the Middle East." *International political science review* 25, no. 4 (2004): 371-392.

⁵⁹ Schlumberger, Oliver. "Opening old bottles in search of new wine: On nondemocratic legitimacy in the Middle East." *Middle East Critique* 19, no. 3 (2010): 233-250.

⁶⁰ Lipset, Seymour Martin. "Political man: The social bases of politics." (1959).

⁶¹ Beblawi, Hazem. "The rentier state in the Arab world." *Arab Studies Quarterly* (1987): 383-398.

from rents, makes a state autonomous from its society in terms of the source of income. While oil represents the main source of rent revenue, other sources such as aid, remittances, pipeline crossings, transit fees and others can also be used for the same function. However, more than others, since oil- monarchies have access to substantial rent revenues, they can distribute them to main target groups, thereby buying political loyalty and maintaining stability.

The theory of the rentier state draws on modernization theory, but it also addresses some of its gaps. Hinnebusch suggested that the failure of contemporary high-income, oil-rich states in the Middle East to democratize also shows the shortcomings of the modernization theory. In his view:

“Modernization thresholds have not been exceeded in so far as much of this income derives from external rent that increases (and decreases) without much of the societal mobilization or complexity which Modernization Theory believes make authoritarian governance unviable”⁶².

Critics of the theory however point to the fact that the theory is neglecting a range of relevant factors, such as the impact of international oil price fluctuations and problems of relative-deprivation.⁶³ The uses and limitations of different forms of legitimation are explored further in the next section.

1.4. Monarchical Exceptionalism, Dynasticism and Rentierism

The Arab world contains a wide range of regimes. Instead of examining the Arab region as homogenously nondemocratic, recognizing the distinctions between different types of regimes can

⁶² Hinnebusch, Raymond. "Authoritarian persistence, democratization theory and the Middle East: An overview and critique." *Democratization* 13, no. 3 (2006): pp. 374–375.

⁶³ Abulof, Uriel. "Normative concepts analysis: Unpacking the language of legitimation." *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 18, no. 1 (2015): 73-89; Schlumberger, Oliver. "Opening old bottles in search of new wine: On nondemocratic legitimacy in the Middle East." *Middle East Critique* 19, no. 3 (2010): 233-250.

explain different patterns of behavior. This thesis focuses on the most pronounced regime type distinction, which is that between monarchies and republics. Monarchies have been understudied as a regime type and Arab monarchies have been largely ignored in the analyses of the Arab uprisings. By contrasting regimes and monarchies and breaking down monarchies into linchpin and dynastic ones, this thesis can contribute to a better understanding of how different institutions impact patterns of stability.

Monarchies have consistently been characterized as exceptionally resilient relative to republics.⁶⁴ Since World War II, authoritarian monarchies have been on average more stable than authoritarian republics. During the cold war, authoritarian republics were often more unstable than monarchies due to geopolitical tensions. Several reasons account for monarchical resilience. In the Arab world, there are more monarchies than any other region. Arab monarchies have been classified in a variety of ways based on religious authority, state-building capacity, and natural-resource endowment. Except for Oman, all Arab monarchies are governed by Sunni Muslim royal families. Except for Bahrain and Oman, all populations of monarchies are also predominantly Sunni Muslim. While UAE and Saudi Arabia are absolutist monarchies, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Bahrain, Qatar, and Oman are constitutional monarchies.⁶⁵

In explaining uneven protests and state responses, the most useful typology is the one distinguishing between dynastic and linchpin monarchies. More than a binary, dynasticism, however, should be viewed as a spectrum. While Kuwait and Saudi Arabia serve as traditional examples of dynastic royal families, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates have

⁶⁴ Anderson, Lisa. "Absolutism and the Resilience of Monarchy in the Middle East." *Political Science Quarterly* 106, no. 1 (1991): 1-15; Yom, Sean L., and F. Gregory Gause III. "Resilient royals: How Arab monarchies hang on." *Journal of Democracy* 23, no. 4 (2012): 74-88

⁶⁵ Herb, Michael. *All in the family: absolutism, revolution, and democracy in Middle Eastern monarchies*. SUNY Press, 1999.

emulated this model. Morocco, Jordan, and Oman exhibit a moderate degree of dynasticism because of the limitations placed on incorporating ruling family into the cabinet.⁶⁶

Using this typology allows for analyzing the relationship between the two competing paradigms for monarchical exceptionalism: rentierism and dynasticism. The rentierism theory has been a hallmark of explanations for monarchical exceptionalism as well as the greater institutional underdevelopment of Middle Eastern states. Several of the classical works in modernization theory have made reference to how rent-seeking has produced social structures and political cultures that are not conducive for democratization.⁶⁷ In his groundbreaking study, Michael Ross has used a large-N, cross-regional analysis to provide statistical support for the oil curse as an explanation for authoritarianism in oil-rich states.⁶⁸ Ross identifies three mechanisms through which oil hinder democracy. First, the rentier effect reduces taxes and increases public spending, which generates authoritarian legitimacy. Second, the repression effect enables the construction of a powerful security apparatus, which deters democratic forces from threatening the state. Third, the modernization effect eliminates the democratic pressures that arise from the transition to industrial and service-sector jobs.

Herb, however, has challenged Ross's causal mechanisms underlying the claim that rentierism harms democracy.⁶⁹ Through altering the operationalization of Ross's variables, Herb produced varying results and explains that Ross's analysis was biased due to drawing cases mostly from

⁶⁶ Herb, Michael. *All in the family: absolutism, revolution, and democracy in Middle Eastern monarchies*. SUNY Press, 1999.

⁶⁷ Inglehart, Ronald. "The renaissance of political culture." *American political science review* 82, no. 4 (1988): 1203-1230; Lipset, Seymour Martin, Kyoung-Ryung Seong, and John Charles Torres. "A Comparative-Analysis of the Social Requisites of Democracy." *International Social Science Journal* 45, no. 2 (1993): 154-175.

⁶⁸ Ross, Michael L. "Does oil hinder democracy?." *World politics* 53, no. 3 (2001): 325-361.

⁶⁹ Herb, Michael. "No representation without taxation? Rents, development, and democracy." *Comparative Politics* (2005): 297-316.

poor states. Herb explains that the presumed negative consequences of the abundance of oil such as authoritarianism and corruption characterize the non-oil rich neighbors as they do for the oil-rich monarchies. This suggests the presence of omission bias. Using a counterfactual measure of development, Herb emphasizes the importance of regional democracy as a determining feature. Thus, the impact of rentierism on democracy has to take into account regional contexts. As rentier states are concentrated in the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa, it is likely that other regional variables can provide a better explanation.

In examining Middle Eastern monarchies, Herb explains that the variable of dynasticism offers several mechanisms through which it influences the stabilization mechanisms of royal families. Dynasticism reinforces mechanism of accountability of the ruler to the dynasty. Thus, if the king's governance threatens the family's interests, the family will intervene and replace the king. Furthermore, the dynasty functions as an information network which solidifies the family's grip. In Saudi Arabia, the family's sheer size, their distribution within the state and the society, and their pyramidal of clientelistic relations allows them to adjust their policies in a way that serves the effectiveness of their governance. Herb examines the historical monarchies of Iraq, Afghanistan, Egypt, Iran and Libya to argue that the lack of dynasticism prompted their collapse.

As explained in the introduction, limited work has examined the relationship between these two paradigms. In both paradigms, stability is viewed as an outcome, but none examine the different mechanisms through which this outcome is achieved. By applying Gerschowski's framework to Herb's regime typology, this thesis addresses some gaps in this theoretical debate while providing a more nuanced account for how these different institutional features influence the different strategies autocrats use.

1.5. Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the different literatures that will be used in the thesis. The first section has introduced and historicized the theoretical approaches to authoritarian stability, outlining the different research waves in the study of autocracy and how each has contributed to the contemporary debates on the persistence of authoritarianism. This thesis draws most substantially on research from the third wave, but it also relies on insights from the second wave. The second section has examined the incentives and constraints states face in employing different authoritarian strategies. This will be used in the case comparison when examining why states adopt different strategies and why some are more effective than others. This will especially be revisited in the thesis's conclusion as the thesis's findings are placed within their theoretical framework. The third section has reviewed the literature on Arab exceptionalism, focusing on how different paradigms approach the issue of authoritarian resilience in the region. Having reviewed how each strategy has been employed in the region, the following chapters segment the analysis by regime type to provide a more nuanced analysis. In the fourth section, this chapter has reviewed the literature on the resilience of Arab monarchies and explored Herb's typology. While monarchical resilience has been attributed to factors such as culture, and and geostrategic relations, the role of rentierism and dynasticism have primarily dominated the theoretical debates on monarchical exceptionalism. The next chapters will further explore these theories and break down these factors while examining historical survival strategies employed in Arab monarchies.

The next three chapters comparatively analyze the historical survival strategies of Arab regimes and the wave of protests and state responses during the Arab uprisings. The Arab uprisings represented a shock to countries across the region. In examining the causes and impacts of the Arab uprisings, along with accounting for popular grievances and opportunity structures, it is

necessary to examine how the states' survival strategies within the countries that witnessed unrest either broke down or, alternatively, managed to withstand the shock. The chapters are themed by case study. The chapter on Saudi Arabia represents a case of a dynastic monarchy, Morocco a case of linchpin monarchy, and Egypt a case of republic. Each begins by analyzing the state's historical survival strategies and how they were influenced by state institutions. This is followed by examining the nature and level of protests during the uprisings and then how and why incumbent elites used which survival strategy during the uprisings, while analyzing the effectiveness of each strategy in confronting unrest. Each chapter ends with a conclusion synthesizing the findings and contextualizing them within the broader regime category. This is revisited in the thesis's conclusion as the thesis assesses the prospects of stability in these cases in the developments following the uprisings.

Chapter 2. Saudi Arabia

2.1. Historical Survival Strategies

Legitimation

Monarchies have an advantage over republics in the degree and form of legitimacy, which provides them with more resilience using traditional, economic as well as religious forms of legitimacy. Across monarchies, despite occasional contestation to individual rulers and the extent of power they exercise, most citizens continue to support the monarchy as a political system.⁷⁰ Except for Bahrain, Arab kings enjoy a relatively high degree of legitimacy. The Amman-based Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre, an independent research organization that gauges the influence of the world's Muslim leaders, ranks the Saudi, Moroccan, and Jordanian kings first, second, and fourth, respectively, on its list "The Muslim 500: The World's Most Influential Muslims. Moreover, in 2007, a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project found Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah to be the most popular leader in Muslim countries.⁷¹ This has solidified Saudi Arabia's status as one of the world's last remaining absolute monarchies.

In accounting for such high levels of legitimacy, dynasticism and the resulting control by the royal family of state institutions plays a central role in shaping the dynamics of the ruling coalition. Historically, the state structure of Saudi Arabia has been intimately tied to the Al Saud family given the family's role in state formation. Although the exact size of the royal family is unknown

⁷⁰ Kamrava, Mehran. "Non-democratic states and political liberalisation in the Middle East: a structural analysis." *Third World Quarterly* 19, no. 1 (1998): 63-85; Kirby, Owen H. "Want Democracy? Get a King." *Middle East Quarterly* (2000).

⁷¹ Pew Global Attitudes Project, "Little Enthusiasm for Many Muslim Leaders," February 4, 2010, <http://www.pewglobal.org/files/pdf/268.pdf>

and is sometimes considered a state secret, it has been estimated between 5,000 and 8,000 adults.⁷² The royal family is marked by a complex structure with varying levels of connection to Saudi society. Even though Herb has highlighted how the family serves as a tool for internal cohesion, intra-familial competition still takes place. While seniority has traditionally served as the key requirement for succession, other factors such as the social standing of the mothers have occasionally influenced the choice of successor. Moreover, family members in power also often play a role in appointing the heir apparent, which can pose a potential for succession dilemmas. This has occasionally led to conflicts within the family, as demonstrated by the purge in 2017 by crown prince Mohammed bin Salman of major political and economic figures. This will be examined further in the chapter's conclusion.

In addition to dynasticism's role in state formation, the king's legitimacy in Saudi Arabia has been derived from religious, economic as well as external dimensions. In his religious legitimacy, the Saudi king's absolute power is restrained only by the Quran and the sharia, whose constitutional status is guarded by the Wahhabi clerics. The Saudi state is fused around a single cultural and religious identity based on the royal family's cooptation of the ultraconservative Wahhabi base, whose interpretation of Islam exerts substantial influence over state and society.

Moreover, in examining the legitimacy of monarchies in the Arab world, several of the paradigms explored in explanations for authoritarianism in the Arab world have been applied to this regime type. The rentier theory has been the one most often used to account for monarchical stability in the region. More than half of the government's revenues in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Kuwait, and Qatar come from the sale of oil.⁷³ Saudi Arabia represents a classic

⁷² Kechichian, Joseph A. *Power and succession in Arab monarchies: A reference guide*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008.

⁷³ Ross, Michael L. "Does oil hinder democracy?." *World politics* 53, no. 3 (2001): 325-361.

rentier state. With proven oil reserves at one-quarter of the world's total, Saudi Arabia's with oil revenues have historically marked approximately 90–95 percent of its total export earnings and 35–40 percent of its GDP.⁷⁴

By international standards, the citizens of GCC countries are one of the wealthiest as reflected by their per capita gross domestic product.⁷⁵ More than high incomes, citizens in the GCC pay no income tax, and many receive subsidized housing, healthcare, and education. Furthermore, except for Saudi Arabia, GCC monarchies have relatively small populations. Additionally, in GCC monarchies, only a minority of the population are citizens, with foreign labor accounting for the majority of the population. However, rather than the size of wealth, it is the source of the wealth which influences the structure of authoritarianism. The abundance of oil and natural gases, combined with a small population, has enabled rulers not only to build up key state institutions like the security apparatus but also to become enormously wealthy themselves and to transfer some of the riches to their citizens. This long-term affluence of citizens has, therefore, effectively stifled formal political opposition in the GCC countries.⁷⁶ Oil wealth, through generating non-tax revenue, provides an opportunity for authoritarian regimes to stave off popular mobilization. In addition to reducing social protests, oil wealth, therefore, leads to more stability.⁷⁷

Thus, across the GCC, neoliberal economic policies have not made middle-class citizens as downwardly mobile as they were in states such as Egypt, Tunisia, or Morocco. The economic

⁷⁴ Yetiv, Steve A. "Oil, Saudi Arabia, and the spring that has not come." *The Arab Spring: Change and Resistance in the Middle East* (2013): 97-115.

⁷⁵ Barany, Zoltan. "Unrest and state response in Arab monarchies." *Mediterranean Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (2013): 5-38.

⁷⁶ Phelps, Richard. "Power and Politics in the Persian Gulf Monarchies." *Middle East Quarterly* 19, no. 3 (2012): 92.

⁷⁷ Smith, Benjamin. "Oil wealth and regime survival in the developing world, 1960–1999." *American Journal of Political Science* 48, no. 2 (2004): 232-246; Waldner, David, and Benjamin Smith. "Rentier States and State Transformations." (2013).

safety net from petroleum wealth has kept the floor from falling out under Gulf citizens. This classic rentier trade-off of economic wellbeing in return for political quiescence still seems to hold in the Gulf. Economic stimulus and the securitization of sectarian identities brought Gulf regimes some political breathing space.

Moreover, for external legitimation, Geddes has argued that monarchies are more insulated from great power politics than republics as they are less vulnerable to geopolitical tensions and are, therefore, more stable.⁷⁸ Arab oil-monarchies, in specific, have historically enjoyed limited pressures from international powers to democratize as resulting instability can lead to higher oil prices, which could threaten economic performances across regions. Thus, the geostrategic nature of oil-rich monarchies within global politics has allowed them to enjoy limited pressures for liberalization.⁷⁹ While this applies to monarchies like Saudi Arabia, it doesn't, however, apply to Morocco.

Cooptation

While the rentierism approach has been the “hegemonic theoretic framework” in explaining patterns of monarchical exceptionalism, Herb has analyzed the set-up of monarchical regimes to explain how they achieve stability through cooptation.⁸⁰ By contrast to leaders of republics, most monarchs have operated at some institutional and symbolic distance from the political arena, and thus had a crucial advantage in managing elites. In his groundbreaking volume, “All in the Family”, Michael Herb uses intra-regime dynamics to argue that the conditions for monarchical

⁷⁸ Geddes, Barbara, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz. "Autocratic breakdown and regime transitions: A new data set." *Perspectives on Politics* 12, no. 2 (2014): 313-331.

⁷⁹ Yom, Sean L., and F. Gregory Gause III. "Resilient royals: How Arab monarchies hang on." *Journal of Democracy* 23, no. 4 (2012): 74-88.

⁸⁰ Herb, Michael. *All in the family: absolutism, revolution, and democracy in Middle Eastern monarchies*. SUNY Press, 1999.

durability can be best understood when the peculiarities of royal family politics are considered, particularly regarding the inclusion and exclusion of parts of the family in key decision-making institutions.⁸¹ Rather than attributing resilience to variables outside of the monarchy such as geopolitical and cultural factors, Herb situates his analysis in the structural institutions of the monarchy, which, through mechanisms of internal conflict regulation, allow for stability.

Herb critiques the traditional paradigms that explain monarchical resilience, specifically those attributing it to oil revenues, external support and culture. According to him, while oil plays a role in expanding the state apparatus, it is only an "intervening variable". This can be demonstrated in Libya, where rentier wealth didn't allow for stability. Instead, Herb focuses on dynasticism as a mechanism of cooptation, explaining it as the main reason for the survival of monarchical regimes. From the perspective of institutions, authoritarian leaders rely on the support of a base coalition for their power. This coalition must be kept cohesive and loyal. This is commonly achieved through the distribution of private goods. However, since the coalition can't guarantee that the stream of benefits will remain constant, a commitment problem can arise, especially during times of economic stagnation.⁸² In dynastic monarchies, however, more than reflecting a hereditary system, dynasticism involves intrafamily cohesion that makes the ruling coalition intricately dependent on the regime's survival and is, thus, more likely to remain cohesive. This reflects the way in which dynastic Arab monarchies have developed ways of including family as well as core elite members in political decision-making.

⁸¹ Herb, Michael. *All in the family: absolutism, revolution, and democracy in Middle Eastern monarchies*. SUNY Press, 1999.

⁸² Magaloni, Beatriz. "Credible power-sharing and the longevity of authoritarian rule." *Comparative Political Studies* 41, no. 4-5 (2008): 715-741.

In such states, the state-building era provided an opportunity for the ruling family to establish its predominance while extending its control over state institutions. Herb explains that, in contrast to linchpin monarchies, which are more personalist, in dynastic monarchies, "members of the ruling families monopolize the highest state offices ... (and) distribute members throughout lower positions in the state apparatus, especially in the key ministries".⁸³ With family members distributed throughout major governmental bureaucracies, the threats from rivals is minimized.

Herb uses the case of Iran's Pahlavi dynasty to demonstrate how, despite being rich in oil, the lack of a dynastic monarchy led to collapse. Under the Iranian monarchy, the shah failed to build a single-party monarchy and used increasing repression to stabilize the state. The Shah's relatives were excluded from senior positions within the state as the shah chose not to delegate power. This made the state increasingly vulnerable, which culminated in his overthrow by the 1979 revolution. While no Arab dynastic monarchy has been overthrown, linchpin monarchies such as those historically in Libya and Afghanistan, despite the presence of large rent revenues, the failure of establishing dynastic control led to their overthrow.

Repression

Oil-rich, dynastic monarchies enjoy relatively high expenditure on their military and have sophisticated security forces. However, despite this greater capacity, Smith explains that, while oil leads to more stability, its effect is through strategies other than repression.⁸⁴ According to Josua and Edel, the higher and better legitimacy monarchies has precluded them from the use of

⁸³ Herb, Michael. *All in the family: absolutism, revolution, and democracy in Middle Eastern monarchies*. SUNY Press, 1999.

⁸⁴ Smith, Benjamin. "Oil wealth and regime survival in the developing world, 1960–1999." *American Journal of Political Science* 48, no. 2 (2004): 232-246.

repression.⁸⁵ This suggests that, unlike in republics, monarchies have channeled dissent through a system that reduces the necessity for repression.

Moreover, since states are more likely to repress when they are consolidating their power, monarchies are less likely to repress given their durability. According to Anderson, et al., states repress to signal to political rivals the regime's capacity and propensity of using repression.⁸⁶ This suggests that, over time, repression should decrease, all else equal. This, however, applies more to high-intensity forms of repression than to low-intensity ones. Overall, when monarchies use repression, they use it pre-emptively and more moderately. Husayn argues that monarchies may use high repression only when there are power struggles within the family.⁸⁷ However, the use of repression across Arab monarchies has historically been low and more targeted when compared to republics. This applies to dynastic as well as linchpin monarchies.

In Saudi Arabia, despite the low level of high-intensity repression, there has been a high level of low-intensity repression.⁸⁸ Saudi Arabia, like other dynastic monarchies, has historically limited the role of the opposition while stifling the development of political activism through banning, stifling, coopting, and manipulating oppositional groups and organizations. In the six GCC states, only Bahrain and Kuwait have anything resembling an organized opposition. However, even in these states, the opposition's capacity for contestation remains minimal. For example, while

⁸⁵ Josua, Maria, and Mirjam Edel. "To repress or not to repress—regime survival strategies in the Arab spring." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 27, no. 2 (2015): 289-309.

⁸⁶ Andersen, David, Jørgen Møller, Lasse Lykke Rørbæk, and Svend-Erik Skaaning. "State capacity and political regime stability." *Democratization* 21, no. 7 (2014): 1305-1325.

⁸⁷ Husayn, Nebil. "Mechanisms of authoritarian rule in Bahrain." *Arab Studies Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (2015): 33-53.

⁸⁸ Cingranelli, David L. "The Cingranelli-Richards (CIRI) human rights dataset." (2004).

Kuwait has had an active parliament and can hold the government accountable, the emir's ability to dissolve parliament prevents the likelihood of political reform.⁸⁹

In Saudi Arabia, the strong state control of institutions has made it one of the most tightly controlled countries. However, the Saudi state has often sought to coopt rather than forcefully confront the opposition.⁹⁰ Nonetheless, given the predominance of the Wahhabi Influence in Saudi Arabia, the state has frequently had to resort to targeted repression and sectarian incitement to control the Eastern province.⁹¹ The Eastern province is Saudi Arabia's largest province and has most of the country's oil reserves. However, it also has the highest concentration of Saudi Shias.⁹² The Shia minority, which numbers between 2.8 million to 4.2 million and is approximately 10 to 15 percent of the general population, but is 33 percent in the Eastern Province, has historically suffered from religious discrimination, economic deprivation and exclusion from the political process. Saudi Arabia's Wahhabi influence has led to the institutionalized marginalization of the large Shia Muslim minority. Naturally, for the persecuted or harassed Shia communities in Bahrain, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia, the religious authority of Sunni royal families and ruling elites has stirred resentment and fueled their opposition.⁹³

While the minority has often concealed its faith to avoid discrimination, several historical phases have witnessed the heightening of the minority's dissent.⁹⁴ For example, with the 1979 Iranian

⁸⁹ Weiner, Scott. "Kuwait's Emir Just Dissolved the Country's Parliament. Here's Why." The Washington Post, WP Company, 17 Oct. 2016, www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/10/17/kuwaits-emir-just-dissolved-the-countrys-parliament-heres-why/.

⁹⁰ Beranek, Ondrej. "Divided we survive: A landscape of fragmentation in Saudi Arabia." *Crown Center for Middle East Studies (Brandeis University)* 33 (2009).

⁹¹ International Crisis Group (2005): *The Shiite Question in Saudi Arabia. Middle East Report N°45.*

⁹² Teitelbaum, Joshua. "The Shiites of Saudi Arabia." *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* 10 (2010): 72.

⁹³ Wehrey, F. (2013): *The Forgotten Uprising in Eastern Saudi Arabia.* Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

⁹⁴ Human Rights Watch (2009): *Denied Dignity. Systematic Discrimination and Hostility toward Saudi Shia Citizens.* New York: Human Rights Watch.

revolution, Saudi Shia demonstrated in demand for an end to discrimination as well as political and economic rights. This, however, led to the state responding with harsh repression, which led to the exile of the opposition's leaders.⁹⁵ Subsequently, despite some gesture of reconciliation and promises of increased religious freedom and political opportunities, the pattern of dissent followed by crackdown has persisted. Consequently, the Sunni-Shia divide is an important factor preventing the coalescing of the opposition.

2.2. Survival Strategies During the Protests

Unlike in republics, in monarchies, protester's demands were limited and non-confrontational and protesters demanded reform, not revolution and regime change. Thus, protests did not call into question the monarchs' basic political and economic arrangements. Instead, they sought political and socioeconomic changes such as electoral reform, freedom to establish civil society organizations, and guarantees of freedom of expression. In some cases, there were demands for changes in personnel, particularly through the removal of corrupt and incompetent ministers.⁹⁶

In dynastic monarchies, social cleavages played a leading role in precipitating unrest, with Shia identity in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, and stateless Bidoon people in Kuwait. In Saudi Arabia, the Shia minority in the Eastern Province was the actor to instigate the wave of wave of protests. However, as examined earlier, waves of dissent in the Eastern Province long predate the events of 2011. In 2011, inspired by the transnational flow of ideas across Arab countries, especially through the close ties with the Bahraini Shia, protests began on February 17, 2011 in the Eastern

⁹⁵ Al-Rasheed, Madawi. "Sectarianism as Counter-Revolution: Saudi Responses to the Arab Spring." *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 11, no. 3 (2011): 513-526.

⁹⁶ Bank, André, Thomas Richter, and Anna Sunik. "Durable, yet different: Monarchies in the Arab Spring." *Journal of Arabian Studies* 4, no. 2 (2014): 163-179.

Province.⁹⁷ Despite the permanent national ban on protests in the oil-rich Eastern Province, in the Shia-majority governorate of Qatif, demonstrators demanded an end to religious discrimination, the release of political prisoners, the expansion of women's rights, and a lifting of the restrictions on freedom of speech. This resulted in the spreading of protests to several cities in the Eastern province as well as in calls for a "day of rage" on the 11th of March 2011 in the capital of Riyadh.⁹⁸

The "day of rage", however, failed to materialize as the state's preemptive deployment of security forces and heavy-handed police blockades prevented any escalation of protests. Thus, the Saudi capital has witnessed only minor protests while most protests have instead taken place in the Eastern Province. While the state succeeded in controlling and deterring protests in 2011, a second wave began when notable protests reemerged in the summer of 2012. This involved renewed marches to demand the release of imprisoned civil rights activists in locations as disparate as Riyadh, al-Qatif, al-Qasim and the pilgrimage center of Mecca. Protests around al-Qatif especially surged following the arrest of prominent Shaikh Nimr Baqir al-Nimr. More than a sectarian riot, the Shia minority protested to call for its socioeconomic demands, such as the reduction of unemployment, particularly youth unemployment. Overall, while frequent, protests in Saudi Arabia failed to gain momentum and become widespread, this wave of Shia dissent was historically unique in its use of street protests as the primary mode of resistance.⁹⁹

Legitimation

Along with other dynastic monarchies, Saudi Arabia has mainly relied on rent redistribution to legitimate itself in the wake of the protests. In all GCC monarchies, economic stimulus packages

⁹⁷ Matthiesen, Toby. "A Saudi Spring?": The Shi'a Protest Movement in the Eastern Province 2011–2012." *The Middle East Journal* 66, no. 4 (2012): 628-659.

⁹⁸ Lacroix, Stéphane. "is saudi arabia immune?." *Journal of Democracy* 22, no. 4 (2011): 48-59.

⁹⁹ Lawson, Fred H., and Matteo Legrenzi. "Repression and Monarchical Resilience in the Arab Gulf States." *The International Spectator* 52, no. 1 (2017): 76-87.

were used to pre-empt and quell the protests.¹⁰⁰ Thus, oil-monarchies such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar, moved quickly to increase public spending to avoid any potential grievances. In Saudi Arabia, during February and March of 2011, the king took preemptive action in the form of an extensive economic package. This included increasing public spending, financial gifts in the form government benefits to its citizens.¹⁰¹ The king also promised to spend \$37 billion on raising civil service salaries and subsidies and building low-income housing units even before protests broke out in its troubled Eastern Province. Furthermore, following the demonstrations, the king earmarked an additional \$93 billion for various socioeconomic projects, including the creation of sixty thousand government jobs. Not counting its financial commitments to other Arab monarchs, the Saudi government pledged \$130 billion to buy social peace. It also pledged \$400 billion to improve education, health care and infrastructure by the end of 2014¹⁰². These handouts, however, were focused on the Sunni population, thereby continuing the policies of exclusion towards the Shia minority.¹⁰³

Cooptation

Unlike in republics and linchpin monarchies, dynastic monarchies have historically had little organized, formal political opposition for the state to coopt, as examined earlier. With a weak and stifled civil society, the royal family has often spread its influence over state institutions, as Herb has analyzed. Nonetheless, with the challenges of the Arab uprisings, dynastic monarchies have

¹⁰⁰ Kamrava, Mehran, ed. *Beyond the Arab Spring: The evolving ruling bargain in the Middle East*. Hurst & Company Limited, 2014.

¹⁰¹ Al-Rasheed, Madawi. "No Saudi spring: anatomy of a failed revolution." *Boston Review* 37, no. 2 (2012).

¹⁰² Evans-Pritchard, Ambrose. "Saudi Ruler Offers \$36bn to Stave off Uprising amid Warning Oil Price Could Double." *The Telegraph*, Telegraph Media Group, 24 Feb. 2011, www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/oilprices/8344421/Saudi-ruler-offers-36bn-to-stave-off-uprising-amid-warning-oil-price-could-double.html.

¹⁰³ Matthiesen, Toby. "A Saudi Spring?": The Shi'a Protest Movement in the Eastern Province 2011–2012." *The Middle East Journal* 66, no. 4 (2012): 628–659.

sought to coopt threatening actors through some minor political reforms. These reforms served as safety valves for dissent and were also used to shore up the state's popular support. Thus, as in Saudi Arabia, cooptation efforts were granted in the form of political concessions that provide for a limited degree of political liberalization and loosening of the kingdom's strict laws.¹⁰⁴

In May 2011, the Saudi government announced that the municipal council elections, planned to be held in 2009, would finally be held.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, King Abdullah announced that, starting in 2015, women will be allowed to participate in municipal elections and will be eligible for appointments to the Shura Council, an advisory body to the king. He also overturned the sentence of ten lashes of a woman who participated in the women's right-to-drive campaign in Jeddah.

Nonetheless, providing reforms for the Eastern Province proved difficult. With the outbreak of protests in the Eastern province, the state reacted promptly and released several prisoners to prevent further demonstrations. The state was successful in pressuring some Shia clerics and traditional opposition activists to channel demands into less contentious forms such as petitions and dialogue with the regime. However, it failed to pacify the younger generation of activists, signaling the growing gap between the traditional Shia leaders and the youth movements. However, in containing the threat from the Shia minority, the state used a strategy of sectarianization to marginalize the demands of the Shia and to fragment the opposition. As examined earlier, the demands of the protests in the Eastern province featured more than sectarian calls. However, the state has framed the protesters as sectarian to dismiss them. The state used anti-Shia discourse to promote sectarian tensions while diverting attention away from

¹⁰⁴ Kamrava, Mehran, ed. *Beyond the Arab Spring: The evolving ruling bargain in the Middle East*. Hurst & Company Limited, 2014.

¹⁰⁵ Matthiesen, Toby. "A Saudi Spring?": The Shi'a Protest Movement in the Eastern Province 2011–2012." *The Middle East Journal* 66, no. 4 (2012): 628-659.

socioeconomic and political demands. Thus, media campaigns were orchestrated that promoted narratives of national and religious unity while portraying the protesters as external agents. This succeeded in thwarting attempts to spread protests more widely and in furthering the exclusion of the Shia minority.¹⁰⁶

In examining how Saudi Arabia, along with other dynastic monarchies, weathers political crises, Herb's analysis is useful. Herb explains that dynastic monarchies can provide elite guarantees since they can't be voted out of office. In dynastic monarchies, the frequently wide presence of royal families in society provided a built-in intelligence service, keeping the families close to those they ruled. Furthermore, Herb argues that family control over state institutions helps smooth over potentially difficult questions of succession and guarantees loyalty and the ruler's accountability to the dynasty. This promotes cohesion of the family and unity among the ruling elite. This, however, doesn't apply to non and semi-dynastic monarchies.¹⁰⁷

Given this framework, despite some modest measures, cooptation was not the major strategy used by the state in limiting protests when compared to the more drastic reforms in linchpin monarchies. Unlike in linchpin monarchies, in dynastic monarchies, firing the cabinet means firing one's relatives, and giving the legislature more power effectively means giving one's extended family less power. This is one of the underlying political constraints of the dynastic monarchies and, thus, one of the reasons that the popular support they receive comes more from their religious authority and ability to provide prosperity rather than political reforms and expanded representation.

¹⁰⁶ Matthiesen, Toby. *Sectarian gulf: Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the Arab Spring that wasn't*. Stanford University Press, 2013.

¹⁰⁷ Herb, Michael. *All in the family: absolutism, revolution, and democracy in Middle Eastern monarchies*. SUNY Press, 1999.

Nonetheless, the royal family's penetration of state institutions has guaranteed internal cohesion and the prevention of elite fragmentation.

Repression

While the dynastic, oil monarchies have historically relied on carrots for the most part, they have also employed sticks when threatened. In Saudi Arabia, repression increased steadily after the initial wave of protests in February/March 2011 had subsided. The already limited rights for freedom of expression and assembly were narrowed, media laws were tightened, and, more generally, the levels of political repression were raised. However, high-level repression was deployed in a relatively targeted and discriminate fashion. While high-level repression was deployed against large-scale protests in the Eastern Province, outbreaks of popular protest elsewhere in Saudi Arabia was pre-empted by low to moderate repression.

Moreover, the level of repression within the Eastern province was also discriminate based on the level of threat of the actor. Thus, opposition leaders were subjected to brutal repression, while rank-and-file protesters were met with low-intensity levels of repression. While it was claimed by the state that there are no political prisoners, there was a detainee out of every six hundred Saudis who was hold without trial in inhumane conditions and there were approximately 30,000 prisoners of opinion.¹⁰⁸ Using Josua's typology, it can be argued that, whereas the repression targeted against the high-level activists in the Eastern province was incapacitating, that targeted at the broader population was only constraining.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Asma Alsharif, "Detainees Disappear into Black Hole of Saudi Jails," Reuters, August 25, 2011.

¹⁰⁹ Josua, Maria, and Mirjam Edel. "To repress or not to repress—regime survival strategies in the Arab spring." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 27, no. 2 (2015): 289-309.

In al-Qatif, hundreds of demonstrators were arrested that spring, which led to the suspension of protests. When protests re-emerged in the Summer of 2012, the level of repression was heightened with the police shooting into the crowds with live ammunition, resulting in the death of dozens of protesters. This succeeded in limiting and deterring collective action as prominent Shia figures and community leaders ordered an end to all protests.¹¹⁰

In examining the increasing use of repression, the Cingranelli-Richards (CIRI) Human Rights Data Project offers useful findings.¹¹¹ The index divides human rights into a “Physical Integrity Rights Index”, which measures high-intensity forms of repression such as political imprisonment and torture, and an “Empowerment Rights Index”, which measures low-intensity forms of repression such as political participation and freedom of speech and religion. Historically, gulf monarchies have had low scores in the empowerment rights index. Saudi Arabia has had the lowest possible score in all sub-indices of the empowerment index. However, the physical integrity rights index has been relatively higher when compared to Arab republics. With the uprisings, Bahrain had the highest global decline in respect for physical integrity rights. Saudi Arabia also witnessed considerable and sustained declines in physical integrity rights. This reflects how, despite low levels of harsh repression historically, dynastic, oil-rich monarchies can potentially become highly repressive when confronted with threats.

2.3. Conclusion & Post-Uprisings Development

Even though the GCC as a whole has not been confronted with protests, the Arab uprisings have, nonetheless, led states, even if those that had no demonstrations, to employ stabilization strategies

¹¹⁰ Lawson, Fred H., and Matteo Legrenzi. "Repression and Monarchical Resilience in the Arab Gulf States." *The International Spectator* 52, no. 1 (2017): 76-87.

¹¹¹ Cingranelli, David L. "The Cingranelli-Richards (CIRI) human rights data project coding manual version 7.27. 13." (2013).

to pre-empt any potential challenges and has prompted regional cooperation between monarchies to guarantee regional stability.¹¹² With the exception of Bahrain, in monarchies across the GCC, there have been considerable similarities within state responses, which reflects how common power configurations and state institutions have resulted in similar survival strategies. The most common reaction in the kingdoms was to economically legitimize the royal family by buying social peace through cash bonuses, lowered food prices, job creation and subsidized housing. Some dynastic monarchs also accommodated popular demands through offering political concessions, though these concessions have been relatively modest when compared with those of other states in the region. Thus, when confronted with unrest, where other states legitimate themselves through reform, dynastic monarchies have legitimated themselves through rent distribution. Moreover, despite pledges of holding council elections, the state in dynastic monarchies has been constrained in its capacity to coopt, especially with ethnic minorities, due to the royal family's traditional control of state institutions. Finally, as demonstrated in the case of Bahrain, foreign assistance was an additional important component of countering the challenges signified by the Arab uprisings.

In Saudi Arabia, rather than surviving through the support of a particular group, internal cohesion played the leading role in guaranteeing loyalty and preventing elite splits, which reflects Herb's analysis of intra-regime dynamics. Unlike the linchpin monarchies, dynastic monarchies, given their prosperity and cohesion, do not need to establish a reformist reputation. Thus, Saudi Arabia has maintained the initiative in promoting economic stimulus more than political reforms. However, in dealing with the Shia minority, one notable change that has taken place when

¹¹² Gerges, Fawaz A., ed. *The New Middle East: Protest and Revolution in the Arab World*. Cambridge University Press, 2013.

compared to earlier waves of dissent has been the increased use of, targeted repression as well as a rise in the securitization of sectarian identities.

This also applies to the larger Gulf region. In examining the impact of the Arab uprisings on Gulf monarchies, Kamrava explains that, “the most notable change in the ruling bargain in the Gulf has been the increased use of repression by state authorities against oppositional groups and individuals”.¹¹³ Moreover, the Arab uprisings have led to a form of solidarity among monarchies as reflected by the GCC’s intervention in Bahrain and its invitation to Jordan and Morocco to join the GCC as members. Thus, despite its limited penetration in this category, the Arab uprisings have still contributed to shifts in the historical survival strategies employed by its states, which amounts to an evolution in dynamics of stabilization for dynastic monarchies.

This shift is further illustrated through examining how economic pressures following the protests of 2011-2012 have reconfigured Saudi Arabia’s authoritarian strategies. One of the most prominent global changes after 2011 has been the oil glut, in which an oversupply coupled with a decline in demand have resulted in sharp declines in the price of oil. Thus, the price of oil has plummeted from approximately US\$110 per barrel in 2011 and 2012 to approximately \$50 in 2017.¹¹⁴ This has had adverse implications on oil-rich monarchies. In Saudi Arabia, when the surge in oil prices that was in place when the 2011 protests emerged experienced a hit in 2014 with declining oil revenues, the state has had to rely on borrowing to finance its expenditure. With growing deficits and rising youth unemployment, the state has come under pressure in maintaining

¹¹³ Kamrava, Mehran, ed. *Beyond the Arab Spring: The evolving ruling bargain in the Middle East*. Hurst & Company Limited, 2014.

¹¹⁴ “OPEC Crude Oil Price Statistics Annually 1960-2018 | Statistic.” Statista, www.statista.com/statistics/262858/change-in-opec-crude-oil-prices-since-1960/.

its unsustainable levels of welfare. However, more than economic pressure, the decline in oil revenues for Saudi Arabia may risk its powerful geopolitical role in the region.¹¹⁵

Despite this economic pressure, the Arab uprisings have led to an increasingly active and assertive regional role for Saudi Arabia, reflected in its efforts of countering the influence of Iran, the Muslim Brotherhood, and Salafi jihadism as embodied by al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. This foreign policy is embedded within its insecurity as the Saudi state attempts to shield Saudi society from these regional trends, whether secular or religious. Wehrey explains that the Saudi state has been anxious from the challenges that arise, “not from ‘hard-power’ foes, but instead take the form of “soft-power” ideological challenges”.¹¹⁶

Meanwhile, with the death of king Abdallah in 2015, crown prince Salman was appointed as the new king by the royal regime’s Allegiance Council. The 79-year-old king has made his young son, Mohammad bin Salman, the crown prince, making him the “power behind the throne”.¹¹⁷ Mohammad bin Salman, who has been the subject of international media attention, has sought to consolidate his power while pushing for a progressive and reformist agenda. He has been credited with loosening the strict social regulations, arresting hardline clerics, stripping religious police from the right to arrest, as well as pushing for reforms to improve women’s and minority rights. More ambitiously, he drew up the project of Vision 2030 which, among other goals, aims to reduce Saudi Arabia’s historical reliance on oil through economic diversification.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Escribano, Gonzalo, and Javier Valdes. "Oil Prices: Governance Failures and Geopolitical Consequences." *Geopolitics* 22, no. 3 (2017): 693-718.

¹¹⁶ Wehrey, Frederic. "Saudi Arabia's anxious autocrats." *Journal of Democracy* 26, no. 2 (2015): 71-85.

¹¹⁷ "Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, Power behind the Throne." BBC News, BBC, 7 Mar. 2018, www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-40354415.

¹¹⁸ Aarts, Paul, and Carolien Roelants. "The perils of the transfer of power in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia." *Contemporary Arab Affairs* 9, no. 4 (2016): 596-606.

More than a legitimation measure, these reforms have allowed the crown prince to expand his powers. Historically, a delicate balance was maintained among members of the royal family through allocating positions across the family's different branches. However, bin Salman has monopolized the control of positions as he purged potential rivals.¹¹⁹ This is demonstrated in his anti-corruption crackdown in November 2017 in which ministers, princes, businessmen became confined as their assets were frozen. While the motive of this purge is still disputed, it has allowed the state to gain financial assets estimated at \$800 billion while sidelining bin Salman's rivals.¹²⁰ This shake-up doesn't challenge Herb's analysis, however, on the durability of intra-regime dynamics in dynastic monarchies as bin Salman's move constitutes a reorganization rather than a restructuring of state institutions, which, therefore, maintains internal cohesion.

Nonetheless, despite the strong public-relations campaign portraying the increasing reforms being undertaken by bin Salman, the increasing trend in repression, even though less covered, has continued as hundreds of prominent writers, academics, poets, journalists and human-rights defenders have been arrested and organizations such as the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association have been targeted.¹²¹ Moreover, in recent years, several incidents have led to renewed tensions with the Shia minority, most notable of which was in 2016 when the state carried out its largest mass execution since 1980 as it executed 47 imprisoned civilians that were convicted of

¹¹⁹ "Saudi Arabia's Unprecedented Shake-up." *The Economist*. November 05, 2017. Accessed July 02, 2018. <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2017/11/05/saudi-arabias-unprecedented-shake-up>.

¹²⁰ "The Saudi purge will spook global investors and unsettle oil markets". *The Economist*. 9 November 2017. <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2017/11/09/the-saudi-purge-will-spook-global-investors-and-unsettle-oil-markets>

¹²¹ "UN Experts Call out Saudi Arabia for 'Repression' of Rights Activists." *Middle East Eye*, 2 Jan. 2018, www.middleeasteye.net/news/un-experts-call-out-saudi-repression-rights-activists-821337605.

terrorism.¹²² This sparked protests in Iran and Iraq and led to a renewed wave of sporadic dissent in the Qatif region of the Eastern province.¹²³

In sum, after the 2011-12 protests, political developments in Saudi Arabia have led to a shift and a reconfiguration in the state's traditional authoritarian strategies. This is reflected in how the Saudi state is increasingly resorting to measures of legitimation through reforms as economic pressures caused by low oil prices have resulted in austerity measures, which led to limitations in the state's historical pattern of rent redistribution. Thus, tax hikes and subsidy cuts were implemented, which led to negative responses as Saudi citizens voiced their frustration. While the state may ease on austerity when faced with popular grievances,¹²⁴ unless it can continuously stimulate its economy or, alternatively, manage to diversify its economy away from oil, its capacity to generously buy social peace as it did previously is unlikely. This suggests that the survival strategies of the dynastic monarchy of Saudi Arabia has converged to those of the linchpin monarchies as both rely primarily on legitimation through reforms to maintain stability. These developments reaffirm that the strategy of rent redistribution can only be maintained through a constant supply of resources. As resources are depleted, the autocrat faces the risks of defection and dissent. The state, therefore, adapts itself and relies more on other strategies to compensate for this decline. Overall, while the dynastic monarchy of Saudi Arabia remains the most stable of regime types, with the decline in oil prices, the challenges from regional actors, and the internal pressures, it has signaled steps towards restructuring its authoritarian strategies so that it can weather new domestic and regional challenges.

¹²² Saudi Arabia Carries Out Largest Mass Execution Since 1980 – Eurasia Review". Eurasiareview.com. 2016-01-02.

¹²³ Khamenei realizes after weeks: Attack on Saudi mission was too damaging". Arab News. January 21, 2016. Retrieved January 21, 2016; Saudi soldier killed in Qatif province, Al Arabiya reports". The National. 8 April 2018.

¹²⁴ Alkhalisi, Zahraa. "Saudi Arabia Eases Austerity after 'Very Negative' Response." CNNMoney, Cable News Network, money.cnn.com/2018/01/09/news/economy/saudi-arabia-austerity-backlash/index.html.

Chapter 3. Morocco

3.1. Historical Survival Strategies

Legitimation

Linchpin monarchies, as dynastic ones, enjoy a relatively high level of legitimacy. An independent 2009 Moroccan poll found that over 90 percent of the respondents approved of the rule of King Mohammed VI.¹²⁵ This legitimacy, in addition to playing a key role in accounting for the uneven levels of mobilization between monarchies and republics, has also proved central in influencing different state responses. In Morocco, as in Jordan, the recognition of the kings as direct descendants of the Prophet Muhammad is a major component of their religious authority. King Mohammed of Morocco is Amir al-Mu'minin, or Commander of the Faithful, a title that goes back to the early days of Islam. Even though there is no mention of sharia law in the relatively liberal Moroccan constitution, many Moroccans, especially the uneducated and the illiterate believe that the blessings of God come down through the king.¹²⁶

Unlike Saudi Arabia, however, Morocco does not enjoy the same levels of dynasticism. In Morocco, similar to Saudi Arabi, the heritage and national identity of the state are linked to the Alawite family. However, with limited diffusion of royal power through the state apparatus, the political leadership has rested with the king as the ultimate arbiter within the regime. The king, therefore, assumes the practical power of various governmental offices. Since the monarch himself, rather the family, maintains the balance between such key institutions as the army and the parliament. This provides the king with great authority, but also poses considerable risk his

¹²⁵ Sater, James N. "Morocco's 'Arab Spring,'" Middle East Institute (2011).

¹²⁶ Hagopian, Elaine C. "Islam and society-formation in Morocco past and present." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 3, no. 1 (1963): 70-80; Munson, Henry. "The social base of Islamic militancy in Morocco." *Middle East Journal* 40, no. 2 (1986): 267-284.

survival. Thus, historically, king Hassan has had to deal with repeated coup and assassination attempts for him to remain in power¹²⁷.

In addition to traditional, religious legitimacy, Morocco also enjoys external legitimacy. Although it does not hold the level of external support as dynastic monarchies, Morocco enjoys support from the United States and France, as it has positioned itself as a stable ally in North Africa¹²⁸. However, unlike in dynastic, oil-rich monarchies, Morocco has struggled with maintaining its economic legitimacy. In both linchpin monarchies, the economy is highly dependent on volatile revenue sources such as money transfers from expatriates, foreign investment, tourism, and aid. Living standards in these two countries are modest, with per capita incomes in 2017 of only \$12,500 in Jordan (123rd) and \$8,600 in Morocco (147th).¹²⁹ In Morocco, King Hassan II has historically sought to promote the growth of an urban middle class to broaden his political base, but in this way neglected the social needs of the rural poor. This is led by widespread poverty is widespread in rural areas. With liberalization, crony capitalism has led to rising frustration. Thus, similar to republics, linchpin monarchies have been incapable of legitimating them through welfare provisions¹³⁰.

Unlike oil-rich monarchies, but like republics, Morocco has adopted neoliberal measures which has led to the dismantlement of the old developmentalist social contract. To economically legitimate himself within this context, King Mohammed VI has taken the initiative to reinvent

¹²⁷ Kechichian, Joseph A. *Power and succession in Arab monarchies: A reference guide*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008.

¹²⁸ Dolan, Kerry A. "Why Morocco Matters To The U.S." *Forbes*, *Forbes Magazine*, 21 Nov. 2013, www.forbes.com/sites/kerryadolan/2013/11/21/why-morocco-matters-to-the-u-s/.

¹²⁹ "Country Comparison :: GDP - PER CAPITA (PPP)." Central Intelligence Agency, Central Intelligence Agency, www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2004rank.html.

¹³⁰ White, G. (2001). *A Comparative Political Economy of Tunisia and Morocco: On the Outside of Europe Looking In*. New York: State University of New York.

social policy while adopting neoliberal measures. Thus, the king has launched ambitious projects such as the National Initiative for Human Development with the goals of addressing the limits of structural adjustment through poverty reduction. These initiatives, however, similar to the Social Fund for Development in Egypt, led to a marketization of development which shifted the responsibility from the state to the society, as people were encouraged to make use of opportunities within the free market.¹³¹ Thus, while the Moroccan state enjoys traditional, religious and external legitimacy, it has limited economic legitimacy.

Cooptation

Unlike dynastic monarchies, linchpin monarchies can be pressured to liberalize due to the lack of power-sharing mechanisms that can allow for monarchical institutions to adapt without broadening the power base. Historically, in both linchpin monarchies, power has rested in the palace, with the king controlling the rules of the political game and the distribution of resources. This has allowed the monarch to rule through arbitrating over competing elites.¹³²

In Morocco, despite losing control during French rule, the Alawite dynasty has been ruling the kingdom for centuries, making it one of the oldest royal families in the world and the longest-serving in the Arab world.¹³³ After independence, despite no constitutional prohibitions on royals holding governmental positions, and, even though several members from the Alawite clan have historically occupied cabinet posts, there has been no monopoly by the king's relatives over key positions. With limits on the prime minister's power, Moroccan politics has been characterized by

¹³¹ Bogaert, Koenraad. *Globalized Authoritarianism: Megaprojects, Slums, and Class Relations in Urban Morocco*. University of Minnesota Press, 2018.

¹³² Waterbury, John. "Marginal politics and elite manipulation in Morocco." *European Journal of Sociology/Archives Européennes de Sociologie* 8, no. 1 (1967): 94-111.

¹³³ Waterbury, John. *The commander of the faithful: the Moroccan political elite: a study in segmented politics*. Vol. 2. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1970.

the king standing above parties and positioning himself as a symbol of nationalist aspirations while balancing between elites.¹³⁴

Unlike their dynastic counterparts, the linchpin monarchies of Jordan and Morocco guarantee institutional flexibility for the king, which allows for the implementation of reforms that would not be potentially feasible in dynastic monarchies. Even though the king in linchpin monarchies maintains ultimate authority over major policies, the state allows for partial liberalization and a greater measure of political pluralism. This has led to diverse political parties operating legally and participating in parliament, which have often cooperated to form national pacts. This was demonstrated in the Jordanian National Charter in 1990 and the Moroccan constitutional reforms of 1972.¹³⁵ This has allowed monarchs to appear to grant concessions and reinforce their role as supreme arbitrator. Thus, multiparty politics permits greater scope for the transmission of societal interests to decision makers and, occasionally, for organized opposition to state policies. Unlike in dynastic monarchies, this greater space for the opposition is used to counteract potential unrest.

Historically, the king has applied measures of economic cooptation through protectionist policies which empowered the Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) elite. However, similar to republics, Morocco's debt crisis in the 1980s has forced it to undergo structural adjustment as proposed by the international financial institutions. With liberalization, a conflict emerged between the Moroccan ISI-elites, mainly the textile manufacturers, and the new class of exporters, mainly from the apparel sector.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Cohen, Shana, and Larabi Jaidi. *Morocco: Globalization and its consequences*. Routledge, 2014.

¹³⁵ Maghraoui, Driss. "Constitutional reforms in Morocco: between consensus and subaltern politics." In *North Africa's Arab Spring*, pp. 183-204. Routledge, 2013.

¹³⁶ Cammett, M. C. (2007). *Globalization and Business Politics in Arab North Africa*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

With the ascension to the throne of Mohammed VI, Morocco's parliamentary system enjoyed greater freedom. According to Herb, Morocco has enjoyed the most developed party system among monarchies.¹³⁷ Opposition parties have occupied leading governmental positions. For example, in 1998, the social democratic Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP) won parliamentary elections, which signaled steps towards democratization through the alternation of power. Such measures have made Morocco transition to become "partly free" according to Freedom House's "Freedom in the World" report.¹³⁸

Nonetheless, among Arab constitutional monarchies, in addition to a modest voter turnout, Herb found government manipulation of election results to be the most serious in Morocco. Thus, after the USFP's victory, the king soon after coopted the party, while having their leader become prime minister in 2002. Similarly, in the years leading to the protests of 2011-12, the Islamist moderate party, PJD, the Justice and Development Party, was rising in popularity, making it the strongest political player. To counter its influence, the king created the PAM, Authenticity and Modernity Party, which was an Islamist, but a "monarchical" party. The PAM, which was led by the king's advisor, aimed to delegitimize the PJD and the Istiqlal parties, thereby guaranteeing the king's control of the political sphere. In this coopted political arena, there's a depoliticization process of the public sphere. This leads to dissociating political parties from traditional forms of politics as they limit their contention to social and economic affairs, while renouncing challenging and questioning the political system. Similarly, this narrows the interests of civil society to issues such as women's rights, which allows for blaming civil society and the opposition for socioeconomic shortcomings. Thus, despite having a strong parliament that enjoys powers such as the ability to

¹³⁷ Herb, Michael. *Princes, Parliaments, and the Prospects for Democracy in the Gulf*. na, 2005.

¹³⁸ Freedom House. *Freedom in the Middle East and North Africa: A Freedom in the World*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2005.

remove confidence in a ministry, Moroccan politics continues to be dominating by king as even parliamentary statutes are subject to the king's approval.

Repression

Since independence until the late 1990s, King Hassan II's reign was marked by high repression. Several factors have contributed to King Hassan's abusive power. During the 1960s, the economy was experiencing stagnation, which led to growing opposition, thereby alarming the king and pushing him to use repression. Moreover, by the 1970s, the military has attempted to assassinate the king twice, prompting him to reassert his power through increased repression. With his death and the ascension to the throne of his son, king Mohamed VI, the level of repression has considerably declined as the new king introduced considerable political reforms.¹³⁹ Thus, unlike his father, king Mohamed VI has shifted the strategy of survival more towards a mix of legitimation and cooptation, while keeping repression to a minimum. For example, the king has allowed socioeconomic protests while allowing for party formation, so as to avoid any backlash. Nonetheless, the king has still imprisoned and harassed journalists and intellectuals, raided headquarters of human rights organizations and censored politically critical publications. Thus, even though repression under king Mohamed VI has relatively declined, there remained occasional clamp downs on opposition, especially when there is low legitimacy.¹⁴⁰

3.2. Survival Strategies during the Protests

Starting from the 1990s, the Moroccan state has tolerated the presence of socioeconomic protests. By the 2000s, these protests were rising with coalitions such as the campaign against the high cost

¹³⁹ Dalmaso, E. (2012). Surfing the Democratic Tsunami in Morocco: A Political Society and the Reconfiguration of a Sustainable Authoritarian Regime. *Mediterranean Politics* (17) 2, 217-232.

¹⁴⁰ Boukhars, Anouar. "Political Violence in North Africa: The Perils of Incomplete Liberalization." (2011).

of living gaining momentum.¹⁴¹ The frequency of protests in Morocco has led to cycles of protests followed by reforms. In 2011, a new cycle began when a youth movement from different ideological orientations, which became known as the February 20th Movement for Change, organized on Facebook. The movement was composed of more than 40 parties and associations and was successful in mobilizing sections of the population whose were excluded by the traditional political actors. On that day, 150,000 to 200,000 Moroccans took to the streets in fifty-three towns and cities across the country. Smaller, mostly uncoordinated demonstrations continued for months. Thus, unlike the sporadic demonstrations in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Oman, the protests in Morocco, as were in Jordan, were sustained.

The participants were mainly non-partisan young, educated, and urban middle-class men and women. Berbers also participated in the protests demanding the end of ethnic discrimination. The mostly coopted political parties, except for the fringe United Socialist Party and the banned Islamist group, Justice and Charity (JC), did not participate and advised their youth organizations to stay away. Moroccan protests were, therefore, devoid of political parties as well as traditional civil society, which condemned the 20 February movement. In addition to socioeconomic demands, the demands of the movement focused on full democratization while limiting the powers of the king. While not calling for abolishing the monarchy or even deposing the king, the protesters called for a “king who reigns but does not rule”. Unlike republics, in which the goal was democratization from below, Morocco’s protests called for democratization from above as they demanded that the king limit his own power.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ Sika, Nadine. "Youth political engagement in Egypt: from abstention to uprising." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 39, no. 2 (2012): 181-199.

¹⁴² Cavatorta, Francesco. "Morocco: the Promise of Democracy and the Reality of Authoritarianism." *The International Spectator* 51, no. 1 (2016): 86-98.

Legitimation

Morocco has used the political legitimation measures employed by republics as well as the economic ones employed by dynastic monarchies. Even though Morocco didn't adopt economic stimulus packages as generous as those of dynastic monarchies, King Mohammed VI still made several gestures to strategically important groups. For example, the king raised the minimum wage and increased social security and retirement benefits for trade unions. He also met with representatives of unemployed university graduates and promised to create four thousand jobs. The king also raised civil servants' salaries, increased subsidies for basic food and fuel and expanded free health care, and obligatory medical insurance for all workers.¹⁴³

Politically, similar to republics, the king increased his efforts in reshuffling the country's political elite. However, the biggest measure used was to reform the constitution. On the 9th of March, the king delivered a speech in which he announced a revision of the 1996 constitution and laid out a set of points to be addressed through these reforms. The king called for rule of law while promoting institutions that allow for the separation of powers. After receiving the recommendations of the Justice and Reconciliation Commission, on 17th of June, the king introduced the new constitution and announced a national referendum on it only two weeks later. The king made use of this accelerated and short time period to prevent the opposition from organizing a public debate on it. Nonetheless, the February 20 Movement boycotted the referendum while describing the constitution as being imposed "from above". In response, the state carried out a major media campaign, while pressuring parties and authorities to participate in the referendum and approve

¹⁴³ Molina, Irene Fernández. "The monarchy vs. the 20 February Movement: who holds the reins of political change in Morocco? " *Mediterranean politics* 16, no. 3 (2011): 435-441.

the constitutional amendments. This led to a turnout of 73.5% and 98.5% approval of the constitution.¹⁴⁴

The new constitution had several positive features. It recognized the Tamazight language, spoken by the Berber population. Citizens were given access to an independent constitutional court that is no longer presided over by the minister of justice. The monarch would have to select a prime minister — now called “president of the government” — from the members of the party that won the election. The new constitution also makes it easier to create fact-finding committees through easing the requirement to one-third of the chamber rather than a majority. In addressing the problem of graduate unemployment, the constitution created a Consultative Council on Youth and Associative Action. Moreover, the king is no longer considered “sacred,” though the “integrity of his person” is inviolable, a distinction that places no more than a symbolic limitation on his power. Finally, in line with the earlier created Equity and Reconciliation Commission, which was appointed to compensate historical victims of human rights abuses, the king has further incorporated reforms for the promotion of human rights.

Despite these features, the constitution continued to preserve the king’s autonomy. The parliament remained relatively inaccessible to civil society organizations and its committee meetings were still held secretly, which guaranteed the limited access to information and the transparency of parliamentary work. Moreover, for every legislative year, the king presides over the opening session and addresses the parliament with his political agenda, which cannot be debated and is used to set a reference for parliamentarians in their discussions. The king can also dissolve parliament and the parliament does not have oversight over the security services and does not have

¹⁴⁴ al-Akhssassi, Mohamad. "Reforms in Morocco: monitoring the orbit and reading the trajectory." *Contemporary Arab Affairs* 10, no. 4 (2017): 482-509.

the power to ratify treaties or modify laws without the king's approval.¹⁴⁵ Overall, despite the extensive reform measures, which allowed for quelling and outmaneuvering the opposition, the king continues to hold the real power, rendering these measures only symbolic.

Cooptation

In linchpin monarchies, the opposition plays a bigger role than in dynastic monarchies, as examined earlier. However, despite the relatively greater role of political parties, they have been mostly ineffective and coopted. Morocco has active parties from different ideological backgrounds, reflecting secular, liberal and Islamist groups. However, in both linchpin monarchies, the opposition is deeply divided as parties fail to cooperate, which has hindered the formation of broad coalitions that can strengthen the opposition's capacity to push for democratization.¹⁴⁶ Following the protests, the king has gradually and strategically opened up the political space and introduced a degree of pluralism, which allowed for the participation of a broad range of actors, including conservative/Islamist ones. This led the moderate PJD to win an unprecedented number of seats in November's parliamentary elections. The PJD campaigned against corruption and sought to win the support of February 20th movement. However, as with historical patterns, the king has used their victory to his gains. While the PJD provided an alternative to the previously discredited parties, the king, as will be examined in the thesis's conclusion has still managed to extend his influence over it.

¹⁴⁵ Maghraoui, Driss. "Constitutional reforms in Morocco: between consensus and subaltern politics." In *North Africa's Arab Spring*, pp. 183-204. Routledge, 2013.

¹⁴⁶ Cavatorta, Francesco. "'Divided they stand, divided they fail': opposition politics in Morocco." *Democratization* 16, no. 1 (2009): 137-156.

These limited liberalization measures and the “divide and rule” strategies were sufficient to marginalize radical demands formulated by the most dynamic segments.¹⁴⁷ Thus, the king’s cooptation of the most influential parties led to the faltering of Morocco’s opposition. Despite its robustness, divisions between the February 20th Movement, the United Socialist Party, and the Justice and Charity group have contributed to the waning of mobilization and the stability of the Moroccan monarchy. Thus, activists became split among often radical young demonstrators, Islamists, and largely coopted political forces that had no incentive to join the protests.¹⁴⁸ The king, therefore, through integrating political actors into the political space, managed to wither the movement as well as to maintain his grip over economic, military and ultimately state power.

Repression

In line with his strategy of limited use of repression, King Mohamed VI faced the 2011-12 protests with limited harsh repression, although he employed low-intensity forms of repression such as increasing the presence of the police.¹⁴⁹ While not employing violent confrontations as in some republics, the state has, nonetheless, limited access to public space, harassed activists, carried out political imprisonment and unfair trials and lowered the levels of freedom of assembly. Amnesty International has reported that 173 cases of torture and illegal detention occurred during the

¹⁴⁷ Abdel-Samad, Mounah. "Why reform not revolution: a political opportunity analysis of Morocco 2011 protests movement." *The Journal of North African Studies* 19, no. 5 (2014): 792-809.

¹⁴⁸ Fakir, Intissar. "Morocco’s Islamist Party: Redefining Politics Under Pressure." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* (2018).

¹⁴⁹ Cingranelli, David L. "The Cingranelli-Richards (CIRI) human rights data project coding manual version 7.27. 13." (2013).

protests.¹⁵⁰ Thus, despite the relative decline in repression preceding the protests under the King, the protests have prompted a wave of low-intensity repression.¹⁵¹

3.3. Conclusion & Post-Uprisings Development

Similar to the pre-uprisings patterns of stabilization, the linchpin monarchies were capable of surviving their waves of protests with a mixture of legitimization and cooptation policies, which allowed them to avoid the spill-overs of instability that the Arab uprisings produced. Linchpin monarchs faced protests with their historical roles as arbiters of the political system, using internal conflicts to bring them supplementary resources of legitimization. For the king, legitimization has come at a small price of cosmetic reforms and economic handouts. The constitutional reforms the state adopted included measures such as delegating authority to the prime minister and expanding the privileges of the parliament. However, the king retained ultimate power such as overseeing the military and conducting foreign policy.

Furthermore, while the 2011-12 protests showed that the opposition parties can mobilize the masses, they also showed that the king's cooptation measures can divide the opposition by making parties satisfied with their political gains. This is made possible through the capacity of the Moroccan structure of contestation to divide the opposition through partially coopting political actors.¹⁵² If opposition groups are uniformly included or excluded from electoral participation, political demands as well as population discontent will increase, thereby threatening the

¹⁵⁰ Amnesty International. *Torture au Maroc. A l'ombre de l'impunité*. 1 May 2015, <http://www.amnesty.fr/Maroc-torture>

¹⁵¹ "Morocco: Repression Undercuts Reform Pledges." Human Rights Watch, 17 Apr. 2015, www.hrw.org/news/2012/01/22/morocco-repression-undercuts-reform-pledges; Lawrence, Adria K. "Repression and activism among the Arab Spring's first movers: Evidence from Morocco's February 20th movement." *British Journal of Political Science* 47, no. 3 (2017): 699-718.

¹⁵² Lust-Okar, Ellen. "Divided they rule: The management and manipulation of political opposition." *Comparative Politics* (2004): 159-179.

monarchy's stability. The monarchy, therefore, influences the nature of opposition dynamics by offering political reward that is targeted to some groups, but not others. When the opposition is divided into included and excluded groups, the included parties will not unite with those that are excluded fearing jeopardizing their position. This collectively weakens the movement for political reform, while compromising the power of the opposition.¹⁵³ Thus, through cooptation of opposition actors, the Moroccan monarchy's reforms have been symbolic as they have not changed the distribution of political power but displayed the responsiveness of the monarchy and contributed to its popular support.

Nonetheless, while the ineffectiveness of the formal opposition has been a well-established feature of Moroccan politics, the protests of 2011 and 2012 revealed that the youth cohort, as seen with their high levels of representation within the 20th of February movement, poses the most threatening source of resistance, especially due to their higher disposition to radically question of the monarchy itself. Given the continuing state of economic frustration with poverty and high unemployment, especially among the youth, the monarchy has struggled to find better strategies to engage with the youth. However, as they are not formalized into the political system, this leaves them with only informal channels for mobilization as a tool for contestation.

For the strategy of repression, Morocco, similar to Saudi Arabia, had only deployed it selectively during the 2011-2012 protests. Rather than outright attacks on protesters, the state has harassed activists and journalists to deter further protests. However, as with Saudi Arabia, even this targeted repression may have long-term consequences. Lawrence has found that many protest leaders come from families that have experience imprisonment due to dissent during the current king's father,

¹⁵³ Lust-Okar, Ellen. *Opposition and economic crises in Jordan and Morocco*. na, 2005.

Hassan II. She argues that this represents a legacy of repression, which suggests that the current targeted repression may lead to further unrest in the future.¹⁵⁴ Nonetheless, repression in both monarchies has succeeded in limiting and deterring immediate dissent. Building on Ritter and Conrad, it can be explained that, whereas monarchies use repression preemptively and as a complement to accommodations, republics use it responsively and as an alternative to their inadequate accommodations.¹⁵⁵ This reaffirms Hafez and Mason and Krane's work linking the impact on repression to its sequencing.¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, unlike the indiscriminate use of repression in republics, monarchies use repression optimally through using it selectively, reaffirming Khawaja's linking of the effectiveness of repression to its level of selectivity.¹⁵⁷

In evaluating the outcome of a social movement in realizing its progress, Chenoweth and Stephan explain that scholars need to examine if the movement has achieved its demands and campaign objectives.¹⁵⁸ In evaluating February 20th movement, the king appears to be greatest victor of the February 20th movement, having not only used institutional manipulation to outlast the movement with his powers unchanged, but also having made it more difficult for opposition to contest his rule.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁴ Lawrence, Adria K. "Repression and activism among the Arab Spring's first movers: Evidence from Morocco's February 20th movement." *British Journal of Political Science* 47, no. 3 (2017): 699-718.

¹⁵⁵ Ritter, Emily Hencken, and Courtenay R. Conrad. "Preventing and responding to dissent: The observational challenges of explaining strategic repression." *American Political Science Review* 110, no. 1 (2016): 85-99.

¹⁵⁶ Hafez, Mohammed M. *Why Muslims rebel: Repression and resistance in the Islamic world*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003; Mason, T. David, and Dale A. Krane. "The political economy of death squads: Toward a theory of the impact of state-sanctioned terror." *International Studies Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (1989): 175-198.

¹⁵⁷ Khawaja, Marwan. "Repression and popular collective action: Evidence from the West Bank." In *Sociological Forum*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 47-71. Kluwer Academic Publishers-Plenum Publishers, 1993.

¹⁵⁸ Chenoweth, Erica, Maria J. Stephan, and Maria J. Stephan. *Why civil resistance works: The strategic logic of nonviolent conflict*. Columbia University Press, 2011.

¹⁵⁹ Lawrence, Adria. "The mixed record of Morocco's February 20 protest movement." *Reflections on the Arab Uprisings: Five years on*. Project on Middle East Political Science, 2016.

Analyzing the developments following the 2011-2012 protests in Morocco reflects the sustainability and prospects of the king's continued approach of stability by reform. Following the constitutional reforms in 2011, the king's increase in the degree of pluralism has allowed for the PJD's parliamentary victory in the 2011 elections. Seven years later, the PJD remains in power, having won October 2016 parliamentary elections. However, as with the USFP earlier, the PJD has become another coopted party. The king has weakened the party which has failed to form a coalition government. In 2017, the king, as a "neutral arbiter", has dismissed its popular head of government, Abdelilah Benkirane, who has been the subject of blame by the media and replaced him with Saadeddine El Othmani, his former foreign minister.¹⁶⁰ Meanwhile, despite the king's constitutional reforms and cooptation measures, as growth has been slowed and youth unemployment remains high, the Moroccan, as is the Jordanian, state continues to face renewed protests, though the new protests have not managed to solicit the support of as many sectors in society as those of 2011-12.¹⁶¹ These persistent socioeconomic challenges may be seen as signaling the king's failure to consolidate his power. In addition to employing repression through arresting protesters and imposing tight restrictions on human rights organizations, the king, however, deflects these challenges while blaming the opposition, thereby reinforcing the division of labor between structures of power, which allows economic policies to be used strategically to delay political reform.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ Ghafar, Abdel, and Anna Jacobs. "Could Morocco's political shakeup empower more radical elements?. Brookings" (2017).

¹⁶¹ "Morocco: Another Crackdown on Protests." Human Rights Watch, 6 June 2018, www.hrw.org/news/2018/06/04/morocco-another-crackdown-protests.

¹⁶² Naoum, Abdelfattah. "Moroccan Government Lashes out at Protest Organizers in Mining Town." Al-Monitor, 4 May 2018, www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/04/morocco-government-accuses-istamists-leftists-protest-jerada.html.

In examining Morocco's policy responses to popular threats, this thesis has explained that its lack of sources of unearned revenues has prevented it from engaging in the levels of provision of public goods as in dynastic monarchies. However, its monarchical, semi-dynastic structure has still enabled the state to navigate among various political forces and to build crucial coalitions so that it can stay in power. However, it is questionable whether its strategies of conflict management can persevere in the face of renewed protests and continue to be effective or whether it will wear out as has happened in some of the region's republics.

Herb has argued that, despite having survived earlier challenges, the linchpin monarchies are the monarchies most likely to democratize, given their little insulation.¹⁶³ It can, therefore, be claimed that, as evidenced by the continuing unrest, Jordan and Morocco are the best positioned monarchies to yield to further incremental reforms towards greater participation, reform and, potentially democratization, with parliamentary liberalization being the likely option. Moreover, in assessing democracy's prospects in the linchpin monarchies, Stepan et al. use the three variables of ruling family-size, taxation structure and popular pressure to explain that, while they remain authoritarian, these regimes present promising relative to other regimes in the region.¹⁶⁴ Similarly, Yom argues that linchpin monarchies are similar to historically autocratic European kingdoms that subsequently democratized to become constitutional monarchies such as Denmark and Sweden. However, he notes that their structures are "permissive, not determinative preconditions" for democratization.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ Herb, Michael. *All in the family: absolutism, revolution, and democracy in Middle Eastern monarchies*. SUNY Press, 1999.

¹⁶⁴ Stepan, Alfred, Juan J. Linz, and Juli F. Minoves. "Democratic parliamentary monarchies." *Journal of Democracy* 25, no. 2 (2014): 35-51.

¹⁶⁵ Yom, Sean. "Jordan and Morocco: The Palace Gambit." *Journal of Democracy* 28, no. 2 (2017): 132-146.

While they have not historically posed immediate threats to the power of the king, political parties, through encouraging mass mobilization and a realignment of elite networks, can become more radical in challenging the king. Frantz and Taylor have argued that, while dictators may set up parties as a tool to neutralize and counterbalance threats from elite circles, this can, in fact, lead to democratization since it promotes peaceful mass mobilization, which results in the reconfiguration of elite dynamics and networks.¹⁶⁶ Moreover, while cooptation can, in the short-run, succeed in solving the king's commitment problems, in the long-run, once parties receive the payoffs of cooptation, there is no guarantee that they will strengthen their own base of power and oppose the king.¹⁶⁷ In Morocco, as in Saudi Arabia, the commitment to accommodations rests on the threat to stability. Building on Acemoglu and Robinson, when there's a credible threat to stability, the elite will commit to redistribution. However, as this threat diminishes, so will the commitment.¹⁶⁸

On the other hand, the case of Morocco's coopted opposition can reflect explanations that argue for distinguishing the dynamics and nature of civil society under authoritarian regimes from those in established democracies, given the constraints authoritarian regimes place on civil society.¹⁶⁹ To maintain the balance of power between himself and the opposition, the king will have to keep the opposition fragmented so his capacity of conflict management, negotiated compromise and threat diffusion can persevere. Alternatively, as reform attempts become exhausted and if the boundaries of cooptation are reached, the king can either adapt his strategies, possibly relying more

¹⁶⁶ Frantz, Erica, and Andrea Kendall-Taylor. "Pathways to democratization in personalist dictatorships." *Democratization* 24, no. 1 (2017): 20-40.

¹⁶⁷ Magaloni, Beatriz. "Credible power-sharing and the longevity of authoritarian rule." *Comparative Political Studies* 41, no. 4-5 (2008): 715-741.

¹⁶⁸ Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. A. (2006). *Economic origins of dictatorship and democracy*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁶⁹ Wiktorowicz, Quintan. "Civil society as social control: State power in Jordan." *Comparative politics* (2000): 43-61; Jamal, Amaney A. *Barriers to democracy: The other side of social capital in Palestine and the Arab world*. Princeton University Press, 2009.

on repression, or cede more power to the opposition, possibly undermining his capacity of standing above politics and, therefore, achieving a constitutional monarchy with actual power-sharing.

Chapter 4. Egypt

4.1. Historical Survival Strategies

Legitimation

Historically, Arab republics, incapable of using traditional and religious forms of legitimation as used in monarchies, have relied on ideological and developmentalist forms of legitimation. However, unlike in the era following independence, in republics such as Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and others, the state was suffering from deficits in legitimacy as the popularity of presidents was declining. Despite being at the center of decision-making, with little connection to the wider population, presidents were regarded as corrupted autocrats that are secluded from society.¹⁷⁰

With the lack of an ideological legitimacy, republics were witnessing declining electoral legitimacy with growing perceptions of the futility of presidential and parliamentary elections. This is reflected in declining voter turnout, with an estimated 23% and 15% in the 2005 and 2010 parliamentary elections, respectively.¹⁷¹ This led the Egyptian state to carry out several steps towards political reforms. In 2000, the state allowed the judiciary to supervise the elections as required by the Egyptian constitution. This was attributed to rising political tensions due to an economic slump earlier in the Summer before the November elections.¹⁷² Similarly, in 2005, Mubarak announced that the law on presidential election laws would change to allow for multiple

¹⁷⁰ Bauer, Patricia, and Bertold Schweitzer. "The Egyptian Revolution 2011: Mechanisms of violence and non-violence." *Democracy in Crisis*, (2013).

¹⁷¹ International Republican Institute (IRI), 2005 Parliamentary Assessment in Egypt November 15–21, <http://www.iri.org/mena/egypt/pdfs/Egypt%27s%202005%20Parliamentary%20Elections%20Assessment%20Report.pdf>

¹⁷² King, Stephen Juan. *The new authoritarianism in the Middle East and North Africa*. Indiana University Press, 2009.

candidates instead of elections through a two-thirds majority of the People's Assembly, and then, in a second stage, was confirmed by public referendum.¹⁷³

Despite these seemingly positive measures of liberalization, in 2007, constitutional amendments were introduced which reversed the earlier liberalization gains. These amendments removed provisions for judicial supervision of elections, gave the president the right to appoint one third of its members and to dissolve the parliament unilaterally, and included other measures infringing on human rights and individual freedom. In explaining this inconsistency, Abdulbaki argues that Mubarak has, paradoxically, yet creatively, mixed democratic and authoritarian elements.¹⁷⁴ Thus, the political system has adopted a multi-party framework, yet a non-competitive one. Elections are held, yet with pre-determined outcomes. This mixture, Brumberg argues, has become “not just a survival strategy”, but a “a type of political system whose institutions, rules, and logic defy any linear model of democratization”.¹⁷⁵

Furthermore, unlike oil-rich monarchies, republics often lacked external legitimation. After 2003, the U.S. administration has sought to promote democratic initiatives in the region such as the U.S.–Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) and the Greater Middle East Initiative. With Egypt being a recipient of US aid and a major regional ally, the Egyptian government was facing pressure for reforms and for limiting repression.¹⁷⁶

Moreover, historically, legitimacy was derived from the redistribution of rent to the population through mechanisms of subsidies, public sector jobs, and welfare services. However, with growing

¹⁷³ King, Stephen Juan. *The new authoritarianism in the Middle East and North Africa*. Indiana University Press, 2009.

¹⁷⁴ Abdulbaki, Louay. "Democracy and the re-consolidation of authoritarian rule in Egypt." *Contemporary Arab Affairs* 1, no. 3 (2008): 445-463.

¹⁷⁵ Brumberg, Daniel. "The trap of liberalized autocracy." *Journal of democracy* 13, no. 4 (2002): 56-68.

¹⁷⁶ King, Stephen Juan. *The new authoritarianism in the Middle East and North Africa*. Indiana University Press, 2009.

demographic threats, redistribution was dismantled and much of the population was being left out as neoliberal reforms favored the regime's cronies. Thus, the state was also no longer capable of appeasing much of the middle class as it previously would. By the 2000s, Nasser's socialist social contract has eroded as the state was struggling with containing rising labor unrest. Thus, similar to dynastic, oil-rich monarchies, under historically state-led, developmentalist eras, republics enjoyed a populist social contract that guaranteed economic legitimacy. However, neoliberal measures have eroded this contract while leading to a convergence of business and state elites. Even though presidents sought to promote social and economic reforms, resources were primarily diverted towards serving the logic of regime maintenance. This has led to neopatrimonial manipulation of the economy for the service of the political and economic elites. Despite the state's efforts in shoring its populist legitimacy by implementing projects for financial compensation, it was confronted with increasing strikes, since, starting from 2004, the longest wave of worker protests since World War II in Egypt was taking place.¹⁷⁷

Cooptation

In addition to experiments in multiparty elections and the weakening of state corporatist organizations, the Egyptian state has used cooptation by including strategic actors within the political process, while still increasing presidential power. This has made opposition in Egypt serve a contradictory purpose by performing contentious politics, while reinforcing authoritarianism.¹⁷⁸

Historically, the state has coopted institutions such as trade unions, religious organizations and political parties. However, by the 1990s, economic reforms were thought to signal the potential

¹⁷⁷ King, Stephen Juan. *The new authoritarianism in the Middle East and North Africa*. Indiana University Press, 2009.

¹⁷⁸ Albrecht, Holger. "How can opposition support authoritarianism? Lessons from Egypt." *Democratization* 12, no. 3 (2005): 378-397.

shift towards a more market-oriented society in which the economic elite would rise in power. However, while the state's neoliberal policies gave rise to a technocratic elite, which was leading the process of policy-making and economic reforms, it was still under presidential auspices. With neoliberal policies such as privatization, the ruling coalition coopted a growing rent-seeking urban and rural economic elite. Nonetheless, despite this inclusion, using formal and informal constraints, the state limited opportunities of the dispersal of power and decision-making beyond the president. This led to the gradual exclusion of workers and peasants from political participation as a rising political base of support, symbolized by the National Democratic Party, was used by the state to prevent elite fragmentation. This policy, therefore, hindered chances of democratization as declining pluralism and the convergence of interests between the economic and political elites led to the strengthening of authoritarianism.

Furthermore, in coopting oppositional groups such as the Islamists, the state has faced restrictions in its capacity of formally including them within the political system. In contrasting the containment strategies of Egypt and Morocco towards Islamists, Albrecht and Wegner highlight how the institutional structure in each has allowed Morocco to succeed in coopting Islamists while Egypt has failed.¹⁷⁹ In both, the state has allowed for the political participation of Islamists. However, the nature of this inclusion has varied, with the formal inclusion of Islamists in Morocco and informal inclusion in Egypt. Similar to other republics such as Tunisia and Algeria, the Egyptian state has adopted a policy of "minimal toleration and formal restriction" towards Islamists, repressing the radicals such as the Jama'a Islamiyya while cautiously tolerating the moderates, mainly the Muslim Brotherhood (MB). Under Mubarak, the MB faced restrictions in

¹⁷⁹ Albrecht, Holger, and Eva Wegner. "Autocrats and Islamists: Contenders and containment in Egypt and Morocco." *Journal of North African Studies* 11, no. 2 (2006): 123-141.

their ability to have a political party, which undermined their organizational capacities. Nonetheless, MB members took part in parliamentary elections as independent candidates. However, if they were to become threatening, the state would crackdown, which was demonstrated in the arbitrary arrest of MB prominent activists in the run-up of the 1995 and 2000 parliamentary elections. Thus, as pattern of accommodation of the Egyptian state towards Islamists demonstrates, the legalization of Islamists is only undertaken if it will not pose a risk to the elite's survival.

In explaining the structure of contestation in Egypt, Albrecht and Wegner argue that “competition takes place between distinct—in themselves rather homogenous—pillars of the state, i.e. between the military, the religious world of al-Azhar, ‘civil society’, and the political realm of the authoritarian system, that is parliament and government”.¹⁸⁰ Thus, in Egypt, the state's crisis of legitimacy meant that the inclusion of opposition can potentially challenge the state's power. This necessitated the state's maintenance of hegemonic rule and limited pluralism in such institutions as the parliament, which meant that cooptation could not be effectively used in Egypt as in Morocco. Overall, despite domestic and international pressure, the president only symbolically ceded power to civil society or to other branches of government and the opening of political space would be interrupted if it leads to actual contestation to the balance of power.

Repression

Arab republics haven historically deployed repression consistently to counter threatening actors. Despite policies of liberalization, repression in Egypt was increasingly deployed in the 1990s. Even though it was initially targeted at the violence of the Islamic Group, it later extended to civil society. Repression became institutionalized with amendments to the penal code, press law,

¹⁸⁰ Albrecht, Holger, and Eva Wegner. "Autocrats and Islamists: Contenders and containment in Egypt and Morocco." *Journal of North African Studies* 11, no. 2 (2006): 123-141.

publications law and other legislations governing institutions such as the media, professional syndicates and trade unions. For example, Law 93 of 1995 significantly widened the definition of crimes such as the propagation of false information and punished citizens convicted of these crimes more severely. Low-intensity repression was also used as the government restricted the media as well, with Reporters Without Borders placing Egypt 143rd out of 167 nations on press freedoms.¹⁸¹ In addition to limiting challenges to the state, these policies were used to allow for the smooth implementation of economic liberalization, especially privatization.¹⁸²

Repression in Egypt has been often portrayed with the persistence of the state of emergency, which allowed the government to control and contain political opposition, suspend the constitution, and expand the powers of the president.¹⁸³ In addition to allowing for such violations such as arbitrary detention, preventing assemblies, and restricting human rights, the emergency law has also hindered the implementation of rule of law as it allowed the president to issue decrees that enjoyed the same status as official laws. This led to passing of laws restraining individuals' rights under the banner of anti-terrorism.

Repression was used by the state to counter any political challenges to survival. Thus, in 2005, with the state's first multiple-candidate presidential elections, the presidential candidate, Ayman Nour, was imprisoned. Similarly, despite allowing space for civil society, the state arrested human rights activists such as Saad Eddine Ibrahim. Moreover, with neoliberal policies leading to widening inequalities, repression was frequently used against labor unrest and opposition groups. While it was often used relatively subtly and sparingly to protect the state's liberal veneer, with

¹⁸¹ Reporters Without Borders. Annual Worldwide Press Freedom Index , 2005.

¹⁸² King, Stephen Juan. The new authoritarianism in the Middle East and North Africa. Indiana University Press, 2009.

¹⁸³ "The Emergency Law in Egypt". International Federation for Human Rights.
<https://www.fidh.org/en/region/north-africa-middle-east/egypt/the-emergency-law-in-egypt>

rising protests in the years preceding the uprisings, there was an increasingly heavy deployment of the security forces. With the increasing use of repression and with increasing police brutality, however, the effectiveness of repression was waning.¹⁸⁴ This led to the emergence of new social movements, which ultimately contributed to the onset of the uprisings.

4.2. Survival Strategies during the Protests

Starting in late 2010, major anti-government demonstrations started in Tunisia and spread to the republics of Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Syria, and to a lesser extent in Algeria, Sudan, and Iraq. In Egypt, economic woes and social frustration have resulted in protests that preceded the uprisings and have led for the first time to widespread public calls for alternatives to Mubarak. Bishara explains that, in the face of this rising discontent, rather than providing concessions, the state has often simply ignored the protests, while dismissing and marginalizing their demands as selfish and “sectoral”.¹⁸⁵ When the uprisings in Egypt were triggered in 2011, similar to monarchies, demonstrators called for socioeconomic programs and political reforms such as reducing corruption, ending state-of-emergency laws, and addressing the poor living conditions for the average Egyptian. However, unlike monarchies, regime change was the primary demand. Similar to trends in Morocco as well as across the region, protests started with youth groups from a variety of ideological leanings calling for a day of revolt on the day coinciding with National Police Day as a sign of opposition to police brutality. This led to an escalation as large-scale opposition movements as well as non-ideological ordinary people joined and occupied public space. The sections below explain how the state has responded to these popular protests.

¹⁸⁴ Schweitzer, Bertold. "Modeling Mechanisms of Democratic Transition in the Arab Uprisings." *Middle East Critique* 24, no. 1 (2015): 55-66

¹⁸⁵ Bishara, Dina. "The politics of ignoring: Protest dynamics in late Mubarak Egypt." *Perspectives on Politics* 13, no. 4 (2015): 958-975.

Legitimation

With increasing protests and mounting pressure, Mubarak provided several concessions to appease the protesters. Mubarak reshuffled the cabinet and set up a committee to propose constitutional changes. He also delegated some of his powers to his newly appointed vice president. State television also reported that judicial officials would investigate three former government ministers and a senior ruling party official on corruption charges.¹⁸⁶ More importantly, in a speech that Mubarak gave to address the protesters, he announced that he will not be seeking re-election in September, signaling the transfer of power within a guided and orderly timetable. Two days later, it was announced that the president's son, Gamal Mubarak, who was widely seen as succeeding him, will not run for elections.

With limited and discredited internal as well as external legitimacy, Mubarak's attempts, however, failed as protesters continued to occupy the streets and demand the immediate resignation of the president.¹⁸⁷ Thus, when confronted with popular protests, presidents' concessions failed to provide the state with renewed legitimacy as the state suffered from little credibility in implementing policies as well as promises of gradual reforms.

Cooptation

With limited financial and institutional capacity, Mubarak failed to diffuse power and distribute privileges to pacify threatening actors. Mubarak called on demonstrators and organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood for "dialogue" and "national reconciliation". However, such measures had little success as they were worn out. Moreover, since neoliberal reforms have broken down

¹⁸⁶ Connolly, Kevin. "Egypt Crisis: Beleaguered Mubarak Reshuffles Cabinet - BBC News." BBC, BBC, 31 Jan. 2011, www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12326880.

¹⁸⁷ King, John, et al. "Mubarak Says He Won't Run Again; Protesters Say It's Not Enough." CNN, Cable News Network, 1 Feb. 2011, www.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/02/01/egypt.protests/index.html.

the state's populist and clientelist "social pact", measures were implemented to reinstate state privileges. Thus, in an attempt to appease state employees, the government announced that salaries and pensions will be raised by 15% by April for the 6 million people on Egypt's public payroll. This would cost an estimated \$960 million.¹⁸⁸ This, however, failed to address the protesters and had limited success.

More importantly, Mubarak couldn't maintain power due to his failure in coopting the military. In monarchies such as Morocco, stability was achieved through restructuring state institutions to promote intra-elite competition. This prevented any certain elite to threaten the ruler's power. However, in Egypt, the military, which had historically contributed to Mubarak's support base, was turning against him in the period preceding the revolution as it distrusted Gamal Mubarak, who was rising in power and being groomed as Mubarak's successor. With rising protests, Mubarak was faced with a shift in the balance of power between the military and the NDP. With little incentive to support Mubarak, the military's refusal to fire on protesters reflected Mubarak's failure in coopting the military. Unlike in monarchies, Mubarak was not capable of controlling elite fragmentation. Thus, Mubarak's failure of thwarted his desire for his son's succession as well as ultimately led him to cede power to the military.

Repression

Across republics, the use of repression was a decisive factor in influencing the outcome of protests, which showed how the regime's capacity and propensity for repression have proven central to its survival. Examining repression patterns from the the Cingranelli-Richards (CIRI) Human Rights Data Project reveals that Egypt, in addition to Yemen, Libya, Tunisia and Syria, have all witnessed

¹⁸⁸ AP. "Egypt Approves 15% Pay Rise for Government Employees." The Independent, Independent Digital News and Media, 7 Feb. 2011, www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/egypt-approves-15-pay-rise-for-government-employees-2207147.html.

decline in the level of physical integrity rights, with all having the least possible score in 2011, except for Tunisia.¹⁸⁹

Across republics, the increase in repression signaled the failure of the traditional mix of cooptation and legitimation to provide stability. In Egypt, although the uprisings were initially celebrated as a non-violent, peaceful revolution, an estimated 846 people were killed by security forces in violent clashes during the 18 days of protests.¹⁹⁰ As protests began and demonstrators marched to Tahrir square, tanks rolled into the streets and riot police fired dozens of teargas canisters at protesters to prevent access to the square, but with little effect. Moreover, journalists, activists as well as protesters were arrested and detained, while army units increased their presence throughout strategic locations. Mubarak ordered the Minister of Interior to use live ammunition, but the head of the security forces refused. This disagreement between Mubarak and his top commanders proved central in leading to his downfall.

Despite this disagreement, one notable incidence of violence took place on February 2nd when the state mobilized gangs of thugs to organize counterdemonstrations to boost the state's legitimacy. Rather than holding peaceful protests, pro-Mubarak forces rushed into Tahrir square on horses and camels to disperse the protesters with their sticks and whips. This represented the state's strategy to undermine the protesters through indiscriminate violence reoccupy public space. In what became known as the "Camel incident", 11 people died and over 600 were injured. However, rather than deter the protesters and restore order, the state's excessive use of force furthered its delegitimization and pushed the military to defect from its support to Mubarak. This resulted in

¹⁸⁹ Cingranelli, David L. "The Cingranelli-Richards (CIRI) human rights data project coding manual version 7.27. 13." (2013).

¹⁹⁰ Michael, Maggie. "846 Egyptians Killed in Anti-Mubarak Uprising." Thestar.com, 19 Apr. 2011, www.thestar.com/news/world/2011/04/19/846_egyptians_killed_in_antimubarak_uprising.html.

the downgrading of the state's authoritarian survival strategies and would contribute to its breakdown.¹⁹¹ The battle of the camel, therefore, is a case in point of the inability of the ruling coalition to effectively use repression and to exercise authority over the military.

In examining the military's defection, several factors have contributed to aligning the military's interests in conflict with those of Mubarak. During the uprisings, the extent of mass protest signaled a legitimacy crisis and a potentially imminent leadership change, which meant that the military's support for Mubarak would potentially delegitimize the military itself. Moreover, in addition to the historical failure of Mubarak to coopt the military, as examined in the previous section, Mubarak's favoring of the Ministry of Interior over the military meant that the military's corporate interests were undermined under Mubarak. Under Mubarak, even though the military continued to represent a core pillar of Mubarak's support base, the state increasingly relied on the State Security Intelligence (SSI) which operated under the Ministry of Interior.¹⁹² This has turned Egypt into a police state rather than a military state. Mubarak blocked efforts of reform of the SSI while allowing them to enjoy special privileges and exclusive powers, which guaranteed that repression would be used to quell any challenges to stability. With the uprisings, the state resorted to the military as the Ministry of Interior proved inadequate in responding to the protests. Following a meeting of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces with the notable absence of the president as its supreme commander on 10th of February, Mubarak had to issue his resignation the following day¹⁹³. Thus, unlike republics such as Libya, Syria and Yemen, despite Mubarak's

¹⁹¹ Sika, Nadine. "Youth political engagement in Egypt: from abstention to uprising." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 39, no. 2 (2012): 181-199; Rudbeck, Jens, Erica Mukherjee, and Kelly Nelson. "When autocratic regimes are cheap and play dirty: the transaction costs of repression in South Africa, Kenya, and Egypt." *Comparative Politics* 48, no. 2 (2016): 147-166.

¹⁹² Barany, Zoltan. "Comparing the Arab Revolts: The Role of the Military." *Journal of Democracy* Volume 22, Number 4 (2011).

¹⁹³ Albrecht, Holger. "„Authoritarian Transformation or Transition from Authoritarianism?“ Insights on Regime Change in Egypt." *Arab spring in Egypt: Revolution and beyond* (2012): 251-270.

willingness for the use of force, the Egyptian government, along with that of Tunisia, failed to coerce the military into the use repression.

4.3. Conclusion & Post-Uprisings Development

With the onset of the Arab uprisings, mass protests erupted across several republics in the region,. In examining how the uprisings unfolded, Scheitzer argues that, in the leadup to the uprisings, traditional survival strategies in republics were becoming worn out as economic difficulties and growing political opposition have rendered them ineffective.¹⁹⁴ Whereas monarchies only witnessed demonstration with no regime change, the greater demands witnessed in republics made extracting concessions from the state unlikely. While there is greater variation amongst republics than monarchies, in republics that witnessed mass-protests, states were constrained in their choice of strategy.

As was demonstrated in the case of Egypt, legitimation was worn out and the state failed to coopt strategic actors, most notably the military. Repression was, therefore, the last resort and, counter-productively often resulted in further delegitimization. This demonstrates that repression reflects the state's weakness. This was explained by Ayubi who argued that repression manifests the state's weakness in achieving its goals using economic incentives and persuasion. With a rentier economy and the lack of rule of law, the use of repression by Arab regimes reflects their last resort for stability and their struggle to maintain their monopoly of the use of violence.¹⁹⁵ Thus, with limited choices of survival strategies, Mubarak had to step down signaling the Egyptian state breakdown.

¹⁹⁴ Schweitzer, Bertold. "Modeling Mechanisms of Democratic Transition in the Arab Uprisings." *Middle East Critique* 24, no. 1 (2015): 55-66.

¹⁹⁵ Ayubi, Nazih N. *Over-stating the Arab state: Politics and society in the Middle East*. IB Tauris, 1996.

Similar patterns have taken place in other republics. The political trajectories of republics has varied more than that of monarchies. With the exception of Tunisia, republics that have endured uprisings have experienced a variety of outcomes, yet they have neither democratized nor have they completely returned to the old authoritarian order. Nonetheless, despite the variation in the repertoire of survival strategies within republics owing to their different institutional structures, republics are more likely to use repression when confronted with popular threats given their limited capacity of legitimation and cooptation. In Syria, the initially peaceful civil uprising escalated when security forces opened fire on protesters, which led to the rise of an armed insurgency, and ultimately mushroomed into a civil war. Similarly, in Yemen and in Libya, repression of demonstrations led to growing protests, especially more violent ones, thereby also escalating to civil wars. In Tunisia, similar to Egypt, the state's failure to coopt the military led to its breakdown. However, unlike Egypt, Tunisia's transition has been smoother and led to a more pluralistic and democratic outcome than that of Egypt. In explaining this divergence, Bellin argues that "while Tunisia's advantaged socio-economic position was certainly an asset, pointing the country in a more democratic direction, it cannot account for the radically divergent political trajectories observed in the two countries".¹⁹⁶ Rather, it was the differences in institutional endowments that proved central in leading to divergent outcomes. In Egypt, the military's size and legacy of political engagement, in addition to its privileged, unconstrained position in society has led to continuing instability, as reflected in the 2013 coup and in the rising reliance for repression as a survival strategy. On the other hand, Tunisia's small, professional and apolitical military has allowed for the institutionalization of civilian state, thereby promoting a smoother and more successful

¹⁹⁶ Bellin, Eva. "Explaining Democratic Divergence: Why Tunisia Has Succeeded and Egypt Has Failed." Project on Middle East Political Science, 10 Oct. 2014, pomeps.org/2014/12/10/explaining-democratic-divergence/.

transition. This demonstrates the leading role state institutions play in influencing transition outcomes.

In further examining how institutions can impact the ability of regimes to reconstruct their authoritarian strategies, Egypt's post-uprisings trajectory presents several important findings. Following the overthrow of Mubarak, power struggle emerged as competing elites sought to dominate the political sphere. Nonetheless, in the immediate developments of Mubarak's resignation, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), which represents a council of the top military officers, came to dominate. Following the resignation of Mubarak, the military moved to dissolve the NDP while putting in trial members of the old regime on grounds of financial corruption. The military, however, used the transitional period to guarantee that it would maintain its power. For example, in 2012, the SCAF pushed for a referendum to replace the old constitution with a new one that gives it legal sanction and allows for the trials of civilians before military courts.¹⁹⁷

To understand these developments, however, requires analyzing the cost of stability on Egypt's stifled political society under Mubarak's form of liberalized autocracy. Even after his absence, Mubarak's legacy on state institutions has greatly influenced the Egypt's transitional trajectory. With historically weakened and coopted opposition and civil society, the Muslim Brotherhood, having been the most robust and organizationally successful oppositional group under Mubarak, despite being formally excluded from the political sphere, rose to power.¹⁹⁸ Their reign, however, was cut short in a popular coup when the military once again switched its alliance and overthrew

¹⁹⁷ Kandil, Hazem. "Back on horse? The military between two revolutions." *Arab Spring in Egypt: Revolution and Beyond* (2012): 175-97.

¹⁹⁸ Menza, Mohamed Fahmy. *Patronage Politics in Egypt: The National Democratic Party and Muslim Brotherhood* in Cairo. Routledge, 2012.

Morsi in 2013. The military's resurgence in Egypt's political transition is linked to its accumulated power under Mubarak's patronage as well as its support from state institutions, which, along with the state's bureaucracy, were embedded within clientelist, loyal networks with deeply entrenched interests in the continuation of the status quo.¹⁹⁹

After the 2013 coup, Egypt has backslid as it witnessed reversals of the 2011 gains and experienced setbacks in its democratic institutions, making it decline in Freedom House's index from "Partly Free" to "Not Free".²⁰⁰ This is reflected in the state's attempt at re-establishing authoritarian structures through the reconstruction of the survival strategies that broke down during the uprisings. After 2013, the state has sought to legitimize itself through economic measures with new projects such as the expansion of the Suez Canal, the new capital and other measures aimed at stimulating the economy and improving popular perceptions. However, the renewed use of neoliberal policies without an economic vision and with no institutional reform has exacerbated economic conditions, leading to declining legitimacy.²⁰¹ The state has also deployed religious and nationalistic narratives as media campaigns have praised the state's heroic war against terrorism and religious extremism. However, with the crackdown on civil society, the closing of public space and growing repression, the state's internal and external legitimacy has also faced growing deficits.²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ Roll, Stephan. "Managing change: how Egypt's military leadership shaped the transformation." *Mediterranean Politics* 21, no. 1 (2016): 23-43.

²⁰⁰ House, Freedom. *Freedom in the world 2014: The annual survey of political rights and civil liberties*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2014.

²⁰¹ Joya, Angela. "Neoliberalism, the state and economic policy outcomes in the post-arab uprisings: the case of Egypt." *Mediterranean Politics* 22, no. 3 (2017): 339-361.

²⁰² Abdelrahman, Maha. "Policing neoliberalism in Egypt: the continuing rise of the 'securocratic' state." *Third World Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (2017): 185-202.

More than previous governments, the use of repression in Egypt since 2013 has sharply increased as the state has used fear as a strategy for polarization while using a populist discourse of national security to militarize the state and reassert its monopoly on the use of violence and revive its historical role as the “guardian of the nation”.²⁰³ Thus, while repression under Mubarak’s state of emergency was considered extra-legal, the Sisi government has institutionalized and provided legal backing for violations with laws such as the NGO Law, Penal Code, Terrorism Law, Military Court Law, and the Protest Law, which have made the security apparatus above the law. This has made repression a regular feature of Egyptian politics as human rights violations such as forced disappearances, unlawful arrests, arbitrary detention, and torture in custody go unrecorded.²⁰⁴ Scheitzer explains that “the extent of the effort to obtain legitimation is mirrored by the extent of repression of all kinds of real or assumed opponents or regime critics, currently at an all-time high, and now also directed against the middle class”.²⁰⁵ Meanwhile, the state has focused on coopting the military along with state institutions such as the judiciary and the parliament through clientelist rent redistribution and power diffusion. The cooptation of these strategic actors guarantees their loyalty as their economic advantages counterbalance the threat from the growing use of repression and preempts any potential wave of protests. This reflects the state’s attempts to prevent collective action and minimize the risk of the threat of unrest so that it can avoid a breakdown.²⁰⁶

The re-autocratization of the Egypt in recent years questions if the regime has, in fact, experienced a breakdown in 2011. The post-2013 government has displayed several notable changes from the

²⁰³ Abul-Magd, Zeinab. *Militarizing the Nation: The Army, Business, and Revolution in Egypt*. Columbia University Press, 2017.

²⁰⁴ Hamzawy, Amr. *Legislating Authoritarianism: Egypt's New Era of Repression*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2017.

²⁰⁵ Schweitzer, Bertold. "Modeling mechanisms of democratic transition in the arab uprisings." *Middle East Critique* 24, no. 1 (2015): 55-66.

²⁰⁶ Schweitzer, Bertold. "Modeling Mechanisms of Democratic Transition in the Arab Uprisings." *Middle East Critique* 24, no. 1 (2015): 55-66.

pre-uprisings government as it reconstructs its authoritarian strategies and reorganizes its balance of power. Rather than a revolution, the 2011 uprisings can be seen to represent a crisis of authoritarian rule at a time of leadership change. Consequently, rather than a regime breakdown, Egypt can be seen to reflect a case of state failure. While not as severe as in other republics, with a governing elite using the state apparatus for its own survival, Egypt has experienced degrees of state failure as the state fails to fulfill basic functions of law, order, and security.²⁰⁷

In contextualizing this trajectory among other republics that were also confronted with popular protests, it is notable that, across the republics that faced challenges, when repression was used as the primary strategy, especially when it was used indiscriminately and excessively against unarmed citizens, the state faced instability and failed in subverting popular protests successfully. This substantiates the proposition that, while raising the costs of contestation in the short-run, repression does not reduce the propensity for dissent in the long-run.²⁰⁸ Since repression does not address the root of popular grievances, it only delays contestation rather than eliminating it. Moreover, the excessive reliance on repression by republics reaffirms that repression is used when there are no alternative strategies. As repression entails strengthening the security apparatus, this creates new risks, as a strong military increases the likelihood of coups.²⁰⁹ In addressing this, Geddes has theorized that when militaries rise to power, they carry with them “the seeds of their own destruction”.²¹⁰ Moreover, as the state allocates more resources to staving off unrest, it relinquishes its capacity to provide public goods, risking state failure. This results in popular delegitimization, leading the state to rely more on its coopted elite for support. While the future of

²⁰⁷ Fishere, Ezzedine. “Why the Egyptian Military Will Relinquish Power.” Mada Masr, Mada Masr, 3 July 2018, www.madamasr.com/en/2018/07/03/opinion/u/why-the-egyptian-military-will-relinquish-power/.

²⁰⁸ Van Inwegen. *Understanding revolution*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2011.

²⁰⁹ Wintrobe, Ronald. *The political economy of dictatorship*. Cambridge University Press, 2000.

²¹⁰ Geddes, Barbara. *Paradigms and sand castles: Theory building and research design in comparative politics*. University of Michigan Press, 2003.

stability in Egypt is unpredictable, since autocratic rulers must do more than just avert rebellion, it can be deduced from this thesis that, rather than clinging to its traditional repertoire of survival strategies, the Egyptian state, more than the other cases examined here, has to adapt itself to upgrade its authoritarian strategies, given the shortcomings of its strategies and its limited capacity for maneuver, if it is to stay in power.

Within this context of the growing reliance on repression as a survival strategy across republics that have witnessed protests, with the exception of Tunisia, the Arab uprisings signal the renewal of the traditional social contract that defined state-society relations. In the traditional and historical social contract, legitimacy was derived from the redistribution of rent to the population through mechanisms of subsidies, public sector jobs, among others. However, with growing demographic threats, much of the population was being left out as neoliberal reforms favored the regime's cronies. After the uprisings, in exchange for the lack of political participation and rule of law, national and individual security have come to the fore, thereby substituting socioeconomic provisions and leading to greater militarization and repression by the state. In the following chapter, the thesis situates these shifts within the broader theoretical framework. The thesis also concludes by examining the significance, implications and limitations of the thesis's findings.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This chapter concludes the thesis through summing up its findings, analyzing their relevance to today's political developments as well their significance, implications and limitations. This thesis has sought to apply the analytical framework of survival strategies on the category of regime types to explore the different patterns in which autocrats respond to threats to their stability. In this process, the thesis has sought to engage in the debates on the dictator's "toolkit" through showing how the structure of the state influences how autocrats can selectively employ authoritarian strategies while also conditioning their adaptability in withstanding shocks to their stability. This thesis has focused on the monarchy-republic distinction as the most salient regime type. While several scholars have examined the durability of Arab monarchies relative to republics through the frameworks of rentierism, culture, and hereditary succession,²¹¹ this thesis has sought to break down these claims and offer a more nuanced account that examines the relationships between these institutions and the channels through which they impact different patterns of survival.

5.1. Limitations

This thesis has faced several limitations. First, in focusing on regime type, this thesis didn't take into consideration other variables which also influence how states achieve stability. For example, variables such as the level of inequality, neopatrimonialism, institutionalization, and sectarianism also impact stability and influence which strategy the state uses. Similarly, within one regime type, there are states that are strong and others that are weak. This variation impacts the state's capacity

²¹¹ Andre Bank, Thomas Richter, and Anna Sunik, "Long-Term Monarchical Survival in the Middle East: A Configurational Comparison, 1945–12," *Democratization* vol. 22, no. 1 (2015), pp. 179–200; Russel Lucas, Thomas Demmelhuber, and Caludia Derichts, "Rethinking the Monarchy- Republic Gap in the Middle East: Special Issue," *Journal of Arabian Studies: Arabia, the Gulf and the Red Sea* vol. 4, no. 2 (2014).

in enforcing law and achieving stability. Thus, treating countries across the same regime type equally would assume that states are equally coherent and functioning. Nonetheless, while regime type is only one of several variables that explain patterns of stability, it has significant explanatory power as it shapes the nature of state institutions, governance and the distribution of power.

Secondly, since this thesis has adopted a primarily structural approach in which states are viewed as rational, calculating actors that make use of available resources and opportunity structures to prolong their survival, it has devoted its analysis to state survival strategies while not giving as much attention to the nature and dynamics of social movements. The relationship between the state's authoritarian strategies and social movements is a dynamic and bidirectional one, making a study that solely focuses on either risk falling into a structural deterministic framework. In recognizing the dynamic relationship between these two, the thesis has accounted for the variation in levels of protests across the cases while subsuming the motivation for such variation under differences in the nature of the state's legitimacy. Nonetheless, rather than treating the social movements as an exogenous variable, approaches to uprisings need to include them as strategic actors who adapt just like the state. Thus, this thesis is limited in that it doesn't examine how social movements function and maneuver differently around the strategies of cooptation, repression, and legitimation used by authoritarian regimes.

Furthermore, this thesis has focused mainly on threats from mass movements. However, there are other types of threats, mainly those from within the ruling elite and those that come from outsiders within society. Further research should account for different sources and levels of threats and how each influences the nature of the state's response. Similarly, in examining the variation in authoritarian strategies, this thesis has compared historical strategies in times of stability to strategies during periods of crises and high levels of oppositional threats. However, comparisons

of state responses to crises across similar periods of unrest can provide opportunities for further research on the variation in authoritarian strategies.

Methodologically, the thesis faced limitations in the lack of data, which makes it difficult accurately measure such variables as legitimacy, cooptation, dynasticism, or rentierism. While a large-N, statistical approach can potentially yield more robust relationships on the different impacts of the variables of dynasticism and rentierism on choice of strategy, the use of proxies to capture complex concepts is imperfect, but it provides a second-best approach for the purposes of comparative insight.

Another methodological limitation arises from the difficulty involved in analytically disaggregating the impact of dynasticism from rentierism since dynastic monarchies are also oil-rich. Thus, given how the available cases don't display sufficient variation, it is difficult to test alternative hypotheses. Similarly, in examining the variable of dynasticism, while the typology of Herb provides useful insights in uncovering the roots of absolutism in different forms of monarchies, it occasionally falls into oversimplified generalizations that fail to capture political dynamics within intermediate cases. For example, despite its hereditary status, in Kuwait, people outside of the royal family have historically played a large role in key political issues, including succession. This has made it into a constitutional monarchy with a semi-democratic system. Similarly, in the United Arab Emirates, the historical development of the federal system of governance has allowed for the emirs to enjoy levels of autonomy in local politics that is uncommon in other monarchies. These cases are overlooked in Herb's analysis. Despite these limitations, the thesis's findings remain relevant. The section below discusses the theoretical implications of the thesis through framing the case-comparison within broader debates as covered in the literature review.

5.2. Theoretical Implications

In comparing the ability of the different cases examined in deploying the three strategies to respond to the protests, this section revisits the theoretical debates explained in the literature review and presents several findings on the relevance of Herb's regime typology in explaining different authoritarian strategies. In comparing linchpin to dynastic, oil-rich monarchies, the ability of dynastic, oil-rich to buy off social peace may suggest that it is resource endowments that is the defining variable in influencing the choice of survival strategies. In this narrative, it is because Morocco lacks the means to buy off its opposition that it must maintain a degree of tolerance towards the opposition and rely on strategies of political legitimation and elite cooptation to stabilize. Similarly, it is because of Saudi Arabia's post-uprisings declining rent revenues that it has resorted to strategies of political legitimation.

While the variable of resource abundance enables autocrats to stave off unrest, it only, however, serves as an intermediate variable that is mediated through the impact of domestic political institutions, which determine how the resources are allocated. Where mechanisms of elite management and dispute resolution are absent, resource wealth has given rise to extractive institutions headed by corrupted, personalist autocrats such as in Iraq and Iran, which have not proved as durable as monarchical, rentierist regimes. Furthermore, in states with decentralized authority such as Libya, resource wealth has promoted the possibility of conflict for the monopolization of rent revenues. Moreover, Herb argues that, "opportunism is a problem money cannot eliminate". With no dynasticism, there is no guarantee of loyalty for a rentier leader, which can encourage the army to overthrow him. Herb reflects on the several threats King Hassan faced during his rule to explain that, to appease the military, the Moroccan king has had to enjoy popular public opinion, otherwise, there is a risk for a military coup. This contrasts with how the senior

posts within Saudi Arabia's National Guard is filled with loyal royal family members, which eliminates the risk of coups.

In Saudi Arabia, rentierism has merged with dynasticism which has reinforced the mismatch between the process of socioeconomic development and the resilience of authoritarianism in Saudi Arabia can be represented by examining the interrelationship between dynasticism and rentierism, as symbolized by the role of oil in shaping the royal family's institutionalization of the state. Traditionally, socioeconomic modernization fragments traditional elites, as technocrats, industrialists and labor power challenge the premodern power structure. In rentier oil-rich states, the abundance of oil has allowed for rapid modernization without disrupting the traditional elite of the royal family. This has allowed them to maintain high levels of legitimacy, but it has also strengthened the state vis-à-vis the society, which has undermined the formation of a civil society. Thus, while dynasticism offers the possibility of economic legitimation, its institutional inflexibility hinders the potential for partial liberalization through measures of cooptation as in Morocco. Even though dynasticism has allowed for a populist social contract that achieves stability through the redistribution of resources, it has undermined the institutionalization of formal avenues for contestation as such measures would compromise the internal cohesion of the dynasty. Thus, despite measures taken by the Saudi monarchy for implementing municipal elections, the domination of the state by the family conflicts with constitutionalization of power-sharing mechanisms such as pluralistic parliamentary systems and well-developed oppositional movements. This is due, not just to the absence of taxation, as the rentierism paradigm holds, but also to the dynastic nature of the monarchy which constrains its capacity of cooptation in dealing with the threat of oppositional contestation. In sum, while the Moroccan king's stability rests on the intra-elite competition promoted through the mix of partial liberalization and electoral

manipulation, that of Saudi Arabia rests on the internal cohesion that is provided by the royal family's domination preventing the emergence of competing elites. These findings reaffirm that there is variation between different forms of monarchies that goes beyond the presence of oil, which theories of monarchical exceptionalism should take into account.

While comparing dynastic and linchpin monarchies highlights the different impacts of dynasticism and rentierism on authoritarian strategies, comparing dynastic monarchies to republics can highlight how the historically institutionalized structures of family-based governance have enabled the dynastic monarchies that cannot be replicated in republics without instability. Thus, with Syria having historically set the trend, across republics such as Egypt, Libya, and Yemen, given the limited institutionalization for rule-based political procedures, long-standing presidents have historically sought to consolidate their power through perpetuating the influence of their sons. As demonstrated by the Arab uprisings, however, this has often had adverse implications on the durability of these regimes and on the stability of these autocrats. Since republics have no constitutional justification for family-based governance, such measures were not perceived as legitimate and often disturbed the traditional balance of power, which led to elite splits. This lack of mechanisms to reduce the uncertainty involved in the transfer of power within republics contrasts with the certainty of dynasticism in Gulf monarchies, which contributes to the varying levels of stability in each. This also reaffirms the primacy of dynasticism in establishing the legitimacy of monarchies, which consolidates their stability.

On the other hand, comparing linchpin monarchies to republics shows that, even though both Morocco and Egypt lack the rentierist social contract of Saudi Arabia and share similar levels of income per capita, the Moroccan king is still able to enjoy a level of institutional flexibility and bargaining power that allows for his legitimation and cooptation strategies to be effective, unlike

those of Mubarak. In republics, personalist leaders with dominant single-parties have traditionally used patronage networks to politicize state institutions, coopt civil servants and the military, and repress dissidents. This has led to the formations of cults of personality around presidents, which has contributed to legitimating their centralized political systems while weakening other institutions. Similar to monarchs, personalist leaders have sought to exploit these weak institutions to establish their legitimacy by reinforcing the relationship between stability and their survival, which has produced a form of legitimacy that is derived from security and order. However, with limited mechanisms of elite management, presidents have failed to consolidate their power as effectively as monarchs. In Egypt, the military's semi-autonomy along with an increasingly threatening opposition have constrained the power of the president in his satisfying his dynastic aspirations. By contrast, the Moroccan king is able to establish a balance of securing its hold on power while containing oppositional threats in a way that Egypt's institutional structure doesn't allow. Thus, despite the concentration of power in the centralized presidential system, presidents have not been able to establish their hegemony across the state's institutions as in monarchies, which has challenged their ability in accommodating compromises and coopting outside actors, pushing them to resort to repression for their survival.

5.3. Conclusion

The analysis above shows that, across the cases, in the years following the uprisings, challenges to stability continue which have pushed rulers to find other means to meet the demands of the electorate and to elicit their cooperation. More than just popular challenges, these qualitative changes stem from political, social and economic changes, which necessitate the renewal of the social contract that defines state-society relations. Despite the divergence in outcomes that has resulted from the uprisings, it has pushed states to adopt regressive policies in the short-run, while

possibly altering their repertoire of survival in the long-run. In republics, with the exception of Tunisia, the uprisings have resulted in multiple adverse trajectories from authoritarian retrenchment to state collapse, civil war, and intensified ethno-religious or identity conflicts. This has pushed even states that have not experienced regime change to undergo institutional change as they absorb the lessons of the uprisings and learn from other cases, which changes the nature of governance as well as of contestation. As states learn from each other, republican as well as monarchical governments across the region have adopted similar policies of using nationalist discourses to consolidate their power while dehumanizing and framing protesters as conspirators, restricting access to public space, increasing suspicion of foreign interference, among other exclusionary measures.²¹² These policies have led the region to have the worst global ratings in 2017's Freedom House's index.²¹³

This reflects a limitation in the traditional transition paradigm in explaining developments following the Arab uprisings. Rather than approaching the process of transition as a teleological, unidirectional sequence and the issues of democratization and authoritarian resilience as opposing paradigms, studies of authoritarian states should recognize the variety of hybrid authoritarian regimes in the region and should dedicate more attention to this grey zone as well as to the state's shifting strategies lurking behind the façade of stability to better distinguish the variety of authoritarian mechanisms of reproduction. Starting in the 1990s, Arab states adopted partial liberalization measures so they can evolve and restructure their institutions as they confronted

²¹² Josua, Maria. "Convergence through learning? Patterns of exclusion during the Arab uprisings". Project on Middle East Political Science, 2016

²¹³ House, Freedom. "Populists and autocrats: The dual threat to global democracy." Freedom in the World Report (2017).

pressures of globalization and democratization. With new local, regional and global pressures today, states are again pushing to adapt and shift their authoritarian strategies to survive.

Almost eight years into the Arab uprisings, the underlying conditions that prompted the protests remain. In examining the modest, even grim and disturbing, developments that the uprisings have produced, this thesis suggests that the state's contemporary as well as historical authoritarian strategies play a leading role in influencing these developments. While some states have managed to upgrade their strategies and outmaneuver social movements and achieve stability, others broke down as the effectiveness of their strategies wore down and they faced constraints in adapting their repertoire of strategies. Rather than attributing the variation in patterns of stability to the personal accomplishments or failures of its leadership or its opposition, this thesis shows that it was the state's institutional structure that led to the divergence in the outcomes of the Arab uprisings. These structures predate the uprisings and show that the state's institutional design constrains the state's agency while shaping and reinforcing different patterns of entrenchment of autocratic rule. Since institutions evolve, states will have to adapt their strategies and reinvent their repertoires so that they can achieve stability.

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