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# Rentier Wealth, Unruly Law, and the Rise of Opposition

## The Political Economy of Oil States

Gwenn Okruhlik

The relationship between oil and politics has generated much intellectual debate. The resulting framework called “rentierism” has produced a number of propositions about the nature of the developmental process. A prominent theme contends that the financial autonomy of oil states grants them immunity from social pressures. I argue that no necessary link exists between the accumulation of wealth and a particular social outcome. The windfall profits of petroleum exports do not translate into a politically quiescent population.

Oil states often foster their own civil opposition because of the way revenues are deployed. The rentier framework is limited because it relegates political choices to a back seat, behind structural economics. Its utility is enhanced if we construct more explicit linkages between state strategies of expenditure and the political consequences for particular social groups. I integrate the conditions of rentierism and personal rule to explain the creation and convergence of dissent in oil states and give substance to the oft-repeated call for the rule of law (*hukm al qanun*).

### Conceptions of the State

The state is a primary unit of analysis in much work on comparative and international politics. Neither Weberian nor Marxist conceptions of statehood adequately account for development in oil states. The Weberian emphasis on extraction does not apply because oil states have been largely relieved of that function. Thus, a defining exchange between state and society is absent.<sup>1</sup> The Marxist emphasis on class does not apply because people do not identify themselves by their relation to means of production.<sup>2</sup> The more salient identities are based on family, tribe, region, and religion. Since rentier states depend on an enormous expatriate labor force, the primary class distinction is between indigenous citizen and foreign resident worker.<sup>3</sup>

A rentier state depends on external sources for a large portion of its revenue.<sup>4</sup> These revenues from abroad are called rent.<sup>5</sup> The rent accrues directly to the state, not to private corporations or individuals. Rent is not the only income, but it certainly predominates. In the past, rentier states have been based on international trade in gold or bat guano. Today, the term refers most often to the oil states whose income is derived from the international sale of petroleum.<sup>6</sup>

Studies focus on three major themes of development: economic, institutional, and political. Scholars who focus on the impact of oil on economic development (or the lack thereof) examine the impact of windfall profits on policy and the allocation of resources and on investment patterns.<sup>7</sup> Development priorities are seen primarily as a function of the structure of revenue.<sup>8</sup> The condition tends to spawn rent-seekers as opposed to producers. Some analysts even link specific behavioral attributes to the rentier condition.<sup>9</sup> Scholars also utilize the rentier framework to understand institutional capacity.<sup>10</sup> Extractive and regulative abilities of states appear to erode in times of plenty, only to be laid bare in times of crisis when they are most needed.<sup>11</sup> The absence of financial constraints on the state may serve to obscure other constraints, for example, in coercive ability and bureaucratic organization.<sup>12</sup> As for political phenomena, there has been a tendency to reify the state and to impose an artificial rigidity on relations between ruler and ruled. A dominant argument contends that externally derived rent breaks a linkage between people and state.<sup>13</sup> As oil revenues accrue from abroad, the state is relieved of the burden of taxation. In turn, the primary function of the state becomes distribution (or allocation) rather than extraction. States then utilize the distributive function as a potential source of legitimacy. Distribution relieves the state of the political accountability that accompanies taxation. (Instead of “no taxation without representation,” the rentier state says “no representation without taxation.”) Simply put, the question of “democracy is not a problem for allocation states.”<sup>14</sup> Money is the ultimate source of control, “used to develop the economy in a way that will maximize obedience,” which is obtained by controlling the structure of the market and the flow of funds.<sup>15</sup>

Though provocative, these observations raise the problem of economic determinism. Clearly left out is politics. Some scholars call directly for a political economy approach but then ignore the political part.<sup>16</sup> They make a mistake. Politics must reenter the explanation of the political economy of oil states.<sup>17</sup>

### **The Divergence of Theory and Reality: Oil and Opposition in the Middle East**

Scholarship on the Middle East is an appropriate venue to initiate a reexamination of the framework. Throughout the Middle East and North Africa, in both have and have-not states, there are demands for social justice, meaningful economic development, and political reform. Tentative steps toward democratic procedure are evident in Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Yemen. The presence of such demands is especially interesting in the oil states.

A long-stated corollary of the observation that distribution replaces extraction as the primary function of the state is that oil wealth can be distributed and used to placate potential dissent. Thus, the government can effectively buy off opposition. Yet in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Bahrain opposition has arisen and with it a discrepancy

between the expectations derived from the rentier framework and empirical reality. Not the simple receipt of oil revenue, but the choices made on how to spend it shape development. Money does not spend itself. Those acting in the name of the state make decisions, and the nature of the regime influences them. The rentier framework has proven inadequate in elucidating the rise of dissent because it reifies the state and overemphasizes state resources and autonomy from the social consequences of expenditures.

Wealth generated through oil receipts is a catalyst for opposition to the state, rather than a tool to placate dissent, for two reasons. It is distributed inequitably (given in abundance to some and withheld from others), and it provides potential dissenters with the resources necessary for mobilization against the regime. In short, the state engenders its own opposition.

Saudi Arabia, for example, is a classic rentier state.<sup>18</sup> Its state is the functional extension of the ruling family. It is often a capital surplus oil exporter and has tremendous reserves in the ground (at least one-fourth of the world's proven oil reserves). Wealth has relaxed many of the traditional constraints of development and enabled the state to avoid really tough decisions or, when decisions are made, to repeal them quickly if opposition is met. Thus, the state can effectively postpone confrontations on property rights, monopolies, the enforcement of contracts, and efficient sectoral resource allocation.

Wealth makes available to the state a wider array of strategies from which to choose. Nevertheless, the content and implementation of the chosen strategy is not attributable directly to rent. Crises elicit a response based on political exigencies. In Saudi Arabia the state response to crisis is indicative of the al-Saud's awareness of their own vulnerability. The state strategies chosen to manage crises (boom, bust, and war) have had very real, though unintended, social and political consequences.

### **Opposition as a Function of State Strategies**

The financial autonomy of the Saudi Arabian state did not translate into immunity from civil pressures. Rent did not buy the support or loyalty of different social groups even during the boom. At most, it may have purchased temporary complacency. The vulnerability of the regime has been exposed in crisis. Dissent that was masked by distribution has been exacerbated by lower oil revenues and political crisis. Though the vast majority of Saudi Arabian citizens are better off materially now than prior to the windfall gains of the boom, oil revenues have been distributed inequitably. The prosperity of private citizens is dependent upon the acquisition of government wealth, with access to contracts, information, jobs in the public sector or infrastructure governed by family relations, friendship, religious branch, and regional affiliation. In five instances the state actually fostered opposition to itself through the deployment of rent. Each involves region or religion.<sup>19</sup>

First, the Hejaz was long the center of commerce in Saudi Arabia. In the last fifteen years the state mandated that all diplomatic missions and bank headquarters be shifted to Riyadh. The *hajj* trade also became increasingly regulated by the state.<sup>20</sup> Local administration of the *hajj* injected much capital into the Hejazi economy (and forged an active merchant community) as temporary markets for the exchange of goods were established each year and lasted for a period of several months. Now, the highly regulated *hajj* requires that pilgrims go directly from the airport to the holy cities, thereby bypassing the traditional markets of Jeddah. The shift of financial and diplomatic activity from the Hejaz and the imposition of stringent limitations on mobility during the *hajj*, were obvious attempts to transfer the commercial center of the country from the west to the center, where the ruling family has traditionally enjoyed more support. Nevertheless, the effort to channel rents to traditional supporters and to break the corporate coherence of the Hejazi merchant group has stimulated a powerful reassertion of identity in the business community, both as private actor and as Hejazi (*vis-à-vis* the state and the Najd). The Hejazi merchant class was not destroyed or replaced.<sup>21</sup> The collective sensibility is reinforced in the chambers of commerce and through informal social ties. It is given voice and made coherent through regional identity.

Second, during the boom the al-Saud established a massive state apparatus to administer the economy. Wanting a supportive bureaucracy, they staffed it primarily with Najdis. Simultaneously, a new business class composed of Najdis was created through the distribution of contracts and investment incentives. The new private businessmen and the new state bureaucrats shared many social and familial networks. This overlap between business and bureaucracy came to haunt the al-Saud when they tried to restructure the economy. Business and bureaucracy operated together to oppose the al-Saud during the bust.<sup>22</sup> They were more loyal to one another (through overlapping family and regional networks) than to any ambiguous concept of "the state."

Working through the state-created chambers of commerce, the business community adopted a broad and relatively activist agenda. The economic terrain emerged as a substitute for political space. Debate was allowed within the chambers, and business objectives changed. No longer directed at specific issues, they sought a predictable environment in which to conduct business. The nature of private business activism expanded from a negative to a positive agenda.

Business and state engaged in debate about the ground rules for politics and enterprise.<sup>23</sup> The major issues involved turf battles over rights to profit-making activity, responsibilities of private business *vis-à-vis* the state, the social obligation of private business, the inequitable distribution of wealth and investment opportunities, the protection of domestic enterprise, the method and curriculum of the national education system, the legal codes, and financial networks. Private activism was a response to princely interference in business and to the (mal)distribution of rents. There was intense pressure to move away from the ad hoc and arbitrary behavior associated with personal rule towards a regularized commercial environment.

The third and most important attempt by the state to quell potential discontent through deployment of oil rents had a powerful effect on Sunni political Islamists. The al-Saud rule in an uneasy symbiosis with the religious authorities, or the *ulama*.<sup>24</sup> All religious institutions are dominated by Najdi Hanbali *ulama*. The al-Saud must seek the approval of the *ulama* for controversial decisions (for example, the deposition of Saud, military response to the 1979 takeover of the Grand Mosque, and presence of foreign troops on Saudi soil in 1990–91). Though these fatwas bind the *ulama* and the al-Saud, they erode the legitimacy of their relationship.

As important as the *ulama* are, the entrenched authorities are dependent upon the al-Saud for their existence. They are “in the pocket of the al-Saud.” The cooptation of entrenched Islamic authorities partially fueled the attempt by Juhaiman al-Utaibi in 1979 to overthrow the government.<sup>25</sup> This attempt was a watershed in Saudi Arabian religion, politics, and culture. The takeover of the sacred mosque (*al-masjid al-haram*) exposed the vulnerability of the ruling family. The threat did not emanate from abroad, but from domestic tribes and institutions.<sup>26</sup> Al-Utaibi was the son of an Ikhwan warrior who had fought Abdulaziz. His call for political change would have engendered more popular support had he chosen a venue other than the holy mosque of Mecca. The incident led to greater surveillance over the general population. The al-Saud promised three major reforms: a consultative assembly,<sup>27</sup> an end to the business activity and the corruption of the princes, and an end to the sale of worthless land at exorbitant prices from princes to the government. Instead of fulfilling them, King Fahd granted more power (some say free reign) to the *muttawwa*. Beginning in the early 1980s, constraints on the press, women, the movement of expatriates, social interaction, and political discussion grew immensely.

The divide between official Islamic authorities and popular Islamic leaders has never been greater. Islam remains a double-edged sword for the al-Saud. It grants them legitimacy as protectors of the faith<sup>28</sup> yet constrains their authority in accordance with *sharia*. Islamist claims of deviation from the *sharia* are especially difficult for the regime to confront, as its right to rule rests largely on the 1744 alliance with the al-Wahhab family.

During the retrenchment of the mid 1980s almost all construction and development projects were halted or scaled back. Though workers went unpaid and contracts unfulfilled, construction of mosques and Islamic education centers continued. The regime sought to legitimate itself during hard times by binding religion and state institutionally. The Islamic University in Medina, Umm al Qura University in Mecca, and Imam Mohamed bin Saud University in Riyadh were funded throughout the bust, as other programs were cut back. By the early 1990s one-fourth of all university students were enrolled in religious institutions. These universities were the nucleus of early opposition to the ruling family. They had intellectuals and ideas, computers, faxes, libraries, and all the resources necessary for mobilization.

The final two examples represent groups that were long excluded from the distribu-

tion of rent. Placation came too late. Not allocating money to a social group is as much a choice on the part of the state as is allocating money. Neglect is rarely benign. In the fourth example, the Eastern province was excluded from the development process. Even though the Shi'a there worked the oil economy, schools and hospitals were few, and the infrastructure was inadequate.<sup>29</sup> Riots in the Shi'ite community in 1979–80 resulted from years of oppression under the Jiluwi governorships. Sheikh Hassan al-Saffar inspired the community through his sermons. Riots in Awamiyya, Qatif, Safwa, Tarut, and other towns were referred to as the *intifada* long before the uprising in Palestine. Oil rent to develop the Eastern province came after the riots. Shi'a opposition groups remain a reliable source of information and analysis regarding political developments in Saudi Arabia.<sup>30</sup> They have operated under various organizational names (the Islamic Revolutionary Organization of the Arabian Peninsula, the Shi'a Reform Movement, the International Committee for Human Rights in the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula) and have published many periodicals (*Arabia Monitor*, *Al-Jazira al-Arabia*, *al-Thawrah al-Islamiyya*, *al-Kalima*, *al-Waha*, and various English language newsletters). The reconciliation brokered in late 1993 between the regime and the Shi'a community was based on an exchange of amnesty for the cessation of critical publications. For the al-Saud, the Shi'a provided a balance against the radical Sunnis. Nevertheless, the reconciliation appears to have worn down recently, with renewed accusations of unfair practices in the region. Dozens of Shi'a clerics have been arrested or had their passports confiscated.<sup>31</sup>

Fifth, the Asir, Najran, and Jizan, provinces in the southwest of the country, were latecomers to distribution and as such have less developed infrastructures than other regions. In August 1995 huge parcels of land in the south belonging to the Qatan tribe were reportedly summarily confiscated by the state. Residents, protesting that even the head of state can not take private land, participated in a form of sit-in at prayer in the mosque in Khamees Mushayt. Such antipathy toward the regime is further bolstered by close familial, social, and economic ties with Yemen. Yemeni influence and identity remain strong in the southwest. Excluded from the wealth for decades, many people in southwestern Saudi Arabia feel a dual identity and a divided loyalty. This dualism represents not active opposition, but rather the absence of support for the Saudi Arabian state. Regional identities become important during times of extreme crisis (based on economic, succession, or international politics), when coalition building shapes politics.

Thus, the informal and inequitable use of oil rent by the state fostered the very forces that have now turned on the ad hoc and arbitrary nature of rule. Citizens who question the inequitable distribution of rents, the misallocation of resources, and the profligate habits of state representatives have found voice in Islamic, regional, and private identities. The state has reinforced social identities. The emergence of opposition in Saudi Arabia is due not to rentier wealth per se, but to choice.<sup>32</sup> The deployment of wealth has engendered challenges to the regime's authority and legitimacy. The political consequences of state strategies are deep and will probably be enduring.

## **Context of al-Saud Rulership and Political Change**

The al-Saud base their claim to legitimacy on the success of their military conquests in the 1920s and 1930s and on their alliance with religious authorities.<sup>33</sup> Over the years they sought to add a new dimension to their “right to rule” as providers of the welfare of the nation. They continually appeal to these claims and seek to retain their dominance through three mechanisms, distribution, penetration, and coercion.

Distributive policies include health care, education, subsidized food and energy costs, easy loans, widespread investment incentives, land grants for housing, and stipends for good grades in school. These mechanisms have not had their intended effect. The population is not acquiescent and is not satisfied with a presumed pact that exchanges welfare for political quietude. Dissatisfaction is especially evident in the cases of the Hejazi private sector, Sunni political Islamists, universities, and coalition between Najdi business and bureaucracy. Further, the receipt of goods and services through distribution is now perceived as a right of citizenship rather than the happy consequence of a boom period.

The al-Saud family has thoroughly penetrated society. They conduct business and are partners with major families in every sector of the economy. They control all key political positions, not only in Riyadh, but throughout the provinces. They strategically marry into other families. They have attempted to dominate Islamic institutions. The al-Saud skilfully use radio and television programs, publications of the ministry of information, and school textbooks to foster a sense of loyalty to the family for their services and accomplishments on behalf of the nation.<sup>34</sup> Daily programs recount their glorious history and their guidance of development projects.

Coercion is applied through a massive intelligence apparatus which constrains freedom of expression, organization, and mobility. By all accounts the actions of security forces are limited only by their own discretion. Freedom of political discussion is severely restricted. Crimes include public criticism, labor strikes, contact with or membership in political organizations, and dissemination of antigovernment ideas. The government strictly controls the work of all publishing companies. The prohibitions are broad and ambiguous (for example, on anything that offends the dignity of government officials or destabilizes public confidence). Radio and television stations are state-owned. Mail is regularly censored, and telephones are tapped. Fax machines have proven to be the preferred medium of communication among Saudis who have access to them, and the state is attempting to impose new restrictions on their ownership. These restrictions are buttressed by military intelligence, the national guard, and a plethora of special security forces.<sup>35</sup> The security apparatus is so extensive that the belief in and fear of its retribution manifests itself in pervasive self-censorship.



### Effect of the Gulf War: The Convergence of Dissent

With the Gulf War of 1991, domestic turmoil intensified. The war did not create new forces of change; rather, it accelerated the political debate long underway. For decades, an exile explains, "there has been sporadic political resistance in the country. With the war, it changed to fairly continuous resistance. Individuals emerged as symbols of resistance to the corruption of the al-Saud." Further, the dialogue of political intercourse changed. Before the war, political criticism was offered only in private, in an informal setting and on a one-to-one verbal basis.<sup>36</sup> It has since been transformed into a public discussion, much of it written, signed, and documented in petitions presented to Fahd. Criticism is articulate, organized, public, and accountable.

For the first time, dissenters have converged on grievances against the regime. This convergence indicates a narrowing base of legitimacy for the al-Saud. Despite significant differences in political agendas, the many sources of discontent converge on three central points: the redistribution of wealth, procedural social justice, and accountability (see the Appendix). Together, they call for the rule of law. Because of this convergence the state can no longer simply play one group against another, as evidenced by the calls for reform from representatives of business, the Sunni religious community, women, the Shi'a community, and the opposition abroad.<sup>37</sup>

### Business Petition, November 1990<sup>38</sup>

In November 1990 forty-three businessmen (among them, three former ministers) presented a petition to Fahd which called for political reform. The ten reforms—on justice, consultation, education, women, and equality—are preceded by a pledge of loyalty to both the *sharia* (religious law) and to the al-Saud. The petition, made public and containing the names of private citizens, was a radical change in Saudi Arabian political dialogue. Nevertheless, somewhat obsequious in its praise of the ruling family the petition ignited much lower domestic support than did a later petition submitted by religious forces because the business signatories "begged and praised too much." Submission of the business petition likely had the tacit permission of some of the al-Saud. Another petition, from businessmen, journalists, and academics, called for a permanent constitution, a free press, and an elected council to protect citizens against abuse by government officials.

### Women's Protest

Also in November 1990 a group of fifty to seventy Saudi Arabian women drove cars in Riyadh in a public demonstration. They were stopped shortly by the *muttawwa'in*.

Their passports were confiscated, those in university positions fired, and their names printed in pamphlets, along with derogatory adjectives, that were circulated in mosques throughout the country. The women were later given their passports, and the university faculty were reinstated. Nevertheless, female students at King Saud University resigned en masse from their courses, saying they “did not want to be taught by women of such morals.” The women drivers apparently had the permission of the al-Saud, likely granted by Prince Salman. Similar demonstrations planned for Jeddah and Dhahran were called off in light of the response in Riyadh. This incident represented far more than the opinions of several dozen urban, educated women (including academics and journalists like Aisha al-Mani and Fawzia al-Bakr and reportedly members of more conservative families like the al-Sheikh and al-Garbou). Each woman would have sought the consent of her family before taking a public action that could harm the family reputation. Therefore, this demonstration likely had the support of many elite families in the three major cities. Fahd, supporters of the women argue, “could have sided with the women, but he has no courage to stand for change in the face of the [religious] militants.” The regime later formalized in a decree what had been a social constraint by legally prohibiting women from driving. It utilized the issue of gender to foster tension between its liberal and conservative opposition.

### Sunni and Shi’a Opposition

Political Islamist forces are far more coherent, powerful and organized than any other group in Saudi Arabia. Islamist orientations encompass a broad political, theological, and cultural spectrum in Saudi Arabia, not simply the “Wahhabis” to whom so many observers refer, including the neo-Ikhwan or *al-usuliyyun* (fundamentalists), the *salafiyyun* (followers of the pious ancestors), Shi’a groups, Sufis, popular or traditional interpretations, and liberal reformists, as well as official or entrenched Islamists. Islam has been used to support and to oppose the prevailing order, and during the Gulf crisis the call to Islam was especially vibrant and empowered sympathizers.

As the activity of the *muttawwa`in* increased, it was directed at citizens for the first time. *Muttawwa* scaled the walls of the homes of several prominent families to protest activities within the home. As the home was considered a sacrosanct unit, in which all activity was left to the discretion of the family, the *muttawwa`in* violated the traditional distinction between public and private space. The *muttawwa`in* also began publicly to ridicule private citizens for not praying often enough in the mosque. Fahd responded by appointing a new, more pliable head of the Commission on Virtue and Vice, Abdul Rahman al-Saeed.

The universities and mosques are a stronghold of political Islam. The universities remained closed for most of the war. The mosques became centers of sermons, ideolog-

ical debate, political opposition, and the distribution of secret tapes. The tapes were circulated in the streets, schools, and mosques throughout the country. Opinions were offered to counter the fatwas of the *ulama* that justified the actions of the state. Salman ibn Fahd al-Awdah, a militant and influential leader in Buraydah, was arrested by police for criticism of government policy during the crisis and was forbidden to deliver sermons. His arrest provoked a demonstration by his supporters outside of the offices of the governor of Qassim province, Abdullah bin Abdulaziz. In Riyadh a popular imam, 'Aidh al-Qarni, was detained for criticizing the foreign military presence in the country. The authorities continued in 1992 to arrest "tens of hardline wahhabies...in response to criticism leveled against the government."<sup>39</sup> Safr al-Hawali, an intellectual from Imam Mohamad bin Saud University, was harassed repeatedly for publicly arguing that the al-Saud government deviated from the *Quran* and *sunna*. Nasser al-Umar, deputy dean of graduate students at the same university, was told to quit preaching.

In a petition presented to Fahd on May 19, 1991, 453 Saudi Arabian religious scholars, judges, and university professors called in strong and direct language for a restoration of Islamic values. The petition explicitly called for twelve reforms of Saudi Arabian political life, including a consultative assembly, fair judiciary, redistribution of wealth, and the primacy of religious law. The al-Saud government was shocked that such sweeping changes had been endorsed by people thought to be their pillar of support. Contrary to the business petition, this one contained no fawning or pledge of loyalty to the al-Saud. Shaikh Abdulaziz bin Baz and Shaikh Mohammad bin Saleh al-Othaimen gave their support to the petition, thereby offering some protection to the many others who signed it. Salman was said to have called the demand for an end to corruption, inequality, and usury "a stab in the back."

The ruling family was shaken, not only by the support this document received domestically, but also by the public method in which it was circulated. The petition made the rounds of schools and mosques before Fahd saw it. Because it abrogated the norm for privacy and discretion in political discussion and problem solving, and because the ruling family publicly lost face, the Supreme Council of Scholars in June 1991 condemned the publication and circulation of the petition.

Pressures for reform were not limited to Sunni believers. Shi'ite representatives from the Eastern province called for a consultative council that included representatives of their community. They implored Fahd to clarify or retract fatwas issued by the Sunni *ulama* that declared followers of the Shiite-Jaferi sect to be nonbelievers (*mushrikoon*) deserving to be killed.

### **The Response of the Ruling Family: Carrots and Threats**

The government sought to counterbalance postwar dissent by tightening internal security checks, deporting the Yemeni labor force, carrying out mass arrests of citi-

zens, controlling the media, and imprisoning influential scholars and imams. Extractive measures were decreased, and more distributive programs were instituted at a time when the government budget could not even be announced.<sup>40</sup> The price of grain sold by the state to small farmers and livestock breeders was lowered by one-third to retain the allegiance of the bedouin. Air fare prices, which were heavily subsidized but recently increased to cover operational costs, were frozen to allow the middle class some mobility. Fahd issued a blanket cancellation of two years worth of mortgage payments, costing the country over \$1 billion. The fees on driving licenses and vehicle registration which so angered middle class citizens were drastically cut in October 1991. The fee for registration of private cars dropped from \$280 (for three years) to \$80.

Fahd responded to internal dissent on February 29, 1992, with three decrees on the basic system of governance (*nizam asasi li'l hukm*), the consultative council (*majlis al shura*), and the reorganization of provincial administration (*nizam li'l muqata'at*). The council is appointed and merely advisory and can be dissolved by the king. The devolution of power to the provinces has been long awaited but will not produce immediate change. All regional governors are members of the al-Saud or loyal families. Also decreed was a system of succession to the throne. The king has the right to appoint and dismiss the crown prince, with the right to succession passed from the sons of Abdulaziz to his grandsons. The aging sons of the founder finally acknowledged publicly what has long been known: the al-Saud must include a younger generation if they are to retain power.

Though the announcements consolidated the central position of the king and the al-Saud in political life, their scope is surprising. They address the concern with abuse of personal rule and the overlap of public and private spheres in Saudi Arabia. Article eight states that members of the council can not use their position to gain personal advantage. Article nine prohibits council members from simultaneously serving in other government positions or in the management of any company. Engagement in commercial affairs requires the permission of the king. Article thirteen broadens participation in policymaking by requiring that every four years at least half of the sixty council members must be new appointments. The result was system maintenance in the guise of liberalization from above. The changes attempted to coopt wider circles of the political public and direct political and religious organizations into acceptable or controllable channels.

### Opposition Response to Reform Announcement

Saudi Arabian opposition forces quickly responded to Fahd's announcements. The documents "failed to meet the citizen's expectations for sweeping reform."<sup>41</sup> The opposition further stated that "[we] welcome these new systems as a first step in the

transfer to the rule of law, we stress the need for more reform...,” and enunciated seven objections to the proposed system of governance, including limitations on accountability, participation, reciprocity, and rights.

The religious and business petitions were justified by the Islamic injunction on the duty of citizens to grant advice to their rulers. Echoing the importance of reciprocity, the dissenters also argued in response to the proposed *majlis*, that the articles “fail to mention that forming contracts between the people and government is, according to Islamic law, a source of legitimacy...[the articles] also fail to define the responsibilities of the king to the people in exchange for their allegiance.” The search for a reciprocal relationship between the government and people is clear.

### Religious Petition, July 1992

In July 1992 107 religious scholars signed a “memorandum of advice” (*muzakharat al-nasiha*) to Fahd. The signatories did not even mention the king’s proposed reforms. Fahd refused to receive the forty-six page document. This petition was even bolder and more defiant than the one drafted in May 1991. Its tone was straightforward; its charges, specific. The petitioners deplored the “total chaos of the economy and society...widespread bribery, favoritism, and the extreme feebleness of the courts,” criticized virtually every aspect of domestic and foreign policy, and demanded a more rigorous application of Islamic law. The memorandum called for religious law, human rights, and justice.

In October 1992 ten members of the Supreme Ulama Council issued a statement calling the petition divisive and misguided and accused the signatories of sedition. They were under pressure from Fahd and the senior princes. In December 1992 Fahd ousted seven members of the council, the country’s highest religious body, for failing to sign the denunciation of the petition. They were replaced with younger, more agreeable religious scholars.<sup>42</sup>

### The Fostering of Opposition by State Utilization of Rentier Wealth

Similar demands are now propagated by dissidents in exile or living abroad. Mohamed al-Mas`ari and his colleague Saad al-Faqih have called for political change in Saudi Arabia. The formation of the Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights (*lajnat al difa`an al huqooq al sharia*) in May 1993 by six academics at King Saud University in Riyadh, called the first human rights organization in Saudi Arabia, was a significant event.<sup>43</sup> Under harassment, the CDLR moved to London by April 1994, where it continued a constant, high technology assault on the regime. The demands of the CDLR include social justice, a judiciary, and accountability in governance.

Al-Faqih and al-Masari parted company in early 1996 when al-Faqih formed a new group, the Movement for Islamic Reform in Arabia (*al harakah al islamiyya lil islah*). He intends to “unveil Arabia” in a monthly newsletter by exposing “the murky affairs of the Saudi dictatorship—their abuse of human rights, their corruption and incompetence, their extravagance with the wealth looted from the country, their mockery of Islam.”<sup>44</sup> He will likely continue to support the goals articulated by the CDLR in 1994.

In May 1994 a diplomat in the Saudi Arabian mission to the United Nations, Mohamed al-Khilewi, requested asylum in the United States, publicizing grievances against the al-Saud that focused on the distribution of wealth, corruption, and the status of women.

Operating largely out of Sudan and Afghanistan, Osama bin Laden, a Saudi Arabian stripped of citizenship in April 1994, funnels financial backing into Islamist organizations. His work appears to favor the construction of Islamic states in several contexts but is often explicitly directed against the al-Saud. He reiterated his threats of violence against American forces in Saudi Arabia in February 1997.

In May 1996 a group called the Committee against Corruption in Saudi Arabia announced itself with an extensive web page.<sup>45</sup> It is believed to consist of individuals with active business ties in the United States, people who have benefitted enormously from the provision of investment incentives made possible through rentier wealth. Its mission statement begins by distancing the group from violence, fundamentalism, and extremism. It aligns itself with the social fabric and Islamic roots of the country, and it calls for participation, human rights, and the rule of law.

Grievances similar to those enunciated in the petitions continue to be voiced but have now been coupled with violent strategies. The bombing at military headquarters in Riyadh in November 1995 and the arrest of a Saudi Arabian national smuggling explosives (including Semtex) at the Jordanian-Saudi Arabian border in spring 1996 indicate the ongoing political turmoil. The bomb blast at an air base in Dhahran in June 1996 followed months of threats of attacks against U.S. interests in the country.<sup>46</sup> The U.S. is interpreted by many to be the external prop to a regime that severely limits political participation.

The relevance of these events and state strategies of expenditure is heightened because they come at a time of relative economic hardship (food, fuel, and electricity prices have all increased) and succession struggles. In Saudi Arabia today opposition is important because of the level of discomfort into which it taps, the willingness of some to employ violence, the rift with the ruling family, an incapacitated king, and the lack of unambiguous al-Saud leadership. Most important, social forces have converged on three central points of dissent: the waste of the financial assets of the country, the lack of accountability, and demands for social justice. They all call for the rule of law. The intensified debate, emergence of leadership, and calls for reform are indicative of pressure to move from the arbitrary and ad hoc behavior associated

with personal rule (or unruly law) toward the rule of law. They do not necessarily call for democracy; rather, the call is for predictability and regularity. Even some dissenters accept a synthesis of the *ulama* and the al-Saud but want behavior that is legitimate, regularized, and bound by an accepted pact. The interplay of personal rule and dependence on external rent is manifest in the call for a reconfiguration of the political economy of Saudi Arabia. It reflects, like many movements in the region, a search for law, authenticity, and self-reliance.

### **Rentier Wealth and Unruly Law: Oil, Opposition, and Political Economy Theory**

Of course, all states in some sense create their own opposition. What makes rentier states especially interesting is the nature of the rent. It is abundant; it accrues directly to the state; it is readily accessible; and it is easily mobilized. Since it is liquid, it can be maneuvered to fulfill specific objectives. It is also vulnerable to fluctuations in international demand. These characteristics have an impact on political and economic development. How a state chooses to respond to the economic crises that are part of the rentier condition—boom, crisis of absorption and bust, crisis of austerity—has very real social and political consequences. The determining variable in the creation and convergence of opposition is the choices of a personal regime in distributing money inequitably for political reasons, not rent.

Rentier theory should be refined to elucidate the fostering of opposition in these supposedly quiescent states by drawing linkages among political choice, state strategies, and consequences for particular social groups. Several problems must be addressed if the rentier framework is to retain theoretical viability. First, the idea of the rentier state has come to imply so much that it has lost its content. Generalizations about loyalty and dissent that were derived from the boom period (1973–86) can not be applied to the postretrenchment and postwar period. The framework must be applied in a more rigorous, empirically conscious manner. Rentier theory reified the state and the autonomy of the state from its society. In fact, state and society penetrate one another. The “boundaries” between state and society are permeable and fluid.<sup>47</sup>

Second, the importance of the political must be asserted. For example, the so-called rentier mentalities, biases, and behavioral correlates do not link rent, behavior, and political reality. Private investors are not antiproducer and speculation-oriented simply because profits accumulate more quickly in nonindustrial activities. Rather, investors do not have access to accurate demographic information on which to base long-term decisions. There is no predictability in the behavior of some princes, no recourse for stolen proposals, no framework for development, and no assurance that investors will maintain control over their investments. These conditions are not

attributable to rent per se, but rather to uncertainty in the investment environment which largely reflects the personal nature of the state. Any preference for trade reflects the political reality of insecurity.<sup>48</sup>

Third, if the rentier dialogue is to be couched in terms of the state, then clearly the questions proposed must be refashioned. The concepts of extraction, intrusion, and penetration must be redefined to fit the state characterized by personal rule and rentierism. Extraction can not be narrowly defined as taxation, for in the rentier state the threat to cut subsidies also elicits similar opposition. Likewise, intrusion is broader than taxation or conscription; indeed, it includes representatives of the state stealing the proposals of private business. Penetration, the extension of state authority in society, occurs not only through formal institutional regulation, but even more through informal penetrative mechanisms such as marriage, business partnerships, and monopolies on economic activities.

In Saudi Arabia, as in many other rentier states, any sense of national identity is cross-cut by other identities (such as region, religion, and family) that are for now more salient. But the inequitable distribution of wealth and the constraints imposed on society have in turn engendered an emerging concept of the state. This counterintuitive development arises because dissenters must define the target of their activities. Opposition forces have in fact begun to give greater content to the ambiguous entity of “the state” and have legitimized it as a legal entity. In so doing, they have formed loose civil associations in order to oppose the state.

In the end, historical and social contexts must be integrated into analyses of contemporary rentier states. Life did not begin, as many imply, in 1973 with the quadrupling of oil prices. Rather, oil enters into an ongoing process of development and into a constellation of identities. The extent to which social forces were corporate groups before oil has indeed proven important. The receipt of oil revenues per se does not explain development or opposition or relations between ruler and ruled. The manner in which the rent is deployed, however, tells us much. The choices made can distort, inhibit, or accelerate political dialogue and economic growth. Deployment is fundamentally affected by political concerns. The unintended consequence of state strategies has been to engender resentment and to foster dissent.

### Appendix Calls for Reform in Saudi Arabia (Abbreviated Versions)

*Business (or Secular) Petition, November 1990* End of monopolization of the right of fatwas by the state-appointed *ulama*; review of the basic system of governance; a consultative council composed of fair and hard working people who represent different parts of the kingdom and keep watch on the executive; devolution of power to local governments; guarantee of the independence, effectiveness, and justice of the judiciary system and opening of judicial institutes to all citizens; total equality



between citizens and noninterference in private affairs without due process of law; free media; reform of the *muttawwa`in*; wider participation of women in society; radical and comprehensive reform of the education system.

*Religious Scholars Petition, May 1991* A consultative council (*majlis al-shura*) independent of all interference; conformity of all regulations to Islamic law (*sharia*); honesty, proper conduct, and expertise of all state officials; justice for all members of society with no favoritism for the elite; honesty and competence in all government officials and a cleansing of corruption from the state apparatus; justice in the distribution of public wealth among all classes and factions and abolition of monopolies and other illegitimate forms of ownership; establishment of an army; a free and critical media within the guidelines of *sharia*; foreign policy that serves the interests of the *umma* and avoids illegitimate alliances; improved religious and educational institutions; integrated and independent judicial institutions that are applicable to all; the safeguarding of all individual and collective rights of people.

*Opposition Response to King Fahd's Announced Reforms, February 1992* The rhetoric of human rights in the constitution does not spell out the fundamental rights of citizens; the media remains subject to government censorship and violates freedom of expression; the system accords the king absolute power in the political life of the country and provides no mechanism for accountability of his actions; the constitution does not recognize a two-way relationship between king and people and does not mention the obligations between citizenry and king; there is no provision for the independence of the consultative council, judiciary, or provincial councils; participation in government bodies is limited to appointment by the ruling family, not general election; relations between central and local government should be close.

*Religious Petition, July 1992* Greater freedom for religious scholars, end of restraints on what they write, permission to form independent committees free of the interior ministry, establishment of privately financed press and broadcasting companies; use of Saudi Arabian embassies abroad as houses for the propagation of Islam; *sharia* as the sole base of laws; protection of human rights and end of censorship of mail and telephone calls, searches of houses, torture, and suppression of freedom to travel; restraints on state security forces and ability to bring officials to court for violation of civil rights; deploring of the expenditure in foreign aid to non-Moslem countries; criticism of the Saudi Arabian purchase of U.S. Treasury bonds and the borrowing of billions of dollars during the Gulf War and prohibition of dealings with western financial and cultural institutions; condemnation of the building of palaces and museum exhibition and demand for the public disclosure of state expenditures; criticism of the wasteful military spending which left the country unable to defend itself and support for compulsory military conscription; condemnation of the presence of

foreign military personnel in Saudi Arabia and the foreign alliances in which it participates.

*Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights Statement of Objectives, 1994*  
Restore the right of people to supervise and check the performance of government; remove the injustices and restore the rights of those oppressed; reform, standardize, and bolster the judiciary to regain its independence and power to eliminate oppression and establish justice.

*Mohamed al-Khilewi, May 1994* Clean up all government departments, especially education and media; refrain from unlimited and permanent international agreements; no longer limit the number of pilgrims at *haji*; fairly distribute wealth and power by ending monopolies and special family privileges; compensate state employees for the absence of salary increases; fight the ills of society that cause discrimination against women; release all state prisoners.

*Committee against Corruption in Saudi Arabia Statement of Objectives, 1996*  
Identify alternative leadership that is able and capable of governing the country without corruption and malice; introduce a parliamentary system in Saudi Arabia; establish new social laws that govern the daily lives of Saudis without resorting to the dictatorial and whimsical rules that have been governing the country since the turn of the twentieth century; correct problems since 1975 whose fiscal, geopolitical, and social repercussions affect the foreign policy and future vision of Saudi Arabia; embark on a worldwide campaign to liberalize laws to protect basic human rights of citizens of Saudi Arabia.

## NOTES

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1. Hazem Beblawi, "The Rentier State in the Arab World," in Giacomo Luciani, ed., *The Arab State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 89.

2. Jacques Delacroix, "The Distributive State in the World System," *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 15 (Fall 1980), 3–21; Hootan Shambayati, "The Rentier State, Interest Groups, and the Paradox of Autonomy: State and Business in Turkey and Iran," *Comparative Politics*, 26 (April 1994), 307–31.

3. Though they comprise almost half of the population, most expatriates have no political power or social status, have restricted access to the welfare state, and remain at the mercy of their local sponsors. Daily life is utterly different from that of a citizen. Their lives are separated by walled, self-sufficient housing compounds grouped largely by nationality.

4. The external nature of revenue prompts concerns about reliance on foreign actors for military security. Foreign actors with interests tied to the flow of a resource may prop up a rentier state. This important research problem goes beyond the limits of this paper.

5. Hossein Mahdavy, "The Patterns and Problems of Economic Development in Rentier States: The Case of Iran," in M. A. Cook, ed., *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 428–67. The nonoil rentier condition was developed by Smith, Marshall, Ricardo, and Marx.

6. Various assumptions are made about the nature of this rent. It is variously measured as percentage of GDP, of revenues from abroad, of government budget, or of foreign exchange earnings derived from crude oil or refined products. It is also applied to states that depend on the receipt of external government aid or upon the remittances of citizens working abroad and is used in reference to the regional circulation of oil wealth.

7. Alan Gelb, *Oil Windfalls: Blessing or Curse?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Hossein Askari, *Saudi Arabia's Economy: Oil and the Search for Economic Development* (Greenwich: JAI Press, 1990); Michel Chatelus and Yves Schemeil, "Towards a New Political Economy of State Industrialization in the Middle East," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 16 (May 1984), 251–65.

8. Hazem Beblawi and Giacomo Luciani, eds., *The Rentier State* (London: Croom Helm, 1987).

9. This observation is stretched to an absurd limit by those who seek to attach behavioral attributes, like the absence of a productive outlook, antiproducer bias, risk aversion, and at worst laziness, to the economic conditions of rentierism. Beblawi; Chatelus and Schemeil; Monte Palmer, Ibrahim Alghofaily, and Saud Nimir, "The Behavioral Correlates of Rentier Economies," in Robert Stookey, ed., *The Arabian Peninsula* (Washington, D.C.: Hoover Institution Press, 1984). The purported "disdain for manual labor" among rentier citizens is often attributed to indigenous tradition. More likely, the pronounced activity in trade is indicative of economic incentives and political constraints, not an absence of initiative.

10. See Kiren Aziz Chaudhry, *The Price of Wealth: Economies and Institutions in the Middle East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); and Terry Lynn Karl, *The Paradox of Plenty: Oil Booms and Petro-States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

11. Theda Skocpol, "The Rentier State and Shi'a Islam in the Iranian Revolution," *Theory and Society*, 11 (May 1982), 265–83.

12. Lisa Anderson, "The State in the Middle East and North Africa," *Comparative Politics*, 20 (October 1987), 1–18.

13. See *ibid*; Beblawi and Luciani, eds.; Jill Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late 20th Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991); Luciani, ed.; and Jean François Seznec, "The Politics of Financial Markets in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrain" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1994).

14. Giacomo Luciani, "Allocation vs. Production States: A Theoretical Framework," in Luciani, ed., p. 76.

15. Seznec, pp. 16, 23.

16. Beblawi and Luciani, eds., *The Rentier State*, do so but then hypothesize that development policies and the structure of expenditure are a function of the structure of revenue. The nature of the state is defined in terms of its size relative to the economy (measured by the ratio of state expenditure to GDP), the sources and structure of its income, the destination of its expenditure, and the laws and regulations affecting economic life.

17. See Riyad Krimly, "The Political Economy of Rentier States" (Ph.D. diss., George Washington University, 1992); and Shambayati.

18. This case study is based largely on one year of field work in Saudi Arabia (1989–1990) that was funded by a Fulbright Grant. The primary source of information is a series of 118 structured, open-ended interviews conducted in the cities of Jeddah, Riyadh, Dammam, Dhahran, al Khobar, and Jubail. All sources remain confidential but are systematically broken down by region, gender, economic activity, and social status. They are supplemented by forty interviews in Washington, D.C., in 1991 and 1995, North Carolina in 1993, and London in 1997 and by continuing correspondence with Saudi Arabian intellectu-

als, businesspersons, and dissidents. All unattributed quotations are from personal interviews with individuals who must remain anonymous.

19. Identity with one's region is strong despite the government's efforts to foster a sense of national identity. The regions were officially renamed in 1985. The traditional names (Najd, Hejaz, Asir, al Hasa) were replaced by their geographical location (Central, Western, Southern, and Eastern provinces). The regions retain their own architecture, ethnicities, family networks, and economic activities. The Najd is composed primarily of indigenous tribal groups. The Eastern province encompasses Shi'a and has a history of population migrations with the oil industry. Many families in the Hejaz derive from pilgrims from Persia, Pakistan, India, and other Arab states. No matter how many generations they have been settled in the Hejaz or what their contributions to society, some Najdis will refer to them in a derogatory sense as "leftovers from the *haji*." Historical differences have now been accentuated by the inequitable distribution of resources. Economic policies which give priority to the center engender regional discontent. There is no vocal separatist movement, but animosity simmers just below the surface. Some suggest it may be tempered with the spread of branch business offices and occupational mobility.

20. Najdi citizens now enjoy the lion's share of political, civil service, military, and religious appointments. Over the last ten to fifteen years Fahd has empowered the Najd even more with the urbanization and settlement of bedouin.

21. Up to the Gulf War there was an active attempt to create an "all-Hejazi private sector" that was not dependent upon government contracts. It did not involve secession, but rather voice within the state.

22. See Kiren Aziz Chaudhry, "The Price of Wealth: Business and State in Labor Remittance and Oil Economies," *International Organization*, 43 (Winter 1989), 101-45.

23. Gwenn Okruhlik, "Debating Profits and Political Power: Private Business and Government in Saudi Arabia" (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas, 1992).

24. Abulaziz ibn Baz heads the Supreme Authority of the Council of the Assembly of Senior Ulama. *Ulama* authority is also expressed in the Administration of Scientific Study, Legal Opinion, Islamic Propagation, and Guidance. The *ulama* oversee the activities of the Committee for Encouraging Virtue and Preventing Vice, which is in charge of the so-called religious police (*muttawwa'in*).

25. See *Al Haram Revolt* (Islamic Revolution Organization in the Arabian Peninsula, 1981); Joseph Kechichian, "Islamic Revivalism and Change in Saudi Arabia: Juhaiman al-Utaibi's 'Letters' to the Saudi People," *The Muslim World*, 70 (January 1990), 1-16; and Jim Paul, "Insurrection at Mecca," *Middle East Report*, 91 (October 1980), 3-4.

26. Dissent emanated from Umm al Qurra University; participants included members of the tribes of Mutair, Yam, Qatan, and Uteiba.

27. Kings Faisal, Khalid, and Fahd have all proposed an appointed consultative assembly. Each announcement was preceded by a crisis: 1962 (war with Yemen), 1970 (attempted air force coup d'état), 1975 (assassination of Faisal), 1980 (takeover of *al-haram* in Mecca), 1982 (death of Khalid), and 1991 (Gulf War). Construction of the assembly building was completed in Riyadh in 1986, but it was officially opened in 1993 when Fahd finally appointed a *majlis*.

28. To emphasize this role, Fahd changed his title in 1984 from "his majesty" to "servant of the two holy places" (*khadim al haramayn*).

29. See "Saudi Arabia—Religious Intolerance: The Arrest, Detention and Torture of Christian Worshipers and Shi'a Muslims" (New York: Amnesty International, September 1993).

30. One dissident recalled his history lessons as a school boy. When he was young, his uncle called him over and said: "*Ibn akhi* [son of my brother], do not believe anything that is written down. History is written by those in power. Do not believe the texts, especially those on religion." In addition to religious and social identity, there are strong Arab nationalist strains in the Shi'a community.

31. Agence France-Presse News Release, Jan. 10, 1998, Nicosia, via Clarinet.

32. Such spending fosters two phenomena: resentment among those who received fewer of the benefits of rentier wealth than others (Shi'as of the Eastern province and people of the southwestern

provinces) and intense debate on ideological and social grounds among those who benefitted from unequal distribution (Sunni Islamists, the bureaucrats, the business community). The al-Saud regime is in the unenviable position of being challenged from all sides, from those it has rewarded and from those it has punished.

33. The al-Saud have sought to retain the original alliance of 1744 by designating spheres of authority for themselves and the *ulama*. The al-Saud control the military and international affairs, internal security, and the budgetary process. The *ulama* control the judiciary, education system, media, public behavior, pilgrimage, and *waqfs* (Islamic trusts). In the economic sphere the al-Saud and the *ulama* wrangle over questions of interest, commercial regulations, legal proceedings, monopolies, and products or activities deemed prohibited.

34. A Hadrami businessman in the Hejaz discounts the attempts. "Anything that is written is false. We tell our history to our children. The al-Saud are just babies. They are very young, and they will go. When they do, my family will still be here."

35. The national guard is responsible for maintaining internal security and is dispatched to deal with internal demonstrations. It is a counterweight to the regular army, whose responsibility is external threat. Military positions have become informally hereditary. During the Gulf War conscription was often discussed but never required.

36. Popular political participation is limited. The most effective participation is informal, private, and individual. Institutions, formality, publicity, and groups are all threatening to the regime. Theoretically, all citizens have access to a *majlis* (council, audience). Senior princes and amirs in smaller towns meet with their subjects on a regular basis. At their best, the *majalis* serve as forums for wide-ranging discussion, submission of complaints, and petitions. At their worst, *majalis* are now limited both in the subjects that can be discussed and in the rank of the participant allowed inside. Real influence over decision making is limited to the highest ranks of the al-Saud and the *ulama*.

37. See Gregory Gause, *Oil Monarchies: Domestic and Security Challenges in the Arab Gulf States* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1994); and Hrair Dekmejian, "The Rise of Political Islamism in Saudi Arabia," *Middle East Journal*, 48 (Autumn 1994), 627–43.

38. Various referred to as the business, secularist, nationalist, or liberal petition.

39. *Arabia Monitor* (Washington, D.C.: International Committee for Human Rights in the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula, February 1992).

40. See various issues of *Middle East Economic Digest*.

41. Response faxed to author by member of the International Committee for Human Rights in the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula, March 1, 1992. The statement quotes "a spokesperson for the opposition, Tawfiq al Shaikh."

42. Two years later, in October 1994, the king established a Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs and a Council for Islamic Call and Guidance. Both were attempts to regulate the activities and functions of mosques and Saudi Arabians abroad "over and above the incumbent Ulama's authority." Joseph Kostiner, "State, Islam and Opposition in Saudi Arabia," *MERIA*, 2 (June 1998), via internet.

43. It is important to understand that human rights are defined within a particular context. In early writings, women were accorded fewer freedoms than men, and one of its founding members, Shaykh Jibreen, supported the killing of Shi'a as nonbelievers. Such subtleties have been lost on some major international human rights organizations.

44. From his web site <[www.miraserve.com](http://www.miraserve.com)>.

45. CACSA is located at <[www.saudhouse.com](http://www.saudhouse.com)>.

46. These events have brought to light several forces including the Combatant Partisans of God Organization, the Tigers of the Gulf, the Hizbollah Kahleej, the Legion of the Martyr Abdullah al Huzaifi, and the Islamic Change Movement—Jihad Wing of the Peninsula. The latter issued fax no. 1 in April 1995 which threatened militant activities against western forces if they did not depart from the peninsula by June 25, 1995.

47. Timothy Mitchell, "The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and Their Critics," *American Political Science Review*, 85 (March 1991), 77–96; and Krimly.

48. It is also posited that rentier investors display a bias for prestige projects and enormous infrastructural developments. Though evident during the boom, the continuation of prestige projects is now ascribable to political pressures. For example, the state would not allow the Juffalli family to close down an unprofitable Mercedes Benz manufacturing plant because it was a high profile item.