

17b

# Civil society: active or passive?

## Saudi Arabia

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### OVERVIEW

This chapter examines the emergence of the Saudi state from a tribally based stateless society to a kingdom with rulers drawn from the Saud family. The twin pillars of dynastic legitimacy are Islam and oil. Both pillars have consequences for the limited character of civil society. Since the late 1970s there have been stirrings of civil society and political opposition. Two political tendencies have emerged: liberal reformist and conservative Islamist. Underpinning these new dynamics have been increasing diversification of Saudi society, a decline in oil revenues in the 1980s and reactions to Saudi Arabia's alignment with the USA. Buffeted by these competing pressures, the ruling family has pursued policies balancing between them with uneven results for the evolution of civil society.



SAUDI ARABIA

### Box 17b.1 Key dates in Saudi Arabia's history

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|--|--|
| <b>1774</b> Oath of Dhiriyya between Saud and Muhammad Abd al-Wahhab | <b>1974</b> Oil revenues quadruple   |
| <b>1902</b> Abd al-Aziz ibn Saud took Riyadh                         | <b>1975</b> Khalid succeeds  |
| <b>1926</b> Abd al-Aziz proclaimed king of Hijaz and Sultan of Najd  | <b>1979</b> Seizure of Holy Mosque in Mecca                                  |
| <b>1932</b> Establishment of kingdom of Saudi Arabia                 | <b>1982</b> Fahd succeeds  |
| <b>1938</b> Beginning of exploitation of oil                         | <b>1985</b> Abdallah effective ruler as crown prince following Fahd's stroke |
| <b>1953</b> Saud son of Abd al-Aziz succeeds                         | <b>1990-1</b> War over Iraqi occupation of Kuwait                            |
| <b>1964</b> Saud deposed. Faisal succeeds                            | <b>1993</b> Consultative Council established                                 |

## Introduction

Civil society and civil society organizations have played a limited role in Saudi Arabia's political development. The character of civil society has been shaped by the interrelationship between dynastic rule of the House of Saud and the twin pillars of dynastic legitimacy: Islam and oil. Whereas the link between the ruling Saud family and a strict version of Islam pre-date the establishment of the state, the impact of oil on Saudi society and politics is more recent. In the contemporary period there has been a complicated interplay between state, government,

Islamic politics, and the economic and social impact of oil revenues. These multiple factors are layered into the relationship between Saudi Arabia and the United States and have resulted in indications of a more active civil society, albeit a mix of the clandestine and unstructured. The emergence of two different tendencies (liberal-reformist and Islamic orthodox) have resulted in the monarchy attempting to balance between the two with uneven consequences for the emergence of an active civil society.

## The historical context of state-building

### From stateless society to the subordination of society

Saudi Arabia is exceptional among developing countries in that it was never colonized. External control was limited to military garrisons of the Ottoman Empire during the nineteenth century. It was not geared to the extraction of natural resources and did not generate the phenomena usually associated with colonialism: a colonial bureaucracy, the expansion of education, and a modern educated class to staff the indigenous institutions of colonial rule. There was no anti-colonial nationalist movement built on the social strata usually involved in nationalist activity: students, the intelligentsia, and merchants. Civil society was little changed by external intervention and for the most part retained the classic form of a **stateless society** embedded in kinship structures of tribe and clan.

Prior to the establishment of the state, Saudi Arabian society had two main forms of social organization: pastoral tribes located in the desert interior and the settled population of the oases and coastal areas. There was no central authority and inter- and intra-tribal disputes, changing tribal alliances and conflicts with enclaves of the settled population, were endemic. It was not through consensus on Islam nor through acceptance

of the rule of the Saud family that Saudi Arabia was unified but through force and conquest.

Islamic legitimation for the House of Saud originated with the alliance of Muhammad bin Saud, a local ruler from the interior village of Dhiriyya, and Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab, an Islamic preacher. It was symbolized by the oath to return to true Islam sworn between the two in 1744 and cemented by marriages between the two families that have continued until today. The alliance added a new Islamic dimension to conflicts as some tribes and tribal segments were incorporated into the *ikhwan* (the brethren)—the followers of Abd al-Wahhab. Tribal conflicts and the waxing and waning of tribal ascendancies continued for more than a hundred years until, at the beginning of the twentieth century, Abd al-Aziz bin Saud (known as Ibn Saud) began extending his conquests through war and Wahhabi doctrines. The *ikhwan* were sent among the tribes and tribal settlements were established based on common Islamic practice rather than kinship solidarity. The combination of Saud warrior leadership and the brethren's religious passion provided the dynamic for the establishment of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932.

With a new central power in the peninsular, marked by naming the state after the conquering family, and an Islamic ideology focused on enforcing

religious conformity, segmentary tribal conflicts were contained as tribal leaders and tribes became subordinated to or associated with the centre. One means to achieve this was the practice of marrying Saud males to the daughters of prominent tribal families. The main opposition to the emergent state was a rebellion by a segment of the *ikhwan*. This was a protest against Abd al-Aziz ibn Saud's links to Christian Britain, the influx of new technologies of motor transport, telephone, and wireless, and the gradual territorial delineation of the Saudi state, whose new borders cut off certain tribes from their traditional wells. More importantly, it presaged the tensions between dynastic power and Wahhabi doctrines that emerged in the late twentieth century. The growth of oil revenues through the 1950s presented the ruling family with the material means to reinforce its power and authority and provide patronage as a means of incorporating dissident tribes and the conquered peripheries under Saud rule and Wahhabi principles. Oil revenues also permitted the gradual establishment of a state bureaucracy, increasing numbers of salaried officials and the growth of budgetary allocations for socio-economic development and educational expansion. A small working class emerged in the eastern oil-producing area and urban centres grew from villages and oases. Such social differentiation, however, took place in the context of strictly enforced conformity to Wahhabi principles. As a result, other than a network of chambers of commerce, social and economic development did not generate an organized civil society.

## Islam

The Islamic underpinnings of authority and legitimacy in Saudi Arabia provided both constraints on civil society organizations and justification for them. Contradictorily, it was in the fuzzy interstices between state and religion that Islam provided some justification for organizations with a degree of independence from the state. One institution difficult to categorize as either a civil society or state organization is the *ulema*. It is a body consisting of those educated in Islam and *sharia* (Islamic law) with the function of ensuring the implementation of Islamic precepts and thus has some characteristics of a corporate non-state organization linking together the local mosque preacher and the highest legal authority. However, given the role of

Islamic law as state law there is a fusion between state and religion at the highest level of *ulema* positions.

The Wahhabi message was based on the unity of God and opposed to the idolatrous accretions of saint worship found among mystical Islamic orders, the practices of the minority Shia community and general lax behaviour. With the establishment of the kingdom, Islam became the basis of the state, state institutions, and law. Saudi publications stress that the holy Koran is the constitution and *sharia* the determinant of personal and public behaviour. The judicial system was unified under the Hanbali school of law, the strictest of the four Islamic legal schools. The duty of the ruler, and basis of his legitimacy, was to ensure implementation of Islamic principles. There was no space for political parties or mechanism for expressing group interests outside of Islam. The *ulema* had a critical voice in decision-making given the absence of a formal constitution and a secular legal system. Clergy dominated key institutions—the Council of Higher Ulema, the High Judicial Council, and the Council of Grievances. The Committee for the Condemnation of Vice and Recommendation of Virtue policed moral conduct, ensuring proper Islamic behaviour, including female modesty. There was, then, an officially prescribed set of principles for both social and political values and behaviour.

Civil society in Saudi Arabia is constrained by a framework that stresses the promotion of the fulfilment of Islamic duties. In so far as civil society is understood to grow from a diverse range of social interests formulated in associations autonomous from the state, this Islamic framework provides limited scope for organized civil society based on factors other than religion. Although Islam in Saudi Arabia lacks anything like the structure of a church, in some respects the *ulema* are the only institution with a degree of autonomy from the state and accepted as a channel between society, government, and state. The centrality of Islam also provides scope for Islamic charitable organizations.

## The house of Saud

The Saud family played an important role in the tribal politics of the Najd interior from the eighteenth century onward. Originating from a small settlement north of Riyadh, the contemporary capital, the

family expanded its control from Najd to the current borders of the Saudi kingdom and can look back on a continuous if sporadic role in the history of the peninsular. After thirty years of expansion and conquest, Ibn Saud took control of the Hijaz, with its holy towns of Mecca and Medina in 1925, declared himself King of Hijaz and Sultan of Najd and its Dependencies in 1926, and in 1932 proclaimed himself as first king of Saudi Arabia.

Since founding the state the Saud family has embedded itself in government and administration, invariably holding key positions like defence, foreign affairs, security, and provincial governorships. Other members are spread through important ambassadorships, the military and security establishment, and government commissions. Ibn Saud had scores of wives and descendants and when collateral family branches are added it is estimated that male family members number around ten thousand, all recipients of government stipends. It is an extended family of such proportion that recruitment from it into official positions is not difficult.

Reinforcing the official view of Islamic legitimacy there is an additional emphasis on two concepts: *shura* and *majlis*. *Shura* refers to consultation between the people and the ruler, although the more traditional practice is consultation with the *ulema*. *Majlis*, traditionally the tribal forum for male elders, has evolved into an institution for consultation between ruler and ruled and in practice a forum for airing grievances and the delivery of petitions. The latter process has been undermined by the growth of bureaucracy.

The framework of Islamic principles in Saudi Arabia and the family's pivotal historic role did not necessarily ensure **legitimacy** for family-dominated government and administration and its key role in the economy. An index of the symbiotic relationship between power and wealth are the land grants by Ibn Saud and his successors to Saud family members and advisers that became a source of enrichment with the massive increase in property prices after 1974 during the construction boom. The presence of such large numbers in important public positions, the allocation to them of stipends from public funds, and, in the 1970s, the increasing number involved in influence peddling and brokering state contracts illustrate the tension between family political power and the autonomy of governmental institutions.

### Box 17b.2 Saudi Arabian oil revenues (\$, unadjusted for inflation)

<b>1965</b>	655m.	<b>1979</b>	70bn.
<b>1973</b>	4bn.	<b>1985</b>	20bn.
<b>1974</b>	23bn.	<b>2000</b>	70bn.

Of particular significance was the involvement of princes in the racket of commissions for state contracts and weapons procurement. In so far as the role of the family was legitimated by Islam, the extravagant palaces, reports and rumours of corruption, and un-Islamic behaviour in the fleshpots and casinos of Europe by some family members reflected badly on the Islamic pillar of legitimacy. Though the population of Saudi Arabia generally benefited from the oil boom, members of the House of Saud were the major beneficiaries and particularly well placed to profit through kinship connections to those members of the family in key decision-making positions.

## Oil and the rentier state

The role of oil revenues provides another competing and parallel explanation to that of Islam for Saud autocracy, the relative stability of dynastic power and the weakness of civil society. The theory of the **rentier state** defines a state like Saudi Arabia and accounts for a particular pattern of politics and social organization. In brief, a rentier state exists where the bulk of its revenues derive from external sources, akin to renting oil fields in return for income. In 1973–4 oil revenues quadrupled and have provided between 70 and 90 per cent of government revenues. Several political and social consequences are seen to follow from oil rent. Firstly, external rent accrues to the state and provides it with a high degree of autonomy from society. The major function of the state is the allocation of revenues to society. This allocative process is distinct from a state whose citizens are involved in producing goods and resources generated from taxing production. Secondly, citizens of a rentier state develop a 'rentier mentality'. Bureaucratic employment,

welfare, medical care, and education are all provided through the state's allocation of oil revenues. Very few citizens are involved in the production of oil and taxation is minimal. In so far as the state does not tax its citizens they make no claims on the state. Those involved in most of the productive work are non-citizen migrant workers on short-term work contracts, dependent on Saudi citizen employers for their residence permits and are marginal members of Saudi society. The political implications of rentier state theory are that civil society is relatively passive; it lacks any imperative to challenge the authorities allocating the oil revenues; and opposition movements and demands for democratic reform and governmental accountability are unlikely to emerge. These implications have been concretized by the official prohibition against political parties and forms of social organization like trade unions and women's movements that might develop as a consequence of social diversification.

Saudi Arabian society, however, has not proved so passive. Demonstrations and protests have occurred sporadically, demonstrate a degree of civil organization, and reflect a disquiet at the lack of political and social change. These occurrences suggest the existence of a skeletal and clandestine civil society. Calls for reform and the emergence of clandestine groups using violent means are indicative of a polarization in Saudi society along two axes: liberal reform and a return to Wahhabi orthodoxy. That these political trends have emerged while Saudi Arabia has remained *by definition* a rentier state, albeit one in receipt of declining revenues, raises serious doubts about the value of rentier state theory for explaining state–society relations.

Dependence on oil revenues makes Saudi Arabia vulnerable to changes in the demand for and price of oil. The collapse of oil prices in the 1980s resulted in declining oil revenues, leading to cuts in government spending, pressure on the private sector to expand its employment of school and university graduates, and encouragement to family firms to become public companies. The retreat of the state as the dominant force in economic development might have significant implications for civil society, particularly in terms of greater autonomy of business and commerce from government. There would certainly appear to be a linkage between expenditure cuts, with a decline in per capita income and increasing youth unemployment, and the emergence of a more activist civil society.

## Key points

- The Saud family is at the apex of politics and the king at the apex of the family.
- Islam provides legitimacy for the monarchy and provides constraints against the development of civil society.
- Saudi Arabia is a rentier state: oil revenues strengthen the state and limit the development of civil society.
- Allocation of oil revenues legitimates the ruling family but results in a more diversified society.
- By definition Saudi Arabia has remained a rentier state but opposition has emerged as oil revenues and per capita income declined.

## Opposition, the rentier state, and Islam

One political implication of the rentier state is that civil society and opposition to government are unlikely to emerge given the material well-being of those who have all the privileges of citizenship. An analysis of the occurrence and character of opposition, therefore, is a means of assessing the utility of the rentier state explanation of Saudi society and state–society relations. Given the secret nature of Saudi politics the analysis of opposition must necessarily be somewhat

interpretative. It is, however, possible to link sporadic eruptions of protest to broad social and political trends. In the case of Saudi Arabia, it is becoming clear that stirrings of civil society activism are a consequence of the role of ideas in mobilizing civil society even if catalysts have been declining oil revenues and shrinking per capita income, on the one hand, and Saudi foreign policy on the other.

### Box 17b.3 *Shura* response to civil society demands

'passing over the demands of civil society could lead to our falling into the abyss . . . The Saudi citizen needs to have his basic rights and freedom of expression guaranteed . . . and his role in social and political participation strengthened, so he can feel part of an inclusive order.'

(Mohammad Ibrahim al-Helwa, Member of the Consultative Council, December 2003)

## Liberalization protests

From the early 1990s, there have been increasing calls for liberalization of the political system. In January 2003 formal reform proposals were presented to Crown Prince Abdallah in 'A Strategic Vision for the Present and Future' (Dekmejian 2003). While accepting the monarchy and invoking Islamic precepts, the document called for the separation of powers, introduction of popular representation and participation, and a framework for establishing civil society organizations. The signatories, educated, professional middle-class, and male, reflected the social change of the previous three decades. They signed as individuals and there was no organizational imprimatur, indicative of the loose and limited nature of civil society. It was followed by a National Forum for Dialogue attended by liberal and moderate Islamist reformers and sanctioned by the Saud family. Popular support for reform was signalled later in the year with an unprecedented public demonstration demanding freedom of expression. In recognition of pressures for liberal reform the government introduced a *Shura* (Consultative) Council and has committed itself to holding the first elections in the kingdom in 2004, although these will be limited to municipal councils.

## The case of women

An examination of the role and position of women provides a useful case study. Female rates of economic participation are low and officially sanctioned

prohibitions against women range from dress codes to driving cars. Justifications for this are that Islam determines the obligations of women, gives priority to their role within the family (al-Farsy 1990: 135) and demands modest behaviour. Priority is given to the strict Islamic principle rather than economic imperatives. However there is a tension between the women's low participation in the workforce and the need to import foreign labour with its perceived potential to undermine the traditional Islamic values.

One aspect of social change has been the expansion of educational opportunities of which women have been significant beneficiaries. Educational development also provides an index of the growth of the educated middle class, the usual candidates for civil society organizers. Total enrolment in secondary education in 1969 was 16,000. Of these 2,000 were girls. By 1986 there were almost 200,000 secondary-school students including 85,000 girls and 15,000 university graduates half of which were female. By the mid-1980s female participation rates in employment showed an increase among the younger generation: about 9 per cent for women in their twenties and 3 per cent for those in their forties. The issue of women's role in society and participation in the economy is controversial, linked to questions of liberalization and equality. The issue dramatically surfaced into politics in 1991 when a large group of educated women, defying the prohibition against women drivers, got behind the wheels of their cars and drove into the centre of Riyadh to the horror of the religious authorities. The women were publicly vilified as akin to prostitutes. The incident was indicative not only of the growing demands of educated Saudi women for equality and liberalization but also of an informal organizational network of women who were willing to take significant political action. In order to placate conservative Islamic circles the government introduced restrictions on women's travel abroad. Balancing these restrictions, the government also took a reformist tack by introducing an appointed *Shura* Council.

## Islamic protests and opposition

Contrasting with liberalization protests have been protests within a Wahhabi and neo-Wahhabi Islamist tradition. They have ranged from the takeover of the

Holy Mosque of Mecca in 1979, to mosque sermons opposed to the US presence in Saudi Arabia in 1990 and the more recent bombings apparently linked to Bin Laden's al-Qaeda movement. While Islam has provided legitimacy for the House of Saud, it has also provided a basis for opposition. This contradiction places the *ulema* in a difficult and ambiguous position: is it an organization that reflects the Islamic values of important segments of civil society, an institution subordinated to the state authorities, or a corporate social group independent of both state authorities and society?

The first serious Islamist eruption occurred in 1979 when Juhayman Utaibi, a religious studies student, and hundreds of followers seized the Mecca mosque, one of the holiest of Islamic sites. His opposition to the ruling family was grounded in religious principles and Saudi history. He rejected the ruling family's legitimacy on the grounds that they did not follow the Koran and the Sunna. He was also critical of Ibn Saud's subordination of the *ikhwan* and called for the *ulema* to oppose the House of Saud. His letters also included attacks on the alliance with the Christians, a clear reference to the West. Juhayman and his group and supporters represented a modern return to past principles and early Saudi Muslim society. The higher *ulema* rejected Juhayman's appeal to oppose the Saud family and supported the authorities with a *fatwa* (religious edict) permitting use of force to expel the rebels from the mosque. In doing so the *ulema* aligned itself with the state authorities rather than with a protest movement rooted in old Saudi society.

When the Iraqi army invaded and occupied Kuwait in 1990 Saudi Arabia was placed in a dilemma over whether to accede to US requests for a military presence to free Kuwait of Iraqi forces or to oppose a Western military intervention against a Muslim state. Consequent on the arrival of US forces a vigorous campaign against the foreign military presence was conducted by mosque preachers who distributed their sermons through cassettes.

Following the high *ulema* sanctioning the presence of foreign forces in Saudi Arabia, a 'Memorandum of Advice' was issued in September 1992 signed by 107 *ulema*, an indication of the existence of an autonomous section of the *ulema*. Among other things the Memorandum called for greater supervision over the state and government policy by a

### Box 17b.4 Koran citation

'When kings enter a city, they cause it to be corrupt, turning its honourable people into a humiliated people.'

(Koran, chapter 27, verse 43 cited in the Memorandum of Advice, September 1992)

religious review body, a religious supreme court, and the invalidation of laws contradictory to *sharia*. A starker challenge to the ruling family was the anti-monarchy citation of chapter 27, verse 43 of the Koran. Making an implicit link between corruption and the ruling family, it also called for those who had gained wealth illegally, regardless of rank, to be punished (Cordesman 2002). Indicative of the need for Islamic legitimacy the authorities purged those who did not denounce the Memorandum from the Supreme Council of Senior Ulema. An additional response was the restriction on charitable fund-raising without government authorization, a measure weakly enforced within Saudi Arabia and impossible to enforce on groups outside.

In so far as church groups and church leaders in the West can be considered a part of civil society, so too could the Saudi *ulema*. Though fragmented with regard to their relationship to the state authorities, *ulema* networks could be viewed as informally organized expressions of civil society. The compliance of some of the leading *ulema* with state policy has brought forth non-*ulema* groups inspired by Islam like the Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights. That was established by the physicist Muhammad al-Masari in 1993 and fused together religious demands with democratic positions. Its adherents were subsequently arrested or fled into exile.

### Key Points

- Two poles of reformism opposition have emerged in Saudi Arabia despite its rentier character.
- Both are suggestive of the growth of civil society even if it is not formally organized.

- Liberal reformists advocate reform of the political system but maintenance of monarchy.
- Islamists and members of the *ulema* have called for strengthening the role of Islam and the *ulema*.
- The Saud family attempts to balance between the two poles of opposition.

## Foreign policy and dissent

Saudi foreign policy, and especially the US–Saudi relationship, has been a catalyst for Islamist opposition. Saudi Arabia’s long-standing informal alliance with the USA has been reflected in both its foreign policy and its oil supply and pricing policies. Most arms purchased by Saudi Arabia were from the USA and accompanying them was a significant growth in American military personnel as advisers and technicians. There have, however, been persistent tensions arising from its ties to the USA and the latter’s policies in the Middle East, particularly support for Israel and Israel’s occupation of Palestine. The cold war mitigated the tensions in that Saudi Arabia’s alignment with the West was against the atheistic communist East.

There were serious domestic repercussions of Saudi Arabia’s foreign policy following the Iranian Revolution of 1978–9, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1980, and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. The establishment of the Shii Iranian Islamic Republic brought demonstrations by the downtrodden Saudi Shii community, possibly inspired seizure of the Mecca mosque, and tacitly challenged the Islamic legitimacy of monarchy in Saudi Arabia. The Soviet presence in Afghanistan, an Islamic country, resulted in organized Islamic resistance within Saudi Arabia providing money and arms and, more importantly, encouraging Saudi citizens to enlist. In the longer term, Saudi Arabia’s involvement in Afghanistan lay behind the subsequent emergence of the most violent and organized opposition to the Saudi regime. Osama bin Laden, from a prominent Saudi family and key recruiter of young Saudis to the Afghan resistance, built the al-Qaeda movement and radicalized its members against the West, in their

language the Jews and Christians. Ultimately, the Saudi monarchy became a target because of its ties to the West, dramatically symbolized by its permission for the Western military presence in the kingdom for the offensive against the Iraqi army occupying Kuwait. Although organized abroad, the appeal of al-Qaeda has domestic roots in Saudi Arabia and could be considered the tip of a politicized network of clandestine civil society groups. Concerted attacks against US interests in Saudi Arabia and the wider region culminated in the ‘9/11’ attacks. Most of those involved were Saudi citizens and subsequent investigation has made clear that funding from Saudi charities had played a significant role in the growth of al-Qaeda and its political and military activities. Islamic charitable organizations were the only civil society organizations permitted by the state. Since then the government has expanded its supervisory and regulatory role over charities after strong US pressure. Extremist Islamist supporters of al-Qaeda consider these developments a mark of the subordination of Saudi Arabia to US interests.

### Key points

- The US–Saudi relationship has generated internal opposition.
- Saudi state support for Afghan resistance and participation of Saudis gave rise to a clandestine and violent internal opposition linked to al-Qaeda.
- In reaction Saudi government has extended state control over charitable organizations, the only active civil society organizations.

## Conclusion

The development of civil society in Saudi Arabia has been a faltering process. The establishment of the Saudi state resulted in the subordination of autonomous tribal units to an autocratic monarchy drawn from the Saud family, whose members were politically, socially, and economically highly privileged. The monarchical system was underpinned by a moral and religious legitimacy provided by the centrality given to Islam and the *ulema*. In addition, massive increase in oil revenues and the family's control over their allocation have buttressed the power of both state and dynasty over society. As a consequence civil society and civil society organizations have played a limited role in Saudi Arabia's political development until recent decades.

Concurrent with declining state and personal income, the increasing differentiation of society and regional developments in the Middle East, the

traditional position of the ruling family has been challenged. Caught in a vortex of social change and political challenges, the monarchy has sought to balance new forces represented by the emergence of a liberal reformist trend, and older forces represented by the *ulema* and civilian movements inspired by an anti-Western Islam. In the past, elements of emergent civil society like the inchoate women's protest movement have been curtailed in the name of balance. On the other hand, emergence of a violent and clandestine Islamist movement linked to al-Qaeda benefited the forces of reform, with the government introducing the appointed Consultative Assembly and proposing local elections. Although the future of civil society might seem brighter than before, it is likely to remain vulnerable to government strategies to balance competing domestic forces, fluctuations in oil income, and regional political events.

### QUESTIONS

- 1 How does the character of Islam in Saudi Arabia shape civil society and constrain the emergence of civil society organizations?
- 2 Does the theory of the rentier state account for the weakness of civil society?
- 3 Can the *ulema* be considered a part of civil society?
- 4 Why and how does the Saud king seek a balance between Islamic and liberal reformist protests?
- 5 What has been the impact of Saudi foreign policy on domestic politics?

### GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

- Al-Farsy, F., *Modernity and Tradition: the Saudi Equation* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1990). Reflects the official view of Saudi society and politics.
- Cordesman, A. H., *Saudi Arabia Enters the 21st Century* (Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2002). Clear analysis of opposition, Islam and Saudi government reaction to '9/11'.
- DeKmejian, R., 'Saudi Arabia's Consultative Council', *Middle East Journal*, 52/2 (1998): 204–18. Discussion of the origins, membership and functions of the Consultative Council.

- Dekmejian, R., 'The Liberal Impulse in Saudi Arabia', *Middle East Journal*, 57/3 (2003): 400–13. Interesting synthesis of the liberalizing tendency.
- Luciani, G., 'Allocation vs. Production States: A Theoretical Statement', in G. Luciani (ed.), *The Arab State* (Los Angeles: UCLA Press, 1992), 65–84. Clear statement of rentier state theory.
- McLoughlin, L., *Ibn Saud: Founder of a Kingdom* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993) Good introduction to the founder of the modern dynasty and the process of state formation.
- Yamani, M., *Changed Identities: The Challenge of the New Generation in Saudi Arabia* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2000). Overview of attitudes of young Saudis; extensive illustrative quotes span the political and social spectrum.

## WEB LINKS

- [www.saudinf.com](http://www.saudinf.com)** website of the Saudi Ministry of Culture and Information.
- [www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/saudi.html](http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/saudi.html)** Detailed up-date of the country's oil industry.
- [www.iad.org](http://www.iad.org)** The religion of Islam home page.
- [lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/satoc.html](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/satoc.html)** Saudi Arabia profile by US Library of Congress Federal Research Division offers wealth of social, economic, and political data.
- For additional material and resources, see the companion web site at:  
[www.oup.com/uk/booksites/politics/](http://www.oup.com/uk/booksites/politics/)