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Heritage, conservation and good governance
Saudi Arabia and the Path to Political Change
Charity in Saudi Arabia

"What are the dynamics of civic activism in authoritarian regimes? How do new social actors—many of them informal, "below the radar" groups--interact with these regimes? What mechanisms do the power elite employ to deal with societal dissidence? The authors of Civil Society in Syria and Iran explore the nature of state-society relations in two countries that are experiencing popular demands for political pluralism amid the constraints of authoritarian retrenchment."--Publisher's website.

Civil society in the Middle East. 2 (2001)

An in-depth look at the most essential issues in the Middle East

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation and Human Rights

Making sense of Saudi Arabia is crucially important today. The kingdom's western province contains the heart of Islam, and it is the United States' closest Arab ally and the largest producer of oil in the world. However, the country is undergoing rapid change: its aged leadership is ceding power to a new generation, and its society, dominated by young people, is restless. Saudi Arabia has long remained closed to foreign scholars, with a select few academics allowed into the kingdom over the past decade. This book presents the fruits of their research as well as those of the most prominent Saudi academics in the field. This volume focuses on different sectors of Saudi society and examines how the changes of the past few decades have affected each. It reflects new insights and provides the most up-to-date research on the country's social, cultural, economic and political dynamics.

West Asia

Researchers studying gender politics in Arab societies have been puzzled by a phenomenon common in many Arab states - while women are granted suffrage rights, they are often discriminated against by the state in their private lives. This book addresses this phenomenon, maintaining that the Arab state functions according to a certain 'logic' and 'patterns' which have direct consequences on its gender policies, in both the public and private spheres. Using the features of the Arab Authoritarian state as a basis for a theoretical framework of analysis, the author draws on detailed fieldwork and first-hand interviews to study women's rights in three countries - Yemen, Syria, and Kuwait. She argues that the puzzle may be resolved once we focus on the features of the Arab state, and its stage of development. Offering a new approach to the study of gender and politics in Arab states, this book will be of great interest to scholars and students of gender studies, international politics and Middle East studies.

Saudi Arabia
The notions of democracy and civil society are inextricably linked. Democracy fosters the development of civil society, as it allows freedom of association to the individuals. This space then links the individuals to the state. In the backdrop of the wave of political liberalization sweeping through West Asia since the early 1990s, the debate on democratization in the region has been associated with the study of three crucial issues, namely: Does civil society exists in the region? What are its strengths and its weaknesses? What does the future holds for its existence? Evidence from the political processes of some countries of the region reveals that civil society has strengthened in the recent past. This book examines the notion of civil society and its relations with democracy and state in the context of West Asia.

Political Regimes in the Arab World

A study of the political culture in Arabia which challenges the stereotypical view of traditional Arab society.

Themes and Concerns of the Saudi Board of Senior Scholars

Religion in Saudi Arabia is undoubtedly a powerful force, but it is unclear to what extent the Saudi religious establishment controls the expression of religion in Saudi Arabia. In many publications, scholars make assumptions about the nature of the relationship between the religious establishment and the state. Some scholars have assumed that the religious scholars (ulemâ‘) are the true power in Saudi Arabia and it is they who control government policy. Others have claimed that they scholars intentionally stay out of the state’s way and attempt only to affect Saudi civil society or that the scholars simply function as yes-men, legitimizing the state’s actions but lacking any autonomy. Clearly these positions are incommensurable. What, then, is the reality of the relationship between the scholars and the state in the Kingdom? Do the religious scholars control the government or do they limit themselves to simply controlling Saudi civil society? This paper examines the fatwas published by the Saudi Permanent Council for the Issuing of Fatwas (al-lajna al-d‘ima li'l-iftâ‘) between 2000–2013 in order to determine the primary concerns of the Council and their ability to affect both Saudi society and government. It argues against both positions; this paper will demonstrate that the Council does not attempt to control government policy, it does not simply serve to affirm and legitimize that policy, and it shows little interest in affecting Saudi society in general. In reality, the Council is a religious institution and their concerns are overwhelmingly religious and ritual, rather than political or social. This paper will also use newspaper articles from a variety of sources in Saudi Arabia and the surrounding nations to examine the first stages of an ongoing project known as the “High Values Program” (barn?maj al-qiyyam al-culiy?‘). The stated purpose of the program is to combat the religious rhetoric of groups like ISIS in the region. This paper will use the articles to demonstrate who, even when assisting the government in attempting to control society, the Council’s concerns remain ritual-oriented.

Civil society in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (voluntary work).

Did digital media really “cause” the Arab Spring, or is it an important factor of the story behind what might become democracy’s fourth wave? An unlikely network of citizens used digital media to start a cascade of social protest that ultimately toppled four of the world’s most entrenched dictators. Howard and Hussain find that the complex causal recipe includes several economic, political and cultural factors, but that digital media is consistently one of the most important sufficient and necessary conditions for explaining both the fragility of regimes and the success of social movements. This book looks at not only the unexpected evolution of events during the Arab Spring, but the deeper history of creative digital activism throughout the region.

Being Young, Male and Saudi

Analysis of both official and opposition Saudi divine politics is often monolithic, conjuring images of conservatism, radicalism, misogyny and resistance to democracy. Madawi Al-Rasheed challenges this stereotype as she examines a long tradition of engaging with modernism that gathered momentum with the Arab uprisings and incurred the wrath of both the regime and its Wahhabi supporters. With this nascent modernism, constructions of new divine politics, anchored in a rigorous reinterpretation of foundational Islamic texts and civil society activism are emerging in a context where authoritarian rule prefers its advocates to remain muted. The author challenges scholarly wisdom on Islamism in general and blurs the boundaries between secular and religious politics.
State-society dialogue in Saudi Arabia is one of the most contested issues in the country today, yet little is known about the National Dialogue process, and its relationship with Saudi society is frequently and widely misunderstood. The first to examine the Saudi Arabian National Dialogue process in its entirety, Mark C. Thompson investigates the relationship between the King Abdulaziz Center for National Dialogue (KACND) and the key social constituencies of Saudi society. Since its establishment in 2003, the KACND has attempted to promote a culture of dialogue and has encouraged the debate of contentious socio-political issues by bringing individuals together from across the Kingdom. Drawing on Antonio Gramsci’s theory of hegemony, the author asks whether the Saudi socio-political system is moving from a form of patrimonial state to one of ideological hegemony and, if this is the case, whether the KACND is a catalyst, or even a driving force, in this transition. Saudi Arabia and the Path to Political Change investigates the practices and the impact of the KACND and assesses the extent to which the institution’s activities, and the ongoing National Dialogue process, represent a viable attempt to address emerging political concerns in Saudi Arabia. Covering pivotal issues including women’s empowerment, public health and employment, the author here explores the extensive impact of the KACND’s activities on internal cross-constituency communication and discourse and shows how the process relates to wider regime strategies and to the evolution of the Saudi polity. Based on approximately 120 interviews conducted in Saudi Arabia from 2009 to 2011 and drawing on the evidence of a wide range of focus groups and interviews with National Dialogue participants, KACND officials, government ministers, lawyers and journalists, this book provides a unique insight into the effects and consequences of Saudi National Dialogue, and questions the extent to which wider ideological debate is possible in the Kingdom.

Politics and Governance in the Middle East

This book discusses how civil society, public debate and freedom of speech affect the management of natural resources. Drawing on the work of Robert Dahl, Jürgen Habermas and Robert Putnam, the book introduces the concept of public brainpower. Good governance of natural resources requires fertile public debate – to conceive new institutions, to provide checks and balances on existing institutions and to ensure their continuous dynamic evolution as the needs of society change. The book explores the strengths and weaknesses of these ideas through case studies of 18 oil and gas-producing countries: Algeria, Angola, Azerbaijan, Canada, Colombia, Egypt, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Libya, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, the UK and Venezuela. The concluding chapter presents 10 tenets on how states can maximize their public brainpower, as well as a ranking of how well 33 resource-rich countries have succeeded in doing so. Four of the chapters – ‘Introduction’, ‘Norway’, ‘Kazakhstan’ and ‘Russia’ – are available under a CC BY 4.0 Open Access license at link.springer.com.

Uncharted Journey

Saudi Arabia in Transition

Challenging the Red Lines

In this innovative study of everyday charity practices in Jeddah, Nora Derbal employs a ‘bottom-up’ approach to challenge dominant narratives about state-society relations in Saudi Arabia. Exploring charity organizations in Jeddah, this book both offers a rich ethnography of associational life and counters Riyadh-centric studies which focus on oil, the royal family, and the religious establishment. It closely follows those who work on the ground to provide charity to the local poor and needy, documenting their achievements, struggles and daily negotiations. The lens of charity offers rare insights into the religiosity of ordinary Saudis, showing that Islam offers Saudi activists a language, a moral frame, and a worldly guide to confronting inequality. With a view to the many forms of local community activism in Saudi Arabia, this book examines perspectives that are too often ignored or neglected, opening new theoretical debates about civil society and civic activism in the Gulf.

Against Corruption

This book includes papers presented at the first conference entitled “Network of Reform and
Civil Society in Yemen

This thesis examines the international and domestic regimes for heritage protection. The thesis includes an historical and contemporary analysis of the World Heritage Convention, a comparative analysis of Western and Middle Eastern domestic regimes, and a focused exploration and analysis of the regime for heritage protection in Saudi Arabia. These analyses reveal that countries with strong civic institutions and processes have developed correlatively strong heritage protection regimes in governance and the law. The importance of pluralistic civil society is clear, as it produces research expertise in academia and non-profit organizations, in addition to engaging communities and people in interest group lobbying for heritage protection. The analysis also reveals the importance of representative government, which responds to civil society, interest groups and influence. As predicted, heritage protection is strongest in industrialised countries with pluralistic institutions and actors and representative government. The World Heritage Convention has catalyzed and facilitated heritage protection in countries without the same level of civil society engagement and representative government by raising the awareness of authoritarian regimes about the necessity and benefits of heritage protection. In this way, the Convention has served as a type of international civic actor. However, as the analysis of Saudi Arabia reveals, heritage protection in authoritarian regimes occurs at the discretion of the leadership. This leads to lower levels of protection than in countries with higher levels of civil society influence and representative government. In Saudi Arabia, heritage protection has suffered as a result of religious, commercial, and nationalistic interests that have determined the value of heritage, sometimes contrary to the Convention's definition of outstanding universal value. However, there is evidence of fledgling norms of heritage protection emerging in Saudi Arabia, manifest in the recent passage of a new domestic legislation. The thesis contains recommendations for improvements to the Saudi regime of heritage protection include the building of partnerships with international experts to serve as technical consultants and mentors to Saudi scholars. In addition, the Saudi regime must construct new governance and procedural structures that establish autonomy for the heritage system from commercial, religious, and state interference. Transparency in governance is also necessary to ensure decisions are made based on considerations of outstanding universal value. Saudi Arabia has a wealth of pre-Islamic heritage, as well as contemporary lived heritage, that deserves protection and will benefit from these recommendations.

The Societies of the Middle East and North Africa

The transition paradigm has traditionally viewed civil society activism as an essential condition for the establishment of democracy. The democracy promotion strategies of Western policy-makers have, therefore, been based on strengthening civil society in authoritarian settings in order to support the development of social capital to challenge undemocratic regimes. This book questions the validity of the link between an active associational life and democratization. It examines civil society in the Arab world in order to illustrate how authoritarian constraints structure civil society dynamics in the region in ways that hinder transition to democracy. Building on innovative theoretical work and drawing on empirical data from extensive fieldwork in the region, this study demonstrates how the activism of civil society in five different Arab countries strengthens rather than weakens authoritarian practices and rule. Through an analysis of the specific legal and political constraints on associational life, and the impact of these on relations between different civic groups, and between associations and state authorities, the book demonstrates that the claim that civil society plays a positive role in processes of democratic transformation is highly questionable. Offering a broad and alternative vision of the state of civil society in the region, this book will be an important contribution to studies on Middle Eastern politics, democratization and civil society activism.

Civil Society in Syria and Iran

The second edition of this well-regarded volume explores the societies of the Middle East and North Africa. Presenting original studies written by the world's leading MENA scholars, it sheds light upon the organizing structure of human vulnerabilities, and dynamic forces
that propel social change among the peoples of the Arab world, as well as Israel, Turkey, and Iran. The volume can be used in conjunction with The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa textbook for a comprehensive overview of the region. Carrying over from the previous edition, among the rich topics covered are agriculture, urbanization, development, identity, citizenship, gender, religion, civil society, the environment, and youths. This second edition adds two new chapters on refugees and public opinion, as each constitutes a crucial part of the region’s social and cultural context. This edition also updates existing chapters to account for the latest events and trends, including the COVID-19 pandemic, popular protests, and demographic growth. Written in an accessible way, the chapters are clearly structured and contain insightful analysis, memorable case studies, illustrative photographs, and visualized data that illuminate the contours of social life across this diverse region. Each chapter also ends with curated questions for discussion, followed by annotated bibliographies to help spark further research to encourage seamless adoption into classrooms.

After the Arab Uprisings

Non-State Actors in the Middle East

Saudi Arabia provides a clear, concise yet analytical account of the development of the Saudi state. It details the country’s historical and religious background, its oil rentier economy and its international role, showing how they interact to create the dynamics of the contemporary Saudi state. The development of the state is traced through three stages: the formative period prior to 1962; the centralization of the state and the initiation of intensive economic development between 1962 and 1979; and the re-shaping of the state over the years since 1979. Emphasis is placed on the recent period, with chapters devoted to: the economic and foreign policy problems which now confront the state the linkages between Saudi Arabia and Islamic radicalism, with the relationship/conflicts involving Al Qaeda traced through from events in Afghanistan in the 1980s the impact of 9/11 and the 2003 Gulf War the identification of major problems facing the contemporary state and their solutions. Saudi Arabia provides a unique and comprehensive understanding of this state during a crucial time. This book is essential reading for those with interests in Saudi Arabia and its role in Middle Eastern politics and on the international stage.

ISS 12 The Arab Revolutions in Context

Established in 1969, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is an intergovernmental organization the purpose of which is the strengthening of solidarity among Muslims. Headquartered in Jeddah, the OIC today consists of fifty seven states from the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The OIC’s longevity and geographic reach, combined with its self-proclaimed role as the United Nations of the Muslim world, raise certain expectations as to its role in global human rights politics. However, to date, these hopes have been unfulfilled. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation and Human Rights sets out to demonstrate the potential and shortcomings of the OIC and the obstacles on the paths it has navigated. Historically, the OIC has had a complicated relationship with the international human rights regime. Palestinian self-determination was an important catalyst for the founding of the OIC, but the OIC did not develop a comprehensive human rights approach in its first decades. In fact, human rights issues were rarely, if at all, mentioned at the organization’s summits or annual conferences of foreign ministers. Instead, the OIC tended to focus on protecting Islamic holy sites and strengthening economic cooperation among member states. As other international and regional organizations expanded the international human rights system in the 1990s, the OIC began to pay greater attention to human rights, although not always in a manner that aligned with Western conceptions. This volume provides essential empirical and theoretical insights into OIC practices, contemporary challenges to human rights, intergovernmental organizations, and global Islam. Essays by some of the world’s leading scholars examine the OIC’s human rights activities at different levels—in the UN, the organization’s own institutions, and at the member-state level—and assess different aspects of the OIC’s approach, identifying priority areas of involvement and underlying conceptions of human rights. Contributors: Hirah Azhar, Mashood A. Baderin, Anthony Tirado Chase, Ioana Cismas, Moataz El Fegiery, Turan Kayaoglu, Martin Lestra, Ann Elizabeth Mayer, Mahmood Monshipouri, Marie Juul Petersen, Zeynep ?ahin-Mencütek, Heini Skorini, M. Evren Tok.

Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World
Civil Society

This is a comparative study that seeks to demonstrate how integration into global markets has affected political development in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. It is widely believed that free markets foster democracy by decentralizing political power and strengthening civil society. Careful analysis of recent developments in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, however, reveals that market integration can have widely divergent political consequences based on the nature of the domestic economy “linking in” to the global marketplace. In Saudi Arabia, market integration has actually led to weakened representative institutions, the disenfranchisement of a formerly powerful opposition class, and the total centralization of political, military and economic power based on a system of tribal patronage. In Egypt, market integration has led to considerable political liberalization, but this may ultimately cause dangerous social upheaval rather than stable, democratic governance. While the spread of capitalist markets is undoubtedly shaping the politics of the region, it will take enlightened policy making to channel these forces toward the development of democratic political institutions.

Civil Society in Saudi Arabia

Leading scholars assembled by the Civil Society in the Middle East program provide lucid, informed essays on the quality of political life, weighing the role of civil society and assessing the prospects for political reform in the Middle East.

The Arab Spring, Civil Society, and Innovative Activism

Although the position of Saudi women within society draws media attention throughout the world, young Saudi men remain part of a silent mass, their thoughts and views rarely heard outside of the Kingdom. Based on primary research across Saudi Arabia with young men from a diverse range of backgrounds, Mark C. Thompson allows for this distinct group of voices to be heard, revealing their opinions and attitudes towards the societal and economic transformations affecting their lives within a gender-segregated society and examining the challenges and dilemmas facing young Saudi men in the twenty-first century. From ideas and beliefs about identity, education, employment, marriage prospects and gender segregation, as well as political participation and exclusion, this study in turn invites us to reconsider the future of Saudi Arabia as a globalized kingdom.

Democracy’s Fourth Wave?

The United States faces no greater challenge today than successfully fulfilling its new ambition of helping bring about a democratic transformation of the Middle East. Uncharted Journey contributes a wealth of concise, illuminating insights on this subject, drawing on the contributors’ deep knowledge of Arab politics and their substantial experience with democracy-building in other parts of the world. The essays in part one vividly dissect the state of Arab politics today, including an up-to-date examination of the political shock wave in the region produced by the invasion of Iraq. Part two and three set out a provocative exploration of the possible elements of a democracy promotion strategy for the region. The contributors identify potential false steps as well as a productive way forward, avoiding the twin shoals of either reflexive pessimism in the face of the daunting obstacles to Arab democratization or an unrealistic optimism that fails to take into account the region’s political complexities. Contributors include Eva Bellin (Hunter College), Daniel Brumberg (Carnegie Endowment), Thomas Carothers (Carnegie Endowment), Michele Dunne (Georgetown University), Graham Fuller, Amy Hawthorne (Carnegie Endowment), Marina Ottaway (Carnegie Endowment), and Richard Youngs (Foreign Policy Centre).

Negotiating the Environment

As the recent revolutions in the Middle East have demonstrated, civil society in this part of the world is on the move. The increasingly important role of non-state actors – a phenomenon of globalization—has characterized developments throughout the region, affecting the struggle for democracy and for peace. This volume brings together scholars primarily form the region to analyse the varied activities and contributions of NGOs, the private sector and the new media, from Morocco to Iran, along with the involvement of diaspora groups. The chapter on facebook in the recent Egyptian revolution captures the role of this new media while the study on similar technology in Iran outlines the barriers raised by the authorities in the current struggles there. Even the fledgling process of democratization in Saudi Arabia is driven by non-state actors while the veteran women’s
movements in the Maghreb serve as an example for the post-Arab spring era in those countries. Providing one of the first assessments of the role of non-state actors in the Middle East, this book will be essential reading for students of Political Science, Sociology and Civil Society, amongst others.

Emergence of female activism

Human Rights Watch’s annual World Report 2016 highlights the armed conflict in Syria, international drug reform, drones and electronic mass surveillance and is a must-read for anyone interested in the fight to protect human rights in every corner of the globe.

Public Brainpower

“Saudi Arabia has considerable pent-up and frustrated social energy, both among young people and their parents’ generation. Civil society can be an asset for the nation, but requires reform of laws governing associational life.” --

Globalization, Democracy, and the Middle East

A holistic and cross-disciplinary approach to understanding why a regional democratic transition did not occur after the Arab Spring protests, this accessible study highlights the salience of regime type, civil society, women’s mobilizations, and external intervention across seven countries for undergraduate and postgraduate students and scholars.

Promoting Middle East Democracy II

The legal situation of associations and foundations in the countries of central and eastern Europe, their terms of creation and operation, their objectives and their fiscal status were examined on the occasion of the multilateral meeting in Strasbourg from 27 to 29 November 1996, organised by the Council of Europe.

Muted Modernists

Taking to the Streets critically examines the conventional wisdom that the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings happened spontaneously and were directed by tech-savvy young revolutionaries. Pairing first-hand observations from activists with the critical perspectives of scholars, the book illuminates the concept of activism as an ongoing process, rather than a sudden burst of defiance. The contributors examine case studies from uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria, Bahrain, Morocco, Jordan, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia, evaluating the various manifestations of political activism within the context of each country’s distinct sociopolitical landscape. The chapters include a country-specific timeline of the first year following the uprisings and conclude with lessons learned. First-hand observations include those of Libyan activist Rihab Elhaj, who reflects on how the revolution gave birth to Libyan civil society, as well as Syrian writer and human rights activist Khawla Dunia, who discusses how Syrians have tried to remain steadfast in their commitment to nonviolent resistance. A foreword by Prince Hicham Ben Abdallah El Alaoui—third in succession to the Moroccan throne and consulting professor at Stanford University’s Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law (CDDRL)—provides a historical overview of activism in the Middle East and North Africa. A postscript from CDDRL director Larry Diamond distinguishes the study of activism from that of democratization. Taking to the Streets will be used in courses on Middle East politics and will be relevant to scholars and the general public interested in democratization, political change, and activism.

Taking to the Streets

This book investigates the role of society groups in the making of the Arab Spring and under which conditions they attained their goals. Democracy and recognition of human rights and fundamental freedoms seem to be the main drives of the people organized in form of civil groups or grassroots movements in the Arab Spring countries; but it is essential to identify when they find it suitable to take such extreme action as taking the streets in an attempt to take down the repressive regimes. It is also important to investigate what methods they relied on in their action and how they challenged the state and the government. A review of the cases in this volume shows that civil society has certain limitations in its action. Analysis of the cases also challenges a commonly held assumption that the Arab world does not have strong and rich civil society tradition. However, for a
lasting success and consolidation of democracy, something more than civil society action is obviously needed. A strong organized opposition and a democratic culture seems to be indispensable elements for the evolution of a democratic order and tradition.

World Report 2016

"Civil society and human rights activists in Saudi Arabia are struggling for greater popular political participation, judicial reform, and an end to discrimination against women and minorities. Saudi authorities have responded by arresting rights defenders and attempting to intimidate, those calling for change. [This report] presents the stories of 11 prominent Saudi civil society and human rights activists, and their struggles to resist government efforts to silence them. Authorities have attempted to stem the growth of independent activism through a sweeping repression campaign, which has included threats, intimidation, investigations, prosecutions, detentions, and long prison terms."--Back cover.

The Changing Middle East

Internet, satellite channels and new technologies are evolving and progressing by the day allowing free flow and exchange of information and ideas. And despite governments’ attempts to frustrate or quash independent players and research centers, the number of independent activists is dramatically increasing and the NGOs are booming. And if corruption were a sensitive subject to governments, it has become a basic commodity on internet websites, NGOs work and discussion programs on satellite channels that are watched and heard by millions across the Arab world. Tackling corruption is no longer a monopoly of government-appointed experts and lawyers. It had reached activists and the societies from all backgrounds. There are few civil society organizations that tackle corruption in this region but are on the rise. In numbers, the Arab civil society in general is witnessing a noticeable vivacity in a number of Arab countries and multiplying by the day despite the restrictive laws and regulations. Certainly, civil society can contribute much to cure corruption, but influential countries such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia do not promote anti-corruption activities or for that matter the establishment of NGOs to fight it. Its main dilemma however is related to finding sources for funding for its activities and development. And while the most common mechanism for encouraging individuals and corporations to make cash and in-kind donations to NGOs is through tax incentives for donors, tax deductions by law are given to individuals who build mosques. Arab countries that do allocate support and tax exemptions to NGOs make sure that recipient societies follow rather than monitor their policies. And though regimes acknowledge the repercussions of rampant corruption on their economies and on foreign investment, they remain hesitant in encouraging the civil society to carry the torch or initiating dramatic changes. In the words of Ahmed Lari, chief of the Kuwaiti Association for Public Funds: Corruption delays development because officials gear budgets toward projects that make them money rather than toward those that can benefit peoples such as education, health and public services.(5)

From the Introduction

Civil society participants have voiced concerns that the environmental problems that were the subject of multilateral environmental agreements negotiated during the 1992 Rio processes are not serving to ameliorate global environmental problems. These concerns raise significant questions regarding the utility of negotiating agreements through the UN. This book elucidates the complexity of how participants engage in these negotiations through the various processes that take place under the auspices of the UN—primarily those related to climate and biological diversity. By taking an ethnographic approach and providing concrete examples of how it is that civil society participants engage in making policy, this book develops a robust sense of the implications of the current terrain of policy-making—both for the environment, and for the continued participation of non-state actors in multilateral environmental governance. Using data gathered at actual negotiations, the book develops concepts such as participation and governance beyond theory. The research uses participant observation ethnographic methods to tie the theoretical frameworks to people’s actual activities as policy is generated and contested. Whereas topics associated with global environmental governance are traditionally addressed in fields such as international relations and political science, this book contributes to developing a richer understanding of the theories using a sociological framework, tying individual activities into larger social relations and shedding light on critical questions associated with transnational civil society and global politics.
Read PDF Civil Society In Saudi Arabia The Power And Challenges Of

Open Networks, Closed Regimes

From late 2010 a series of dramatic and unprecedented events swept across the Middle East and North Africa, toppling several autocratic regimes that had held power for decades and ushering in a new climate of dissent and democratisation. The Arab Revolutions in Context seizes a unique opportunity to reflect on these seismic events, their causes and consequences, and the core issues facing the region as it moves forward. This volume is more than a collection of detailed thematic essays. It situates the Arab Revolutions within their broader contextual backgrounds—showing that a unique set of historical events, as well as local, regional and global dynamics, has converged to provide the catalyst that triggered the recent revolts—and also within a new conceptual framework. The argument here is that the Arab Revolutions pose a very specific challenge to conventional wisdom concerning democracy and democratisation in the Middle East. The Arab Revolutions in Context is the first volume of its kind to address the Arab Revolutions and the varying analyses, debates and discussions that they have stimulated.

Heritage, conservation and good governance

One of the implications of Orientalism is that the Arab world, as a homogenous entity, is often analysed as an anomaly within the international system. This book argues that, despite their differences, societies across the globe ultimately construct their own history according to very similar dynamics and tensions. The methodological approach of this book, using different countries within the Arab world as models, offers the reader an analysis of relations between the elites and their opposition in a variety of settings. A definition of the political structure of each country is drawn from this analysis before potential future scenarios, as according to country specific experts, are proposed. This model provides a useful contribution to students and scholars of political science and international relations. Through providing a comparative study of the political regimes currently operating in the Arab world; their elites, civil society, power resources and political resistance, this book illustrates that despite the image of homogeneity sometimes portrayed by the Arab world, it is the multiplicity of models and heterogeneity of regimes that constitute reality.

Saudi Arabia and the Path to Political Change

As the Internet diffuses across the globe, many have come to believe that the technology poses an insurmountable threat to authoritarian rule. Grounded in the Internet’s early libertarian culture and predicated on anecdotes pulled from diverse political climates, this conventional wisdom has informed the views of policymakers, business leaders, and media pundits alike. Yet few studies have sought to systematically analyze the exact ways in which Internet use may lay the basis for political change. In Open Networks, Closed Regimes, the authors take a comprehensive look at how a broad range of societal and political actors in eight authoritarian and semi-authoritarian countries employ the Internet. Based on methodical assessment of evidence from these cases—China, Cuba, Singapore, Vietnam, Burma, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt—the study contends that the Internet is not necessarily a threat to authoritarian regimes.

Charity in Saudi Arabia

A systematic and up-to-date introduction to politics and society in the Middle East. It examines domestic, regional and global actors and in light of the so-called 'Arab Spring', pays particular attention to the tension between processes of democratization and ongoing authoritarianism.

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