

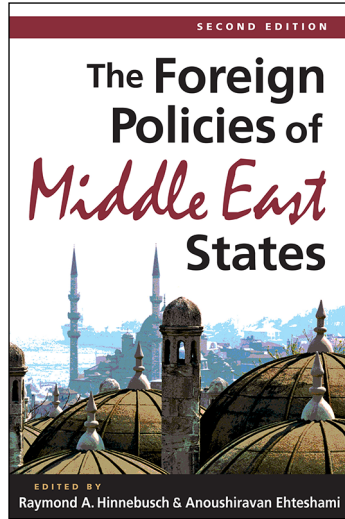
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The Foreign Policies of Middle East States

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edited by
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Contents

<i>Preface</i>	vii
1 Foreign Policy in the Middle East <i>Raymond Hinnebusch</i>	1
2 The Middle East Regional System <i>Raymond Hinnebusch</i>	35
Part 1 Pivotal Arab Powers	
3 The Foreign Policy of Egypt <i>Raymond Hinnebusch and Nael Shama</i>	75
4 The Foreign Policies of Iraq and Lebanon <i>Adham Saouli</i>	105
5 The Foreign Policy of Jordan <i>Curtis R. Ryan</i>	133
6 The Foreign Policy of Qatar <i>Mehran Kamrava</i>	157
7 The Foreign Policy of Saudi Arabia <i>F. Gregory Gause III</i>	185

- 8** The Foreign Policy of Syria
Raymond Hinnebusch 207
- 9** The Foreign Policy of Tunisia
Emma C. Murphy 233

Part 2 Non-Arab Regional Powers

- 10** The Foreign Policy of Iran
Anoushiravan Ehteshami 261
- 11** The Foreign Policy of Israel
Clive Jones 289
- 12** The Foreign Policy of Turkey
Philip Robins 315

Part 3 Conclusion

- 13** Making Foreign Policy in the Midst of Turbulence
Anoushiravan Ehteshami 339
- Glossary of International Relations Terms* 351
- Bibliography* 355
- The Contributors* 379
- Index* 381
- About the Book* 400

1

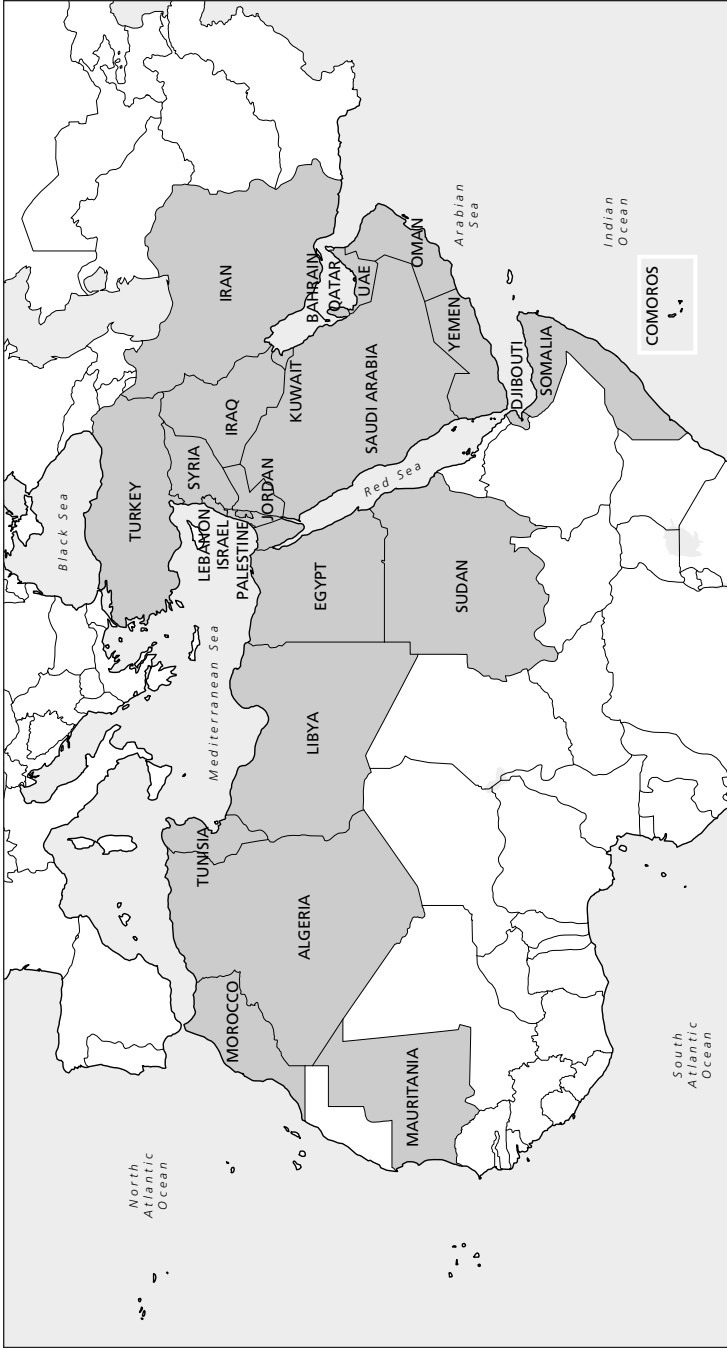
Foreign Policy in the Middle East

Raymond Hinnebusch

Our approach to understanding international politics in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) might be called complex realism.* We start with realist basics because Middle Eastern policymakers are quintessential realists, preoccupied with the threats that are so pervasive in the MENA region. We accept the realist claim that insecurity generates struggles for power and that foreign policy seeks to counter security threats—threats first of all to regime survival but also to state interests such as sovereignty and territorial integrity. Some states also have ambitions for regional leadership, international acceptance, and economic development, but these can only be pursued when security is established.

Yet in regard to the MENA region, several realist assumptions are problematic. First, states are not necessarily cohesive actors. Second, some are so fragmented, or their sovereignty is so compromised by dependency, that their foreign policies might reflect regime interests but less obviously national interests. Third, the environment in which foreign policy makers operate is more mul-

* See the glossary (p. 351) for definitions of international relations (IR) terms.



The Middle East (the Arab League plus Iran, Israel, and Turkey)

tilayered than that depicted by realists. Fourth, aside from the regional interstate system, foreign policies are also affected by the transstate identities and the global hierarchy in which regional states are also embedded. The following framework of analysis takes account of this complexity.

To do this, we need to bring to the analysis the relevant findings of other theories besides realism. While the domain of realism is the regional interstate system, with its balance of (material) power among states, Marxist-inspired structuralism identifies the place of the MENA region in the global system, namely in the economic periphery, where it is dependent on the international capitalist core. Constructivists help us understand the transstate level, where identity matters: in the Middle East, sub- and supra-state identities compete with state identity, inspire transstate movements, and constrain purely state-centric behavior. While realists take state formation for granted, for historical sociology it is changing and contingent, with variations shaping differences in how states respond to international pressures. Finally, as a text on foreign policy, we aim, with foreign policy analysis, to open the black box of decisionmaking, because as realists themselves accept, the way that states respond to environmental pressures is a product of internal leadership and the policy process.

The MENA Environment: The Multiple Determinants of Foreign Policies

Environment determines the challenges that policymakers face, and in MENA this environment is constituted of several distinct levels: the global environment, the interstate environment, and the transstate environment. Moreover, for MENA regimes, the domestic level can be seen as an environment not too dissimilar from these external ones. Here we look in more detail at these distinct levels that make up the MENA environment.

The Global Level: Core-Periphery Relations

The Middle East, according to Leon Carl Brown (1984, 3–5), is a “penetrated system,” one subject to an exceptional level of exter-

nal, chiefly Western, intervention and control. Yet due to its cultural distinctiveness, it is stubbornly resistant to subordination. Western penetration has endured in the postcolonial era, motivated by contiguous location and the exceptional concentration of great power interests—oil, transit routes, Israel, and the like. As Barry Buzan (1991, 441) points out, the Islamic Middle East is the only classical great civilization that has not managed to reestablish itself as a significant world actor since the retreat of Western empires. This defines the parameters within which states of the Middle East must operate and is a major issue in regional politics.

Structuralism, the IR theory most concerned with explaining global core-periphery relations, has been widely used by scholars of the Middle East to understand this reality (Amin 1978; Bromley 1990, 1994; Ismael 1993). According to Johan Galtung's (1971) influential "structural theory of imperialism," the global economy is divided between a core, comprising the dominant Western economies, and a periphery, comprising the economies of the developing world, defined chiefly by a global division of labor in which the production of the latter serves the interests of the former. The periphery states, including those of the Middle East, are thereby subordinated within a global hierarchy, dependent on and tied to the core powers while being only very weakly related to each other. Indeed, the transformation of the Middle East under imperialism produced an outcome that resembles Galtung's model.

First, where once there was a universal trading empire, imperialism fragmented the region into a multitude of relatively weak and, to an extent, artificial states. As Brown (1984) shows, these states, at odds with each other and insecure, sought external patrons and resources for the regional power struggle set in motion by this fragmentation. Especially where the new states emerged as Western protectorates against indigenous opposition, they have remained dependent for their security on the Western global powers long after formal independence. Unlike India and China, the postcolonial state system frustrates rather than restores the precolonial universal state.

Second, the parallel incorporation of the regional economy into the world capitalist system shattered regional economic interdependence and restructured the region into a classic dependent

economy marked by the production and export of primary products (e.g., cotton, oil) and dependence on imports of manufactures and technology (Owen 1981). Oil may be thought to be fundamentally different from other primary products, given the dependence of core economies on it, but in fact the region's export of "recycled petrodollars" has perpetuated overall regional dependency on the import of capital (foreign aid, loans, and investment), and hence high levels of debt, in a way not significantly different from the export of other primary products (Alnasrawi 1991; Kubursi and Mansur 1993).

Economic dependency means that a major function of foreign policy must be to secure resource flows from external sources. Because states' revenue bases are exceptionally dependent on external resources, whether foreign aid, taxes on foreign trade, or oil revenues, and not on domestically raised taxes, states may actually be more responsive to the demands of global powers than to domestic opinion in designing their policies (1995a, 1995b). Indeed, some Middle Eastern states explicitly design their foreign policies to serve economic ends, whether conceding policies favorable to great power patrons in return for aid or merely subordinating nationalism in policymaking to ensuring a favorable investment climate.

Equally important to sustaining the region's subordination to the core is the "bridgehead" (local clients) that the core "establishes in the center of the periphery nation for the joint benefit of both" (Galtung 1971, 81). Specifically, by implanting "client elites" and fostering "compradors"—importer-exporters doing business with the West—Western imperialism created shared economic interests between the core and dominant local landed-commercial classes, while retarding national bourgeoisies with an interest in autonomous national and regional development. Arguably, the current dominant form of this relation is manifested in the way the overwhelming investment of surplus petrodollars by Arab oil monarchies in the West gives their ruling families a much greater stake in the economies of the core than in the MENA region's economy. According to Bruce Moon (1995a), an overlap of local elites' economic interests, worldviews (through Western education), and threat perceptions (fear of radical move-

ments) with those of core elites brings MENA foreign policies into congruence with those of the core.

While shared elite interests are more important in sustaining regional subordination to the core than is crude power, the core great powers, where there is insufficient overlap of interests, use economic punishments—such as withdrawal of aid or economic sanctions—against economically vulnerable regional states (e.g., the attempts by the United States to isolate Iran in an effort to force it to constrain its nuclear program). As a last resort, military force is periodically used to prevent, in Brown's words, any regional power from trying to "organize the system" against the core—as Saddam Hussein found out. Such intervention is consistent with Immanuel Wallerstein's (1974a, 1974b) argument that the maintenance and expansion of the world capitalist system depends on a hegemon, a dominant state that defends the system, breaks down barriers to core-periphery economic links (e.g., promoting economic liberalization), and ensures reliable core access to raw materials and, especially, the cheap energy concentrated in the Middle East. The core-periphery struggle over oil has been a dominant theme in the region's politics, from the West's overthrow of Iran's Mossadeq to the formation of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to the US wars against Iraq.

Structuralists assume that there is an ongoing struggle between imperialism and regional resistance to that imperialism. Indeed, roughly every decade, a revisionist movement has come to power in some MENA state and attempted to challenge the core's hold over the region. Thus, Nasser's Egypt, Baathist Iraq and Syria, and Khomeini's Iran have all challenged the status quo (Nahas 1985; Gause 1991, 1997). But understanding the conditions under which regional resistance is likely to be successful is assisted by bringing in insights from other IR traditions. The realist variable of polarity matters: for example, regional autonomy was facilitated when, during the Cold War, global bipolarity "split the core," so to speak. The superpower rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, which made local clients valuable, actually gave local states leverage over their global patrons, even allowing the "tail to wag the dog" over regional issues where the

client's vital interests were more at stake than those of the global patron. It also allowed local states to extract enhanced military capabilities (arms transfers, training) that would, ironically, make external intervention more costly. Bipolarity arguably gave local states a crucial three-decade window of opportunity to consolidate their autonomy (Gerges 1994). Second, as William Thompson (1970) observed, the lack of horizontal ties in the periphery in Galtung's model applies in the Middle East chiefly at the economic level and has not prevented the survival in the region of dense transstate cultural and political ties—that is, the transstate identity that constructivists insist matters. Identity shared across MENA states provides a potential vehicle for the mobilization of nationwide anti-imperialism by nationalist regimes attempting a collective challenge to the dependency system. Thus, in the 1950s, superpower competition, in limiting the ability of the Western great powers to use military force in the region, created space for Nasser's attempt to use pan-Arab ideology to organize the Arab states, albeit briefly, against Western intrusion.

Finally, state-formation approaches can help us understand the considerable differences in state responses to the core-periphery hierarchy, notably between, on the one hand, the initially radical republics and, on the other, the status quo monarchies. The radical republics were keen to throw off the dependency system. Thus they pursued statist economic development strategies aiming to dilute or diversify dependency and enhance state power capabilities used in support of nationalist foreign policies challenging Western penetration. This was possible only because of alternative Soviet markets and technology available during the Cold War, not to mention Soviet political protection. Moreover, the limits of such strategies were also underlined by the fate of poorer states such as Egypt, where statist economic failure ended in a post-Nasser dependency on Western aid providers, above all the United States, which expected and obtained an end to Egypt's radical nationalism, hence restoring the dominance of the core over this pivotal periphery state. But where oil resources provided a relatively secure economic base, regimes—Libya, Iraq, and Iran—were better positioned to absorb the economic costs of challenging the core's power.

In contrast to the radical regimes, other MENA regimes willingly accepted subordination, becoming clients dependent for economic benefits or protection on a core patron state and, in return, according their patron political support in the periodic regional crises. In this respect, the oil monarchies stood out: their ruling elites, having acquired a stake in the status quo order, notably through the recycling of petrodollars via Western banks and investments, were less interested in challenging the system. This did not exclude that they might seek to enhance their position *within* the system: thus, OPEC, in which oil producers banded together “horizontally,” altered the “feudal” structure of relations and arguably allowed a state like Saudi Arabia, with its pivotal role in stabilizing oil prices, to transform dependency into asymmetrical interdependence with the global core. Even Jordan, literally dependent on its annual budget subsidy to sustain the state, briefly defied its patrons in the Gulf War while Israel, with its unique capacity to penetrate the policy process of the United States as world hegemon, is little constrained by its high dependence on the latter. This record suggests that while some regional states seek to overthrow the core-periphery system in the region while others accept it, all regional states, as realists would expect, put some value on sovereignty, and hence seek either to evade core constraints or to manipulate the core-periphery system, in what Ayooob (2002) called “subaltern realism.”

However, the post-Cold War transformation in the world system, specifically Soviet collapse and unchecked US hegemony, sharply narrowed the possibilities for regional states to defend their autonomy and restored the hierarchic asymmetries of the core-periphery system. Two wars against Iraq gave the United States an unparalleled military presence in the region beginning in the 1990s. Most MENA states became embedded in the patron-client networks that the United States established to co-opt the local allies it needed to control the region (Hinnebusch 2011). In parallel, the globalization of capitalism subordinated local states to the demands of international finance capital as exercised, notably, through the International Monetary Fund. While globalization continued to meet more resistance in the Middle East than elsewhere, notably in the region’s evasion of full economic liber-

alization, increasingly regimes and their associated crony capitalists saw it as an opportunity for increased investment, markets, profits, and self-enrichment.

Still, to the considerable extent that this increasing external penetration generated popular local resistance—notably in the rise of radical political Islam—local elites found themselves caught between external demands and those of their populations. Then, the cautious entry of other great powers, such as China, into the region beginning in the first decade of the twenty-first century, gave local powers marginally more room to maneuver in dealing with the United States, and the new cold war between Washington and Moscow over the Syrian uprising suggested a return to multipolarity in the region. In parallel, the bid of the United States for regional hegemony seemed to falter with its withdrawal from Iraq and its demonstrated inability to contain the effects of the Arab uprisings.

In sum, the impact of the region's position in the world system on the foreign policies of local states is by no means straightforward. Where the interests of local regimes overlap with those of core patron states, these regimes tend to “bandwagon” with their global patron to contain local threats. On the other hand, global penetration generates resistance, and where nationalist movements come to power, they have sought to organize a regional coalition to balance against external powers. However, this is only possible when, simultaneously, the great powers are divided (as in the Cold War) and hegemonic intervention is thus deterred, and when the region is relatively united (the Nasserite 1950s and 1960s) against the outside world.

The Regional System: Identity and Transstate Politics

Foreign policy making in the MENA region is immensely complicated by the high level of incongruence between states and identity. While realism assumes the congruence of national identity and the state (thus nation-states), and hence imagines states as cohesive units whose policymakers pursue the “national interest,” in the MENA region no such national interest can be assumed. Because the borders of MENA states were often arbi-

trarily imposed by Western imperialism at the expense of a pre-existing and relative cultural and linguistic unity, which more or less persists, the mass loyalty to the state, where it corresponds to a definite nation, is, particularly in the Arab world, typically diluted and limited by strong popular identifications with both larger suprastate communities—the Arab nation, the Islamic community—and also with smaller substate identity groups (Korany 1988). As a result, states are highly permeable to transstate movements, and discourse and consensus on the national interest cannot be assumed. Among the consequences of this incongruence are pervasive irredentism and an exceptional impact of suprastate identities on the international relations of the region.

Irredentism. The MENA region suffers from rampant irredentism—dissatisfaction with the incongruity between territorial borders and “imagined communities.” Irredentism is partly rooted in the way substate (ethnic or religious) communities, in frequently spilling across state borders (becoming transstate), stimulate territorial conflicts. States contest each other’s borders or interfere in each other’s “domestic” affairs by supporting dissident sub- or transstate movements, a practice that can escalate into actual military confrontation between them (Gause 1992). Thus, the Kurdish proto-nation spreads across Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria, making these states vulnerable to separatist movements but also allowing them to manipulate Kurdish dissidents against each other. This transstate conflict was an element in the Iran-Iraq conflict of the 1980s and in the Turkish-Syrian confrontation of 1998. Somewhat similarly, the displacement of the Palestinians by the creation of Israel, and Israel’s dissatisfaction with its initial (pre-1967) borders, transmuted an interethnic struggle over Palestine into an Arab-Israeli interstate conflict. Shiite Iran’s effort to export Islamic revolution found a particular response in Shiite communities throughout the region and helped touch off the Iran-Iraq War, the world’s longest-lasting twentieth-century war. In Lebanon, the power of substate (sectarian) identities and the ties of rival sects with kindred communities in other states produced civil war and state collapse, which allowed rival states to make

Lebanon a battlefield and unleashed a major war (1982) between Syria and Israel and chronic conflict on Lebanon's southern border with Israel.

Suprastate identity. While irredentism is a feature of much of the third world, what has made the Middle East unique is its history of powerful suprastate identities and hence its suprastate politics of pan-Arabism and pan-Islam. The power of suprastate identity is most apparent in the Arab states, which share a high degree of linguistic and cultural homogeneity. The common Arabic language—the critical ingredient of nationhood—has, owing to a standard newspaper and radio Arabic, become more homogeneous, stunting the evolution of national dialects as the linguistic basis of separate nations. Arab satellite television reinvigorated a sense of shared experience and identity. This made the Arab world a “vast sound chamber” in which ideas and information circulated widely (Noble 1991). Cross-border immigration was continual: in the 1950s in the form of major flows of Palestinian refugees; since the 1970s in the form of labor migration to the Gulf's oil-producing states. Tim Niblock (1990) argued that the interests of the separate Arab states were deeply intertwined by labor supply, investment funds, security, water, communications routes, and the Palestine issue. The states of the Arab world were less well represented by realism's impenetrable “billiard balls” than as a set of interconnected organisms separated only by porous membranes (Noble 1991).

As a result, transstate identities—Arabism and Islam—were, for many Arabs, more emotionally compelling than identification with the state. According to 1978 survey data, 78 percent of Arabs believed that they constituted a nation and 53 percent believed that state boundaries were an artificial product of divide-and-rule imperialism (Korany 1987, 54–55). Historical memories of greatness under unity, and the experience that the Arabs were successful when they acted together (e.g., the 1973 war and use of oil as a weapon) and readily dominated when they were divided, kept the ideal of Arabism alive. So did common grievances: the loss of Palestine was seen as a common Arab disaster; the 1967 war shamed all Arabs, not just the defeated frontline states, while the

relative Arab successes in the 1973 war inspired solidarity across the region. The US wars on Iraq aroused hostility across the Arab world. At the level of formal ideology, this sentiment was manifest in the doctrines of Arab nationalism, which viewed all Arabic-speakers as forming a nation whose states, at a minimum, ought to act together for common interests, or be constitutionally confederated, or, in Arab nationalism's most ambitious form, Baathism, be merged in a single state embracing this nation. While such ambitions have been eclipsed in recent decades, most Arab constitutions still define the nation as the Arab nation (Ayubi 1995). As such, the Arab world is, according to Eberhard Kienle (1990), a system of territorial states, not—so far at least—a system of nation-states.

Identity variance. There is, however, considerable variation among MENA states in the relative level of incongruence between territory and identity and therefore in the different ways in which multiple levels of identity—substate, state, and suprastate—coexist. At one end of the spectrum are the non-Arab states whose borders resulted in large part from indigenous agency; hence, the incongruity between state and identity in those states is far less salient than in the Arab world. Turkey and Iran had long histories as centers of empires and constructed modern nations around their dominant ethnic-linguistic cores with considerable success, despite the unfinished task of integrating a multitude of minorities, above all the Kurds. Israel's very identity as a state was inseparable from its role as a homeland for Jews, despite its Arab minority and diverse ethnic origins.

Even in the Arab world, identification with the territorial state is more robust in some countries, and although there are everywhere multiple and often-competing identities, one can identify a continuum defined by the relative strength of identification with the state. At one pole are the Gulf states such as Kuwait, where survey data collected by Tawfiq Farah and Feisal Salam (1980) showed that state identification came first (24 percent of respondents), then religious affiliation (14 percent), and Arabism last. The geographically separate Maghreb (North Africa) always identified less with Arab nationalism and more with local statehood

(though a distinct Tunisian identity and Morocco's long history under an independent dynasty did not prevent the arousal of populations during the Arab-Israel and Iraq wars). Iliya Harik (1987) argued that where minority sects historically established autonomous regimes, as in Yemen, Oman, and Lebanon, identifications with the state were stronger.

Egypt is located in the middle of the continuum, with its strong sense of territorial identity based on the Nile Valley and its history of statehood predating the Arabs. Yet Egyptian identity has been Arab-Islamic in content, with attempts to construct alternative definitions of Egyptianness—"pharaonic" or "Mediterranean"—failing and Egyptians seeing their country as the natural leader of the Arabs (Hinnebusch 1982). Egypt's strong sense of kinship with the Arab world meant that decisions taken purely on grounds of state interest, such as Sadat's separate peace with Israel, membership in the Gulf War coalition against Iraq, and collaboration with Israel in the siege of Gaza—which would be perfectly natural were Egypt a consolidated nation-state—were in fact damaging to regime legitimacy.

At the other end of the continuum, in many Arab Mashreq (Fertile Crescent) cases, where externally imposed borders corresponded to no history of independent statehood, much less of nationhood, suprastate identities were strongest. It is no accident that the main pan-Arab nationalist movement, Baathism, was born in Syria and was most successful there and in Iraq and Jordan. If historical and geohistorical Syria (*bilad ash-sham*) might have supported a viable nationhood, its fragmentation into four ministates (Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine) prevented the truncated rump from becoming a strong uncontested focus of identity. The attempt to generate a separate non-Arab Syrian national identity by the Syrian Social Nationalist Party came to nothing, and for most Syrians the content of Syrian identity was Arab. Iraq was the opposite case, a state artificially constructed by imperialism that threw together communally different Ottoman provinces, in which, thereafter, the political dominance of the Sunnis was contested by the Shiite majority and the non-Arab Kurds, and where a national identity acceptable to all substate groups remained illusive.

Identity has also varied over time. As Michael Barnett (1998) argues, identity is “constructed” and the interaction of Arab leaders determined the evolution of identity between competing poles of pan-Arabism and sovereignty. From the 1950s through the 1970s, pan-Arabism was at its political height. In this period, major Arab states sought all-Arab leadership, competing to persuade public opinion by “outbidding” rivals in promotion of Arab causes. The conduct of the game—with Arab states pressuring or threatening the elites of rival states by making pan-Arab ideological appeals to the populations of the latter—would, in a consolidated nation-state system, be seen as interference in domestic affairs and have little chance of success. However, in the Arab world, this game was natural and successful precisely because of the power of supranational identity, especially as deployed by Nasser’s Egypt. Even if leaders, particularly Nasser, tried to manipulate pan-Arabism to serve state interests, pan-Arab movements were autonomous and no mere instruments of regimes. Indeed, such movements used Nasser to bolster their local standing as much as he used them, and they constantly pressured him into increasing Egypt’s commitment to the Arab cause against his own better judgment. The outbidding of rival leaders established pan-Arab norms of behavior: states perceived to be violating these norms became more vulnerable to subversion, while states perceived as living up to these norms were able to maintain pan-Arab leadership. Even Nasser felt constrained to satisfy the expectations of his pan-Arab constituency, which entrapped him and his rivals in a dynamic of nationalist outbidding against Israel that led to the 1967 war, at great cost to state interests.

The interactions of leaders also began to “deconstruct” pan-Arabism, so to speak, which became especially evident in the 1980s as interstate disagreements over the extent and nature of pan-Arab commitments, as well as the failures of Arab unity projects and of Arab collective institutions, disillusioned and demobilized Arab publics, thereby reducing pan-Arab constraints on state leaders. Ironically, the use of Arabism by ambitious leaders to subvert rivals only heightened the sense of threat from other Arab states and led state elites to promote distinctive state identi-

ties and the norm of state sovereignty to legitimize their state-centric behavior. The outcome was, according to Barnett (1998), “normative fragmentation” that broke the hegemony of pan-Arabism. In parallel, as, after 1975, the oil boom gave many Arab regimes a greater capacity to give their citizens a material stake in their states, identification with the territorial state increased, although it could not be consolidated absent democratization giving citizens the rights needed to feel the state was “theirs.”

In these conditions pan-Arabism survived but had to adapt to the consolidation of sovereign states. The Arab League’s charter had been predicated on respect for the sovereignty of individual Arab states *and* the belief that they should act together for common interests defined by their Arab identity. As Avraham Sela (1998) showed, the Arab summit system, in which Arab leaders regularly met to seek consensus on all-Arab issues, institutionalized a version of Arab solidarity more compatible with state sovereignty. When state sovereignty and security were jeopardized by pan-Arabism, leaders increasingly ignored it. Yet because state identities still could not wholly substitute for Arab-Islamic identity, regimes were still keen to be seen as acting for common Arab or Islamic interests and had to disguise or justify their behavior when they ignored these interests. Sadat’s separate peace with Israel, the classic case of Arab collective interests being sacrificed to (Egyptian) reasons of state, was legitimized not just by appeal to the doctrine of sovereignty but also by the claim that Egypt was leading the Arab world to peace.

To the extent that pan-Arabism declined, it left an ideological vacuum filled by the rise in the 1980s of another suprastate identity, political Islam. Islamic movements were, of course, no mere substitute for pan-Arabism; they concentrated more on creating Islamic societies within individual states than seeking a pan-Islamic order, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, in its charter, acknowledged state sovereignty. However, although secular Arabism and political Islam were ideological rivals, their foreign policy orientations largely reinforced each other: both prioritized loyalty to the Arab or Islamic community over citizenship of individual states, and both rejected Western imperialism and the legitimacy of Israel.

Beginning in the 1990s, the power of suprastate identities went through cycles of decline, usually when Arab states violated Arab norms or fought each other, and revival, usually in time of Israeli or Western attacks on Arab countries. The Arab Spring was bound also to have a major impact on identity, but initially it was ambiguous. The contagion of the uprisings throughout the Arab world reaffirmed Arabness, but protesters' demands for democracy were state-centric, and their invitations to Western powers to intervene against their own governments were a violation of Arab norms. Transstate Islam, whether of the Muslim Brotherhood or al-Qaeda variety, initially attained new power, and the latter, particularly in the most artificial fragmented states of the Levant, undertook insurgencies across and in contempt of state boundaries. Yet the splintering of Islam into warring Shia and Sunni, moderate and radical variants, also debilitated its unifying potential.

From the beginning, struggles over identity were by no means detached from the material structures in which the region was embedded. On the one hand, attempts by regional states to use suprastate identity to establish regional hegemony were chiefly aimed at challenging the subordination of the region to the global core. At the same time, the failures of such efforts were in large part a consequence of the permanent material consequences of the core's imposition of the states system on the region—both of state territorial boundaries and the simultaneous shattering of preexisting economic interdependencies.

In sum, multiple identities and the embedding of the individual MENA states in suprastate Arab and Islamic communities have implications for makers of regional foreign policy. At the leadership level, as Kienle observed (1990), Arab leaders have treated the Arab world as a single arena of leadership competition, and the power of suprastate Arab identity made pan-Arab leadership ambitions seem natural to the leaders of the main Arab states, notably Egypt and Iraq. After pan-Arabism declined and was, to an extent, superseded by pan-Islam, Turkey and Iran, sharing Islamic suprastate identity with the Arab world, were empowered to also pursue ambitions for regional leadership. Second, mass publics have believed that policymakers' pursuit of particular state

interests should be qualified by the obligation to defend shared Arab-Islamic interests, such as the Palestine cause and autonomy from the West. As late as 2006, more respondents in Arab countries still thought elites should act in the Arab or Muslim interest (46 percent) than in the state interest (42 percent); by 2009 this had dropped to 43 percent and by 2011 to 30 percent, with 58 percent thinking state interest should come first, possibly indicative of the attrition of the pan-Arab generation (Telhami, 2006, 2011a). However, the result was still unique in world politics and, as Bahgat Korany (1987) put it, ruling elites remained caught between *raison d'état* (defense of the sovereignty of their states) and *raison de la nation* (pan-Arabism) in foreign policy making.

The Regional System: Interstate Relations

According to neorealism, the states system is the main determinant of the behavior of its constituent states, its “anarchy” imposing security-maximizing behavior on all. MENA states operate in a particularly anarchic regional system, with border conflicts and irredentism built in at its formation and containing two of the world’s most durable conflict zones, the Arab-Israeli and the Gulf arenas, where war is a regular occurrence. Moreover, Avner Yaniv (1987) argues that transnational norms restraining interstate violence are little institutionalized in the MENA region. This, in turn, is arguably because the conditions that liberals expect will generate norms taming the power struggle—democratic cultures and economic interdependence—are absent or weak in the region. Both economic dependence on the core states and autarky-seeking neomercantilist reactions against economic dependence stunted the regional economic interdependence that liberalism expects to generate shared interests in the peaceful resolution of conflicts. As such, as realists expect, security threats are necessarily the first priority of makers of MENA foreign policy and power-balancing against threats pervasive in the region.

There is, however, considerable variation in balancing strategies, determined, for realists, by a state’s position in the balance of power. The strategic importance or vulnerability of a state’s geographical location shapes the main threats and opportunities it

faces, and contiguity typically makes neighbors the most salient threat to most states. A state's power assets are, for realists, the main determinant of its likely security strategy. As Steven Walt (1987) argues, the modal strategy is a "defensive realist" accumulation of sufficient military power and alliance partners to deter threats. However, states with greater power resources (wealth, population, size, social coherence) are more likely to have activist foreign policies and may adopt an "offensive realist" pursuit of regional hegemony, including also the projection of soft power from a claim to act for wider regional interests. The non-Arab states have generally enjoyed the most material assets, notably Turkey and Iran, from their size and historical coherence, and Israel, from its special external connections; among the Arab states, Egypt, due to its population size, centrality, and cohesion, has always been the potential hegemon. On the other hand, weak states are more likely to concentrate on defending their sovereignty, often seeking protection by bandwagoning with an external great power. Where states are so weak that the major immediate threat is from internal opposition, they may seek support from such a patron to deal with both internal and regional threats, in what Steven David (1991) called "omni-balancing."

Realism also argues that the basis of order in international politics is the balance of power: the pervasive balancing behavior of states constitutes an equilibrium mechanism preserving the state system against revisionist challenges. Thus, according to Dankwart Rustow (1984, 598), "while many Middle Eastern countries individually nurse expansionist or hegemonic ambitions, all of them collectively, by their preference for the weaker side and their readiness to shift alignments regardless of ideology, offer strong support for the status quo." For neorealists, the state system itself tends to "socialize" its constituent parts into playing by realist rules, "teaching" leaders not only to balance against threats but also to prudently match their goals to their capabilities (Waltz 1979, 74–77). Evidence suggests that, indeed, the logic of the state system increasingly impressed itself on Middle Eastern foreign policy makers (Taylor 1982) even when realist rules were violated. Thus, the pursuit of domestically driven ideological policies to the neglect of the power balance, notably the pan-Arab

outbidding on the eve of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war or Islamic Iran's attempt to export revolution, led to military disasters (Stein 1993) and the rise in revisionist states of new leaders socialized into more "realistic" behavior. This underlines the neorealist dictum that even if leaders and domestic forces determine what a state wishes or tries to do, it is the system level—the balance of power—that determines what it can do.

Walt argues that realist rules hold despite the special feature of the Arab state system, namely shared Arab identity. In his classic realist study *The Origin of Alliances* (1987), Walt shows that, even at the height of pan-Arabism, which enjoined inter-Arab cooperation, Arab states widely balanced against each other and specifically against Egyptian hegemony. Not only did the conservative monarchies do so, but also even pan-Arab regimes in Syria and Iraq balanced against their ideologically natural Egyptian leader because the threat to their sovereignty from Nasser overrode all ideological considerations. In the longer term, balancing took the form of domestic statebuilding to make regimes less permeable to pan-Arab ideological subversion. In time, pan-Arab transstate movements, having failed to overthrow the state system, gradually declined; states had outlived their main nonstate challengers.

Once ideological revisionism is replaced by pragmatic geopolitics, the balance of power, other things being equal, is more likely to be stable. However, in the MENA region, as its states became consolidated and increasingly well armed during the 1970s and 1980s, this very state strengthening enhanced the potential threat that each posed to the other. With domestic opposition more manageable, states could mobilize the support and resources to build up their power and, if they wished, pursue external ambitions. Regional order was therefore dependent on the balance of power, but unfortunately this balance proved widely unstable. Power imbalances were built into the regional system by the arbitrary boundary-drawing that created nonviable or ministates (around oil wells as in Kuwait, or as buffers as in Jordan) alongside large neighbors dissatisfied with these boundaries. Also, the unevenness of state formation meant that states that consolidated earlier, notably the non-Arab states, had a power

advantage over the later-developing Arab states. The power balance was also repeatedly upset by the rapid differential growth in the relative power of certain states owing to their exceptional access to oil revenues and foreign aid and hence to arms deliveries from external powers. Thus, Israel and Iraq achieved power superiority over neighbors, providing the occasion—when combined with irredentist leaderships—for, altogether, four wars: Israel's 1967 preemptive war, its 1982 invasion of Lebanon, and Iraq's two Gulf wars. In the end, power balances were restored, but only after very costly wars: balancing preserved the system but had not kept the peace.

Realism has its limits for foreign policy analysis, and neo-classical realism indeed acknowledges (Lobell, Ripsman, and Taliaferro 2009) that one cannot deduce state behavior from the systemic structure (particularly given its multilayered complexity in the MENA region). Thus, how states respond to external threats and opportunities varies according to internal factors, notably elite threat perceptions and the capacity of institutions to mobilize power. Variations in elite perceptions suggest that threats, far from being self-evident as realism too often assumes, are, as constructivism insists, shaped by identity, which determines which states are “friends” and which are “enemies.” Identity itself, however, is fluid, constructed, and highly contested in the domestic political arena. As regards institutions, where regimes are institutionally consolidated, society is a source of resources and support that leaders can mobilize for the conduct of assertive foreign policies. Where regimes are unconsolidated, society is a source of internal threats that have to be “omni-balanced” against. Thus, to understand states' foreign policies, one must understand the internal features of the state.

State Formation and Foreign Policy Tangents

If the external environment of a regime determines the kind of challenges it faces, state features, namely the level of state formation and the social composition of ruling coalitions, are major determinants of states' response to these challenges. In turn, these

features of the states shape their interactions and thus the character of the regional system. This is in line with historical sociology's view that it is through the interaction of system and states that the two are co-constituted.

Level of state formation determines the main threats that foreign policy is used to manage. When the consolidation of states in the regional system is low, the main threats come from within and foreign policy is used to counter domestic opposition (e.g., by obtaining resources from a patron or generating legitimacy from nationalist rhetoric). In periods of low state formation, policy-makers are buffeted by contrary pressures from penetration of their states by the core powers and by regional transstate forces. When state formation is high enough that internal threats are manageable, the domestic environment becomes a source of support and resources, and if military capabilities of all states advance sufficiently to create a security dilemma, the main threat comes from neighbors; hence foreign policy deals with external threats and ambitions. State formation (together with territorial size and resource endowment) also affects a state's power position, since only relatively consolidated states have the resources to pursue military buildups and to mobilize their populations for the external power struggle. High levels of state formation depend on inclusion of social forces in strong institutions and on enough coincidence of identity and state boundaries to legitimize regimes. Unfortunately, few states of the Middle East enjoy these conditions, although state formation level is a matter of degree and has varied over time and among states.

The social basis of state formation determines the initial direction of foreign policies, notably determining the main distinction among MENA states: revisionist versus status quo orientation. This is shaped in large part by whether the social forces incorporated into a regime's ruling coalition are privileged or plebeian and the extent to which identity is satisfied or frustrated by state boundaries. Where identity is frustrated, as in Syria, the outcome is more likely to be a revisionist foreign policy than where, as in Turkey, it is relatively satisfied. Revolutions bringing plebeian counter-elites to power are likely to be propelled by some combination of internal class conflict and identity frustration; the

endemic revisionism in the Middle East is most likely to find expression when plebeian outsiders come to power in such revolutions. The importance of the social composition of the ruling coalition can be seen from the fact that the same states may change from supporters to challengers of the status quo, as Iran and Iraq did after their respective revolutions changed the class composition of their ruling coalitions.

The main historical distinction between the Arab regimes has been associated with different kinds of ruling coalition, with the Western-aligned monarchies incorporating privileged, status quo, landed and tribal elites, and the republics initially incorporating revisionist alliances of the middle-class with the peasantry. Such initial differential social composition set these regimes on contrary status quo or revisionist foreign policy tangents, but this tended to be altered over time by pressures on the regimes from the environment (to become more pragmatic) or by changes in social composition (as when “embourgeoized” formerly radical elites acquired a stake in the status quo).

The main phases of MENA state formation (more relevant for the Arab world than for the non-Arab states), distinguished by differences in levels of state consolidation and in dominant orientations, are outlined in the following section. State formation followed a bell-shaped curve, increasing to a peak in 1985 and then declining. The impact of global and transstate forces on the regional system is minimized at higher levels of state formation and accentuated in periods of its decline.

The first phase, the period of oligarchy (1945–1955), comprising the initial post-independence years, was, in the Arab core and Iran, an era of weak states, governed by externally imposed or narrowly based oligarchs, landed magnates, or tribal chiefs, with regimes low in institutionalization and inclusion, and chiefly driven by fear of domestic instability from publics inflamed by transstate nationalism. In foreign policy, regimes either relied on external protection against such threats—embedding themselves deeper into the dependency web—or sought legitimacy through anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist rhetoric. By contrast, in Turkey and Israel, states that were more consolidated and in which institutionalization, combined with democratization, gave leaders sub-

stantial legitimacy and hence autonomy in foreign policy making, classic reason of state prevailed, although Turkey's satisfaction with its borders made it status quo while Israel's dissatisfaction made it revisionist.

The second phase, the period of populist revolution (1956–1970), featured widespread rebellion by emerging middle classes against imperialism and oligarchy that generated increasing praetorian instability. By the 1960s (after 1956 in Egypt), statebuilding was under way, but the different origins and initial social bases of regimes dictated quite different statebuilding strategies, which biased foreign policy in different directions.

In the Arab monarchies, state formation took place under Western patronage in small, geopolitically weak, and nationally unmobilized tribal societies. The main threat to regimes came from dissatisfied, if small, emerging middle classes. Domestic vulnerability was contained by traditional (patriarchal and Islamic) legitimacy. Regimes omni-balanced with the Western great powers for protection from interlinked domestic and regional threats. In Iran's larger, more mobilized society, the Shah had to construct a more elaborate technology of control. In many cases, old regimes were overthrown in revolutions or revolutionary coups.

In the opposite strategy, that of the authoritarian-nationalist republics, regimes originating in middle-class overthrow of Western client elites sought mobilization of countervailing popular support and dilution of dependency on the West. Wealth redistribution (e.g., land reform, nationalizations) garnered mass support, and public sector–led development bolstered autonomy of the West and enabled regimes to access aid, markets, and protection from the Eastern bloc. Because the military was the main vehicle of factional politics, and because regimes lacked a secure social base in a dominant class, they remained unstable. Hence legitimacy was sought through revisionist-oriented Arab nationalist foreign policies.

The main features of this period were the attempt of Nasser's Egypt to roll back Western hegemony in the region and the so-called Arab cold war (Kerr 1971) between the anti-imperialist republics and the pro-Western monarchies, reflective of the dif-

ferential social bases of the regimes. Egypt, as the first and most successful of the republics to consolidate its regime, was able to stimulate republican revolutions elsewhere, most successfully where identity had been frustrated by artificial boundaries or where oligarchs had alienated the middle class by monopolizing property and opportunity. In tribal societies, monarchies were less vulnerable and able to resist revolution. Interstate politics chiefly took the form of the manipulation of discourse wars and transstate movements against rival regimes.

The third phase, the period of authoritarian state consolidation (1970–1990), was apparent by the mid-1970s, as both kinds of regimes, monarchies and republics, sufficiently built institutions and included constituencies to reduce domestic instability (Dawisha and Zartman 1988; Mufti 1996). The initial incentive for statebuilding, to overcome domestic instability, was reinforced by the increased frequency of war; booming oil revenues and continued superpower patronage provided the means.

Statebuilders followed neopatrimonial strategies that blurred the distinction between monarchies and republics: substate sectarian, tribal, and family *assabiya* (social solidarity) was used to construct webs of trusted followers at the state center who commanded the instruments of power. These instruments, which included bureaucratic structures, ruling parties with controlled corporatist associations, and modern means of coercion and surveillance, dramatically expanded and increasingly penetrated society.

The attachment to states of strategic class interests anchored them against the winds of transstate popular sentiment. Both monarchies and republics gave birth to state-dependent bourgeoisies, closely linked to officialdom, which had a stake in the status quo. Stability was also advanced by incorporation of a sufficient segment of the middle and lower strata through state employment. In the authoritarian republics, the coincidence in the 1960s and 1970s of economic growth and redistributive policies—land reform, state employment—gave these strata some stake in the state. In the oil monarchies, command of oil revenues enabled the state to incorporate the minority of the population who held citizenship as a privileged constituency with interests to

protect against the possible demands of migrant labor for similar rights. The monarchies also used the transfer of aid to conservatize the radical states.

The oil resources accruing to states provided them with the resources—without resort to taxation and accountability—to establish substantial autonomy from society. Autonomous elites, balancing above social forces and presiding over states less vulnerable to transstate ideology, generally attained greater freedom from domestic pressures to conduct foreign policies according to geopolitical reason of state. Political elites still legitimized their states in terms of suprapstate Arabism and Islam, which, however, actually strengthened the capacity of individual states to pursue reason of state, and thus Saudi Islam as well as Syrian and Iraqi Arab nationalism legitimized foreign policies that were largely expressive of state interests. Despite continuing differences between some republics and monarchies, the subordination of ideology to geopolitics drove enough convergence in their foreign policies to end the Arab cold war. In addition, several regimes built large, well-equipped armies that posed increasing threats to their neighbors and sparked several wars, particularly on the Arab/non-Arab fault lines (Arab-Israeli, Iran-Iraq). Increased threats from neighbors stimulated classic realist power-balancing.

The fourth phase, the period of post-populist authoritarianism (1990–2010), already starting in the 1980s, emerged fully in the 1990s with the end of bipolarity. The exposure of grave vulnerabilities in the newly consolidated states—economic crisis and loss of Soviet patronage in the republics, and military shock (the Iranian threat, Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait) in the monarchies—exposed the limits of regional autonomy and induced movement toward the reintegration of regional states into the US-led global capitalist system.

The “overdevelopment” of the state in the 1970s, encouraged by the oil boom and the exploitation of economies for military ends, translated into growing economic constraints once the oil boom ended (1986). The most visible policy response, especially in the republics, was *infitah*—economic liberalization. A consequent change in the social base of the state was manifested in rulers’ moves toward sharing power with the bourgeoisie and

excluding the popular strata, combined with the abandonment of distributive populism. Islamist opposition mobilized the marginalized victims of economic liberalization. But the Islamist movements, unable to make Islamic revolution against still-strong state apparatuses (with Islamic rebellions smashed in Algeria, Egypt, and Syria), attempted incremental Islamization from below. The reversion to economic dependency of many post-populist republics on Western financial institutions was accompanied by a moderation or end of nationalist foreign policies and by realignment toward the West. In the oil monarchies, there was a much more overt reliance on Western military protection. Overall, balancing turned into bandwagoning with the core.

The fifth phase, the age of Arab uprisings (2011–), has been a reaction to the authoritarian, West-centric, and inegalitarian rule of the post-populist era, a revolt manifest in the overthrow of presidential monarchies and initial empowerment of the outsiders, Islamic movements. In the age of state consolidation, fragile states had been stabilized by the protection of their sovereignty under bipolarity and rent from the oil boom. Now, however, they were again highly vulnerable to external penetration. On the one hand, economic globalization, deployed by the global core, reduced the ability of regimes to provide welfare to mass publics (owing to neoliberal structural adjustment). In parallel, a discourse of democracy and human rights was transmitted by the new information technology that encouraged anti-regime political mobilization by educated, Internet-connected, middle-class youth who had absorbed Western liberal ideology. Regimes thought to be highly durable suddenly seemed quite fragile, although the “deep state” would in some cases prove more resilient than initially appeared, notably in Egypt.

In the short term, at least, the result of the Arab uprisings was further state weakening, especially in the more fragmented societies. This was most obvious in Syria, which experienced civil war, but in Yemen, Iraq, and Libya the capacity of central governments also fell and their monopoly on violence and territorial control was damaged by the rise of armed insurgent groups. The uprisings led to considerable political mobilization, but the uprising states lacked the stable institutions necessary to incorporate

this mobilization despite holding relatively free elections to assemblies. Moreover, publics became sharply divided along sectarian and Islamist versus secular lines, and between remnants of the old state establishment and radicals wanting more thorough revolution, producing a three-sided struggle over the very rules of political order. Contesting elites still dominated, but the masses were now a key resource in intra-elite power struggles. This resulted in a renewal of “praetorianism,” in which politics was played out through street protests, riots, military intervention, and elections, without agreed rules of the game. Where the central power survived, hybrid regimes combined authoritarianism with elections in which rivals used identity politics to mobilize constituencies. Where it collapsed, mass praetorianism took the form of armed social movements and warlords, as in Libya and Syria.

The republics that faced uprisings were too fragmented to produce coherent foreign policies. Rather, the weakening of the state, combined with the omni-balancing of rival elites seeking external resources and support in their internal power struggles, made the republics battlegrounds of “competitive interference” by the non-Arab states (Iran, Israel, and Turkey), by the Arab monarchies that had escaped the uprisings, and by global powers. State weakening reempowered transstate forces, but they promoted highly divisive Shia-Sunni discourse wars rather than the inclusive rhetoric of the earlier pan-Arab period. In parallel, dependence on the international financial institutions and core powers actually deepened as economies were destabilized.

The Intrastate Level: The Black Box of Policymaking

While the environment and state formation may determine regimes’ challenges and bias their responses, much variance remains unaccounted for since, in any given situation, there are always multiple possible choices. Moreover, in the Middle East, pressures from the environment often pull in contradictory directions; hence, to obtain one value often requires giving up another. Thus, security sought through foreign protection may sacrifice foreign policy autonomy, and legitimacy from anti-imperialism

clashes with economic dependency on the global economic powers (wealth). Governments must mediate, Janus-faced, between internal and external demands, with rational moves in playing the game at one level being often impolitic on another. To understand choices we must open the “black box” of policymaking in which policies are drafted and decisions are made and implemented. Here the main tradition, foreign policy analysis, is mostly concerned with agency, and specifically with how the features of the policy process enhance or detract from the ability of states to cope with their environments. How regimes prioritize and make trade-offs in any given situation will be affected by three components of the decisionmaking process: foreign policy role, the balance of power among interests in the foreign policy process, and leadership.

Foreign Policy Role

A state’s foreign policy role implies an identity and defines orientations toward neighbors (friend or enemy), toward great powers (threat or patron), and toward the state system (revisionist or status quo). Roles are constructed by elites in interaction with other states and with their publics (likely reflecting the interests of dominant social forces in the regime). Role also includes a *modus operandi* that incorporates experience (learning, accumulated memory) of state elites in balancing among economic needs, geopolitical imperatives, domestic opinion, and state capabilities (Holsti 1970; Dessouki and Korany 1991).

Geopolitical position has a major impact on foreign policy role conception. Thus Egypt’s centrality has led its decisionmakers to seek influence in the Arab East, North Africa, and the Nile Valley. But its role altered from defender of the Arab revolution in the 1960s to status quo power (mediator between Israel and the Arabs and then bulwark against Islamic extremism) in the 1980s and 1990s, arguably paralleling the consolidation of a new bourgeois ruling class. The frustration of identity may also produce enduring roles: artificial or truncated states such as Syria and Iraq have sought protection and fulfillment in a wider Arab role. Israel’s role conception as a besieged refuge for world Jewry

imparts both insecurity and an irredentist need for more territory and water.

Although role is manipulated by elites, once it is constructed it sets standards of legitimacy that constrain elites and shape the socialization of the next generation of policymakers. It may therefore impart a certain consistency to foreign policy despite changes in leadership and environment. Role does not, however, provide ready-made decisions, since its application in different and unique situations allows for differences in interpretation of role or role conflict, which must be settled in the foreign policy process.

Power Concentration and Decisionmaking

When elites disagree, the internal power distribution, defined by the state's governing institutions, decides policy outcomes. This distribution may affect the rationality of decisions—for example, whether regimes over- or underreact to threats. Excessive autonomy of the leader from accountability risks the pursuit of idiosyncratic policies that may be irrational, while excessive fragmentation among branches of the bureaucracy may produce policy incoherence.

In the authoritarian republics, the leader-dominant model long prevailed. Foreign policy was constitutionally the reserved sphere of the chief executive, who was also the commander in chief of the armed forces, although in reality presidential power depended on how secure the president's position was. Consolidated presidencies could make bold or risky decisions, such as Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal, Sadat's separate peace with Israel, and Saddam's invasion of Kuwait. In Arab monarchies, extended ruling families constituted informal consultative groups with which the monarch was expected to consult, and decision-making tended to be based on consensus (the lowest common denominator) and hence was likely to be cautious and status quo. In pluralistic states, such as Israel, the prime minister had to keep senior cabinet colleagues satisfied, and in Turkey a national security council under the president assembled the cabinet and military chiefs. Where such more collegial leadership prevailed, more information and input potentially allowed for better policies

unless it was vulnerable to “groupthink” and the resultant failure to imagine new options. Fragmented leaderships, as in Iran, tended to zigzag depending on which faction was in power. If none was in charge, effective foreign policy making seemed to be frustrated when, for example, the foreign ministry’s effort to improve relations with the West were frustrated by the contrary policies of the Revolutionary Guard or the intelligence ministry.

*The Idiosyncratic Variable:
How Much Does the Leader Count?*

In regimes where power is personalized and concentrated, and especially in times of fluidity or crisis, the leader’s personal style, values, perceptions—and misperceptions—can make an enormous difference (Dawisha 1988). Whether this is a liability depends in part on the experience and character of the leader. Thus, while Syria and Iraq were long ruled by branches of the same Baath party and had similar regimes consisting of leader, army, and party, big differences between the styles of Assad (the cautious and calculating general) and Saddam (risk-taking former street fighter) explained key differences in their foreign policies (along with the greater resources available to oil-rich Iraq and the formidable Israeli neighbor faced by Assad).

Difference in leadership recruitment systems may make a difference. Where leaders climbed to power in a struggle, as in early phases of authoritarian republics, they were often more competitive and power-hungry personalities than those who inherited a crown. Leadership recruitment through competitive elections is supposed to make for more accountable and hence more constrained leaders, but in the Middle East, democratically elected leaders are not always less bellicose. In Turkey it was elected politicians (Adnan Menderes, Turgut Özal) who occasionally departed from the cautious policies of the career bureaucracy, while in Israel, where electoral success usually required being seen as tough on the Arabs, it was peace diplomacy, not war-making, that was most constrained. However, periodic competitive elections do allow for alternation between more and less hawkish governing teams, something seen in both Israel and Iran.

Because leaders and their bureaucracies tend to be too invested in existing policies, change in failing policy is most likely when an external shock is accompanied or followed by leadership change, with the new leader more willing to reinterpret the situation. With the change from Nasser to Sadat and from Khomeini to Rafsanjani, successors, although building on alterations already initiated, ended up turning their predecessors' policies upside down.

Leadership miscalculations have had enormous consequences for the region, including Nasser's brinkmanship on the eve of the 1967 war and Saddam's failure to anticipate the reaction to his invasion of Kuwait. The diplomatic skills and bargaining strategies of leaders, including intangibles such as "credibility" and "will," can also make a decisive difference. Thus Shibley Telhami (1990) argues that Sadat's failure to play his hand effectively in the Camp David negotiations produced a suboptimal outcome.

Intra-Elite Bureaucratic Politics

In the Middle East, normally the leader makes the decisions, but other interested actors do try to influence him, such as presidential advisers, senior military and intelligence officers, key cabinet members, party apparatchiki, and foreign ministry officials. As the "bureaucratic politics" model argues (Halpern and Clapp 2006), each of these actors may propose different policies shaped by their special roles and material interests. Characteristic of the Middle East has been the dominating role of the military and intelligence services at the expense of the diplomats (Kasza 1987). The salient role of the former, even in pluralistic Turkey and Israel, and the relative weakness and limited professionalism of most foreign ministries, may bias policy toward coercive options and prioritize "national security" issues over others. Important, however, is the change in the role of the military in the Arab republics and Turkey from vanguard of reform and nationalism to pillar of the (conservative) status quo preoccupied with the Islamist threat from within. Economic and business elites have until recently had only limited access to decisionmakers. Yet economic imperatives require state elites to remain cognizant of busi-

ness needs. Where a “national bourgeoisie” is ascendant, its demands for protection from foreign competition may reinforce a nationalist foreign policy. In contrast, satisfying *infatih* internationalist bourgeoisies is likely to require a pro-Western policy designed to entice foreign investment.

Public Opinion

Input into foreign policy making from outside the governing establishment has typically been limited and indirect in the Middle East. In normal times when the public is divided or inattentive, elites enjoy more autonomy to act as they please. However, even in authoritarian regimes, the public may have an indirect impact on foreign policy if leaders must defend legitimacy under attack by rivals or if the masses are aroused by conflict with the West or Israel (Dawisha 1988; Lucas 2000). Public opinion is likely to play a greater role in regimes having electoral accountability mechanisms, such as Turkey and Israel, but this does not necessarily lead, as liberals expect, to more pacific foreign policies, because populations have remained mobilizable by irredentist ideology (Mansfield and Snyder 1995). Thus Israel, the most democratic regional state, has most often attacked its neighbors, including semidemocratic Lebanon. Moves toward democratization resulting from the Arab Spring potentially may force leaders to pay more attention to public opinion in foreign policy making, even if only to manipulate it for their own purposes. Yet the options of post-Arab Spring states are no less constrained than hitherto by external factors, such as the balance of power with neighbors or dependency on the West, which sharply dilute the effect of popular demands in the policy process.

Summary: Explaining Foreign Policy Outcomes

Since regime security is normally the first priority of foreign policy makers, threats to it are the main factor driving foreign policy. Threats and strategies for dealing with them are, however, greatly complicated by the multilevel feature of the regional system. In

addition to the interstate military threats that concern realism, the embedding of the regional system in a transstate public sphere means that regimes also face threats to their domestic legitimacy from transstate movements and discourses and from their manipulation by other states—as when Nasser’s Egypt mobilized pan-Arabism against rival regimes in the 1950s (Harknett and Van-DenBerg 1997). But the transstate level is also a source of domestic legitimacy (from, for example, being seen to champion pan-Arab interests) and an arena for playing out leadership ambitions based on suprastate identity. Also, the core great powers that penetrate the MENA region are both a constraint on autonomy and a source of resources that regimes need in order to confront regional and domestic threats. Hence policymakers must balance between the various levels, their strategies depending on where they see the strongest threats as coming from and where they can find the most resources to counter these threats.

The main threat may be internal or external, and regimes may either bandwagon with (appease) or balance against these threats. If the main security threat is internal, regimes may either omnibalance with an external power to obtain the support and resources needed to balance against it (even at the expense of autonomy), or they could “reverse omni-balance”—use radical nationalist rhetoric to mobilize internal support—that is, appease internal opposition. If the threat is an external power, the regime could either rely on a global protector or seek to power-balance through nationalist mobilization of domestic support, military buildup, and alliance-making. If the precarious economic health of a state threatens internal security, the acquisition of economic resources may move to the top of the foreign policy agenda.

Choices among these alternatives will depend on factors such as a state’s power position. If states are too weak to balance against threats from stronger states, they will have to appease them or seek a patron-protector, while in larger states power-balancing and even a reach for regional hegemony are realistic options. The social composition of the ruling coalition also matters for whether states are satisfied with the status quo or have greater ambitions. The historical records shows that MENA regimes are typically caught between pressures from the global

hierarchy and regional pressures (from the transstate Arab-Islamic public space and neighboring states). Hence their strategies have chiefly fallen into two quite durable alternatives: status quo regimes omni-balance with global patrons in order to contain regional and transstate threats, while revisionist regimes reverse omni-balance in order to mobilize regional alliances to balance against Western global powers and their regional allies, especially Israel.

Organization of the Book

We have identified in this framework chapter the factors that matter in foreign policy making but not their relative weight, which varies by country and over time. As such, the relative explanatory power of different factors is a matter of empirical research. In the next chapter we present a more complete empirical overview of the evolution of the regional system and of the forces to which foreign policy makers have had to respond. Thereafter, we present empirical case studies of the foreign policies of regional states, including pivotal Arab states and the three non-Arab regional powers, with each case study roughly following a similar framework in examining the environmental determinants of foreign policy, the policy making process, and foreign policy outputs. We conclude the book by summarizing our findings and stressing the foreign policy patterns of the past two decades.