

CHAPTER I

An Introduction to Bahrain: The Dysfunctional *Rentier* State

In February 2011, encouraged by successive mass uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt, hundreds of thousands of Bahraini citizens took to the streets to call for the ouster of the ruling Āl Khalīfa tribe. The date chosen for the start of protests, February 14, marked the nine-year anniversary of Bahrain's 2002 Constitution, a charter promulgated unilaterally by a then newly-ascended King Ḥamad bin ʿĪsā, and one that has come to symbolize for regime opponents, in particular for the country's long-disenfranchised Shi'a majority, the false promise of political reform in Bahrain. Exactly one month after the onset of demonstrations, which saw the violent deaths of protestors and riot police alike and prompted a counter-mobilization by pro-government Sunnis, the movement was finally crushed with the intervention of several thousand ground troops dispatched by neighboring Arab Gulf states eager to contain the mounting crisis.¹

The present work is not the story of that uprising—not, at least, in the immediate sense. It was conceived and mostly written long before protestors occupied the now-flattened Pearl Roundabout and renamed it “Martyrs’ Square.” Of course, in describing the conditions that made possible Bahrain's failed revolution, it does offer a framework through which to view this latest episode in a tumultuous recent history. Yet its real purpose lies elsewhere, and the net it aims to cast is far wider. Though its primary focus be Bahrain, the investigation here seeks to examine a much larger class of cases of which this tiny archipelago in the shallow waters off Saudi Arabia is but the best contemporary representative. This category I call the

¹ While it is much too premature to finish the book on the February 14 uprising, which in many ways is still ongoing, the International Crisis Group's *Middle East Report N° 111*, “Popular Protest in North Africa and the Middle East (VIII): Bahrain's Rocky Road to Reform,” gives a useful overview. Available at: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/Middle-East-North-Africa/Iran-Gulf/Bahrain/111_Popular_Protest_in_North_Africa_and_the_Middle_East_VII_Bahrain's_Rocky_Road_to_Reform.pdf>.

dysfunctional *rentier* state: a state flush with historical levels of resource revenues yet unable to buy the political acquiescence of its citizens—or, of a particular sort of citizen. That such a government is unable to do so is a problem not only for it, likely, but one moreover for political science, whose standing interpretation of the Arab Gulf monarchies revolves precisely around this pretended ability to appease would-be opponents through material benefaction, more specifically via guaranteed state employment and exception from taxation. So if there exist, then, identifiable circumstances under which this formula for political buy-off does not obtain, we must revise not merely our expectations about the inherent political stability of the Arab Gulf regimes, but also our understanding more generally of the nature of politics in rent-based societies. The present thesis outlines this revision.

Testing the Untested

A curious fact about the proposition that economic satisfaction breeds political indifference in resource-dependent states—about this “*rentier* state thesis”—is that for a conceptual framework first proposed some three decades ago and popular ever since, it has yet to be put to the test empirically. Certainly, some of its corollaries have invited quantitative research, most notably its implication that, at the country level, the extent of a nation’s reliance upon rents from the sale of natural resources should tend to be inversely-related to its democraticness, since more rents means more citizens content to relinquish their political prerogative in exchange for material benefits. Other studies proceed one step further to associate democracy with rates of taxation and government-sector employment. Yet, for all their effort, these analyses cannot bring us closer to demonstrating the individual-level link between material contentment and political apathy that is the explicit theoretical mechanism underlying the *rentier* framework, precisely because such analyses do not operate on the individual level. That the regimes of the Arab Gulf are both non-democratic and resource-dependent does nothing to show that, in early 2011 in the United Arab Emirates, or in Kuwait, individual citizens who are satisfied with their economic situation also tend to be satisfied with their country’s political situation. Equally, that Saudi Arabia and Qatar maintain high government employment rates and do not impose income taxes cannot directly connect the individual-level economic outcomes of these policies to citizens’ political orientations. In short, extant evaluation of the *rentier* hypothesis has been limited to tests of the very observations that gave rise to the theory originally, while its own proposed causal logic remains unexamined.

At its core, then, the *rentier* state thesis is less a story about the political machinations of greedy governments than it is about human nature and its impact on individual political behavior under particular conditions. Indeed, the most provocative claim of *rentier* theory is exactly this, that it purports to understand the very political motivations of individual citizens such as those of the Arab Gulf: *why it is* that people become involved in, or alternatively shrink from, politics; *what it is* that leads them to support or oppose a government. Economics, it insists, is king; other competing factors, it implies by omission, must take a back seat. From here it is plain that any proper assessment of the *rentier* framework must investigate what the latter professes already to know: the individual-level determinants of political orientation in highly-clientelistic, rent-based societies. And as it was the Gulf region itself that served as archetype for these early *rentier* theorists, it is perhaps only fitting that its first real test should be conducted there.

But such a thing is easier said than done. To be sure, that the *rentier* causal processes have escaped rigorous evaluation is not explained by choices of academic focus merely, but by a lack of empirical data with which to carry out any analysis whatever. Macro-level data on resource exports, political openness, and rates of taxation and state-sector employment are readily available for most countries of the world; those recording the political opinions and behavior of ordinary Gulf Arabs are emphatically not. Even the two foremost survey research projects attempting to compile such data—the World Values Survey (WVS), begun in 1990, and the Arab Democracy Barometer (AB), in 2005—have succeeded despite their considerable efforts and resources in surveying but three of the six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council: Saudi Arabia in 2003 (WVS), Kuwait in 2006 (AB), and Qatar in 2010 (WVS). And of these, only the Kuwait survey managed to field the crucial but highly-sensitive questions about normative political opinions and political activities, while the Qatar data are not yet public.

However, even were one to obtain such individual-level data, what is it exactly that one would expect to find? In other words, why should one doubt the abilities of the GCC states to purchase political quietude by distributing rent-funded material benefits to citizens? Indeed, with the exception of Bahrain, the Arab Gulf as a distinct category of nations seems to have succeeded in avoiding the sort of mass revolt that today continues to threaten regimes across the Middle East and North Africa, and all but Qatar and the United Arab Emirates have appealed to citizens' wallets with generous social welfare packages announced soon after the Arab Spring arrived in the Gulf. So, to ask the question again: what indication is there that the

rentier paradigm does not offer a more or less accurate account of the relationship between Arab Gulf governments and ordinary Gulf Arabs? Why bother probing a theory that appears thus self-evident?

The answer, I argue, turns around how one interprets the case of Bahrain. If one views the country's defiance of basic *rentier* assumptions—of citizen disinterest in politics, of a lack of organized political opposition, and ultimately of regime stability—if one believes such contradictions the result of a Bahraini domestic politics that is *sui generis* in the Arab Gulf, then, certainly, there is little to learn from it. Either Bahrain's rulers are particularly inept at political co-optation, they somehow lack the resources to accomplish it, or Bahraini citizens are uniquely recalcitrant among Gulf peoples. But if, as I propose herein, the conditions that make possible Bahrain's dysfunctional *rentier* state apply in degrees to the other nations of the region; if the furious politics of Bahrain represent not a theoretical exception but merely the realization of a latent possibility that exists in all the Arab Gulf regimes according to their peculiar vulnerability to such conditions, then the case of Bahrain is far more instructive. If there exist identifiable circumstances under which the standard *rentier* interpretation of Gulf politics is not valid—circumstances that describe Bahrain particularly but not uniquely—then through studying this case one may not only arrive at a necessary revision of the *rentier* state thesis, but a better practical understanding of citizen-regime (and, as we shall see, citizen-citizen) relations in the Arab Gulf region and beyond.

Ethnic Conflict and the Dysfunctional *Rentier* State

This condition underlying Bahrain's inability to buy popular political disinterest and assent is, as the present study explains, the longstanding societal division between its Sunni and Shi'i communities, an ethnic-based² competition over no less than the very character of the Bahraini state. Beyond offering a viable basis for mass political coordination in a type of regime said by its very nature to lack one, this Sunni-Shi'i conflict also serves to disrupt the mechanisms of political buy-off available to Bahrain *qua rentier* state by, in the first place, making the political orientations of ordinary Bahrainis dependent not primarily upon economics but upon ethno-religious affiliation and concern for the empowerment of the rival group; and, in the second place, by prompting the government to forego the liberal and indiscriminant use of

² Here and throughout, I use the term "ethnic" or "ethno-religious" in lieu of "sectarian" broadly to describe the ascriptive social categories Sunni and Shi'i. This usage may therefore be understood as synonymous with confessional religious community and should not be confused with Arab or Persian descent.

public-sector employment to mollify would-be opponents for fears over national security, of Iranian-inspired Shi'a emboldening, and, more generally, as punishment for those perceived to lack national loyalty. The latter effect, which operates on the political supply side, means that the state is unable effectively to utilize even those political pressure-relieving measures assumed to be distinctively available to it as an allocative economy. The former, operating on the demand side, ensures that such state-side efforts, even if they could be employed, would be employed in vain.

In the ethnically-divided *rentier* state, citizens' orientations toward the regime depend fundamentally on their perceptions of the confessional balance of power enshrined therein. This means that concerns for the empowerment of ethnic rivals at the expense of one's own group inevitably compete with more mundane matters of economic welfare in determining the extent of an individual's support for, and actions in favor of or against, the government as conservator of the political status quo. Political attitudes and actions are influenced not simply by the question "What has the government done for me?," but by the more elementary question "What—or who—does the government represent? By whom exactly am I being governed? and is it my interest they have in mind?" For members of Bahrain's Shi'a ethnic out-group, a perennial political minority despite its demographic majority, opposition to the regime stems on principle from its structural exclusion from the instruments of power, not from dissatisfaction with its collective share of the nation's oil revenues. Thus, for example, were government opponents only enraged further when King Ḥamad attempted to pre-empt their February protests with the announcement of a \$2,600 hand-out for each Bahraini family. As said by one now-imprisoned opposition leader, "This is about dignity and freedom—it's not about filling our stomachs. ... The core of this is political, not financial."³

The issue is also, for many Shi'is, one for which inspiration may be found readily in religion itself, the historical arc of Shi'ism being precisely one of struggle and self-sacrifice in the face of a more powerful but corrupt political-*cum*-religious oppressor. In Bahrain, religious rites and celebrations are replete with allegory and even explicit comparison connecting the seventh-century conflict over the leadership of the Muslim community to the present-day struggle in Bahrain. Indeed, to an outside observer of the most holy Shi'i festival of 'Āshūrā',

³ In Thomas Fuller, 2011, "Bahrain's Promised Spending Fails to Quell Dissent," *The New York Times*, March 6. Available at: <<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/07/world/middleeast/07bahrain.html>>. The quote in fact comes from a prominent (and now jailed) Sunni opposition figure, Ebrāhīm Sharīf, whose leftist political society Wa'ad faces similar persecution (and targeted electoral disenfranchisement) for its expressly secular views.

it is difficult to perceive whether the myriad processions, passions plays, and sermons tell of the battle against the 'Umayyad caliph or against the Bahraini monarch. In sum, as many Shi'a believe (or can be motivated by the idea that) they have a collective right to political authority based on religious notions of injustice and betrayal rooted in the very foundations of Islam, it is difficult to pacify their demands with mere promises of jobs and relief from taxation.

At the same time, moreover, anti-state mobilization on the part of Bahrain's Shi'a-dominated opposition elicits a popular response in kind from ordinary Sunni citizens anxious to avoid any serious revision of the nation's political balance of power, much less a wholesale change in regime instigated by Iranian agents. As a result of this Sunni counter-mobilization, in the ethnically-contested state of Bahrain it is not only members of the political out-group that defy the basic *rentier* assumption of apoliticality but the entire political community, pushed on the one side by Shi'a reformists, pulled on the other by a countervailing force of Sunnis motivated by the fear, exaggerated or not, that a Shi'a-empowered Bahrain may begin to look much like another post-2003 Iraq. "If the Shias took control of the country," one plain-speaking Bahraini told *The New York Times* amid turmoil in August 2010, "they would pop out one eye of every Sunni in the country."⁴ More recently, this same apprehension was evident in the massive rallies and even campaigns of armed violence organized by pro-government Sunnis aiming to stifle the momentum of the February 14 uprising, a counter-revolution that by mid-March threatened to culminate in open Sunni-Shi'i conflict.⁵ For their efforts, these "loyal citizens" would later be paid homage by Bahrain's premier, who "lauded [them] for their honourable mobilization against wicked plots," and "for standing united as a bulwark defending their country against subversive conspiracies."⁶

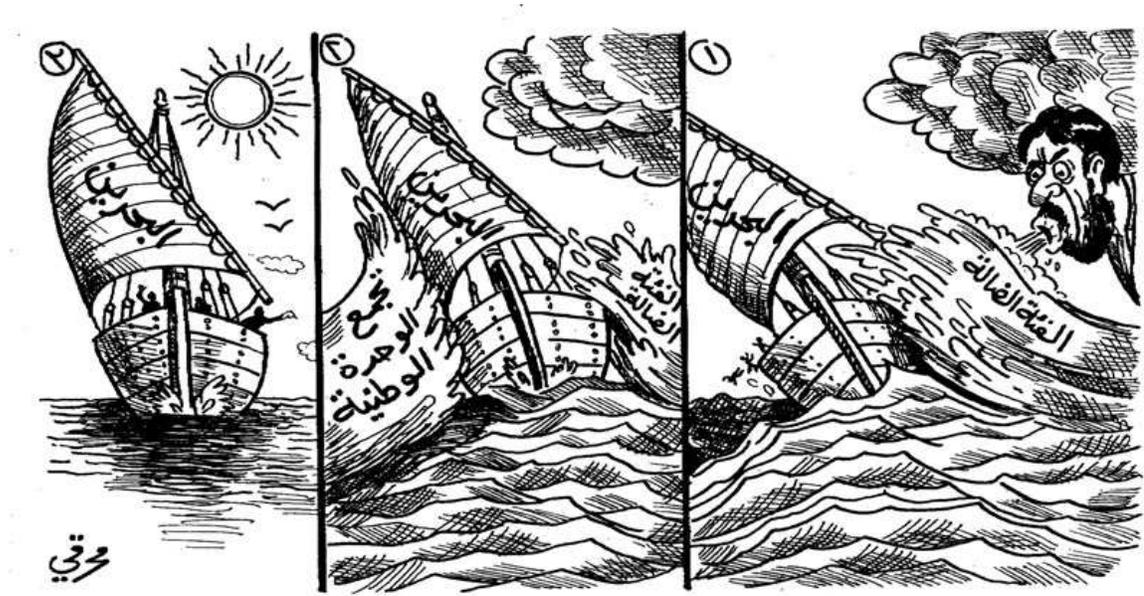
The *rentier* state of the Arab Gulf must therefore sink or swim on its capacity for economic appeasement, yet in ethnically-divided societies this ability is hampered not only on the demand side by those citizens unwilling to take the bargain but also on the supply side by a state reluctant to enrich or empower members of a community it views as an open or

⁴ In Thanassis Cambanis, 2010, "Crackdown in Bahrain Hints of End to Reforms," *The New York Times*, August 26. Available at: <<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/27/world/middleeast/27bahrain.html>>.

⁵ See, e.g., Michael Slackman, 2011, "Bahrain's Sunnis Defend Monarchy," *The New York Times*, February 17. Available at: <<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/18/world/middleeast/18voices.html>>. Perhaps the most infamous case of Sunni-Shi'i civil violence took place on March 13 at the state-run University of Bahrain, where anti-government protestors clashed with pro-government mobs. Similar incidents took place throughout the country, including at public schools, which were consequently closed for an extended period.

⁶ "Premier's tribute...", 2011, *Gulf Daily News*, April 22. Available at: <<http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/NewsDetails.aspx?storyid=304489>>.

FIGURE I.I. A Cartoon in the Government-Affiliated Akhbār al-Khalij Depicts the Nation’s Sunnis Righting the Bahraini Ship Inundated by “the Deviant Denomination”



latent political opposition with ties to hostile regional challengers (namely, Iran), individuals readily-identifiable moreover on the basis of geography, family names, language, and other ascriptive ethnic markers. The question such a state faces, accordingly, is whether its power of economic benefaction—most notably, government employment—is best used to reward friends or to attempt to convert known and potential enemies. In Bahrain, at least, the answer is clear: public-sector employment does not secure political allegiance; it is political allegiance that secures public-sector employment,⁷ especially when the work in question carries national security implications. And, in a part of the world that spends more of its wealth on internal

⁷ In case there were ever any doubt about the direction of causality here, one need only witness the more than 2,000 individuals fired from public-sector positions for suspicion of having taken part in protests in February and March. This mass termination of Shi'a employees and beneficiaries extended, *inter alia*, to government agencies, publicly-owned companies, hospitals, schools, sports clubs, and university scholarship-holders. The response was so sweeping, in fact, that it prompted the U.S.-based AFL-CIO to file a labor rights complaint against the Bahraini government, contending that the firings violated its free trade agreement with the United States. See “Concerning the Failure of the Government of Bahrain to Comply with Its Commitments Under Article 15.1 of the US-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement,” 2011, The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), April 21. Available at: <http://www.aflcio.org/issues/jobseconomy/globaleconomy/upload/bahrain_fta04212011.pdf>.

and external security than any other,⁸ the scope of the resulting ethnic-based exclusion from this most far-reaching of *rentier* government benefits is far from trivial. Yet not only are Bahraini Shi‘a excluded altogether from police and military service, but fear of Iranian-inspired emboldening—of a veritable Shi‘a fifth column—serves to limit their employment also in those institutions close to the exercise of state power, including the Ministries of Defense, Interior, Foreign Affairs, Justice, and others. And where they do find public employment, political correctness dictates that Shi‘is are suffered disproportionately to fill lower-ranking positions. Paradoxically, then, though with only economic patronage at its political disposal, still the ethnically-contested *rentier* state chooses to forgo or curtail what is assumed its most powerful weapon, for fear that the cure should be worse than the disease.

The Significance of Bahrain

The decisive question, of course, preceding even that of how one might test such claims, is whether the foregoing describes Bahrain merely or is in fact generalizable to a larger class of societies. Is this dysfunctional *rentier* state simply that: a case made unique by a confluence of unhappy circumstances from which little else may be gleaned? or are the conditions outlined above more widely applicable to the region or to the greater Middle East? In short, does a study of ethnic conflict and political mobilization in Bahrain tell the interesting but ultimately one-off story of political life on a tiny island off the coast of Saudi Arabia? or are its insights of more general interest to students of political science?

First, from a strict theoretical standpoint it is clear that the endogenous and exogenous causes of this dysfunction—domestic ethnic division, politically-sidelined Shi‘a populations, and fear of Iranian expansionism—are not limited to Bahrain, and indeed are growing today only more widespread and more acute throughout the Arab Gulf and beyond. Ever since the Islamic Revolution designed to bring Shi‘a populism to the Gulf monarchies, and, more recently, since the inadvertent empowerment of Iraq’s long-disenfranchised Shi‘a majority, ruling families from Syria to Yemen have grown increasingly fearful of what Jordan’s King ‘Abdallāh II famously described as the expanding “Shi‘a crescent,” of Shi‘a citizens increasingly

⁸ According to the authoritative database compiled by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, between 2000 and 2009 the top 11 military spenders as a proportion of GDP include five of the six GCC states: Oman (#1), Saudi Arabia (#2), the UAE (#4), Kuwait (#6), and Bahrain (#11). Data for Qatar are not reported for the years 2000, 2001, and 2009, but based on the incomplete data it would rank at #30. Data available at: <<http://www.sipri.org/databases/milex>>.

forceful in their demands for political inclusion, and of patron regimes willing to back their cause. Of course, in those Gulf countries with marginal Shi'a populations—Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates—this concern is less pressing both for governments and for ordinary Sunnis; and, one presumes not coincidentally, there bilateral relations with Iran remain on non-confrontational and, in the former two cases, even cordial terms. Among the six GCC nations, then, one may distinguish between halves that are more and less (or perhaps not at all) vulnerable to an ethnic-based disruption to *rentier* business-cum-politics as usual.

In line with these *a priori* expectations, moreover, evidence from elsewhere in the Arab Gulf suggests that the same Sunni-Shi'i division that underlies Bahrain's dysfunction drives a similar process of ethnic-based political mobilization in the region's other rent-based regimes, which, if on account of demographics are less endangered by it, are affected in a manner that is conceptually equivalent. In the two other GCC states with significant Shi'a populations—Saudi Arabia and Kuwait—opposition has also arisen and, as Okruhlik (1999, 297) has observed, “with it a discrepancy between the expectations derived from the rentier framework and empirical reality.” There as in Bahrain, “windfall profits of petroleum exports do not translate into a politically quiescent population,” (295) because such rents do not automatically “buy the support or loyalty of different social groups” that are disproportionately excluded from state benefits, these distributed not in a way that is politically-agnostic but on the basis of “family relations, friendship, religious branch, and regional affiliation” (297).

Yet, as the ongoing political crisis in Bahrain has put into stark relief, triggers of ethnic-based political arousal in the Arab Gulf need not even originate from some domestic cause. In the days and weeks following February 14, Shi'is from Iran to northern Yemen to Lebanon to Iraq demonstrated in solidarity with their Bahraini coreligionists.⁹ Indeed, the main impetus behind the heavy-handed GCC intervention to squash the Bahrain uprising was the fear that neighboring Shi'a populations—in particular those of Saudi Arabia's oil-rich Eastern Province adjacent to Bahrain—would take the cue to begin their own mass protests. The United Arab Emirates openly threatened to deport any Shi'a residents speaking out publically against the

⁹ In Iraq, not only ordinary citizens but also prominent Shi'is in government strongly criticized the GCC response in Bahrain. Prime Minister Nūrī al-Mālīki himself warned that “the region may be drawn into a sectarian war” if the situation were allowed to fester. For such perceived one-sidedness, the Gulf states forced the cancellation of a March Arab Summit scheduled to take place in Iraq, insisting that “the atmosphere is not right.” See Serena Chaudhry and Waleed Ibrahim, 2011, “Iraq's Maliki says Bahrain may ignite sectarian war,” *Reuters*, March 25. Available at: <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/03/25/us-iraq-politics-idUSTRE72O6JK20110325>>.

GCC action in Bahrain, and are said to have expelled several hundred Lebanese ex-patriots.¹⁰ But most dramatic of all was the impact in Kuwait, where the entire government fell directly as a result of a Sunni-Shi'i split in parliament over the country's response to Bahrain.

Not wanting to inflame its own sizable Shi'a community, in late March the Kuwaiti government offered in lieu of sending ground troops to mediate talks between Bahrain's rulers and the opposition. This proposal earned the swift condemnation of other GCC members and of its own Sunni politicians, who accused Kuwait's rulers of showing more concern for Iranian-backed Shi'a terrorists than for their (Sunni) brothers in Bahrain. When Kuwait next tried to send a medical delegation to help treat Bahrain's wounded, it was refused entry at the Saudi-Bahrain causeway, a further public embarrassment that prompted several Salafi politicians to initiate proceedings to quiz the country's prime minister for his decision to spurn military aid to Bahrain. At the same time, Shi'a parliamentarians moved to question two separate *Āl Ṣabāḥ* ministers for allowing foreign and domestic media to "fuel sectarian tension in the country." Under siege from all sides, Kuwait's emir opted to dissolve the government rather than allow the inquest to proceed.¹¹ Then—at last—shamed and bullied into participation, Kuwait dispatched a naval detachment to Bahrain. The lesson: the Arab Gulf *will* stand together against the shared threats of Shi'a irredentism and Iranian meddling—whether individual members like it or not.

The First Mass Political Survey of Bahrain

This proposition, that Sunni-Shi'i competition explains not only the dysfunctional *rentier* state that is Bahrain but the inability for ethnically-diverse Arab Gulf regimes to buy political assent more generally, presents no lack of challenges for the one looking to demonstrate it empirically. For now one requires not only individual-level data on the political attitudes and economic conditions of ordinary Gulf Arabs, but moreover ethno-religious data identifying individuals as a member of one or the other community. And when even the aggregate proportions of Sunnis and Shi'is in the GCC states is a matter of speculation—as governments refuse to offer (or claim not to collect) such statistics—these two requirements render inadequate all extant

¹⁰ See, e.g., "Iraq, Bahrain and the region: Sectarian bad blood," 2011, *The Economist*, March 31. Available at: <<http://www.economist.com/node/18491700>>.

¹¹ For a more complete version of the story, see Ḥusayn al-Ḥarabī, 2011, "محمد الصباح السبب المباشر وراء استقالة الحكومة," ["Muḥammad al-Ṣabāḥ Is the Direct Reason behind the Government's Resignation"], *Al-Ra'ī*, April 1. Available at: <<http://www.alraimedia.com/Alrai/Article.aspx?id=266356&date=01042011>>.

data sources, including the aforementioned World Values and Arab Barometer surveys of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and (even were the data publically available) Qatar.

Hence, in early 2009 I endeavored to collect new data from Bahrain, undertaking the first-ever mass political survey of Bahraini citizens. Based a nationally-representative sample of 500 random households, the survey employed the standard Arab Barometer questionnaire that asks respondents about their economic situations in addition to their social, religious, and political behaviors and attitudes, including normative political opinions. The Bahrain survey also recorded respondents' confessional affiliations, allowing not only an empirical test of the present argument but also the first window into the country's ethnic demographics in almost 70 years. For the last time the Government of Bahrain reported official statistics on its Sunni and Shi'i communities was in its very first census, in 1941 (QUBAIN 1955). Utilizing these new Bahrain data, I carry out the first proper assessment of the individual-level assumptions that underlie the long-accepted but never-tested *rentier* state framework.

Because no equivalent data exist from elsewhere in the Arab Gulf, however, the parallel inquiry to determine how far the relationships discovered in Bahrain obtain across other country contexts is undertaken using survey data from Iraq collected in 2004 and 2006. Although the two cases to be examined thus differ qualitatively on many levels, still the exercise is a fruitful one precisely for this reason: if we find that, despite considerable cross-national variation in social, economic, and political institutions, to say nothing of history itself, the individual-level determinants of political opinion and behavior operate similarly in Bahrain and Iraq—if it turns out that Sunni and Shi'i Iraqis as well as Bahrainis are influenced more by ethnic considerations than by economic, then we will have evidence that Bahraini politics is not *sui generis* but applies in degrees to the region's other societies according to their specific ethnic configurations. In which case we may conclude that the dysfunctional *rentier* state of Bahrain is but the theoretical archetype—not the exception—of the Arab Gulf.

Summary of Chapters

The exposition outlined here proceeds in seven chapters, the first of which is now at an end.

Chapter 2 offers a more expansive account of the conceptual framework introduced already, a theory of ethnic-based political mobilization in the Arab Gulf *rentier* states.

Chapter 3 gives additional substance to this theoretical account by studying the case of Sunni-Shi'i conflict in Bahrain. Drawing insights from interviews conducted with some

dozen Bahraini political and religious leaders—four of whom now face lengthy prison terms for their alleged roles in the February 14 uprising—this section describes how, in Bahrain, the individual-oriented politics of economic competition assumed to operate in allocative societies is superseded by an ethnic-based contest to determine the very character of the nation itself: its history and cultural identity; the bases of citizenship; and the conditions for inclusion in public service.

Chapter 4 supplies a practical and methodological preface to the analysis of my Bahrain mass survey, detailing the actual survey procedure, likely theoretical and methodological objections, and a first reliable look at Bahrain's ethnic demographics since its 1941 census.

Chapter 5 employs the previously-unavailable data from my Bahrain mass survey to explore the determinants of political opinion and action among ordinary Bahraini citizens. It seeks to discover whether Bahrainis' normative attitudes toward their government and the political actions they take for or against it are influenced foremost by material satisfaction, as per the *rentier* state hypothesis, or by ethnic affiliation and orientations, as argued herein.

Chapter 6 mirrors the Bahrain mass survey analysis with a parallel study of political opinion and behavior in Iraq. Using comparable survey data, this investigation aims to learn how far the individual-level relationships uncovered in the previous section are limited only to the Bahrain context or, on the contrary, obtain more widely.

Chapter 7 reviews the preceding, makes note of its limitations, and suggests how it might be extended as part of a larger revised Arab Gulf research agenda.

Notes for Chapter 1

International Crisis Group. 2011. "Popular Protest in North Africa and the Middle East (VIII): Bahrain's Rocky Road to Reform." *Middle East Report N° 111*. Available at: <[http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/Middle-East-North-Africa/Iran-Gulf/Bahrain/111 Popular Protest in North Africa and the Middle East VII Bahrain's Rocky Road to Reform.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/Middle-East-North-Africa/Iran-Gulf/Bahrain/111%20Popular%20Protest%20in%20North%20Africa%20and%20the%20Middle%20East%20VII%20Bahrain's%20Rocky%20Road%20to%20Reform.pdf)>.

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