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Bank, André; Richter, Thomas; Sunik, Anna

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# Long-term monarchical survival in the Middle East: a configurational comparison, 1945–2012

André Bank, Thomas Richter\* and Anna Sunik

Institute of Middle East Studies, GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies, Neuer Jungfernstieg 21, Hamburg 20354, Germany

The survival of eight monarchies during the “Arab Uprisings” has put centre stage the fundamental question about the durability of this subtype of authoritarian regime. Seen from a broader historical perspective, however, the idea that monarchies have an inherent advantage in retaining power is less evident: a number of authoritarian monarchies broke down and subsequently became republics (Egypt 1952, Iraq 1958, North Yemen 1962, Libya 1969, Iran 1979), while others survived (Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates). To account for these divergent long-term pathways we systematically compare the 13 current and former Middle East monarchies. Using a fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA), we concentrate on five central explanatory factors derived from previous research – namely, external support, rent revenues, family participation, the monarch’s claim to legitimate rule, and hard repression. Our findings highlight the existence of three broad pathways to monarchical survival – linchpin monarchies, like Jordan and Morocco, versus the dynastic Gulf monarchies – and also reveal a possible hybrid third pathway, one which shares linchpin characteristics, but relates to cases on the Arabian Peninsula (Oman and the historical Imamate in North Yemen).

Keywords: Middle East monarchies; authoritarian survival; family participation; rents; legitimacy claims; external support; repression; Arab uprisings

## Introduction

The “Arab Uprisings” have cast new light on the discussion about the survival of authoritarian monarchies in the Middle East. Since late 2010, a fascinating monarchy– republic divide has hereby become apparent: while the heads of state in the authoritarian republics of Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, and Libya have been ousted, it is striking to note that the eight authoritarian monarchies have thus far survived – and

\*Corresponding author. Email: [thomas.richter@giga-hamburg.de](mailto:thomas.richter@giga-hamburg.de)

this despite the mass demonstrations that have taken place, such as in Bahrain in early 2011 as well as in Jordan and Morocco throughout 2011 and 2012.<sup>1</sup> The recent breakdown of the “Arab presidents for life”<sup>2</sup> and the survival of the monarchies lead us to pose the fundamental question of what the specific conditions are for the survival of this latter subtype of authoritarian regime.<sup>3</sup>

Given that an authoritarian monarchy has not broken down in the Middle East since the Iranian revolution of 1979 when the Pahlavi monarchy ended, this article undertakes a historical comparison since 1945, systematically taking into account all 13 cases of monarchical survival and monarchical breakdown. In the earlier period, spanning the 1950s to 1970s, it was these authoritarian monarchies that encountered particularly large-scale social protests, and a significant number of them were eventually replaced by republics. At the same time, however, certain authoritarian monarchies have survived. Against this historical background, the guiding research question of this article becomes: what explains monarchical survival in the Middle East since 1945?

We begin by identifying a number of deficits and contradictory propositions in the existing literature on authoritarian monarchies in the Middle East, and underline the importance of a historical-comparative perspective that, first, combines arguments from all of the previous explanations, second, applies them to all cases of monarchical survival and breakdown, and third, does so systematically over a longer period of time (Section 2).

Section 3 introduces our comparative method, a fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA). Based on Boolean algebra, this approach allows us to test for the necessary and sufficient conditions looking at five core aspects (external support, rent revenues, family participation, the monarch’s claim to legitimate rule, and hard repression) for the survival or breakdown of the two “outcomes”, the results of which are presented in Section 4. Our main findings are that three distinct groups of conditions can be said to explain the survival of authoritarian monarchies in the Middle East: First, the “linchpin” monarchies<sup>4</sup> of Morocco and Jordan have survived due to their historical-religious claims to legitimacy, despite lacking rent revenues and despite no participation by the extended royal family in political decision-making. Second, the “dynastic”<sup>5</sup> Gulf monarchies are reliant mainly on a combination of high rents and family participation in order to ensure their survival. A third group of monarchies from the “southern” part of the Arabian Peninsula – the Sultanate of Oman and the Imamate in North Yemen (until 1962) – point to a third, hybrid cluster of survival. With the introduction of the third pathway somewhat in-between the “classical” linchpin and dynastic types, our comparative approach helps to supplement the dominant “dualism” in earlier monarchy research on the Middle East. Our QCA also contends that among the five conditions none is singly sufficient for monarchical survival. What is more, our findings show that it is the respective historical interplay of different conditions which is decisive for the three different forms of monarchical survival.

When it comes to monarchical breakdown in the Middle East, our findings reveal the historical complexity underlying the revolutionary events that occurred from the 1950s to the 1970s and highlight important case-specific developments rather than overarching trends. In the final part, Section 5, we summarize and discuss our findings and highlight some lessons for the recent debates about monarchies in the Middle East.

### **State of the art: monarchies in the Middle East**

The first systematic accounts addressing postcolonial monarchies date back to the 1950s and 1960s, when modernization-theory approaches studied the newly independent states through the guiding dichotomy of tradition versus modernity.<sup>6</sup> In this understanding, authoritarian monarchies represented almost the classical form of traditional political rule. They were considered to only possess very limited capacities in order to acquiesce to modern demands for political liberties, party pluralism, and the incorporation of more and more differentiated social strata – especially of the new, urbanized middle classes. This perspective hence often teleologically expected the rapid breakdown of authoritarian monarchies, as well as their replacement with “modern” democratic republics. It was Samuel Huntington’s notion of the “king’s dilemma” that famously emphasized the alleged contradiction between the monarchy as a quintessential traditional institution and the modernizing challenges that monarchical regimes face.<sup>7</sup>

While the “king’s dilemma” decisively shaped later research on monarchies and led to the “largely unspoken consensus among political scientists that monarchy is passé”,<sup>8</sup> it can nevertheless claim only limited explanatory power for developments in the Middle East. While its focus on the monarchy’s institutional limitations can indeed contribute to the explanation of the monarchical breakdowns in, for example, Egypt (1952) and Iraq (1958), it still underestimates other Middle Eastern monarchies’ capacities for policy innovation and institutional flexibility which – in contrast to the socialist republics in the region – has often allowed kings, emirs, and sultans to pursue a much less ideological, socially transformative and thus ultimately delegitimizing agenda.<sup>9</sup> Newer alternative approaches on the survival of Middle Eastern monarchies, beyond the all too narrowly cultural(ist) ones,<sup>10</sup> consist of five analytical perspectives: (1) geostrategic perspectives; (2) political-economic, rentier approaches; (3) an institutionalist, intra-family account; (4) legitimation-based explanations; and (5) repression-based accounts.

Geostrategic perspectives put centre stage the external military support of global powers like the United States or, historically, United Kingdom, France, and the Soviet Union for monarchies in the Middle East. One prominent explanation relates to foreign and military aid as well as arms sales: Laurie Brand and Sean Yom respectively stress the importance of largely unconditional foreign aid for financing the repression and co-optation of the domestic opposition, citing evidence from the resource-poor monarchy in Jordan.<sup>11</sup> With regard to military aid, it is argued that it

“can help fuel[ ...]domestic patronage networks”<sup>12</sup> and that arms deals are a further way to cement the support of foreign powers like the US, especially with regard to the oil-rich monarchies on the Persian Gulf.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, money from military aid and arms deals is not sufficient to replace the needed domestic expenditures for funding the repression or co-optation of the domestic opposition. Sean Yom and Gregory Gause III have argued that a combination of “diplomatic assurances, economic grants and military interventions” account for the important foreign patronage that the US in particular grants Middle Eastern monarchies, and, further, that such assistance has decisively contributed to the latter’s recent survival.<sup>14</sup>

Rentier-state perspectives concentrate on the political economy of the so-called “oil monarchies”.<sup>15</sup> According to Giacomo Luciani, the survival of Middle East monarchies can be explained by the continuous and high rent influx via the export of oil and natural gas to world markets. It also relates to the rent payments made to loyal and geostrategically important clients such as Jordan and Morocco.<sup>16</sup> The two approaches are complementary, as the monarchies’ rent revenues are supplemented by the financial support from external powers.<sup>17</sup> Together, rentierism can help to explain the consolidation of the Gulf monarchies after the oil price revolution in 1973. The “hard case” in this regard is the Islamic revolution in Iran of 1979, where the regime maintained a continuously high level of rent income during the 1970s. Revenues from the export of oil were also a dominant aspect of state funds in pre-1958 Iraq as well as in Libya before 1969. In all three cases, additional factors would have to be taken into consideration in order to explain monarchical breakdown. Additionally, the focus on “oil monarchies” cannot account for the survival of the non-oil rentier monarchies of Jordan and Morocco.

The third perspective has been directed specifically against a narrow rentierist perspective. In his ground-breaking volume *All in the Family*, Michael Herb argues that the conditions for monarchical survival can be best understood when the peculiarities of royal family politics are taken into account, in particular regarding the (non-)inclusion of parts of the family in key decision-making institutions.<sup>18</sup> Following Russell Lucas’ characterization,<sup>19</sup> Herb differentiates between so-called “dynastic monarchies” and “linchpin monarchies.” In the five dynastic monarchies of the Persian Gulf, the ruling family determines political decision-making by consensus. The family acts as a “ruling institution” and monopolizes the central positions in both the administration and the security apparatus.<sup>20</sup> In the linchpin monarchies of Jordan and Morocco, as well as the collapsed monarchies of Egypt (1952), Iraq (1958), Libya (1969), and Iran (1979), the monarch – with the support of the respective royal court – has balanced between other influential institutions like the army or the parliament.<sup>21</sup> Herb’s concentration on the trajectories of dynastic monarchies does not ultimately provide a satisfactory explanation for the broader set of monarchies in the Middle East. He neither explains the survival of the “non-dynastic monarchies” in Jordan and Morocco nor does he sufficiently substantiate his core argument that family participation shields monarchies from

breaking down. This shortfall is also due to the fact that all of the analysed dynastic monarchies are also oil-rich, and thus family participation has historically always been connected with high income from rents.<sup>22</sup>

The fourth perspective addresses the politics of legitimation.<sup>23</sup> Oliver Schlumberger differentiates between four “core competences” for survival.<sup>24</sup> The first component, religion, is of particular importance in the monarchies of Jordan, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia, especially when contrasted to other existing monarchies as well as the authoritarian republics (with the exception of the Islamic Republic of Iran post-1979).<sup>25</sup> The monarch’s religious legitimacy can be instrumentalized against the Islamist opposition in times of crises.<sup>26</sup> The second component, tradition, can also be considered a (re)source of legitimation, as the general policy among the Gulf monarchies of reinventing tradition indicates.<sup>27</sup> Within the third component, ideology, Schlumberger concentrates on the Middle Eastern republics alone, since they base their historic claim to leadership on revolutionary and often Arab socialist ideas.<sup>28</sup> The fourth component, material legitimation, refers to the political-economic dimension in the allocation or distribution of state resources – key to ensuring the loyalty of influential social groups. While the illustrations of different legitimation strategies abound, the other side of the equation – the acceptance of those strategies by the target audience – is often omitted, since it is hard both to define and to operationalize.

The fifth and final perspective analyses the relevance of repression. With regard to Middle East authoritarian regimes in general and monarchies in particular, repression-based approaches are still in their infancy, even though the region as a whole has been characterized by a particularly high level of political and civil liberties restrictions since the 1970s.<sup>29</sup> Two perspectives on repression in the Middle East can be distinguished. Spinks, Sahliyeh, and Calfano find that between 1980 and 2005 monarchies in the Middle East commit less personal integrity violations (hard repression) than their republican counterparts in the region. They do not, however, see a regime type effect when it comes to constraining, that is, “soft” forms of repression.<sup>30</sup> A recent study of Bahrain and Egypt post-2011 shows that this earlier monarchy-republic distinction does not hold in the context of the “Arab Uprisings”,<sup>31</sup> thus leaving results for the employed forms of repression inconclusive. The second perspective on repression in the Middle East does not make a distinction between authoritarian monarchies and republics. Eva Bellin explains the robustness of authoritarian regimes in the region from the 1970s to the 2000s with a particular constellation of four inter-related features<sup>32</sup>: First, the availability of rents keeps the repressive apparatuses fiscally healthy; second, the geostrategic importance of the Middle East ensures the existence of international networks which support strong coercive institutions; third, the low level of institutionalization and often patrimonial structure of security apparatuses increases their inclination to use harsh violence against potential regime challenges; and fourth, the low levels of social mobilization prevent the emergence of strong regime challenges in the first place. In light of the “Arab Uprisings”, Eva Bellin has recently reconsidered her earlier analysis. She finds that, broadly, the interplay of the four factors still exists, even though it is

particularly the institutional structure of the repressive apparatuses which determines the survival or breakdown of the authoritarian regimes.<sup>33</sup>

Comparative research on monarchies in the Middle East can be demarcated along geostrategic, political-economic, intra-family, legitimacy and/or repression-based lines. These five broad perspectives have allowed for a growing differentiation in the explanatory factors for monarchical survival. With its focus on the joint occurrence of at least two of the following three factors – geostrategic foreign patronage, political-economic rents, and a domestic, cross-cutting coalition – only the recent study by Yom and Gause on monarchical survival during the “Arab Uprisings”<sup>34</sup> has presented more explanatory factors than the one or two typically offered. A systematic comparison of key arguments from all five perspectives is, however, still lacking. In addition, only Michael Herb’s analysis covers the cases of broken-down monarchies during the era of the early 1950s (Egypt) to the late 1970s (Iran), and thus takes a longer-term historical perspective than the mainstream “here-and-now” approaches.<sup>35</sup> This article thus follows Herb’s exemplary study – but does it more systematically by including all five cases of breakdown, including the fall of the Zaydi monarchy in North Yemen in 1962. Taken together, this threefold extension – in terms of explanatory conditions, historical depth, and breakdown cases – of the comparative analysis on monarchical survival in the Middle East is undertaken in the empirical sections that follow.

### **Fuzzy set QCA as a method of systematic comparison**

In our empirical analysis we use an fsQCA in order to systematically identify the necessary and sufficient conditions that explain the survival as well as the breakdown of authoritarian monarchies in the Middle East since 1945.<sup>36</sup> To the best of our knowledge, an fsQCA has to date not been used to analyse authoritarian regimes in the Middle East.

FsQCA belongs to a cluster of relatively new formal set-theory data analysis techniques that are “concerned with the systematic matching and contrasting of cases to establish common causal relationships by eliminating all other possibilities”.<sup>37</sup> Originally introduced by Charles Ragin in the late 1980s to be used with binomially scaled data sets (crisp set QCA), the technique has since been further developed; currently, it is able to deal with ordinal scaled data.<sup>38</sup> Set-theory approaches have become an interesting complement to the prevailing statistical and case study techniques within the tradition of macro-comparative research designs.

QCA analyses proceed in four steps – first, with a process of calibration: measures for conditions and the outcome are transformed into set-theory categorizations.<sup>39</sup> In fsQCA, outcomes and conditions need to be ordinal scaled within a binomial value range between zero and one. The value of 0.5 signals a crossover point at which a case is neither in nor out of a specific value set. Cases above or below 0.5 are coded according to their degrees of membership, using previously

defined criteria. We decided to use different fuzzy set scales in the following analysis. More details on the creation of these scales are given in Section 4.

Second, using these set-theory measures a truth table is constructed with  $2^k$  rows – with  $k$  being the number of conditions – in which each row represents one of the possible combinations of conditions. All existing cases are allocated to these rows according to the values of these conditions. Most likely, some rows will contain only a few cases, while others will consist of many. There will also be empty rows, indicating that none of the empirical cases fits with this specific combination of conditions.

In a third step, the number of rows in the truth table is reduced by looking only at those with which empirical cases are associated. Rows with no empirical case – so-called logical remainders – are deleted. For all remaining rows consistency values are calculated. Consistency in fsQCA corresponds to the degree to which cases fit to the set-theory relationship expressed in the solution.<sup>40</sup> The recommended minimum level of consistency lies between 0.75 and 0.80. All rows below this level are not included in the analysis.

Fourth, a Boolean algorithm is used in order to logically reduce the rows into simplified solutions based on the counterfactual analysis of conditions. Based on two Boolean expressions – the logical AND  $\frac{1}{4}$  “ $\wedge$ ” and the logical OR  $\frac{1}{4}$  “ $\vee$ ” – this Boolean minimization results in solution formulas that point to the sufficient conditions or combinations of sufficient conditions that explain a certain outcome.

## **Empirical analysis: monarchical survival and breakdown in the Middle East, 1945–2012**

### *Selection of cases and calibration of outcome and conditions*

Our base sample consists of all monarchies existent in the Middle East between 1945 and 2012. Currently there are eight monarchies in the Middle East, which are supplemented by five historical cases of monarchical breakdown: Egypt 1952, Iraq 1958, North Yemen 1962, Libya 1969, and Iran 1979. Altogether, this adds up to 13 authoritarian monarchies.<sup>41</sup>

A major challenge for a historical-configurative approach that looks at regimes over an extended period is that values of outcomes and conditions might change over time. Since there is no standard procedure for solving this problem in QCA, we have opted to divide into shorter time periods the study for each of the monarchical regimes, on the basis of meaningful and transparent criteria. Our unit of analysis is a country period. In order to create country periods we have used a two-step procedure: First, we divided each of the countries into historical periods depending on who the monarch was. We call this the ruling period. For instance, Morocco has been divided into three ruling periods: 1956 – 1961 under King Muhammad V, 1961 – 1999 under King Hassan II, and 1999 – 2012 under King Muhammad VI.<sup>42</sup> Second, we have further subdivided ruling periods for each country using data on attempted coup d'états by cross-checking the two data sets “Global Instances of Coups”<sup>43</sup> and “Coup d'État Events.”<sup>44</sup> If, for instance, an attempted coup was reported within a

given ruling period, this period was then split into two country periods with the division corresponding to the year in which the coup took place. In implementing this procedure, there are altogether 39 identified country periods for the 13 Middle Eastern monarchies in existence between 1945 and 2012. The political event that we are interested in corresponds to our empirical assessment regarding the survival or breakdown of authoritarian monarchies at the end of each country period (survival). While the list of country periods as well as the final codings of Yare presented in Table 3 in the Online Appendix, in the following we extensively discuss criteria and procedures.

In principle, each country period has been given a value of one (1) if the corresponding authoritarian regime stayed in power during the last year of a country period. Each country period has been given a value of zero (0) if the monarchy lost power. The latter occurred in only five of the 39 country periods, the above-mentioned breakdowns. In addition to the decision about whether a country period is a member of the set of surviving cases (1) or a member of the set of non-surviving cases – which equals breakdown (0) – we have used the longevity of a regime to estimate the general durability of either surviving or collapsed monarchies. This data has then been used for a finer grading of the initial coding. There are three levels of durability among the survival (0.6; 0.8; 1) as well as the breakdown (0; 0.2; 0.4) cases, which respectively correspond to low (1–28 years), medium (29–56 years), and high (57–84 years) durability. The thresholds for the groups were determined by dividing the duration of the regimes into thirds.<sup>45</sup>

In Section 2 we argued that the question of monarchical survival in the Middle East monarchies has been analysed along geostrategic, political-economic, intra-family, legitimacy, and/or repression-based lines. Drawing on this earlier systematization, we have thus selected five measures in total, each corresponding to one of these dimensions:

- (A) Strategic external support by the leading Western powers, the US, the UK and France (*esupport*), relates to the geostrategic dimension of monarchical survival.
- (B) Rent revenues (*rents*) flowing into state coffers due to the export of natural resources such as oil and natural gas are at the core of political-economic explanations for monarchical survival.
- (C) Family participation (*family*) in political decision-making.
- (D) The monarch's claim to legitimate rule (*leg-claim*) – based on historical and/or religious premises – is a central aspect of the political legitimation from above.
- (E) Hard repression, which is sometimes, but not regularly, used to quell opposition within and outside of the monarchical regime.

The following paragraphs briefly explain the more general procedures and criteria that we have used to calibrate each condition. A complete list of all calibrations is presented in Table 3 of the Online Appendix.

**(A) Strategic external support by major Western powers (esupport)**

While the provision of external support to an authoritarian regime is a complex, multidimensional and sometimes even contradictory phenomenon, for the sake of clarity we rely on a simplistic understanding: Using a fuzzy calibration, we use arms sales from the US, the UK, and France as a proxy for the degree of strategic external support by major foreign powers. Since arms sales above an average degree cement the donor's commitment to the recipient's strategic relevance, they seem to be a relatively sensible indicator for what Yom and Gause would call foreign patronage. Data for arms sales of all three Western powers are available since 1950 from the SIPRI Arms Transfer Database.<sup>46</sup> To establish a fuzzy scale of external strategic importance, we use the direct method of calibration, as suggested by Ragin.<sup>47</sup> As requested there, we have to define three different thresholds: non-membership (0), the crossover point (0.5), and full membership (1). If there are no arms sales to a given country, we interpret this as being a full non-member of the set of strategically important monarchies and code 0. Coding decisions on the upper bound of 1 as well as on the crossover point of 0.5 are more challenging. We decided to follow a strategy of global mean distribution here. If a monarchy receives arms sales from all three Western powers, which is above the global mean of total arms sales from the same three Western powers, this monarchy then belongs to the set of strategically important countries. In calibrating the crossover point of 0.5, we therefore use the annual global mean of arms sales from the US, the UK, and France. To be a complete member of the set of strategically important countries, we define one standard deviation above the mean as the upper bound for being qualified for a coding of 1. Means and standard deviations are then averaged over respective country periods and compared to the country specific averages of arms sales. The final calibration of this fuzzy scale is presented in Table 3 of the Online Appendix.

**(B) Rents revenues (rents)**

While in the recent literature on the distributive capacities of the rentier state an important distinction has been made between resource dependency – measured as the ratio of rent revenues to gross domestic product (GDP) or to total state revenues – and resource abundance – measured as the per capita value of rents available in the state budget – the (limited) availability of historical data permits us to use rent dependency only as an indicator.<sup>48</sup> As part of the Global State Revenue and Expenditure (GSRE) data set, there is historical data available on the value of state revenues accruing to tax and non-tax payments based on the production of natural resources.<sup>49</sup> Due to the lower coverage of data using the per capita indicator, we decided to use the share of state revenues from primary commodities as a share of total state revenues as our primary estimator in calibrating the average level of rents available to the monarch.

In order to calibrate the fuzzy scale for rents, we again apply the direct method of calibration. For full membership (1), we use the Luciani threshold of 0.40 rents

as a share of total state revenues.<sup>50</sup> Having less than 0.05 rents as a share of total revenues constitutes full non-membership (0) within the concept of a rentier state; 0.20 rents as a share of total revenues then points toward the crossover point (0.5).

**(C) Family participation**

The family as a ruling institution – understood as the monopolization by members of the ruling families of “the highest state offices, including the premiership and the portfolios of Interior, Foreign Affairs and Defence, the ministries known in the Gulf as *wizarat al-siyada*, or ministries of sovereignty”<sup>51</sup> – is an important condition in explaining the survival of Middle East monarchies. On the basis of Herb’s classic study, and complemented by our own analysis, we coded a fuzzy scale of family participation using the following criteria:

- (1) If family members are explicitly excluded by constitution, law, or decree we coded a value of 0.
- (2) If family members are allowed to rule, and are found to dominate one of the relevant state institutions like the cabinet, ministries, public sector companies, the ruling party, and/or the military and security apparatus, we coded a value of 0.33.
- (3) If family members are allowed to rule, and are found to dominate at least two separate relevant state institutions like the cabinet, ministries, public sector companies, the ruling party, and/or the military and security apparatus, we coded a value of 0.67.
- (4) If family members are allowed to rule, and are found to dominate in the majority of the different relevant state institutions like the cabinet, ministries, public sector companies, the ruling party, and/or the military and security apparatus, we coded a value of 1.

**(D) The monarch’s claim to legitimate rule (*leg-claim*)**

Measuring legitimation is a notoriously difficult task. Given the current options, we decided to restrict our codings to a narrow understanding of legitimation that combines a primary aspect with a number of secondary sub-dimensions.<sup>52</sup> Based on the country and Middle East monarchy literature, which highlights the role of religion for monarchical legitimation, we estimated whether forms of religious heritage and practices – descent from Prophet Muhammad, the performance of institutionalized religious functions and alliance with religious authorities – were used by the ruler as a strategy to justify his rule. This operationalization, we think, is broad enough to incorporate various forms of religious claims. If religious heritage and practices were existent during a country period, we coded the fuzzy value of legitimation as being above the crossover point of 0.5.<sup>53</sup> Additionally, we used four characteristics of the respective political regime, derived from the concept of legitimation articulated by Beetham, to specify the multidimensionality of the concept: (a)

personality cult and charismatic leadership; (b) regional engagement (legitimation through engagement in regional forums or in regional mediation initiatives); (c) procedural mechanisms (for example, *shura* council, *diwaniyya*); and, (d) traditional legitimation or the reference to a foundational myth.<sup>54</sup> We applied the following coding rules to generate the fuzzy scale of *leg-claim*:

(1) We coded 0 if there is no religious legitimation observable, and 0.6 if there is.

(2) If, in addition to no religious legitimation, one or two of the secondary aspects can be observed, we coded 0.2. If one or two secondary aspects and religious legitimation can be observed together, we coded 0.8.

(3) If, in addition to no religious legitimation, three or four of the secondary aspects can be observed, we coded 0.4. If three or four of the secondary aspects and religious legitimation can be observed, we coded 1.

### **(E) *Hard repression (repression)***

In order to calibrate hard repression, we use data on purges, defined as “any systematic elimination by gaoling or execution of political opposition within the ranks of the regime or the opposition”.<sup>55</sup> The source is the Cross-National Time Series Data Archive founded by Arthur Banks (indicator *domestic5*). This data set is the only source available providing data on all the 13 monarchies and in particular dating back to 1945. As Banks himself concedes, this data is mostly based on *New York Times* reports and might thus tend to underestimate the true intensity of purges. We decided, therefore, to apply a minimal coding of repression that relies on a binominal measurement of having at least one event of purging within a country period – coded as 1 – or of having no purges reported in the Banks data – coded as 0.

### ***Tests for necessary and sufficient conditions***

Combined set-theory values for the five conditions are summarized in Table 3 in the Online Appendix. There are 34 cases of survival (*survival*) and five cases of breakdown (*~survival*).<sup>56</sup> The breakdown cases are: Egypt 1945 – 1952, Iraq 1945 – 1958, North-Yemen 1955 – 1962, Libya 1951 – 1969, and Iran 1953 – 1979. Using this data, we construct a truth table (Table 4 in the Online Appendix) that shows that there are 32 theoretically possible combinations of the five conditions using a binominal ideal-type value space. Eighteen of these configurations are represented by empirical cases with a membership greater than 0.5.<sup>57</sup> Fourteen configurations are filled by cases of surviving monarchies,<sup>58</sup> one of which also includes a case of monarchical breakdown.<sup>59</sup> Four configurations are filled exclusively by cases of breakdown.<sup>60</sup>

Our tests for necessity (Table 5 in the Online Appendix) yield no single necessary condition for either the survival or breakdown of monarchies in the Middle

East.<sup>61</sup> We then proceed to the tests for sufficiency. Both procedures have been carried out for survival (*survival*, Table 1) as well as for breakdown (*~survival*, Table 2).<sup>62</sup> Our results from the tests for sufficiency point in a similar direction: there is no single condition that is, in itself, sufficient to ensure monarchical survival or breakdown. Instead there are, as we have found, a number of causal complexities. A condition that can lead under certain circumstances to survival can also lead to breakdown under different ones, and combinations of conditions are found to be jointly sufficient in forming pathways towards either survival or breakdown. These conditions are called INUS conditions.<sup>63</sup> The results of our tests for sufficiency are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

As is evident from Table 1, there are in total seven pathways to survival<sup>64</sup>; the first covers the classical linchpin monarchies of Jordan and Morocco. It highlights the importance of the historical-religious claim to legitimate rule despite the absence of high rents and family participation. The last two pathways (6 and 7) explain the survival of all of the Gulf monarchies (with the exception of Oman). A combination of high rent revenues and the participation of family members in political decision-making without using hard repression are of key importance in Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. A distinct pathway (7) exclusively for Saudi Arabia illustrates the specificity of this kingdom: Rent revenues and family participation are accompanied with a strong claim to legitimate rule.

The remaining four pathways (2–5) form an interesting cluster, emphasizing the *hybrid* nature of Oman and the Imamate in North Yemen. Both overlap, for different reasons, with at least one of the linchpins or dynastic monarchies. The North Yemeni Imamate holds similar structural conditions with Morocco and some historical periods of Jordan (2). On the other hand, the early Yemeni periods had similarities with the evolution of the Saudi Kingdom until 1964 (4). Omanis quite similar to contemporary Jordan (3), enjoying strong external support and legitimacy claims combined with low family participation and no hard repression. At the same time, the Sultanate resembles many structural features of the Saudi Kingdom after 1964 (5): a combination of strong external support, rent revenues, legitimacy claims, and the absence of hard repression. These combinations in between the classical linchpin and the classical dynastic monarchies underline that there are historical formations of monarchies in the Middle East that blur the long-held dichotomy of linchpin vs dynastic monarchies in the region.

The solution for breakdown (as depicted in Table 2) consists of three terms that cover four of the historical cases of monarchical breakdown.<sup>65</sup> It reveals three central findings: First, pathways to monarchical breakdown seem to be very complex and are not merely the opposite of pathways explaining survival.<sup>66</sup> Second, the lack of family participation is common to all pathways of monarchical breakdown, while the remaining conditions differ depending on the specific case.<sup>67</sup> Only one pathway is shared by more than one case (no. 3 in Table 2), pointing to structural similarities between the two “rentier linchpins” of Libya and Iraq. Third, and somewhat surprisingly, the impact of hard repression, rent revenues, and legitimacy claims is

Table 1. Solutions explaining the survival of monarchies in the Middle East (contradicting cases in parentheses and italics).

No.	Country cases	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(Y)	Number of cases	Raw coverage	Unique coverage	Consistency
		Esupport	Rents	Family	Leg-claim	Repression	Survival				
Linchpin 1	Classical Linchpin Jordan46-50 S, Jordan51-57 S, Jordan57-70 S, Jordan70-99 S, Jordan99-11 S, Morocco56-61 S, Morocco61-71 S, Morocco71-72 S, Morocco72-99 S, Morocco99-11 S		0	0	1		1	10	0.2773	0.0496	0.8352
Hybrid 2	Yemen Linchpin Morocco56-61 S, Morocco61-71 S, Morocco71-72 S, Morocco99-11 S, Jordan46-50 S, Jordan51-57 S, Yemen45-48 S, Yemen48-55 S, ( <i>Yemen_N55-62 B</i> )	0	0		1		1	9	0.2910	0.000	0.8352
3	Oman Linchpin Jordan99-11 S, Oman 71-11 S	1		0	1	0	1	2	0.066	0.000	0.9388
4	Yemen Dynastic Saudi45-53 S, Saudi53-64 S, Yemen45-48 S, Yemen48-55 S, ( <i>Yemen55-62 B</i> )	0		1	1		1	5	0.3257	0.0000	0.9075
5	Oman Dynastic Saudi69-75 S, Saudi75-82 S, Saudi82-05 S, Saudi05-11 S, Oman 71-11 S	1	1		1	0	1	5	0.2695	0.000	0.9843
Dynastic 6	Classical Dynastic Abu Dhabi71-04 S, Abu Dhabi04-11 S, Bahrain71-81 S; Bahrain81-99 S; Bahrain99-11S, Kuwait61-65 S, Kuwait65-77 S, Kuwait77-90 S; Kuwait90-06 S, Kuwait06-11 S, Qatar71-72 S, Qatar72-95S, Qatar95-11 S, Saudi45-53 S, Saudi69-75 S, Saudi75-82 S, Saudi82-05 S, Saudi05-11 S		1	1		0	1	18	0.5352	0.2343	0.7527
7	Saudi Arabia Saudi45-53 S, Saudi53-64 S, Saudi64-69 S, Saudi69-75 S, Saudi75-82 S, Saudi82-05 S, Saudi05-11 S		1	1	1		1	7	0.3671	0.0277	0.9215

Table 2. Solutions explaining the breakdown of monarchies in the Middle East.

No.	Country cases	(A) Esupport	(B) Rents	(C) Family	(D) Leg-claim	(E) Repression	(Y) Survival	Number of cases	Raw coverage	Unique coverage	Consistency
1	Egypt45-52 B	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.0978	0.0948	0.8639
2	Iran53-79 B	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0.0784	0.0597	1.0000
3	Iraq45-58 B, Libya51-69 B	0	1	0	1		0	2	0.1507	0.1320	0.8978

not straightforward. The use or non-use of hard repression seems to be largely irrelevant for monarchical survival. Repression is also not efficient in shielding a monarchy, which enjoys strong external support and high rent revenues as the example of Iran 1979 demonstrates. Iraq in the 1950s and Libya in the 1960s each had high rent revenues and a claim to historical-religious legitimacy, yet also broke down. Rent revenue thus does not seem to be a particularly strong stabilizing factor in itself either, since it is found in three of four (or five, if one includes North Yemen) cases of breakdown.

## **Discussion of results and conclusions**

Drawing on the insights from but also moving beyond the recent debates on monarchies in the Middle East, we suggest a historical-configurative explanation for the survival of this subtype of authoritarian regimes. Based on a systematic fsQCA of all 13 monarchies that have existed in the region between 1945 and 2012 and by looking at the five core conditions – strategic external support, rent revenues, family participation in political decision-making, the claim to legitimacy, and hard repression – a number of conclusions can be drawn.

The most striking finding is that beyond the well-known “classical” *dualism* separating dynastic (Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE) from linchpin monarchies (Jordan and Morocco), we identify a third, hybrid pathway containing the Sultanate of Oman as well as some historical periods of the Imamate of North Yemen. Taken together, these three pathways demonstrate one of the core strengths of QCA, namely to have largely independent explanations for the same outcome (equifinality).

The identification of a third category, represented by only one contemporary case, highlights another strength of Boolean analysis. Each case retains its context-specific importance thereby allowing otherwise often marginal or outlier cases to appear prominently in a separate pathway. So while neither Oman nor the Yemeni Imamate fall together in one category, they both represent specific historical formations which lie outside the dominant dualism of monarchy studies in the Middle East. Apart from clarifying our knowledge about the development of both the classical linchpin and dynastic regimes, their pathways reveal the blended nature of the survival strategies of Oman and earlier North Yemen, which stand apart from the other Middle Eastern monarchies. Deviating from especially Morocco and all of the smaller Gulf monarchies, Oman shares a combination of a lack of systematic family rule and strong legitimacy claims with Jordan. On the other hand, the Sultanate intersects with its direct northern neighbour Saudi Arabia in that it displays a combination of rent revenues with high levels of traditional legitimacy claims. Interestingly, Oman is the only surviving oil-rich monarchy without systematic family participation. Historically speaking, it highlights the possibility that also rentier linchpins – other historical examples being pre1958 Iraq and pre-1969 Libya – were able to overcome deadly domestic challenges. While neither Iraq nor Libya enjoyed the strategic importance of contemporary Oman (high

external support), the latter case highlights the importance of not using hard repression when enjoying high oil revenues and being of strategic importance to the West. This is a lesson the last Shah of Iran ignored, while at the same time he was unable to base his legitimacy claims on the same strong historical and religious sources as Sultan Qaboos does today.

The Imamate of North Yemen, instead, quite similar to Morocco and Jordan on the one hand, was a fascinating example of a family-dominated regime based on strong religious legitimacy claims without controlling much oil revenue. Historically, this is maybe the only example of a failed would-be dynastic monarchy, sharing many similarities with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia before 1964. The Imamate of Yemen sheds light on an important historical precondition of the evolution of dynastic monarchies. Oil revenues were instrumental in order to finance other family members as well as a family-based modern state bureaucracy. This connection is sometimes forgotten when looking at the remarkable stability of the contemporary monarchies in the Gulf. It is both family participation and oil revenues which were and still are crucial for the survival of five of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members. However, one important caveat remains: While the survival of the Imamate in North Yemen is explained by the fourth pathway as highlighted in Table 1, the fsQCA incorrectly assumes that the breakdown period is part of this survival pathway. This is where further historical research is needed. It might be that additional aspects like an external invasion, as argued by Herb,<sup>68</sup> may account for this specificity.

Our findings for explaining monarchical breakdown are much more complex than those for survival, and therefore lack the degree of generalization we achieved in the case of the latter. To start with, the counterfactually generated Boolean solutions are not just the opposite of our explanations for survival. This asymmetric causality, an additional major strength of Boolean analysis, is an important aspect to bear in mind when interpreting our results. The complexity of the interaction with other conditions makes clear that breakdown seems to be an event that occurs only under very specific historical circumstances. Additionally, the breakdown results evince that a number of prominent factors, as outlined in the literature, have an ambiguous, context-sensitive impact. Most notably, high rent revenues, were present in three out of four of the broken down monarchies – contradicting the strong claim that they might be singly sufficient for authoritarian survival, an argument often made in the early rentier state literature. A more general reason for the lower degree of generalization with regard to monarchical breakdowns relates to the “survival-centric” literature of authoritarian regimes in the Middle East. There is no condition in the literature on Middle East monarchies that has a clearly theorized causal impact on monarchical breakdown. On the contrary, apart from family participation, each condition supposedly conducive to survival may potentially also contribute to breakdown if and when it is combined with various other conditions. There is, hence, a clear need for greater emphasis on a distinct breakdown-centred research to gain more insights into the specificities of this phenomenon.

What are some of the lessons that can be drawn from this historical-comparative perspective regarding some of the recent developments among monarchies in the context of the “Arab Uprisings”? Due to the equifinal paths, different lessons can be drawn for different types of monarchies. The major lesson for linchpins is to prevent an erosion of their historical-religious legitimacy claim. Ongoing developments in Jordan and Morocco, however, do not signify a historical similarity with this (yet). Gulf monarchies instead need to conserve their combination of family rule and oil rent revenues – contemporary Bahrain is a case in point. If one of the two conditions weakens, the authoritarian monarchy might risk ending up like Iran in 1979 or getting in increasingly tense intra-family power struggles. The continuing positioning of royal family members in the highest state offices – arguably coupled with a better allocation of oil-rent spoils – remains, therefore, the single most important strategy the Bahraini monarchy could employ to survive in the long term.

Safeguarding family participation also plays an overarching role for most of the other oil-exporting Gulf monarchies. If they were to abandon this practice and to rely instead on historical-religious claims to legitimize their rule, they might find themselves progressing towards the structural situations that monarchical Iraq and Libya experienced more than four decades ago. It is thus the erosion of the domestic factors of family participation and legitimacy claims that fosters those critical moments in which breakdown becomes a real possibility. External factors like strategic military support and rents are, in themselves, not sufficient to ensure survival – but they can be very powerful instruments if combined with domestic conditions. This is, ultimately, perhaps the most crucial lesson to be learned in the still ongoing events of the “Arab Uprisings”.

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### **Supplemental data**

Supplemental data for this article can be accessed <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2013.845555>.

### **Notes**

1. In addition to Bahrain, Morocco and Jordan, the other five contemporary authoritarian monarchies in the Middle East are Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.

2. Owen, Arab Presidents.
3. Lucas, "King's Dilemma"; Yom and Gause III, "Resilient Royals."
4. Lucas, "Monarchical Authoritarianism."
5. Herb, All in the Family.
6. Huntington, Political Order.
7. Ibid., 177.
8. Anderson, "Absolutism," 1.
9. Ibid.
10. There are three prominent cultural(ist) approaches to Middle Eastern monarchies: The first stresses the mutually reinforcing ideological connections between monarchies and Islam (Lewis, "Monarchy"), allegedly allowing the Jordanian, Moroccan, and Saudi Arabian kings a peculiar kind of religious legitimacy. Lewis' take, however, tends to underestimate the often-contradictory effects of monarchical attempts at Islamic legitimation. In addition, a number of monarchies currently exist without any religious legitimacy at all (Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)). The second culturalist perspective stresses the dominance of patriarchal social structures (Ben Dor, State and Conflict). This perspective can, however, be countered by pointing out that it is not only monarchs who act as "national father figures" in the region; many presidents in the Middle East have behaved in quite similar ways in this regard. Third, Menaldo has recently put forward the idea of a specific monarchical political culture that allows for credible commitment, see Menaldo, "Resilient Monarchs." However, it is important to point out that his dependent variable is political turmoil rather than regime survival or breakdown.
11. Brand, Jordan's Inter-Arab Relations, 81–3; Yom, "Jordan," 163.
12. Snyder, "Sultanistic Regimes," 58.
13. Gause III, Oil Monarchies, 127.
14. Yom and Gause III, "Resilient Royals," 85; for a similar argument on the pre-"Arab Uprisings" see Frisch, "Why Monarchies Persist."
15. Gause III, Oil Monarchies.
16. Luciani, "Allocation vs. Production State."
17. Yom and Al-Momani, "International Dimensions."
18. Herb, All in the Family.
19. Lucas, "Monarchical Authoritarianism."
20. Herb, All in the Family, 235.
21. Herb explicitly excludes North Yemen from his analysis. Ibid., 17.
22. An alternative institutionalist account is provided by Lucas, Politics of Survival.
23. Hudson, Arab Politics; Schlumberger, "Old Bottles."
24. Schlumberger, "Old Bottles," 239 – 46.
25. In Jordan, the Hashemite king can trace his descent back to the Muslim prophet Muhammad. In Morocco as well, the Alaoui king – as the amir al-mu'minin – is a descendant of Muhammad. In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the country's nomenclature itself denotes the ruling family, which has been closely associated since the eighteenth century with the strict Wahhabi interpretation of Hanbali Islam. As the khadim al-haramain, the Saudi royal family attains further religious legitimacy in hosting and organizing the annual Islamic pilgrimages to Mecca and Medina.
26. Krämer, "Good Counsel."
27. Demmelhuber, "Political Reform."
28. Schlumberger, "Old Bottles," 243 – 45.
29. Bellin, "Robustness"; Spinks, Sahliyyeh, and Calfano, "Status of Democracy."
30. Spinks, Sahliyyeh, and Calfano, "Status of Democracy," 329ff.
31. Josua and Edel, "To Repress."
32. Bellin, "Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East."

33. Ibid., 130 –5.
34. Yom and Gause III, “Resilient Royals,” 85.
35. Herb, All in the Family.
36. A condition is defined as being necessary if it must be present for a certain outcome to occur (Ragin, Comparative Method, 99). Thus tests for necessity attempt to verify whether a condition is always there if a certain outcome occurs; however, necessary conditions might also be present even if the outcome does not occur. A condition is defined as being sufficient if by itself it can produce a certain outcome. Tests for sufficiency attempt to verify whether a condition always leads to the same outcome; thus, sufficient conditions are not present if the outcome does not occur.
37. Berg-Schlosser et al., “Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) as an Approach,” 2.
38. Ragin, Fuzzy-Set Social Science.
39. Fiss, “Building Better Causal Theories,” 402.
40. Ibid.
41. Two controversial cases – Tunisia before independence 1956 and the Federation of South Arabia – were not included since we focus our analysis exclusively on independent states.
42. Smaller periods, which we call transition periods – like the official rule by Farouk’s son Fuad II in Egypt between 1952 and 1953, which came after the Free Officers took power – are not considered an appropriate unit of analysis. A complete list of accepted transition periods is attached to Table 3 in the Online Appendix. Since the UAE consists of seven different sheikhdoms, with each experiencing different cycles of succession, strictly speaking we would have to consider each emirate an independent country unit. We decided, therefore, to take Abu Dhabi – as the leading emirate – as representative of the whole federation in our analysis.
43. Powell and Thyne, “Global Instances of Coups.”
44. Marshall and Marshall, “Dataset Coups d’État.”
45. Note that we do not code the crossover point of 0.5 of survival explicitly. The decision whether a case belongs to the value space above or below 0.5 is exclusively made by looking at regime survival (breakdown below 0.5 and survival above 0.5).
46. Available at <http://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers/background> (1 July 2013).
47. Ragin, “Fuzzy Sets.”
48. Basedau and Lay, “Resource Curse.”
49. Lucas and Richter, Taxation, Distribution and Authoritarian Regime Longevity.
50. Luciani, “Allocation vs. Production State.”
51. Herb, All in the Family, 8. Please note that we do only code family participation and not dynastic monarchies. There is an important difference between both concepts, as Herb himself notes: “...it is the rise of the ruling dynasties to dominate the petro-state that best explains the survival of the monarchies” (Ibid., 52). Oil and family participation only jointly created dynastic monarchies.
52. Beetham, Legitimation of Power.
53. Sponsoring the build-up of mosques or the mere reference to righteous religious behaviour in speeches by the monarch or important regime actors does not suffice for a country to be coded above 0.5.
54. Beetham, Legitimation of Power.
55. Banks, “Data Archive,” 11. Please note that in our understanding the repression of local or regional rebellions, like for instance the secessionist movement in Dhofar (south of Oman) during the 1970s, does not fall under the scope of this definition.
56. The “~” sign signifies membership below the threshold of 0.5, while no sign represents membership above the value of 0.5.
57. The 14 rows that are not represented by empirical cases are called logical remainders. While there is no clearly established guideline regarding how many rows can be logical

remainders, with five conditions, 14 nevertheless seems a plausible number.

58. These are Rows 1 – 7, 9 – 10, 14, and 16 – 18 in Table 4 of the Online Appendix, covering 34 country periods in total.

59. This is Row 7 in Table 4, where one historical period of monarchical survival in North Yemen clusters together with the time period of 1955 – 1962, which was ended by a republican revolution.

60. Rows 8, 12, 13, and 15 represent four historical cases of monarchical breakdown.

61. Schneider and Wagemann, *Qualitative Comparative Analysis*, suggest a consistency level of 0.90 as the threshold value for a necessary condition, none of our conditions or their inverse fulfils this criterion.

62. All tests were run with fsQCA Version 2.5, software that can be downloaded at: <http://www.u.arizona.edu/cragin/fsQCA/software.shtml> (18 July 2010).

63. INUS conditions are insufficient but necessary parts of a condition that is itself unnecessary to, but sufficient for, the result Schneider and Wagemann, *Set-Theoretic Methods*, 79.

64. For further elaboration and formalization see the Online Appendix, Table 6.

65. For further elaboration and formalization see the Online Appendix, Table 7.

66. However, since there is a limited number of breakdown cases to begin with, the pathways are of the maximum possible length since no meaningful Boolean minimization could be undertaken.

67. The country period of North Yemen between 1955 and 1962 falls within a pathway of monarchical survival (no. 7 in Table 4 of the Online Appendix), even though it is a case of a broken down monarchy. It has, therefore, not been analysed as part of the monarchical breakdown QCA that is presented in Table 2.

68. Herb, *All in the Family*, 17.

### **Notes on contributors**

André Bank is a research fellow at the GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies in Hamburg, where he is a member of the Institute of Middle East Studies. He received his PhD in political science from the University of Marburg, Germany. His main research foci are the comparative study of autocracies, violent conflict, and regional order in the Middle East.

Thomas Richter is a senior research fellow at the GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies in Hamburg, where he is a member of the Institute of Middle East Studies. He holds a PhD in political science from the Bremen International Graduate School of Social Science (BIGSSS) at the University of Bremen, Germany. His main research focus lies on the comparative study of autocracies in the Middle East and other world regions.

Anna Sunik is a junior research fellow at the GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies in Hamburg, where she is a member of the Institute of Middle East Studies. She is currently writing her doctoral dissertation at the University of Heidelberg. Her main research foci are the comparative study of autocracies, foreign policy, and Middle Eastern politics.

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