

# Middle Eastern Authoritarian States and the Political Economy of Development

## GOVT 332

### A) Factors that contribute to the origin of the Authoritarian State in the Middle East:

- **Colonial Rule:**
  - **Created artificial borders** that divided the region into some two dozen nation-states (separating communities and brought together people from different communities), making the state function of social and political integration nearly impossible without the use of coercion.
  - **Created a strong, centralized, militarized state.** A lopsided “state” where the state was much stronger and much more modernized than society.
  - **Foreignness of the Source of the Nation-State**, which rendered the state somewhat illegitimate in the eyes of the masses.
  - **Bourgeois Nationalism?**
  - **State-Led Growth**
- **Cultural Elements?**

### B) Factors that support the Authoritarian State in the Middle East:

- **Developmentalism:** the exchange of economic welfare and development for political and social rights (the state provides welfare in exchange for political acquiescence).
- **Neotraditionalism:** the selective and/or opportunist invocation of tradition or cultural elements to legitimize political rule
- **Coercive** apparatuses and the elite’s will to use them
- **Corporatist Systems of Interest Representation:** allows the government/regime to play off sectors against one another while boasting “limited pluralism”
- **International Support for Authoritarian Regimes**
- **Rentierism:** states that derive much of their revenues from rent that accrues to the state, making the state more autonomous and less accountable
- **The Strategic Context:** Extremist opposition, negative legitimacy, and the silent majority

## Post-Colonial Development and Challenges

### General Trend in Non-Rentier States

	<b>Political</b>	<b>Social</b>	<b>Economic</b>
<b>Challenges</b>	Incomplete independence (ties still existed b/w local elites and former colonizers)	Social equity/justice in an impoverished society (1% of the people owned more than 60% of the Land). Illiteracy	Independent Economic Development
<b>How they were dealt with?</b>	Emergence of populist authoritarian regimes (mass-inclusive, elite exclusive regimes)	Redistribution of Wealth: a) land reform and b) nationalization of private assets	Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI)
<b>Outcomes (short-run)</b>	Populist Authoritarian regimes (social and economic policies increased the legitimacy of the state initially)	Upward socioeconomic mobility and political disempowerment (rise of the middle class—associated with public sector growth). Massive urbanization	Dramatic expansion of the public sector, which became the largest single employer, serving political not economic functions
<b>Long term and/or Unintended Outcomes</b>	Strong and entrenched authoritarian state with low legitimacy.  Outlawed opposition and drove dissenters into religious opposition	A) Failure of incorporation (in cities) leads to masses of alienated, disillusioned individuals. some, with time, oppose state & take action.  B) reduced salaries, with time, reduce the size of the middle class	Oversized, bloated, and inefficient public sector.  Regimes embark on forms of economic liberalization that compromise labor in favor of select business actors/sectors.

## The Rentier State

The emergence of rentier states in the 1970s has profoundly influenced the character and development of the Arab state system, whether they benefited directly or indirectly.

What is rent?

What is the rentier state?

How does the rentier state influence politics?

1) **Rent** is a source of income that derives from ownership of natural resources, as opposed to other types of income, like wage and profit.

- rent accrues from ownership whereas wage and profit are earned.
- i.e., rent income does not derive from productive activity

2) **Characteristics of a rentier state:**

- a rentier state is one where the dominant source of income is rent (e.g. Kuwait)
- only a small segment of the population is involved in generating rent
- in a rentier economy, rent accrues to the state (owner of the resource)
- State adopts a distributive function and relaxes extractive functions

3) **General Effects of the Dominance of Rent:**

- a disproportionate amount of wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few.
- a disproportionate amount of power is concentrated in the hands of a few
- effects a break in the work-reward relationship: income/wealth becomes unrelated to work and leads to a get-rich-quick mentality
- role of the state as provider of public goods through taxation becomes blurred: with little taxation, not much calls for representation
- the role of extractive institutions diminishes while distributive institutions swell: leads to severe imbalances and obstacles during times of economic crisis or oil busts.
- the dominance of the state breeds authoritarian rule and weakens opposition.