

# Over-stating the Arab State

Politics and Society in  
the Middle East

NAZIH N. AYUBI

I.B.Tauris Publishers  
LONDON · NEW YORK

## The Middle East and the State Debate: a Conceptual Framework

Why is it that even though they all call themselves Arabs, there are actually twenty disparate Arab 'states', all of which vary greatly in size and in resources and some of which are among the smallest in the world? Why is it that these 'states' engage so keenly in a multitude of attempts at political unification which always fail, one after the other? Why is it that although the rhetoric of politics in most Arab countries is based on broad or even universalist ideas such as nationalism or socialism, the actual 'ruling caste' is often very narrowly based and non-representative? Why is it that although they have large and expanding bureaucracies, armies and security forces, they fail to 'penetrate' the society in areas such as taxation and law enforcement? Why is it that these states appear to be so easily able to switch regional and international alliances (for example between the East and the West during the Cold War)? Why is it that they appear to be able overnight to launch complete reversals in domestic policy (say from socialism to economic liberalism and vice versa)?

These are some of the questions that have given rise to the idea of writing this comparative study on Arab politics.

The comparative method involves a synthesising exercise, both in generalisation and in specification (hence its vulnerability to criticism from both theoreticians and historians). Generalisation is mandatory, but it should not be so sweeping as to obliterate the distinct historical features of various 'cases'. Specification is also important, but it should not be so extreme as to turn every example into a 'special case' incapable of informing us beyond the contours of its own 'essence'. The book will attempt a certain balance between the two considerations. If there is a slight tilt, it may be in the direction of conceptualisation and generalisation since I am convinced that, whereas there is a reasonable number of good Middle Eastern country studies now available, comparative synthesising works (with few exceptions such as Hudson [1977], Bill and Leiden [1984], Bill and Springborg [1990], Richards and Waterbury

In a certain sense this study is exploratory: attempting not so much to give a comprehensive coverage of any particular country or theme as to explore how they may be studied in the light of certain conceptual categories that do not stem either from a presumed socio-philosophical individualism (which has not yet established itself in the Middle East) or from an imagined (non-changing) cultural 'essence'.

The title of the book may perhaps warrant a little explanation. 'Over-stating' the Arab state is meant here to imply two theoretical concerns. The first aims at manifesting and explaining the remarkable expansion of the state in quantitative terms that has taken place during the last three to four decades, by way of expansion not only in state industrialisation and social welfare but also in public personnel, public organisations and public expenditures, etc. This process of expanding both the size of the state machine and the role of the state in the economy and society is what is usually described by the term *étatisme*. My use of the expression 'over-stating' in this context is analogous with the familiar word concept 'overstaffing', and fairly akin to Hamza Alavi's [1979] concept of the 'over-developed state'. Very often, too, the Arab state is 'over-stated' in the sense of being over-stretched or over-extended; this is particularly true of populist regimes that try to pursue developmentalist and welfare policies at the same time.

'Over-stating' the Arab state is also meant, ironically and by contrast, to imply that the real power, efficacy and significance of this state might have been overestimated. The Arab state is not a natural growth of its own socio-economic history or its own cultural and intellectual tradition. It is a 'fierce' state that has frequently to resort to raw coercion in order to preserve itself, but it is not a 'strong' state because (a) it lacks - to varying degrees of course - the 'infrastructural power' [Mann, 1986a] that enables states to penetrate society effectively through mechanisms such as taxation for example; and (b) it lacks ideological hegemony (in the Gramscian sense) that would enable it to forge a 'historic' social bloc that accepts the legitimacy of the ruling stratum.

Owing to the 'articulated' nature of the Middle Eastern social formations (a phenomenon that will be elaborated upon throughout the book), their politics tends also to assume an articulatory form, represented by various degrees and manifestations of 'corporatism'. This stems from the fact that in these societies neither 'philosophical individualism' nor social classes have developed well enough to allow for the emergence of politics as we see it in Western, capitalist societies. As with corporatism in general, Middle Eastern corporatism ranges between a more 'organic', solidaristic and communitarian strand at one end of the spectrum and a more organisational, interest-based and populist/mobilisational strand at the other. Saudi Arabia and other kin based monarchies in the Gulf are illustrative of the first strand; Egypt and other sometime radical, populist republics are illustrative of the second.

Yet, and as G. O'Donnell [1977] has brilliantly observed, corporatism is

[1990], Owen [1992], and to some extent the Luciani volumes, culminating in Luciani [1990b] are still lamentably lagging behind. Bromley's valuable book [1994], whose publication coincided with the completion of this book has a somewhat similar (political economy) approach to the present work, although it is different in scope and restricted to Western (although certainly not Orientalist) sources and debates.

In trying to deal with the subject I have been broadly informed by a 'political economy' approach without in fact overlooking the significance of 'political culture'. This was made possible by developing a simple, though in some ways unusual, conceptual framework, wherein concepts such as 'articulation', 'non-correspondence' and 'compensation' feature quite prominently. I believe that with the help of such concepts, 'political economy' and 'political culture' approaches can be reconciled and need no longer be regarded as inevitably contradictory. The writings of Arab authors about their own politics can thus cease to be mere statements of difference and signs of exoticness, and can be incorporated into a more universalist social science literature.

For this book aims at two apparently contradictory objectives. One is to place the Middle East (or more specifically the Arab World) within a theoretical and comparative framework that avoids the (Orientalist/Fundamentalist) claim of its utter peculiarity and uniqueness [see Halliday, 1993]. As one political scientist has rhetorically wondered, "Are Arab politics still Arab?" [Green, 1986]; and as another social scientist has conjectured, why should one always look for some peculiar reasons to explain things that take place in the Middle East? [Gilsenan, 1991].<sup>1</sup> The other objective is to rely as much as possible on literature produced by the Arab scholars themselves on their own societies and politics. The two objectives are not as contradictory as they may appear at first glance: our purpose is to show that although the Arab World and the Middle East region have their own *specificity* (I intentionally avoid speaking of 'authenticity') they are also - even when analysed by their own intellectuals - capable of being understood according to universal theoretical and 'social-scientific' categories.<sup>2</sup>

The coverage of this book proceeds in expanding circles. The 'core' is manifested by nine countries, covered in detail throughout the work, which have been selected to represent important 'categories' of Arab state (these are Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Tunisia and Algeria). Other Arab countries (e.g. Morocco, Lebanon, Yemen) are dealt with when the theme under discussion warrants tackling them as representative cases. From outside the Arab World, Turkey is referred to as being historically influential (through the Ottoman connection), as well as being an interesting comparative case (with regard to themes such as *étatisme*, populism, etc.). Iran is also referred to from time to time. The book is therefore based on a certain careful balance between case studies on the one hand, and comparisons and generalisations on the other.

not only 'statising' but also 'privatising'; i.e. it allows for special interests to make inroads for themselves within the state apparatus. The recent drive towards 'privatisation' as part of economic restructuring in the Middle East coincides with a broader re-examination of the state/civil society relationship. Within this re-examination, the public/private dichotomy is no longer only about ownership of the means of production but also about morality and social space, with the forces of political Islam declaring 'public' the sphere of morality, in order to fight back a state that has – perhaps for too long (and unsuccessfully) – declared 'public' the entire economic domain.

### THE STATE DEBATE

Over the past decade or so, two apparently contradictory developments seem to have been taking place. Intellectually, political and social scientists have been busy 'bringing the state back in' as a major analytical concept (one which had apparently been eclipsed, mainly under the impact of American behaviouralism). In real political and economic life, however, there has been a great deal of talk about having 'less of the state' (*moins d'Etat*) and about 'getting the state off our backs'.

In the increasingly integrated world (market-wise and communications-wise) in which we live, the two developments (the intellectual and the politico-economic) have had an impact that extends far beyond their original birth place in the capitalist, advanced 'core' countries. And this has, of course, included the Middle East region.

Interest in the state and its role in the society and the economy started to grow among Arab intellectuals in the 1980s. The state had emerged in the Arab World at a time when Arab intellectuals were not really paying attention to its development – they were mostly preoccupied either with the 'Islamic *umma*' or with 'Arab nationalism', but not with the territorial bureaucratic state as such. With a few partial exceptions (notably Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Oman, Yemen and Turkey), the state – as a concept and as an institution – has been a recent introduction in the Middle East. Most Middle Eastern countries have, however, succeeded in preserving their newly established 'states', although not without cultural and social agony, while the state machines have themselves expanded most remarkably in size and in functional scope. It is only recently that this intellectual neglect of the state phenomenon has been partly ameliorated, and the contribution of authors in the Arabic language in this field is indeed worthy of review and critique – which we endeavour to do in this book.

Although most of the polities in the present-day world are usually described as 'states', the concept of the state that is familiar to political scientists cannot easily be isolated from the nationalist and organisational developments that took place in Europe in the period from the sixteenth to the twentieth century,

or from the ideas of leading European thinkers such as Machiavelli, Bodin, Hobbes and Hegel.<sup>3</sup> The last, in particular, has been most influential and until Marx challenged several of his formulations in the nineteenth century, the Hegelian concept prevailed of the state as a moral expression of the triumph of unity over diversity, of the general over the specific, and of the public interest over the private [cf. Held, 1983: 1–58].

Marx, on the other hand, maintained that this was merely the state's concept of itself. In reality the state apparatus was a distinct entity that might be distinguished but could not be separated from the society at large. The state appears in two different capacities with Marx: either (as in the Communist Manifesto) it was an executive committee for the management of the collective affairs of the bourgeoisie, and as such a direct reflection of the interests of this class; or (as in the Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon) it was an autonomous apparatus whose action ranged between balancing the existing interests in the society and promoting the 'parasitic' interests of the state personnel themselves [Draper, 1977]. There are therefore two potentially contradictory concepts of the state in Marx; one (instrumentalist, input-oriented) that sees the state as a reflection of the society, especially its class realities (Marxism Mark I); the other that sees it as a fairly autonomous body within the society capable of shaping events in it (Marxism Mark II) [cf. Badie and Birnbaum, 1983: 3–11].

Such a contradiction has opened the gate for debates among various Marxists as to the most pertinent way of conceptualising the state. In my view the leading figure in this debate was Antonio Gramsci. Given the influence of Gramsci's ideas on much of the analysis in this book, it may be in order at this stage very briefly to review his 'theory' on the state.

In many ways Gramsci filled in the gaps in Marx's theory of politics. His formulations part company with the conventional 'scientific' Marxist premise that the "base determines the form of consciousness", and establish instead the premise that the "base determines what forms of consciousness *are possible*" [Femia, 1975: 38]. According to Gramsci the state is "the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules" [Gramsci, 1971: 244].

It has of course been customary to speak of the state in terms of power ever since Botero's *Della Ragion di Stato* and in particular since Machiavelli's *Il Principe*. "That an impersonal structure of domination called the state is the core of politics is an idea so deeply embedded in our ways of thinking that any other conception of it appears counter-intuitive and implausible" [Viroli, 1992: 3, 126ff, 178, 281–5]. Even Weber's celebrated definition is based on power, albeit tempered power: "a state is a human community that (successfully) claims *the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory" [in Gerth and Wright Mills, eds, 1970: 77–9; original emphasis]. Of

course Weber's concept of domination as the basis of the state is tempered by his concept of 'legitimacy': "in principle, there are three inner justifications, hence basic *legitimations* of domination" – 'traditional', 'charismatic' and 'legal' [ibid.].

In Gramsci, 'domination' as a basic component of the state is also tempered, in this case by 'hegemony' – a concept far more comprehensive and less juridic than legitimacy. Of Greek origin, it is fortunate that *egemonia* also exists (most likely from the very same root) in classical and modern Arabic, as *haymana*. What is more, some shades of the same concept might have been anticipated in Ibn Khaldun's notion of *iltiham* (coalescence), which adds social integration and ideological cohesion ('a prophesy or a right doctrine'), to the overpowering physical capacity (*ghulb*) of the state. According to Ibn Khaldun in his *Muqaddima*: "Natural authority is derived from a group feeling ('*asabiyya*'), [acquired] through the constant overwhelming of competing parties. However, the condition for the continuation of this authority is for the subservient parties to coalesce with the group that controls leadership" [quoted in Salamé, 1987: 208; compare also Qurban, 1984: 309–55].<sup>4</sup>

Gramsci develops the concept of hegemony from Marx and Lenin and makes it a seminal component of his concept of the state, a concept that he does *not* sharply contrast with civil society. He incorporates the apparatus of hegemony in the state, thereby expanding it beyond the Marxist-Leninist conception of the state as a coercive instrument of the bourgeoisie [Carnoy, 1984: 72ff]. Thus, according to Gramsci, "... the general notion of state includes elements which need to be referred back to the notion of civil society (in the sense that one might say that state = political society + civil society; in other words hegemony protected by the armour of coercion)" [Gramsci, 1971: 263]. As Martin Carnoy explains, Gramsci realised that the dominant class did not have to rely solely on the coercive power of the state or even its direct economic power to rule; rather, through its hegemony, expressed in the civil society *and* the state, the ruled could be persuaded to accept the system of beliefs of the ruling class and to share its social, cultural and moral values [Carnoy, 1984: 87]. A class becomes hegemonic in two ways: 'leading' and 'dominant'. "It leads the classes which are its allies, and dominates those which are its enemies" [Gramsci, 1971: 55–7, n. 5].

As Christine Buci-Glucksmann [1980] rightly illustrates, the concept of hegemony cannot be reduced to the Marxist notion of dominant ideology, or to the Weberian problematic of mechanisms of legitimacy that combine violence with ends of social integration. In the case of a successful hegemony, a class leads the whole of society forward:

Its 'attraction' for the allied (and even enemy) classes is not passive but active. Not only does it not depend on simple mechanisms of administrative coercion, of constraint, but it is not even exhausted in the mechanisms of ideological imposition, ideological subjection (Althusser), or in legitimation by symbolic

violence (Bourdieu). Rather, from the moment hegemony becomes simply the backing for violence, or even worse, is only obtained by violence (the case of fascism, where 'consent is obtained only by the baton'), this hegemony is in fact no longer assured [Buci-Glucksmann, 1980: 56–8].

The Gramscian concept of hegemony is broader than the Weberian concept of legitimacy because it does not confine itself to the processes according to which political structures are accepted by the system's agents, but delves as well into the area of cultural and ideological consent, and emphasises the role of the state as *educator* [Gramsci, 1987: 187–8]. What Gramsci calls the 'gendarme-state' and the 'corporative-state' (i.e. the state in terms of its 'law and order' functions and the state in terms of its economic interests and functions) is simply a primitive and narrow, rather than a sophisticated, phase of state formation and development [cf. Buci-Glucksmann, 1980: 69ff, 89ff]. By contrast, Gramsci's concept of the 'integral state' or the 'state in its totality' (*lo stato integrale*) is not confined to the government but includes certain aspects of the civil society and is based on hegemony and leadership. The concept of the 'integral state' is thus often linked to that of the 'ethical state' or the state as educator – through the schools and the courts [ibid.: 127ff]. As Laclau and Mouffe put it, it is in the

movement from the 'political' to the 'intellectual and moral' plane, that the decisive transition takes place toward a concept of hegemony beyond 'class alliances'. For, whereas political leadership can be grounded upon a conjunctural coincidence of interests in which the participating sectors retain their separate identity, moral and intellectual leadership requires that an ensemble of 'ideas' and 'values' be shared by a number of sectors [Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 66–7].

The contemporary state in the Middle East appears to correspond to the Gramscian categories of 'gendarme-state' and 'corporative-state'. Aspects of the 'police-state' in the Middle East are clear enough to most observers. As for the corporative aspects of the state, the following passage by C. Buci-Glucksmann would be relevant to the Middle East:

The economic-corporative phase of the state is necessarily longer ... the more 'gelatinous' and less developed civil society is. The state is then compelled to play a driving role in the social development, and this in the absence of earlier democratic traditions. When Gramsci writes how 'in Russia, the State was everything, civil society was primordial and gelatinous', it is necessary to add that precisely because this State was everything (authoritarian, tsarist), it could not be an integral state in the Gramscian sense. Class unification of an authoritarian and bureaucratic kind cannot be taken as a sign of strength ('expansiveness'), it is rather a sign of weakness [Buci-Glucksmann, 1980: 284ff].

Thus there is an inevitable 'productivist' phase, which may even lean towards a kind of 'statolatry' (i.e. an attitude of each particular social group towards *its own* state). But the transition from this to an integral state must take place

by way of hegemony – or relationships at all levels of the society, from the factory through to the school, that aim at the creation of a new type and level of civilisation [Gramsci, 1987: 186–8]. To Gramsci the creation of an integral state with a leading or ‘directive’ class (*dirigente*) is equivalent to the creation of a *Weltanschauung* [Gramsci, 1971: 381]. Hegemony is achieved when this ‘world-view’ is diffused by agencies of ideological control and socialisation into every area of daily life to the extent that this prevailing consciousness is internalised by the broad masses to become part of their ‘common sense’ [Boggs, 1976: 39]. This is usually achieved through a dialectical interaction between the structure and the superstructure, between the objective and the subjective, manifested in the creation of a socio-political bloc, or, as Gramsci calls it, a historical bloc (*blocco storico*). This latter is “a *contingent*, socially constructed form of correspondence among the economic, political and ideological regions of social formation, [with an] anti-reductionist emphasis on the specificity of the ‘national-popular’ and the ‘popular-democratic’, in contradistinction to class demands and struggles” [Jessop, 1982: 209].

Gramsci’s ideas on the state have been elaborated on or amplified by a number of thinkers including in particular Althusser and Poulantzas [cf. Carnoy, 1984: Ch. 4 and refs cited]. For our purposes the most useful idea to borrow from Althusser is his concept of the ‘ideological apparatuses of the state’. Poulantzas is more complex, but his concept of the state as the most rational capitalist is not particularly pertinent for developing (pre-capitalist or early capitalist) countries (if indeed it is even appropriate for capitalist states). More useful for our purposes is his elaboration of the concept of the ‘relative autonomy’ of the state and his idea of the state as an arena for competition and struggle among the various ‘class fractions’ of the bourgeoisie [see, e.g., Poulantzas, 1971, and compare the critique by Miliband, 1983].

While benefiting from people like Poulantzas, I find that delving directly into Gramsci is often more rewarding. This is perhaps due to the fact that Gramsci had come originally from underdeveloped Sardinia and had lived in Italy at a period of (relatively) early capitalism combined for a while with Fascism (an atmosphere that is reminiscent of the situation in many semi-peripheral, and in some peripheral, countries today). In a certain sense, Gramsci may be regarded “as an original theoretician and a political strategist of ‘uneven development’” [Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 65–6]. His pertinence may also be attributable to his exceptional sensitivity to cultural issues (including the role of the intelligentsia), which are extremely important in the Middle East. Or is it perhaps due simply to the man’s sheer intellectual genius and fecundity of thought? [cf. e.g., Davidson, 1977].

This is not to suggest that Gramsci’s literature has been actually deployed for the purposes of studying Arab politics. While there is currently an undeniable curiosity among Arab and Western scholars about the relevance of Gramsci to that part of the world [cf. e.g., Zureik, 1981; Al-Kanz, 1992; Davis,

1994; and most particularly Rashid et al., 1992], Gramscian concepts have not yet been systematically applied to the analysis and understanding of Arab politics in the way they have been applied to, for instance, Latin American politics.<sup>5</sup> Those in the Arab World who have attempted such an application have apparently found it delightfully rewarding:

Gramsci’s writings are texts with which you can enter into a dialogue, for they deal with issues that do concern us. Although they were written in Italy over half a century ago, the worries, aspirations and debates contained in them seem to be parallel to our own, to Arab and to international present-day concerns [Ghazul, 1992: 136].

Until quite recently, the prevalent concepts of politics (and of the state) that the Arabs tended to borrow from the West were first excessively formalistic, then, increasingly, excessively instrumentalist. An earlier concept of the state was heavily derived from the (continental European) ‘constitutional law’ school and its ‘general theory of the state’. This was heavily indebted to the Hegelian concept of the state as an entity ‘outside’ the civil society and above it, which expressed more general and noble ideas pertaining to the public interest. To emphasise the separate and higher nature of the state the constitutionalists borrowed for it, from private law, the concept of a ‘moral personality’ (*shakhsiyya ma’naviyya*): i.e. the state was thus an entity with a certain ‘mind’ and logic of its own that balanced in a dialectical way not only the considerations of specificity versus those of generality but also those of order versus those of change [cf. e.g., Burdeau, 1970: 103ff; Al-Badrawi, 1960: 61–3; Al-Jarf, 1960: 74ff].

This moral personality (the state) oversees the affairs of a specific ‘people’ on a specific ‘territory’, according to the principle of ‘sovereignty’. This principle in turn has two manifestations: one external, connoting formal independence and equality *vis-à-vis* other states, the other internal, connoting the authority of the governor or of the government over its subjects. It was this internal aspect of sovereignty that Max Weber singled out as the most pertinent element in a sociological definition of the state: that it possesses the ultimate right to the legitimate use of force within the society [cf. Gerth and Wright Mills, 1970]. The fact that there was often a disparity between the legal equality of these subjects (citizens) *vis-à-vis* the state and the reality of their inequality (which was due to the division of the society into classes and to the protection given by the state to property rights) has not been part of the main concerns of traditional constitutional theory [cf. Poggi, 1978: 5ff, 94–5, 101–17].

More refined constitutional theory, however, contains, as a guarantee of the generality and objectivity of the state, a provision for the ‘separation of powers’ (by way of ‘checks and balances’ among the executive, legislative and judiciary functions) and a certain technique for restoring the (formally severed) con-

nection between the state apparatus and the political society, which is elections [Miaille, 1982: 222–37].

Sociological concepts of the state (that of Max Weber included) had little currency in the Middle East, however. Weber remained basically identified with the legal-rational type of bureaucracy – most administrative and management experts in the Middle East (as we shall see in Chapter 9) accepted this concept with missionary zeal, many of them not realising that Weber had related this type of organisation rather closely to an (alien) ‘protestant ethic’ and that he had thus pronounced it to be rather remote from Muslim societies [cf. Turner, 1974].

Weberian social science reached the Arab World mainly in its modified American form. For the study of politics it was behaviouralism, structural-functionalism and systems theory which started to invade the scene from the 1960s on. Not unlike Marxism Mark I (i.e. the state is a reflection of the economic base as manifested in the class structure), what we may simplistically call ‘American Political Science’ also relied during this period on an instrumentalist input-oriented approach. The difference was that whereas Marxism Mark I emphasised economic and socio-economic (class) inputs, American political science emphasised cultural and social-psychological inputs. Both neglected or overlooked the state as the major political actor, both underestimated its relative autonomy, distinct identity and ability at times to shape society, and both were content simply to ‘derive’ the state either from economics or from culture.

Attempts to restore a sense of autonomy and prominence to ‘the political’ as represented by the state came first, and perhaps ironically, from the neo-Marxists, especially in the 1970s (e.g., Lukacs, Korsch, Poulantzas, Habermas, Offé, etc.) and was symbolically captured, among others, in the debate over the relative autonomy of the state, whereby the state does not ‘reflect’ but rather ‘mediates’ interests within society. During the 1980s and 1990s, American political science came round to rediscovering the state and to ‘bringing the state back in’, although uncertainty has continued as to what exactly was meant by the ‘state’ [cf. Krasner, 1984; Evans, Rueschemeyer and Skocpol, eds, 1985].

#### THE STATE IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

It is possible to conclude from what has been discussed so far that the ‘state’ is a phenomenon and a concept whose origins and precursors can be specified. Geographically and historically it is a European phenomenon that developed between the sixteenth and the twentieth centuries. Juridically, it is premised on the idea of law as general, impersonal rules. Organisationally, it is associated with unity, centralisation and functional differentiation (the so-called ‘legal-rational type’ with its bureaucracy and public servants). And economically, its

rise has generally accompanied the development of capitalism and the rise of the bourgeoisie, including the need for extending and controlling the market, and for spreading and standardising the process of commodisation within it, so that it included human labour as well.

Although ‘state’ and ‘society’ are inseparable from each other in concrete terms, the two have often been contrasted with each other in conceptual terms. The state is often conceived as standing apart from, and above, society. A more useful idea, suggests Timothy Mitchell, is to regard the state as the ‘structural effect’ resulting from modern techniques of functional specification, organisational control and social surveillance that are exercised within society by institutions such as armies, bureaucracies and schools [Mitchell, 1991: 78–96].

But if this is indeed the case, to what extent can one speak of the state outside this just-mentioned geographical–historical–socio-economic context? For example, can one speak about states in the generic sense so that they may include, for example, pre-capitalist or non-European cases? [cf. Badie and Birnbaum, 1983: 42ff]. Peter Nettl, in a pioneering article, stated that this was possible and spoke about varying degrees of ‘stateness’ to be measured according to certain criteria that he enumerated. As such the concept is universal, although he thought that the developing countries had not, by the mid-1960s, adopted and internalised that tradition in an effective way [Nettl, 1968: 589–891].

Yet the state formula appears to have become truly globalised and one is justified in wondering, with the Turkish political scientist Ali Kazancigil, why it is adopted by all new states and why new formulas are not improvised, even in cases where the socio-historical prerequisites for a ‘state’ do not obtain and even when its nationalist/secularist concepts seem to contradict the native religio-political ethos so notably (as, he says, is the case with many ‘Islamists’)? Although part of the impact of the state concept may be attributed to its imposition by colonial powers, much of it is still due to cultural diffusion and to voluntary mimicry by the élites of non-Western countries [Kazancigil, 1986: 119–25].

But are these countries that mimic the European state formula ‘real’ states? Dumont [1986] suggests a link between the development of individualism as a cultural tradition and the emergence of the modern state, and although he does not appear to say it in so many words, he seems to imply that the two are somewhat correlated. Badie and Birnbaum are less sure about the economic (capitalist) prerequisites of the state but more emphatic about relating it to the development of a specific (European) set of cultural and religious values that date back to Roman law and to the Renaissance and are closely linked to the concept of secularisation. Such values are, in their view, incompatible with societies dominated by an organic religion (such as Islam or Hinduism); such latter societies are incapable of functioning according to the principles of ‘differentiation’ and ‘autonomisation’ of groups and organisations

which are so fundamental for the Western state model – to enforce such a state model on such societies by ‘exporting’ it would only lead to the emergence of authoritarian trends within the political sphere [Badie and Birnbaum, 1983: 97–101, 135–6]. Their argument stems basically from the organic-contractual dichotomy used by many to contrast Eastern (including Middle Eastern) societies with Western ones [Nisbet, 1986: 79–80].

Jackson and Rosenberg [1985] indeed conclude that such ‘states’ are not real. At best they are quasi-states. They hold that one has to distinguish between a legal, juridic concept of the state and a sociological, ‘empirical’ concept of the state. Many countries in the Third World (especially in sub-Saharan Africa) are states in the first sense only, since the developmental pattern of the state phenomenon in the Third World has been the reverse of that pattern in Europe and the West. In the latter, ‘states’ developed as political, military and social entities first, and then endeavoured – through competition and war – to gain legal recognition of their existence. In Africa and much of the Third World the ‘state’ emerged first in its juridic sense, as part of a colonial legacy, before social and organisational factors sufficient to make of it a real state had developed. Not only this, but the ‘legality’ of these pre-mature states acts as a constraint on their development towards becoming real ‘sociological’ states because this legality gives a false impression of (and provides an artificial compensation for) the necessity of ‘building’ a real state on solid economic, administrative and cultural bases [see also Jackson, 1993].

Yet the problems of the post-colonial state are not simply attributable to its purely juridic ‘pre-mature’ nature. Part of the problem may be due to its ‘lopsided’ nature: to the fact that it is underdeveloped in certain respects but overdeveloped in others. This is an idea elaborated upon by Hamza Alavi [Alavi, 1979]. The state in the ex-colonial societies was not created by a national bourgeoisie but by a foreign colonial one which over-inflated the size of the bureaucratic machine, especially its military wing, to serve its own purposes in the colonies. As these purposes were generally separate from the main bulk of national interests, maintains Alavi, this state has developed a considerable amount of ‘relative autonomy’ *vis-à-vis* the native economic and social forces. And as a continuation of this colonial legacy, the military-bureaucratic oligarchy of the independent states has continued to play a mediating role among the competing demands of three owning classes: the landlords, the native capitalists and metropolitan capital. Inevitably this gave the state significant power in the economic as well as in the political affairs of the society. Alavi’s thesis is indeed persuasive and potentially useful, but one has to be careful about its relevance for various cases. In the Middle East context it will not be very useful for states that have no clear and sustained ‘colonial’ past, or for post-colonial states which are not dominated by the military-bureaucratic oligarchy (as in the Gulf region, for example). It is generally true, however (as we shall see in Chapters 9 and 11) that bureaucracies are ‘over-

sized’ in the Middle East, both in relation to the society at large and in comparison to non-executive bodies of politics, and one can probably speak about an oversized (if not necessarily over-developed) state in the Middle East regardless of the colonial past of these states.

This exaggerated role of the state can more easily be related to the delayed capitalist development of most peripheral countries. The most powerful argument in this respect has been advanced by Alexander Gerschenkron [1962] who has illustrated that the later a country is in its economic development, the larger the role that the state is likely to play in trying to promote development [compare also B. Moore, 1969]. This is how *étatisme* has come to characterise the political economy of many countries in the South. Although some trace the historical origins of regulatory practices to Babylonian and Egyptian times, the term *étatisme* was first coined to describe the system of centralised administration and economic management instituted by Jean-Baptiste Colbert, the minister of finance and the controller-general under Louis XIV in seventeenth-century France (and by later régimes of centralised government and mercantilistic policies in France and elsewhere) [Chodak, 1989: 2–3, 96–100]. state policies that are highly interventionist and manipulative in the economic sphere are also sometimes described as *dirigiste*. *Dirigisme* is a practice that places “economics as the key area around which political battles are waged” and “views the state as a necessary and essentially benign agent of economic transformation” [Milanović, 1989: 64ff].

It is also worth noting that countries which obtained their independence before the Second World War – that is, before the consolidation of a global capitalist economy (such as in Latin America and the Balkans) – were more capable of developing a national bourgeoisie of sorts and of accumulating reasonable levels of domestic capital than were the countries that acquired their independence after the Second World War, as was the case with most Asian and African countries [Kazancigil, 1986: 131–7]. In these latter countries, one finds not only that the native capitalists are so dependent on the state for protection, subsidy and the provision of various services and products, but that the state also plays a more important role in the production process itself, especially with regard to controlling and disciplining the working classes by political (and sometimes violent) means [compare Aké, 1985]. Thus both the capitalist and the working classes are generally subservient in relation to their own ‘peripheral’ state, which explains, among other things, the crisis of democracy in most Middle Eastern countries (as we shall see in Chapter 11 and elsewhere).

But the subservience of the national bourgeoisie and of the working classes *vis-à-vis* their own state does not tell us the whole story about the nature of the peripheral state. Such a state cannot be understood with reference to its ‘own’ classes and social forces alone, because it is also governed by the requirements of what Mathias and Salama [1983] call the *Economie mondiale constituée* (the



compound world economy), including in particular the needs of the national states of the core. This is an arena where the vagaries of the international division of labour confront the various attempts to modify this division. The peripheral state may thus be regarded as a bridge between the local society and the world system; it acts to spread trade relations and to preserve certain components of the international division of labour within its borders, using a mixture of legitimacy-building and violence-applying enforcement methods [Mathias and Salama, 1983: 35ff, 89–126]. Although the analysis of Mathias and Salama is still basically premised on a 'derivation' theory (i.e. that the state, although formally autonomised, can ultimately be traced to capital, via processes of commodification), it is certainly more sophisticated than the somewhat simpler formulation of Aké [1985: 105–7]. The derivation theory of the state has some proponents in the Arab World (e.g. Khalid al-Manubi of Tunisia) and although it can be useful at a certain rather general level it does not, in my view, offer a detailed analysis of the specific problems of states (in the plural) rather than of *the* state in the generic sense [for further studies and critiques of the state derivation theory see Clarke, 1991].

One is still in need of a theory that relates in detail the imperatives and requirements of the economy (domestic and global) to the potentialities and options of politics in a developing country. The best attempt in this vein, in my view, is the now quite influential one of Guillermo O'Donnell [1973, 1977]. The degree to which I have been influenced by O'Donnell's analysis will become clear in various parts of this book; it is sufficient to say here that his main contribution has been in trying to link the various stages in the development of certain economic strategies (mainly that of import-substitution industrialisation) with various changes in the nature of the state that are characterised by shifting socio-political coalitions (as represented, for example by populism, corporatism and bureaucratic-authoritarianism). Leonard Binder [1988] has lamented the fact that such an approach has not affected Middle Eastern studies – but recently it has started to exercise a certain influence [cf. e.g. Farah, 1985], and to good effect in my view. This present study in many ways continues along the same path.

Such an approach should consider not only the way in which the state's form and characteristics are modified under the impact of changing economic imperatives and socio-economic alliances, but also the way in which the state in many cases adjusts the economic imperatives and reshapes the socio-economic alliances. One need not regard the state only as a 'receiver' (i.e. along with what I have previously termed input-oriented approaches, whether economic or behavioural). The state may 'reflect' (or 'represent', or 'condense', etc.) the social classes or may intermediate among them; but there are also cases, especially in the periphery, where the state manages to *create* its own classes.

Such a proposition is not completely novel, even within Marxist circles.

Obviously part of the debate over the so-called 'Asiatic mode of production' [cf. e.g. CERM, 1969] pertains to the possibilities of the emergence of classes from within state institutions or as a result of state action. There is no denying that a certain 'Orientalist' slant has characterised much of the Marxist debate with regard to non-European societies [cf. Turner, 1978]. Even our good friend Gramsci is not completely blameless in this respect. Yet there is still some validity left in the category of the Asiatic mode of production if one can overlook its ethno-culturalist connotations to concentrate instead on its geo-ecological and economic-historical dimensions. Thus for example, as Perry Anderson notes, no hereditary nobility similar to that of Europe was able to develop in the mediaeval Islamic empire, since individual private ownership did not exist as a principal *right* and because wealth and status were closely tied to connection with the state. In return the state also maintained tight control of the city, the market and the guilds, thus allowing little room for independent 'bourgeois' classes to emerge [cf. Anderson, 1979, esp. 361–77]. I accept such a description as being very generally true, and will leave a detailed discussion of the various implications to later chapters. For the moment we should keep in mind the proposition that, owing to its specific geo-historical background as well as its current heavy involvement in economic accumulation, the Middle Eastern state is not simply a reflection of the class reality of its society but very often a creator of such realities as well.

#### THE NON-INDIVIDUALISTIC PATH TO THE STATE

Thus far we have considered the socio-economic specificity of the Middle Eastern state, but what about its 'cultural' specificity? We have already referred to the views of some writers to the effect that the concept and institution of the state are exclusively European phenomena that are culturally incompatible with Muslim societies, due to the latter's 'organic' nature and to the weakness of individualist and secularist traditions within them. Even epistemologically, it is often said, the word *state* signifies different things in Arabic and in Latin. Scholars observe that the very linguistic origins of the word *state* in European languages and of the word *dawla* in Arabic actually imply opposite things: stability and continuity of position in the first; circulation and reversals of power and fortune in the second. We are also frequently told that it is the concept of the community (*umma*), especially in its religio-cultural sense, that is more important in the Islamic political tradition than any concept of the state or the political system [see, e.g., the discussion in Ayubi, 1991a: Ch. 1, also Ayubi, 1992c]. Although much of this is true, I would suggest that it may not be an Arab or an Islamic peculiarity and would like to argue in the next few pages that there are indeed potentially both non-individualistic and non-European paths to the state.

Part of the conceptual problem is related to the fact that when we speak of 'Western' political science we actually mean Anglo-Saxon and to some extent French political science (and in their 'liberal' strand at that); German sociological and historicist thinking, for example, tends on the whole to be absent. The problem is even more pronounced for Middle Eastern scholars because of their special colonial linguistic and cultural links with the English and French 'metropolises'. This is perhaps a pity, since there are several German ideas that have more affinity with certain Arabo-Islamic concepts and concerns than have some of the most prevalent English and French political ideas.

Historicist and romantic German thinking has always attached a special emphasis to the concept of the Community, *Gemeinschaft* (or *jama'a*; *umma* in Arabic), which they identified with the 'authentic' spiritual essence, *Geist* (or *ruh* in Arabic) of Germany in contradiction to the Renaissance philosophy of Napoleonic France. Through the ideas of such people as Sauvigny, Moser, Müller, Fichte and Mommsen the German Romantics were able to relate the concept of the Community to the concept of the state (via the concept of the Nation), so that the state came to be regarded as the fullest and noblest expression of the Community. In certain ways they generalised the moral principles of the village or the guild to include the entire nation, and they coloured their concept of freedom not by individualism but by a distinctive collective aura derived from the concept of loyalty, on the assumption that the strength of the group and the freedom of the individual always went hand in hand [cf. Black, 1984: 196–202; Dumont, 1986: 74–5, 114–17, 134–59, 260–61]. Another branch of the German tradition, deriving its antecedents from Herder and Beseler, was to see in language and law the most supreme expression of the nation. This was to reach its apogee in Gierke and Tönnies, who tried in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to enliven the concept of a collective personality based on brotherhood and solidarity [Black, 1984: 210ff]. Such concepts and concerns of German and other European Romantic, Historicist and Conservative thought are strikingly akin to many of the concepts and concerns predominant in Arab and Islamic political thinking.<sup>6</sup>

More specifically, "we have a Romantic notion of history which is familiar in modern history – from Herder and his patrimony in Germany, to ideas current in the Risorgimento, to the organicist, racist conservatism of Gustave Le Bon. All these are widely attested to in the history of modern Arab thought" [Al-Azmeh, 1993: 28]. From the early stages of 'reformist' Arab thought under the encounter with modern European ideas in the nineteenth century, the two main intellectual leaders, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839–97) and Muhammad 'Abduh (1849–1905) had inclined towards a 'vitalist', 'organismic' concept of the body-politic, that invites comparison with Herder's romanticism and his emphasis on *Bildung*, and with Spencer's social-Darwinism [ibid.: 44–5, 81]. Their theory of the 'tight bond' (*al-'urwa al-wuthqa*) "is very decidedly anti-Enlightenment – both in its tenor and its content, and has

been implicitly or explicitly embraced by all revivalist movements." It adopts an organicist and vitalist paradigm of the polity according to which a body-politic in which the various parts are not related by a purposeful 'unity' resembles a body in distemper. Ideas of 'political organisms' were prevalent in the Middle East at the time under the influence of Spencer, and were shared even by secular Arab thinkers such as Shibli Shumayyil.<sup>7</sup> Another comparison that can be made is with Herder's vitalist Romanticism, which is detectable in Young Ottoman thought and apparent in the 'solidaristic corporatism' of the Turkish nationalist Zia Gökalp and in the ideas of the Pan-Arab Ba'athists and of the Syrian Social-Nationalists [ibid.: 82–7].

The Pan-Arabists (as we shall see in Chapter 4) were particularly fond of people such as Nietzsche, Spengler and Bergson. The neo-Islamists inherit parts of that influence, usually adding to it a certain "naturalization of history" (e.g. *din al-fitra*) that Aziz al-Azmeh finds analogous to the National-Socialist cult of nature [1993: 30]. Another connection might be found in the fascistoid Frenchman Alexis Carrel (d. 1944), who seems to have influenced such important Islamic thinkers as Abul-Hasan Nadwi, Sayyid Qutb and 'Ali Shari'ati [cf. Al-Sayyid, 1988: 349; Hanafi, 1986: 44–5; Al-Azmeh, 1993: 30; but see most particularly Choueiri, 1990: 140–49].

The influence of such concepts is also starting to find its way into the works of contemporary Arab political scientists as well. A good case in point is to be found in the writings of Hamid Rabi' (d. 1989), an influential Egyptian political scientist who taught also in Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia and elsewhere in the Arab World. Influenced in particular by German and Italian Historicist schools (he studied and lived in Italy for many years), he is a kind of 'cultural nationalist' with a distinct Islamic inclination. Rabi' is openly anti-Enlightenment. In his view the 'nation-state' in its European form was mainly a reaction to the Catholic model, attaching first place to rights of the individual, aiming at creating a direct unmediated relationship between the citizen and the state, forcing the Church to retire into its own cocoon, and thus expelling all non-political agencies from the relationship and ending up by adulating the state in the name of individual rights [Rabi', 1980: 15–16]. This model is not suitable for the Arab countries, for which Rabi' suggests an inspiration from the Islamic model by way of a certain revival of the 'cultural heritage' (*turath*) to be guided by a distinct 'political function' (*wazifa siyasiyya*). He finds the German national school worthy of consideration in this respect, and admires the way the German thinkers, when faced with the humiliation of the French conquest, delved into their own Teutonic heritage in search of cultural and civilisational roots that raised the Germans' awareness of their national distinctiveness and 'authenticity' [ibid.: 21].

Any attempt to create an Egyptian or Arab national self-awareness has, likewise, to search in older Islamic sources for aspects of distinctiveness and authenticity. Rabi' endeavours to undertake some of this task himself, and

abstracts a number of features from what he calls the Islamic political paradigm that should inspire the contemporary quest for national authenticity:

The cultural heritage (*turath*) is the means to self-recognition. The national Self is one and indivisible. It is the expression of a fixed continuity, in spite of some diverse manifestations on the individual and collective levels. Self-recognition cannot spring up except from the past. Just as a tree may not be complete without a multiplicity of branches, its ability to survive will obtain only as to the depth to which its roots can reach [ibid.: 218].

The Islamic model, he maintains, has its aspects of political vitality that can inspire contemporary politics. Although it has not known the idea of 'voting', or of representative councils, institutionalised political opposition, or guarantees for the political liberties of the individual, it has its own concepts and dynamics for political equilibrium. These concepts include moderation, consensus and compromise, and those dynamics include balance and mutual control between the caliph, the 'ulama' and the judges [ibid.: 46-51, 133-49]. The Islamic polity is not a state in the European sense (i.e. territorially defined) but an organised politico-religious community (*umma*). The purpose of the *umma* is spreading the message (*da'wa*) and the function of power and authority (*sulta*) is to act as the instrument for achieving such a cultural/civilisational mission (*risala hadariyya*). The Islamic 'state' is therefore a 'doctrinal' state ('*aqā'idīyya*') with a distinct communicational function (*wazīfa ittisaliyya*) based on the merger of ethical principles with political ideals, and on the non-separation of private life and public life. The state is closely linked to culture/civilisation (*hadara*), and the Islamic *hadara* is distinctively militant (*kifahīyya*), based on group loyalty within and on civilisational encounter outside [ibid., 1980: 154-67].

That concept, states Rabi', is different from the state concept as it developed with the nation-state in Europe. In the latter the idea of the civilisational function of the state has declined in favour of a purely 'political' function (notwithstanding the 'ideological' conflict that characterised the Cold War). The Islamic state, by contrast, followed in the tradition of the Greek and Roman civilisations where the state and the 'civilisational will' (*al-irada al-hadariyya*) were at one. The civilisational function of the Islamic state revolves around *al-da'wa* (the 'call'), and politics is about securing the environment that enables the individual to realise his Islamic idealism. That state is also universalistic in its appeal. The European state since Machiavelli, and in particular since the French Revolution, has become too abstract and too isolated from society and culture; its "concept of the state is void of any moral or cultural existence" [287-8]. By contrast the Islamic state is the expression of a certain ethical ideal: Islam presents a certain ideal, if not a specific political model [289-93]. The modern Arab national state should in turn be an instrument for sustaining a permanent link between the past, the

present and the future. For the nation (*al-umma*) is not based on racial unity but on a unity of perception, language and civilisation, and the ideal of this community is not overwhelmingly economic but moral and ethical [Rabi', 1985: 46-7].

Rabi's improvisation is important, first because he is one of very few Arab *political scientists* who wrote on the Islamic state, and second because, unlike most other 'modern' scholars, he did not try to interpret the Islamic state according to the French-constitutional or the American-behavioural school. Instead, Rabi' is an idealist (it is often impossible to draw a distinction in his writing between the 'was' for the idealised Islamic polity and the 'ought' for the desired Arab state), he is avowedly anti-Enlightenment, hostile to the French Revolution and openly inspired by German and Italian historicist/romantic ideas. He rejects the concept of state autonomy and the attempt to confine the state's function to the political domain. For him the French Revolution represents "a dangerous decline for many political concepts and perceptions. If it has released political forces and realised the concept of national politics, it has at the same time sowed the seeds for racialism and national chauvinism, and drained the political vocation of any civilisational essence" [Rabi', 1983: 268-93, 288]. By contrast Rabi' finds the tenets of the German historicist school more capable of capturing the essence of the Islamic (and hence the Arab) state, and his writings are replete with sympathetic references to people such as Sauvigny, Fichte and Mommsen. It is also possible to trace in his writings echoes of the concept of the ethical state (*lo stato etico*) as espoused by such writers as Croce, Gentile and ultimately of course, Hegel [cf. Bellamy, 1987: 8 *et passim*]. He calls for a politically driven revival of the *turath*, and he even attributes the success of contemporary political Zionism to its having been inspired by the historical German school on the one hand and by the Abbasid and Fatimid Islamic literature on *da'wa* on the other: "the Zionist call has been able to find, via the Islamic *turath*, a starting point from which to address the world of the twentieth century ... and to achieve ... this success that could not have been anticipated by the most optimistic of analysts" [Rabi', 1980: 192-5]. The message is clear: the contemporary Arabs should do the same if they really want their own effective (and therefore by definition authentic) state that is modern but also faithful to the cultural values of their historical community.

One possible device for linking the concept of the community to that of the state (of which there are also some shades in Rabi's writings) is through the concept of corporatism: i.e. that of various corps that act (or are utilised) as intermediaries between the community and the state. Because it is a 'bridging' concept (of intermediation), corporatism has always tended to tilt either towards the community (in the more culturalistic, romantic strands of corporatism) or towards the state (in the more organisational, authoritarian strands of corporatism) - hence, incidentally, the methodological elusiveness of the con-

cept of corporatism, in spite of its extreme importance. Corporatist thought, originating in Germany, France and Belgium, has exercised important influences in Southern Europe, Latin America and the Middle East. It has influenced Arab legal thinking via the highly regarded scholarship of dean Léon Duguit, who taught at Bordeaux and Cairo;<sup>8</sup> Arab political thinking via the influential writings of the early Harold Laski and of G.D.H. Cole and the guild socialists; and Arab sociological thinking via the penetrating impact of the Durkheim school [cf. e.g. Al-Jarf, 1960: 74 *et passim*; Saif al-Dawla, 1991: 60–78; Nasr, 1963: Part 2; Al-Naqib, 1985: 8–9; Mitchell, 1988: 119–27]. There is also a more recent revival of certain corporatist themes, especially among the writers that I label ‘cultural Islamists’ (e.g. ‘Adil Husain, Tariq al-Bishri, H. Amin, etc.), whom we shall be referring to elsewhere in this work. My own use of the concept of corporatism in this book is not meant by way of recommending its possible ideological or ‘moral’ tenets as a solidaristic concept, but by way of regarding it as a useful analytical tool for understanding a whole range of devices for organising and managing state/society relations [my concept is therefore quite close to that of G. O’Donnell in 1977].<sup>9</sup>

Most of the non-individualist approaches to the state that I have just surveyed were intellectually suppressed in recent decades (because of their presumed affinity with Fascism), and thus it is currently rather hard to imagine how the concept of the state can be separated in reality from its liberal Western intellectual correlates of individualism, contractualism, secularism, differentiation, and so forth. Fortunately, however, the emergence of Japan as a leading world state, followed in recent years by a number of East Asian ‘economic tigers’, has now made it possible to see real, prosperous and in some senses strong states with antecedents that are distinctly different from those associated with the French and the English models.

Thus, for example, in a critique of Western modernisation theory, the Japanese political scientist K. Mushakoji [1985] draws attention to the fact that Western political scientists are often incapable of even posing the same questions about political development that their Japanese colleagues may be able to ask with the Japanese experience in mind: for example, what is the role of family and village groups in the formation of modern institutions in Japan? What are the traditional origins of the Japanese state including the ancient state institutions of China? What is the ‘cosmology’ that envelopes and governs the work of political and administrative institutions? It is suggested by some that collective sharing of power is more important in the Japanese tradition than individual struggle over power. Others point to the fact that the Japanese perception of rationality is distinctly different from its Western counterpart. Others say that decisions in Japan ‘emerge’ and are not ‘taken’: they are not based on a selection from among clear alternatives but on an adjustment among various options and views [see also from a Marxist perspective Taguchi and Kato, 1985].

We are not interested here in the details of these various propositions, only in the correct suggestion by Mushakoji that there are different possible ‘principles of polity-formation’ among which Japan represents but one non-Western manifestation. And the significance of some recent Arab attempts at re-discovering Japan [e.g. A. Abdel-Malek, 1981, 1983; Husain, 1985; Rashad, 1984] lies not in the fact that Japan necessarily represents a relevant example for the Arab World to emulate, but rather in that it illustrates the ‘conceptual’ possibility of economic and political development according to a non-European model of the polity and the state.

#### THE ARABS AND THE ISSUE OF THE STATE

Although the concept of the state is, as we have seen, a European one, the daily ‘reality’ of the state is now a fact that encompasses twenty-odd Arab countries and at least half-a-dozen more ‘Middle Eastern’ ones. This ‘state’ has in the main come to the Middle East as an ‘imported commodity’, partly under colonial pressure and partly under the influence of imitation and mimicry [cf. Ben Achour, 1980]. It is noteworthy, however, that Arab thought in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has concerned itself with various concepts of unity and integration except for that of the state. The subject matter of this integration has varied, ranging from a religio-moral ‘tight bond’ (*al-urwa al-wuthqa*) in Afghani and ‘Abduh, to a linguistic-cultural bond for most theoreticians of Arab nationalism (Zaki Arsuzi, Michel ‘Aflaq, Sati’ al-Husri, etc.). Both the Arabist and the Islamist movements have undervalued the issue of the state, and have tended to regard matters of borders, populations, rights, markets, and so on, as rather artificial or superficial details [Sharara, 1980: 61–83].

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century Muslims had thought of politics in terms of the *umma* (a term originally connoting any ethnic or religious community but eventually becoming nearly synonymous with the universal Islamic Community) and of *khilafa* or *sultan* (i.e. government or rule of respectively a more religious or a more political character). A concept of the ‘state’ that may link these two, previous categories of analysis (i.e. the community and the government) was not to develop until later on. The term *dawla* (used today to denote ‘state’ in the European sense) existed in the Quran and was indeed used by mediaeval Muslim authors. However, in its verbal form, the word had originally meant ‘to turn, rotate or alternate’. In the Abbasid (and subsequent) periods it often conveyed the sense of fortunes, vicissitudes or ups and downs (e.g. *dālat dawlatuhu* = his days have passed). Gradually the word came to mean dynasty and then, very recently, ‘state’. Rifa‘a Rafi‘ Al-Tahtawi [1801–73] had already paved the way for a territorial rather than a purely communal concept of the polity when he emphasised the idea of *watan* (*patrie; vaterland; rodina*). None the less he could not break away

completely from the (religious) *umma* concept, nor did he call for a 'national state' in the secular European sense. According to Bernard Lewis the first time that the term *dawla* (*devlet*) appears in its modern meaning of state, as distinct from dynasty and from government, is in a Turkish memorandum of about 1837 [Lewis, 1988].

Islamic thinkers were, however, in no hurry to espouse this new concept of the state. Afghani and 'Abduh were still speaking of the Islamic *umma* and its 'tight bond' (*al-'urwa al-wuthqa*) and of the Islamic ruler and his good conduct. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi (1854-1902) went a step further by talking about the Islamic league (*al-jami'a al-islamiyya*) as a religious bond, while using the term *umma* not in an exclusively religious but sometimes in an ethnic sense, and using the term *al-watan* when he spoke of what united Muslim with non-Muslim Arabs. He also distinguished between the politics and administration of religion (*al-din*) and the politics and the administration of the 'kingdom' (*al-mulk*), saying that in the history of Islam the two had united only during the Rashidun era and the era of 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz [Nassar, 1986].

Although the Arabs have been concerned since the nineteenth century with the 'manifestations of power', they seem to have paid little attention to its social, economic and intellectual foundations within the state [Salamé, ed., 1987]. The Arabs moved fairly rapidly in adopting the structural features of the state and the bureaucracy (in the European style) but they were rather slow in internalising the concept of the state itself, or the 'ethics' of public service and the attitudes of collective action [Bonné, 1973: 17-19; Umlil, 1985; Al-Jamal, 1984: 365-8]. Nor were they particularly impressed by the concept of 'freedom' (which Western thinkers closely relate to the development of the modern state), when they learned of it in the European literature. For Khair al-Din of Tunisia, 'liberty' still came second in importance after the conventionally crucial 'justice' (*adl*) in explaining the basis of Europe's strength and prosperity. Tahtawi also likened liberty to justice, in order to bring it closer to the Arab conception. Certain Christian Arabs (especially those exposed to Protestant influences), and Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid (who adopted a liberal nineteenth-century concept of freedom) were, according to Albert Hourani, rather exceptional in their interest in freedom [Hourani, 1970: 90, 101, 173-4, 248].

Much of the writing of 'Abdallah Al-'Arawi (Laroui) on the state, which counts among the best by any Arab writer, revolves around a similar theme: that the Arab state is all body and muscle but with little spirit and mind and with no theory of liberty. A brief review of Laroui's ideas may therefore be in order here. Laroui starts with the conventional Arabic concept of *dawla* (connoting turns and rotations with regard to power and riches), and comments that as such, this type of state must ultimately be based on usurpation and coercion: forever subject to the threat of a stronger contender and always removed from the domain of moral values (except in the case of the 'unreal'

Islamic utopia) [Al-'Arawi, 1981: 116, 125]. This contrasts with the 'European' (mainly Hegelian/Weberian) concept of the state, adopted by Laroui, which sees in the state a totality of instruments aimed at the rationalisation of society - a rationalisation (the Marxists further maintain) that was historically tied to the practices of the bourgeoisie [ibid.: 72-4].

As for the 'actual' modern Arab states, Laroui sees in them the outcome of two processes: a natural evolution of the despotic Sultanate state (based on oppression and arbitrariness); and a reform process that has changed some of the higher administrative arrangements and borrowed from the West the modern means of transport and communication (and some improvements in agriculture and trade). This reformist process was historically initiated in the *tanzimat* (organisations and arrangements) which were introduced in their first phase by the Turkish Sultan in order to consolidate his own authority internally and externally, and were then pushed ahead in a second phase by the European colonialists in order to expand the imperial market and weaken the native leadership, while cultivating the loyalty of newer social élites [ibid.: 129-33].

However, Laroui believes that the *tanzimat* and the other organisational reforms that followed were not successful in transforming the attitude of the Arab individual towards political authority; they failed to entice him into regarding the contemporary (nationalist) state as a manifestation of a general will or of public ethics. The reasons for this are multiple. The 'foreignness' of the apparatus of power and administration has prevented the state from permeating the society. Thus the 'legal rule' was never combined with a 'moral conscience', nor has the emotional bond with the community or with the nation been identified with a political association (the state). The state machine was reformed, and a technocracy of sorts was allowed to function, bringing economic improvements to most people, but the state remained 'alien' in relation to society, and the nationalist movement and the Arab intellectuals remained attached to Utopia, and a long way away from accepting the reality of the state or dealing objectively with it [ibid.: 138-54]. The Islamic jurists continued to be attached to the concepts of the *umma* and the caliphate. But the newer concept of Arab nationalism has not helped either, Laroui believes, because it pinned its allegiance to a Pan-Arabist ideal, thus depriving the territorial state of a badly needed measure of legitimacy [ibid.: 156-71].

One finds in consequence, maintains Laroui, that the contemporary Arab state is obsessed with power and strength, and it may indeed be strong in terms of its 'body'. But (and here he echoes Gramsci) the violence of this state is in reality an indication of its weakness and fragility: the (coercive) apparatus may be powerful but the state as a whole is weak because it lacks rationality and because it lacks the necessary moral, ideological and educational supports [Al-'Arawi, 1981: 146-58, 168].

How can all this be explained? Laroui considers that the problem of the

Arab state can be attributed mainly to the fact that it has never been associated, in its emergence and development, with the idea of *liberty* (in its Western sense). Liberty (*huriyya*) in Islamic thought has a psychological/metaphysical meaning, whereas in Western thought it carries mainly a political and social meaning. And whereas Western liberal thought has linked the concept of liberty to the concept of law (and therefore to the state), the signs and symbols of freedom in Islamic society are usually extra-statal or anti-statal, e.g. nomadism, tribalism, sufism. Thus there is mutual exclusivity between the concept of liberty and the concept of the state in traditional Arabo-Islamic society: the more extended the concept of the state, the narrower the scope for freedom [Al-'Arawi, 1983: 11-86].

What about modern Arab society then? If anything it fares even worse with regard to freedom, Laroui finds. In the traditional society there was more of an equilibrium of sorts between the state and Society: nomadism predated the state and represented the freedom of origins, the tribe preserved a certain degree of freedom of action within the state, and Sufism represented an outlet whereby the individual could opt to be completely outside the domain of the Sultan. The polity was characterised by absolute despotism, but the scope of the 'political' was limited – the political society was not synonymous with Arab society at large: the individual could resist the political through a group to which he belonged, or he could withdraw from it completely to live on his own and for himself. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries an important transformation (i.e. the *tanzimat*) took place, leading to an expansion of the scope of the state and a contraction of the horizons of the 'non-state'. The autonomous group appeared to be a threat that should be suppressed before the colonialists could exploit it for their own purposes, and the autonomous individual seemed to resemble an enemy that should be subjugated. Like the traditional state, the new one remained concentrated and authoritarian, but its domain has expanded tremendously at the expense of the freedom of the group and of the individual [Al-'Arawi, 1983: 29-36, 107].

The analysis in this book will, in many ways, follow on from the point at which Laroui had arrived. There is little purpose in anticipating the entire story in advance, but it may be in order at this juncture to sketch an outline of the main argument and conceptual framework of this study.

#### SCHEMATIC ARGUMENT AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The argument of this book can be roughly condensed and encapsulated in the following few pages. The Middle East has historically possessed modes of production that were mainly tributary in nature. Such a predominance of 'control-based' modes of production has often constrained the process of

accumulation but it has certainly increased the importance of the political factor.

In modern times, the tributary modes of production have been articulated with the encroaching capitalist mode of production (especially in its 'exchange' manifestations). With few exceptions, the outcome has often been the emergence of a basically 'circulationist' type of system whereby the ruling caste is fairly autonomous from the production process and the social classes, but often excessively dependent on the outside world.

The class nature of such a society manifests a dispersed, fluid class map with classes excessively dependent on the state (or on the outside world) and with many intermediate strata, *couches moyennes*, in existence. Several of these contend with each other for social and economic prominence but without any of them being structurally capable of assuming class hegemony within the society.

Owing to the lack of class hegemony, politics in such a society is not characterised by an orderly process of aggregating demands but by acts of capturing the state and acts of resisting the state. Once in power the ruling caste usually has no intention of giving it up, but the techniques of maintaining power vary from case to case – although there are two important types. In situations where the preservation and enhancement of the privileges of the group that captured the state would require preserving the status quo (without necessarily rejecting economic growth or artificial modernisation), the ruling caste would strive to co-opt other groups, in a 'consociational' manner if possible. This situation is true of the oil-exporting countries of Arabia and the Gulf.

In situations where the promotion of the interests of the group/fraction that captured the state would require changing the status quo via acts of social engineering (e.g. developmentalism or so-called socialism, etc.), the political techniques would include both political co-optation and political isolation ('*azl siyasi*'). Formulas of an artificial corporatist nature are more likely in such a situation, with the heavy hand of the state either tightly controlling the various corps that belong to the ruling coalition or alliance (*tahaluf*), or sometimes replacing certain corps altogether and simulating others in their stead in the state's own image.

The political pattern is also governed by the 'logic' and the episodes of the economic strategy that the ruling caste finds itself obliged/tempted to follow. In general, expansionary phases are conducive to socially and politically inclusive practices, whereas contractionist phases are more conducive to socially and politically exclusive practices. This principle seems to apply to all cases, although its manifestations may vary between examples where the expansion is based on externally derived rent (as in the oil-exporting countries) and examples where the expansion had been based on domestically derived sources (as was the case, at least partly, in the 'developmentalist' states).

There is no hegemonic ideology involving all classes and groups in such a state; developmentalism is too vague a concept to be considered as such and in most cases it remains confined to the technocratic and 'intellectual' fractions. There may, however, be bursts of nationalistic fervour, charismatic arousal or populist jubilation – but this is hardly ideology. In the regional/external sphere, there is a wavering between an emotional attachment to utopian pan-ideologies (such as Arabism or Islamism) on the one hand, and on the other, an inarticulate, untheorised identification with the territorial state, often closely tied to the pursuits (and the claimed achievements) of the techno-bureaucratic élites. Whereas the more conservative systems have managed to internalise certain elements of an Islamic ideology into the ideological apparatus of the state (by co-opting, rather than simply controlling, the Islamic clerics), the more 'radical' modernising systems have seen their marginalised groups adopting political Islam as a counter-hegemonic ideology in recent years.

A few brief notes about our conceptual framework may now be in order. Obviously I cannot clarify all concepts in detail at this point, but the main purpose is to show how they relate to each other. Each concept will be elaborated upon in its own appropriate context. Concepts that appear in single quotation marks, but especially those that are italicised, represent especially important conceptual devices in our analysis. Sometimes I distinguish between 'principles' and 'methods': the first are hypothetical (and often diagnostic) concepts; the latter are strategy-oriented (or prescriptive) concepts.

### *The concept of 'articulation'*

Our analysis starts from the concept of 'modes of production', with the intention of correlating it gradually with 'modes of coercion' and 'modes of persuasion'. The start from modes of production is necessary to remind ourselves that we are not looking at bourgeois capitalist societies with elaborate class structures, differentiated social roles and advanced 'contractual' traditions. Not only that, but the lineages of contemporary modes of production are different in the Middle East: for example, the 'feudalist' antecedents of the 'modern' period are very often missing, and in their stead there are various tributary modes based on irrigated agriculture, pastoralism, long-distance trade, and so forth. All such 'histories' have had a tremendous impact on the social formation and on the 'political culture' in the region.

Not only can a great deal be learnt by remembering that the antecedents of the contemporary modes of production were very different in the Middle East from those in, say, Europe, but a lot can also be gleaned by bearing in mind the operation of two principles: (a) that modes of production in the Middle East are often not singular and uni-dimensional but rather are *articulated* (i.e. two or more modes can often coexist and interlink); and (b) that in

many Middle Eastern social formations there is little *correspondence* among the various 'instances' or manifestations of structural power in society [for an attempt to apply the concepts of 'articulation' and 'non-correspondence' to Arab historical material see Sharara, 1977: esp. 151–66].

Here a little elaboration may be worthwhile. Power in society manifests itself structurally in three types of modalities: modes of production, modes of coercion and modes of persuasion. In conventional Marxist theory these modes were placed at different levels and endowed with different degrees of autonomy. The economic 'instance' (i.e., the mode of production) was considered the base, whereas the 'politico-legal' and the 'ideological' instances (modes of coercion and persuasion) were described as superstructure. Many classical Marxists did not believe in any degree of functional autonomy of the political from the economic – i.e. they believed in direct economic determinism. Others believed in some functional autonomy and in economic determinism 'in the final analysis'. In general, however, there has been agreement that there was a very strong tendency towards 'correspondence' among the 'three' instances: the economic, the political and the ideological. In such analyses there is either a crude instrumentalism that does not allow for any independence of the state from the capitalists, or else a conception of the state as the ideal collective capitalist that organises particular capitals and class fractions for their own common interests or for the interest of capital in general.

Others, however, could allow for a higher level of autonomy for '*the political*' (i.e. the state). One particularly known conjuncture is when the equilibrium among class forces permits the emergence of an autonomous state (the so-called Bonapartism, a category which has been used in the study of some Middle Eastern régimes, such as that of Nasser). This was still regarded, however, as an exceptional or abnormal situation, often leading to stagnation or to catastrophe (as in Fascism). Less often, but more appropriate for our purposes, such situations are analysed in terms of the overall weakness of class forces (whether or not they are in equilibrium). If class forces are generally weak, a situation typical of most pre-capitalist or newly capitalist societies, then the state may enjoy a high degree of independence from capitalists most of the time. If the classes are economically and/or politically weak, that would allow for an independent state (such as in Tsarism, Sultanism, bureaucratic-authoritarianism, etc.). Or else hegemony could be organised by the intellectuals, in a contingent way, via specific *supra-class discourses* (which is in reality an aspect of articulation) [cf. Jessop, 1990].

Articulation may therefore take the form of linkages not only among various modes of production, but also among (non-corresponding) 'instances' of structural power. Thus it would be possible to imagine in a particular society an articulation between, for example, certain economic and technical elements of the capitalist mode of production and certain social and cultural elements of pre-capitalist (e.g. feudalist, even slavery) modes of coercion and persuasion.

Japan has been the outstanding case, but most Fascist regimes and many bureaucratic-authoritarian ones manifest similar articulations. The *method* of articulation, on the other hand, focuses on hegemonic practices, general strategies or *articulating discourses* which meld the different institutional systems together, typically via the state and/or a national-populist ideology. Laclau and Mouffe [1985: 105ff] define articulation as such: "We will call *articulation* any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice."<sup>10</sup>

Not all instances, however, can articulate with all other instances, at all times. Articulation is contingent on certain conditions and circumstances, and *contingency* is not another word for voluntarism (although it may involve structural or strategic selectivity). Articulations are more likely in situations where no one mode of production or no one class has emerged to dominate, and also at 'transitional' stages where a certain mode of production or a certain class loses its supremacy without another having yet taken its place. Articulating discourses (i.e. ideologies) are contingent both in the sense of depending on social conjunctures and in the sense of being flexible and adaptable and able to change meanings and political character in different circumstances [Halliday and Alavi, eds, Introduction in 1988: 5-7].

It is only in such a way that one may properly comprehend the phenomenon of patronage and clientelism in 'transitional' societies while avoiding the trap of attributing it all to the 'essence' of their cultures, or that one can understand, for example, a term such as 'political tribalism' [Al-Naqib, 1987] with regard to states in Arabia and the Gulf. Such a term suggests that some of the coercive and/or persuasive aspects of the 'lineage mode of production' may continue to survive even when the economic (e.g. pastoral) base of such a mode might have declined or even disappeared. In contemporary Arabia, an export-based rentier economy is articulated in very interesting ways with tribal and other community-based solidarities, animosities and compromises, as we shall see in detail later on.

The concept of articulation can also explain why a discourse like that of the Islamists does not seem to carry much by way of a clear class content. Being essentially an anti-state discourse it often manages to *interpellate* (i.e. to 'call', entreat or persuade by pleading) different, or even contradictory, classes and forces (e.g. the proletarianised intelligentsia and the prosperous traditional and/or 'new' merchants), which may eventually form a *power bloc* united in its opposition to the state: to its managerial failure and its cultural alterity [cf. Ayubi, 1991a].

The concept of *interpellation* (which has Gramscian and Althusserian antecedents) connotes the articulated (or, more pejoratively, the eclectic) discursive process that has been constructed in such a way that it literally *appeals* to people from different classes and groups who all feel they are being addressed or 'called' by it. It is therefore an ideological mechanism through which

subjects are endowed with specific identities, interests and social positions. It is usually involved in the construction of 'historic blocs' and in most populist discourses [Laclau, 1979; Jessop, 1991]. Nationalist and religious discourses have a strong 'interpellatory' potential because they represent cases whereby the same symbolic code can attract disparate social constituencies.

Another related feature can be brought in at this point: culture cannot be treated simply as a 'reflection' of the economic base, and this is particularly so if one is to follow an 'articulation' approach. Culture changes much more slowly than the economy. It is influenced not only by the mode of production but also by many geographically and historically contingent factors, such as the natural resource endowment, the ecological environment, encounters with other civilisations, the spread of a particular religion, being colonised or not, by whom, and for how long, etc. We may describe all such factors as a *conjuncture*.

It is a distinct advantage of the articulation method that it would enable us to conceive of a situation where the 'technical' arrangements most typical of a particular mode of production may be articulated with the cultural (and the political) aspects more typical of another mode (and therefore possibly of another 'age'). Thus tribalism may be expressed socially and politically even though its economic base may have weakened or disappeared. Even slavery was still known in Arabia until recently, and quasi-slavery relations are still to be observed today. The bureaucratic centralised traditions of a 'hydraulic' society may persist even when irrigated agriculture ceases to be the source of livelihood for the majority of the population and even when land and other economic resources are no longer exclusively owned by the state.

There are other extremely important implications for the principles of 'articulation' and 'non-correspondence': one is that they enable us to see that the class map in such a society is often likely to be variegated and fluid, thus not allowing for the emergence of a hegemonic social class. Another is that this state of affairs may give rise, according to the '*principle of compensation*' (or *asynchrony*),<sup>11</sup> to a situation whereby the 'political' (the state) is likely to assume primacy within the social formation, by way of compensating for the absence (or the weakness) of a leading entrepreneurial class or a hegemonic national bourgeoisie. In other words, "the political sphere can be linked to the social sphere not in the sense of a representation but rather in the sense of a compensation: political forms do not reflect what is social, *they complete it*" [cf. Vergopoulos, 1990: 142, 154, original emphasis].

Another advantage of the concepts of articulation and non-correspondence is that they are likely to help in anticipating certain possible developments. They would seem to suggest, for example, that there is no direct, immediate, and necessary relationship between, for instance, the recent drive towards economic liberalisation on the one hand and prospects for political liberalisation on the other: economic 'openings' and privatisations can indeed be



articulated with political authoritarianism (as will be elaborated upon in Chapters 10 and 11).

Yet in spite of their importance, the principles of articulation and non-correspondence have not been as frequently utilised as they could have been in analysing politics in the periphery, where 'transition' appears to be quite a long-term process. 'Transitional' episodes are of course the most difficult to analyse, but they are also the most interesting to study. Curiously, it was a public administration man, Fred Riggs [1964] who came near enough to applying such a concept (under the banner of the 'prismatic society') quite early on in the 1960s, although in relation to administration rather than to politics or the state. The concept was then more directly applied to society and politics by a number of political economists dealing with peripheral countries in the 1970s and 1980s, as we shall see later in the book.

### *Defining the 'state'*

So what exactly is this 'state' about which we are constantly speaking? Obviously it is our key concept in this study, and eventually all the shades of meaning which the term suggests should become clear. Yet some simplified working definitions may be needed at this stage. In one such definition, the state can be said to be an abstract construct that connotes the ensemble of institutions and personnel that possess the exclusive right to public power (or to the legitimate use of force) within a certain territorial society. But such a definition is a narrow one because it overlooks several things about the functions of the state, one of which is that it acts as a bridge and a linkage point between the economic system on the one hand and the cultural system on the other – that is, the state guarantees the conditions conducive to the processes of (capital) production and reproduction, and the state oversees the process of the authoritative allocation of values in society. Let us elaborate a little upon this preliminary definition.

First, the 'state' is a juridic abstraction. It connotes exclusive authority (sovereignty): domestically over a certain territory with its inhabitants, and externally, *vis-à-vis* similarly defined units (i.e. other states). The real substance of this authority is actual power exercised within the society through government; and *vis-à-vis* the foreign 'others', if necessary through war. This legal abstraction is therefore a formal expression of power relationships.

The origins and bases of many power relationships in modern, complex societies are, however, derived from economic relationships pertaining to property rights or control over the means of production. The state normally plays a crucial role, either in setting the conditions that enable certain types of economic relationships to take place and to reproduce themselves, or, more immediately, in directly controlling the means of production and fixing most of the economic relationships in a more authoritative way.

Behind the state's control of the conditions and/or of the resources themselves, it is usually possible to detect a certain normative pattern: an ideological underpinning, an ethical code, or a cultural vocation that inspires the state either in a declared (conscious) or in an undeclared (unconscious) manner.<sup>12</sup>

The study of states therefore has to deal with the following:

- the extent to which the state is legally and juridically abstracted so that it appears to be, for example, fairly distinct from the individuals who rule and from their personal whims;
- the features of the structure and institutional build-up of the state, especially the bureaucracy and the army, or, in other words, its 'body and muscle';
- the ways and modalities according to which the state goes about its exercising of power over the society, or, in other words, the functioning of the state;
- the types of class and group interests that the state action tends to favour or disfavour, relatively speaking, and the extent to which such class and group interests may be represented within the ruling élite itself. Also the types of social patterns and economic relations that state action (as represented by public policies, for example) tends to induce or to reproduce within the society;
- the types of normative assumptions (cultural, ethical, ideological, etc.) that seem (in a declared or undeclared manner) to lie behind state action: for example, its concepts of the 'self' and the 'other', and its 'allocations' of the major political values of freedom, equality, justice, and so on.

Although it is not always easy in less-developed countries, where (as for example in 'Sultanism') the rulers and the state are often so thoroughly entangled with each other, the distinction should always be kept in mind between *government*, *régime* and *state*:

Regimes are more permanent forms of political organization than specific governments, but they are typically less permanent than the state. The state, by contrast, is a (normally) more permanent structure of domination and coordination including a coercive apparatus and the means to administer a society and extract resources from it [Fishman, 1990: 428].

One aspect of the primacy of 'the political' in developing countries manifests itself in the state's 'intervention' in the economic sphere, not only as animateur, planner and coordinator but also as producer and manager – this is what is usually termed *étatisme*. This 'intervention' carries with it two political outcomes: (1) that the state becomes powerful, because it now controls both the system of authority and the system of wealth; and (2) that the 'legitimacy' of the regime and of the state in general (since the duration of a certain government or regime is not known in advance, the two actually overlap in the Arab World) will become closely tied to its *achievement* and *performance* in

the economic field. This often transmits politics and its language into a language of economics, management (and technocracy). An economic crisis thus becomes a crisis for the state, which will often try to find financial solutions for the difficulties without readily conceding its economic (and thus political) control.

We also deal in this book with the economic and the managerial sphere (including the bureaucracy and the public sector) for other important reasons, including: (a) to illustrate that economic and managerial matters have their *own* politics, even though they are often presented as a (more useful) alternative to politics; (b) to show that part of the failure in economic and managerial spheres is due to their assumed technicality; and (c) to illustrate that although controlling the economy augments the state's power, it also increases its vulnerability, since all economic problems and failings are bound to be blamed on the state, thus detracting from its legitimacy.

It will be noticed that although I sometimes use the term 'legitimacy' in this work, I do obviously prefer the concept of *hegemony*. The concept of hegemony is superior to that of legitimacy in that it includes, but also surpasses, the latter. In addition, hegemony is not as closely tied to the specific mechanisms of political representation and participation (which are too closely tied to Western/capitalist pluralistic and parliamentary democracy) as legitimacy seems to be. It may also be easier to analyse the concept of hegemony within the conditions of developing countries. All definitions of legitimacy are based on a *belief*, and this has to be quantitatively measured through certain technical devices (attitude surveys, opinion polls, etc.) whose free application is not permitted in Arab countries. It should also be noted that not all definitions of legitimacy emphasise the elements of achievement and performance or consider the legitimacy of the socio-economic system, even though these are particularly important in defining the concept of legitimacy in most developing countries. Legitimacy in the Middle East is closely intertwined with an evaluation of the performance of the state both as a producer (the public sector) and as a distributor (social welfare), and considerations of 'sufficiency' and 'justice' play a far more important role as components of the concept of legitimacy than they do in advanced capitalist countries.

Furthermore, whereas the use of the legitimacy concept requires us continuously to make a careful distinction between feelings towards the political institutions and those towards the regime and its incumbents [cf. e.g. Gurr, 1970: 183-92 and refs cited], the concept of hegemony is far more closely associated with the *state* (which forms our main category of analysis), while being at the same time more sensitive to social and economic factors (which in turn suits our political economy approach). Since hegemony is both social and ideological, it allows more scope for the study of coalitions and alliances among classes and groups (i.e. 'socio-historic blocs'). Indeed, I find the *inclusionary/exclusionary* scales improvised by authors inspired by the Gramscian

concept of hegemony (e.g. O'Donnell, Stepan, Mouzelis, etc.) far more efficacious in dealing with a Middle Eastern politics that lacks devices such as voting, elections, parties, etc. In this vein, a concept like '*incorporation*' assumes great relevance, and so do terms such as *fronts*, *coalitions*, *charters*, *pacts*, and so forth.

The concept of inclusion/exclusion is more useful than the restricted concepts of representation and participation because it implies both socio-economic and political involvement (the first being particularly important for many developing societies). It also allows the 'principle of compensation' to apply, in the sense that in the short- to medium-run a higher level of socio-economic inclusion may distract from/compensate for political participation. In the longer run, however, the more comprehensive the socio-economic inclusion, the more certain that claims/demands for political participation will emerge (Iran under Muhammad Reza Shah is a good case in point here).

### *Corporatism*

The mention of inclusion/exclusion represents a good opportunity to say a few words about another key concept of this book, that of corporatism. For the purposes of this work, I define *corporatism* rather broadly. It is a political concept which, along with the organisational arrangements that it inspires, is premised neither on the supremacy of the individual nor on the supremacy of class. In societies where theoretical individualism is weak and where classes are embryonic, neither the conventional liberal nor the conventional Marxist paradigms seem to be able to capture the realities of the situation. There are no free elections or even opinion polls that would allow us to assume that national politics represents in some way an aggregate of the ideas and interests of the individual citizens. Nor are there long-term, well-established and self-conscious classes that either have superordinated within the society in a 'hegemonic' way or that have, alternatively, taken over power by force and established, for example, a 'dictatorship of the proletariat'.

What tends to be there, by contrast, is a situation that invokes a political vocabulary which appears to reify a 'collectivity' (the 'community' - variously defined - and/or the state) and a whole range of activities that seem to locate much of the political function with clientelistic networks (thus the importance, among others, of 'patronage') and/or within nominally formal organisations (thus the importance, among others, of 'bureaucratic politics'). We seem therefore to be having *groups* (some of them more 'primordially' solidaristic and some more socio-economic in nature), and we have the state. Then we have a whole variety of 'arrangements' (some more abrupt and cruel than others) for sorting out the relationship between the groups and the state. Some of these arrangements are collaborative and inclusionary: tribal confederations, national fronts, populist coalitions, ethnic consociations, etc.; while some are

more conflictual and exclusionary: subordination, encapsulation and segmentary 'capture' of the state apparatus, etc.

I attribute such manifestations less to an imagined cultural continuity (e.g. an 'organic' conception of society in Islam) and more to the articulated, and often transitory, nature of the modes of production in developing countries (a point repeatedly elaborated upon elsewhere in this work). Yet such manifestations are very much there, even though they are often missed in analyses that are exclusively premised on a presumed individual-derived or class-derived politics. While individualism and classes are both growing in the Middle East, an analysis that concentrates on them to the neglect of group/state relationships (both conflictual and collaborative) will certainly be missing a great deal about political realities in that region. Politics in capitalist, liberal societies can be understood – as we have already suggested – with reference to two main categories of actors: individuals and classes. Individualism establishes the rights and the 'dignity' of the 'nuclearised' free individual who is released from all primordial 'bonds' and who is then presumed to enter into all kinds of social relationships by his/her own free will and in a contractual fashion. This type of relationship also governs the individual's connection with the state, through mechanisms such as voting, elections and representation. Classes are social groups that join together individuals who, generally speaking, occupy similar positions with regard to the means of production and the relations of production in society. Through their collective action they are presumed to influence strategic decision-making in society, including decisions that emanate from the state.

It should follow from these definitions that neither individualism nor class analysis will – if used exclusively – provide a very useful paradigm when one is dealing with a society where neither the historic-intellectual prerequisites for individualism nor the socio-economic bases for a clearly differentiated class structure are present. In much of the Third World the individual, even though he has often been forced out of his primary group, has not yet enjoyed the protection of individualism as a juridic-intellectual concept, nor has he been accommodated within a clearly differentiated class structure. Thus we have a state of flux whereby the human being is partly nuclearised but not fully individualised; he is partly a member of his primary group and partly a member of an emerging class structure. The 'state' in such a situation cannot be 'derived' or deduced either from the presumably 'contractual' relationship that binds the individual to the government in liberal theory, or from the presumed class domination that is supposed to give the state its character in Marxist theory. The outcome of such a fluid situation is either open 'praetorianism', i.e. politics being the *immediate* rather than the potential or ultimate application of violence, or, alternatively, situations in which politics represents a continuous search for intermediaries that can bind the individual and the groups to the state.

'Intermediary' politics features not only individuals and classes, but also – and sometimes primarily – groups. These groups in turn may include primary, solidarity-type groupings (*Gemeinschaft*) or functional, interest-type groupings (*Gesellschaft*). Individuals, groups and classes may be linked through various mechanisms (e.g. patronage, clientelism, proportionality, etc.), and through various 'organisational' modalities (chambers, networks, 'shillas', etc.). The relative importance of the various groups varies from one society to another depending on a society's level of socio-economic differentiation and its social and cultural history.

In short, I adopt a broad concept of corporatism, similar to that of G. O'Donnell [1977], in which it is regarded as a set of relationships between state and society, between the public and the private. Although this approach does not stem from the belief that corporatism is the necessary organisational outcome of certain political cultures, it has to be sensitive to any aspects of cultural specificity that may be of significance within the social history of any particular country or region. And there is little doubt in this respect that the Arabo-Islamic cultural tradition has its own distinctive features with regard to state/society and public/private relationships.

As happened in some other parts of the world, Middle Eastern experimentation with corporatism could afford to follow basically 'inclusionary' practices during their early (mainly *populist*) phases. This was helped, in the short run, by the ability of the 'relatively autonomous' state to expand national industry, public employment and social services. The relative autonomy of the state, as well as its ability to disburse largesse, were both made possible through the acquisition by the state of significant financial resources by way of nationalising private enterprises (foreign and local) or through the receipt of considerable external payments (oil revenues, foreign aid, etc.). *Etatisme* and bureaucratisation represented some of the obvious correlates of such a state of affairs.

But the increasing reliance on 'un-earned' income, invoking the description of many Arab countries as rentier (or semi-rentier) states, has rendered the state vulnerable to several (mainly external) forces over which it had little control. This, combined with the growing financial burdens of welfarist policies has led to the escalation of a 'fiscal crisis of the state', that left the state panting both for cash and for legitimacy. Such developments (supported by important globalisation pressures) started, in turn, to usher the exhausted state in the direction of economic *privatisation* and a certain degree of political *pluralisation* – a story that will be recounted in detail in the rest of this book.

#### NOTES

1. "I have been asked a thousand times for the deep cultural explanation of all sorts of profound differences between 'us and them'. Now, as that dubious creature, a Middle East specialist ... I have virtually a vested interest in talking about historical and sociological specificities. They certainly exist. But on nearly all occasions the answers have actually seemed to me *not* to require

any special insight into unique cultural peculiarities. Rather, they appear to demand a relatively straightforward attempt at a political reading of the situation rather than the citing of some supposed mental or cultural condition" [Gilsenan, 1991: 30–31].

2. The specificity of the Middle East derives from a number of factors including most particularly: (1) the arid zone ecology with its important economic and social consequences; (2) the predominance of Islam as a religion and a way of life; (3) the proximity to Europe and the special sensitivities and vulnerabilities caused by this; and (4) the crucial role (economic, social and political) played by oil in the last two decades, especially but not exclusively in the oil-exporting countries of the region.

3. It is not exactly clear when the transformation was achieved of the semantics of *status*, *estate* and *Stand* into those of *state*, *état*, *stato*, *estado*, *Staat*, etc. Even Hobbes still used 'state' as synonymous with *civitas* and Commonwealth, and handled it according to the old metaphor of the body [cf. Luhman, 1990: 129–35].

4. This is somewhat similar to Ibn Khaldun's distinction, with regard to the formation of the political community, between two types of influence, or *wazi'*: an 'external/objective' type based on coercive disincentives, and an 'internal/subjective' type based on (religious) motivation [Abd al-Salam, 1985: 88–96; Al-Jabiri, 1982a: 472–3]. This is the nearest that one comes in the traditional literature to a distinction between 'incentives' and 'motivation'. The word *wazi'* is almost impossible to translate – the use of the English word 'influence' here is very approximate.

5. Peter Gran [1987: 92] finds that "While the Arabs have yet to produce a Gramsci, the questions which Gramsci raised in the 1920s are now quite freely raised in the *Ahali* newspaper in Cairo, in Jumblatist circles in Lebanon, in the Islamic Left of the Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr and Hasan Hanafi, and in academic writings, represented here by an essay by Elia Zureik." Traces of a Gramscian influence on some Arab writers in recent years have been observed by Labib [1992a: 64ff].

6. The influence of conservative European thought on Arab and Muslim writers and scholars continues to be a very poorly researched area, as Western and Arab writers on the subject have tended to emphasise (and often to celebrate) the impact of liberal (and to some extent socialist) ideas on Arab and Middle Eastern thinking [cf. e.g. Hourani, 1970; 'Awad, 1969–86; Al-Ansari, 1980; a partial exception is R. Khuri, 1983]. Conservative (including organicist) concepts and ideas present in Arab political discourse were always assumed, not necessarily correctly, to have an 'Islamic' or 'Oriental' genealogy.

7. According to Alfred Stepan, the 'organic state' tradition is not confined to Hegel and the German writers but considerably pre-dates them. It pertains to a normative vision of the political community in which the component parts of society harmoniously combine to enable the full development of the human potential. This corpus of political thought runs through Aristotle, Roman law, mediaeval natural law and into contemporary Catholic social philosophy, and is still very alive as a philosophical and structural influence, especially in southern Europe and Latin America [Stepan, 1978: 26–7]. Similar concepts, likening society to the human body or to a 'tight building' (*bunyan marsus*) and calling for the solidaristic integration of its members (*takaful*), are quite familiar in Islamic writings.

8. Léon Duguit was a colleague of the major corporatist sociologist Emile Durkheim (1858–1917) at the University of Bordeaux and is regarded as one of the leading minor theorists of corporatism [Black, 1984: 220–23]. He is usually classified as a 'social functionalist' whose top political values were social solidarity and social function [Brecht, 1959: 304]. Not only did Duguit teach and enjoy a tremendous intellectual influence in Egypt, but in 1927 he also drafted the curriculum and regulations of the Faculty of Law of Cairo University – the model for such faculties in the Arab World. He was critical of the concept of the sovereignty of the nation or the people and advised an emphasis on social responsibility, legal controls and collective interests [Gourdon, 1989: 563 n.52; Saif al-Dawla, 1991: 60–78]. It is often assumed that the influential law schools (and by extension the law profession) in the Middle East must have been bastions of liberalism, but this is not exactly the case as the content of the courses was often anti-individualist and

opposed to concepts of 'sovereignty' of the 'nation' or of the 'people'. For specific examples from Egypt see 'I. Saif al-Dawla, 1984: 603–8.

9. The terms *corporativismo*, *Korporativismus*, etc., which tend to imply a doctrine or ideology, have had unfortunate etymological associations in the inter-war period. "The more inventive Italians and Germans rather quickly resolved the issue by dropping out the 'iv' and referring to *corporatismo* and *Korporatismus* as Anglo-Saxon-imposed neologisms conveniently purged of their discredited past associations" [Schmitter, 1985: 59]. For the uncertain attempts to render the term into Arabic, see Chapter 5, n. 6.

10. Laclau and Mouffe [1985: 103ff.] proceed further than I would in this analysis by giving "the structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice" the name: *discourse*. I would prefer to distinguish, at least analytically, between the socio-political bloc on the one hand and political discourse on the other. I would therefore agree that the practice of articulation consists among other things "in the construction of nodal points which partially fix meaning" [ibid.: 112–13]. I also agree that "the general field of the emergence of hegemony is that of articulatory practices" [ibid.: 134ff].

11. The notion of *asynchrony* is also employed in the writings of O. Ianni, T. di Tella, G. O'Donnell, J. Nun, A. Touraine and others.

12. The concept of the state as a 'normative order' concentrates on the symbolic attributes of the state as a unifying force for the entire community. Its implications range from a highly idealist 'total' form as in Hegel and in the Croce/Gentile doctrine of *lo stato etico* (as well as with many of the modern Islamists such as Mawdudi and Qutb), to a more micro-level practical concern with ethics in specific state apparatuses. Anthony Black [1988: 113–21; 156–7] contrasts the liberal view of the state with what he calls the *civic view*, according to which the state has a substantive purpose all of its own, namely to promote the good life and justice in society. What characterises the liberal view is that it starts and ends with the individual. The liberal state is, in more than one sense, a *Rechtsstaat* (legal-constitutional state), whereby the public sphere (*res publica*) exists solely to enable persons to pursue their own ends, and where a clear distinction is made between crime and sin. The 'civic state' by contrast aims to ensure that its inhabitants lead a good moral life and regards *moeurs* and beliefs as its direct concern. Gramsci often uses the terms 'ethical state', 'cultural state' and 'educator state', but is obviously more inclined towards the latter: "Every State is ethical in as much as one of its most important functions is to raise the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level" [in Buci-Glucksmann, 1980: 127, 301]. We take this concept on board in this book, supplemented by David Easton's 'allocative' (and therefore political-economy amenable) formulation about politics being the "authoritative allocation of values" in society [Easton, 1953: 130]. On the possible 'highest values' that may be adopted by the state see Brecht [1959: Ch. 8], and for a further discussion see Black [1988: 98ff].