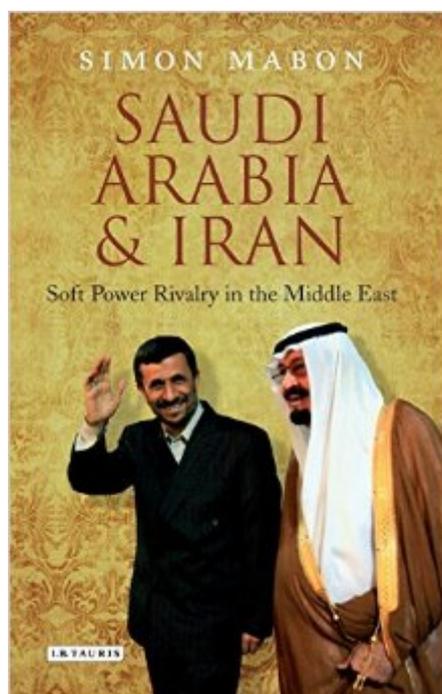


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Saudi Arabia And Iran: Power And Rivalry In The Middle East



Synopsis

In the wake of the 1979 Iranian revolution, relations between states in the Middle East were reconfigured and reassessed overnight. Amongst the most-affected was the relationship between Iran and Saudi Arabia. The existence of a new regime in Tehran led to increasingly vitriolic confrontations between these two states, often manifesting themselves in the conflicts across the region, such as those in Lebanon and Iraq, and more recently in Bahrain and Syria. In order to shed light upon this rivalry, Simon Mabon examines the different identity groups within Saudi Arabia and Iran (made up of various religions, ethnicities and tribal groupings), proposing that internal insecurity has an enormous impact on the wider ideological and geopolitical competition between the two. With analysis of this heated and often uneasy relationship and its impact on the wider Middle East, this book is vital for those researching international relations and diplomacy in the region.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book offers a loose procedural scheme, called the *‘Incongruence Dilemma’*, for the analysis of the short-term interactions of states and the *‘identity groups’* within them. An identity group can be an ethnicity, a tribe, or a religious sect. The analysis is then applied to Saudi Arabia and Iran over the period since 1979. *‘The Incongruence Dilemma,’* the author states, *‘builds upon a Classical Realist position, while adding a Constructivist dimension that stresses the importance of identity.’* (p. 18) His *‘Incongruence’* is a stately way of saying *‘conflict’*. The *‘dilemma’* is that when a country tries to mitigate a conflict with one identity group, it typically worsens a conflict with another. Classical Realism of course refers to Hans

Morgenthau and his *Politics among Nations*. The term *Constructivist* refers to *Dialogues in Arab Politics* by Michael Barnett, who is propounding a theory that differs from Realism by *rejecting objective facts, suggesting instead that facts are dependent up on socially established conventions.* Although the author refers to a number of recent general books on international relations, he paraphrases all of them with reasonable clarity in his first chapter. There are three stages to this procedural scheme. The first is concerned with *structure, notably ... the constraints placed on identity groups operating within a state.* In brief, this is the setting. The second is *concerned with the role of agency, notably those identity groups who comprise identity incongruence, and, thus, the internal security dilemma.* So having examined the setting, he introduces the actors. The third stage is involved with the actions that occur, partly as resulting from the settings and the actors, but also how settings and actions are perceived.

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