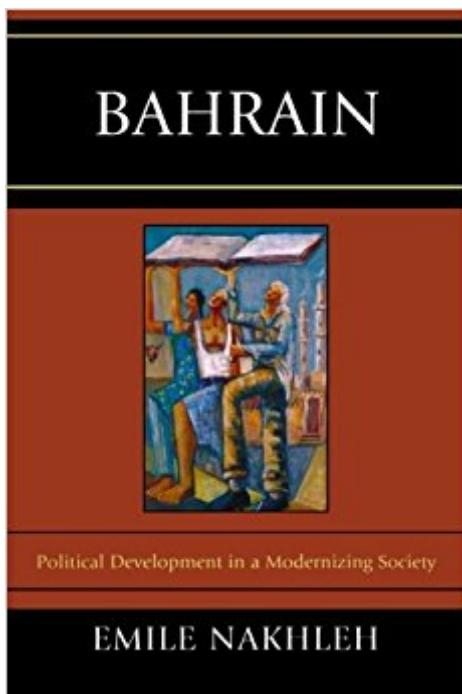


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Bahrain: Political Development In A Modernizing Society



Synopsis

The book is a study of political development in Bahrain during the first five years after its independence in 1971. It is based on field research done by the author as the first senior Fulbright scholar in that country. The book was banned in Bahrain for 30 years but was allowed to be published in Arabic in that country in 2006. The study focuses on the tribal structure of Bahraini society and the rule of a minority Sunni government by al-Khalifa family over a largely disenfranchised Shia majority. To examine the making of the new state, the book analyzes the nature and characteristics of the Bahraini tribal society, the educational system of modern Bahrain, the nature of the political system, and popular demands for participation in decision making. The book also examines the making of the new constitution, the first ever national election to both the Constitutional Assembly and the National Assembly, and the electoral campaigns and candidates. The book also discusses the restrictions on freedoms of speech and assembly, the denial of women the right to vote, the banning of political parties and the role of clubs as surrogate political gathering places, the exclusion of the Shia majority from the economic and political centers of power, and the absence of government accountability and transparency. The February 2011 popular uprising in Bahrain underscores some of the key challenges discussed in the book, especially the autocratic nature of the regime and the urgency of political reform for domestic stability.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Bahrain, a small yet geopolitically prized and culturally complex country has been propelled to the headlines, but Emile Nakhleh was there first. His seminal account of Bahrain's political development

brims with insights every bit as topical as today's news. I was not surprised to learn that the Arabic translation of the volume is much respected in Bahrain. Nakhleh's extensive fieldwork began not long after the Gulf state won independence. His intricate, richly detailed accounts of political socialization, government institutions and practices, as well as associational life remain relevant. Any serious reader interested in Gulf politics will want to have Nakhleh's rewarding study of Bahrain at hand, particularly to understand how political power and influence are sustained and wielded. (Augustus Richard Norton, Boston University)

Emile Nakhleh is the author of *A Necessary Engagement: Reinventing America's Relations with the Muslim World*.

This is a must read book for anyone who wants to really understand the background of current Bahraini politics. It talks in details about the beginnings of early Bahraini politics during the first parliamentary elections and gives a clear picture of the views and opinions in addition to the backgrounds of the political and social elites.

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