

Islamic Republic of Iran vs Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: A Struggle for Regional Hegemony through Oil Politics

Dr. Sadia Rafique

Assistant Professor, Political Science Department. GC University Lahore

Maria Khalil

BA Hons student, Political Science Department. GC University Lahore

M Hamza Ikram

BA Hons student, Political Science Department. GC University Lahore

Abstract

The Middle Eastern region is rich in its oil sources and it is a hub of major oil producer and exporters of the world. Among many oil-producing states, there are two who have always stood on the face of each other for creating their dominance and hegemony in the region. These are the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Both the countries have been historic rivalries due to their ideological differences from the beginning, but now they stand on the verge of political and economic differences too. The intervention of the foreign powers and the involvement of their interests has added fuel to fire in the rivalry of these two Islamic oils producing states. The economy being US centered, and the rates of the oil being defined by the international market, has been used as a tool to incorporate with the US vested interests and to its ally Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, the support of Russia is towards Iran which again is an historic rival of the US. Hence both the Middle Eastern Rivals are now in a fight against each other for creating their regional hegemony and dominance. This study searches on the factors, which are becoming the key players to form this hegemony. It also emphasis on the viewpoints of Iran and Saudi Arabia and tries to navigate the demand and desire of both of the states. The complex issue of Saudi-Iran rivalry which has overtime turned into an oil-centric political rivalry has been discussed in detail from the perspective of Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Keywords: Hegemony, dominance, rivalry, politics, geo-political, state-centric, foreign-powers, region, oil politics, middle east.

Introduction

For decades, the Middle East has become the epicenter of world affairs. Both Saudi Arabia and Iran are significant Middle Eastern forces, and both see each other as the region's emerging hegemon. Relations between the two countries are fraught to say the least, with the religious Sunni/Shia division playing a major role in the conflict,

but much of the animosity stems from centuries of shared cultural mistrust. Religious disagreements have intensified their decades-long rivalry, as both embrace two separate sects of the same faith, Islam. Iran and Saudi Arabia have emerged as the Middle East's two most powerful nations, each with hegemonic aspirations, and are clearly at odds with one another in a fierce fight for regional supremacy. The world has seen the eruption of tension between these two states in various Middle Eastern countries, including Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen, where their strategic, commercial, and geopolitical ambitions are at odds.

The conventional and historical animosity between the two states, as well as their struggle for hegemonic control over the Middle East, took a new direction when the region drew the attention of foreign powers as a rich source of hydrocarbons and fossil fuels, especially oil. Oil became a strategic foreign asset during World War II, and its use as a diplomatic instrument grew significantly. The Middle East played a key role in deciding the foreign policies of major world powers, especially the United States of America, after WWII, when the US cemented its control over an international structure based on liberal and capitalist values. This is due to the fact that the Middle Eastern oil regions actually account for 65 percent of the world's proven oil reserves and 30 percent of daily demand, making the Middle East the global oil industry's regional center of gravity¹.

The availability of oil reserves was a powerful variable and a central factor in transforming the political phenomenon into oil politics. The neo-political World Order was built on oil. The region's minerals and oil wealth have endowed it with global political and economic focus. The situation evolved over time, making the region a key player in international strife and diplomatic intrigues. Saudi Arabia and Iran enriched with Oil reserves with the percentages of 25% and 8.5% of total oil reserves of the Middle East respectively, when realized the strategic and international importance of Oil, they both used it to advance towards the achievement of their goal of regional dominance. However, the new global order after 2nd world war put a halt to their animosity as both of the states were close allies of The United States of America and both were known as “Twin Pillars of the Gulf”². The scenario again changed after the Iranian Revolution of 1979 when Iran adopted the hostile anti-American policies and nationalized its Oil facilities while Saudi Arabia remained an important ally of USA. Since then, the rivalry between the two countries has taken on an international dimension, dominated by the United States.

¹ Bulent Gokay, “Two Pillars of US global hegemony: Middle Eastern Oil and the Petrodollar,” in *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Imperialism and Anti-Imperialism*, ed. Immanuel Ness, Zak Cope (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-91206-6_334-1.

² Stephen Brannon, “Pillars, Petroleum and Power: The United States in the Gulf,” *The Arab Journal* 2, no. 1 (1994): 6.

Now both countries are focusing on the oil politics to get an upper hand in the dominance of the region. As the world's demand for oil increased, so did the United States' imports, and Saudi Arabia became one of the few producers capable of meeting the world's insatiable appetite for oil. Saudi Arabia took advantage of this opportunity in 1974, transitioning from a major oil producer of around 2.5 million barrels per day to a mega producer capable of producing over 8.5 million barrels per day. KSA, with the help of USA, has developed its oil industry to a level that it is producing more than 10 million barrels of crude oil per day³.

On the other hand, Iran has minimized the impact of US economic sanctions by making alliances with other great powers such as China, Russia etc. One big development in this context is that, recently, China has announced to invest 400 million dollars in the petroleum sector of Iran⁴. Moreover, Iran has developed a missile arsenal of thousands of warheads, including cruise and ballistic missiles, capable of wreaking havoc on oil installations around the Persian Gulf. The most recent practical demonstration is the devastating attacks on the oil industry in Saudi Arabia in September 2019, attributed to Iran by the United States, which were a reminder of the fragility of the oil market and of that how Iran could try to use this fragility of oil industry for its own geopolitical interests.

Research Questions

Following are some questions, which are addressed later in this research paper:

1. What are the Political Issues between Saudi Arabia and Islamic Republic of Iran?
2. Why does KSA want to exert its hegemony and dominance in the region?
3. Why does IRI want to exert its hegemony and dominance in the region?
4. What are the interests of Western Powers in the Oil Politics of Middle East?
5. What Role did US played in the Conflict of these two states?

Theoretical Framework

To make the study authentic and structured, help of different theories have been used. The theories of hegemony, dominance and state-centric realism have been used in this paper.

The theories of hegemony and dominance have been used parallel while discussing the politics and narratives of KSA and IRI. The study reveals that both of the countries wanted to insert hegemony and dominance over each other in order to become the independent rulers and to enjoy more power.

³ Seyed GholamHosein Hassantash, "Iran, Saudi Oil Relationship: Friendship or Rivalry," *International Association for Energy Economics* 35, no. 1 (2014): 9.

⁴ Hussain H Zaidi, "Oil Politics," *The News International*, September 30, 2019.

While studying the narratives of Iran and Saudi Arabia, it is found that both of these countries had a state centric approach to keep make their counties stronger and add more value to them. The struggle for power and dominance are based upon the fact to give their countries a better position in the region and enjoy more prestige.

Historical Background

KSA and IRI are historic rivals of the Middle East. They both are known to be the undisputed heavy weights of the Middle East and when these two come in front of each other, the world gets ready for something to happen. But the irony is, that after so many conflicts between the two Middle Eastern states, no physical war happened. However, it can be said that both the counties are in a silent cold war with each other with foreign involvement and interests on both sides.

From some of the historical events, it seems like it is a war for physical Dominance, which includes both, economic and political aspects, also is an unending dispute between both the countries to become the leaders of the Muslim world. The point to ponder here is, that the majority of the Muslim population does not even live in Middle East.

The Iranian society has faced Iranian revolution which has changed the face of Iran dynamically. The changes the revolution brought can be witnessed in their socio-political priorities. Iranian revolution is considered to be an alarm and warning for its rivals as well.

Another major difference between IRI and KSA is the sectarian difference. IRI is a major Shia population while a majority of the Sunni's lives in KSA. This is an interesting fact in the politics of IRI and KSA that both the countries rely very much on the religious legitimacy and they constitute it as a pillar of their political governance⁵.

Iran has been supporting a lot of military groups in different parts of Middle East which includes Lebanon, Gaza and Syria. Whereas KSA is only found in Yemen where the kingdom is fighting with Houthi rebels that have in turn being supported by Iran⁶. And hence, the war in Yemen heated up the Saudi-Iran Rivalry. The Houthi attacked Saudi Oil Facilities and there were heavy explosions on the Saudi oil tankers and Iran was blamed. Iran denied being involved in these attacks. The results of what happened in the Arabian waters and the Red Sea was felt by the entire world as it affected the price of Oil. It also affected the delivery of millions of barrels of oil each day.

⁵ Jonathan Marcus, "Why Saudi Arabia and Iran are Bitter Rivals," *BBC News*, September 16, 2019.

⁶ Valeri Modebadze, "The Battle for Regional Dominance between The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and The Islamic Republic of Iran," *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs* 4, No. 3 (2018): 69.

Iran made some important friends, like Russia and China. These two strong Asian states are supporting Iran through investing in their development projects, business and military at the time when Iran faced sanctions. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia has good ties with the Gulf countries including Sudan, Egypt and Israel. The trump card in KSA is the US. They both cannot stand Iran. The problem of US with Iran has historic roots from the Iranian Revolution when Americans diplomats were made hostage.

All these events have added fuel to fire in the chaotic situation of Iran and Saudi Arabia which has created enormous problems for the Middle Eastern region itself.

Struggle for Regional Hegemony

The conflict between the Sunni Arab dynasty and the Shia Persian theocracy is often depicted as primarily a sectarian conflict in a narrow sense. However, at its heart, the confrontation is a geopolitical fight for political, fiscal, and military superiority, as well as religious authority. The Islamic Republic of Iran (Iran) and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) are rivals in an unprecedentedly diverse and turbulent area, where the two antagonists contend for control of the Middle East and the Muslim world. The conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran can be compared to the Cold War struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union. Saudi Arabia and Iran try to prevent direct confrontation in the same way as the United States and the Soviet Union resisted direct conflict. Rather than fighting each other outright, both sides oppose each other implicitly and give differing degrees of assistance to various camps in regional disputes. Unlike the Soviet Union and the United States, which competed for global influence, Iran and Saudi Arabia do not have superpower status and therefore have little plans to dominate the globe.

They are only fighting each other for the sake of gaining power in the Middle East. Both states aspire to be the Islamic world's leader, and they are engaged in a relentless fight to conquer the Middle East and expand their presence in neighboring countries. Both countries support radical Islamic groups in other countries and are fighting for regional supremacy. The kingdom of Saudi Arabia vehemently opposed Teheran's plans to export revolutions and expand its presence in the Middle East after the creation of theocratic rule in Iran. Saudi Arabia is adamant about countering Iran's disruptive challenge and condemns Teheran's plans to rule the Arab world at all costs. Saudi Arabia and Iran often accuse each other of fomenting sectarianism in Iraq, Yemen, Syria, and Lebanon by supporting Shia and Sunni militias⁷. Both countries tend to stay out of overt conflict with one another. Rather than engaging in overt combat, both sides engage in indirect combat and provide differing degrees of assistance to various camps in regional conflicts.

⁷ Ribale Sleiman Haidar, ed., *Saudi Arabia And Iran: Beyond Conflict and Coexistence?* (London: LSE Middle East Centre, 2018): 5-6.

Oil politics in Middle East

Oil, or petroleum, has not always been admired and used, but only in the last hundred years has it established itself as a widely sought-after commodity, an essential component of modern industry, and an important force in international relations. The Middle East oil was explored as a visible power of minerals, accounting for 40% of the global estimate⁸. Surprisingly, the region's minerals and oil wealth have endowed it with global political and economic focus. The oil industry in the Middle East began to expand prior to World War I. Until the early 1950s, Britain and, later, the United States controlled the region economically and militarily. 7 American and British firms dominated the global petroleum industry, with complete control of demand, pricing, and marketing. The governments of the Middle East were only paid a set royalty of 20 to 25 cents per barrel⁹. The discontent and tension caused by World War II, as well as developments in Venezuela, the Saudi Arabian agreement of 1950, and the Iranian nationalization crisis of 1951, established a new trend. Rather than a set royalty, the governments earned half of the proceeds from producing activities, which involved oil refining and distribution to tankers. This ranged from 70 to 80 cents per barrel in the 1950s¹⁰.

US Hegemony: A key factor in Middle Eastern Oil Politics

The Middle East's oil-rich areas have influenced US foreign policy significantly. This is due to the fact that the Middle Eastern oil regions actually account for 65 percent of the world's proven oil reserves and 30 percent of daily demand, making the Middle East the global oil industry's geographical center of gravity¹¹. As a result, they are a critical geopolitical concern for the United States. Despite becoming one of the world's largest oil producers, the United States consumes much more oil than it produces. In 2018, the United States produced 17.87 million barrels per day (bpd) of oil, while it consumed 19.69 million bpd¹². Oil from the Middle East has steadily displaced US oil after new and plentiful discoveries of cheaper oil in the Persian Gulf shortly after WWII. Without clear and safe access to this resource, the global economy will collapse, and the US's status as the world's leading force would be jeopardized.

⁸ Charles Issawi, "Oil and Middle East Politics," *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 31, No. 2 (1973): 112.

⁹ Ibid.: 112.

¹⁰ Ibid.: 112.

¹¹ Bulent Gokay, "Two Pillars of US global hegemony: Middle Eastern Oil and the Petrodollar," in *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Imperialism and Anti-Imperialism*, ed. Immanuel Ness, Zak Cope (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-91206-6_334-1.

¹² Hussain H Zaidi, "Oil Politics," *The News International*, September 30, 2019.

After WWII, the long-term goal of US hegemony was never to pursue political and economic goals by overt territorial domination and authority over other sovereign states; this was only a fallback position necessitated by resistance to or lack of growth of modes of political independence associated with a liberal world-wide economic order. Where such liberal forms were stable, or where non-liberal domestic forms were willing to act externally within the prevailing liberal order, the "market," backed by the US and its allies' political and military might, could be counted on to deliver. The global economy, which is dominated by the United States, needs plenty of inexpensive and readily available oil to continue expanding. To retain its economic supremacy, the United States sought to open up and transnationalize oil-rich markets in the Global South, such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, in order to further its racial interests while still securing its dominant status within the new structure.

Although the Saudi-Iranian oil rivalry is ostensibly a bilateral affair, it has always had a foreign component, which has been overshadowed by the United States. Following WWII, both countries became effective allies of the United States in the Middle East. However, the Iranian revolution of 1979 marked a turning point in the role of oil in the Saudi-Iranian relationship. Both countries had previously been important US allies, a role that brought political and economic benefits, especially to their oil industries. However, Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution opened the way for a road separation. Though Saudi Arabia remained a staunch US ally, Iran pursued a revolutionary and anti-Western foreign policy, which resulted in its exclusion from a US-dominated international system.

As a result, the Iranian oil sector has been under American pressure since 1979, with a variety of international sanctions and embargoes crippling Iranian oil production. Iran has not been able to meet the pre-revolutionary levels of oil output of over 6 million barrels a day. Meanwhile, Saudi oil output surpassed 12 million barrels per day in 2018¹³. Until recently, US policy in the oil-rich Middle East sought to curb Iran and maintain repressive regimes in the Arabian Gulf, as well as defend domestic and foreign US oil rights, continue vast contracts for the US defense industry, and provide stable and affordable crude oil to allies in Western Europe and the Pacific. Dual containment, on the other hand, has come under criticism from the European Union and Japan, with the latter supporting its own energy producers at the detriment of American firms barred from doing business by the US government.

Oil Politics and Rivalry of Iran and KSA

The Middle East has evolved as a critical subject of international dispute and diplomatic intrigues as a result of the region's condition and environment. According to statistics, the Middle East holds 68 percent of all oil that has been discovered around

¹³ Sukru Cildir, "How Saudi-Iranian Oil Rivalry has been shaped by American Power," *The Conversation*, November 14, 2019.

the world¹⁴. Iran and Saudi Arabia, with 8.5 percent and 25 percent of crude reserves respectively, are two major contributors to this 68 percent of oil¹⁵. The petroleum industry accounts for more than half of Saudi Arabia's overall economic production and almost two-thirds of its export revenue. Oil and gas account for 25% of Iran's GDP and 70% of its export earnings, respectively¹⁶. A drop in global oil prices or demand often has an effect on both economies. The proliferation of oil reserves in these two Middle Eastern countries is a powerful variable and a central element that has transformed both countries' political phenomena into oil politics.

The attitude of both countries toward each other, in which each sees the other as a rival state and an imminent challenge, has given the traditional animosity a new dimension. As oil prices fell to \$30 a barrel in February 2016, Saudi Arabian officials met with their counterparts from Russia, Venezuela, and Qatar to negotiate options for an oil production freeze to stabilize output levels¹⁷. After two months of negotiations, nothing came of it. Fearing that Iran would gradually gain market share, the kingdom declined to consider a production freeze. Iran, on the other hand, refused to implement export limits that would have prevented it from returning to pre-sanctions output levels, seeing the change as an effort by the Kingdom to keep it from resuming its pre-sanctions market role. Later, Saudi Arabia took additional measures to stymie Iran's attempts to expand oil exports: it barred Iranian crude carriers from entering its waters and lowered its oil prices to European customers by 35 cents a barrel, a move aimed squarely at Iran's potential demand¹⁸. Saudi Arabia has also considered increasing its oil supply in order to flood the market and disrupt its biggest rival. Iran, on the other hand, offset Saudi Arabia's maneuvers by offering concessions to its Asian buyers and pricing its oil at 60 cents below Middle East benchmark rates in order to undercut the Saudis¹⁹.

Saudi Arabia's rivalry with Iran has become a significant source of geopolitical concern. They are the region's top oil producers, with the former holding the world's second-largest oil reserves and the latter having the world's fourth-largest oil reserves. Until the 1970s, they fought for market share in the global oil market, and they also played key roles in OPEC. Iran, on the other hand, has been subjected to a slew of sanctions following the Islamic Revolution in 1979, and has steadily lost ground. Saudi Arabia has established a close relationship with the United States,

¹⁴ Ghulam Fareed, Dr. Zahid Yaseen, Dr. M. Ashraf, "Oil Politics in the Middle East: Understanding the Genesis of Petrodollar Strategy," *Pakistan Social Sciences Review* 3, no. 1 (2019): 19.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*: 19.

¹⁶ Hussain H Zaidi, "Oil Politics," *The News International*, September 30, 2019.

¹⁷ "The 'Oil War' between Iran and Saudi Arabia," *RUSI*, June 15, 2016, <https://rusi.org/commentary/'oil-war'-between-iran-and-saudi-arabia>: 1.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*: 2

¹⁹ *Ibid.*: 2.

establishing itself as the only oil-producing nation capable of balancing the world economy.

In contrast to Iran, Saudi Arabia has adopted comparatively novel policies. First, it has worked to diversify the economy and reduce its reliance on oil. Second, it is attempting to collaborate with countries such as Israel and enhancing relations with non-OPEC oil suppliers. Notably, Saudi Arabia is finding a balance between current and new directions in economic and diplomatic zones, aiming to increase production and capability in the oil industry rather than decrease it, while still attempting to revitalize other sectors. It is attempting to reduce the oil and gas industry's proportional share of the economy while still increasing its total scale. Saudi Arabia also wants to reinforce existing collaboration networks while looking for new ones.

Iran has chosen to reinforce current policies and alliances, in comparison to Saudi Arabia's strategy. Iran is pursuing an exploitative agenda in the economy as well as in foreign affairs. At the national level, expanding the oil and gas market remains a top priority. Iran is now focusing on strengthening current alliances rather than forging new ones. Iran has adopted different strategies to use oil as a political and strategic weapon. Rostam Qasemi, former oil minister of Islamic Republic of Iran, told Al Jazeera in 2011 that if pressurized, Iran would not hesitate to use oil as a political and strategic weapon²⁰. According to various experts, the most convenient and appropriate option for Iran to use oil as a political, strategic and geopolitical tool will be to close the Strait of Hormuz, a significant choke point along Iran's southern and eastern boundaries and a major transit path for up to 40% of the world's oil exports²¹.

Furthermore, Iran poses a serious threat to Middle Eastern oil pipelines, possibly allowing it to extort concessions from world powers. Iran has accumulated a missile arsenal of thousands of warheads, including cruise and ballistic missiles, capable of wreaking havoc on oil installations around the Persian Gulf in recent years²². It also has forces and proxy fighters in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen with mortar, rocket, and drone capabilities. Iran will assault regional oil facilities with a range of weapons, including drones and cyberattacks, from multiple fronts. As a result, protecting all facilities of all regional producers at the same time is extremely challenging, especially in Saudi Arabia, where the oil industry has a wide geographic footprint.

Saudi Arabia, according to various media outlets, is especially vulnerable to low-cost armed drones that have effectively evaded the kingdom's internal air defenses. Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen have used these weapons to attack Saudi Arabia's vital infrastructure, including airports and oil installations. In

²⁰ Dr. Parvaz, "Iran: Willing to Use Oil as a Political Tool," *Aljazeera*, November 23, 2011.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Amy M. Jaffe, "How Iran Can Hold the World Oil Market Hostage," *Council on Foreign Relations*, October 29, 2019.

September 2019, concerted attacks on Saudi Arabia's Abqaiq crude processing center and the Khurais oil field interrupted world's oil demand by about 5.7 million barrels per day, or about 5% of global output²³.

Conclusion

Competing legitimacies describe the Saudi–Iran rivalry. Both has used Islamism to develop its political goals, and both have used it to combat competing philosophies. Both sides want to form a regional order that will promote their interests and ensure their domestic stability against the backdrop of what seems to be a larger secular change in global influence at a time when they likely only have enough power to create chaos. There can be no naturally produced grand accord in the Middle East because there is no inherent balance of force. Finally, the region's challenges can only be solved by fully integrated and resilient states operating under the umbrella of a national security system.

While neither Saudi Arabia nor Iran has the potential to completely marginalize or defeat the other, they are both well-equipped to maintain their competition by diplomatic, commercial, and even military means, despite their political and economic difficulties. This ongoing crisis is keeping the Middle East's future hostage. However, it would be an error to regard the division as old, entrenched in sectarian hatreds, or perhaps unresolvable. At this point, it's unclear how close we are to a détente or a settlement, and we seem to be farther apart than ever before from peace between these two major forces.

There has been a recent perception that position of Middle East, as one of the most powerful suppliers of the world's hydrocarbons, is waning, especially as its strategic significance to the US has decreased. Geopolitical conflicts in the Middle East are likely to worsen, and the popularity of fossil fuels is expected to decline over time due to gradual developments in the global oil supply.

Saudi Arabia has been developing its main oil and gas sector while still attempting to improve other industries through an industrial diversification program. Its cooperation with non-OPEC oil producers, especially Russia, has been credited with helping to stabilize oil prices and reassert its global market power. However, despite geopolitical risks such as the severing of diplomatic relations between Qatar and other GCC countries, the US withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal, and the relocation of the US embassy to Jerusalem, collaboration with Israel may pose a danger. Such collaboration could jeopardize Saudi Arabia's credibility as a religious and regional leader. As a result, this lack of authority could jeopardize the monarchical system's legitimacy.

²³ Nikolay Kozhanov, "Why oil makes Gulf Countries vulnerable to Iran," *Aljazeera*, December 26, 2020.

Iran seems to be well aware of the dangers that come with continuing down the current route. Its new Five-Year Development Plan recognizes the value of business diversification. Iran has not set clear diversification targets because it lacks the means to take a new path. Furthermore, owing to its conflict with the United States, it has found it difficult to establish new diplomatic partners. In terms of the economy and foreign politics, it has no choice but to stick to the status quo. Iran is attempting to develop its oil and gas business while also fortifying relations with regional allies such as Syria, Iraq, Turkey, and Qatar, as well as China, Russia, France, and Germany. Its aggressive ties with the US are a major roadblock, but its future strength would likely aid it in achieving its objectives.

Bibliography

- Anonymous. 2016. "The 'Oil War' between Iran and Saudi Arabia." RUSI, June 15. <https://rusi.org/commentary/'oil-war'-between-iran-and-saudi-arabia>.
- Brannon, Stephen. 1994. "Pillars, Petroleum and Power: The United States in the Gulf." *The Arab Journal* 4-10.
- Cildir, Sukru. 2019. "How Saudi-Iranian Oil Rivalry has been shaped by American Power." *Academic rigour (Journalistic flair)*. The Conversation, November 14. <https://theconversation.com/how-saudi-iranian-oil-rivalry-has-been-shaped-by-american-power-124123>.
- Ed., Ribale Sleiman Haidar. 2018. *Saudi Arabia And Iran: Beyond Conflict and Coexistence?* London: LSE Middle East Centre.
- Ghulam Fareed, Dr. Zahid Yaseen, Dr. M. Ashraf. 2019. "Oil Politics in the Middle East: Understanding the Genesis of Petrodollar Strategy." *Pakistan Social Sciences Review* 17-37.
- Gokay, Bulent. 2015. "Two Pillars of US global hegemony: Middle Eastern Oil and the Petrodollar." In *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Imperialism and Anti-Imperialism*, by Zak Cope Ed. Immanuel Ness. London: Palgrave Macmillan. doi:https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-91206-6_334-1.
- Hassantash, Seyed GholamHosein. 2014. "Iran, Saudi Oil Relationship: Friendship or Rivalry." *International Association for Energy Economics* 9-11.
- Issawi, Charles. 1973. "Oil and Middle East Politics." *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 111-122.
- Jaffe, Amy M. 2019. "How Iran Can Hold the World Oil Market Hostage." Council on Foreign Relations, October 29. <https://www.cfr.org/article/how-iran-can-hold-world-oil-market-hostage>.

- Kozhanov, Nikolay. 2020. "Why oil makes Gulf Countries vulnerable to Iran." *Opinions / Oil and Gas*. Aljazeera, December 26. <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2020/12/26/why-oil-makes-the-gcc-countries-vulnerable-to-iran>.
- Marcus, Jonathan. 2019. "Why Saudi Arabia and Iran are Bitter Rivals." *Middle East*. BBC News, September 16. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-42008809>.
- Modebadze, Valeri. 2018. "The Battle for Regional Dominance between The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and The Islamic Republic of Iran." *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs* 66-72.
- Parvaz, Dr. 2011. "Iran: Willing to Use Oil as a Political Tool." *Features*. Aljazeera, November 23. <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2011/11/23/iran-willing-to-use-oil-as-a-political-tool>.
- Zaidi, Hussain H. 2019. "Oil Politics." *Opinion*. The News, September 30. <https://www.thenews.com.pk/writer/hussain-h-zaidi>.