

International Interactions, Vol. 11, No. 1, pp. 43-59
0305-0629/84/1101-0043\$18.50/0
© 1984 Gordon and Breach, Science Publishers, Inc.
Printed in the United States of America

Coalition Formation in the Arab World: An Analytical Perspective

ABRAHAM DISKIN

*Visiting Professor, Department of Political Science and School of International
Affairs, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1S 5B6*

and

SHAUL MISHAL

*Senior Lecturer, Department of Political Science, Tel-Aviv University, Tel-Aviv,
Israel*

The purpose of the article is to examine the applicability of several well-known theoretical concepts from the theory of coalition formation. The attempt to apply the term *winning coalition* to the system of inter-Arab relations raises problems which derive from the fuzzy boundaries of the system, from the sovereign status of the states involved, and from difficulties in measuring the states' respective weights. The attempt to apply coalition theories based on the idea of policy distance also proves unfruitful, since most inter-Arab coalitions are neither *minimal range* nor *closed* coalitions. Despite their dependency on the ideas of winning coalition and policy distances, however, the concepts of *pivotal party* and *permissible coalition* appear when revised applicable to coalitions in the Arab world.

The analysis of coalition formation in the Arab world reveals the existence of three main types of coalitions: (a) *declarative coalitions*; (b) *non-winning coalitions*; and (c) *minimal winning coalitions*, which tend to be *preventive* in nature.

1. INTRODUCTION

The basis for the theories of coalition behavior was laid by von Neumann and Morgenstern (1944). Almost twenty years passed before Gamson (1961) and Riker (1962) applied the von Neumann-Morgenstern theorems to testing and applicability of coalition formation theory to political life, and especially to intra-state coalitions in parliamentary regimes. Other scholars, including Taylor (1972), Axelrod (1970), DeSwaan (1970), Dodd (1974), and Morgan (1976), have since tried to improve the theory of coalition formation in light of their empirical findings, especially those concerning parliamentary coalitions in multi-party systems.

The purpose of this article is to examine the extent to which theories of coalition formation are applicable to the political life in the Arab world, where "defeat," as Clifford Geertz (1971, p. 251) put it, "is never total, victory never complete, tension never ending, and all gains and losses are merely marginal and temporary as winners fall out and losers regroup. . . ." Such an examination might contribute to the analytical efforts to search for systematic explanations for inter-Arab political behavior.¹

In the preceding section, we examine the applicability to the Arab world of the concept *winning coalition*, which emphasizes the power relations among participants. Section three focuses on the "policy distances" approach, which emphasizes the ideological dimension. In section four, we discuss the applicability of the concepts "pivotal party" and "permissible coalition." Finally, we present and discuss the impact of inter-Arab relations of three basic types of coalitions that derive from our analysis and characterize Arab politics.

2. THE "WINNING COALITION" APPROACH

The basic idea behind the concept of winning coalition, as formulated by von Neumann and Morgenstern, concerns the problems of making decisions that will bind all the actors when the number of actors is large. The approach assumes that both the number of actors involved in decision-making and their importance remain constant, or are at least known in advance; that none of the actors enjoys the ability to force his will on other participants; and that the final decision can be measured in terms of utility (Riker, 1962). It is assumed that (a) the sum of the

utilities to be divided amongst the participants in a political system is constant or at least known, and (b) the utility to be gained from the final decision will be divided among the actors participating in the decision-making.

These assumptions lead to the (almost) unavoidable conclusion that in democratic political systems coalitions should include a majority of the actors. This majority should be kept to a minimum in order to avoid distribution of benefits to superfluous partners. Thus the emergence of such terms as *minimal winning coalition*, (Riker, 1962); *minimum size coalition*, (Gamson, 1961); and *bargaining proposition*, (Leiserson, 1970). Examples of coalitions which are not of the minimal winning type abound, however: in Denmark and Italy, for example, minority coalitions have been supported by "losing actors." This phenomenon can be explained by a concept termed *permissibility*, to which we shall return in the fourth section.

The attempt to apply the term "winning coalition" to relationships among countries in general and among the Arab states in particular raises three central problems: the problem of international system boundaries, the problem of state sovereignty, and the problem of assigning appropriate weights to each of the respective states.

2.1 System Boundaries

Uncertainty regarding the number of actors (that is to say, states) participating in coalitions among international systems complicates analysis in terms of a "winning coalition." In contrast to national parliaments, where the number and importance of the actors is known in advance, it is relatively difficult to identify potential coalition partners at the international level.

The inter-Arab system appears extraordinary in this respect. The boundaries of the Arab world are clearly defined by membership in the Arab League, founded in 1945 on the basis of the common national, ethnic, religious and linguistic heritage. The constitution of the Arab League quite explicitly defines not only the boundaries of the system but also the meaning of the term winning coalition, a meaning different from that accepted in parliamentary regimes. Article Seven of the Pact of the League of Arab States declares that "unanimous decisions of the Council shall be binding upon all member states of the League; majority decisions shall be binding only upon those states which have accepted

them. In either case the decisions of the Council shall be enforced in each member state according to its respective basic laws." (Pact, 1959.) Convening a summit meeting formally requires a simple majority of the League members, although in practice the agreement of the central members of the League is necessary.

Several limitations tend to blur the boundaries of the inter-Arab system, however. The first is the existence of several sub-systems within the overall inter-Arab framework. Thus, despite the lack of a formal framework distinguishing them from the rest of the Arab world; the Maghreb countries clearly form a regional sub-system. The continuing struggle in the Spanish Sahara involved Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria and Libya, while countries east of Libya did not become involved.² The large oil-exporting countries—Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Libya, Qatar and Kuwait—represent a second sub-system. As members of the Arab Front for Steadfastness and Confrontation States, founded following Sadat's peace initiative in 1977. Libya, Algeria, Syria, the South Yemen Republic and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) represent yet a third such sub-system. A winning coalition within one of these sub-systems does not imply a winning coalition in the overall inter-Arab framework.

A second factor limiting the sharpness of inter-Arab boundaries involves Arab countries which border non-Arab countries. The Shah of Iran, for example, promised to assist several small Arab states in the Persian Gulf against possible threats from Iraq. Syria and Libya currently support Iran in her present military conflict with Iraq. An even more compelling example of the role of non-Arab neighboring states is the movement of Israeli troops towards the common border of Syria, Jordan, and Israel during the Syrian invasion of Jordan during September 1970.³ Israel's quasi-participation in the inter-Arab system, effected through troop movements, prevented a Syrian victory, despite her superior strength.

The involvement of the USSR and the U.S. in the events in Yemen during 1979 points to the third limitation in defining the boundaries of the inter-Arab system: the support of the superpowers outside the area in different coalitionary combinations. France and Britain, because of their historical roots in the region, and the U.S. and USSR, because of their global interests, are the most important states involved in this connection. Examples of active involvement on the part of these states are plentiful. American troops landed in Lebanon and British troops in Jordan in 1958 (Safran, 1969), the British ruled over the Jordanian

army under Glubb until March 1954 (Vatikiotis, 1967; Mishal, 1978); Russian pilots participated in air fights between Egypt and Israel during the summer of 1970.⁴ More contemporary examples are France's supply of uranium to Iraq, despite Israel's protestations and, of course, the recent developments in Lebanon.

It is noteworthy that coalitions involving non-Arab countries have usually lasted longer than purely Arab coalitions. Syria's ties with the USSR over the last decade have been far less volatile than her relations with her Arab neighbors. In contrast to the long-standing, stable Syrian-Russian relations, relations between Syria and each of her Arab allies—Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya and the PLO—have been characterized alternately by periods of cooperation followed by periods of tension and even military confrontation. Similar instability characterized Syria's relations with Egypt during the 1960s and 1970s.

2.2 State Sovereignty

Unlike actors in intra-state systems, actors in the international arena are not bounded by the international system's rules of the game. An Arab country which is not a member in a "winning coalition" might not recognize its "losing status:" its sovereignty contradicts the basic rules of the coalitionary game. In this context it is relevant to cite the almost eternal argument regarding the meaning of the term "Arab unity." Although this concept is accepted throughout the whole Arab world, the behavior of some countries reflects an insular, patriotic interpretation of the term unity (*wataniyya*), while the behavior of the other countries reflects a more integrated interpretation of this concept (*quwmiyya*).⁵

The problem of sovereignty has an additional aspect. Some of the Arab countries, because of their sovereign status, can not only avoid fulfilling the operative decisions of a winning coalition but can also prevent the adoption of resolutions which they oppose. This means that some of the countries enjoy, together with their sovereign status, a *liberum veto* in the Arab world. Egypt's relations with Israel exemplifies how sovereignty and the *liberum veto* can affect the inter-Arab coalitionary game. Until Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, Egypt enjoyed the status of a state with a right to *liberum veto*: other Arab countries could not reach an operative decision regarding their relations with Israel—for example, starting a war—without Egypt's prior agreement. After Sadat's initiative, Egypt lost this position. Indeed, during the Ninth Arab summit

TABLE I

The Weight and Rank of Various Arab States in 1979^{1,2}

	Iraq	Algeria	Libya	South Yemen	Syria	Lebanon	Bahrain	Jordan
Population (m.)	12.7	19.1	2.9	1.9	8.4	2.7	.4	3.1
(rank)	(5)	(4)	(11)	(13)	(6)	(12)	(17)	(10)
Total Armed Forces (m.)	.22	.09	.04	.02	.23	.01	.00	.07
(rank)	(3)	(5)	(10)	(13)	(2)	(16)	(18)	(6)
GNP (\$ bn.)	15.5	15.9	19.0	.5	7.1	3.4	1.7	1.9
(rank)	(5)	(4)	(3)	(18)	(9)	(12)	(15)	(14)
Defense Expenditure (\$ bn.)	2.0	.6	.5	.1	2.0	.2	.1	.4
(rank)	(4)	(8)	(9)	(18)	(3)	(13)	(15)	(10)
Combat aircraft	339	260	205	105	389	16	—	73
(rank)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(7)	(2)	(14)	(18)	(8)
Range of actor's rank according to different measures	3-5	4-8	3-11	7-18	2-9	12-16	15-18	6-14

1. Source: The International Institute for Strategic Studies (1979 pp. 36-47). Later sources given in similar conclusions (Heller, 1983).

2. For the order of the different states from left to right see Figure 1.

meeting in Baghdad (November 1978) and the Tenth summit meeting in Tunis (November 1979), the other Arab countries reached resolutions bitterly opposed by Egypt.⁶ However, Egypt was still strong enough to retain, if not the right to exercise her *liberum veto*, at least her ability to refrain, as a sovereign state, from implementing decisions that were not to her liking. This found expression in her efforts to reach a political settlement with Israel despite wide Arab opposition to this policy.

A further example is Jordan, who appears to have enjoyed *liberum veto* status over the Palestinian issue until the 1967 war and perhaps even until the Rabat summit of 1974. This status was lost following the Rabat resolution, which recognized the PLO as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Nevertheless, even after the Rabat summit, Jordan continued to retain her sovereignty in decision-making regarding the Palestinian issue, as expressed by her continued opposition to the PLO carrying out military operations against Israel from Jordan.

2.3 The Relative Importance of the Respective Arab States

Analysis of winning coalitions is further complicated by the ambiguity over the measurement of the "importance" of the various Arab states.

Tables I and II reveal this difficulty. The various Arab countries vary

	Kuwait	North Yemen	Qatar	Saudi Arabia	Tunisia	U.A.E.	Morocco	Oman	Sudan	Egypt
	1.2	7.5	.2	8.0	6.4	.9	19.3	.9	20.9	40.5
	(14)	(8)	(18)	(7)	(9)	(15)	(3)	(16)	(2)	(1)
	.01	.04	.01	.05	.02	.03	.10	.02	.06	.40
	(15)	(9)	(17)	(8)	(12)	(11)	(4)	(14)	(7)	(1)
	11.9	1.5	1.0	64.2	5.8	12.0	9.5	2.6	6.2	18.1
	(7)	(16)	(17)	(1)	(11)	(6)	(8)	(13)	(10)	(2)
	.3	1	.1	14.2	.2	.8	.9	.7	.2	2.2
	(11)	(16)	(17)	(1)	(14)	(6)	(5)	(7)	(12)	(2)
	50	11	4	178	14	52	72	35	36	563
	(11)	(16)	(17)	(6)	(15)	(10)	(9)	(13)	(12)	(1)
	7-15	8-16	17-18	1-8	9-15	6-15	3-9	7-16	2-12	1-2

tremendously in strength, depending on the criterion used to measure strength. Saudi Arabia is wealthy but unpopulated; Syria is relatively strong militarily but poor and has a relatively small population; Morocco is highly populated but relatively enjoys neither military nor economic power. A country's location and its leader's involvement in inter-Arab affairs are also important determinants of strength. Algeria's aspirations for leadership in the Arab world are to some extent foiled by her distant location. Libya, under the charismatic leadership of Qadhafi, who is strongly involved in the inter-Arab system, is a far more important actor than Libya was until 1969 under King Idris, who was very far from having similar political aspirations.⁷ These factors cannot be formally defined, thus leading to further theoretical and practical difficulties in analyzing winning coalitions.

3. THE POLICY DISTANCES APPROACH

As Browne (1973) has shown, the concept of a winning coalition by itself lacks any predictive power, even on the level of parliamentary relations. This failure inspired efforts to improve the theory of coalition formation through the use of policy (or ideological) distances between actors. Under this approach, all actors are placed on a single and con-

TABLE II

Rank Correlation Coefficients (Spearman) Corresponding to Different Measures of States' Weights

	A	B	C	D	E
A. Population	1.00	0.89	0.53	0.52	0.61
B. Armed Forces		1.00	0.55	0.70	0.79
C. GNP			1.00	0.81	0.68
D. Defense Expenditure				1.00	0.73
E. Combat Aircraft					1.00

tinuous ideological continuum. As the participants in the coalitionary game are usually interested in decisions whose utility is a function of the ideological distance between them, we might expect coalitionary partnerships between actors between whom policy distances are small.

The terms *range* and *closed coalition* (DeSwaan, 1973) are central to the idea of distance between actors. The first concept captures the notion that ideological distance between the extreme participants in a coalition will be minimal. The concept of the closed coalition suggests that a coalition formed with relatively extreme actors, A and B, will tend to include all of the actors in the range between the extremes.

The concept of the closed coalition holds considerable predictive power. DeSwaan (1973), in his far-ranging study, pointed to many parliamentary coalitions which are not closed. However, a close study of his findings shows that almost all of the deviations he cited were a result of imprecise measurements of the distance between parties. Parliamentary systems are not necessarily unidimensional in the ideological sense, (Diskin, 1980), a point largely ignored by DeSwaan.

Applying the concepts of range and closed coalition to the inter-Arab political system is problematic. The ideological cleavages which divide the Arab countries are many. The Arab states are divided along a myriad of different dichotomies; "progressive" versus "reactionary," pro-Western versus pro-Soviet, militant in the Arab-Israeli dispute versus moderate, rich versus poor, etc. Furthermore, the political elites may change their position: Egypt, for example, changed its international orientation, a process which was expressed, among other ways, by forcing the Soviet advisors to withdraw in July 1972. Changes of government, such as those

that took place in Iraq in 1958 and Libya in 1969 can dramatically change a state's ideology.

In a previous study we demonstrated the relationship between the Arab leaders' behavior and their stands on ideological issues (Diskin and Mishal, 1981). Figure 1 points out the distances between Arab countries in 1978, after Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in 1977, as reflected in the frequency of meetings between Arab leaders: i.e. kings, presidents, prime ministers, foreign ministers, and defense ministers. The greater the frequency of meetings between the leaders of two Arab countries, the smaller the distance between them.

The distances between the Arab countries, as shown by Figure 1, parallels that of the leaders' stand on the Arab-Israeli issue. On the right side of Figure 1, we find Egypt, as well as Morocco, Sudan, Oman, and to a much lesser extent Jordan, which demonstrated feebler opposition to Sadat's moves than did the rest of the Arab world. On the left of the figure we find Iraq and members of the Arab Front for Steadfastness and Confrontation states (Algeria, Libya, Syria), who are known for their extreme anti-Israel stand and who demonstrated a clear anti-Egyptian stand since Sadat's peace initiative.

This evidence of a relationship between Arab leaders' behavior and their ideological stand enables us to use the continuum shown in Figure 1 to test the applicability of the theories of coalition formation.

If positions on the above continuum were constant and could predict coalition formation, we would be able to construe coalitionary behavior suffices to disprove this supposition. Egypt, the moderate on the continuum, was the only country to participate in all the wars against Israel. Twice, during the Sinai War of 1956 and the War of Attrition, she had to carry the load alone. Egypt had coalitions with Syria during 1958-1961 and during the 1973 war. Other countries also participated in coalitions which do not correlate with the continuum—Syria and Iraq in 1975, Syria and Jordan in 1970, and Syria and the PLO from 1975 through June 1976, during the civil war in Lebanon. Thus the concept of policy distances between countries is no less difficult to apply to the study of coalitionary politics in the inter-Arab system than is the concept of winning coalitions.

4. THE PIVOTAL PARTY AND THE PERMISSIBLE COALITION APPROACH

The concepts of the *pivotal party* and the *permissible coalition* are derived from the two concepts discussed above and bear investigating with respect to the inter-Arab political system.

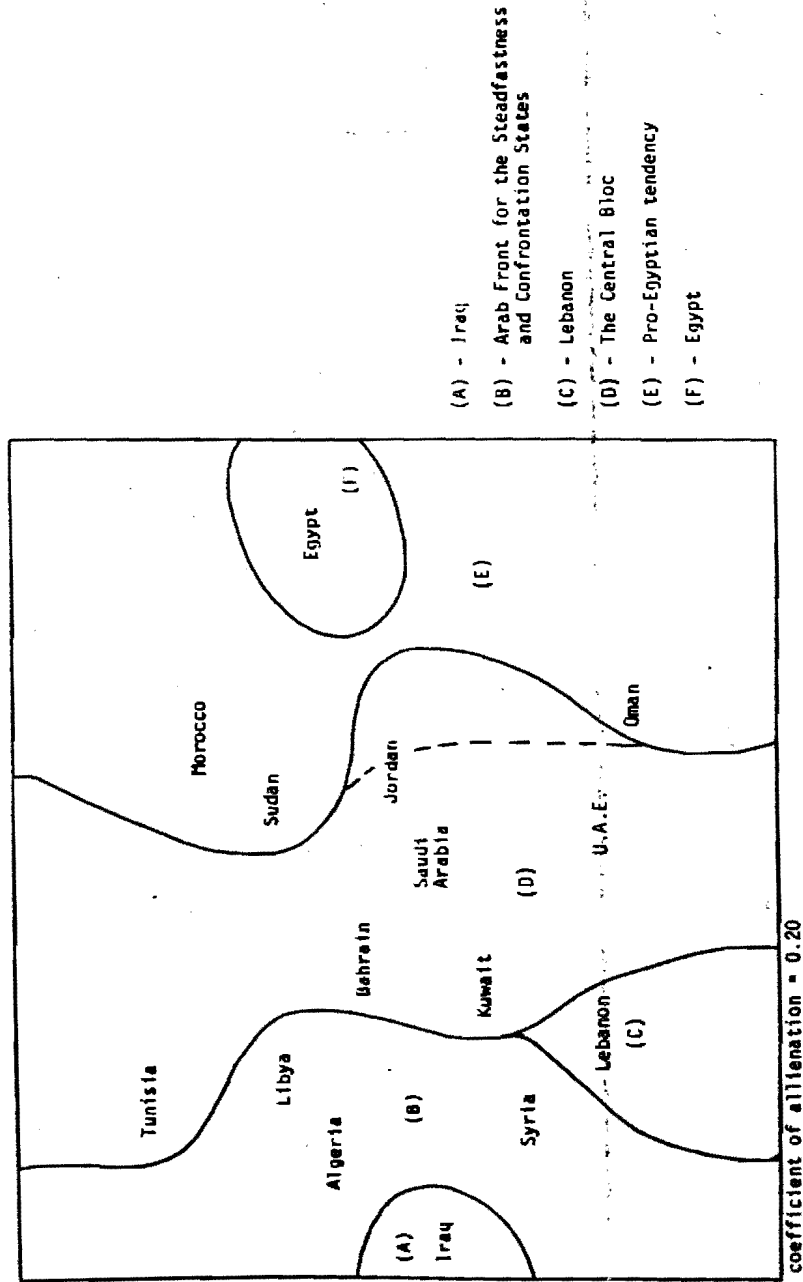


FIGURE 1. Configuration of the Arab States based on frequency of meetings between Arab leaders in 1978. (Source: Diskin and Mishal, 1981).

The notion of the pivotal party is based on the assumption that coalitions must be winning and "closed." It is then possible in any political system to identify one actor whose participation in the coalition is certain. When distance between actors is described with the aid of a uni-dimensional continuum, this participant will be the one actor without whom neither those on the right nor those on the left can obtain a majority. This theory refers to situations in which the concept of majority is straightforward, as for example, in national parliaments. Since the coalition must simultaneously have a majority and be "closed," this actor will be the only one in the system whose participation in any coalition is certain. Amitai Etzioni's study of the Israeli party system was the first study dealing with this notion. Etzioni (1959) identified the *Mapai* party as commanding a pivotal position, which enabled it not only to participate in all Israeli cabinet coalitions but also to control the political system. Later work, such as Dominique Remi's examination of multi-party political systems in Europe (1975), also identified the power of the pivotal party.

The concept of permissibility is used to explain the support of extreme participants for coalitions in which they take no part. The idea underlying this concept is that rather than have the coalition win the support of extremists on the other side of the political spectrum, an extreme actor would prefer to support a coalition without actively participating in it. DeSwaan (1973) and others tested the concept of permissibility regarding winning coalitions. Interestingly this concept can also explain the operation of non-winning coalitions. The extreme leftist parties in Italy, Denmark, Sweden or Finland, for example, will support even minority coalitions in order to avoid the formation of a majority incorporating the right-wing political parties.

It is impossible to speak of a pivotal country and permissibility in the Arab world. We have shown that winning coalitions are not part of the Arab political reality and that distances between Arab countries are both difficult to measure and devoid of predictive power with respect to coalition formation. Nevertheless, there are Arab states which aim for a pivotal position and often seem to attain it by participating in any such meaningful coalition, behavior similar to that of political parties in a multi-party system.

Until 1967, Egypt came closest to attaining a pivotal position in the system of inter-Arab relations. Under President Nasser's leadership, "progressive" Egypt maintained ties with the "reactionary" countries.

This enhanced her leadership position and helped to bridge conflicts among Arab states. It is noteworthy in this context that despite their militant statements, the other Arab states abstained from war with Israel until Egypt gave practical support.

Figure 1 shows that the large inter-Arab political center has become markedly divided since Sadat's initiative of November 1977. It is possible to argue that Saudi Arabia, the strongest of the "central" countries, has, since 1977, played the role of the "pivotal" country. The courting of Saudi Arabia and other "central" countries by Iraq on the one hand and Egypt on the other proves the importance of the pivotal position, notwithstanding the aforementioned difficulties associated with the terms "winning coalition" and the "policy distance between countries."

The concept of permissibility also takes on a special character in the context of inter-Arab relations. One manifestation of permissibility is expressed by the radical states' efforts to stop the central countries from affiliating with the opposite political extreme. This was especially clear after Sadat's initiative, when strong countries such as Iraq and Syria placed themselves on opposite ends of the political distance spectrum.

Another indication of permissibility concerns the formation of small coalitions which are far from being "winning," at least on the pan-Arab level. Coalitions in the Persian Gulf, such as the unification of the smaller Arab Emirates, for example, could not exist without the blessing of stronger countries which are not actual partners to the coalition. Another example is that of Kuwait, who like her stronger northern neighbor Iraq, refused to accept UN Resolution 242, despite the fact that Saudi Arabia did not categorically reject it. This shows us that Kuwait's geographical position makes it difficult for her to join any meaningful coalitions which stand in direct contradiction to the interests of either of her neighbors. However, the differences and tensions that usually characterize relations between Iraq and Saudi Arabia leave Kuwait with a manageable coalitionary range.

Jordan's persistent refusal to join in the Camp David peace process, despite direct and indirect pressure from Egypt, Israel, and the U.S., may also be interpreted in the context of permissibility. For Jordan's neighbors, Iraq and Syria, Jordan's participation in the negotiations would create an unpermissible coalition.

It appears, therefore, that permissibility in the inter-Arab coalitionary game concerns not the *radicality* of the "permitting actors," as accepted in the classical theory of the permissible coalition, but rather the power

of the permitting actors and their geographical proximity to the actors participating in the permissible coalition.

We have also learned that in the Arab world a pivotal actor can be, at one and the same time, a permitting actor. According to the classical theory of distances between parties, this is impossible: a pivotal party must be a central party while a permitting party is, by definition, an extreme party. A possible explanation for this is that the political distances in an inter-state system, in contrast to an intra-state system, may be less significant than the geographical distances between countries, their power, and their drive towards a position of leadership.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The theory of coalition formation deals with coalitions whose aim is to recruit participants in order to win control of the distribution of political benefits. Such coalitions do not exist in the Arab world. Rather these types of coalitions can be identified: (a) *declarative coalitions*, that tend to center on declared pan-Arab objectives and encompass most of all of the Arab countries; (b) *non-winning coalitions*, which tend to be small and/or for the short term and to focus around strictly operative objectives; and (c) *minimal winning coalitions* which tend to be "preventive" in nature. The latter coalitions are based not on operational aims, such as achieving benefits for its participants, but rather on the prevention of the allocation of benefits by other possible coalitions. Such a type of coalition may be called a *preventive coalition*.⁸

Decisions of the various Arab summit meetings are characterized by coalitions of the first kind. At such summits, decisions with a mainly declarative but binding character like decisions regarding relations with Israel or the idea of pan-Arab unity are reached. Examples of operational coalitions of the second kind include the short-term coalition between Egypt and Syria on the eve of the 1973 war or the limited coalition among Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al Qaiwain, Ras al-Khaimah and Fujairah within the framework of the United Arab Emirates. An example of a coalition of the third type, the "minimal winning coalition," is the coalition between Saudi Arabia and the other countries in the Arab Peninsula and Jordan. This is a weak and informal coalition aimed, among other things, at preventing the formation of a "winning coalition" led by radical countries.

In contrast to intra-state coalitions, coalitions among states, especially in a multi-state system like the Arab world, are unstable and fluid. Among the theoretical explanations for this greater instability we have cited constantly changing number of actors who are candidates for the coalitionary game and the capability, as well as the will, of states to force coalitionary decisions on losing states which are limited by the sovereignty of the latter. Moreover, the usefulness of coalition theory in the context of the Arab world is severely limited by the problems of assigning appropriate "weights" to various states as coalitionary actors. As the respective strengths of the various states fluctuate, the formation and maintenance of coalitions is hampered.

The policy distances between countries are also complex and fluid, and thus not given to definitive analysis. The influence of changing interests is sometimes greater than the influence of ideological cleavages. These cleavages frequently have no clear justification. Furthermore, the stability of coalitions once they have been formed, is dependent on the individual political elites which may themselves be unstable, and whose motivations on the international scene may in any case change. The ambition to lead—on an international scale—whether it is realized through the idea of holding a "pivotal" position or in another way, is hard to define in formal terms. The same is true regarding the applicability of the term permissibility in the international arena.

It seems that the influence of these variables on the fluidity and instability of the coalitionary relations in the Arab world is even greater than in other multi-state systems. It is enough to mention in this context the difference between inter-Arab coalitions and coalitions such as NATO, the Warsaw Pact, the EEC, or even OPEC.

Several of the characteristics that account for the fluidity of the inter-Arab coalitionary game may be cited. Because the Arab states have been independent less than sixty years, no institutionalized tradition of inter-state ties exists. This in itself may be sufficient to explain the instability in the coalitionary game. The ideological contrasts among the different Arab regimes and the radical changes they periodically undergo may constitute an additional reason for this instability.

Another factor tending to increase the instability of inter-Arab coalitions is the traditional dominance of small elites, generally not exposed to heavy pressures of public opinion regarding foreign policy issues. Thus the ruling elites were quite free in their management of foreign policy leaving them free to maneuver.

Changes in the circumstances and conditions in which the inter-Arab coalitions operate represent another element which tends to increase their instability. Relations with Israel, the outcome of a particular war, fluctuations in the price of oil, changes in the position and power of the PLO, developments in neighboring countries such as Afghanistan or Iran, and the changing involvement of the super powers in the area—all these constitute factors whose influence on the inter-Arab coalitionary game can hardly be forecasted.

Nonetheless, the fact that the inter-Arab coalitionary aims cannot be accurately defined in operative terms of utilities distribution, does not mean that we have to regard the inter-Arab coalitionary game as an end by itself. Coalition formation in the Arab world can be analyzed through the use of analytical concepts including the notions of preventive coalition, permissible coalition, and the pivotal country.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We are grateful for the support given by the Tel-Aviv University Research Project on Peace, which made this research possible.

NOTES

1. See, for instance, Yair Evron and Yaacov Bar Simantov (1975); Gabriel Ben-Dor (1976) and Leonard Binder (1958).
2. On the involvement of Morocco, Libya, and Algeria in the Spanish Sahara, see Michael C. Hudson (1977).
3. For more details, see Kissinger (1979).
4. For further details, see Shalim and Tanter (1978).
5. For more on these terms, see Sati' al-Husri (1955). For a detailed analysis, see Sylvia G. Haim (1958).
6. On the specific resolutions of the ninth Arab summit conference, see *Tishrin* (1978). On the resolutions of the tenth summit conference, see *Tishrin* (1979) and the *Journal of Palestine Studies* (1980, pp. 178-80).
7. On Qadhafi's leadership and policy, see, *inter alia*, Sheehan (1972) and Hudson (1977, pp. 321-25).
8. We prefer to use the term *preventive coalitions* rather than *blocking coalitions* since the latter is usually related to 50 percent coalitions (DeSwaan, 1973).

REFERENCES

- al-Husri, Sati. "Al-Uruba awwalan," *Dar al-'ilm lil malayin*, (1955), p. 13.
- Axelrod, Robert. *Conflict of Interest*. Chicago: Markham Publishing Company, 1970.
- Ben Dor, Gabriel. "Inter-Arab Relations and the Arab-Israeli Conflict," *The Jerusalem Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (1976), pp. 70-96.
- Binder, Leonard. "The Middle East as a Subordinate International System," *World Politics*, Vol. 10 (1958), pp. 408-429.
- Browne, Eric. *Coalition Theories: A Logical and Empirical Critique*. London: Sage Publications, 1973.
- De Swaan, Abram. "An Empirical Model of Coalition Formation as an N-Person Game of Policy Distance Minimization," in Groennings et al. (1970), pp. 424-444.
- . *Coalition Theories and Cabinet Formations*. Amsterdam, London and New York: Elsevier Publishing Company, 1973.
- Diskin, Abraham. *Das Politische System Israels*. Koln and Wien: Bohlau Verlag, 1980.
- and Mishal Shaul. "Spatial Models and Centrality: Meetings Between Arab Leaders," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (1981), pp. 655-676.
- Dodd, Lawrence. "Party Coalitions in Multi-Party Parliaments: A Game Theoretic Analysis," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 68, No. 3 (1974), pp. 1093-1117.
- Evron, Yair and Bar Simantov, Ya'acov. "Coalitions in the Arab World," *The Jerusalem Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1975), pp. 71-88.
- Etzioni, Amitai. "Alternative Ways to Democracy: The Example of Israel," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 74, No. 2 (1959), pp. 196-214.
- Gamson, William. "A Theory of Coalition Formation," *The American Sociological Review*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (1961), pp. 373-383.
- Groennings, S., E. Kelley and M. Leiserson (eds.). *The Study of Coalition Behavior*. New York: Holt Reinhart and Winston, 1970.
- Haim, Sylvia G. "Islam and the Theory of Arab Nationalism," in Laquer (1958), pp. 287-298.
- Heller, Mark (ed.). *The Middle East Military Balance - 1983*. Tel Aviv: Tal Aviv University and Yediot Aharonot, 1983.
- Hudson, Michael. *Arab Politics: The Search for Legitimacy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977.
- Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (1980), pp. 178-180.
- Kissinger, Henry. *White House Years*. Boston and Toronto: Little Brown, 1979, pp. 620-626.
- Laquer, Walter Z. (ed.). *The Middle East in Transition*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958.
- Leiserson, Michael. "Game Theory and the Study of Coalition Behavior," in Groennings et al. (1970).
- Mishal, Shaul. *West Bank/East Bank: The Palestinians in Jordan, 1949-1967*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978, pp. 57-58.
- Morgan, Michael J. *The Modelling of Governmental Coalitions: A Policy-Based Approach with Interval Measurement*. Ann Arbor: Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1976.
- "Pact of the League of Arab States," *The Arab World* (1959), p. 17.
- Remy, Dominique. "The Pivotal Party: Definition and Measurement," *European Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (1975), pp. 293-301.
- Riker, William. *The Theory of Political Coalitions*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962.
- Safran, Nadav. *From War to War*. New York: Pegasus, 1969.
- Shalim, Avi and Raymond Tanter. "Decision Process, Choice, and Consequences: Israel's Deep-Penetration Bombing in Egypt, 1970," *World Politics*, Vol. 30, No. 4, pp. 499-508.
- Sheehan, Edward R.F. "Colonel Quadhafi: Libya's Mysterical Revolutionary," *The New York Times Magazine*, February 6, 1972.
- Taylor, Michael. "On the Theory of Government Coalition Formation," *The British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (1972), pp. 361-386.
- The Military Balance 1979-1980*. London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1979, pp. 36-47.
- Thishrin* (Damascus daily), November 6, 1978.
- , November 23, 1979.
- Vatikiotis, P. J. *Politics and the Military in Jordan*. London: Frank Case, 1967, pp. 97-136.
- von Neumann, John and Oscar Morgenstern. *The Theory of Games and Economic Behavior*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944.