

Mirages of reform

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Résumé ou extrait : In Mirages of Reform, Steve L. Monroe argues that geopolitics and social connections between state and capital underpin the Arab world's uneven trade policies. Despite decades of international pressure, neoliberal trade policy reform in the Arab world has been varied, selective, and often ineffective. Neoliberal trade policies have not deepened international trade in many of the region's markets. This book explains why. When the region's regimes have strong support from global powers and strong social connections to the industrial elite, they engage in extensive but deceptive trade policy reform. Behind an edifice of neoliberal trade policies, neopatrimonial forms of protectionism like tax evasion and noncompetitive procurement shield the socially connected from international competition and obstruct actual trade liberalization. Industrialists are less trustful of regime promises of neopatrimonial protectionism after reform when they have weak social connections to their regime and their regime has low support from global powers. They are more likely to defend existing protectionist policies under these conditions, resulting in less trade policy reform. Drawing on interviews, firm- and industry-level data, and evidence from Jordan to Morocco, Mirages of Reform reveals how international and domestic factors interact to shape the Arab world's rugged trade policy terrain. Insightful and well researched, this book imparts important lessons and warnings about the repercussions of economic reform in the region.

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