The Low-Cost OPEC Cycle:
The Big Elephant in the Room

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In 2015, Oil Demand Growth (particularly gasoline) Carried Bulk of Adjustment

Global Oil Demand, y/y change, thousand b/d

Non-OECD Asian Gasoline and Diesel Demand, y/y change, thousand b/d

Oil demand growth (driven in big part by low oil prices) exceeded expectations in 2015 though it has been slowing down in recent months.

Source: IEA, Energy Aspects

Non-OECD Asia remains main source of growth; But growth is no longer only about China or about diesel; as Asian economies rebalance, gasoline (also naphtha) have become the main driver of oil demand growth.
In 2016, Pass on the Baton to Non-OPEC Supply (Particularly US Shale)

After robust growth in the environment of high oil prices, the y/y change in non-OPEC supply has turned negative in almost every part of the world.

Source: EIA, Energy Aspects

Despite efficiency gains, US shale has been leading the way and has been the fastest to respond to the decline in the oil price with growth turning negative.
Middle East OPEC Supply Growth: the Elephant in the Room

OPEC has been major source of supply growth with Iraq and Saudi Arabia alone adding more than 1.1 mb/d in 2015 and more than 700,000 b/d in 2016 (Jan-August)

Source: OPEC, Energy Aspects

In 2016, Iraq and Saudi Arabia were joined by Iran which ramped up its output to pre-sanction levels much faster than originally expected
Saudi Arabia not willing to cut output unilaterally; shaped by the mid 1980s events when its attempt to protect the price resulted in loss of large volumes of production and market share (and lower revenues)

Source: BP, OPEC

In response to Venezuela’s increase in output in the mid 1990s, Saudi Arabia increased its output beyond its quota contributing to the oil price collapse
Saudi Output Policy Has Passed Through Various Phases Recently: Is there a New Phase in the Making?

Saudi Arabia Oil Production, mb/d

Saudi Arabia Crude Oil Exports, thousand b/d

Phase 1: Increase production to offset outages; Phase 2: Pursue a market share strategy in the absence collective agreement on output and in face of a structural shock and heightened uncertainty; Phase 3 in making: Increase output and pursue cooperation; What are the potential drivers?

Saudi exports remain elevated and it seems there is implicit policy of maintaining crude exports above a certain level
Recent Increase in Output Not Only Due To Swing in Summer Oil Demand

**Gasoline and Diesel Demand, thousand b/d**

![Graph showing gasoline and diesel demand over time](image)

- Products demand has weakened in recent months particularly diesel reflecting an overall slower economic growth.

**Crude Burn, y/y change, thousand b/d**

![Graph showing crude burn change over time](image)

- Crude burn compared to last year has also fallen reflecting in part slower growth of electricity demand and use of more gas in the power sector.

Source: JODI
Saudi Arabia refining runs at record levels as the new refineries ramp-up output

Exports of products (particularly diesel) have been on the rise and Saudi Arabia is competing in products market

Source: JODI
Phase 2: New Set of Structural Uncertainties

**Game Under Certainty**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elastic US supply (Game 1)</th>
<th>Inelastic US supply (Game 2)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Other-OPEC members do not change output</td>
<td>Other-OPEC members cut output</td>
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**Game Under Uncertainty**

Under complete information about shale response in a rising price environment, there is a single and efficient solution to the game.

Under uncertainty about US shale response, Saudi Arabia is better-off to assume that shale supply curve is elastic and not to cut production.

Limited Diversification and Heavy Reliance on Government Revenues

**Oil share of government revenues, %**

**Quarterly Real GDP Growth**

Paradox: Vision 2030 is about moving away from oil but oil revenues constitutes main source of government revenues and are enabling factor to transitioning to ‘vibrant’ economy

Fall in oil revenues has had a big on economy especially on non-oil private sector which still relies heavily on government spending

Source: Jadwa
Despite fiscal buffers, Saudi Economy Badly Hit By Low Oil Price

Saudi Imports, $ billion and y/y change (%)

Saudi Stock Market Index

Saudi imports have declined sharply in the last few months

Saudi stock market has lost more than half of its value since the fall in the oil price

Source: Jadwa
Saudi Arabia doesn't target specific level of oil output: Falih

Saudi minister says OPEC moving to common position on oil output changes

OPEC agrees modest oil output curbs in first deal since 2008

Speed the market rebalancing by seeking cooperation with other producers but OPEC output at historical records; Help improve market sentiment and squeeze shorts out of the market; Serious barriers remain for a deal in November (Iran-Saudi relations being only one among many barriers)
Iraqi rig count has fallen sharply as government faces serious fiscal pressures.

Iraqi government forced to revise downwards its long-term production target, negotiating with oil companies for new plateaus of production.

Source: Baker Hughes, Various Sources
Attacks on oil infrastructure in the Niger Delta intensifies as government’s ability to pay-off militants weakens

Source: Energy Aspects
The Low-Cost OPEC Cycle

• OPEC adjustment mechanisms
  – Collective agreement on cuts (Long-time to achieve consensus especially when many producers have aspirations to increase production; highly uncertain)
  – Impact on investment and on output (Longer lags than high non-OPEC cost producers; in stable OPEC countries, drive to invest continues even in a low price environment; the drive to maximize output in an attempt to maximize short-term revenues)
  – Fiscal crisis and output disruptions (highly unpredictable)

• OPEC current behavior represents a fundamental difference from some of the past cycles (absence of a key feedback mechanism to balance the market)

• Saudi oil policy shaped by multiple considerations (Internal: limited diversification; External: Nature of the shock; OPEC dynamics: Ability to forge a deal with other producers and implement it)

• As these factors change and/or as new information becomes available, Saudi oil policy will also change

• Potential shifts in Saudi oil policy and/or signals about these shifts will continue to shape oil market outcomes