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Transitions in the Arab World

Spring or Fall?

David S. Sorenson

Beginning in early 2011, mass public protests swept much of the Arab world, bringing a mix of hope, sadness, and foreboding for the future. While the demonstrations sent several long-serving presidents out of their countries, other rulers mobilized their security forces and inflicted high civilian casualties to retain their grip on central power. This article considers some of the reasons for the revolts that have occurred in numerous Arab countries and assesses some potential outcomes and implications, both for the Arab world and for the United States. Recent events raise a number of questions.

- Will the proverbial hundred flowers of democracy spring forward in Arab countries that have either exiled their leader or are in the process of challenging established autocracies?
- Will democracy building become sustainable through the building of democratic institutions and popular support, or will incomplete democratic construction ultimately lead to disappointment and a possible democratic rejection?
- Will corrections to the economic conditions that contributed to the waves of populism in the Arab world follow democratization and secular capitalism?
- Will religious forces, initially marginalized in the popular revolutions, reassert themselves through democracy, and should that happen, will democracy survive possible religious radicalization?

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- Might Arab-world democratization make the Middle East less war prone?
- How will the United States recraft its Middle East policies in the wake of the so-called Arab spring?

The "Arab Spring" Begins

In January 2011, 26-year-old Mohamed Bouazizi of Bouzid, Tunisia—unable to get a job despite a degree in computer science—was being harassed by authorities for selling vegetables from a cart without a license. The police badgered him and stole his wares. When he complained to a magistrate, she allegedly slapped him. His frustration and humiliation drove him to drench himself with paint thinner and light it, perishing from his burns two weeks later. Videos of Bouazizi swathed in bandages quickly spread throughout Tunisia, and angry crowds gathered to demand the resignation of Pres. Zine Abidine Ben Ali, who had ruled the country autocratically since 1988.

After several weeks of escalating violence between security forces and demonstrators, leaders of the Tunisian army demanded that Ben Ali depart the country. Surprisingly, he complied and boarded a plane for Saudi Arabia, thus becoming the first Arab autocrat in many decades to wither in the face of public unrest. More significantly, his departure triggered a wave of popular actions in a number of Arab countries, ushering in what the media came to refer to as the Arab spring, fueled by the lowest levels of full democratization in the world.

In Egypt, cries of "Tunisia is the solution" replaced "Islam is the solution," as the movement spread to Cairo. Discontent over the Hosni Mubarak regime, which had occasionally exploded into angry demonstrations over the years, rekindled as Egyptian citizens watched Tunisians rising up against Ben Ali. Increasingly larger crowds gathered in Cairo's Tahrir Square and elsewhere. Their discontent reflected some of the same issues that motivated protests in Tunisia: poor national economic performance, high levels of corruption, and a loss of faith in the electoral system, which many Egyptians believed was particularly manipulated in favor of regime supporters in the 2005 national elections. The crowds grew in Tahrir Square and elsewhere in Egypt, and after numerous confusing signals from the regime and spasms of violence wrought by state security forces, senior Egyptian army officers joined the protestors in support. With an important support base

gone, President Mubarak boarded an aircraft for Sharm al-Sheik, leaving considerable disarray behind, as many in the square realized that the task of reconstruction lay ahead in a long and uncharted journey.

Decades of political stagnation and top-down control across a wide swath of Arab countries fueled the anger of activists, who took to the streets and to social media, determined to oust the occupants of the presidential palaces. From Tunisia and Egypt, revolutionary zeal spread to Oman, Jordan, Yemen, Syria, Bahrain, and Libya. However, these movements and their targeted regimes took different trajectories. In Oman, protests occurred largely in the port city of Sohar, though they spread briefly to Muscat but waned after Sultan Qaboos ibn Sa'id promised reforms. Jordanian monarch King Abdullah II fired key cabinet members (a tactic used by his father, King Hussein, to quell protests or coup efforts), while dissenters in Syria and Yemen continued the conflict with their rulers and regime supporters. Syrian ruler Bashar al-Assad used his military and internal security forces to quell large demonstrations in most large Syrian cities, as did Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Saleh. In June 2011, Saleh was wounded in a palace attack and departed to Saudi Arabia for medical treatment. Yemen slipped farther into chaos as armed Islamist gangs roamed the periphery of the key port city of Aden, while the army and state security forces melted away without leadership or direction. Demonstrators flooded Pearl Square in Manama, Bahrain, and were first repelled by Bahraini security forces. As the protests grew, Saudi Arabian and other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) forces crossed into Bahrain to quell the demonstrations. This move, the only coalition effort to dampen antigovernment activism during the 2011 Arab revolts, came with the explanation that the mostly Shia Bahraini movement would only benefit Iran if it had succeeded. In Libya, Muammar Qaddafi fought the opposition with most of his armed forces, leading the UN Security Council to declare a no-fly zone that morphed into a "prevent civilian casualties" policy, including targeting military vehicles along with aircraft. In response, warplanes from several NATO countries, joined by Qatar, attacked Libyan security forces, and Libya appeared to literally fall apart. Qaddafi clung to power as rebels captured half the country and set up a "capital" in the eastern city of Benghazi.

With Ben Ali's departure, demonstrators in other countries began to believe that in at least some Arab countries, the man behind the curtain was just that, ruling with illusory powers and standing on a fragile powerbase. Yet Ben Ali proved to be the exception. The military in socially liberal

Tunisia, small but professional, refused to dispatch troops against their fellow Tunisians, lining up instead to protect the protestors against the security police. And the head of the armed forces, Gen Rachid Ammar, told Ben Ali that the army would not obey his orders to shoot demonstrators and that the president should depart. It may also be the case that Tunisia's economic elite were not sufficiently bought off through patronage to make them willing to put up much of a fight in Ben Ali's defense because, as one author argues, most of the corruption in Tunisia existed within the president's own family.[1]

In other Arab countries few, if any, demonstrations broke out; thus, Algeria, Lebanon, Iraq, and most of the Gulf Arab states remained relatively calm. Bahrain was the notable exception, but harsh prison terms for Bahraini protest leaders and the GCC intervention seemed to dampen any more interest in taking to the streets. Scattered demonstrations broke out in Jordan and Morocco, but quickly dissipated. Thus, at this writing, parts of the Arab world are in transition, leaving important questions about the future.

The Arab storms surprised many observers, yet they should not have been surprising. With the growth of global media, popular pressures grew over the years against other unaccountable governments in most parts of the world. The refrain was the same: we want democracy, and, along with it, economic progress. Given its conditions in 2011, the Arab region seemed more vulnerable than anywhere else in the world to mass public outcries.

While democracy may be on the march in other parts of the globe, 2011 Freedom House rankings showed no Arab countries rated as "free" (Israel was the only Middle Eastern country so ranked), three considered "partly free," and 14 ranked "not free."[2] Moreover, the march to democracy in the Arab world was moving backwards, as the 2009 Freedom House ratings carried seven Arab countries as partly free, but Bahrain, the Palestinian Territories, Yemen, and Jordan moved from partly free to not free in the 2010 report.[3] Limited freedoms in some Arab countries vanished as regimes increasingly feared the rising tides of discontent fed by stagnant economies, growing corruption, regime misbehavior (lavish spousal gifts and nepotism got special attention), and the rise of Islamist movements that increasingly wanted to enter the political system through popular elections. Unaccountable Arab regimes dreaded that street protests enabled by a growing adoption of social communications media would quickly spread

to their own countries. Paradoxically, some Arab governments reflexively rolled their limited democracy back, censoring or suspending news media, banning Islamists from parliament, and jailing those whose political activism went beyond regime redlines, thus setting the stage for the very revolts that pushed for the ousting of those same regimes.

Will Democracy Build and Spread in the Arab World?

The push toward global democratization accelerated in several parts of the world in the 1980s and 1990s. East Asia saw South Korea, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Taiwan transition to democratic rule. Latin America witnessed numerous military juntas fall to political change. Sub-Saharan Africa gradually began to democratize, and political change also came in Eastern and Central Europe as most post-communist countries adopted Western European–style democracies. In these cases the old order rarely used violence to stay in power. They either acceded to elections in the false hope they would prevail; departed the country, as did former Philippines president Ferdinand Marcos; or were executed, as was the fate of Romanian leader Nicolae Ceauşescu in 1989. While some autocratic regimes displayed dogged resistance to protestor demands—as have Burma's military rulers and the Chinese Communist Party at Tiananmen Square in 1989—they were increasingly the exceptions.

Might the Arab world follow these regional "waves" of democratization? And how might democracy arrive, embed, and survive in Middle Eastern Arab states? Conversely, might the passions for accountable governance founder as regime supporters mobilize and raise the price of protest to the point where hope is replaced by the realization that further dissent will only result in jail or death, as it did in Iran in 2009? The initial answers involve the identification of fundamental requisites for democracy, elements that may both empower democracy and impede it.

Some Democratic Requisites

One essential requirement for establishing democracy is a favorable attitude by the recipient public. Numerous public opinion surveys in Arab countries reveal broad majority support for the concept: to wit, a spring 2010 Pew Charitable Trust survey found 60 percent of Egyptians, 69 percent of Jordanians, and 83 percent of Lebanese agreed with the statement,

"Democracy is preferable to any other form of government."[4] These results mirror other findings of widespread support for accountable governance in the Arab region, as Amaney Jamal and Mark Tessler find: "Despite—or perhaps because of—the persistence of authoritarianism across the Arab world, popular support for democracy there is widespread. The evidence for this may be gleaned from twenty different surveys carried out in nine different Arab countries between 2000 and 2006."[5] Implicitly these sentiments not only support the establishment of accountable participatory political systems, but they also discredit the old clientelist governments that characterize so many Arab states.

Democracy also grows best when incubated through institutional mechanisms: the acceptance of rule of law; state-building, to include impartial administrative bodies and their managers; an open news media; and a viable education system, allowing citizens to make informed choices. Some would additionally argue that democratization also requires outside pressure (often read, "from the United States"). US policy has sometimes been hesitant to support democracy or reluctant to back away from autocrats, even as they were slipping from power, as in Indonesia.[6] The United States opposed election results it did not like in the Hamas victory in Palestine in 2006 and ignored the thwarting of democracy after the military clampdown in Algeria following the 1991 elections, which favored the Islamist FIS party.[7]

Democracy also requires patience, because few countries make dramatic leaps from autocracies to full-fledged democracies. Only Croatia and Serbia-Montenegro jumped from not free immediately to free on the Freedom House scale after their 2000 elections, while most others either became lodged at partly free (Albania, Armenia, Macedonia, and Moldova) or tumbled back toward autocracy (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia).[8] Because the elites who benefitted under autocracy will most likely resist democratic efforts to normalize wealth distribution, democracy will remain incomplete. As author Charles Tilly observes, "On average, people who experience equitable treatment from their governments and/or have direct say in governmental operations gain more satisfaction from politics and display greater willingness to bear burdens for the common good."[9]

Barriers to Democratization

The primary barriers to democratization are the resistance of regimes and their entrenched economic, political, and military elites. Administration

supporters who draw considerable benefits from autocratic rulers may resist political transition unless they can shape it.[10] These elites contribute to state constructions that are designed more to facilitate central rule than to provide essential public services, including a large state security network, expensive housing compounds, private schools and tutors for the wealthy, and hospitals run by soldiers that cater to wealthy foreign medical tourists. They also include hefty militaries and military budgets, which not only provide national security but also military support for the regime that signs the checks. Thus, even if elections were to occur in the Arab world, the "deep state" structures would remain as impediments to democratic growth.

The Persistence of Arab Autocracy

Persistent rule became a hallmark of many Arab regimes: the al-Saud family has governed Saudi Arabia since 1932, Sultan Qaboos ruled Oman since 1971, the Alouite family reigned in Morocco since 1956, the Assad family controlled Syria since 1970, Muammar Qaddafi ruled Libya since 1969, and Ali Abdullah Saleh first served as president of the Yemen Arab Republic in 1978 and then became president of unified Yemen in 1990, to name just a few Arab longevity cases. In other cases the polity has been dominated by the "big men," as it has been in Lebanon,[11] and in Palestine under Yasser Arafat.[12] These and other long-serving Arab leaders could claim to have brought political stability and security to their countries as they not only quashed leftist and Islamist movements but also negotiated to keep the military from launching periodic coups by buying off soldiers with powerful positions in the government and the economy. They did the same for powerful tribal and family leaders, as patronage kept many Arab leaders afloat.[13]

In these cases strong Arab rulers prolonged their stay in power by capturing existing institutions or creating new ones to serve the interests of themselves and their parties, usually to distribute patronage to regime supporters. However, when the "strong man" leaves, an institution often withers away, not independent enough to stand on its own. Without viable political structures, a country is thus often vulnerable to yet another strong man who can rule in the absence of independent organizations. He steps in to fill a vacuum because the mechanisms tying him to public consent are lacking. He can demand such consent after arrival and then continue to "ask" for it through periodic staged "elections." Partly

because of these patronage and Potemkin village–like electoral structures, the kinds of political institutions upon which democracy must be constructed are lacking, such as independent judiciaries, civil societies that are independent from the old regimes, and electoral mechanisms designed to facilitate elections instead of stealing them.[14]

Religion and Autocracy

Sometimes political elites construct their resistance to democracy on religious grounds. Saudi Arabia is particularly important in efforts to block further democratic transitions in the monarchial Arab world, fearing a sweeping away of such regimes if one falls to popular rule. The al-Saud family justifies its right to rule largely through its adherence to the "Wahhabi" understanding of Sunni Islam, which has fairly extensive quarrels with the practice of Shia Islam.[15] Thus, Saudi Arabia is trying to gain admission of Jordan and Morocco to the Gulf Cooperation Council, joining the "king's club" of Gulf Arab countries, in an effort to emphasize the stability of Arab monarchies as a bulwark against potential Iranian influence in the area.[16] Saudi Arabia is also working to head off Egyptian support for Islamist groups like the Muslim Brotherhood, since that group professes to follow a different understanding of Islamic law than that which is dominant in Saudi Arabia, and which would challenge the Saudi Arabian understanding that justifies absolute monarchy. Said one Saudi Arabian lawyer, "If another model of Shariah says that you have to resist, this will create a deep difficulty."[17] And, most significantly, Saudi Arabia joined other select GCC countries in sending in security forces to quell antiregime demonstrations in neighboring Bahrain, sending a strong signal that the most powerful Gulf Arab country would not tolerate threats to either itself or to other Gulf kingdoms. In doing so, Saudi Arabia inserted itself as a defender of the Sunni-dominated Gulf countries against demonstrations that were mostly (though not exclusively) by Bahraini Shia. The message reflected the concern that the Shia populations, not only in Bahrain but in the other Gulf Arab countries as well, would challenge the Sunni domination and, in doing so, would facilitate Iranian Shia influence.

Other barriers to democratization include mechanisms for "rent distribution." This was likely the case in countries such as Venezuela and Russia, which wandered from a path to democracy. States sell their raw material resources to foreign consumers, and the accrued rents go directly back to the state, which distributes the proceeds through an enlarged state

capacity system to buy off the opposition rather than having to face it in electoral competition. These so-called rentier states do not levy personal income taxes on their populations, thus removing a key measure of political accountability.[18] However, as Charles Tilly posits, state capacity may either impede or facilitate democratization, particularly when it is lubricated by petroleum sales. "International sales of such resources as oil often promoted de-democratization."[19] Additionally, because rentier states depend on raw material prices to sustain their rulers, sharp fluctuations in such prices can lead to popular discontent because the flow of rewards plunges during price downturns. Oil prices alone have gyrated dramatically since 1973, enriching on the upswing and stoking hopes of good fortune, yet plunging downward several years later and angering those who had dreamed of better economic futures.

Arab Military Politics

In most Arab states the military has been and still remains a powerful player, portraying itself as the backbone of independence, either constructing the state after leading the independence movement (e.g., Algeria) or ousting a post-imperial lackey, as did the armed forces in Egypt in 1951 and in Libya in 1969. Arab militaries often became Praetorian guards that deposed monarchs and sultans on a regular basis and replaced them with those of their liking.[20] Thus, soldiers emerged in the post-independence periods as a major part of state capacity, often participating in and controlling, to some extent, the distribution and redistribution of national resources. Their reward is often a significant part of the national budget; many Arab-world defense burdens—the percent of the GDP taken by defense—are among the highest in the world. Oman tops the list at over 11 percent of GDP; Saudi Arabia and Qatar spend 10 percent, while Iraq is 4th in the world, Jordan 5th, and Yemen is in 7th place.[21]

In some cases Arab militaries, often joined by state security services, fought to crush popular protests (e.g., Syria, Libya, and Yemen), and GCC troops joined to dampen Bahraini demonstrations, as noted above. Some soldiers appeared to truly believe their duty was to defend the regime. Others most likely feared they would sink along with the state leader and be executed or imprisoned for corruption or human rights violations, along with a loss of military privilege. They could calculate that military largesse would not survive democracy, as it had not in other democratic transformations. As James Lebovic notes regarding Latin America, "The

effect of democratization was to increase civilian relative to military shares of countries within the region."[22]

When the military adopts the mantra of state defender, it may decide its ideal of a nation is harmed by the continuing rule of an unpopular autocrat, as they did in Tunisia and Egypt. But this does not mean that the army will move the next step to democracy promotion. The Tunisian army returned to its bases after Ben Ali left, but the Egyptian military remained in power, ruling via a rump military council and engaging in activities that raised questions about its motives. Said one observer in Cairo, "I think they are incapable of understanding the extent to which the revolution wants to change things in the country. To them, removing the president was enough."[23] The military began to censor publications critical of it and threatened some journalists for crossing over what it seemed to believe were media redlines.[24] This is probably reflective of the Egyptian military belief that one of the greatest threats to Egypt was from Islamist activism and that democratization would serve to empower the very groups that the armed forces had campaigned against since the founding of the Egyptian Republic. Egypt's armed forces may be willing to negotiate a "pacted transition" to the next leader, stipulating certain demands in exchange for their move back to their bases. They apparently preserved some of their privilege when they kept the ministry of military production under military control and may have even negotiated with the Muslim Brotherhood to finally clear Cairo's streets of protestors. Noted one analyst, "There is evidence the Brotherhood struck some kind of a deal with the military early on. It makes sense if you are the military—you want stability and people off the street. The Brotherhood is one address where you can go to get 100,000 people off the street."[25]

How Arab-World Democratization Might Start

Partly because of these democracy obstacles, the test cases for democratization will be in the countries that have initially sent their autocrats packing, Tunisia and Egypt. Democratization is most likely to happen in Tunisia, which though ruled authoritatively since its founding, still features a relatively liberal social order reflecting the values of founding president Habib Bourguiba, who emphasized a secular vision for his country that continued after his 1988 replacement by Ben Ali. Bourguiba also politically marginalized the Tunisian military, professionalizing it while

restricting its political space.[26] And he countered the elite power seen in other Arab countries through his sometimes troubled support of Tunisia's labor movement, the *Union Générale Tunnisienne du Travail*, or UGTT. After Ben Ali's exit from Tunisia, the country's temporary leadership rescheduled the July elections for September to give democracy more time to ferment and grow, though, as Dr. Larbi Sadiki told Al Jezeera News,

> And now, all of a sudden, it is as if there is too much democracy—unimaginable a few months ago. A once-starved fortress of political thought and deliberation besieged by Ben Ali now has mastered the art of deliberation in a variety of registers. Professional elite politics, endless political new media freelancing and cafe politics—where the bulk of protesters take breathers—tests the pulse of the national mood, caricatures the octogenarian leadership, and laughs at the expense of all parties and leaders.[27]

Yet Tunisia is different even from its North African neighbors, and different also from the rest of the Arab world, as noted above. Few Arab countries have Tunisia's relatively progressive political culture or a military that has been as politically neutral as have been the Tunisian armed forces. Most draw on some form of legitimacy to bolster their claims to authoritarian rule that go far beyond those used by Bourguiba and Ben Ali. Thus, while full democracy may bear fruit in Tunisia, its prospects are dim in most of the rest of the Arab world where it does not already exist, even in partial form.

Some other Arab states may become at least partly free, joining Lebanon, Kuwait, and Morocco; these three countries will most likely remain in this status. Egypt could transition, though the military committee that now manages political affairs in the post-Mubarak regime will probably be quite reluctant to grant more than partial suffrage, most likely excluding many Islamist or leftist parties from participation. It is also unlikely that the conservative military and its allies in what remains of the Mubarak state will want to permit a fully independent judiciary or a fully free press. Jordan's King Abdullah II has promised more parliamentary oversight of the government (though not of the monarchy), allowing for parliamentary control of some of the budget and the appointment of ministers (and removal for cause).[28] Yet other Arab countries now in the throes of revolt may only witness more bloodshed and turmoil as largely discredited regimes try to hang on to power, as in Libya and Syria. Bahrain remains a monarchy with few reforms and no movement to democracy after Bahraini and GCC forces moved to protect the Crown. And Yemen without President

Saleh remains a question mark. On the one hand, its deep divisions are highly unlikely to be bridged by even a furtive effort at democracy. Yet, as one writer notes, even under Saleh, Yemen has developed more liberal structures and openness than have most other Arab autocracies, permitting open criticism of the regime and the president, and has held several elections deemed free and fair by outside observers.[29]

If It Arrives, Will Arab Democracy Last?

Finally, even if more Arab leaders join presidents Mubarak, Ben Ali, and Saleh in the old autocrat's home, democracy takes time to grow. Notes Jack Goldstone, "Even after a peaceful revolution, it generally takes half a decade for any type of stable regime to consolidate. If a civil war or counter-revolution arises (as appears to be happening in Libya), the reconstruction of the state takes still longer."[30] In the few months since the regime exits in Egypt and Tunisia, frustration is beginning to build again, and if democracy requires public patience, that tolerance may not last long enough for even partial democracy to develop.

Democracy carries a high price, as it demands compromise, delay, stalemate, and, frequently, indecision or compromised decisions at best. Over time, enthusiasm for democratic rule may wane, as it did in places like Russia, Lithuania, and Ukraine. After years of turbulent democratic governance, those preferring democracy to a strong leader fell from 51 to 29 percent in Russia, 79 to 42 percent in Lithuania, and 57 to 20 percent in Ukraine.[31] To be sure, not all populations in former autocratic countries felt betrayed by democracy, but the danger of disappointment is clear. Transitions to democracy often build popular hopes that can be easily disappointed should democracy not produce the expected results. After the Soviet Union's collapse, many Russians welcomed the establishment of an elected parliament and a presidential system, and new political parties quickly emerged to challenge the Communist Party. But constructing a market economy on the foundations of a Marxist-inspired economic system riddled with corruption and favoritism proved difficult, and as the economy foundered, discontent with democracy grew. Some Russians seemed to welcome the transition from partial democracy to autocracy under Vladimir Putin and his successor, Dmitri Medvedev. In Venezuela, Hugo Chavez came to power in an election but has gradually pushed the

country back to its authoritarian past. Although there have been mass protests, they have not stemmed the slide away from democracy.

Sustainable democracy also requires the establishment and defense of independent political institutions that dispense justice independent of regime leadership, which referee political disputes in a manner widely accepted, and which provide outlets for diverse political views without censorship. However, such institutional construction can take years and encounter stiff opposition from those who have benefitted from the old order. The military often is wary of limits on its authority, and religious groups may fear that strong democratic institutions may limit religious expression or religious power. Religion, after all, derives its influence more from faith than by democratic choice. Because Islamic organizations in particular gain influence by having their religion designated as the official state religion, as in most Arab countries, they may fear in particular a political loss to secular institutions.

Arab Transformations and Economic Progress

While the transition forces' narrative in many Arab countries was the call for political change, poor economic conditions underpinned much of the protestors' anger. High population growth, persistence of rentier state economies, doggedness of the state-managed economy, endemic corruption (the highest in the world, according to Transparency International),[32] and a host of other factors combined to restrict economic progress. The *2002 Arab Human Development Report* argued that

> Most countries in the region formerly adopted, and some long adhered to, now discredited statist, inward looking development models. These models may have been appropriate in early post-independence years, but they now serve neither governments (which need rapid economic growth in order to achieve policy objectives, including human-development objectives with respect to, e.g., health care, education and provision of social safety nets) nor people (who seek more good jobs with decent wages and working conditions).[33]

In some Arab countries, guided economic development came from "Arab socialism" empowering the state to manage economies, though the result was often a confusing welter of conflicting ideas drawn from Arab historical experience, Marxism, or "scientific socialism," all supported by sometimes tortuous logic. Fouad Marsi wrote in a 1966 Egyptian publication, "Necessity in society is the same as inevitability in society. It is a

historical inevitability, like the inevitability of the triumph of socialism in our country. . . . For society is governed by necessity . . . but necessity in society is, in the final analysis, economic necessity."[34] The result was often a large bureaucracy that operated much of the economy through state planning and desires to not only reduce unemployment but to also engage in import substitution industrialization to reduce dependency on the industrial West.

In some cases the regime supported existing economic elites, as did early independence leaders in Syria. Both rural landowners and urban merchants contending for influence were desirous of independence from the French Mandate but fearful of revolution or democracy. They feared it would bring left-wing movements into power.[35] Jordanian economic leaders largely came from "East Banker" Bedouin families, whom the monarchy rewarded with industrial aid to allow them to catch and surpass the Palestinian merchant class in levels of industrialization.[36] In Morocco, critical fingers point at the small group of elite business owners "who live on unearned income from official favors such as transportation permits and quarry and fishing licenses."[37]

In other cases state socialism closed opportunities for private sector investments, and so, as the failures of socialism became apparent, some regimes initiated a privatization process. Egyptian president Anwar Sadat initiated *infitah* ("openness") after the 1973 war which, according to some critics, opened doors for a new business elite that would show its appreciation through regime support, particularly when privatization helped to create monopoly power and political favoritism.[38] For example, as Tarek Osman notes, the allocation of contracts for property, tourism, and development often went to business tycoons with close ties to the ruling regime.[39]

The persistence of the state in the economy is generally not conducive to economic progress; in Morocco and Tunisia the state lagged behind the industrialists and business associations in promoting and upgrading the apparel economic sector, for example.[40] Authors Robert Springborg and Clement Henry attribute this lag to "crony capitalists [being] provided local oligopolies and monopolies that they exploit, leaving the more competitive and risky business of producing for export to those unable or unwilling to strike deals with the political leadership."[41] Partly for such reasons, Arab countries were less industrialized in 2007 than they were in the 1970s, four decades earlier.[42] According to Paul Rivlin, "The balance of

political forces that prevails in the beginning of the twenty-first century does not encourage economic development. The forces for economic change are weak, while those favoring the status quo are strong."[43] Thus, prospects for economic progress are limited.

If political transformation leads to at least the foundations for democracy, will economic change follow? The answer is probably a qualified "no," or at least not rapidly, and not at a pace that would satisfy most of the protestors who are demanding more jobs, more accessible and better education, better economic infrastructure, and the other economic factors that make up a healthy economy. Moreover, there are already indications that the Egyptian public believes economic conditions are worse after Mubarak's exit. According to a Gallup survey conducted between 25 March and 2 April 2010, 28 percent of Egyptians ranked the economy as "getting better" in March 2010; this dropped to 20 percent in March 2011, a month after Mubarak left.[44] While some may view economic chaos as the price for change, others may come to the position that things were at least economically better under the old order.

One possible remedy for anemic Arab economic performance is to continue the process of privatization of state firms begun in the 1980s in some countries but never completed. However, such a move would probably produce more problems initially than it might solve. One strident complaint that fueled Arab discontent was high unemployment levels, but privatization is designed in part to reduce the bloated job levels in inefficient state enterprises. Thus, viable privatization might only swell the current Arab unemployment ranks. Second, privatization often benefits the oligarchs and their families; witness in particular the anger directed at the Mubarak family and their cohorts who benefitted from the transfer of state enterprises. If such a pattern repeats after political transformation, supporters of the new political order might get the rewards the old oligarchic families received, thus fueling a new round of political discontent.

Finally, one persistent complaint by the street demonstrators was the deeply embedded corruption, yet efforts to root it out may only worsen economic conditions. As one observer in Egypt stated, "The main sources of capital in this country have either been arrested, escaped, or are too afraid to engage in any business," and many construction projects funded with corrupt money have been stopped. Banks have ceased lending money as anticorruption investigations probe illegal activities of the Mubarak elite.[45]

Might Arab Transitions Change the Politics of Religion?

Islam is the prevailing religion in the Arab world, mixed with pockets of other faiths, and its role in Arab politics has varied. Before the arrival of European colonialism in the nineteenth century, Islam provided governance, if not democracy, in many parts of the Arab world. Timur Kuran explains:

> Until the establishment of colonial regimes in the late 19th century, Arab societies were ruled under Shariah law, which essentially precludes autonomous and self-governing private organizations. Thus, while Western Europe was making its tortuous transition from arbitrary rule by monarchs to democratic rule of law, the Middle East retained authoritarian political structures. Such a political environment prevented democratic institutions from taking root and ultimately facilitated the rise of modern Arab dictatorships.[46]

The dominant political movement in many Arab countries that had experienced colonial rule was Arab nationalism, which brought a new class of autocrats to power in newly independent states, calling not for religious governance, but rather political modernity.[47] These demands came from multiple sources: European contacts; the Arab renaissance, or *Nahda*, of Egypt's Muhammad Ali Pasha; the narratives of modernizing Islamist thinkers like Rashid Rida and Jamal al-Afghani; and nationalist figures like Mustafa Kamil and Lutfi al-Sayyid, along with Christian Arabs from the Eastern Mediterranean.[48] Yet Islam and its legacies were always in the political and cultural background, and when Arab nationalism began to fail expectations, political Islam emerged. Consequently, some Arab regimes have suppressed political Islam, its leaders, and parties, either fearing it will compete successfully for their national narratives or believing it will lead to interfaith conflict and repression should it prevail in political spaces. Others faced a violent threat from radical Islamists, as occurred in Syria in the early 1980s when the Muslim Brotherhood literally declared war on the ruling Ba'ath regime. Algerian forces and violent Islamist movements clashed in the 1990s in a bloody civil war that claimed over 100,000 lives, initiated partly when the Algerian armed forces suppressed elections in 1992 that would probably have resulted in a majority Islamist parliament. Other regimes banned or severely limited Islamist participation absent a real challenge to their regimes, so Tunisian presidents banned the al-Nahda party, and Jordan restricted considerably the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood. Egypt restricted or banned outright the Muslim Brotherhood and either assassinated or executed some of its key leaders, like Hassan al-Banna

and Sayyid Qutb. Other polities have tried to embrace political Islam, authorizing their own spiritual leadership, as in Saudi Arabia, or capturing the voices of Islamic institutions, as have successive Egyptian regimes that have pushed the venerable Al-Azar University to speak in their support. Yet both the most popular and the most violent Islamist groups were at least kept at arm's length if not banned outright by autocratic regimes. Should such regimes depart and even limited forms of democracy emerge in the Arab world, will the results empower Islamist groups?

There is considerable public support for Islam playing a greater role in politics, as noted in a 2010 Pew poll. In a question asked only of Muslim citizens, fully 95 percent of Egyptians, 53 percent of Jordanians, and 72 percent of Lebanese said that it was "a good thing" that Islam played a large role in politics.[49] This of course begs the question, What kind of Islam? The common answer usually divides across "radical" versus "moderate" Islam, but such categories do more to confuse than to clarify. As Jillian Schwedler deftly notes, the context matters. While most Muslim Brotherhood branches, some Salafi groups, and conservative clerics all explicitly reject violence, their goals range from limited reforms to a complete makeover of the government and economy, so are they radical or moderate? Other Islamists choose violence against the military but not against civilians, while even the most moderate Islamist faction might turn to violence if subject to severe repression or total exclusion from political spheres.[50] In short, Islamists are less likely to adopt violence as a tactic if they are at least partly included in post-transformation dialogs and policies and allowed to participate in elections. At the same time, some Islamist groups that have experienced repression at the hands of autocratic governments may not be trusting that the new order will include them, or if there is no new order but just continuing disorder, may continue violent struggles. Thus, it is quite possible that Islamist groups like the al-Houthi in Yemen, a branch of the minority Shia Zaydi sect, may continue to use violence against a likely Sunni-dominated political order in the post-Saleh era.[51] An increase in Islamist militancy is reported in some parts of Yemen after Saleh, particularly in less-governed parts of the country.[52] Yet Hezbollah in Lebanon, widely considered a radical violent Shia group, has lessened violence against other Lebanese (though clearly not against Israel) and contested successfully for Lebanese parliamentary seats. In June 2011, Hezbollah and its Christian and Druze allies expanded their parliamentary seats from

11 to 18, allowing them even more influence, albeit through the electoral process.

This last trend reflects a wider practice in the Arab world and beyond of Islamist groups contesting for influence under a democratic umbrella and raising concerns in some quarters that Islam and democracy are inherently incompatible. Bassam Tibi writes that "the Islamists propagate the formula *al-hall huwa al-Islam* (Islam is the solution). For them, this solution is the Islamic *shari'a* state. This state is based on the principle of *hakimiyyat Allah* (God's rule), which is clearly not in line with democracy."[53] Yet while there are certainly extreme Islamists who argue that sovereignty must be found in God and not in popular participation, Asef Bayat describes a more significant trend. "Since the late 1990s, against a backdrop of intensifying religious sentiment in the Muslim world, a nascent post-Islamist trend has begun to accommodate aspects of democratization, pluralism, women's rights, youth concerns, and social development with adherence to religion."[54]

The other question is whether elements of what is described as "radical Islam" will moderate under Arab transformations. One answer is that it will have to if it is to survive public preferences. The call for an "Islamic state" has been a consistent demand of many more radical Islamist groups, yet the appeal of such a polity is small for most Muslims. David Cook observes, "Radical Muslims offered Afghanistan under the Taliban (1996–2001) as an example (of a *Shari'a* state), and it was not persuasive to the vast community of Muslims."[55] Very few Muslim Arabs would find either the strict application of sharia law or membership in an Islamic caliphate desirable. While Islamic law informs much of personal jurisprudence in the Arab world (facilitating such matters as divorce, alimony, and other such issues), civil codes are prevalent in most of the region, and the complaint is not that Islamic law should replace civil structures, but that such structures have become arms of the state. The idea of a caliphate is more popular outside of the Arab region, partly because it offers few solutions to immediate problems facing Arabs, and because Arabs, at only 20 percent of the world's Muslim population, would be a distinct minority in an Islamic empire.

Apostasy is another aspect of Islam that has spawned debate within Islamist circles, though the very term causes confusion because of the variety of understandings. The most radical jihadists may claim the right to declare certain Muslims as apostates (*tahwid*) and then either call for

their death (as did the late Ayatollah Khomeini in the Salman Rushdi case) or kill them directly, but, as Olivier Roy notes, even eminent Islamists have not called for death of those accused of apostasy but rather their legal separation from the Muslim community.[56] Moreover, the "Amman Message," initiated by King Abdullah II of Jordan and adopted at an Islamic conference in Saudi Arabia in 2005, with the endorsement of over 500 Muslim scholars, specifically forbids the declaration of any Muslim as an apostate,[57] giving some religious sanction to the forbidding of this practice (known as *takfir*) by certain radical Islamists that had little support anyway among the wider Islamic community.[58] Everyday Arab Muslims risked death by Islamist fanatics who decided on the basis of some illegitimate fatwa that those not fighting violently in support of radical ideals were apostates, and thus it is very unlikely that a democratic Arab political entity could endorse death for those considered apostates.

Other potential fissures cross religious boundaries, including relations between Muslims and minority Christians. Authoritarian regimes generally managed potential tensions between faiths, though there were tense moments. Egyptian Coptic Christians relied on tacit bargains struck between Coptic leaders and the Mubarak government to protect Egyptian Copts, estimated to be around 10 percent of Egypt's population. However, in the political vacuum that resulted from Mubarak's ouster, religious pressure escalated, with several church burnings and dozens dead in the wake of rioting sparked by rumors of Christian abductions of women trying to convert to Islam to circumvent Coptic divorce laws.[59] Egyptian Islamists, marginalized by decades of National Democratic Party rule, may now gain more power, raising fears among Egyptian Copts that the rights and protections negotiated under Mubarak may disappear or at least weaken.[60] It is also quite possible that the progressive groups of Muslim scholars and journalists that Raymond Baker called "the new Islamists" will exercise more influence with their beliefs that the Egyptian stage has been shared by both Muslims and Christians and that ultimately both must cooperate in solving Egyptian problems.[61] Bruce Rutherford also notes the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, perhaps reflecting the views of younger members, has emphasized religious pluralism and described the Copts as "partners and brothers in our long struggle to build the nation."[62]

While democracy will most likely result in a moderation of the more dramatic interpretations of Islam, the religion will most likely remain in the public sphere. The kind of secularism represented by the Kemalist

Turkish image is doubtful. Arab Muslim publics are unlikely to accept such Turkish practices as state control of the mosques or state-appointed religious mufti to articulate the state's position on religious matters, since the autocratic Arab state widely engaged in such practices. Even in Turkey itself, the public restrictions on Islamic expression are gradually withering under the rule of the modestly Islamist Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi (Justice and Development Party, or AKP), which continues to win majorities in the Turkish parliament.

Will Democracy Make Middle Eastern Wars Less Likely?

The traditional Kantian assumption that democracies are less likely to wage war against other democracies has been a part of American national security strategy since the Clinton administration,[63] but recent scholarship challenges this assumption. Authors Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder argue that emerging democracies that fail to develop democratic institutions to check the potential power of a war-prone leader might actually be more likely to engage in war. They note that earlier waves of democracy generally involved middle-income countries, but subsequent democracy waves are more likely to involve low-income countries with lower citizen skills and immature institutions, thus, "Botched democratizations in such settings could give rise to grave threats to international peace and security."[64]

Wars have been selective events in the Arab world. Some Arab countries have been involved in numerous conflicts, including Jordan, Egypt, and Syria, which fought Israel in 1948, 1967, and 1973; Syria was also briefly involved in the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Yet other Arab countries have rarely if ever fought a significant interstate war. Morocco and Algeria fought the brief "War of the Dunes" in 1963 but not since. While some Gulf Arab countries sent troops to the 1990–91 effort against the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, their conflict was brief. While not one of these states was democratic in its time of war, it is not obvious that a democratic political order would have made much difference. These were small engagements, and when national leadership calculated the cost of continuing the conflict, they demurred and the troops came home.

Yet Mansfield and Snyder's arguments are important, because viable political institution building may not accompany democratization should it occur in the Arab world. And given the powerful emotional pull that the Palestinian issue has on Arab publics, it is possible to imagine situations

where faltering economies under incomplete democratization may push some elected leaders to pick a fight with Israel to deflect criticism from their own domestic problems.

While interstate wars may become less likely, for reasons other than democratization, civil wars may grow in number and intensity. While Yemen's President Saleh was increasingly unpopular in his own country, he at least controlled the forces of dissolution that loomed large since the country's unification in 1999 but did not explode into civil war. With Saleh's departure or demise, the anger in south Yemen about alleged northern favoritism could easily rekindle civil war, as could the resentment in the areas dominated by Saleh's rival tribes. Syria, long under the political domination of the minority Alawite, could also see civil war as its majority Sunni Muslim population fights to reclaim what it believes is its right to dominate the state.

Arab Transformations and Relations with the United States

The United States entered the Arab transformation period in a disadvantaged position, which was largely of its own making. The George W. Bush administration had few friends in the region outside of the ruling circles in select Arab countries, and what little capital it enjoyed evaporated in the 2003 Iraq operation that received almost universal Arab condemnation. One observer wrote that democracy promotion under the second Bush administration was "part of a wider set of US interests and policies with which it is frequently in contradiction, and US credibility is so low in the Arab Middle East that the US message of democracy is often rejected together with the messenger."[65] The Obama administration fared somewhat better at its outset, but squandered capital as well when it failed to advance Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts and continued to support the same autocrats that a considerable majority of the Arab populace wanted to remove. It did not help that, even as the wave of protests gathered steam in Cairo, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton declared the Mubarak regime to be "stable." Moreover, the United States was highly inconsistent, with President Obama calling for the removal of Muammar Qaddafi and sending US warplanes to support rebel efforts against him, while at the same time saying very little about harsh regime policies in Bahrain, a US security partner and military base host. Critics of US Arab-world policy

also noted the United States was much more involved in transformations to democracy in places like Serbia, Ukraine, and Georgia, actively using USAID funds to support antiregime broadcasts in these countries, while remaining silent in the Arab transformation period.[66]

Should democracy spread even marginally to the Arab world, the resulting governments will have to respond to the opinions of their publics. And if surveys are partial indicators of attitudes toward the United States, accountable Arab regimes will find their freedom to cooperate with the United States constrained. According to a 2008 Brookings Institution poll, 64 percent of respondents in the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia hold "a very negative attitude towards the United States," and a similar number believe that Iran has a right to acquire nuclear weapons.[67] Most importantly, deep suspicions of American motives remain, as revealed by Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal, a widely respected Egyptian journalist, in an interview with Al-Jazeera Television: "Although the Arab world has great expectations, it is still facing serious dangers simply because the multinational forces [code for United States and its allies] have interests in the region and are working to protect them through sectarian lines, economic and psychological pressure, or military action."[68] Thus, relative to American policy, the real concern is whether or not US Middle East interests are advanced through Arab democracy. In this case "probably not," but, more importantly, we do not yet know what kind of democracy will occur, if any, or where, or how stable it might be.

For the United States, this should be a period of watchful waiting and recognition that the old policies of supporting unelected Arab leaders in the name of regional stability may not produce the same results as it did for many decades. While such support sometimes produced useful shared intelligence, cooperation in arresting suspected terrorists, combined military exercises, and basing rights, the reality is that such support now may only weaken Arab absolute rulers. Thus, choices must be made with much more care about which Arab leader(s) to embrace. More importantly, the range of possible outcomes in countries like Egypt is too wide to craft definitive US policy, because Egypt might become a semi or full democracy, the Muslim Brotherhood might win enough seats to block Egyptian cooperation with the United States, or the Egyptian army may decide to retain the reins of power, hoping to preserve privileged positions and keep de-

mocracy limited at best. American rash choices without a long-term view of the changes in the Arab world will only produce policy disappointments.

Conclusions

The year 2011 started auspiciously in the Arab world, as two long-standing autocratic regimes collapsed after a decades-long period of rule. Initially, hopes sprung in the region, and beyond, that democracy might finally bloom—a genuine "Arab spring." Yet the belief that transition would be relatively quick and painless disappeared, as some Arab absolute rulers learned from the experiences of their former colleagues and tightened their rule, banding together in some cases and raising substantially the price of opposition. Revolts that emerged in Oman, Bahrain, and Jordan faded as a combination of security-force violence and partial reform measures quelled them. In other cases the street protests continued, but dictators in Syria, Yemen, and Libya used their elite armed forces, sometimes supplemented with foreign mercenaries, to violently suppress popular movements. Life returned to the status quo in the few Arab countries that had not been wracked by violence, disorder grew in Egypt and Yemen after their leaders left, partly because their departure created too large a political vacuum for anyone to fill except the armed forces, or, in the case of Yemen, rival factions fought over the remains. The United States and other outside countries were left wondering how to craft revisions to their Middle East policies with so much uncertainty left in the area.

At the same time, a force has been unleashed in the Arab world that will be very difficult to curb completely, though in countries where the regime response has been particularly violent and repressive, the movement may all but die, as happened in Iran after 2009. Certainly the hopes of those expecting a fairly rapid and wide Arab democratic transition have been dashed. Yet, if even slow democratization comes to Tunisia and perhaps to Egypt, and Jordan and Morocco continue to open a fairly closed political system, Arab hopes for political transformation will continue, and democracy may spread slowly. That may be a more favorable long-term outcome for Arab democracy advocates, because, as noted here, sometimes the too-rapid diffusion of democratic governance may carry the seeds of its own destruction. SSQ

Notes

1. Christopher Alexander, *Tunisia: Stability and Reform in the Modern Maghreb* (London: Routledge, 2010), 64–65.

2. Freedom House issues an annual map of freedom, available at http://www.freedomhouse.org/images/File/fiw/FIW2011_MENA_Map_1st%20draft.pdf. The organization considers Western Sahara a separate country ranked as not free, while Morocco, which claims Western Sahara, is ranked as partly free. Of the total population of the Middle East and North Africa, 78 percent live in countries rated as not free compared to 35 percent of sub-Saharan Africa.

3. Iliya Harik notes that relatively undemocratic Kuwait and relatively democratic Turkey hold the same score (partly free), and that some sub-Saharan African nations with severe democratic challenges rank higher than do most Arab countries. He says, "The argument here is not that Arab countries have a stellar record of democratization, as indeed they do not. It is a matter of whether FH's quantitative measurement of democratization across the board is reliable at all." Harik, "Democracy, 'Arab Exceptionalism,' and Social Science," *Middle East Journal* 60, no. 4 (Autumn 2006): 664–84.

4. James Bell, "Will Enthusiasm for Democracy Endure in Egypt and Elsewhere?" Pew Charitable Trust, 8 March 2011, http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1918/enthusiasm-for-democracy-in-egypt-tunisia-fragile-eastern-europe-experience-shows.

5. Amaney Jamal and Mark Tessler, "Attitudes in the Arab World," *Journal of Democracy* 19, no. 1 (January 2008): 97. Like all surveys, these results must be taken with appropriate caution. Not all who respond to the survey have a similar understanding of "democracy," and sometimes support for democracy is higher in nondemocratic countries than in their counterparts. Yu-Han Chu and Min-Hua Wang find that uncritical support for democracy is lower in Taiwan and South Korea, two successful Asian cases of democratic transformation, than it is in Vietnam and China, where one-party rule still prevails. See Chu and Wang, "Solving an Asian Puzzle," *Journal of Democracy* 21, no. 10 (October 2010): 114–22.

6. Thomas Carothers, "The 'Sequencing' Fallacy," *Journal of Democracy* 18, no. 1 (January 2007): 21.

7. Ian O. Lesser, "Policy towards Algeria after a Decade of Isolationism," *Mediterranean Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (Spring 2001): 8–21. Daniel Brumberg chillingly predicted that "if the Algerian experiment immediately founders, or succeeds temporarily only to give rise to a new authoritarianism, the prospects for a new democratic bargain in the Arab world will be dealt a severe blow." Brumberg, "Islam, Reform, and Elections in Algeria," *Journal of Democracy* 2, no. 1 (Winter 1991): 71.

8. Valerie Bunce and Sharon L. Wolchik, "Favorable Conditions and Electoral Revolutions," *Journal of Democracy* 17, no. 4 (October 2006): 6.

9. Charles Tilly, "Inequality, Democratization, and De-Democratization," *Sociological Theory* 21, no. 1 (March 2003): 41. Michael Bernhard makes a similar argument to explain the failure of Weimar Germany to sustain democracy: "This marriage of iron and rye (agriculture in the east and industry in the west) perpetuated the social pattern of unequal development. It preserved the quasi-feudal character of German agriculture in the east, while Germany in the west increasingly evolved into a modern society. . . . Because of this alliance, Germany is seen as the classic European example of the antidemocratic potential of the bourgeoisie." Bernhard, "Democracy in Germany: A Reappraisal," *Comparative Politics* 33, no. 4 (July 2001): 382.

10. Some members of these elites did line up with the protestors against the established regime, but that was largely because they either thought they could maintain their power under democratic rule or they had fallen from favor in the presidential palace.

11. David S. Sorenson, *Global Security Watch: Lebanon* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010), 79–80.

12. Amaney A. Jamal, *Barriers to Democracy: The Other Side of Social Capital in Palestine and the Arab World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 24.

13. For examples, see Toby Craig Jones, *Desert Kingdom: How Oil and Water Forged Modern Saudi Arabia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); Steffen Hertog, *Princes, Brokers, and Bureaucrats, Oil and the State in Saudi Arabia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010); Christopher M. Davidson, *Dubai: The Vulnerability of Success* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); and Marc Valeri, *Oman: Politics and Society in the Qaboos State* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

14. This is not to imply that Middle East civil societies are all or mostly tools of the state, because many have been performing essential work that fills voids left by governmental neglect. Yet Arab autocrats have viewed most civil society groups as threats and have clamped down on those that rulers believe are conduits of internal opposition and/or outside influence. Laith Kubba correctly notes, however, that Arab civil society groups are effective agents to demonstrate the lack of performance by too many Arab governments. Kubba, "The Awakening of Civil Society," in *Islam and Democracy in the Middle East*, eds. Larry Diamond, Marc F. Plattner, and Daniel Brumberg (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 28–34.

15. See Natana J. DeLong-Bas, *Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2004), 86–90.

16. "Saudi Arabia Scrambles to Limit Region's Upheaval," *New York Times*, 27 May 2011.

17. Ibid.

18. Michael L. Ross, "Does Oil Hinder Democracy?" *World Politics* 53, no. 3 (April 2001): 325–61. Rentier states derive wealth from raw material rents, which often prop up authoritarian regimes because proceeds from them are used to buy off potential opposition and because income flows mitigate the need for personal income taxes, one primary means of accountability between the citizenry and government. See Gwenn Okruhlik, "Rentier Wealth, Unruly Law, and the Rise of Opposition: The Political Economy of Oil States," *Comparative Politics* 31, no. 3 (April 1999): 296–97; Donald L. Losman, "The Rentier State and National Oil Companies: An Economic and Political Perspective," *Middle East Journal* 64, no. 3 (Summer 2010): 427–45; Steffen Hertog, "The Sociology of the Gulf Rentier Systems: Societies of Intermediaries," *Comparative Studies in Society & History* 52, no. 2 (April 2010): 282–318; and Jay Ulfelder, "Natural Resource Wealth and the Survival of Autocracy," *Comparative Political Studies* 40, no. 8 (August 2007): 995–1018.

19. Charles Tilly, *Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 200. Studies vary on exactly how much of a barrier rentier states pose for democracy, though. Michael Herb argues that while rent-seeking states do have an impact on democratization, other factors like income distribution and the percent of the population that is Muslim also impact on levels of democracy. Herb, "No Representation without Taxation: Rents, Development, and Democracy," *Comparative Politics* 37, no. 3 (April 2005): 297–316.

20. Majid Khadduri, "The Role of the Military in Middle East Politics," *American Political Science Review* 47, no. 2 (June 1953): 516; Ellen Lust-Okar, *Structuring Conflict in the Arab World: Incumbents, Opponents, and Institutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 56–57; James T. Quinlivin, "Coup-Proofing: Its Practices and Consequences in the Middle East," *International Security* 24, no. 2 (Fall 1999): 131–65; S. E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962); Victoria Clarke, *Yemen: Dancing on the Heads of Snakes* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 63; and Larbi Sadiki, *Rethinking Arab Democratization: Elections without Democracy* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009),120.

21. CIA, "The World FactBook," 2011, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2011.html.

22. James H. Lebovic, "Spending Priorities and Democratic Rule in Latin America," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45, no. 4 (August 2001): 450.

23. "Hero of Egypt's Revolution, Military now Faces Critics," *New York Times*, 8 April 2011.

24. "Egypt's Military Censors Critics as It Faces More Scrutiny," *New York Times*, 31 May 2011.

25. Michael B. Slackman, "Islamist Group Is Rising Force in a New Egypt," *New York Times*, 24 March 2011.

26. David S. Sorenson, "Civil-Military Relations in North Africa," *Middle East Policy* 14, no. 4 (Winter 2007): 106–7.

27. Larbi Sadiki, "Tunisian Elections: Gone Until October?" *Al-Jazeera*, 24 May 2011.

28. "Jordan King Abdullah Vows to Allow Elected Cabinets," *BBC News*, 12 June 2011; and "King Outlines Vision for Jordan's Future," *Jordan Times*, 13 June 2011.

29. April Longley Alley, "Yemen's Multiple Crises," *Journal of Democracy* 21, no. 4 (October 2010): 74–75. Although as Alley notes in a separate piece, the structures of Yemeni governance do not produce or transfer political power. Instead, power and wealth are produced and transmitted through a highly informal, yet deeply patterned, web of tribally and regionally based patronage relationships. Alley, "The Rules of the Game: Unpacking Patronage Politics in Yemen," *Middle East Journal* 64, no. 3 (Summer 2010): 386.

30. Jack A. Goldstone, "Understanding the Revolutions of 2011," *Foreign Affairs* 90, no. 3 (May/June 2011): 14.

31. Bell, "Will Enthusiasm for Democracy Endure in Egypt and Elsewhere?" The actual question was, "Some feel that we should rely on a democratic form of government to solve our country's problems. Others feel we should rely on a leader with a strong hand to solve our country's problems. Which comes closer to your opinion?"

32. "2008 Corruption Perceptions Index, Regional Highlights: Middle East and North Africa," Transparency International, http://www.transparency.org/regional_pages/africa_middle_east/middle_east_and_north_africa_mena.

33. *Arab Human Development Report 2002* (New York: United Nations Human Development Programme, 2002), 4, http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/regional/arabstates/RBAS_ahdr2002_EN.pdf.

34. Fauzi M. Najjar, "Islam and Socialism in the United Arab Republic," *Journal of Contemporary History* 3, no. 3 (July 1968): 185.

35. Philip S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism, 1920–1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), chap. 8; James L. Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria at the Close of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); and Patrick Seale, *The Struggle for Syria: A Study of Post-War Arab Politics, 1945–1958* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

36. Paul Rivlin, *Arab Economies in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 168; and Philip Robins, *A History of Jordan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 85–87.

37. Marvine Howe, *Morocco: The Islamist Awakening and Other Challenges* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 211. See also Melani Claire Cammett, *Globalization and Business Politics in Arab North Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 84–86.

38. Henri Barki, "Can the Middle East Compete?" *Journal of Democracy* 6, no. 2 (April 1995): 113–27. Bruce K. Rutherford argues that critics exaggerate the stake that Egypt's business elite have in maintaining the political status quo. Rutherford, *Egypt after Mubarak: Liberalism, Islam, and Democracy in the Arab World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 209.

39. Tarek Osman, *Egypt on the Brink: From Nasser to Mubarak* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 120–21.

40. Cammett, *Globalization and Business Politics*, 216.

41. Clement M. Henry and Robert Springborg, *Globalization and the Politics of Development in the Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 135.

42. *Arab Human Development Report 2009*, 103, http://www.arab-hdr.org/publications/contents/2009/ch5-e.pdf.

43. Rivlin, *Arab Economies in the Twenty-First Century*, 290.

44. Bryant Ott and Mohamed Younis, "Egyptians Optimistic Post-Revolution," Abu Dhabi Gallup Center, 6 June 2011, http://www.gallup.com/poll/147938/Egyptians-Optimistic-Post-Revolution.aspx. The article title is based on another question, "Where on a scale of 1 to 10 do you expect to be on in five years?" that showed Egyptians giving a 5.7 on the Cantril Self-Anchoring Scale. The *optimism* word was based on an increase from 4.9 the previous year but failed to consider the 6.0 score of 2009; thus, the post-Mubarak score was actually lower than in years previous to 2010—not really much optimism.

45. "Egypt's Economy Slows to a Crawl; Revolt Is Tested," *New York Times*, 9 June 2011.

46. Timur Kuran, "The Weak Foundations of Arab Democracy," *New York Times* op-ed, 28 May 2011. Kuran argues elsewhere that Islamic law also retarded economic growth in the Middle East; see Kuran, *The Long Divergence: How Islamic Law Held Back the Middle East* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011). Kuran's explanation is interesting but incomplete, as there are ample other reasons for the persistence of Middle East autocracy, including patterns established during the period of European colonial rule that most Arab states experienced and, some would argue, the demands of a harsh desert environment that limit individual freedom and favor collective action.

47. Colonialism varied in intensity and effect across the Arab world. In some cases it was deeply rooted, and hundreds of thousands of Arabs died in colonial resistance, as in Algeria, Lebanon, and Libya. In other situations colonial powers drew boundaries but ruled largely through local leaders, as was the case in the Arabian Gulf, Iraq, and Jordan. Yet in other instances European colonialism had little national effect, as in Saudi Arabia.

48. Richard H. Pfaff, "The Function of Arab Nationalism," *Comparative Politics* 2, no. 1 (January 1970): 150–52; and Elizabeth Suzanne Kassab, *Contemporary Arab Thought: Cultural Critique in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 17–19.

49. "Muslim Publics Divided on Hamas and Hezbollah," Pew Charitable Trust, 2 December 2010, http://pewglobal.org/2010/12/02/muslims-around-the-world-divided-on-hamas-and-hezbollah/.

50. Jillian Schwedler, "Can Islamists Become Moderates? Rethinking the Inclusion-Moderation Hypothesis, *World Politics* 63, no. 2 (April 2011): 151.

51. The al-Houthi movement is a subgroup of Zaydi Muslims founded by Badr al-Din ibn Amir al-Houthi and located in northern Yemen. The Zaydi, who have lived in Yemen for many centuries, claimed persecution by the majority Sunni regimes over many years, even under the Saleh government, although Saleh himself is a Zaydi.

52. "Militants Linked to Al-Qaeda Emboldened in Yemen," *Washington Post*, 12 June 2011; and "Clashes Continue Between Al-Qa'ida Militants, Yemeni Military Forces in Zinjibar," *Ma'hrib Press* (Open Source Center), 12 June 2011.

53. Bassam Tibi, "Islamism and Democracy: On the Compatibility of Institutional Islamism and the Political Culture of Democracy," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 10, no. 2 (June 2009): 144.

54. Asef Bayat, *Making Islam Democratic: Social Movements and the Post-Islamist Turn* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 187.

55. David Cook, *Martyrdom in Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 163.

56. Olivier Roy, *Secularism Confronts Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 81.

57. Amman Message website, http://www.ammanmessage.com/.

58. Debate over the meaning of and consequences of *takfir* is deeply lodged in Islamic tradition. While the practice probably stems from early Kharijite tradition, it was not widespread, and the ritualistic killing practices were abhorred by Muslims. See Patricia Crone, *God's Rule: Six Centuries of Medieval Islamist Political Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 391. Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood theorist Sayyid Qutb is credited for a revival of *takfir* (see Mohammed Aboob, *The Many Faces of Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Muslim World* [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008], 58), though Qutb placed more emphasis on accusations of *jahiliyya*, the state of ignorance of Islam that he believes Islamic leaders fall into when they behave in un-Islamic ways (see John Calvert, *Sayyid Qutb and the Origins of Radical Islam* [New York: Columbia University Press, 2010], esp. chap. 6).

59. "Egypt's Christians Fear Violence as Changes Embolden Islamists," *New York Times*, 31 May 2011. It is important to note, though, that some of the worst violence occurred in the Imbaba section of Cairo, one of the poorest sections of the city.

60. Ibid.

61. Raymond William Baker, *Islam without Fear: Egypt and the New Islamists* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 47.

62. Rutherford, *Egypt after Mubarak*, 97.

63. See for examples Michael Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs," in *Debating the Democratic Peace*, eds. Michael E. Brown, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Steven E. Miller (Cambridge: MIT Press); Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post–Cold War World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); James Lee Ray, *Democracy and International Conflict: An Evaluation of the Democratic Peace Proposition* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995); Tobias Bachteler, "Explaining the Democratic Peace: The Evidence from Ancient Greece Reviewed," *Journal of Peace Research* 34 (August 1997); and Spencer Weart, *Never at War: Why Democracies Will Not Fight One Another* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

64. Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, *Electing to Fight: Why Emerging Democracies Go to War* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), 12.

65. Katerina Dalacoura, "US Democracy Promotion in the Arab Middle East since 11 September 2001: A Critique," *International Affairs* 81, no. 5 (October 2005): 977.

66. Shadi Hamid, "The Struggle for Middle East Democracy," *Cairo Review of Global Affairs*, 23 May 2011, http://www.aucegypt.edu/GAPP /CairoReview/Pages/articleDetails.aspx?aid=20.

67. *2008 Annual Arab Public Opinion Poll*, Brookings Institution, http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Files/events/2008/0414_middle_east/0414_middle_east_telhami.pdf.

68. "Al-Jazirah TV Interviews Egypt's Haykal on Arab Revolts, Obstacles, Other Issues," *Al-Jazeera Satellite Television* (Open Source Center), 8 June 2011.