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**Islam, Muslims, and Liberal Democracy in the Middle East: Jordan in  
Comparative Perspective**

Fares Abdelhafez al-Braizat

A thesis submitted to the department of Politics and International Relations  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Politics and Government

Rutherford College  
University of Kent at Canterbury

March 2003

## **Abstract**

The aim of this thesis is to examine the role of culture as explanation for variations in support for democracy and authoritarianism in the Middle East. Culture operationalised in terms of religiosity. Islamic culture is measured, here, by subjective and objective Islamic religiosity. Culture has been the most influential factor dominating the literature on problems of democracy in the Middle East. It is the purpose of this work to investigate the extent to which culture is really relevant to the explanation of problems of democracy in the Middle East. This thesis seeks to contribute to knowledge by developing a multi-causal theoretical framework in order to examine the propositions of cultural and sociological reductionism regarding the study of democracy and democratization in general and in the Middle East in particular. The proposed framework depends on cost-benefit and risk assessment at the individual level linking structural phenomena like socio-economic factors or culture to behaviour. The hypotheses derived from the theoretical framework were tested with original, high quality, representative survey data. These data are cross-cultural / cross-national and the indicators we use have been rigorously tested for validity and reliability to control for culturally specific connotations in survey questions. Also, these data are collected at the individual level and partly compared overtime. This aids us in establishing trends and linking them to a wider set of variables (socio-economic, socio-political, and socio-cultural). When the theoretical framework was tested against the data we uncovered some interesting findings. Monocausal explanations focusing on religion alone are largely refuted. Multivariate analyses, which incorporate all relevant variables in the literature and control for their interactions reveals that cultural variables (Islamic religiosity) are largely irrelevant to the explanation of variations in support for democracy and authoritarianism.

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**To Dr. Mustafa Hamarneh and my parents ...**

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## **Introduction to the Thesis**



## Introduction to the Thesis

Since 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2001 the debate about democratising the Arab world and the relationship between 'Islam' and liberal democracy has intensified.<sup>1</sup> In parts of the 'International Community' this debate has reached a point of extensively discussing policy options to impose democratic regimes on some 'Muslim' countries currently run by authoritarian political regimes.<sup>2</sup> Some have advocated the use of coercive power in order to effect change; others opt for gradual and carefully measured change in 'Muslim' societies: enhancing civil society and civic education through international development aid.<sup>3</sup> However, both 'policy options' are in contention with the assumption that the 'culture of Islam' was incompatible with liberal democracy; in this view Muslims cannot accommodate democracy. This claim has not only been made by Western observers. The 'winners' of the current status quo in the Muslim world in general, and in the Arab world in particular, have frequently insisted on the alleged incompatibility between 'Islam' and liberal 'Western' democracy.<sup>4</sup> This debate also conceals an interesting paradox: on the one hand, it can be shown empirically that the majority of people living in Muslim countries support the idea of having democratic political systems to govern their countries; on the other hand the reality is that they are governed by autocratic regimes. Thus far cultural explanations trying to account for this discrepancy have remained empirically unsatisfactory.

The aim of this thesis is to examine the role of culture as explanation for variations in support for democracy and authoritarianism in the Middle East and to compare the role of cultural factors to other variables discussed in the standard literature, especially socio-economic factors and the role, attitudes and strategies of elites and other relevant actors. Culture has been the most influential factor dominating the literature on problems of democracy in the Middle East. Culture is operationalised here in terms of collective and individual religiosity. This is not to exclude other

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<sup>1</sup> For example leading journals on Democracy and Democratisation dedicated complete issues to democratising the Arab world. See the *Journal of Democracy*, October 2002, 13(4), which was dedicated to *Democratization in the Arab World? Democratization*, Spring 2002, 9(1) was dedicated to *The European Union and Democracy Promotion: The Case of North Africa*.

<sup>2</sup> Gaddis, J. L. 'A Grand Strategy', *Foreign Policy*, November-December issue 2002 available on [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/issue\\_novdec\\_2002/gaddis.html](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/issue_novdec_2002/gaddis.html) accessed October 17, 2002

<sup>3</sup> Commission of European Communities, *The Barcelona Process: The European-Mediterranean Partnership 2001 Review*, Luxemburg: European Commission, 2002.

cultural variables based on traditions that are not necessarily Islamic (e.g. primordialism). The reason why culture is operationalised in terms of religiosity is that Islam has been utilised as a major factor -if not the only factor- contributing to the validation of other components of culture such as tribalism, sectarianism, collectivism, and primordialism. In contrast to a large body of literature that simply assumes that people in Muslim societies are influenced by Islam without specifying the extent to which this is actually the case individually or collectively, an attempt is made in this thesis to measure the actual level of religiosity in Muslim societies as subjective and objective Islamic religiosity both for entire societies and individuals. It is the purpose of this work to investigate the extent to which Islam is really the necessary and sufficient condition to the explanation of problems of democracy in the Middle East. It must be noted that there are other explanations to problems of democracy in the Middle East especially the contributions of political economists. It is not the purpose of this thesis to operationalize the concepts proposed by political economists regarding democratic deficit in the Middle East.<sup>5</sup>

This work seeks to make an original contribution to knowledge by attempting to develop a multi-causal theoretical framework reducing the complexity of the many factors influencing support for democracy or, alternatively, authoritarianism, in Middle Eastern countries without resorting to cultural, sociological or rational-utilitarian reductionism often found in the study of democracy and democratization in general and in the Middle East in particular. The proposed framework seeks to synthesise elements from influential approaches to the study of the fate of democracy in the Middle East using data and theoretical assumptions on the cost-benefit calculations and risk assessment of citizens at the individual level as a theoretical device linking structural phenomena such as socio-economic factors, institutions or culture to behaviour (as will be explained in chapter three). The hypotheses derived from the theoretical framework will be tested using original, high-quality, representative survey data, which have been collected in recent years but have not

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<sup>4</sup> The latest example is the Saudi ambassador to London Prince Turki al-Faysal talking on the BBC World Service on 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2002, when he argued that democracy is incompatible with Islamic principles.

<sup>5</sup> The contributions of political economists in this field deserve an independent study because they provide a variety of concepts which – if operationalised in quantitative terms- would offer a good contribution to explanations of problems of democracy in the Middle East. I will survey some of these concepts in chapter three.

been used fully and comprehensively in advanced multi-variate analyses of the topic. The author has been involved in the collection of these cross-national and cross-cultural data on the indicators used here (World Values Survey, with an emphasis on comparative design issues and data collection in Jordan) as well as in the collection of data specific to Jordan (by the Centre for Strategic Studies of the University of Jordan). The indicators of the World Values Survey carried out in over 60 countries have been rigorously tested for validity and reliability reducing, as far as possible, bias stemming from specific connotations in survey questions across different cultures. These data are collected at the individual level, that is, they seek to measure the attitudes of individual citizens. The data collected by the Centre for Strategic Studies of the University of Jordan additionally allow some comparisons over time. This enables us to establish trends. The rich data on socio-economic and other background factors for each respondent allows us to link attitudinal data to a wider set of variables (socio-economic, socio-political, and socio-cultural) and test many of the claims made at the theoretical level empirically using quantitative methods.

When the theoretical approach, which is more an organising framework than a theory, was tested against the data we uncovered some interesting findings. There is a considerable gap between the desire of most people in the Middle East and Northern Africa to live under a democratic regime and the reality of the political regimes in the region. Mono-causal explanations of the absence of liberal democracy in the region focusing on religion alone can largely be refuted. Multivariate analyses incorporating a wider range of relevant variables and allowing us to control for their interactions reveal that cultural variables (Islamic religiosity operationalised in various ways) are, on their own, largely irrelevant to the explanation of variations in support for democracy and authoritarianism. This finding is in contention with some influential literature, but is based on more precise and direct measurement of subjective and objective Islamic religiosity than is usually the case in the comparative and theoretical literature. Equally, the empirical analyses reveal that simple, deterministic modernisation-theoretic models, which still play a major role in the macro-sociological and macro-political comparative study of democracy, have to be refuted, too. Those benefiting from the socio-economic and technological modernisation process in Middle Eastern countries are often the most sceptical with regard to liberal democracy, which is difficult to reconcile with the assumptions of classical

modernisation theory that socio-economic modernisation and its social and psychological consequences tend to lead to pro-democratic attitudes and outcomes. In this thesis, it will be shown that a more complex model of the consequences of modernisation, distinguishing between winners and losers in this process, can provide useful insights, if it is combined with elements of a rational-utilitarian model linking values and beliefs on the one hand to institutional constraints influencing individual cost-benefit calculations and expectations of risk on the other. Such a model comes at the price of higher complexity but provides a more realistic explanation of the absence of democratic, and the presence of authoritarian, political regimes in the Middle East, despite strong support for political democracy at the attitudinal level. Compared to most existing rational-choice models, the present study does not have to rely on assumptions about individual cost-benefit calculations and expectations of risk, but can actually use some empirical data at the individual level.

The question of compatibility between 'Islam' and liberal democracy relates to a wider and so far unresolved debate addressing the correlation between 'culture', (political culture in particular) and liberal democracy. The present thesis seeks to contribute to this debate by focusing on the association between Islam/Muslims and support for democracy/authoritarianism. This work is based on two main propositions: Firstly, cultural variables (especially religious affiliations) alone are not decisive for the prospects of democracy in the Middle East; obstacles for democracy in Muslim countries do not lie exclusively in cultural traits. Secondly, impediments to democracy are more likely to be external to culture and more closely linked to the interaction between political institutions and instrumental rationality and choices made by 'influential' political actors determining the mechanisms and dynamics of 'political processes', nationally, regionally, and internationally. These 'rational choices' have prevented individuals and groups without privileged access to economic and political resources (losers of the process of socio-economic modernisation) to realise their goals through democratic politics. Democratic politics has been viewed by 'influential' actors (winners of this modernisation process) as a 'risky' endeavour because it would provide powerless individuals living under authoritarian regimes with wider access to resources controlled by the winners of modernisation. No Arab regime has been prepared to make concessions of this kind. This may change in the near future. After the events of 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 the international factor has

become increasingly more important as a driving force for democratisation in the Muslim world. One of the conclusions of this thesis is that Islamic culture as such is unlikely to stand in the way of a democratisation of public life (the thesis makes no claims about the democratisation of 'the private', which is an issue to be pursued in future studies).

Islam as a cultural factor has been extensively utilized, qualitatively and quantitatively, as explanatory variable to explain the lack of democracy in predominantly Muslim countries. For example, in a comparative study of 146 countries, it has been argued that 'increasing the Muslim share in the population from 10 to 90 percent decreases the probability [of democracy] by 0.267.'<sup>6</sup> The authors of this study concluded by stressing, in relation to the Muslim world, 'the role of perceptions and beliefs in the determination of institutional practices.'<sup>7</sup> In the Muslim world 'the poverty of public discourse has inhibited collective action to remedy social ills', the authors added, although their study did not include any variable operationalising relevant perceptions and beliefs. The dependent variable analysed in the aforementioned article was the Freedom House political-rights index, a widely used indicator. This index is a measure of the extent to which political regimes respect and guarantee political rights. It is not, however, a measure of what 'Muslim' people living under these regimes believe or experience individually. Yet general conclusions were made about Islam and Muslims, not about political regimes constrained by regional and international factors, for example, the cold war containment strategy.

A similar incompatibility thesis is echoed in the Muslim world itself, too. Some autocratic regimes and intellectuals in the Muslim world celebrate the 'academic' and 'scientific' conclusion that pluralist democracy and electoral politics are 'alien' to the 'Islamic culture'.<sup>8</sup> The implication of such an argument is that Muslims have not

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<sup>6</sup> See Clague, C., Gleason, S., and Knack, S., 'Determinants of Lasting Democracy in Poor Countries: Culture, Development, and Institutions', *The ANNALS of the American Academy, AAPSS*, 2001, 573, January. p. 27.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 36.

<sup>8</sup> The Egyptian minister of Youth Ali Eddein Hilal Dessouki, purposefully argued that the United States should cease what he called a habit of lecturing about democracy. 'You can not have democracy without democrats,' he said. 'You cannot have democracy imposed on authoritarian societies.' Does the minister know that more than 90% of Egyptians stated that they want democracy? See Jane Perlez, *The New York Times*, October 3, 2002. Western diplomats in Cairo see Mr. Dessouki, a former political science professor at Cairo University, as the best hope for trying to move the political system. He is a

been, and will not be able to, accommodate democratic norms. One could assume that it is rational for the political regimes of the Muslim world in general and particularly in the Arab world to support and re-produce these arguments. Preserving absolute authority, exclusive access to resources, patron-client re-distribution of resources in exchange for political support, all these manifestations of power have been 'blessed' by a touch of arbitrarily selected 'Islamic' values and sold to the publics accordingly<sup>9</sup>. Throughout the cold war era and up until 11<sup>th</sup> of September this policy has been legitimized by Western powers.<sup>10</sup> Given that most perpetrators of the 9/11 atrocities were Saudis and Egyptians, that is, from two pro-Western countries, considered to be very important strategic allies of the USA, serious questions were asked. What went wrong?

It appears that the policy of securing 'stability' in the Middle East by oppression has backfired in many respects. Most importantly, at the international level the US and EU apparently shifted their policies in the region towards promoting the goal of 'less internal oppression'. If this policy shift is to produce concrete results in the near future, it would respond to the overwhelming desire of Muslims, especially in the Arab region, to have democratic political systems governing their countries. More than 90% of the people in Jordan, Egypt, and Morocco agree that democracy may have some problems but it is better than any other form of government according to World Values Survey (WVS) data collected in late 2001, which will be the main source of empirical investigation in this work.

Taken at the abstract level, support for democracy in Muslim societies is overwhelming. These high levels of support endorse the view that there is no

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political mentor of Gamal Mubarak, the son of President Mubarak, who is increasingly viewed as a likely heir, says Jane Perlez.

<sup>9</sup> For example, in March 1992 King Fahd of Saudi Arabia explicitly rejected democracy as un-Islamic. 'The democratic system prevalent in the world is not appropriate for us in this region ... our peoples in their makeup and characteristics differ from that ... world. The election system has no place in the Islamic creed, which calls for a government of advice and consultation and for the shepherd's openness to his flock, and holds the ruler fully responsible before his people'. *Mideast Mirror*, March 30, 1992, p. 12.

<sup>10</sup> Some might argue this generalisation is not wholly accurate because, for example, the EU is committed to democracy promotion in the Arab world through Barcelona Process. The EU allocates only 1.6% of its aid to the region to projects related to democracy promotion. In late 2002 the US announced 29 million US Dollars budget to democratise the Arab world. These sums are very insignificant if compared to the military aid the US and EU states give to authoritarian regimes in the

necessary antagonism between Muslims and democracy. On the contrary, as we shall see in chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8 of this thesis, the Muslim populations' desire for democracy is accompanied by majorities in Muslim countries rejecting authoritarianism. This is in sharp contrast with the views and practices of political regimes in the Muslim world, particularly in the Arab world.

The strong discrepancy between Muslims' democratic aspirations and the political regimes they are governed by opens up interesting research questions. Many scholars of the Middle East have overlooked this empirical discrepancy, arguing that the problem of undemocratic regimes in the region was a cultural one<sup>11</sup>. It will be argued here that this argument is based in methodological and theoretical reductionism. Methodologically, the state was taken as the unit of analysis and it was identified with the powerful authoritarian regimes lacking democratic legitimacy. If we were to make generalizations about Islam/Muslims, our unit of analysis should be the 'individual Muslim' not the regimes, which somehow were identified as 'Muslim' for 'analytical' reasons. Following this method has led to sweeping generalisations such as 'Egypt is not democratic'. The argument proposed in this thesis is, yes, the political regime is not democratic according to social science literature on democratic standards, but does that mean Egyptians are not democratic either? It is precisely this

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region. See Braizat, Fares. 'EU, US and democracy promotion in the southern Mediterranean', working paper no. 5. Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels. 2003.

<sup>11</sup> For this view, see Lewis B. *What Went Wrong: The Clash Between Islam and Modernity In the Middle East*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2002; Fukuyama, Francis. 'History and September 11', in Booth, K. & Dunne T. (eds.) *Worlds in Collision: Terror and the Future of Global Order*. London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2002. pp. 27-35, Fukuyama argued that Islam is the one major world culture that arguably does have some very basic problems with modernity.' p. 31; Huntington S. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996. Sharabi H. *Neopatriarchy: A theory of Distorted Change in Arab Society*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988. For a critical review of this book, see Moghadam, V. 'Neopatriarchy: A Theory of Distorted Change in Arab Society', *Critical Sociology*, Spring 1990, 17(1), p. 111. Also see Waterbury, J. 'Democracy Without Democrats?: The Potential for Political Liberalization in the Middle East,' in Salamé, Ghassan. (ed.) *Democracy Without Democrats: The Renewal of Politics In the Muslim World*, London: I.B.Tauris, 1994. p. 33. Brumberg, Daniel. *Arab Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy: A Complex Encounter*, Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 2002. In a testimony to the Congress of the United States, House of Representatives, Committee on Government Reform, Subcommittee on National Security Veterans Affairs, and International Relations, (October 8, 2002) Daniel Brumberg argues that '...since the roots and logic of autocracy are local, [Arab regimes] will survive and endure the creation of an American-backed post-Saddam government.' p 9. The testimony available at <http://www.ceip.org/files/pdf/2002-10-08-BrumbergHilltestimony.pdf> accessed October 19, 2002. For a detailed review of this literature and the counter arguments see Moaddel, Mansoor, 'The Study of Islamic Culture and Politics: An Overview and Assessment', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 2002. 28, pp. 359-386.

methodological selectivity and reductionism that appears to make Islam compatible with democracy from one perspective and incompatible from another.

The frequent repetition and utilization of this 'method' has produced similar results about the politically minded Islamic movements in Muslim countries. For many students of Islamic movements the question has been whether these movements are, or could be, democratic. Again a cultural explanation was introduced, based on the premises that since no Muslim country qualifies as a democracy, movements coming from such a background would not be any better. Democratic governments of the West backed the secular Algerian military to preemptively strike down democratic local elections in Algeria in 1992, because democracy seemed to provide political opportunities to Islamists who were 'suspected' of being undemocratic and were not given the chance to prove themselves either way. Western governments, acting perhaps on faulty advice, overlooked the fact that 'political victory of Islamism is the end of true devotion. Mosques are packed in places where they have become sites of mobilization in opposition to a state perceived as particularist, client-oriented, and repressive; but they empty out when Islamism takes power.'<sup>12</sup> The point is that politically-minded Islamic movements are influenced by a social, economic, and political context, which defines their politics. Cultural values, in this case Islamic ones, may provide frames defining the mobilization of forces against injustice but tend to lose in importance once the protest issues are addressed.

Have we developed comprehensive testable models that explain 'the absence of democratic, and the presence of authoritarian, political regimes and attitudes in the Muslim world? Can we develop such models? Classical social science theories have offered some explanations. Modernization theory and its more recent variants posit that levels of socio-economic development are the best predictors of democracy.<sup>13</sup> But still even those Muslim countries that crossed the decisive threshold of economic development (GNP, GDP) deemed necessary in the literature for democratisation to take place successfully are not democracies even according to a minimalist definition

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<sup>12</sup> Roy, Olivier. *The failure of Political Islam*. London: I.B.Tauris, 1994. p. 199.

<sup>13</sup> See for example Diamond, Larry. 'Economic Development and Democracy Reconsidered' in Marks, G. & Diamond, Larry. (eds.) *Reexamining Democracy: Essays in the Honour of Seymour Martin Lipset*, London: Sage. 1992. p. 6. For detailed analysis of socio-economic indicators in relation to



such as power rotation (for example, the Gulf states). Those countries that did manage to have some sort of interrupted quasi democracy are the poorer and the less developed ones (Morocco, Yemen, Jordan, Bangladesh, Turkey, and Pakistan). These examples turn this assumption of modernisation theory on its head. What is the problem, then?

These examples reveal the ambivalent nature of modernisation processes. Modernisation processes produce 'losers' and winners. Socio-economic modernisation is constrained by actors' rational choices and preferences.<sup>14</sup> Actors, as these examples expose, could hamper and manipulate the 'expected' sociological and political outcomes of modernisation, rendering the functionalist assumptions and explanations seriously challenged. However, theorists adhering to functional models often turn to cultural explanations when their models fail to account for deviances they encounter.

Islam has often been identified as the most important factor hindering democracy in the Muslim world. For example, Francis Fukuyama posits that 'Islam is resistant to modernity'<sup>15</sup> and therefore Islam cannot incorporate democratic values and practices. He explains his view: 'Islam ... is the only cultural system that seems regularly to produce people ... who reject modernity lock, stock and barrel.'<sup>16</sup> Fukuyama speaks for many orientalist-culturalists, who explain problems of the Muslim world by reference to the 'culture of Islam', the lack of democracy included. Even some empiricists subscribe either exclusively or partially to culturalist explanations.<sup>17</sup> Some are more cautious than others. For example, Vanhanen argued that 'features of Muslim culture may delay democratization ... but I am not willing to argue that Muslim culture makes the emergence of democracy impossible'<sup>18</sup>. Yet again

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Muslim countries see Vanhanen, Tatu. *Prospects of Democracy: A study of 172 countries*. London: Routledge, 1997. pp. 117-127.

<sup>14</sup> Saalfeld, Thomas. 'Rational-Choice Theory in Legislative Studies: Models of Politics without Romanticism', *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, Spring 1995, 1(1), pp.32-64.

<sup>15</sup> Fukuyama, Francis. 'The West has Won: Radical Islam can't Beat Democracy and Capitalism', *The Guardian*, October 11 2001.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> For the exclusive explanation see Clague, C., Gleason, S., and Knack, S., 'Determinants of Lasting Democracy in Poor Countries: Culture, Development, and Institutions', *The ANNALS of the American Academy*, AAPSS, 2001, 573, January. p. 27

<sup>18</sup> For partial explanation see Vanhanen, T. *Prospects of Democracy: A study of 172 countries*. London: Routledge, 1997. pp. 119.

academics and policy makers alike are left without substantial evidence to establish the relevance of the 'culture of Islam' as a significant variable in the explanation of the persistence of authoritarian political systems in the Muslim world. Nor are they sure of the relevance of democratic or authoritarian orientations to Muslims. As it stands, political regimes, scholars, politicians, journalists, and experts on 'Muslim societies' have said a lot on behalf of ordinary Muslims who are often oppressed in their own countries. Democracy is a component of human development<sup>19</sup> and the Muslim world in general, and particularly the Arab world, is lagging behind much of the rest of the world in this respect. The freedom deficit in the Arab world is alarming<sup>20</sup>. If this situation continues to remain as stagnant as it is, it is very likely that this will become an evermore fertile breeding ground for extremism, conducive to terrorism, not stability. Given the academic and policy-makers' need to help formulate sound theories and policies about democratising the political regimes of the Muslim world, it is time to investigate the attitudes of the very people concerned in relation to democratic/authoritarian values.

After decades of inadequate empirical data, progress on such questions is now possible. The World Values Survey (WVS) has generated a large data set covering more than 60 countries constituting 80% of the world population. The data set contains more than 230 variables dealing with a wide variety of political and social issues from family values, politics, democracy, political participation, materialist and post-materialist values, political, religious, and social allegiances to party preferences, and many other themes. Since the 1970s these surveys have been used in more than 200 publications in several languages. However, until recently Muslim societies had largely not been included. Recent waves of the WVS have changed that. Since the cross-cultural validity and reliability of indicators in WVS have largely been accepted by mainstream social science, some of these variables will be utilised to examine the relevance of Islam to Muslims and to democratic/authoritarian values. The analysis will be implemented in several steps.

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<sup>19</sup> Welzel Chris., Inglehart, Ronald., and Klingemann, Hans Dieter., 'Human Development as Theory of Social Change', Paper presented to the *World Values Survey Conference* at University of Stellenbosch, South Africa. 17-21 November 2001.

<sup>20</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report*, New York: UNDP/RBAS, 2002. p. 27.

First, after reviewing the basic cultural arguments regarding Islam and liberal democracy (chapters 1 and 2), a theoretical framework will be developed that allows the researcher to incorporate and test hypotheses derived from the main research traditions in the study of democratisation (or lack thereof) in the Middle East: cultural, modernisation-theoretic and actor-centred traditions (the latter focusing on the strategic costs and benefits of democratisation for different groups in Muslim societies). Secondly, a comparative aggregate-level analysis will be carried out to test the relevance of religiosity at the macro-level in the 62 countries for which data are available. These countries have very different religious traditions, which allow us to examine the extent to which predominately Muslim societies are different from non-Muslim societies. These analyses will enable us to compare predominantly Roman-Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Buddhist, Muslim (Shiites and Sunna), Confucian, and secular societies in respect of the prevalence of democratic/authoritarian orientations in these societies. Thirdly, once these correlations are established at a bivariate level, an attempt will be made to expand the model and control statistically for modernisation-theoretic variables such as human development and political institutional variables such as democratic traditions (the latter influencing the 'cost' of [contentious] political participation). Fourthly, the hypotheses tested in comparative analysis at the aggregate level will then be assessed at the individual level in a case study of one Muslim country, Jordan. For Jordan, there are 20 data sets available produced by the Centre for Strategic Studies (CSS) at the University of Jordan covering the democratisation experience, which started in 1989. CSS surveys cover, amongst other indicators, the perceived performance of government, parliament, political parties, and civil society organizations, which are very important for the evaluation of total regime support and performance.

The proposed analysis at the macro and the micro levels will reveal the extent to which democracy is supported in Muslim societies (or, at the individual level, for a specific Muslim society as a case study), the extent to which the concept of democracy is understood in the sense of 'Western' liberal democracy and the extent to which the culture of Islam is an important determinant. In the macro-level analyses, the unit of analysis is the 'society' represented using aggregate data drawn from each society according to standard statistical techniques normally utilized in social

sciences. At the micro level the analysis will employ the individual level data also derived from representative samples of the Jordanian population.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **Studying Islam and Politics in the Middle East: A Critical Review**

## Studying Islam and Politics in the Middle East: A Critical Review

### Introduction

This chapter intends to examine some of the literature produced on Islam and politics in the Muslim World in general and in the Middle East in particular. It will focus on the substance, theory, and methodology of previous scholarly studies that try to explain the Muslim, Middle Eastern, and Arab politics (these terms are used interchangeably in most of the literature). Due to the vast amount of multi-disciplinary literature on the Muslim world, it is hard to do justice to all published works. Nonetheless, since the scope of this thesis is Islam and liberal democracy, a particular attention will be paid to the explanations given to the association, or the lack of it, between Islam on the one hand and liberal democracy and authoritarianism on the other in the wider context of what is known as Islamic or Middle Eastern studies.

Due to the 'perceived' importance of the role of Islam in contemporary politics at the local, regional, and international levels, vast and varied scholarly works have been produced to address the role of Islam in politics. The literature has been dominated by two major traditions. The first is the Culturalist or Orientalist tradition, which is favoured by scholars seeking 'internal cultural explanations' of politics in the Middle East. The second tradition is empirical and more rigorous; unlike the Culturalist tradition, it involves various variants of social theory and empirical methods of analysis.

The Culturalist tradition comprises five somehow distinctive approaches. The first approach, though generic, embarked upon the assumption that there is an *inherent incompatibility* between Islam and political modernity (rational rule making). This approach focused upon the religion of Islam as *the* explanatory variable irrespective of the phenomenon being 'investigated' and did not account adequately for the de facto secular politics in the historical Islamic states and the secular nature and conduct of 'modern states' in the Muslim world. The second approach, in response to the first approach, elaborated an argument of compatibility between Islam and political modernity but stressed a kind of cultural distinctiveness that would account for an Islamic 'type' of

politics. This approach emphasised a 'constructive' role, which Islam may have in generating political development in contemporary Muslim states. Faced by the growth of political Islam, which promoted, at its early stages, a transnational discourse that transcends the borders of 'modern state' in the Middle East, scholars developed a third approach that attempts to account for micro social processes in order to understand Islamism. Yet, some scholars took the analysis further focusing on the externalization of religion at the individual level and the disintegration of traditional religious authority at the aggregate level in order to explain 'Muslim politics'. With 'Muslim politics' remaining unexplained satisfactorily, scholars opted for the 'rentier state' model (borrowed from the political economy literature), which also leaves a lot to be desired. In the following sections of this chapter, some of the basic propositions of these approaches will be critically evaluated.

The proponents of the empirical tradition argue that it is evident that there is a shortage in the literature that addresses theoretical development in Middle Eastern studies.<sup>1</sup> Although the topics in Middle Eastern studies are of interest to all social scientists, the development of theories from within the field that can contribute to the understanding of social change in the Muslim societies remains weak if compared to other area studies. This weakness arguably stems from the fact that cultural explanations are still dominant in the field and often reproduced extensively and uncritically. Recently there has been a move towards a more thorough and analytical explanation of politics in the Middle East.<sup>2</sup> Although these explanations are reasonable because they utilize more advanced 'models' than the Culturalists, they have remained on a high level of abstraction that render them amenable to serious and reasonable critique. As will be argued later in this chapter, cultural and functional theories and their most recent variants have not accounted satisfactorily for the

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<sup>1</sup> See Tessler, M. Nachtwey, J. & Banda, A. 'Introduction: The Area Study Controversy', in Tessler, M. Nachtwey, J. & Banda, A. (eds.) *Area Studies and Social Science: Strategies for Understanding Middle East Politics*. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999. pp vii-xxi.

<sup>2</sup> A few studies addressing Middle East politics with analytical rigor have been published. Examples of these studies are: Abootalebi, Ali. *Islam and Democracy: State-Society Relations in Developing Countries 1980-1994*. New York & London: Garland Publishing, 2000; Bromley, S. *Rethinking Middle East Politics*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994; Zubaida S. *Islam: The people and the State: Political Ideas and Movements in the Middle East*. London: I.B. Tauris, 1993; Turner, B. *Marx and the End of Orientalism*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978. A common thread unites these studies is that they do not subscribe to superficial cultural explanations.

absence of democracy in the Muslim world in general and the Arab world in particular. Strikingly, rational-choice assumptions have not appeared to be an attractive formula for modelling and understanding Middle Eastern politics.<sup>3</sup> This may be attributed to the fact that rational choice theorists are sceptical about the utility of cultural variables in explanations of political behaviour. Nonetheless, rational choice theory has a lot to offer in explaining why Arab states have not democratised yet as we shall see in chapter three and six.

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<sup>3</sup> Tessler, M. Nachtwey, J. & Banda, A. 'Introduction: The Area Study Controversy', in Tessler, M. Nachtwey, J. & Banda, A. (eds.) *Area Studies and Social Science: Strategies for Understanding Middle East Politics*. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999. pp. ix-xv.



## **Cultural Explanations of Islam and Political Modernity**

The question of Islam and rational rule making was invoked in response to the challenges faced by the colonial powers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. How do colonial powers rule people belonging to different cultures? In response to this question, two schools of thought within the Culturalist tradition presented two views: Romanticism and Rationalism.<sup>4</sup> These two schools have some resemblance, while the former opted to uncover internal rules and features to the Islamic culture that ‘hindered the development of modern political order’, the rationalists opted to a rational-Westernizing model of political modernity and ‘used the European experience as the scale of universal history to judge the political experience of historical Islam.’<sup>5</sup> However, the Romanticism school made some contributions and cultural propositions regarding Islam and politics. Therefore, they deserve a brief review.

### **Romanticism and the Supremacy of Culture**

Culturalists focus on certain features of ‘Islamic culture’ as determining factors in political development or the lack of it in the Muslim world. In this tradition, submissiveness was viewed as integral part of Islamic political theory.<sup>6</sup> It has been argued that Islamic doctrine preaches submission to the ruler and encourages people to refrain from active involvement in opposition to the established political order. Following this line of reasoning, the argument goes on to suggest that the reason behind this understanding is that the political language of Islam contains no percept to rebel against a bad government. Instead, classical Islam teaches the duty to resist an impious ruler.<sup>7</sup> However, what remains unclear, even in the language of those who adhere to cultural explanations, is ‘how the lawfulness or sinfulness of a command was to be tested.’<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Moaddel, Mansoor. ‘The Study of Islamic Culture and Politics: An Overview and Assessment’, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 2002. 28: 359-86. p. 360.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Pryce-Jones, D. *The closed Circle: An Interpretation of the Arabs*. New York: Harper & Row, 1989. (Reprinted April 2002); Pipes, D. ‘Dealing with Middle Eastern Conspiracy Theories’, 1992, *Orbis*, 36(1).

<sup>7</sup> Lewis, B. *The Political Language of Islam*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1988. For a critical assessment of Lewis’ work *The political language of Islam* see Moaddel, Mansoor. ‘The Study of Islamic Culture and Politics: An Overview and Assessment’, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 2002. 28. pp. 359-86; Halliday, Fred. *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation: Religion and Politics in the Middle East*. I.B.Tauris. 1999 [1996]. pp. 204-6.

<sup>8</sup> Lewis B. ‘Islamic Concepts of Revolution’, in Vatikiotis, P. J. (ed.) *Revolution in the Middle East and Other Case Studies*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1972. pp. 30-40. p. 33.

Moreover, apart from very few scattered phrases by some early Muslim rulers, ‘no legal procedure or apparatus was ever devised or set up for enforcing the law against the ruler’.<sup>9</sup> Although the Quran does not provide detailed rules for governance<sup>10</sup> still some Culturalists invoke an ‘Islamic tradition’ that gives all the priority to ‘law and order’ disregarding other considerations. Following this line of reasoning, students of the Middle East often point to ‘a long tradition in Islamic (especially) Sunni political thought upholding the importance of maintaining order in the potential face of anarchy.’<sup>11</sup> Practically, maintaining order does not have to be a doctrinal theory, it stems from issues facing a political leader who acts rationally to protect his position and is therefore prepared to justify his rule with available means whether religious or otherwise. In the history of ‘Muslim states’ the prevailing practical circumstances of tribal revolts whose position was affected by the rulers ‘prompted [Muslim] theorists to stress the need for ruler’s effective power to maintain order and justify obedience to him. This perception of order in turn helped to strengthen traditionalism in all aspects of life -religion, politics, literature, and thought. As a result, political thought received less attention than dogmatic theory.’<sup>12</sup> Consequently, a systematic process of politicisation of religion by rulers took place as a rational response to political and social circumstances.<sup>13</sup>

Some scholars remain unidimensional and reluctant to recognise the existence of other dimensions and views or at best deem them minor and irrelevant within Islamic political thought, while other traced variations in theory and practice.<sup>14</sup> Categorisations of ‘Islamic

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Huwaidi, Fahmi. *al-Islam wa al-Dimokratyyia*, [Islam and Democracy]. Cairo: Al-Ahram Publishing and Translation House, 1993; Ayubi, N. *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World*. London & New York: Routledge, 2002 [1991].

<sup>11</sup> Brynen, R., Qurany B., & Noble, P. ‘Introduction: Theoretical Perspectives on Arab Liberalization and Democratization’, in Brynen, R., Qurany B., & Noble, P. (eds.) *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World, Vol. I Theoretical Perspectives*. Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner, 1995. pp. 3-27. p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> Moaddel, Mansoor. ‘The Study of Islamic Culture and Politics: An Overview and Assessment’, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 2002. 28. pp. 359-86. p 363.

<sup>13</sup> Ayubi, N. *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World*, London & New York: Routledge, 2002 [1991]. p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Anderson, Lisa. ‘Democracy in the Arab World: A Critique of the Political Culture Approach’, in Brynen, R., Qurany B., & Noble, P. (eds.) *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World, Vol. I Theoretical Perspectives*. Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner, 1995. pp 77-92. Krämer, Gudrun. ‘Islamists Notions of Democracy’, in Beinlin. J. & Stork, J. (eds.) *Political Islam: Essays from Middle East Report*. London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 1997. pp. 71-82.

political theory' are quite inadequate. This inadequacy rests upon two conceptual ambiguities. The first of these is that Culturalists tend to 'interpret' cultural norms or traditions such as honour, shame, and revenge, which are vaguely defined as a representation of 'Islam' and its teachings. Secondly, scholars of this tradition, tend to interpret political practices of Muslims throughout history as a representation of 'Islamic political theory'. For example, Bernard Lewis explains the rise of contemporary Islamism in the Middle East by reference to an Islamic identity, which embraces a universal belief in the inseparable relationship between religion and politics and thus Islamism is nothing but a manifestation of this Islamic identity.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, Lewis argues that 'the practice of Christianity was in marked contrast with both its precursors and its competitors. In imperial Rome Caesar *was* God, reasserting a doctrine that goes back to the god-kings of remote antiquity. Among the Jews, for whose beliefs Josephus coined the term "theocracy" God was Caesar. For the Muslims, too, God was the supreme sovereign, and the caliph was his vice-gerent, "his shadow on earth". Only in Christendom did God and Caesar coexist in the state, albeit with considerable development, variety, and sometimes conflict in the relations between them.'<sup>16</sup> Does Lewis's account explain contemporary Israeli secular liberal democracy? Does it explain the persistence of autocracy and authoritarianism in Southern Europe until 1970s? Does it explain authoritarianism in Christian African states? Does it explain secular authoritarianism in contemporary Syria? Lewis' account leaves a lot to be desired. So do most Culturalist explanations.

The historical realities of Muslim states point to a departure from the prophet's model of state in which he was the political and the spiritual leader. The major divisions between Sunni and Shiite in Islam were conflicts about political leadership rather than over doctrine.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, the implication of these conflicts is that the doctrine was subject to human conditions in which different groups sought a particular application of doctrine in accordance with its rational interests. One would contend that the doctrine was not the

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<sup>15</sup>Lewis, B. *Islam and the West*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

<sup>16</sup>Lewis, B. *What went Wrong: The Clash between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2002. p. 97.

<sup>17</sup>Lewis, B. *What went Wrong: The Clash between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2002. p. 100. Although Lewis recognises this fact, culture for him remains *the* supreme explanatory variable. This contradiction begs more questions as to why this is the case?

primary concern for these groups; it was, however, a political instrument in seeking a better deal to boost their interests. As Halliday puts it 'one can in fact argue an extreme case, namely that the whole history of Islam as a political and civilizational project has been dominated by realistic, political calculations.'<sup>18</sup> Although there was no need to create separate religious institutions, a de facto separation of politics and religion was at work in which leaders acted as politicians not as religious leaders even though they embraced some religious notions. This historical reality was depicted by Bernard Lewis:

'In the Muslim perception, there is no human legislative power, and there is only one law for the believers-the Holy Law of God, promulgated by revelation. This law could be amplified and interpreted by tradition and reasoning. *It could not be changed, and no Muslim ruler could, in theory, either add or subtract a single rule. In fact of course they frequently did both, but their action in so doing was always suitably disguised.*'<sup>19</sup>

#### **Authoritarianism Explained?**

The evidence thus far clearly suggests that religion was used as a political instrument and this was understood by some scholars as its application. Following this unsound line of reasoning, authoritarianism was attributed to the doctrine rather than socio-economic and socio-political conditionality encountered by rational actors in quest for utility maximisation. For example, Vatikiotis explains the legitimisation of the Egyptian regime after 1952 coup d'état and the post-independence Algerian regime by reference to patterns of Islamic political culture that favours authoritarian leadership.<sup>20</sup> This contention did not hold up when empirically tested by Daniel Price almost thirty years later.<sup>21</sup> Price argues that 'Islam is not the cause of the lack of democracy in predominantly Muslim countries'.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, invocation of traditional concepts of leadership, which denote strength and power, has been instrumental in establishing

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<sup>18</sup> Halliday, Fred. *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation: Religion and Politics in the Middle East*. I.B.Tauris, 1999[1996]. p. 118.

<sup>19</sup> Lewis, B. *What went Wrong: The Clash between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2002. pp. 101-2. (Emphasis added.)

<sup>20</sup> Vatikiotis, P. J. 'Tradition and Leadership: the Example of Algeria', in Zartman, I. (ed.) *Man, State, and Society in the Contemporary Maghrib*. New York: Praeger, 1973. pp. 309-29.

<sup>21</sup> Price, Daniel. *Islamic Political Culture, Democracy, and Human Rights: A Comparative Study*. Westport & London: Praeger, 1999. pp. 153-5.

<sup>22</sup> Price, Daniel. *Islamic Political Culture, Democracy, and Human Rights: A Comparative Study*. Westport & London: Praeger, 1999. p. 153.

legitimacy of political regimes in the Middle East. For example, Arab leaders tend to utilise historical concepts of leadership when ‘the unknown successful leader of a coup d’état emerges at first as a genuine *za’im* [leader], that is, as a saviour, a hero, a symbol of national honour, and freedom, and in possession of all power in the state.’<sup>23</sup> Apparently, cultural determinism has been a prominent and monotonous explanatory tool in attempting to understand politics in the Arab and Muslim worlds. It is palpable that ‘culture’ is a very loose and tenuous concept, depending on what is included in, and what is excluded from its definition an analyst would ‘explain’ whatever he/she wishes.

Political leaders in the Muslim world in general and in the Arab world in particular today as before have used cultural notions that best serve their interests and that happen to be revivification of authoritarian notions. Had there been an alternative, which would have provided a stronger justification for absolute power, rulers would have opted for it. Societies’ uncritical attitude of the rulers’ power has been further facilitated by state control of all means of information. The strength of the regimes facilitated an official interpretation of Islam that stress people’s obligations to society rather than their rights against government.<sup>24</sup> The pace of change towards a more critical attitude of rulers’ power is increasing and this is because individuals increasingly realise that they are losing more than gaining as a result of authoritarianism. So far, regimes’ resistance to change is strong because they are not prepared to give up all the power they ‘possess’ voluntarily. Culture is relevant to this process only as a mobilisation force readily available for political actors.

The political realities of authoritarianism in the Middle East today have been explained by historical precedents. It is argued here that the explanatory power and relevance of historical instances to today’s realities is tenuous at best. For example, Lapidus argues that modern authoritarianism in the Middle East has developed from the legacy of late Muslim empires. Under these empires, he contends, a secular theory of patrimonialism gradually replaced the classical Islamic theory of sovereignty. In this theory, political

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<sup>23</sup> Sharabi, H. ‘Power and Leadership in the Arab World’, 1963, *Orbis*, vii (3), pp. 583-95.

<sup>24</sup> Price, Daniel. *Islamic Political Culture, Democracy, and Human Rights: A Comparative Study*. Westport & London: Praeger, 1999. p. 157.

power was not seen as the privilege of society as a whole but was limited to certain individuals or groups. Under these arrangements, political power was exercised 'through networks of clients and retainers.'<sup>25</sup> Patrimonial patterns are still dominant in the Arab world today as they do in East Asian and African societies.<sup>26</sup> Thus, patrimonialism is not particularly a Muslim phenomenon; it prevails across the Third World. Therefore, cost-benefit calculations on the part of the actors involved in the process make more sense than 'importing' a practice from the 12<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century as an example in order to explain the realities of late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Inadequacy of Culturalist Explanations**

Culturalist explanations are marred with contradictory assumptions and methods, which often lead to paradoxical conclusions. Culturalists, as demonstrated above, invariably invoke features of Islamic tradition to explain the pervasiveness of authoritarian political regimes in the Middle East. In addition, Culturalists consistently attribute the failure of democracy in the Muslim world, in Moaddel's words, to 'Islam's conceptual inadequacy in the area of individual rights.'<sup>27</sup> For example, Lewis argues that Western democracy is rooted in Roman law of the 'legal person', which is a corporate entity with certain rights and obligations.<sup>28</sup> While Christianity 'was forced to recognise the authority of Roman law'<sup>29</sup>, in Islam, conversely there is no such recognition, hence, no legislative function. And without legislative function, there is no need for legislative institutions nor for any principle of representation.<sup>30</sup> These accounts are oversimplified. It is argued that Western democracy is a product of capitalist development more than anything<sup>31</sup> else.<sup>31</sup> Cultural

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<sup>25</sup> Lapidus, I. 'The Golden Age: The Political Concepts of Islam', *Ann. Am. Acad. Poli. Soc. Sci.* Nov. 1992. pp. 13-25. p.17.

<sup>26</sup> Abootalebi A. *Islam and Democracy: State-Society Relations in Developing Countries 1980-1994*. New York & London Garland Publishing, 2000. pp. 136-7.

<sup>27</sup> Moaddel, Mansoor, 'The Study of Islamic Culture and Politics: An Overview and Assessment', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 2002. 28. pp 359-86. p. 364.

<sup>28</sup> Lewis, B. *Islam and Liberal Democracy: A historical Overview*, *Journal of Democracy*, April 1996, 7(2); Lewis, B. *Islam and the West*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

<sup>29</sup> Gibb, H. *Modern Trends in Islam*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1947. p. 85. Quoted in Moaddel, Mansoor. 'The Study of Islamic Culture and Politics: An Overview and Assessment', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 2002. 28. pp. 359-86. p. 364.

<sup>30</sup> Lewis, B. *Islam and Liberal Democracy: A historical Overview*, *Journal of Democracy*, April 1996, 7(2); Lewis, B. *Islam and the West*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

<sup>31</sup> Rueschemeyer, D., Stephens, E.H., & Stephens J.D. *Capitalist Development and Democracy*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992. pp. 20-21.

values have little to contribute to the initiation of liberal democracy.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, the 'legal person' was recognised in Islam as an individual with rights and obligations.<sup>33</sup> Besides, the notion that there is no need for representation because the individual has no legislative function, is rather sweeping. Islamic doctrine identified *shura* (consultation) but did not spell out its details and functions,<sup>34</sup> which were left to the people to decide upon, thus, acknowledging the right of individuals to forge the system suitable to them. Moreover, had Lewis written these ideas in 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe he would have found no differences between Muslim countries and Europe at that time. Both had neither representative bodies nor legislative institutions as known in contemporary politics. Therefore, attributing the existence of democratic institutions to historical factors dating back thousands of years requires reconsideration. Following Lewis' line of reasoning, one would attribute all events witnessed in Europe throughout history to Roman law or any other nostalgia because there is no logic underpinning his conclusions but impressions. Impressions are neither valid nor reliable explanatory instruments. Therefore, they cannot be taken for granted while marred with methodological and theoretical fallacies.

### **Culturalists and Rational Explanations**

The assumption that individuals are rational actors understandably has not been elaborated in Culturalist literature. Ignoring this assumption has led Culturalists to argue that conceptions of humans upheld in Islam and Christianity have contributed to the rise of democracy in Christian societies and authoritarianism in Muslim societies. 'Christian political thinkers began from the premises that man was a disobedient sinner and that the Almighty detested the stench of anarchy'.<sup>35</sup> Because man is perceived to be an evil character, the argument goes, thinkers have devised systems of checks and balances to counterbalance human nature and prevent rulers from misruling. The perceived nature of man whether good or evil, it is argued here, is not limited to Christian, Muslim, or

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<sup>32</sup> See chapter 5 in this thesis.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Rashid Gannoushi at the University Oxford on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2002. Also see Esposito, J. & Voll, J. *Makers of Contemporary Islam*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. pp. 91-117.

<sup>34</sup> Price, Daniel. *Islamic Political Culture, Democracy, and Human Rights: A Comparative Study*. Westport & London: Praeger, 1999. pp. 23-38.

<sup>35</sup> Perry L. *Intellectual life in America: A history*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989. p. 8.

Buddhist perceptions of humans, it is universal. Beside the fact that cultural classifications and categories are not mutually exclusive, human beings by nature comprise good and evil and it is common sense that humans as rational actors are inclined, relatively speaking, to be good rather than evil. For being good potentially might have a higher credential for utility maximisation and involves less cost. Moreover, Muslim theologians did not begin with the assumption that human beings are good by nature. Had Islam assumed that human beings are good by nature there would have been no need for government or 'Islamic political theory'. This discussion shows that the problems of cultural explanations rest with the irrational assumptions they often begin with.

However, in the tradition of Islam, posits Moaddel, 'there is an optimistic view of humans, which, it may be postulated, ensured the extension of the system of the patriarchy in the Islamic world into the modern era. For there was no need to question the power of the patriarch, who is in essence a do-gooder. In classical Islamic political theory, the emphasis is to find and install the rightful caliph. After he is installed, following his order is binding to all Muslims.'<sup>36</sup> This emphasis hardly translates to political realities. A few years after the death of the prophet Mohammed, political power was attained by force and since then, it has been maintained by force within autocratic dynasties.<sup>37</sup> The evidence from the experience of historical Muslim states point to the fact that political actors have given little consideration, if at all, to good or evil perceptions of humans, they acted to maintain their control over power and resources.<sup>38</sup>

Moreover, the notion that the practice of historical Muslim states is a reflection of Islamic principles of governance is also challenged. At the conceptual level, Islam provides concepts like *shura* (consultation), *ijma* (consensus), and *maslaha* (utility, interest), which have some resemblance to democratic principles. Neither the doctrine nor the jurisprudence provided procedural rules of implementation. Nothing was known about

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<sup>36</sup> Moaddel, Mansoor, 'The Study of Islamic Culture and Politics: An Overview and Assessment', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 2002. 28. pp. 359-86. p. 365.

<sup>37</sup> Hourani, Albert. *A history of the Arabs*. London. Faber & Faber, 1991. Chapters 1 & 2.

<sup>38</sup> Ayubi, N. *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World*. London & New York: Routledge. 2002 [1991]. p. 27-34.



the procedures of how to hold the caliph accountable, nor there was a process of validating consensus. Therefore, the interpretation and application of these abstract concepts were presented in a way to maintain the interests of the beneficiary actors at that time. Islam did not define procedural rules for the implementation of these abstract concepts leaving room for *ijtihad* (independent reasoning). *Ijtihad* provided an acceptable way to Muslims in order to interpret the doctrine. In political terms, this was an opening for involved actors to construct the interpretation that best suits their interests. Thus, *shura* was limited to the inner circle of the ruler. The inner circle accordance with the ruler was presented as the consensus of the *ummah*, and *maslaha* was seen as maintaining the *unity* of the *ummah*. Such interpretations and applications aborted the potential of developing 'legal' or 'legitimate' opposition to the status quo. For these reasons, opposition was confronted with force not dialogue and as time passed by more opposition developed in the peripheries, which culminated in the proliferation of independent states ultimately taking over the states of which they defected.<sup>39</sup>

### **Tenuous Causality**

Culturalists' contributions to the understanding of Islam and politics have been enriched by dedicated work on literature, languages (Arabic, Persian, and Turkish), translation, and interpretation of Islamic texts to Western languages. Although rich in details and translated concepts, these contributions remain largely unreliable as explanatory tools of politics in the Muslim world. Moreover, these contributions contain serious methodological and theoretical problems. Comparisons between 'Islam' and the 'West' remain unsystematic and ahistorical. For example, Lewis<sup>40</sup> comparison of *Islam and the West* relies on accidental *ad hoc* evidence picked in order to demonstrate incompatibility between 'Islam' and modern structures of politics. Like many other Culturalists' propositions, the focus on some features prevailing in Muslim societies such as patriarchy,<sup>41</sup> patrimonialism,<sup>42</sup> authoritarianism and despotism<sup>43</sup> and the consistent

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<sup>39</sup> For more details about the development of opposition in the peripheries of the historical Muslim states see the excellent sociological analysis presented in Ayubi, N. *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World*. London & New York: Routledge, 2002 [1991]. pp 4-5.

<sup>40</sup> Lewis, B. *Islam and the West*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

<sup>41</sup> Sharabi, H. *Neopatriarchy: A Theory of Distorted Change in Arab Society*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

attempts by most Culturalists to explain these features by reference to Islamic text especially Quranic verses, leave the explanations unattractively thin and incomprehensive. Culturalists tend to 'analyse' 'Islam' by seeking causes and effects based on their subjective secondary understanding of the *nass* (text). For example, in his study *The Political Language of Islam*, Lewis<sup>44</sup> based his conclusions on the premises that religious origins of words would determine the political thinking of individuals, groups, and states for the most part.

This approach is seriously flawed. There are many reasons underpinning this assertion. Firstly, the Arabic language was not invented by the prophet of Islam, it was an established language long before Islam.<sup>45</sup> Following Lewis' logic, for the sake of argument, one can argue that the Bedouin origin of words determined the political language of Islam. Therefore, what is understood to be Islamic (in Lewis' analysis) is in fact tribal and Bedouin. This would turn Lewis assumption on its head. Secondly, the reconstruction of Arabic by Muslims has served a political reality that is irrelevant to Muslim states today. For example, *dar al-harb* (the land of war) and *dar al-ssalam* (the land of peace) have no resonance in Muslim states today.<sup>46</sup> Such states are part of an international legal framework to which 7<sup>th</sup> century vocabulary are unfamiliar. Thirdly, words with religious connotations are used in a context, which dictates the meaning and implication of these words. Thus, it is absurd to assume that *diwan* (bureaucratic record office) which was used in 7<sup>th</sup> century has the same meaning today, *diwan* today refers to a place where people meet whether in a private house or collectively owned property. Fourthly, it is difficult to reduce the actions of millions of people to a set of words; people do what they do because the language determines certain courses of action. It is an

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<sup>42</sup> Weber 'used an inversion to define his ideal-typical concept of (European) legal rationality, contrasting it with what he called 'kadi-justice,' or the personalized application of Islamic law (*sharia*). Weber tells his readers that Muslim justice is the antonym of modern Western practice.' See Carapico, Sheila. 'Introduction to Part One', in Beinun, J. and Stork, J. (eds.) *Political Islam: Essays from Middle East Report*. London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 1997. p. 29.

<sup>43</sup> Wittfogel, K. A. *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963.

<sup>44</sup> Lewis, B. *The Political Language of Islam*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1988.

<sup>45</sup> Hourani, Albert. *A history of the Arabs*. London. Faber & Faber, 1991. pp. 12-3.

<sup>46</sup> These concepts may have some resonance for some radical Islamists but not for mainstream legal Islamist parties.

implausible assumption. One can numerate a long list of reasons in order to demonstrate the invalidity of language-based causal explanations. However, it is sufficient to argue that these explanations reflect romantic mythological, mystical and above all irrational arguments.

Culturalists' interpretations of Islam and Islamic societies rarely embarked on rational approaches. One of these rare studies is Charles Lindholm's anthropological study of the *Islamic Middle East*.<sup>47</sup> He contextualises evidence used by other Culturalists in order to show that statements made by Muslim scholars in support of authoritarian rule were rational responses to socio-political and socio-economic circumstances and were not a mere reflection of the *nass* (text), which can justify any position at any given point in time. This analysis is echoed by other scholars of the Middle East. For example, Karawan argues that 'the truth is that Islamic arguments can be used to critique or justify different things. When I was growing up in Egypt in the 1960s, we were told that Islam was on the side of public ownership, central planning, and the redistribution of wealth. Then in the mid-1970s we heard, in some cases from the same authorities, that Islam was actually on the opposite side. Islam is now more than 1,400 years old, and it has generated a vast body of religious texts and scholarship through which anyone with the time and inclination can search for support on any number of topics. Others who hold contradictory opinions can do the same, and they too may come up with justifications for their views from these same sources.'<sup>48</sup> Thus, utilising the Quranic text or its vast interpretations as evidence in order to argue that Islam is intrinsically 'authoritarian or democratic embodies serious methodological and theoretical deficiencies. It is however more accurate to start with actors' preferences and incentives in order to explain political phenomena in the Muslim world.

The history of the Muslim world 'is structured by an ancient antagonism between urban civilizations and armed peripheries. This fluid and unreliable setting has favoured an entrepreneurial ethic of risk-taking, individual initiative, adaptiveness and mobility

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<sup>47</sup> Lindholm, Charles. *The Islamic Middle East: An Historical Anthropology*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.

<sup>48</sup> Karawan, Ibrahim. 'Middle East Studies After 9/11: Time for an Audit', *Journal of Democracy*, 2002, 13(3). pp. 96-101. pp. 99-100.

among opportunistic co-equals who struggle over ephemeral positions of power and respect, constrained only by participation in a framework of elastic partilineages. In this competitive environment, secular authority has been thoroughly pragmatic and desacralized.<sup>49</sup> In the Muslim world today, modernisation has limited the powers of the periphery and the state has taken effective control utilising all possible means to ensure and enforce its grip on power. In this situation, Islam has been employed as a tool to legitimise the state (rulers' power) whenever a need for extra influential tool is thought to be necessary in order to quell potential unrest. Post-colonial modernisation, no matter how limited, interrupted the mystical and mythological reminiscence of the past. Flavoured by 'Islamic touches', pragmatism and secular politics remain incessant in most contemporary Muslim states.

Given the methodological weaknesses of the Culturalists' approach, it would be meaningful to use their methods to illustrate that Muslim thinkers have asserted rational behaviour irrespective of theology. For example, rational competition is reflected in a statement made by the ninth-century Muslim philosopher al-Muhasibi in which he said the natural instinct that motivates human beings is 'a dislike of being unable to attain someone else's station'.<sup>50</sup> This line of reasoning transcends the cultural patterns of primordialism, which is thought to inhibit rational thinking among Arabs.<sup>51</sup> The presumed strengths of tribal loyalties 'have never precluded internal antagonism'.<sup>52</sup> This is evident in an assertion made by a merchant who said 'we are brothers, but when we evaluate the inventory we are enemies'.<sup>53</sup> These examples illustrate that Culturalists' selective usage of evidence and lack of theoretical coherence in their arguments cannot produce knowledge that could contribute to the understanding of human behaviour and social change. Taking isolated incidents on *ad hoc* basis from any historical period to

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<sup>49</sup> Lindholm, Charles. *The Islamic Middle East: An Historical Anthropology*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996. p. 259.

<sup>50</sup> Quoted in Rosenthal, Franz. 'The Study of Muslim Intellectual and Social History: Methods and Approaches', in Rosenthal, Franz. (ed.) *Muslim intellectual and Social History*. Aldershot: Variorum, p. 10.

<sup>51</sup> Pryce-Jones, David. *The Closed Circle: An Interpretation of the Arabs*. New York: Harper & Row, 1989.

<sup>52</sup> Lindholm, Charles. *The Islamic Middle East: An Historical Anthropology*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996. p. 261.

<sup>53</sup> Quoted in Waterbury, John. 'Tribalism, Trade and Politics: The Transformation of the Swasa of Morocco', in Gellner, Ernest. & Micaud, Charles. *Arabs and Berbers*. Lexington: Lexington Books, 1972. p. 232.

generalise about more than one billion people (Muslims) is rather discordant. Because such generalisations are oversimplified, unreasonably reductive, and the methods employed to reach them are inadequate.

Choosing incidents from various historical periods of Islamic history in order to argue that Muslims are authoritarian leaves social scientists puzzled as much as it leaves Muslim societies unexplained and vaguely understood. Because isolated incidents rarely account -if it at all- for the complex relations of hierarchy, which must exist in any social formation. For example, Ibn Taimiyya's<sup>54</sup> often cited phrase in which he said 'sixty years of an unjust Imam are better than one night without a Sultan',<sup>55</sup> and similar phrases have been used to justify the argument that Islam is authoritarian.<sup>56</sup> There are many rational reasons why a jurist would accept tyranny, in certain circumstances it is a rational and normal response to anarchy. However, this does not mean that it is an intrinsic trait of Muslims. As rational actors, humans calculate the potential losses vis-à-vis gains and pursue a policy of convenience. As one author puts it 'given the history of the region the typical dread of chaos is surely not unwarranted.'<sup>57</sup>

Orientalists' literature suggests four salient cultural traits that make Muslims amenable to despotism. Firstly, fatalism, it has been argued that Islam predestines Muslims and thus encourages passivism.<sup>58</sup> This argument is based on a collection of proverbs and Quranic verses. Barakat provides counter proverbs and Quranic verses, which undermine the validity of conclusions based on deliberately selected examples.<sup>59</sup> Secondly, determinism of power politics or 'the command of the powerful', it has been argued that the Arabs and Muslims have an understanding of power politics which reflect that those in power

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<sup>54</sup> Died 1328 he was a Hanbalite (belongs to the Ahmad Ibn Hanbal's school of thought) Jurist and a scholar.

<sup>55</sup> Cited in Lindholm, Charles. *The Islamic Middle East: An Historical Anthropology*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996. p. 264.

<sup>56</sup> Pipes, Daniel. *In the Path of God: Islam and Political Power*. New York: Basic Books, 1983.

<sup>57</sup> Lindholm, Charles. *The Islamic Middle East: An Historical Anthropology*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996. p. 264. Lindholm provides some the proverbs which have been used as evidence by some Orientalists.

<sup>58</sup> See Berger, Morroe. *The Arab World Today*. New York: Doubleday, 1964. pp. 156-7, 159. Patai, Raphael. *The Arab Mind*. New York: Scribners's, 1976. p. 147. Patai is perhaps the most adamant scholar arguing for Arab fatalism. Patai's book was reprinted 2002 in paper back.

<sup>59</sup> Barakat, Halim. *The Arab World: Society, Culture, and State*. California: California University Press, 1993. pp. 192-193.

should make the best of it, until other group or leader takes over.<sup>60</sup> This determinism flows ‘from the cultural premises’<sup>61</sup> of the Middle East. These cultural premises, according to Lindholm, are based on a statement made by the chief *qadi* (judge) of Egypt Ibn Jamaa, who argued ‘if the office of Imam is vacant ...and there aspires to it one who does not possess the qualifications for it but who imposes himself on the people by his might and his armies... obedience to whom is compulsory ... this is in no way invalidated by his being barbarous or an evil-doer, according to the most authoritative opinion. ... the sovereign has a right to govern until another and stronger one shall oust him from power and rule in his stead. The latter will rule by the same title and will have to be acknowledged on the same ground.’<sup>62</sup> Ibn Jamaa’s argument combined with other proverbs signify ‘acceptance of exploitation as a rational act.’<sup>63</sup> Thirdly, Muslims’ identification with the rulers as ‘ideal Everyman’, this argument assumes that the moral ‘opprobrium of tyranny has been lessened by the masculine ethic of competitive individualism.’<sup>64</sup> Fourthly, Muslims’ acquiescence to despotism ‘springs directly from the values of egalitarian individualism.’<sup>65</sup> These four traits can be found in any society at any point in time. It is a methodological fallacy to argue that these traits in some societies culminate in despotism while in other societies facilitate democracy. If these cultural traits produce different outcomes in different cultures, it is a testimony that the assumption of causality embodied in these traits are invalid. It would be more reasonable to argue that these traits do not comprise causal links leading to other phenomena because they may well be outcomes of socio-economic conditions rather than ‘mind sets’.

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<sup>60</sup> Lindholm, Charles. *The Islamic Middle East: An Historical Anthropology*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996. p. 263.

<sup>61</sup> Lindholm, Charles. *The Islamic Middle East: An Historical Anthropology*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996. p. 260.

<sup>62</sup> Quoted in Lindholm, Charles. *The Islamic Middle East: An Historical Anthropology*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1996. p. 263.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid 265.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid 264.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid 265.

## Minds and Closed Circles?

Another strand in the Culturalist literature focused on 'Arab Mind', 'Arab-Islamic Mind', and 'Muslim Mind'. This literature's view is shared by some Arab-American or Muslim-American scholars who rely heavily on Culturalist literature in order to produce an 'internal view' of the Arab and Muslim world.<sup>66</sup> For example, Khashan's work is an attempt 'to write an imitation of Fouad Ajami's *The Arab Predicament*. He has failed (in style and substance) but nevertheless succeeded in writing a perhaps unintended and (il)logical sequel to Raphael Patai's *The Arab Mind*.'<sup>67</sup> Khashan is interested in investigating the 'intellectual backwardness' and 'moral degeneration' of the Arab mind<sup>68</sup> or the Arab-Islamic mind.<sup>69</sup> His work has been criticised from different perspectives. For example, AbuKhalil criticises Khashan's work unhesitatingly: 'In this bizarre work, which will strain the patience of even the most tolerant reader, the worst aspects of clichéd Orientalism are revived unabashedly.'<sup>70</sup> However, Khashan's book as most of Culturalist literature is filled with sweeping generalisations.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, this type of literature reproduces more methodological and theoretical problems than it solves. For example, Khashan's most cited references were published in the 1950s. He reiterated

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<sup>66</sup> Examples of this literature are: Khashan, Hilal. *The Arab-Islamic Mind, Arabs at the Crossroads: Political Identity and Nationalism*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2000. Ajami, Fouad. *The Arab Predicament, Arab Political Thought and Practice since 1967*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981. Kamrava, Mehran. *Democracy in the Balance: Culture and Society in the Middle East*. New York & London: Chatham House Publishers, 1998.

<sup>67</sup> AbuKhalil, As'ad. 'Review of *The Arab-Islamic Mind, Arabs at the Crossroads: Political Identity and Nationalism*', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, winter 2001, 15(2), available on <http://www.ijpips.org> accessed 29 November 2002.

<sup>68</sup> Khashan, Hilal. *The Arab-Islamic Mind, Arabs at the Crossroads: Political Identity and Nationalism*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2000. p. 1.

<sup>69</sup> Khashan, Hilal. *The Arab-Islamic Mi: Arabs at the Crossroads: Political Identity and Nationalism*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2000. p. 2.

<sup>70</sup> AbuKhalil, As'ad. 'Review of *The Arab-Islamic Mind, Arabs at the Crossroads: Political Identity and Nationalism*', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, winter 2001, 15(2), available on <http://www.ijpips.org> accessed 29 November 2002.

<sup>71</sup> For example, he blames Iran for the first Gulf war and Kuwait for the second Gulf war. pp 94-5 and 98-101. Moreover, there are many examples which are nothing but sweeping generalizations. He argues, 1) Syrian students lack 'social responsibility and coordinated thinking,' citing as proof the remarks of a certain Alfred Carleton pp. 23-24. 2) 'Arab weaknesses are essentially the result of their own evolutionary processes, mostly unrelated to Western influence' p. 63, citing an assertion by Issawi as evidence. 3) The glory and greatness of the Arab Islamic civilization is false and imaginary p. 128, citing a statement to that effect from a certain Hudaytha Murad. 4) The Saudis are lazy p. 78, citing the judgment of a certain Donald Wells. 5) 'Very few Arabs deal with reality in an objective and rational manner' p. 133, citing an assertion by a certain Sa'id Hija. 6) All Muslims are committed to the perpetration of Jihad (which he defines simply as 'holy war'), but the militants are merely 'better equipped' at carrying it out p. 113.

them uncritically. For a book published in 2000, the reader would expect utilisation of new methods in cultural studies such as quantification of cultural traits or at least acknowledgment of the existence of such attempts. Instead, Khashan 'frequently treats the reader to the insights of Iraqi Ba`thist functionary Sa`dun Hammadi--hardly a credible source--on the subject of political development'.<sup>72</sup> Again, this type of literature largely lacks theoretical and analytical coherence; causal analysis is marginalised in order to pave way for 'assertions' and 'decelerations', which are based on impressionistic observations rather than rigorous investigation.

Exemplary of this work is Khashan's book, which is 'full of harsh judgments and preachy declarations.'<sup>73</sup> Khashan makes some assertions like his evaluation of 'the Arab mind', which he interprets as incapacitated,<sup>74</sup> and 'his contempt for and condescension toward not only Arab leaders (certainly understandable) but also the Arab masses, whose incompetence and irresponsibility make them incapable of dealing with rationality and complex analysis'.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, Khashan states that 'part of the problem with Arab elites is attributable to moribund Arab masses.'<sup>76</sup> AbuKhalil suggests that Khashan 'must be grateful that he is not afflicted with the same disorders that, according to his own analysis, seem to afflict all other Arabs.'<sup>77</sup>

Based on impressionistic assumptions, Khashan offers a list of what Arabs must do in order to catch up with the modern world. In this regard, he offers very specific recommendations. Arabs are urged to appreciate 'hard work, punctuality, individuality,

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<sup>72</sup> Hammadi served as the speaker of the Iraqi Parliament for some time under Saddam Hussein. Nonetheless, Khashan cited him on political development see Khashan, Hilal. *The Arab-Islamic Mind, Arabs at the Crossroads: Political Identity and Nationalism*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2000. p. 83.

<sup>73</sup> AbuKhalil, As`ad. 'Review of The Arab-Islamic Mind, Arabs at the Crossroads: Political Identity and Nationalism', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, winter 2001, 15(2), available on <http://www.ijpips.org> accessed 29 November 2002.

<sup>74</sup> Khashan, Hilal. *The Arab-Islamic Mind, Arabs at the Crossroads: Political Identity and Nationalism*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2000. p. 134.

<sup>75</sup> AbuKhalil, As`ad. 'Review of The Arab-Islamic Mind, Arabs at the Crossroads: Political Identity and Nationalism', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, winter 2001, 15(2), available on <http://www.ijpips.org> accessed 29 November 2002. AbuKhalil cites pp. 133-135 of Khashan's book.

<sup>76</sup> Khashan, Hilal. *The Arab-Islamic Mind, Arabs at the Crossroads: Political Identity and Nationalism*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2000. p. 148.

<sup>77</sup> AbuKhalil, As`ad. 'Review of The Arab-Islamic Mind, Arabs at the Crossroads: Political Identity and Nationalism', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, winter 2001, 15(2), available on <http://www.ijpips.org> accessed 29 November 2002.



anonymous citizenship, respect for state authority, informational inquisitiveness, commitment to basic human rights, and acceptance of the idea of broadly shared political responsibility.’<sup>78</sup> Khashan assumes that the opposite of these qualities is the prevalent norm in Arab societies. He does not provide convincing evidence to support his claims. Impressions do not substitute for hard evidence. Besides, it remains unclear what he meant by the aforementioned qualities. For example, ‘respect for state authority’ is a very problematic issue because presumably he is referring to a democratic West European or North American states, which do not compare to any authoritarian Arab state in terms of internal political conduct. According to Khashan’s logic, opposition to a failed state/political regime would mean disrespect to state authority, which cannot be compared to disobedience to civil law enforced by democratic institutions and independent judiciary. However, the majority of Arab people are forced to obey authoritarian political regimes because the cost of opposing them is very high. In this sense, respect for state authority is a rational response to state power. Opposing the power of authoritarian states cannot be interpreted as disrespect to the legal authority of a democratic state. This is one of many confusions that are present throughout Khashan’s book.

Khashan recommends that secularism is to be avoided because ‘tolerance, perseverance, commitment to public goals, and recognition of inalienable human rights all can occur without secularism per se.’<sup>79</sup> This seems to be a meaningless recommendation because it contradicts Khashan’s preference for ‘progressive rationality’, which does not subscribe to irrational notions such as religion. This example points to the seriousness of the methodological and theoretical problems created by impressionistic and romantic writers who seek ‘internal’ explanation to Arab societies and politics. Khashan’s book like many other works of the shallow Culturalist tradition are viewed by some commentators not only as weak and valueless ‘contributions’ but also as ‘insulting to millions of Arabs and to all those who believe in human equality. Not all is well in the Arab world, of course, but to hold an entire people responsible (in their genetic and mental makeup) for the

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<sup>78</sup> Khashan, Hilal. *The Arab-Islamic Mind, Arabs at the Crossroads: Political Identity and Nationalism*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2000. pp. 140-1.

<sup>79</sup> Khashan, Hilal. *The Arab-Islamic Mind, Arabs at the Crossroads: Political Identity and Nationalism*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2000. p. 148.

misguided and evil policies of political leaders and external powers is outright prejudice.’<sup>80</sup>

In *The Closed Circle: An Interpretation of the Arabs*<sup>81</sup> Pryce-Jones converges with Culturalists by attributing ‘the failure of the Arabs’ to the prevalence of three cultural characteristics. He suggests that struggle for power in the Arab world consists of individuals seeking authority as an end in itself. He contends that the winners of this challenge rule in an authoritarian method and losers end up in prison. It is true that the struggle for power results in losers and winners. However, since this struggle is undemocratic, generalisations drawn from it should not be made across the Arab world putting everybody together. There is a difference between those who control the state and the deprived people. Thus, conclusions drawn from describing power struggle hardly apply to the individual actor even though these conclusions are applicable to the authoritarian regimes dominating Arab politics. Since these regimes are not representative of Arab societies, we cannot generalise their behaviour as representing Arab peoples. The second trait Pryce-Jones suggests is ‘money-favour’. He argues that it is the civilian equivalent of power struggle and it mirrors intrinsic Arab behaviour; those who have the money exhibit it and the have-nots end in poverty. Is this limited to Arabs only? It does not seem to be the case. The third trait Pryce-Jones suggests is the shame and honour binary. He argues that this binary dominates Arab private life and restrains gender relations. For Pryce-Jones, these traits define and explain the ‘actions’ of Arabs. In fact, it is rather too optimistic to explain ‘Arabs’ behaviour’ by reference to shame and honour as determining factors. Moreover, power struggle, as presented by Pryce-Jones above, is not a unique Arab trait. To suggest it is an Arab trait defies common sense. Despite its deficiencies, *The Closed Circle* is described by another Culturalist as ‘a landmark for understanding the politics of the Middle East.’<sup>82</sup> Nevertheless, renowned

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<sup>80</sup> AbuKhalil, As`ad. ‘Review of The Arab-Islamic Mind, Arabs at the Crossroads: Political Identity and Nationalism’, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, winter 2001, 15(2), available on <http://www.ijpips.org> accessed 29 November 2002.

<sup>81</sup> Pryce-Jones, David. *The Closed Circle: An Interpretation of the Arabs*. New York: Harper and Row, 2002 [1989].

<sup>82</sup> Pipes, Daniel. ‘Review of The Closed Circle: An interpretation of the Arabs’, fall 1989, *Orbis*. Recent reviews and opinions on the book reveal a forlorn picture encompassing the ‘debate’ on the Arab-Muslim world. For example, [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) published insipid reviews like ‘Mr. Pryce-Jones has managed to

major works on the Middle East did not even mention it.<sup>83</sup> When it is mentioned, it is criticised for oversimplification and methodological weaknesses and untidiness.<sup>84</sup>

In *The Dream Palace of the Arabs*,<sup>85</sup> Fouad Ajami reiterates the Culturalist arguments relying on more Arabic sources than most of his colleagues in this school of thought. The basic assumptions, however, remain unchanged. Ajami makes sweeping generalisations that seem to be unreasonable to a political scientist, but his background as poet might explain his fascination with ill-formulated propositions. For example, in the aforementioned book, Ajami argues that Pan-Arabism is a 'Sunni dominion dressed in secular garb.' No methodologically sound study in political science or sociology would have made such an indiscriminate claim. The basic facts tell a contradictory story; the Syrian regime is not Sunni, the Egyptian regime deracinated Sunni Islamism, the Saudi regime opposed pan-Arabism. Based on these facts, how can we conclude that pan-Arabism was a Sunni dominion dressed in secular garb? If we take Ajami's argument for granted, our understanding of politics in the Arab world would remain superficial. Because arguments like Ajami's leave the impact of all other factors unaccounted for.

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put together a multitude of reasons why we of the advanced West should never trust an Arab. They are untrustworthy, they care only about their own clan, they make a practice of political murder, etc, etc.' The viewer adds 'Mr. Pryce-Jones has apparently never experienced the upside of dealing with Arabs, such as their ability to negotiate reconciliations and the basic freedom of belief that exists in most portions of the Arab world. This book reminds me of the kind of material printed about the Japanese during World War II. It provides us with all we need to hate the Arabs.' Amazon.com attributed this view to 'a reader from Monticello, Florida United States.' Under the title '*A closed circle, indeed.*' another viewer writes 'the cultural weight of centuries rests on the Arabs and Pryce-Jones uncovers layer after layer of myth, folklore, history, lies, and the western folly of seeing Western problems and solutions mirrored in Arab realities, projecting onto a different people sets of values and accepted norms of behavior that are just not part of their lives. For the first time I have read an author that tells me something I suspected from my admittedly limited dealings with Arabs in 12 years: they understand power, but democracy escapes them as an absurdity.' For more reviews of this book see <http://www.amazon.com> accessed December 8, 2002.

<sup>83</sup> These works include Halliday, Fred. *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation: Religion and Politics in the Middle East*. I.B.Tauris, 1999[1996]; Esposito, John. *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* Oxford: Oxford University press, 1995[1992]. Barakat, Halim. *The Arab World: Society, Culture, and State*. Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 1993. Esposito, John. (ed.) *Political Islam Revolution, Radicalism, or Reform?* Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997; Beinin, Joel. & Stork, Joe. (eds.) *Political Islam: Essays from Middle East Report*. London & New York, 1997; Salamé, Ghassan. (ed.) *Democracy Without Democrats? The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World*. London & New York: I.B.Tauris Publishers, 1996[1994]. Guazzone, Laura. (ed.) *The Islamists Dilemma: the Political Role of Islamist Movements in the Contemporary Arab World*. Reading: Ithaca, 1995.

<sup>84</sup> Brynen, R., Qurany B., & Noble, P. 'Introduction: Theoretical Perspectives on Arab Liberalization and Democratization', in Brynen, R., Qurany B., & Noble, P. (eds.) *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World, Vol. 1 Theoretical Perspectives*. Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner., 1995. p. 7.

<sup>85</sup> Ajami, Fouad. *The Dream Palace of the Arabs: A Generation's Odyssey*. New York: Pantheon, 1998.

Besides, Ajami does not introduce a model of analysis of which testable hypotheses can be deduced. Instead, he provides selected examples and incidents in order to generalise on the Arab world without taking into account the influences of social, economic, and political situations prevalent in Arab societies and restrictive of actors' behaviour. One of the major weaknesses of Ajami's work lies in its inapplicability to other contexts. This stems from the inadequacy of its methodology. Social theory does not seem to be relevant to *The Dream Palace of Arabs*.

### **Undemocratic Individualism: 'selfish individualism'**

Under the title 'selfish individualism' writes Kamrava<sup>86</sup> about three traits that characterise the inability of Middle Easterners to accommodate democratic practices. He posits that '[t]he first is a marked inability to compromise, especially by politicians and leaders. Second, the region's pattern of political evolution and history have given rise to self-righteous-ness, demagoguery, and lack of consensus, all of which in turn have undermined the potential for compromise and concession. Third, there is a strong cultural component at work as well, especially insofar as the values attached to Islam are concerned. One result of Islam's current refusal to adapt to changing social and economic circumstances-in Tibi's<sup>87</sup> words, its lack of "cultural accommodation [to] social change"-has been a "defensive cultural chauvinism". Another equally pervasive result has been a stubborn defensiveness within the culture, eroding the chances for compromise and rational consensus. Ironically, a number of Muslim thinkers have considered the *ijma* (the consensus of the community) as one of the very foundations of Islamic faith. Theory and practice, however, have not always been in tune in the Middle East.'<sup>88</sup>

Such an impressionistic view clearly lacks comprehensive supporting reasoning. In justifying his argument Kamrava says that '[d]ifficulty in reaching compromise has been

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<sup>86</sup> Kamrava, Mehran. *Democracy in the Balance: Culture and Society in the Middle East*. New York & London: Chatham House Publishers, 1998. p. 187.

<sup>87</sup> The reference to Tibi is Tibi, Bassam. *Islam and the Cultural Accommodation of Social Change*. Translated by Clare Krojzl, Boulder, Colo: Westview, 1990. p. 70.

<sup>88</sup> Kamrava, Mehran. *Democracy in the Balance: Culture and Society in the Middle East*. New York and London: Chatham House Publishers, 1998. p. 187.

observable at the elite, and scholarly level as well as at the level of masses, but I am focusing specifically on compromise that is cultural and/or political.’<sup>89</sup> Such sweeping generalisation could be said about any region, culture and nation. Secondly he did not define the term ‘compromise’. Moreover, an optimistic observer would view it as pluralistic environment for political and cultural interaction. Do mature democracies have a consensus on all issues? There is a diversity of views, which enriches the debates and then the majority opinion prevails. A methodological point worth mentioning is that any person could see the westernised forms of social and political behaviour in many Middle Eastern cities, ranging from ways of dressing to cuisine and political organisation. Thus equally one can make the point that my *impression* about Amman is that, in a way it is, very Western and the same could be said about Cairo and Dubai. Therefore, to label the entire region by the ‘inability to compromise’ on cultural and political issues is far from being totally true. Thus what is essential is to refine the investigation tools and come up with empirically well-supported generalisations. The shortcomings of Kamrava’s argument are so many thus responding to all will exhaust this section. But to summarise I think he represents many writers on the Middle East who write from an ivory tower that is detached from reality. His argument, however, could be reasonable had he identified a certain village in Iran or elsewhere in the Middle East in the fifties as a reference point. His static view of a culture resistant to change is disputable on empirical as well as logical grounds.

### **Culturalists’ Methodological Deficiencies**

Absence of systematic historical comparisons in the Culturalist literature on the Muslim and Arab worlds left the assertions made by Culturalists largely unqualified. Students of the Middle East and the wider social science continue to be unconvinced that certain features of Muslim societies (particularly in the Arab world) such as tribalism, shame, honour, and fatalism would adequately explain the politics or social orders of Muslim societies. Moreover, causal relationships between what Culturalists call Islamic cultural tradition and the nature of the historical states in the Muslim world are ‘almost made subjectively, based on the [Culturalists’] own secondary interpretation of the religious

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid. p. 187.

principle.’<sup>90</sup> Such an approach is apparent in almost all Culturalists’ works mentioned above. Their basic assumptions -that the culture of Islam is constitutive of an ‘Islamic Mind’ or the culture of Arab speaking peoples comprises an ‘Arab Mind’ and these ‘minds’ determine the political, social, and economic outlooks of Muslims and Arabs-remain weak grounds for methodological and theoretical rigorous.<sup>91</sup> In other words, Culturalists’ assumptions representing a given culture as an all-encompassing totality, which embodies a framework for understanding and explaining the course of political realities in a given cultural hemisphere, do not seem to produce thick and reliable explanations even though they may engender certain understandings of isolated incidents.

Given the limitations of cultural interpretations as tools of analysis, the understandings created by such tools remain incomprehensive, limited, and above all contribute so little to social theory building. For example, Sharabi’s<sup>92</sup> attempts to explain the rise of authoritarianism in the Arab world by invoking traditional concepts and formulations of leadership such as ‘*za`ama*’ (leadership) is seriously out of tone with explanatory social theory. It is out of tone because one can equally invoke the ‘words’ Sultan, King, Imam, and Leader in order to argue that since these concepts of leadership existed in the historical Islamic experience and they had been used and conceptualised in an authoritarian context, then the reason for authoritarianism in the Arab world today is past historical tradition, which remains unchanged. An argument that sounds quite unreasonable because it does not account for economic inequalities, internal conflicts between ruling elites and disenfranchised groups, the impact of oil wealth, regional and international political-strategic factors. Thus, Culturalists while displaying ‘a commendable skill in their thick description of various aspects of Islamic theology and intellectual history, their assertions about Muslims were often replete with vague generalization and ethnic stereotyping.’<sup>93</sup> Preachy declarations like Muslim mind or Arab

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<sup>90</sup> Moaddel, Mansoor, ‘The Study of Islamic Culture and Politics: An Overview and Assessment’, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 2002. 28. p. 365.

<sup>91</sup> For a critique of culturalist’s literature, see Halliday, Fred. *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation: Religion and Politics in the Middle East*. London: I.B.Tauris, 1999 [1996]. Pp. 195-217.

<sup>92</sup> Sharabi, H. *Neopatriarchy: A Theory of Distorted Change in Arab Society*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988; Sharabi, H. ‘Power and Leadership in the Arab World’, 1963, *Orbis*, vii(3), pp. 583-95.

<sup>93</sup> Moaddel, Mansoor, ‘The Study of Islamic Culture and Politics: An Overview and Assessment’, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 2002. 28. p. 366.

mind's inability to accommodate rational thinking have so limited benefit to the methodology of scholarship and enriching of social theory.

There have been some sound and rigorous studies employing critical analysis of previous works on the Muslim world. Turner analysed Middle Eastern societies utilising a Marxist approach, which -he argues- presents the end of Orientalism.<sup>94</sup> Turner posits that 'my approach to the Orientalist picture has not been primarily to argue that their assertions turn out to be empirically false but to show the absurdity of the problems which are produced by their premises.'<sup>95</sup> However, Marxist literature on the Middle East did not provide 'a set of answers' but it provides a framework within which to examine questions pertinent to the Middle East<sup>96</sup> and the Third World in general. However, Marxism -as any theoretical and methodological approach- is subject to ideological manipulation. For example, some scholars used a Marxist approach to explain 'Arab backwardness.'<sup>97</sup> In this context, Turner refers to the work of Avineri as an 'attempt to provide a Marxist theory of Arab backwardness [which] can be shown to be defective on both empirical and Analytical grounds.'<sup>98</sup>

Said's critique of Orientalism, which he describes as an ideological arm of the dominant Western powers, uncovered a pattern of oversimplification within the mainstream intellectual production on Islam. Although the publication of Orientalism created extensive debates in Middle Eastern studies as it did in literary studies, which are still going on, Said did not introduce an alternative theory to the study of politics in the Muslim world. However, it should be remembered that Said is a literature scholar and he is not a political scientist. Nonetheless, his critics argue that 'the central misgiving about

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<sup>94</sup> Turner, S. Bryan. *Marx and the End of Orientalism*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. p. 81.

<sup>96</sup> Halliday, Fred. *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation: Religion and Politics in the Middle East*. London: I.B.Tauris, 1999 [1996]. p. 197.

<sup>97</sup> For a critique of these writings, see Turner, S. Bryan. *Marx and the End of Orientalism*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978. In chapter two 'Marxist Theories of the Middle East' Turner examines various authors.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid. p. 38.

the Saidian critical project is that Said left unanswered the very historical issues in relation to which the Orientalist discourse was formulated.<sup>99</sup>

The Culturalists have been rightly criticised for their 'false premise'<sup>100</sup>, 'etymological reductionism'<sup>101</sup> they also focused on discourse instead of addressing political and social realities of the Middle East. The speeches of unelected officials speaking in the name of Islam, Muslims, Arabs, Jordanians, etc. cannot be taken for granted as representations of these people and discursively 'analysed' in order to produce an 'internal' understanding of the 'Middle East'. Internal understanding of the Middle East requires eliciting information from ordinary people in order to establish an approximation of what they think and what action they are likely to take in response to their environment. It is important to establish the extent to which these debates (over *Orientalism*) and the ideas they embody are relevant to the very people concerned.

The usage of 'Islam' as an independent variable is open for debate. Thus far, 'Islam' in the Orientalist literature has been *the* single explanatory variable. Literature produced to encounter it (*Orientalism*) has not been rigorous, and this applies to methods and theories. The result of the debate between Orientalists and counter Orientalists created Westoxification versus Eastoxification. The result was 'the uncritical reproduction of myths about the region in the name of anti-imperialism, solidarity, understanding, and so on.'<sup>102</sup> The critical assessment offered by Halliday, Moaddel, and Barakat of Culturalist literature produced a more reasonable approach but what is largely missing in this literature is hard evidence necessary to back its theoretical assumptions.

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<sup>99</sup> Moaddel, Mansoor, 'The Study of Islamic Culture and Politics: An Overview and Assessment', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 2002. 28. p. 366-7. See also Halliday, Fred. *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation: Religion and Politics in the Middle East*. I.B.Tauris. 1999 [1996]. pp. 210-215.

<sup>100</sup> Halliday, Fred. *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation: Religion and Politics in the Middle East*. I.B.Tauris. 1999 [1996]. P. 208.

<sup>101</sup> Halliday, Fred. *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation: Religion and Politics in the Middle East*. I.B.Tauris. 1999 [1996]. p. 206.

<sup>102</sup> Halliday, Fred. *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation: Religion and Politics in the Middle East*. I.B.Tauris. 1999[1996], p. 214.



### **Empirical Studies of Islam and Democracy**

In contrast with the Culturalists a few authors have attempted to examine the relationship between Islam and democracy utilising empirical evidence from Muslim countries. Although the use of empirical data in Middle Eastern studies have been scarce, the few cases in which data were gathered represent a shift towards a more rigorous approach to the understanding of the problems of democracy in Muslim societies. Six studies have focused on the question of Islam and democracy and due to their methodological differences have reached different conclusions. Some attribute the failures of Middle Eastern states to accommodate democracy to the cultural heritage of Islam, while others excluded culture on the basis that it is an insignificant factor. A third strand focused on the strength of the state in comparison to civil society and concluded that the strength of the authoritarian state is the most important factor in hindering democratisation in Muslim states. The latter strand emphasised the commonalities between Muslim states and other Third World states in which cultural factors are insignificant. Below I will examine these studies in relation to methods, theory and substance in order to establish the extent to which these contributions have enhanced our understanding of the question of Islam and democracy.

In his comparative study of 172 countries Vanhanen<sup>103</sup> includes twenty-seven countries from the Middle East and North Africa in which Muslims constitute the majority of the populations. His primary task was to test the level of distribution of economic resources within societies and predict democratisation using a combined index of power resources (IPR). In relation to the Middle East and North Africa Vanhanen also wanted to answer the question 'whether some characteristics of Muslim culture make democratisation more difficult in Islamic countries than in the countries of other cultural areas.'<sup>104</sup> Given Vanhanen's theory failure to account for the lack of democratisation in the region, he was quick to argue that 'on average, the level of democratisation has been much lower than expected. Because Muslim culture unites the countries of this regional group and separates them from most countries of the other regional groups, one could argue that

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<sup>103</sup> Vanhanen, Tatu. *Prospects of Democracy: A study of 172 Countries*. London: Routledge, 1997.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.* p. 117.

some features of Muslim culture strengthen the concentration of political power. It may be that power-holders can increase their control of intellectual power resources by identifying themselves with Islam just like former Christian rulers in Europe were allied with the Church'.<sup>105</sup> Although Vanhanen did not operationalize cultural variables in his study, he opted for a cultural explanation when his theory proved inadequate to the explanation of the lack of democracy in the Muslim countries included in his sample.

He goes on to argue that 'because Islam allows polygamy, reproductive resources are less equally distributed in Muslim countries than in other countries.'<sup>106</sup> The implication of this argument for Vanhanen is that polygamy concentrates resources in the hands of men and exclude women therefore concentration of power remains male-centred and this situation results in despotism. However, he does not spell out how polygamy engenders despotism. Moreover, he cites Betzig's<sup>107</sup> study in which she argues that there is a correlation between polygyny and despotism. However, the hypothesised correlation between polygyny and despotism does not seem to be vital to the explanation of authoritarianism in Muslim countries. As Fargues demonstrates 'polygamy, which seems never to have been very common in the Arab world, is decreasing everywhere: it happens only between 2 and 10 per cent of marriages (it is prohibited in Tunisia).'<sup>108</sup> Tunisia is a case in point, polygamy was outlawed shortly after independence, around fifty years of illegal polygamy did not make Tunisia less authoritarian. Moreover, the majority of people in Muslim societies disagree with the principle of polygamy (Table 1-1 below). In a nutshell, there is more to the story than these cultural factors. Although Vanhanen produced sophisticated theory and method in his study, which no doubt valuable to students of comparative politics and democratisation, its focus on functionality and its exclusion of the influence of rational actors be it states or institutions, has left his theory

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid. pp. 117-8.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. p. 118.

<sup>107</sup> Betzig L. Laura. *Despotism and Differential Reproduction: A Darwinian View of History*. New York: Aldine, 1986.

<sup>108</sup> Fargues. Philippe. 'Demographic Explosion or Social Upheaval?', in Salame, Ghassan. (ed.) *Democracy Without Democrats? The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World*. London: I.B. Tauris. 1996 [1994]. p. 170.

incapable of explaining the lack of democracy in Muslim countries that have reached the levels of distribution of resources necessary for democratisation in 1990-1.<sup>109</sup>

Table (1-1) Muslims' attitudes towards polygamy: Question: 'I would like to ask your opinion about the following issues related to relationships between men and women. 'It is acceptable for a man to have more than one wife'. Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither agree or disagree, disagree, or Strongly disagree?

	Nigeria	Turkey	Indonesia	Egypt	Iran	Jordan
Agree	39.2	20.6	18.6	9.9	11.3	18.7
<b>Disagree</b>	<b>51.2</b>	<b>56.9</b>	<b>70.6</b>	<b>80.4</b>	<b>76.2</b>	<b>71.2</b>
Other *	9.6	22.5	10.8	10.7	12.5	10.1
Total N=100%	2022	3401	1004	3000	2532	1222

Source WVS fourth wave, conducted 2000-2001. I have combined strongly agree and agree in one category (agree). I followed the same method for disagree and strongly disagree. \* includes neither agree or disagree, NA and DK.

The second study is *Islamic Political Culture*<sup>110</sup> in which Price introduced an operationalisation of 'Islamic political culture'. Price states that 'my primary objective in developing an indicator of Islamic political culture is to capture the most important dimensions of contemporary Islamic political ideology.'<sup>111</sup> Drawing on the work of William Shepard<sup>112</sup>, Price classifies 'Islamic ideology' according to two characteristics: 'comprehensiveness' and 'authenticity'.<sup>113</sup> Price also contends that 'the independent variable representing the extent to which a political system is influenced by Islamic political culture will combine these two dimensions. It is important to note that this measure deals only with a country's political culture and not with the extent of its religiosity or adherence to Islam.'<sup>114</sup> The latter sentence seems to be contradictory because it is not clear how to separate 'a country's political culture' from its 'religiosity' and 'adherence to Islam' if comprehensiveness, as Price defines it, 'relates to the extent to which Islamic law is followed.' Following Islamic law by definition means adherence to Islam. Moreover, a few lines later Price states that 'adherence to *Sharia* is what

<sup>109</sup> These countries include Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Tunisia. See Vanhanen, op. cit., p. 120.

<sup>110</sup> Price, Daniel. *Islamic Political Culture, Democracy, and Human Rights: A Comparative Study*. Westport & London: Praeger, 1999.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid. p. 145.

<sup>112</sup> Shepard, William. 'Islam and Ideology: Towards a Typology', *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 19. pp. 307-336.

<sup>113</sup> Price, Daniel. *Islamic Political Culture, Democracy, and Human Rights: A Comparative Study*. Westport & London: Praeger, 1999. p 145.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid. p. 145.

separates Islamic governments from other governments'.<sup>115</sup> However, Price uses 'authenticity' to 'capture the extent to which, and how, a regime and its leaders are willing to accept ideas, institutions, and technologies that originate outside of the Muslim world.'<sup>116</sup> Price's operationalisation of what he calls Islamic ideology is problematic because the conceptual ambiguities he leaves unresolved.

Price uses correlation and regression analysis in order to evaluate the impact of 'Islamic political culture' on democracy. He concludes that 'the findings show that Islamic political culture does not have a significant affect on democracy.'<sup>117</sup> Although Price's work is marred with conceptual problems, he took the analysis into a more advanced level by attempting to construct variables measuring 'Islamic political culture'. This attempt departs from the conventional way of studying 'Islamic political culture' because it goes beyond the reliance on 'labelling' of countries where the majority of the population are Muslims as 'Islamic'. Despite the effort put in Price's study, the methods of data collection he pursued are not very reliable. His reliance on embassies of the twenty-three countries he included in the study, and meeting very few people from these countries (he does not provide numbers) leaves one wondering how representative the embassies' officials and the very few people he met of the these countries. In order to boost reliability and test the viability of his classification of 'Islamic political culture', Price sent a questionnaire to 218 experts of Middle Eastern studies in the United States of which only 49 were completed.<sup>118</sup> Finally, Price fell in a trap that many others did not escape, that is, he used the Freedom House scores for the twenty three Muslim countries as a representation of 'democracy and individual rights' in these countries and he failed to acknowledge that these scores represent regimes' performance not attitudes of the populations at large.

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid. p. 145.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid. p. 146.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid. p. 149.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid. p. 189.

The third study of interest here is Jawed's *Islam's Political Culture*.<sup>119</sup> Jawed's study is based on survey of 163 individuals conducted in 1969 and published thirty years later in 1999. The sample was selected from four occupational categories: university teachers, practicing lawyers, journalists, and *ulama*. The latter is drawn from traditional religious schools where the former three were drawn from modern education establishments. The study is organised around three major topics: attitudes toward national identity, the polity, and the economy. The author is particularly concerned with the relationship between Islam and democracy. Therefore, he analysed the attitudes of the four groups in the sample in relation to the political system that resembles Islam most among democracy, socialism, democracy and socialism, and dictatorship and/or fascism. The study found that 85.7 percent of the *ulama* say democracy resembles Islam, compared to 61.4 among professionals in West Pakistan.<sup>120</sup> However, although the study is packed with cross-tabulations and other forms of statistical analysis, there remain two major weaknesses inhibit the analysis. The first weakness is the small sample size. The second weakness is the old age of the data.

The fourth study is Abootalebi's *Islam and Democracy*<sup>121</sup> in which he attempts to account for the role of the state in democratisation or the lack of it in less developed countries (LDCs). Abootalebi concludes that 'genuine democratisation is dependent upon the breadth of resource distribution among groups within society and between society and its state: Thus the success or failure of democratic processes of government in LDCs is a function of the degree of distribution of socioeconomic [...] resources in the society.'<sup>122</sup> Using regression analysis Abootalebi analyses 86 LDCs. His analysis demonstrated that 'prospects for inauguration of democracy in LDCs is a function of particular social, economic, and political variables.'<sup>123</sup> Abootalebi's analysis departs from conventional works in the way in which he constructed indexes to measure societal power versus state power. His analysis revealed that 'either a weak society or a strong state can inhibit

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<sup>119</sup> Jawed, Nasim Ahmed. *Islam's Political Culture: Religion and Politics in Predivided Pakistan*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid. pp. 69-72.

<sup>121</sup> Abootalebi, Ali. *Islam and Democracy: State-Society Relations in Developing countries 1980-1994*. New York & London: Garland Publishing, 2000.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid. p. 213.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid. p. 214.

democratisation'.<sup>124</sup> As far as Islam is concerned Abootalebi concludes that 'Islam was found overall to not inhibit democratization in all regressions for which it was controlled.'<sup>125</sup> Moreover, he added 'the absence of democratic political systems in developing –including Muslim- countries, is a product of maldistribution in socioeconomic power resources, not from the cultural underpinnings of these societies.'<sup>126</sup>

Abootalebi's study is a well-structured empirical analysis if compared to similar works on Islam and democracy. However, given the fact that the study deals with macro-level state centred data (like measuring state power by state expenditure as a percentage of GNP) one would like to see micro-level societal data that deal with individuals' perception of democracy. Abootalebi did not find a link between Islam per se as a cultural variable and the persistence of authoritarianism in Muslim countries. However, the way in which he considers 'Islam' does not go beyond the conventional criteria which considers a country as 'Muslim' if the majority of its people are Muslims. Thus, we are left with very little information about what the individuals in these societies think of democracy. In this thesis, I will fill this gap by analysing data elicited from Muslim individuals living in 'Muslim countries'.

The fifth study is *Determinants of Lasting Democracy in Poor Countries*.<sup>127</sup> The study presents a statistical analysis of the determinants of democracy. The authors found that 'cultural beliefs and institutional inheritances are important determinants' of the viability of democracy in poor countries, even when controlling for literacy and socioeconomic development.'<sup>128</sup> This assertion defies the findings of most literature on the relationship

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid. p. 116. See also Sadowski, Yahya. 'The New Orientalism and the Democracy Debate', in Beinin, Joel & Stork, Joe. (eds.) *Political Islam: Essays from Middle East Report*. London & New York: I.B.Tauris, 1997. pp 33-50. Sadowski offers a critical review of the literature on State-Society relations in the Middle East.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid. p. 116.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid. p. 116.

<sup>127</sup> Clague, C., Gleason, S., & Knack, S., 'Determinants of Lasting Democracy in Poor Countries: Culture, Development, and Institutions', *The ANNALS of the American Academy, AAPSS*, January 2001, 573, pp. 16-41.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid. p. 16.

between democracy and socioeconomic development.<sup>129</sup> There is an obvious methodological reason why the authors reached this conclusion regarding culture. That is, the dependent variable they analysed 'is the mean level of democracy, which is the fraction of years in the 1960-94 period (or the period of independence to 1994) that country is classified as a democracy.'<sup>130</sup> These scores represent the performance of the political systems in these countries. The majority of LDCs included in the study's sample have authoritarian political systems. It is hardly credible, for obvious reasons, to consider these scores as representing the societies living under these regimes. It is this methodological miscalculation that make 'culture', for the authors, an important determinant of democracy. The authors state that 'being a former colony of Britain or one of its four settler colonies increases the probability of democracy by 0.368; being an island increases it by 0.203; and increasing the Muslim share in the population from 10 percent to 90 percent decreases the probability by 0.267.'<sup>131</sup> The problem with this analysis is that it ignores other factors which would be far more important than 'culture'. The role of the state, international actors, rational actors, local elites, and regional wars in the particular case of Muslim countries may have a stronger explanatory power than *ad hoc* assertions. However, instead of emphasising the need for further analysis that would potentially include other factors, the authors were content to reiterate some cultural assertions about the inherent incompatibility between the culture of Islam and democracy.<sup>132</sup> Such studies raise questions about the basic assumptions taken for granted by some researchers in comparative politics. Following the logic of the aforementioned study one could start with an assumption that is fundamentally flawed like 'Egypt is not a democracy because it is a Muslim, Arab, or African country.' Such an assumption would lead to a construction of cultural variables like Muslim, Arab, and African on impressionistic rather than empirical bases (for example assuming that the Arab League is a representative of all Arabs). I remain sceptical that these constructions would deliver

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<sup>129</sup> See for example Lipset, S. M. 'The Social Requisites of Democracy Revisited', *American Sociological Review*, February 1994, 59, pp. 1-22.

<sup>130</sup> Clague, C., Gleason, S., and Knack, S., 'Determinants of Lasting Democracy in Poor Countries: Culture, Development, and Institutions', *The ANNALS of the American Academy, AAPSS*, January 2001, 573, p. 25.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.* p. 27.

<sup>132</sup> See *Ibid.* p. 36. and note 19 on page 39 in *Ibid.*

a better understanding of political realities in Egypt or elsewhere than models of politics based on rational actor's assumptions.

The sixth study is 'Islam and Democracy in the Middle East'.<sup>133</sup> In this article Tessler acknowledges the rarity of 'systematic empirical inquiries into the nature, distribution, and determinants of political attitudes in the Arab world'<sup>134</sup> and tries to examine 'the influence of Islam on attitudes toward democracy using public opinion data collected in Palestine (West Bank and Gaza), Morocco, Algeria, and Egypt.'<sup>135</sup> Tessler concludes that: First, 'Islam appears to have less influence on political attitudes than frequently suggested by students of Arab and Islamic society.'<sup>136</sup> He states that the study 'strongly suggests that Islam should not be reified when attempting to explain Arab political orientations, and, in particular, it offers evidence that support for democracy is not necessarily lower among those individuals with strongest Islamic attachments. On the contrary, it provides support for those who challenge the thesis that Islam discourages the emergence of political attitudes conducive to democracy.'<sup>137</sup> Third, 'support for political Islam does not involve a rejection of democracy and that those with a more favourable view of Islamist movements and platforms are no less likely than others to favor political competition and to desire mechanisms to hold leaders accountable. Thus, in the popular mind, at least, there is no necessary incompatibility between democracy and Islamic governance.'<sup>138</sup> Fourth, Tessler concludes that 'religion influences political orientations more frequently and consistently in the West than in the Arab world.' The limitations of small sample sizes in Morocco and Algeria (1000 interviews in one single city of each country) and Egypt, did not prevent Tessler from producing a sophisticated statistical analysis, which is largely needed to understand the relationships between religion and politics not only in the Arab world but worldwide. However, Tessler constructed indexes of various and different indicators from the four countries. Given the dissimilarities of the indicators one would be somewhat cautious as far as the reliability and validity of these

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<sup>133</sup> Tessler, Mark. 'Islam and Democracy: The Impact of Religious Orientations on Attitudes Toward Democracy in Four Arab Countries', *Comparative Politics*, April 2002, 349(3), pp. 337-54.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid. p. 337.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid. p. 337.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid. p. 348.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid. p. 348.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid. p. 349.



indicators is concerned. It would be more reliable for comparative analysis to have identical indicators. The WVS provides such identical indicators, which will be analysed in chapters five, six, seven, and eight of this thesis.

## Conclusion

The critique of Culturalist approaches to the study of societies whether in the Middle East or elsewhere requires more than citing counter assertions and fashionable preachy declarations. Because such a method has the potential of creating more problems than it solves, a rigorous critique ought to transcend conventional wisdom held in the circles of Middle Eastern studies. As valid as they may be, conventionally held indecisive notions representing Orientalist and Culturalist approaches as tools of domination and colonialism, still do not empirically refute or validate the basic assumptions utilised in this type of literature. The romantic, rational, and empirical scholarly works examined above point to problems and gaps in the study of the relationship between Islam and democracy.

The basic problem lies in the theoretical and methodological inadequacy of the Culturalist approach. In all of the Culturalist works reviewed above, I did not find a coherent theoretical framework that situates the realities of the Middle East in a larger context of interest to social and political theory building. Instead, there are assertions and impressions, which are based on *ad hoc* evidence. For example, the extensive use of proverbs, religious texts, political speeches, and poetry leaves one wondering about the reliability of such 'evidence' in explaining complex social and political structures whether in the Middle East or elsewhere.

The empirical studies examined above make a better contribution to the understanding of the relationship between religion (Islam) and politics in the Middle East. However, some of them when faced by the inadequacy of their theories and methods -Vanhanen and Clague et al.- to account for deviations from the expected norms were quick in seeking cultural explanations based on impressions rather than solid empirical evidence. In the same vein we find Culturalists establishing causal relationships between the religious origins of words and political realities of the contemporary Middle East. Such attempts prove to be meaningless to social scientists because their internal consistency is flawed; one can use the same evidence to establish contradictory arguments. Against this background, there is a need for a more rigorous approach in theory and method.

As will be demonstrated in chapter three of this thesis, a rational choice model of politics will be introduced. The model would overcome the difficulties identified above because it, unlike Culturalist explanations, allows us to generate testable hypotheses about the link between the motives of individuals, states, and policies.<sup>139</sup> Given the availability of large-scale data sets drawn from representative samples from more than 60 countries (WVS and EVS), this thesis would attempt to overcome some of the deficiencies identified above, such as small sample sizes, oldness of data, incomprehensiveness of indicators, limited target samples, and weak *ad hoc* representations of Muslim populations (i.e. the use of proverbs). In short, it will provide some solutions for problems of equivalence<sup>140</sup> by utilising common sets of indicators<sup>141</sup> in different societies. These data in combination with the Freedom House data would allow us to construct a model containing the role of the state (a factor that has never been accounted for in previous empirical research on the Islam and democracy), culture (Islam), and socio-economic development. The contribution to the study of Islam and democracy, presented in this thesis, is the quantification of the religion of Islam subjectively and objectively (chapters 5 and 6). This quantification, uncovers the relationship between individual Muslims and religion in quantitative terms. Before we move to the theory and methodology guiding this work, it is vital to address the contemporary debate on Islam and liberal democracy on specific issues often pointed out as areas of incompatibility between Islam and liberal democracy. Issues pertinent to the principle of power rotation, divine and popular sovereignty, the nature of the state, the ruler, and political pluralism, will be dealt with in chapter two.

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<sup>139</sup> Saalfeld, Thomas. 'Rational-Choice Theory in Legislative Studies: Models of Politics without Romanticism', *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, Spring 1995, 1(1). p. 32.

<sup>140</sup> For more about this problem in comparative research see van Deth, W. Jan. ed. *Comparative Politics: the Problem of Equivalence*. London and New York: Routledge, 1998.

<sup>141</sup> For more information about identical indicators see Kaiser, André. 'Institutional Regimes', in van Deth, W. Jan. (ed.) *Comparative Politics: the Problem of Equivalence*. London and New York: Routledge, 1998. pp. 203-221. The author discusses the issue of identical indicators on pp 208-213. Although his discussion relates to institutions, it offers some insights for other areas of comparative politics.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Islam and Liberal Democracy**

7

## Islam and Liberal Democracy

### Introduction

This chapter intends to address the issues pertinent to the compatibility or the lack of it between Islam and liberal democracy. The chapter will use material selectively and wholly qualitatively, but it does so precisely to show the inadequacies of cultural essentialists since it could be demonstrated that the possibility of interpreting Islam enables it to either support or refute the validity of democracy as an analyst so chooses. The function of this chapter in the thesis is to establish the conceptual similarities and differences between concepts of governance embedded in contemporary Islamic political thought as presented by Muslim theorists and activists and liberal democracy in order to establish the extent to which these concepts are compatible or incompatible at the theoretical level. Because the units of analysis in this thesis are 'actors' whether individual Muslims or states, it is important to establish the theoretical concepts of governance they are supposed to hold in their capacity as Muslims. In order to establish similarities and differences, a clear definition of liberal democracy and its components is crucial. The confusion about the relationship between Islam and liberal democracy often stems from impreciseness of political concepts attributed to them. To this end, liberal democracy 'ideal type' is defined as a political mechanism for solving conflicts of interest in a peaceful manner. It is a system in which basic elements are safeguarded:

1. Competition: Contenders for political office compete in open, free, and periodic elections and the most powerful decision makers are elected
2. Participation: Universal suffrage in which all adult citizens have equal right to vote
3. Accountability: Elected officials and decision makers are accountable to the people through a representative parliament.

These three elements and their sub-components represent basic rules of democratic political systems. There are many other definitions of democracy<sup>1</sup> which are not addressed

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<sup>1</sup> For example Lipset defines democracy in a complex society 'as a political system which supplies regular constitutional opportunities for changing the governing officials, and a social mechanism which permits the largest possible part of the population to influence major decisions by choosing among contenders for political office' see Lipset SM. *Political Man: The Social Basis of Politics*. New York, Doubleday. 1960. p. 45; Lipset SM. *Political Man: The Social Basis of Politics, expanded and updated edition*. London, Heinemann. 1983. p. 27; Diamond, L. & Marks, G. 'Seymour Martin Lipset and the Study of Democracy',

here for the simple reason that our concern in this chapter is to compare basic democratic principles to equivalent notions of governance in contemporary Islamist political discourse. The three elements outlined above capture the essence of democratic political system.

The chaotic proliferation, legal, and illegal, of Islamist movements<sup>2</sup> across the Middle East and their perceived attitudes towards democratic political practice, have added more importance to the theoretical study of the relationship between Islam and liberal democracy. However, much of the work on Islam and liberal democracy is marred by confusion due to the perennial problem faced by scholars in distinguishing between 'principles' and 'practices'. For example, an Islamic movement would be working 'legally' under a secular constitution: a de facto acceptance of secularism, but this acceptance does not prevent it from focusing on religious teachings regarding religious 'collective morality', which might not be compatible with secular democratic principles of individual liberty. If a movement accepts a secular constitutional framework, its 'practices' should be more important than its 'supposed' or 'assumed' anti-secular stands. It is quite often the case that scholars, politicians, and journalists focus on, and give more weight to attitudes declared by some members of Islamist movements in order to argue that these movements are not democratic<sup>3</sup>. Although political ideals are not always transferable to political practices, they are still relevant to the politics of Islamist movements. Therefore, Islamic 'principles' as presented by Islamists will be compared to liberal democratic principles and then practices of Islamists will be discussed in relation to these principles where it is deemed appropriate.

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in Diamond, L. & Marks, G. (eds.) *Re-examining Democracy: Essays in Honour of Seymour Martin Lipset*. London: Sage, 1992. pp. 1-14. For more information see about definitions of democracy see Dahl, Robert. *On Democracy*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997. Dahl, Robert. *Polyarchy; Participation and Opposition*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1971; Dahl, Robert. *Dilemmas of Pluralist Democracy: Autonomy vs. Control*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982. Dahl, Robert. *Democracy and its Critics*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989.

<sup>2</sup> Islamist movement refers to organised political groups which define Islam as the main political ideology and struggle to apply Islamic law.

<sup>3</sup> For example many scholars have referred to a statement made by Ali Belhadj of the Algerian FIS to argue that Islamic Movements are not democratic. For an account of this issue See Esposito, John. & Voll, John. *Islam and Democracy*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University press, 1996. p. 158.

The proliferation of Islamist Movements led to confrontations between governments and Islamists in Algeria, Egypt, and Syria to name but a few. Islamist movements occurred due to circumstances such as political, social, and economic alienation.<sup>4</sup> The Islamist movements' struggle for political participation and inclusion in the political process of their respective countries led to the adoption of confrontational and sometimes violent strategies. This has raised several intellectual and political questions: Do these confrontations reflect deeply-rooted typical Islamic principles or are they merely stages in political struggle in countries dominated by authoritarian regimes? What role does Islam have in hindering or accelerating democratisation and political participation in Muslim Middle Eastern countries?

A closer look at the literature of Islamic movements since the beginning of the twentieth century, argues the Egyptian Islamist Fahmi Huwaidi, reveals that there has been no conflict neither between Islam and democracy nor with the Western liberal project as a whole<sup>5</sup>. The conflict was primarily one about colonialism. Islamic perceptions of democracy, Huwaidi contends, as portrayed by Muhamad Abdu, Rashid Reda, Muhamad Shaloot, Hasan Al-Banna, and Abas Mahmood Al-Aqad are compatible with participatory democracy.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, as much as there are some shared elements between Islam and liberal democracy, there are some areas where they diverge. The 'zones' of compatibility and incompatibility are difficult to map because as Sisk puts it 'neither Islam as a religious tradition nor democracy as a political concept have all-

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<sup>4</sup> Halliday, Fred. *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation: Religion and Politics in the Middle East*. I.B.Tauris, 1999[1996]. p. 118. During the 1980s and 1990s enormous literature focused on the socio-economic and socio-political reasons for the rise of Islamic Movements/ Examples of this literature: Ayubi, N. *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World*, London: Routledge, 2002[1991]; Anderson, Lisa. 'Fulfilling Prophecies: State Policy and Islamist Radicalism', In Esposito, John. (ed.) *Political Islam: Revolution, Radicalism, or Reform?* Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner, 1997; al-Azmeh, Aziz. *Islam and Modernities*. London: Verso, 1993; Guazzone, Laura. 'Islamism and Islamists in the Contemporary Arab World', in Guazzone, Laura. (ed.) *The Islamist Dilemma: The Political Role of Islamist Movements in the Contemporary Arab World*. Reading: Ithaca Press, 1995. pp. 3-38; for more examples see Halliday, Fred. *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation: Religion and Politics in the Middle East*. I.B.Tauris, 1999 [1996]. p. 234 endnote 9.

<sup>5</sup> Huwaidi, Fahmi. *al-Islam wa al-Dimokratyyia*, [Islam and Democracy]. Cairo: Al-Ahram Publishing and Translation House, 1993.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

encompassing definitions or properties.’<sup>7</sup> However, there are certain concepts that can be compared on the bases of their applicability to ways of governance. The Islamists’ notions of Islamic political system are particularly interesting in this regard.

In order to address the issue of incompatibility between Islam and liberal democracy, one has to pinpoint those elements of Islamic religious thought and teachings that embody political connotations. The linkage of these connotations to political order and socio-political democratic values is crucially important to the understanding of the perceived incompatibility between Islam and liberal democracy. The discussion throughout the coming sections of this chapter is intended to highlight the broad picture of Islamic principles of governance as presented by theorists of political Islam in comparison to liberal democratic principles. It also addresses points of difference and convergence. But before moving to detail these points, the question of ‘why Islam?’ has to be addressed for the obvious reason that Islam is the ‘factor’ most frequently picked by media analysts, academics, politicians in order to explain the lack of liberal democracy in Middle East.

### **Why Islam?**

For the past three decades, the religion of Islam has become increasingly central to people’s daily life in the Middle East. In numerical terms, an overwhelming majority of Egyptians (97.3%) report that religion is very important to them and 98.4% describe themselves as religious people. This pattern of emphasis on Islam is persistent in all Muslim countries for which survey data are available. Other Muslim countries also display similar attitudes; in Morocco 99% of the population reported that God is very important in their lives, in Iran 82.3% describe themselves as religious people<sup>8</sup> (see table 2-1 below). For this reason, we must pay attention to religion as a factor when considering democracy in an Islamic context. Does the religion of Islam have an impact on democratic values and orientations and, if so, to what extent? Is the role of Islam as

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<sup>7</sup> Sisk, Timothy. *Islam and Democracy: Religion, Politics, and Power in the Middle East*. Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1992. p. 15.

<sup>8</sup> These data are drawn from the fourth wave of the WVS conducted in these countries during summer and autumn 2001.



religion sufficient as a factor that, according to some accounts, explains the deviation of the Middle East from the global spreading of liberal democracy?

In the Muslim Arab countries of the Middle East and North Africa, the re-emergence of political Islam as a social and political phenomenon attracted scholars' attention across all social sciences and humanities.<sup>9</sup> Some observers contend that this phenomenon could be explained by the political relevance of the culture of Islam at the individual level<sup>10</sup>. This is to say that there is little doubt that the re-emergence of Islam, as a popular phenomenon through which the long alienated individuals have found a means of political expression, provided an authoritative and available valuable source of legitimation for individuals to move from political passivity to political activity. Some of these accounts are largely speculative and lack adequate empirical evidence.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, they tend to generalise that Islam in its current manifestation is essentially anti-democratic. Such accounts have ignored factors that can better explain the misfortunes of liberal democracy in the Middle East like the role of political actors in the

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<sup>9</sup> See Guazzone, Laura. (ed.) *The Islamist Dilemma: The Political Role of Islamist Movements in the Contemporary Arab World*. Reading: Ithaca Press, 1995. This book contains 13 chapters written by political scientists, sociologists, and historians of the Middle East. It is a valuable source of information about the role of Islamism in the domestic political process and its impact on regional and international relations.

<sup>10</sup> Fukuyama, F. 'History and September 11', in Booth, K. & Dunne T. (eds.) *Worlds in Collision: Terror and the Future of Global Order*. London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2002. pp. 27-35. Fukuyama argues that 'Islam is the one major world culture that arguably does have some very basic problems with modernity.' p. 31. Sharabi H. *Neopatriarchy: A theory of Distorted Change in Arab Society*. Oxford University Press, New York, 1988. For a critical review of this book see Moghadam\_V. *Neopatriarchy: A Theory of Distorted Change in Arab Society*, *Critical Sociology*, Spring 1990, 17(1). p.111. Also see Waterbury, J. 'Democracy Without Democrats?: The Potential for Political Liberalization in the Middle East,' in Salamé, G. *Democracy Without Democrats: The Renewal of Politics In the Muslim World*. I.B.Tauris: London. 1996 [1994]. p. 33. Brumberg, Daniel. *Arab Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy: A Complex Encounter*. Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 2002. In a testimony to the Congress of the United States, House of Representatives, Committee on Government Reform, Subcommittee on National Security Veterans Affairs, and International Relations, (October 8, 2002) Daniel Brumberg argues that '...since the roots and logic of autocracy are local, [Arab regimes] will survive and endure the creation of an American-backed post-Saddam government.' p. 9. The testimony available at <http://www.ceip.org/files/pdf/2002-10-08-BrumbergHilltestimony.pdf> accessed October 19, 2002.

<sup>11</sup> For Example, Fukuyama in support of his claim cites Turkey as the only working democracy in the Muslim World. Fukuyama, F. 'History and September 11', in Booth, K. & Dunne T. (eds.) *Worlds in Collision: Terror and the Future of Global Order*. London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2002. p. 31. However, Turkey is not a 'Free' country according the Freedom House indexes of Political Rights and Civil Liberties. Fukuyama, it seems, gives more weight to his impressions over academic empirical evidence.

relevant societies, political opportunity structures available in a given political context, socio-economic variables, and the impact of global capitalism.<sup>12</sup>

As a consequence of the states' failure in many Arab countries to include all political groups, including Islamists, in the political process and the nature of Islamism as mass-based political movements across the region, Islam as a political framework, provides individuals with a sense of political significance, which otherwise does not exist under repressive regimes. The message of relevance Islam comprises is composed of a matrix of interconnected meaningful political qualities. Islam provides a political ideology that is felt across the social realm and that ideology in essence is a socio-political one. This ideology is made relevant socially, politically and religiously. Through worship places, the esteemed religious scholars with their emotional declamatory speeches provide an essential rhetoric, which strengthens the relevance of individuals to politics but within the ideological view of Islam. The political support for Islamist political movements is derived from all spectrums of society with noticeable concentration among the underprivileged that seek salvation, students, and middle class merchants<sup>13</sup>. More specifically, it is derived from those who feel betrayed by the system; people, who feel that corruption, nepotism, and favouritism are widespread, tend to support Islamists because of their perceived integrity and moral stands against such practices.<sup>14</sup> Such support is rationally convincing, corruption can only benefit the few who have access to resources but it cannot benefit an entire population consequently the disadvantaged majority opts to support an option, which is perceived to minimise corrupt practices,

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<sup>12</sup> For a detailed account of this point see chapter one of this thesis.

<sup>13</sup> This is largely true for the base of support for the Islamic Action Front Party (IAFP) in Jordan, based on analysis of survey data collected in Jordan by the Centre for Strategic Studies (CSS) at the University of Jordan, also there is a decline in the overall support for IAFP. See CSS, *Democracy in Jordan*, CSS: Amman. 2002. p 25. In September 2002 only 6.7% of the Jordanian population (who named a political party that most represents their political, social and economic aspirations) reported the IAFP compared to 18.5% in 2001, 52.4% in 2000, 60.6% in 1999, 59.4% in 1998, 65.8% in 1997, and 70.5% in 1996. Support for HAMAS is limited to 21% of the Palestinian population according to Jerusalem Media and Communication Centre survey. The survey was published by the Jordantimes.com accessed Monday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2002. For other countries, detailed data, to the best of my knowledge, are not available. However, there is a trend in the literature to cite Islamists gains in parliaments but it does not go beyond that. For example see Krämer, Gudrun, 'Cross-Links and Double Talk? Islamist Movements in the Political Process', in Guazzone, Laura. (ed.) *The Islamist Dilemma: The Political Role of Islamist Movements in the Contemporary Arab World*. Reading: Ithaca Press, 1995. pp. 46-47.

<sup>14</sup> Personal interview with Rashid Gannoushi in Oxford on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 2002.

preaches justice for all, and has higher perceived credentials than incumbents. These qualities are mostly found amongst Islamists. However, Islam appeals to those in power as well as to those opposing them.

Islam projects disobedience to a 'just' government as a crime to be punished with all the force of the law. At the same time, Islam encourages disobedience if the ruler behaves unjustly in government.<sup>15</sup> As much as Islam offers comfort to the deprived and oppressed, it also provides some protection to the oppressors (see table 2-1 column 4). It does so because the Quranic text does not spell out detailed rules of accountability. Therefore, it is open for interpretation, which may vary according to context. Variations in interpretation create- especially when social turmoil takes place- ambiguities and perhaps this is why Islam appeals to all social strata. With this intrinsic worth, which can justify any position, Islam as a constructed 'political framework', and as a belief system appealing to the many, deserves some attention to explore the potentiality for a democratic polity within it.

Despite the role religious institutions and ideas play in shaping the political outlook of some sectors of society, this does not happen in separation from the rest of material reality. Religious institutions, with their hierarchy of preachers, occur and grow in a social context and interact with it. They can only survive as the social context alters if they find some way of changing their own base of support. However, history provides many examples of people who profess nearly identical religious beliefs ending up on opposite sides in great social conflicts. This happened with the social convulsions, which swept Europe during the great crises of feudalism in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century, when Luther, Calvin, Münzter and many other religious leaders provided their followers with a new interpretation of biblical texts. In this sense, Islam has not been different.

The view of Islam as homogeneous system of thought is a misleading conception.<sup>16</sup> There are many 'Islams'. There is no need to go back to history to invoke examples; the current

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<sup>15</sup> See chapter one of this thesis.

<sup>16</sup> Fred Halliday argues this point eloquently see Halliday, Fred. *Nation and Religion in the Middle East*. London: Saqi books, 2000; Halliday, Fred. *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation: Religion and Politics in*

Islamist movements present diverse -manifestations of these 'Islams', ranging from extremely Orthodox to 'secular Muslims'. However, the majority of the populations in Muslim societies are supportive of democracy as an ideal form of government and very religious at the same time. Should Islamic religiosity constitute a hindrance to democracy, levels of support for democracy in Muslim societies would not have been as high as we observe in Table 2-1 below. Nonetheless, a detailed analysis (chapters 6, 7, and 8) will examine this relationship.

It is clearly evident that support for religious politicians is substantially high in Muslim countries. One can deduce that in Muslim societies, religion and politics are intertwined, at least, in the public perception; support for democracy as an ideal form of government is very high and considerable majorities in some Muslim countries (Table 2-1) prefer politicians who believe in God. However, such a deduction could be misleading. Because a preference for politicians who believe in God to hold public office is not restricted to Muslim populations even though this preference is stronger in Muslim populations (Table 2-1 below). This emphasis perhaps reflects the perceived credentials of believers as honest and 'clean' politicians who would not be as corrupt as non-believers.

Table (2-1) Respondents' attitudes towards religion, politics, and democracy in 11 Muslim countries

Country	Religious person %	Politicians who don't believe in God unfit for public office (strongly agree+ agree)	Comfort and strength from religion	God is very Important % (reported 10 on the scale)	Democracy better than any other form of government %
Bangladesh 01	96.9	75.1	98.9	93.3	98.3
Egypt 01	98.7	90.0	99.9	81.6	97.7
Albania 98	94.9	NA	58.8	16.5	96.8
Azerbaijan 96	88.3	NA	87.6	60.9	96.1
Morocco 01	NA	94.0	99.8	99.2	95.4
Jordan 01	86.2	82.9	99.7	98.5	90.3
Bosnia 98	69.8	NA	64.7	30.3	89.4
Turkey 01	78.4	68.7	91.1	76.7	88
Indonesia 01	84.5	90.5	100	96.9	71.2
Iran 01	94.9	NA	96.3	82.9	69.3
Pakistan 95-97	NA	NA	84.6	74.2	NA
USA		51.7			
S. Africa		63.8			
Venezuela		62.0			
Philippines		83.7			
Tanzania		74.6			

Source: WVS and EVS fourth wave. The latest data available are presented in the table. For some countries, I had to rely on data from the Third WVS/EVS wave as indicated by the year next to each country in the first column.

*the Middle East*. London: I.B.Tauris. 1999 [1996]; also Bromley posits a similar view see Bromley, Simon. *Rethinking Middle East Politics*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994.

In the Muslim countries (above), it could well be that this perception of ‘transparency’ is the reason why Muslims prefer politicians who believe in God in order to minimise corrupt practices by incumbent regimes.<sup>17</sup> It is likely that the preference for believing politicians in non-Muslim countries (see table 2-1 above) is high for similar reasons. Among developing countries only the USA showed a majority rejection of politicians who do not believe in God.

### **Islamist Perceptions of Democracy**

It is not possible to talk about Islam and democracy in general but only about Muslims living and theorising under specific objective circumstances. This may sound evident enough, and yet it is all too often ignored, not least because authors themselves present their views as ‘the position of Islam’ on any given matter whether democracy, liberty, pluralism or otherwise.<sup>18</sup> It is also evident that there are certain elements of the faith accepted by all those who consider themselves to be Muslims. Nonetheless, Muslims differ considerably over how an Islamic society should be organised. Even amongst Islamists differences over approaches to politics are conspicuous. For example, while some Islamists accept political pluralism, others reject it outright. Such attitudes may well be determined by societal factors, but both attitudes could be justified by different interpretations of the Quranic text. In the following discussion, Islamist views pertinent to politics will be contrasted with liberal democratic principles.

Because democracy is a contestable concept, argues the Pakistani Islamist intellectual and activist Khurshid Ahmad<sup>19</sup>, it is ‘intellectually unacceptable and culturally untenable to assume that a particular Western model of democracy must be accepted as an ideal form of polity for the entirety of mankind, particularly for Muslims, who have their own distinct and ideological identity and historico-cultural personality.’ He goes on to say,

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<sup>17</sup> See Transparency International, *Global Corruption Report*. 2001. Especially the chapter on North Africa and the Middle East, pp. 95-108. The report available on <http://www.globalcorruptionreport.org/#download> accessed 20 October 2002.

<sup>18</sup> See Krämer, Gudrun. ‘Islamists Notions of Democracy’, in Beinin, J. & Stork, J. (eds.) *Political Islam: Essays from Middle East Report*. London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 1997. p. 72.

<sup>19</sup> For a biography of Ahmad see Esposito, John. & Voll, John. *Makers of Contemporary Islam*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. pp. 39-53.

democracy's 'simple export to the Muslim world ... is not a realistic option.'<sup>20</sup> There are two dimensions of democracy that necessitates such a contention Ahmad posits: 1) democracy's philosophical roots: 'the concept of popular sovereignty and consequent principle of legitimacy based exclusively on popular support'. 2) Democracy's 'operational mechanisms ensuring people's participation in governance in order to discern the will of the people as to the choice of rulers as well as of policies and programs'. He contends that 'within the context of Islamic faith, culture, history and contemporary experience, there are clear lines of guidance, which suggest a unique and distinct political framework that can rightly be described as truly participatory, both in substance and spirit and capable of establishing a political order committed to the twin goals of *'adl* (justice) and *shūra* (consultation), the real substance of operational democracy'. He also contends that 'this approach has the further potential to remedy some of the conflicts, contradictions, and failures of secular democracy.'<sup>21</sup> Ahmad's vision of 'Islamic democracy', however, remains at the abstract level as it neither spells out the 'mechanisms' of *shūra* nor mentions universal suffrage, rotation of power, periodic elections, or institutional accountability. Instead he reiterates some Western critics<sup>22</sup> of democracy and concludes that '... the Muslim *ummah* [nation], must not blindly follow any of the Western models; instead, they should draw upon their own ideological and historical sources and establish institutions that represent their own mankind, and a lot can be learned from the contemporary Western world, but only those arrangements which have roots in our own history and experience and are considered part of our value framework and cultural ethos can really be fruitful in our own lands.'<sup>23</sup>

Ahmad's vision of Islamic democracy is, for many reasons, flawed. To start with, his focus on the Islamic *ummah*, as seen currently, is utopian. The *ummah*, he refers to, does not exist in clearly defined political boundaries. There are modern states inhabited by majority of Muslim populations and members of the Organisation of the Islamic

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<sup>20</sup> Ahmad, Khurshid. 'Islam and Democracy: Some Conceptual and Contemporary Dimensions', *The Muslim World*, Spring 2000. 90. p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. p. 2.

<sup>22</sup> For example he cites Carothers, Thomas. 'Democracy without Illusions', *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 1997; and Arblaster, Anthony. *Democracy*. Open University Press, 1994.

Conference but they do not constitute a politically viable or even homogenous *ummah*.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, his focus on the notion that Muslims should 'establish institutions that represent their own mankind' is a very vague contention. What does 'own mankind' mean? This question, like many others, Ahmed left unanswered. However, 'own mankind' could mean different things; race, culture, faith, language ... etc. this is essentially an approach, which employs a very unclear use of the concept of culture by equating it to 'own mankind'. Furthermore, Ahmad frequently used phrases like 'our own history and experience'. History, first, is not static. What kind of history does he mean? Islam does not exclusively define the modern history of the modern Middle East; Turkish, Arab, and Persian nationalisms contributed to the collapse of the presumed 'Islamic' Ottoman Empire. Within the sphere of Arab nationalism, sub-nationalism emerged in the form of modern states, which in many cases surpasses pan-Arab nationalism (see Table 2-2 below).

Talking about the Muslim *ummah* outside the limitations imposed by the modern nation state is utopian thinking. Hence, in reality, modern Middle Eastern states although inhabited by Muslims, are defined with reference to geography, language, ruling families and all or some of these features combined. One cannot see an *ummah* or the *ummah* Ahmad refers to as a viable political entity although to some extent it is felt at the psychological level. Had there been an *ummah* across the so-called Islamic World, a vast majority of Muslim respondents to the WVS question 'which of the following best describes you?' would have reported 'above all I am Muslim' (see Table 2-2 below). Although 8 in 10 Egyptians identified with Islam, followed by 7 in 10 in Jordan, and two-thirds of the respondents in Iran and Turkey, identification with the nation state in Bangladesh and Indonesia was stronger than identification with Islam. In the Arab countries, Egyptian and Jordanian respondents' attachment to the state is the lowest with

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<sup>23</sup> Ahmad, Khurshid. 'Islam and Democracy: Some Conceptual and Contemporary Dimensions', *The Muslim World*, Spring 2000, 90. p. 6.

<sup>24</sup> Halliday, Fred. *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation: Religion and Politics in the Middle East*. I.B.Tauris, 1999 [1996]. p. 123. Halliday argues that *ummah* is a myth perpetrated by Muslims and non-Muslims alike. He also posits that *ummah* -meaning one community- 'has never been true of the Islamic world since the years of the first caliphs.' This applies to Muslims in Europe today.

Egypt remarkably low. In short, 'Muslims like non-Muslims, have multiple identities, the relative balance and character of which change over time.'<sup>25</sup>

This can be explained partly by the 'artificial state' created by the colonial powers, the failure of the political regimes in these states to deliver satisfactory services to the population, and their perceived failure against Israel for the past 50 years. All these factors contributed to the popularity of the Islamists who emphasise far-reaching transnational Islamic values and solidarity. Moreover, some Islamist movements, especially in Egypt, developed into essentially anti-regime and consequently anti-state movements.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, it is not surprising to see Muslim Arabs identify with Islam more than any other loyalty. Nonetheless, this identification does not justify a sweeping generalisation - like Ahmad's - to talk about a Muslim *ummah* or *the Muslim ummah*<sup>27</sup>. The shared sense of belonging to the religion of Islam does not constitute a political *ummah* that transcends de facto 'national' identities, which are enforced by the 'modern state'. National identities, in reality, are not subordinated to a greater religious community. On the contrary, the political regimes of Muslim states embrace 'Islamic identities' of various types to enhance their bargaining position versus rival competitors over available resources. This also holds true for the Islamist movements themselves.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Halliday, Fred. *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation: Religion and Politics in the Middle East*. I.B.Tauris, 1999[1996]. p. 124.

<sup>26</sup> See Mustafa, Hala. 'The Islamist Movements under Mubarak', in Guazzone, Laura. (ed.) *The Islamist Dilemma: The Political Role of Islamist Movements in the Contemporary Arab World*. Reading: Ithaca Press, 1995. pp. 161-185.

<sup>27</sup> Other social scientists have reached similar conclusions; see for example Mandeville, Peter. 'Reimagining the *ummah*? Information Technology and the Changing Boundaries of Political Islam', in Mohammadi, Ali. (ed.) *Islam Encountering Globalization*. London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002. pp. 61-90; Eickelman, D. F. *Muslim Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

<sup>28</sup> This argument is not new. For example, see Dawisha, A. (ed.) *Islam in Foreign Policy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983. especially the chapter by Leifer, M. 'The Islamic Factor in Indonesia's Foreign Policy', in Dawisha, A. (ed.) *Islam in Foreign Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983. Piscatori, J. 'Asian Islam: International Linkages and Their Impact on International Relations', in Esposito J. *Islam in Asia: Religion, Politics and Society*. New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 230-261; Saravanamuttu, J. 'Malaysia's Foreign Policy: 1957-1980', in Zakaria Haji Ahmad (ed.) *Government and Politics in Malaysia*. Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1987; Taj ul-Islam Hashmi (ed.) *Islam, Muslims and the Modern State*. London: St. Martin's Press, Macmillan, 1994; Voll, J. 'Relations among Islamist Groups', in Esposito J. (ed.) *Political Islam: Revolution and Radicalism, or Reform?* Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997. pp. 231-248. part three of the book 'The international Relations of Political Islam' is particularly relevant.



Table (2-2) Sources of political identity in 6 Muslim countries in (2001). Percentage reporting: Above all, I am a Muslim and above all, I am a ... 'the nationality', and Above all I am an Arab (Arab countries only). The question asked in surveys was 'Which of the following best describes you?'

Nation	Attachment to Islam: Above all I am a Muslim	Attachment to the Nation Above all I am ...	Attachment to Pan-Arabism Above all I am an Arab
Bangladesh	23.6	55.0 Bangladeshi	
Indonesia	42.0	52.2 Indonesian	
Iran	61.0	34.1 Iranian	
Turkey	64.4	34.1 Turkish	
Jordan	72.5	15.3 Jordanian	8.6
Egypt	79.4	9.8 Egyptian	1.0
Israel	43.9 Jewish	31.2 Israeli	

Source: WVS fourth wave 2001. The latest data available are presented in the table.

### Islamic Political System?

The principles of an Islamic political system according to Ahmad are<sup>29</sup>:

- 1) Sovereignty belongs to Allah alone and humans are vicegerents. Humans must establish the *sharia* that has been revealed to their guidance, so as to be at peace with themselves, the universe, and with God. 'This would bring peace, justice, bliss and prosperity in this world and ensure real salvation in the Hereafter'.
- 2) All human beings are equal before the Lord and subject to the same Law that He has ordained. The Islamic political system is based on the principle of sovereignty of Allah and the supremacy of the *sharia*. The legitimacy of the system comes from the loyalty and obedience to Allah and commitment to follow and establish the *sharia*.
- 3) The position of human beings is that of Allah's vicegerent (*khalifa*). This *istikhlāf* has been entrusted on all those human beings who accept Allah as their *Rab* and Sovereign. The concept is one of popular vicegerency, shared by all believers. Vicegerency also means that limited authority has been delegated to the people to run these affairs. The authority is endowed, not on any chosen person, family, tribe or group, but all Muslim men and women and it is they who have to exercise this power in accordance with the Islamic principle of *shura*. ... Hence, legitimacy in the Islamic political order comes, first and foremost, from accepting Allah as the Sovereign and His Law, i.e. the *sharia* as the supreme Law, and secondly, the governance of society by and in accordance with the will of the people.
- 4) The principle of obedience expounding the network of rights and obligations in an Islamic polity has two distinct dimensions: one, loyalty to Allah and His Prophet and second, the people's right to free speech, discussion, dissent and participation, including the right to disagree and criticize those in authority.

It is important to remember that these principles refer to Muslims only, the community of believers. Islam officially abolishes all distinctions between Muslims but reinforces them between Muslims and non-Muslims whether within the Muslim society (non-Muslims are *ahel dhimmah*) or between non-Muslim societies and the Muslim society. Thus, according to Ahmad's interpretation of the Islamic political system people are equal

<sup>29</sup> Ahmad, Khurshid. 'Islam and Democracy: Some Conceptual and Contemporary Dimensions', *The Muslim World*, Spring 2000, 90. pp. 7-10. There are many other theories of Islamic political system, for example, Khomeini's theories of Velayat el-Faqih, which I am not addressing here. The reason why I

before the law of Allah *sharia*, which gives non-Muslims living in a Muslim society fewer rights from the state and fewer duties to the state. Ahmad's interpretation of Islamic political system is not romance-free. It is more of a wishful thinking than a coherent political theory of governance for all people without discrimination. Because he does not specify political mechanisms that would 'bring peace, justice, prosperity, and salvation'. Taken at face value, his idea of Islamic political system would bring instability and injustice because the exclusion of non-Muslims is likely to be a source of conflict rather than peace. Besides, contemporary liberal democracies embrace international codes of human rights, which condemn discrimination against people on religious basis. Thus, from a liberal democratic point of view a discriminatory political system on the basis of religious belief cannot be viewed as democratic.

The despotic tyrannies of the Muslim world in which political action was completely suppressed under the iron law of a despot, stood in contrast to the Western model that favours citizenship and participatory government. Hegel expressed this viewpoint when he compared the Ottoman Empire to Germany. He stated that 'the Orientals knew only that *one* is free, the Greeks and Romans that *some* are free, while we knew that all men absolutely, that is, as men, are free.'<sup>30</sup> In a similar manner, Max Weber described the typical Middle Eastern state as an arbitrary, personalised kingship, marked by overlapping, incoherent, and whimsical administrative and judicial institutions staffed not on the basis of ability but on the basis of loyalty to the ruler. For Weber, the legitimacy of this inefficient and cruel form of authority was 'irrational', based only on the populace's passive acceptance of tradition, the leader's coercive power, and traditional legitimacy.<sup>31</sup> These views continue to be echoed in modern times in different forms such as the contrast between perceived Islamic authoritarian culture and western liberal democratic culture<sup>32</sup>.

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selected Ahmad's theory is to highlight some basic elements and compare them to liberal democratic principles.

<sup>30</sup> Hegel, G. W. F. *Reason in History*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1953. p. 24.

<sup>31</sup> Weber, M. *Economy and Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978. pp. 625-7, 976-8.

<sup>32</sup> Huntington, S. *The clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996. For a critique of Huntington thesis see Salim, Rashid. (ed.) *The Clash of Civilisations?: Asian Responses*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University press, 1997. Huntington. SP, Ajami, F. 'The Clash of Civilizations ? The Debate', *Foreign Affairs*, New York, 1993.

The political development of Islamic theories of governance had been informed by three main sources: *sharia*, Arabian tribal traditions, and the heritage of the lands that the Muslims conquered specially Persia and Byzantium. According to Nazih Ayubi<sup>33</sup> the influence of the *sharia* was more evident during the era of the first four successors of the prophet 632-661. The influence of tribal tradition was dominant during the *umayyad* dynasty 661-750. The third was noticeable during the *Abbasid* 750-1258 and *Ottoman* dynasties. The first three caliphs of the prophet Mohammed relied on a nomadic-inspired tripartite principle of *shura* (inner-circle consultation), *aqd* (ruler-ruled contract), and *baya* (oath of allegiance to the ruler). However, these norms of establishing political legitimacy were gradually neglected and as a result, this form of un-institutional direct democracy disappeared from the politics of the subsequent 'Islamic state' as effective source of political legitimacy. Through the conflict, which accompanied transferring political power to the fourth successor, political power was completely attained forcefully by the *umayyads* who established a semi-aristocratic monarchy depending on tribal affiliation rather embracing the principles of consultation, political contract and oath of allegiance.<sup>34</sup>

Since then Islamic political thought regarding the role of the ruler, the community, and the subjects, was concerned mostly with the caliph's characteristics and the sustainability of the community with little mention of individuals' rights. As Al-Sayyid argues after the *umayyad* dynasty took over, Islamic *fiqh* (jurisprudence) was particularly concerned on one hand with the authority of the *caliph* as political leader and symbol and on the other with sustaining the *umma* or *jama'a* (community) as united body<sup>35</sup>. It was in this political context that the need for *sharia* was restructured as a source of ideological unification of the community since the broader goal, human and political unity, was no longer attainable. Under the *abbasids*, the authority and rights of the *imam* (leader), and the rights of community, continued to be discussed in *foqaha* (jurists') circles but the

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<sup>33</sup> Ayubi, N. 'Islam and Democracy', in David Potter et al, *Democratization*, Cambridge: Polity Press. 1997. p. 346.

<sup>34</sup> For a more detailed account see Ayubi, N. *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World*. London: Routledge, 2002 [1991]. pp. 1-31.

<sup>35</sup> Al-Sayyid, Radwan. *Al-Umma wa al-jama'a wa al-sulta* [Community, Group, and Authority]. Beirut: Dar Iqra, 1984. pp. 122-141.

emphasis was more on his abilities and personal qualities. The political rights of individuals were absent theoretically as well as practically as it appears in a major work of a prominent *faqih* (jurist) Ibn Taimiya who mentioned individuals' rights as civil rights over one's life and possessions and made no hint to individuals' political rights and liberties<sup>36</sup>. A contemporary interpretation by a prominent professor of constitutional law opposes this reading and stresses that human rights in the *sharia* are not restricted to individual's freedoms (i.e. freedom of expression and possession); rather the *sharia* links individual's rights of participation in collective decisions to his/her right to access the nation's wealth<sup>37</sup>.

Subsequently emphasis on the *caliph's* power and characteristics developed into a distinct construct in which divine authority is conveyed by the political leader: the *caliph* who is the guardian of religion and is responsible to expand the land of Islam. Moreover, the 'original concept of *tawhid* (oneness, unification, monotheism) was gradually transformed into a concept of unique, supreme, and absolute power of the ruler'<sup>38</sup>. Such conception of power and political leadership was not only characteristic of Islamic political thought under the *abbasids* and subsequent dynasties, it continued to appear in the writings of the *Nahda's* (renaissance) thinkers during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries like Jamal El-din al-Afghani and Mohammed Abdu who introduced a renewed formulation of *caliph* termed *al-Mustabid al-Adel* (benevolent despot)<sup>39</sup>.

These historical accounts sound convincing but limited to a historical experience, which does not totally correspond to contemporary Islamist understandings of the relationship between religion and politics. Therefore, in the following section, Islamist contemporary

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<sup>36</sup> Watt W.M. *Islamic Political Thought: the Basic Concepts, Islamic Surveys*. no.6, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1968. p. 96.

<sup>37</sup> This view is attributed to professor Tawfiq Al-Shady in his book *fiqh al-shura wa al-istishara*. Cited in Huwaidi, F. *al-Islam wa al-Dimokratyyia*, [Islam and democracy], Cairo: Al-Ahram Publishing and translation House. 1993. p. 114.

<sup>38</sup> Hanafi, H. *Min al-'aqida ila al-thawra* [From Faith to Revolution]; Vol.1: Theoretical Introduction, Cairo: Madbuli. 1988. pp.7-8 cited in Ayubi, N. 'Islam and Democracy', in David Potter et al, *Democratization*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997. p. 347.

<sup>39</sup> Ayubi, N. *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World*. London: Routledge, 2002 [1991]. p. 16.

understandings of the relationship between Islam and politics will be illustrated in order to establish the extent to which they match liberal democratic principles of governance.

### Islamists' Perceptions of Religion and State

Drawing on extensive literature written by contemporary Islamists, Krämer, argues that there is a consensus among these writers on the notion that Islam constitutes a comprehensive way of life.<sup>40</sup> This implies a rejection of secularism.<sup>41</sup> Although contemporary Islamists denounce secularism, they make clear distinctions between the spheres of religion proper and temporal politics. The spheres of religion are clearly defined as *ibadat*, which involve an individual's relation with God as set in the doctrine.<sup>42</sup> Other spheres of life, politics included, are defined as *mu`amalt*, which cover social, economic and political life. The significance of this distinction between *ibadat* and *mu`amalt* lies in the nature of each category. While the former is eternal and fixed, the latter is flexible and can be adapted to the changing circumstances, provided the results conform to the *sharia*. Thus, it is established that there are two spheres of human life and activity: *ibadat* revolving around faith and worship and *mu`amalat* around worldly affairs, both subject to the precepts of Islam.<sup>43</sup>

A second consensus found amongst contemporary Islamists concerns the 'Islamic system'. That is, 'the truly Islamic system is the application of the *sharia* and not any particular political order – the historical caliphate included. What matters are the purpose of the state and the principles upon which it rests.'<sup>44</sup> These principles are derived from the Quran and *sunna* and they comprise justice, consultation *shura*, equality, freedom,

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<sup>40</sup> Krämer, Gudrun. 'Islamists Notions of Democracy', in Beinlin, J. & Stork, J. (eds.) *Political Islam: Essays from Middle East Report*, London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 1997. p. 73. This section draws heavily on Krämer account.

<sup>41</sup> Contemporary debate on secularism dates back to 1925 when the Egyptian scholar Ali Abd al-Raziq published his book *Al-Islam and the Roots of Government*, in which he argued that Mohammed was a prophet not a statesman, Islam is religion and not a state, and the caliphate was from the beginning based on force. These claims are still central to the debate today and often outrage Islamists.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibadat* are the five pillars of Islam: the profession of faith, prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and pilgrimage.  
<sup>43</sup> Krämer, Gudrun. 'Islamists Notions of Democracy', in Beinlin, J. & Stork, J. (eds.) *Political Islam: Essays from Middle East Report*. London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 1997. pp. 73-74.

<sup>44</sup> Krämer, Gudrun. 'Islamists Notions of Democracy', in Beinlin, J. & Stork, J. (eds.) *Political Islam: Essays from Middle East Report*. London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 1997. p. 74.

and struggle in the path of God *jihad*.<sup>45</sup> The government is seen as the executive of God's law. The debate amongst Islamists shifted to the details. An important question was raised about the totality of the *sharia*: Does it regulate all spheres of life to the very small detail, or does it only provide general guidelines? Islamists demonstrate a consensus that the *sharia* is a comprehensive set of norms and values but at the same time flexible and therefore suited to all times and places. However, the debate over *sharia* paves the way for distinctions to be made between the untouchable and immutable principles and flexible elements of the *sharia*. The latter is subject to human reasoning while the former is fixed. Islamists' attitudes toward human reasoning, *ijtihad*, demarcate the various schools of thought dominating Islamist political discourse on politics and particularly democracy. Some Islamists have argued that *ijtihad* is irrelevant because the tradition of Islamic thought defined and explained all legal issues, thus it is sufficient to go back to that tradition to solve contemporary problems. This school can be termed as conservatives. In contrast to the conservatives, there is the modernist school. This school, while acknowledging the significance of tradition, argues for new interpretations of the Quran that are suitable for contemporary realities.

However these categories are not mutually exclusive. When political matters are at stake the Muslim Brothers, who on the basis of their social views would qualify as conservatives, hold remarkably modern ideas. For example, they consider government and politics as part of *muamalat*, which are left to human reason to decide upon. This logic does not differ from the logic of those who argued for secularism. As Krämer puts it 'for the Muslim Brothers, unlike for Abd al-Raziq, Islam is religion and state, and yet both agree that the precise form of government is left to human reason to define'.<sup>46</sup> This logic leads to a significant point about the theoretical possibility of adopting democratic government by Islamists. Since government organisation is part of *muamalat*, it would be, according to the logic of Islamists, acceptable, recommended, or even mandatory to adopt a democratic government or some elements of it, provided this does not lead to the

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid. p. 74.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. p. 75.

neglect or violation of Islamic norms and values.<sup>47</sup> In accordance with this view the exiled Tunisian Islamist Rashid Ghannoushi argues that

If by democracy is meant that liberal model of government prevailing in the West, a system under which the people choose their representatives and leaders, and in which there is an alteration of power, as well as freedoms and human rights for the public, then the Muslims will find nothing in their religion to oppose democracy, and it is not in their interest to do so anyway.<sup>48</sup>

The leader of the Jordanian Islamic Action Front Party, Ishaq Farhan, in response to a question about the relationship between Islam and Politics posits that

We believe that Islam offers general guidelines on how political decisions are to be made. It instructs Muslims to consult with each other. But the form or mechanism of consultation has not been specified in the Quran. It is left to the believers to design such a form within its proper historical context. We believe that democracy is the proper form, and Islam is wholly compatible with parliamentary democracy.<sup>49</sup>

These views of leading Islamists reflect an acceptance of democratic procedures as a political mechanism for solving political conflicts. There remain the issues of women and religious minority rights, which have been major issues that Islamists and their critics endlessly debate. In the course of the coming sections these two issues will be dealt with.

### **Islam, Democracy and the Debate on Universal Human Rights**

To equate 'rights or political ideals' with western states was, as Halliday argues, 'very much a stock-in-trade of the nineteenth-century colonial thinking mixed as it was with ideals of social Darwinism'. He goes on to say that 'Huntington's espousal of this position, replete be it with misused quotes from Walzer, is of an equally illiberal, conservative kind'<sup>50</sup>. Moreover, summarising some of the Western liberal thinkers' views on 'rights' under what he terms 'hegemonic abstentionism'<sup>51</sup>, Halliday posits that

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid. p. 75.

<sup>48</sup> Cited in Esposito, John. & Voll. John. *Makers of Contemporary Islam*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. p. 114.

<sup>49</sup> Moaddel, Mansoor. 'Interview with Dr. Ishaq A. Farhan, the Leader of Islamic Action Front Party', in Moaddel, Mansoor. & Talatof, Kamran. (eds.) *Contemporary debates in Islam: An Anthology of Modernist and Fundamentalist Thought*. London: Macmillan, 2000. pp. 310-313.

<sup>50</sup> Halliday, Fred. *Nation and Religion in the Middle East*. London: Saqi Books, 2000. p. 16.

<sup>51</sup> The term as explained by Halliday 'refers to those political theorists who, from a variety of philosophical starting points, seek to limit the application of universal concepts of human rights. Numerous terms for such an approach exist – communitarian, relativist, tradition-based, anti-foundationalist, postmodernist, [and] realist. There are philosophical differences between them, but their practical conclusion, their

'MacIntyre<sup>52</sup>, ... has questioned the possibility of a rational and hence universalist approach to rights. He has insisted on locating all discussions of morality within the context of tradition and tradition-related communities'<sup>53</sup>. Similar is the view of Hampshire's, who is 'sceptical of universalist or rationalist approaches. He believes instead in the possibility of some minimum'<sup>54</sup>. This minimum is 'a non-divisive and generally acceptable conception of justice, however thin a conception this may be, amounting at its minimum only to fair procedures of negotiation.'<sup>55</sup> Not far from this view is Walzer's view of rights and morality. Although he rejects the notion of universal rights, he consents to the idea of moral minimalism in the international sphere. As introduced by Halliday, Walzer 'distinguishes between a 'thick' and 'thin' morality, the former being principles inherent within communities, the latter being only those values that we observe as recurring, reiterated, between communities.'<sup>56</sup> Thus from a liberal point of view the notion of universal rights is very contestable one. This allows for the introduction of context-bound rights and moralities.

However, context-bound values, human rights, and moralities are subject to a 'context', be it political, social, economic. The political context involves actors who would be willing to argue for relativity of human rights on cultural basis. In the Middle East it is often noted that those who argue for relativity of rights are not the oppressed people, but their oppressors and 'by their Western friends who derive financial and strategic benefit from so doing'.<sup>57</sup> When calculating costs and benefits, actors opt for the least costly option to maximise their potential utility. In this context, 'cultural norms' provide an easy target for benefit maximisation because they are inexpensive to produce and market. For

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implication in the real world, is broadly similar. ... It is hegemonic that it comes from a standpoint within the dominant liberal-democratic states and reflects a choice about how to use existing forms of power. A theory that advocates doing less or doing nothing when more could be done, ...' Halliday, Fred. *Nation and Religion in the Middle East*. London: Saqi Books, 2000. p. 15-16.

<sup>52</sup> MacIntyre, Alasdair. *After Virtue*. London: Duckworth, 1984. MacIntyre, Alasdair. *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* London: Duckworth, 1988.

<sup>53</sup> Halliday, Fred. *Nation and Religion in the Middle East*. London: Saqi Books, 2000. p. 16.

<sup>54</sup> Halliday, Fred. *Nation and Religion in the Middle East*. London: Saqi Books, 2000. p. 17.

<sup>55</sup> Hampshire, Stuart. *Innocence and Experience*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1989. p. 78 cited in Halliday, Fred. *Nation and Religion in the Middle East*. London: Saqi Books, 2000. p. 17.

<sup>56</sup> Halliday, Fred. *Nation and Religion in the Middle East*. London: Saqi Books. 2000. p. 17.

<sup>57</sup> Halliday, Fred. *Nation and Religion in the Middle East*. London: Saqi Books. 2000. p. 18.



example, invoking 'Islamic values' or 'Asian values'<sup>58</sup> (however defined) as a justification for minimal respect for Human Rights by oppressive regimes would have a relatively easy access to the international public domain. For the media is likely to reproduce 'cultural norms' as explanatory factors in world politics.

Viewed as a monolithic religion, Islam presents a set of values that are, from an Islamic point of view, universal. In its early days, Islam developed procedural mechanisms to universalise these values by means of preaching, conquering new land, and Jihad. In the contemporary world such mechanisms are irrelevant; universalisation of Human Rights is governed by many other rules including international institutions. These rules are universal and more than ever before Humans subscribe to them including Muslims. The international trend towards universalisation of Human Rights seems irreversible and it exposes the deficiencies of the relativity of rights argument. Islamists insist on some form of cultural specificity. Even those who accept democracy as a political mechanism and acknowledge that polygamy is declining still would appose abolishing it on Islamic grounds. For example, the leader of the Jordanian Islamic Action Front Party was asked the following question: 'If the parliament passes a law that makes polygamy illegal, what would be your reaction?' He answered, 'we will oppose this law on Islamic grounds.'<sup>59</sup> The argument of relativity still serves reserved Islamists and some political regimes. If universal principles of human rights are to be upheld regimes and Islamists alike must state the acceptance of them.

### **Divine Versus Popular Sovereignty**

In historical Islam, divine sovereignty was the central theme around which political authority was envisaged by practitioners as well as religious scholars. 'Political authority

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<sup>58</sup> See Errol P. Mendes, 'Asian Values and Human Rights: Letting the Tiger Free', a paper published on the Human Rights Research and Education Centre website [http://www.uottawa.ca/hrrec/publicat/asian\\_values.html#N\\_1\\_](http://www.uottawa.ca/hrrec/publicat/asian_values.html#N_1_) accessed 17 November 2002. The author is a Professor of Law, Director of the Human Rights Research and Education Centre, University of Ottawa, Editor-in-Chief, National Journal of Constitutional Law and member of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal.

<sup>59</sup> Moaddel, Mansoor. 'Interview with Dr. Ishaq A. Farhan, the Leader of Islamic Action Front Party', in Moaddel, Mansoor. & Talattof, Kamran. (eds.) *Contemporary debates in Islam: An Anthology of Modernist and Fundamentalist Thought*. London: Macmillan, 2000. p. 313.

was understood as the instrument through which the application of the main tenets of the divine message could be supervised, so that sovereignty was thus not for the ruler or for the clergy (let alone for the 'people') but was for the Word of God as embedded in the *sharia*<sup>60</sup>. Conventional wisdom amongst orientalist holds a static view that the principle of popular sovereignty, which is central to democratic theory, is in sharp contrast with the Islamic concept of divine sovereignty.<sup>61</sup> A view to which Islamists subscribe.

Historically the Islamic state was nomocracy (Rule of rules).<sup>62</sup> Therefore, it was neither an autocracy nor a theocracy. The state was perceived simply as a vehicle for achieving security and order in ways that would assist Muslims to attend to their religious duties of advocating good and preventing evil. Legislation was not really a function of the state, for the (divine) law *preceded* the State and was not one of its products, and the legal process was restricted to deducing detailed rules and judgments from the broader tenets of the *shari'a*. A certain element of equilibrium and balance was presumed among three powers: caliph, as a guardian of the community and the faith; the *ulama* or religious scholars, involved in the task of furnishing religio-legal advice (*fatwa*); and the judges, who settled disputes according to religious laws (*qada`*) people are bound to the system through a concept of loyalty (*wala`*) – loyalty is meant to be to the umma rather than to the regime, to the idea rather than individual.<sup>63</sup> However, in practical terms the Caliph ruled individually and loyalty to him was the most common form of loyalty witnessed in historical Islamic state. As such the historical Islamic state differs sharply from the modern democratic secular nation state, which is a precondition for a democratic polity.

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<sup>60</sup> Ayubi, N. 'Islam and Democracy', in David Potter et al, *Democratization*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997. p. 347.

<sup>61</sup> Kedourie, Elie. *Democracy and Arab Political Culture*. Washington: Washington Institute, 1992.

<sup>62</sup> Tamara Sonn defines Nomocracy as 'a state governed by a codified system of laws. The ideal Islamic state is one governed by individuals or bodies bound by Islamic law'. In contrast theocracy 'is a state governed by God/gods or those who claim to act on divine authority'. She argues the latter does not apply to the Ideal Islamic state. See her article on 'Political Authority in Classical Islamic Thought', at <http://www.islamonline.net/English/contemporary/islamic-3/islamic1.shtml> p. 1.

<sup>63</sup> Ayubi, N. 'Islam and Democracy', in David Potter et al, *Democratization*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997. pp. 347-8. See also Nazih Ayubi, *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World*. London: Routledge, 2002 [1991]. pp. 22-23.

The ideal Islamic state –nomocracy- argues Ahmad ‘is different from a secular democracy as it is diametrically opposed to the concept of the sovereignty of the people’ and it is ‘characterized by the supremacy of the *Shari`ā*, yet it is diametrically different from theocracy as it has been known in history’<sup>64</sup>. He also posits that ‘the lesson of history is very clear: secularisation and Westernization of Muslim lands is not possible without arbitrary power. There is no incompatibility between Islam and a truly democratic system based on people’s participation and power-sharing.’<sup>65</sup> This Islamist understanding of the state- nomocracy- represents a state governed by a codified system of laws, which sharply contrast with the principle of popular sovereignty. This understanding of the state pre-empts legislation by the people (elected representatives) or at least limits it to the *muamalat* within the framework of sharia and its purposes (*maqasid*). Thus, there are imposed limits as to what representatives are able to do. But human reasoning (*ijtihad*) could maximise the area of legislation by generating new and contemporary interpretations of the *sharia*.

In the case of Islam, the codified system of laws is divine and thus unquestionable. By contrast, in a democratic system all systems of law are subject to criticism, contestation, and amendments because freedom of expression is safeguarded irrespective of the subject matter. In an Islamic context, even in a proclaimed secular state like Egypt, anybody who touches on the taboos of Islamic teachings faces punishment in the name of Islamic morality by the state’s religious authorities<sup>66</sup>. As Tamara Sonn has put it ‘[...] classical Islamic legal theory implicitly distinguishes between those empowered to interpret the law (the legislative and judicial branches) and those empowered to make sure the law is being followed (the executive branch). Executive political power-with its coercive authority-ideally would concern itself with safeguarding Islamic law. But because it is subject to abuse, the formulators of Islam’s classical theory of political authority considered it an unreliable repository of religious responsibility. They therefore retained the primary responsibility for influencing the life of the community in the hands of legal

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<sup>64</sup> Ahmad, Khurshid. ‘Islam and Democracy: Some Conceptual and Contemporary Dimensions’, *The Muslim World*, Spring 2000, 90. p. 14.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. pp. 17-18.

scholars: the legislative and judicial branch of Islamic authority.’ This is far a way from popular sovereignty, there are two layers of authority above the people 1) the divine authority represented by the *sharia*, and 2) those who interpret it.

Thus, Ahmad’s claim that ‘there is no incompatibility between Islam and a truly democratic system’ doesn’t seem to be convincing. For he did not define ‘truly democratic system’. Instead he argued that the system is ‘based on people’s participation and power-sharing’, participation can be 100% or near, like in former USSR, Syria, and Tunisia in May 2002 and the results are 99% win, but does this mean democracy and power sharing? Simply no. It does not provide checks and balances protecting citizens against abuse of power. Thus, theocracy is not very different from nomocracy because both systems are based on a supreme unchallenged and unquestionable power. In theocracy it is God and/or his representative on earth and in nomocracy it is the broad rules revealed from God to the prophet. The principle is essentially a similar one and subsequently the outcome is very comparable if not identical. In short, both systems do not qualify as a democracy that is based on freedom of choice because absolutes beyond critique are prominent.

Accountability is another point where *some* Islamic understandings of public authority sharply differs from liberal democratic theory. In liberal democratic theory all agents are accountable to their principals being individuals or organisations where in the former accountability is to God through the application of his doctrine and is postponed to the judgement day because God is the principal<sup>67</sup>. However, contemporary Islamists conceive accountability and sovereignty in a way that is no different from liberal democratic theory. They argue, as one Islamist put it, ‘we believe that *al-sha’ab* (people) is the source of authority and we believe in the principle of power rotation’<sup>68</sup>. This democratically positive view has been subject to regular suspicion. Its opponents have

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<sup>66</sup> Ghazaleh, Pascale. ‘Sex, lies and censorship’, *Al-Ahram Weekly Online*, 27 Dec. 2001 - 2 Jan. 2002 issue. No.566. <http://web1.ahram.org.eg/weekly/2001/566/20011.htm> accessed 1 January 2002.

<sup>67</sup> This interpretation is commonly found among the ultra-orthodoxy of groups like Hezb al-Tahrir Al-Islami (Islamic Liberation Party) and Al-Takfir w al-Hijra group.

<sup>68</sup> Interview with Dr. Mohammed Jamal Heshma a member of Muslim Brotherhood Movement and MP in the Egyptian parliament on Al-Jazeera Satellite Channel showed on the 11<sup>th</sup> of January 2001 11:30 p.m-12:30 a.m. on Ahmed’s Mansoor’s program *Bela Hudood* (Without Frontiers)

argued that Islamists use this slogan to obtain power and once they acquire power they turn their back on the slogan and apply *sharia* religious law which does not recognise the right of other political groups like Communists to operate freely in the society: the application of *sharia* would automatically disenfranchise non-Muslims and non-believers. Dr. Heshma responds to this point by saying that all citizens have the right to exercise their constitutional and legal political rights (here he refers to the current constitution of Egypt), and it is only the people that have the right to elect and choose their representatives. Thus the power of any political, social, and economic ideas is anchored in the electorates who have the right to elect and endorse representatives symbolising their aspirations and beliefs<sup>69</sup>. This view represents a departure from the traditional view and indicates a process of reform that has taken place within contemporary Islamic movements.

### **The Role of the State**

Modern democratic secular states emphasise worldly and material well-being of individuals. In such a political context spirituality is a private matter and its place in public sphere is nonexistent due secularisation of the nation state. Islamists maintain that an Islamic system or Islamic democracy, while paying attention to material needs and well-being, emphasises the spiritual aspect of life and considers spirituality first, superior, and the primary target. Therefore, worldly and material well-being is understood in line with spirituality if not defined by it<sup>70</sup>. In Sisk's words 'Islam especially, as a religion, has a deep spiritual meaning reaching far beyond its political aspects, and indeed is aimed at addressing the totality of life and human relations, along with the afterlife'<sup>71</sup>. This echoes the Muslim historian and sociologist Ibn Khaldun's view in which he defines the primary reason for *imama* (leadership) in the Islamic state as achieving the spiritual and material needs of people because material needs are associated with spiritual needs in the afterlife

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<sup>69</sup> Interview with Dr. Mohammed Jamal Heshma a member of Muslim Brotherhood Movement and MP in the Egyptian parliament on Al-Jazeera Satellite Channel showed on the 11<sup>th</sup> of January 2001 11:30 p.m-12:30 a.m. on Ahmed's Mansoor's program *Bela Hudood* (Without Frontiers).

<sup>70</sup> See, for example, various chapters of Huwaidi, Fahmi. *al-Islam wa al-Dimokratyyia*, [Islam and democracy]. Cairo: Al-Ahram Publishing and Translation House, 1993. pp. 123-133.

<sup>71</sup> Sisk, Timothy D. *Islam and Democracy: Religion, Politics, and Power in the Middle East*. Washington D.C.: United states institute of Peace, 1992. p. 15.

and this what the principal legislature (God) accepts. Thus, the ideal Islamic state makes the religion or the moral law of religion the determinant of its actions.<sup>72</sup>

What are the characteristics of the state in Islam? Reviewing the major writings about the subject, Huwaidi cites seven themes that guide the Islamic state. Sovereignty for the nation,<sup>73</sup> society is obliged and responsible for the common good, freedom is the right for all, equality among people is a fundamental, the rights of non-Muslims are legitimate and safeguarded, injustice is forbidden and its resistance is a duty, and finally the law is above all.<sup>74</sup> These themes are very much compatible with liberal democratic theory of modern state. However, Huwaidi and associates advocating Islamic democracy are clear about the traditional interpretation of Islam in which non-Muslims are treated as second-class citizens. They reject this interpretation and propose equality on the basis of citizenship rather than religious belief.<sup>75</sup>

In the Western modern democratic nation-state, the authority of the nation is supreme, although this view is increasingly challenged by Globalisation. Sovereignty is entrenched in the nation or in the parliament it elects. As such the nation or its parliament make the law and change it. In Islamic terms the authority of the nation is restricted by the *sharia* i.e. the divine law ties members of the nation. Therefore, the nation cannot behave contrary to the rules of Quran and *sunna*. Thus the elected lawmakers are obliged to legislate within the boundaries of the divine law. The divine law consists of a set of ethical issues that are absolute and cannot be openly debated at the parliament's floor. For example, issues of homosexuality, atheism, and agnosticism are rejected outright. These issues are, in Islamic terms, against the ethics laid down in the doctrine. Discussion of the aforementioned issues is plausible in a secular context but it is quite impossible in

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<sup>72</sup> Ibn Khaldun's view is cited in Huwaidi, Fahmi. *al-Islam wa al-Dimokratyyia*, [Islam and democracy]. Cairo: Al-Ahram Publishing and Translation House, 1993. p. 127.

<sup>73</sup> Khomeini does not subscribe to this view. For his account of Islamic state see Khomeini, Imam Ruhullah. 'The Pillars of an Islamic State', in Moaddel, Mansoor. (eds.) *Contemporary debates in Islam: An Anthology of Modernist and Fundamentalist Thought*. London: Macmillan, 2000. pp. 247-250.

<sup>74</sup> Huwaidi, Fahmi. *al-Islam wa al-Dimokratyyia*, [Islam and democracy]. Cairo: Al-Ahram Publishing and Translation House, 1993. pp. 103-114.

<sup>75</sup> The Jordanian Islamic Action Front Party subscribes to this principle of equality. See Moaddel, Mansoor. 'Interview with Dr. Ishaq A. Farhan, the Leader of Islamic Action Front Party', in Moaddel, Mansoor. &

an Islamic context. Thus, even the idea of sovereign individual, that is, an individual independent of religious ethics is hardly understood in Islamic terms because individuals' rights and duties are set in the doctrine. Therefore any encroachment in overstating individuals' rights of belief or behaviour that out-step the bounds of *sharia* cannot be understood in any way but apostate. Consequently, the principle of being a member of the Islamic nation/state is breached.

Islamic political thought expressed the relationship between the community of individuals and the state with specific emphasis on justice, while the modern western nation-state emphasised liberty, as the highest political value.<sup>76</sup> Thus the dichotomy is individual/liberty in western thought and individuals/justice in Islamic thought (Figure 2-1 below). 'Since the application of justice is highly contingent and discretionary, it is natural that 'leadership' (*qiyada; imama*) would become the most important, even exclusive, political 'institution'.<sup>77</sup> This emphasis on collective justice enabled the successive leaders of the Islamic states throughout history to monopolise political power and exclude opposition voices in the name of justice for all but only as seen by an unaccountable leader.

Figure (2-1) a typology of political order in Western and Islamic contexts

Model	Political unit	Highest political value	Political order
Islamic model	Community/ group/jama`a/umma	Justice /adle/ adala	Leadership /qiyada/imama
Western model	Individual	Liberty	Law/state

Nonetheless, from the Muslim Brothers to the Iranian clerics a comprehensively detailed description defining an Islamic state is hard to find, and the search for it 'will be in vain'<sup>78</sup>. Not because it is a political secret but because such a description –if it has ever existed- would not answer all the questions posed. Consequently, some will argue that an Islamic state is based on consultancy (*shura*) while others will argue that it 'is desirable

Talattof, Kamran. (eds.) *Contemporary debates in Islam: An Anthology of Modernist and Fundamentalist Thought*. London: Macmillan, 2000. pp. 310-313.

<sup>76</sup> Ayubi, Nazih. *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World*. 2002 [1991] London: Routledge, p. 24.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid. p. 24.

<sup>78</sup> Ayubi, Nazih. *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World*. London: Routledge, 2002 [1991]. p. 42.

but not actually required'. Yet, 'those who do accept *shura* as an integral part of Islamic government will disagree about its definition and whether it is invested in the political leadership, in the religious scholars, or else in the people or community at large. ... yet any Islamic manifesto will include, *a priori*, a detailed account of the moral precepts that the public is to observe collectively and that are to be overseen authoritatively, especially in the area of sexuality, women and the family. For Islam ... is not a particularly 'political' religion, this does not mean that it is a private, 'individualistic' religion. Very much the contrary: it is about *public ethics* and *collective morals* – and hence Islam's *apparently* 'political' character in the eyes of many people.'<sup>79</sup> It is this manifestation of Islam that has been elaborated upon as the basis of an Islamic political system. A system that emphasises collective morals and protects them in the name of, and for, the *umma*. At the end of a chapter on *the theory and the practice of the Islamic state*, Ayubi summarises the story of the Islamic state: 'It is one of the ironies of Utopia that nostalgia can indeed be aroused for things that have never really existed'.<sup>80</sup>

### **The Composition of the Nation and Political Opposition**

It is plausible to argue that the concepts of nation and community have democratic as well as authoritarian qualities and potentials<sup>81</sup>, depending on what is included and excluded from the definitions of nation and community. After reviewing some of the influential Islamic writers' opinions of the 'other', Huwaidi, reaches a tentative conclusion: although circumstances have changed, and the danger of turmoil has vanished, and Islam became an established religion, the Islamic consciousness conceives opposition as synonymous to turmoil.<sup>82</sup> It may be this understanding that led Islamic thinkers throughout history to portray minorities and 'others' as a *threat* to the stability of Islam and Muslims. To illustrate this point, I will briefly discuss the position of *ahl al-dhemma* or *ahl al-kitab* (resident non-Muslims belonging to other monotheistic religions recognised by Islam, mainly Jews and Christians). Non-Muslims, historically labelled as 'others', were divided into two groups: 1) those who live outside the Islamic state (here I

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. p. 34.

<sup>81</sup> Halliday, Fred. *Nation and Religion in the Middle East*. London: Saqi Books, 2000. p. 16.



am not referring to a particular state; rather I am referring to a conceptual framework of the ideal Islamic state), 2) those who live in the Islamic state but belong to another religion recognised by Islam (Jews and Christians). Muslim-others are divided into two categories as well: 1) those who belong to another Islamic religious faction, and 2) those who have another view of politics different to those in power. The formulation and problematisation of the 'other' in Islamic thought is attributed to historical circumstances, inherited traditions, and most importantly to various interpretations of the religious doctrine (Quranic verses). Although the majority of Islamic theorists nowadays recognise the constitutional and legal rights and duties of individuals and groups (Dr. Heshma, Huwaidi, Gannoushi, Farhan, and many others), there are some who tend to look back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century interpretations or even earlier and apply them to contemporary situations. For example, Maududy classified non-Muslims in three categories relying on historical rather than contemporary experiences. Huwaidi criticises such reading of Islam and argues that Maududy's main mistake was that he explained his position of the 'other', in our times, using the logic of the early ages of Islam when international relations were based on wars and the outcomes of battles'<sup>83</sup>.

Muslim religious theorists' understanding of the nation is different from the modern concept of nation state. In the West, the development of democracy was linked to the 'nation state' although recent developments in the United Kingdom, for example, such as the devolution of Scotland point to a different set of conditions. In Islamic terms the nation is tied together because of the assumed religious belief that unifies people. Thus, Islam is a universal religion that emphasis the ties of belief over race, language, geography, and nationalism. Nonetheless, Islam acknowledges the existence of other circles within the *ummah* such as geography and nationalism for organisational reasons but they are not defining features of the *ummah*.<sup>84</sup> In the historical Islamic states *ahl al-kitab* were favourably treated by the state as compared to the Islamic sects. The formers'

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<sup>82</sup> Huwaidi, Fahmi. *al-Islam wa al-Dimokratyyia*, [Islam and democracy]. Cairo: Al-Ahram Publishing and Translation House, 1993. p. 21.

<sup>83</sup> Huwaidi, Fahmi. *al-Islam wa al-Dimokratyyia*, [Islam and democracy], Cairo: Al-Ahram Publishing and Translation House, 1993. p. 19.

<sup>84</sup> Huwaidi, Fahmi. *al-Islam wa al-Dimokratyyia*, [Islam and democracy]. Cairo: Al-Ahram Publishing and Translation House, 1993. p. 127.

freedom of belief was safeguarded, their security of life and possessions were the responsibility of the state, and generally they were exempted from military service, 'in return for paying a sort of "poll tax" (*jizya*)'. The Islamic sects (*nihal, firaq or tawaiif*) were persecuted by the Sunni State and 'struggled for their own group autonomy within or without the state.'<sup>85</sup> The non-Muslim minorities formed an 'integral (social and economic) part of the Islamic State' but not a political place. 'Whereas the Islamic sects opposed the dominant ideology and the central power and survived only by way of resisting or deceiving it, the religious minorities accepted the ideology of the state, however reluctantly, and conformed to its expectations of them; their survival was not as much a function to their resistance as it was of the tolerance of the Islamic state'<sup>86</sup>

Denying some or all rights to other groups is omnipresent in all the texts above. If it is not for religious, it is for political reasons and not limited to one group. Thus an Islamic state whether ideal (Ahmad's account) or historical (Ayubi's account), was a de facto legal, and political framework for all its citizens. Such a state does not qualify as 'democratic' because there does exist a preferential treatment on the basis of religion although Islam officially drops all differences based on ethnicity, colour, race, and language, it reinforces differences between Muslims and non-Muslims. Is that still the case among Muslims today?

In the contemporary 'nation states' of the Islamic world, the status of religious minorities is presented from two different viewpoints. First, the secular or semi-secular state treats all its citizens as equals - in theory at least. For example, in Jordan religion does not make a difference in appointments in high governmental posts. Christians in Jordan (around 5% of the population) are favoured by the political system as a minority group; it is customary for Jordanian cabinets to include two ministers of Christian background. Second, the 'revivalist mood and orientation of resurgent Islam has [negatively] affected

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<sup>85</sup> Nazih Ayubi. *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World*. London: Rutledge, 2002 [1991]. pp. 23.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. drawing on an excellent analysis by Fu`ad Al-Khori *Imamat al-shahid wa imamat al-batal* [Leadership of the Martyr and Leadership of the Hero]. Beirut: Markaz Dar al-Jami`a, 1988.

the status and rights of non-Muslims' in these states' argues Esposito<sup>87</sup>. He goes on to say 'in recent years, tensions and clashes between Muslim and non-Muslim communities have increased: the Copts in Egypt, Bahai in Iran, Chinese in Malaysia, and Christians in the Sudan, Pakistan, and Nigeria.'<sup>88</sup> These tensions resulted in bloody conflict in Egypt, India, Pakistan, Nigeria, Lebanon and Sudan.

In the history of the Islamic state the 'lack of social 'representativeness' of the State was often compensated for by the state adopting religion in an attempt to impart an ideological or cultural cohesiveness on the society. '[...] opposition to the state in such circumstances is difficult to accommodate in purely political terms'. '[...] since the state has claimed for itself a religious *raison d'être*, protest movements may also feel tempted to express their opposition in religious terms.'<sup>89</sup> Recently, some of the post-colonial 'nation states' in the Middle East have adopted a secular discourse as *raison d'être* but this discourse did not go far in many of these states i.e. Egypt in which there 'have been attempts to make apostasy subject to the death penalty'<sup>90</sup>. In other states, like Tunisia and Syria, secularism has been successful because it is primarily protected by the state's power and forcefully imposed. States that impose secularism in the Middle East are far from being democratic. Here yet again we are faced with a dilemma. On the one hand, democracy may bring about an Islamist majority hostile to its very foundations, on the other hand, suspension of democracy may lead to the radicalisation of opposition movements whether Islamists or otherwise. Religious minorities would be negatively affected either way.

Ideally, if we are to take equality before the law seriously on the basis of citizenship (not religious background), a non-Muslim citizen should be able to become a prime minister of a Muslim country. If the majority of the population is opposed to this ideal we may opt to say this society has not developed a democratic political culture. One might argue, this democratic ideal should be universally espoused including Western Christian

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<sup>87</sup> Esposito, John. *Islam: The Straight Path*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. p. 209.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. p. 209.

<sup>89</sup> Ayubi, Nazih. *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World*. London: Routledge, 2002 [1991] p. 30.

democracies; this would mean a British Muslim, in principle, should be able to become a prime minister. In the case of the Arab-Muslim countries this ideal has a greater potential for the fact that Christian Arabs have lived alongside Muslim Arabs for more than 14 centuries while British Muslims have recently immigrated and settled. It makes more sense for the Muslim-Arabs to uphold this principle. The evidence suggests that this is not the case; predictably the majority of Muslims in the Jordanian society (78.5%) i.e. four in five did not favour ‘a non-Muslim Jordanian to become a prime minister’ while only 10.7% of Muslim Jordanians favoured the idea. Among Christian Jordanians 67.4% are in favour while 18.2% did not favour the idea (see Table 2-3 below).

Table (2-3) To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? A Non-Muslim Jordanian to become a Prime Minister?

	Muslims		Christians	
	Frequency	Valid Percent	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly agree	26	2.4	16	30.4
Somewhat agree	91	8.3	20	37.0
Neither agree nor disagree	119	10.8	8	14.4
Somewhat disagree	198	18.0	1	2.2
Strongly disagree	663	60.5	9	16.0
Total	1097	100.0	53	100.0

Source: WVS – Jordanian data set conducted September 2001.

In Muslim countries today non-Muslim minorities may face another ‘potential restriction on their rights’. Given the increasing revival of Islamists, particularly radical Islamists, across the region, the states may opt to Islamize the conduct of politics as a cooptation strategy. If Islamisation of politics becomes the norm, will it prevent non-Muslims from holding key government positions? Esposito answers this question adequately; he argues that ‘with the exception of the head of state or prime minister, in most Muslim states citizens may hold any office, regardless of their faith. This Western, liberal, secular approach is increasingly contested by those who argue that non-Muslims should not hold key government, military, judicial, or legislative positions responsible for formulating and implementing the Islamic ideology of the state, since non-Muslims could not be fully committed to that ideology. Thus, while the constitutions of many modern Muslim states grant equality of citizenship and opportunity, the contemporary resurgence has resurrected pressures to reassert legally the traditional attitude toward non-Muslims,

<sup>90</sup> Esposito, John. *Islam: The Straight Path*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. p. 209.

which has remained unchanged in Islamic law and is operative in the minds and outlook of the many Muslims'.<sup>91</sup>

### **The Political Leader and Rotation of Power**

Another area of incompatibility between Islam and liberal democracy was that of the life-long rule of the *caliph*. It is argued that this Islamic concept of the ruler is essentially undemocratic; therefore Islam cannot accommodate democratic rotation of political power. This view is not only Orientalist; some contemporary Islamic factions share it, although the 'perspective'<sup>92</sup> is contrastive. For example, *hezb al-tahrir al-Islami*<sup>93</sup> (The Islamic Liberation Party) insists that Islam prohibits restricting the time span of the head of the state, he stays lifelong as long as he adheres to God's Book, the prophet's tradition and able to bear the responsibility of governance. The Liberation Party justifies its position on this issue by referring to the early *caliphs*' mandates where there was no mention of time span<sup>94</sup>. However, many contemporary Islamic thinkers challenge this static view on the ground that it is the right of everybody to adopt any political views, but the danger lies in presenting these views as the views of Islam rather than of the individual or the group concerned. The Liberation Party's interpretation (above) relied on a text that does not support it according to the well-informed Islamist Huwaidi, who argues that we are not aware of any Quranic text that obliges Muslims to adhere to one form of government.<sup>95</sup> Clearly, then, the historical fact that the early *caliphs* reigned until they died, could not be interpreted as application of an Islamic way of governance, it is a historical precedent, no more no less, and most significantly it does not rely on a Quranic text.

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<sup>91</sup> Esposito, John. *Islam: The Straight Path*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. p. 210.

<sup>92</sup> On the question of perspective, how does it affect reading the contemporary scholarly work on the Arab world see Sharabi, Hisham. 'The Scholarly Point of View: Politics, Perspective, Paradigm', in Sharabi, H. (ed.) *Theory, politics and the Arab World*. New York & London: Routledge, 1990. pp. 1-2.

<sup>93</sup> It was established in 1952 in Jordan and managed to obtain one seat in 1954 elections. It has always been an illegal underground political party, which also spread to other Muslim countries.

<sup>94</sup> The Islamic Liberation Party (Hezb al-Tahrir Al-Islami) *Naqd Mashro' al-Dustour al-Irani, wa nass al-Dustour Al-Islami (Refutation of the Iranian Constitution Project and The Text of the Islamic Constitution)*. 1979. Cited in Huwaidi, Fahmi. *al-Islam wa al-Dimokratyyia, [Islam and democracy]*. Cairo: Al-Ahram Publishing and Translation House, 1993. p. 65.

The lifelong reign of the Caliphs was justified by some contemporary Islamists by reference to the divine message they bear. Since the message is divine, it is absolute and irrefutable. A commitment to it, guarantees the prevalence of 'good' in life and after life. Therefore, if Islamic authority is to bear the responsibility of applying the divine message, it should not be 'obstructed' in any way i.e. it should not give up power to other political group. This is not because 'Islamic authority' is above accountability but because it is the guardian of *sharia* and Islamic values. Therefore, if another political group took over political power, the divine message will be hampered. According to this understanding, an Islamist authority will not be able to accommodate secular rival political forces. Giving up political power to another political group – which may not adhere to the divine message- may result in squandering and negligence of the divine message i.e. it would be a religious sin. In order to avoid such repercussion, political authority must stay in the hands of the *sharia's* guardians and this means an automatic exclusion of secular groups.

The second justification is a historical one; that is, political authority in the Islamic state since the prophet's time was retained in the hands of head of state until his death. Consequently, at the practical level the principle of power rotation was not known in the Islamic experience of governance. Besides, power rotation as a political concept and as a political practice is relatively new and became a fully-fledged concept in the twentieth century. However, in the *Political Language of Islam* the orientalist Bernard Lewis<sup>96</sup> explains that the concept of politics in Islam '... (*siyasa*) itself was, of course, originally used in the sense of dealing with livestock; its usage with regard to humans implies having to persuade/coerce the presumably less wise and capable. The leader in such a case must possess a certain clout (literally a 'goad' – *shawka*) in order to secure obedience'.<sup>97</sup> This reading of the concept of 'politics' implies superiority of the leader and inferiority of the people, not the seniority of the leader as apolitical figure above the

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<sup>95</sup> Huwaidi, Fahmi. *al-Islam wa al-Dimokratyyia*, [Islam and democracy]. Cairo: Al-Ahram Publishing and Translation House, 1993. p. 66.

<sup>96</sup> Lewis, Bernard. *The Political Language of Islam*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988.

<sup>97</sup> Lewis's explanation was summarised in Ayubi, Nazih. *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World*. London: Routledge, 2002 [1991] p. 23.

ordinary person. Moreover, it does not reflect political leadership as a representation of the public interest (*al-maslaha al-`ama*) on the contrary leadership is seen as 'imposed' and thus it has to secure its survival. This reading has proved expressive of most Islamic states throughout Islamic history and still seen as such by most of contemporary Arab leaders. For example late King Hussein of Jordan had always emphasised that it is the *fate* of the Hashemite family<sup>98</sup> to lead the people throughout history and at the present day. Moreover, King Fahad of the oil-rich Saudi Arabia told the Kuwaiti daily *Al-Siyasa* '[t]he election system has no place in the Islamic creed, which calls for a government of advice and consultation and for the *shepherd's openness to his flock*, and holds the ruler fully responsible before his people'.<sup>99</sup>

Intellectually, Islamic political thought and jurisprudence did not tackle the issue of peaceful power rotation perhaps for the obvious reason that it did not occur as an issue of concern to the Ulema, who were co-opted into legitimising existing rulers who devolved some power/influence down to them. Instead, Islamic jurisprudence focuses on justice (*`adl*) and 'since justice is such a relative, flexible concept that will be applied to each case according to its own merit, the effectiveness of its application is related not to the existence of general abstract rules to be applied by the State impersonally on individuals, but to the presence of a pious and wise ruler. Hence the emphasis in Islamic writings on the character and qualities of the leader (*imam or khalifa*).'<sup>100</sup>

The third justification is related to the contemporary political practice in the Arab Islamic countries. The first thesis suggests the 'hijacking' of democracy and elections. This means Islamists accept the principle of power rotation as long as they are in opposition and once they take power they are expected to abandon democracy altogether. This *impression* or judgement of intention prevailed after the Islamic Salvation Front of Algeria won a significant share of the 1992 parliamentary elections. However, Islamists

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<sup>98</sup> The King repeatedly emphasised this idea during his public speeches. I personally remember his speech in a graduation ceremony held in the military branch of Mu`tah University in summer 1991.

<sup>99</sup> Emphasis added. This statement was quoted in Sisk, Timothy D. *Islam and Democracy: Religion, Politics and Power in the Middle East*. Washington D. C. United States Institute of Peace, 1992. p. 50.

<sup>100</sup> Nazih Ayubi. *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World*. London: Routledge, 2002 [1991]. p. 24.

have three views on this issue. A group of them rejects the principle of power rotation and argue that it is too early to discuss the subject because Islamists are not allowed participation in politics in the first place. For example, the two leaders of the Algerian FIS, Ali Belhadj<sup>101</sup> and Abbas Madani have opposite views on democracy. Belhadj 'was dismissive of democracy, which he saw as but another tool of the West'<sup>102</sup>, while Madani 'projected the image of reason and was moderate in his discourse and publicly supportive of democratic elections and pluralism'.<sup>103</sup> Another group is pessimistic because they realised that Islamists will not acquire political power under the given circumstances even if they participate in politics because ruling elites delineate the margins of freedom and impose a red line as to what extent the Islamists are allowed to go.<sup>104</sup> Therefore, they have a pretext not to think about the possibilities of power rotation. A third group have an attitude that agrees with power rotation. For example, the Turkish, Jordanian, Moroccan, Tunisian, and Egyptian Islamic Movements have stated theoretically and practically their commitment to power rotation. It appears as if in principle there is no outright objection to power rotation by mainstream Islamists<sup>105</sup>. The contemporary Islamic thinkers have strongly advocated the principle of power rotation with caution that favours it. For example, Hwuaidi argues that power rotation is extremely important at the intellectual level because the Islamic realisation of politics will continue to suffer a serious fallacy that undermines its credibility and commitment to democracy.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Ali Belhadj's confrontational approach can be explained by his background. He was born in Tunisia in 1956, 'lost both his parents in Algeria's war of independence. Unlike Madani, he is the product of a completely Arab-Islamic religious education. He became a secondary school teacher of Arabic and an Imam, or mosque preacher. He was imprisoned from 1982 through 1987 during a crackdown against Islamists. In contrast to Madani and many modern Islamic activist leaders in other Muslim countries, Belhadj had no exposure to the West or to the world outside Algeria. As a result, he tended to be dogmatic and militant. His call for immediate imposition of the Sharia and his denunciation of the Algerian government and of the West proved popular among many young Algerians'. See Esposito, John. & Vol, John. *Islam and Democracy*, New York & Oxford: Oxford University press, 1996. p. 158.

<sup>102</sup> Esposito, John. & Vol, John. *Islam and Democracy*, New York & Oxford: Oxford University press, 1996. p. 158.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> See Nuaihed, Waleed. 'Al-Islamyyun wa Addawlal wa Dimokratyyia' [Islamists, State, and Democracy] in al-Kuwari, Ali. (ed.) *Al-Harakat al-Islamyyia wa al-Dimokratyyia* [Islamic Movements and Democracy]. Kuwait: Dar Qirtas, 2000. pp. 51-70.

<sup>105</sup> Mainstream Islamists refer to groups and individuals who accept and advocate participation in the politics of their respective countries.

<sup>106</sup> Hwuaidi, Fahmi. *al-Islam wa al-Dimokratyyia*, [Islam and democracy]. Cairo: Al-Ahram Publishing and Translation House, 1993. pp.166-171.



Illustrating Islamists' acceptance of power rotation, Huwaidi argues that a few Muslim thinkers today would disagree with idea that the Message of Islam is rooted in guidance and preaching. Therefore, Muslims' responsibilities towards it are limited to conveyance. This means that Islam is recognised as a guiding philosophy before it is a political project. As a consequence of this understanding, political authority is not an aim in itself. Political authority is an essential expedient to convey the message of Islam. The latter is far more important in Islam's view than the former<sup>107</sup>. During the second half of the twentieth century, the revival of Islamist movements under conditions of economic deprivation, social and political alienation, and tight state control over freedom of expression, political authority appeared to be the aim of the majority of these movements. Consequently, the conveyance of Islam's message, as the first priority, was shifted to a second order issue in the given circumstances. But, is it legitimate for Islamists to hold onto power under the pretext of utilising political authority to convey Islam's message? Where would Islamists stand, if a secular party were elected to replace them in authority? These are the most relevant questions that demand an Islamists' response.

The Islamic view, argues Huwaidi, conditions the exercise of power by popular endorsement. As such Islam meets democracy on the question of legitimacy and equally does not recognise parties that do not commit themselves to the 'system'- meaning the working social and political order. In this context, Islam tolerates a secular party that tolerates religion but it does not tolerate a secular party that does not recognise religion hence traditional social public order, because the latter is largely constituted by, and embedded in, the religious order. Thus legitimacy is granted to the tolerant parties (from an Islamic viewpoint) and denied to the intolerant ones.<sup>108</sup>

Taking the aforementioned dichotomy of inclusion and exclusion, Huwaidi forcefully argues for the principle of power rotation. If the people elected another political party irrespective of its ideological standpoint, Islamists must concede defeat and handover power to the elected party, even if it is a secular party and has apparent view and

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<sup>107</sup> Huwaidi, Fahmi. *al-Islam wa al-Dimokratyyia*, [Islam and democracy]. Cairo: Al-Ahram Publishing and Translation House, 1993. p. 167.

reservations regarding the application of the *sharia*. He adds there is no place or justification whatsoever to the claim that Islamists should retain authority in order to protect the religion of Islam. It is their responsibility to protect the religion as long as they are elected and trusted by the people. Once people entrusted other party, Islamists must hand over political power. This standpoint relies on a religious principle, which says 'no compulsion in religion' hence the derived rule is 'there is no compulsion in politics'.<sup>109</sup>

Thus, according to Islam, political authority is seen as means to the conveyance of the divine message. But Islamists' preservation of power is conditioned by being democratically elected. This view is a well known *fatwa* of Shaykh Yousof al-Qardawy in which he stated that if Islamists won an election while in opposition and then failed to implement their programme while in power, they must leave the job for those elected by the people and as a consequence Islamists must bear the responsibility for their failure and correct their trajectory by going back to the conveyance phase which comes prior to the governance phase.<sup>110</sup>

### **Political Pluralism**

One of the frequently repeated claims about Islam is its incapability to comprehend political parties and differences of opinion. To begin with, the historical Islamic state since its inception had witnessed a diversity of political cleavages, which resulted in the creation of more than 100 *firqah* (party).<sup>111</sup> Almost all these parties whether political or intellectual were oppressed by the state, and none of them managed to obtain political power through political contestation and competition, those who managed to take control achieved it through conflict and war. This might be convincingly attributed to the despotic nature of the political system: the Caliphate establishment. The disagreement between these parties was neither about the essence of Islam nor its fundamentals; it was

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid. p 169.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid p 170.

<sup>110</sup> Conversation between Huwaidi and Qardawy reported in Huwaidi, Fahmi. *al-Islam wa al-Dimokratyyia*, [Islam and democracy]. Cairo: Al-Ahram Publishing and Translation House, 1993. p. 171.

diversity within unity and about 'seeking the right application of Islam'<sup>112</sup>. During the tenth century, the Islamic state suffered an ongoing deterioration, which affected the status of independent interpretation of Islamic Law (*ijtihad*). The symptoms of deterioration were evident in the form of unquestioned imitation of past precedent doctrinal interpretations (*taqlid*), replacing *ijtihad*. This situation produced a state of chaos, accusations were exchanged, and fighting became a continuous feature of Islamic history, and most importantly was the absence of the single central Islamic state. Accusations of *takfir* (accusing somebody of rejecting the message of God) and straying (*fusq*), are still practiced by some contemporary Islamic movements. A recent example is Nusr Hamid Abu Zayd a professor of Islamic and Arabic Studies at Cairo University, was accused of being an apostate, and ordered separation from his wife<sup>113</sup>. Thus, there appear to be some kind of monopoly over the religious truth. Although Abu Zaid, as many others, think of themselves as Muslims seeking a better and contemporary interpretation of Islam which suits the changing nature of the society, such a presentation has not convinced the traditionally dominant group of religious scholars to accommodate the 'new' interpretations of the text.

The *taqlid* (unquestioned imitation of past precedent doctrinal interpretations) has been questioned by many Islamic theorists in the recent wave of Islamic revivalism across the Arab World. Their critique is informed by, first, the view that Islam is not a static text. Second, The social, political and economic circumstances have changed therefore new interpretations of the text are required. Political pluralism is one of many themes that have been reconsidered. This point is best explained through the discussion of the Quranic concept of *hezb Allah* (God's party) and its interpretation. Some interpretations divided people to *hezb Allah* as meaning believers in God and *hezb al-shaitan* as meaning non-believers. Therefore, all those who are members of the political party that raises the slogan of *hezb Allah* are the true believers and all others are *kuffar* (rejecting the message

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<sup>111</sup> Amarah, Mohammed. *al-khilapha wa nash`at al-ahzab al-islamyyah* [Caliphate and the Formation of Islamic Parties] cited in Huwaidi, Fahmi. *al-Islam wa al-Dimokratyyia*, [Islam and democracy]. Cairo: Al-Ahram Publishing and Translation House. 1993. p. 131.

<sup>112</sup> al-Elwany, Taha, *adab al-ikhtelaph fi el-Islam* [The Ethics of Disagreement in Islam]. Cairo: Madbouly, 1989. p. 102.

of God)<sup>114</sup>. This interpretation has been questioned and invalidated. As Attiah argues the comparison between *hezb Allah* as referred to in the Quran and the term political party that developed in the twentieth century is an incorrect comparison. Because such a comparison implies *takfir* (accusation of rejecting God's message), of all those who are not affiliated to the political party that carries the slogan *hezb Allah* and such situation would mean expelling all of them out of the nation of Islam because they gave their affiliation to another party. He adds, the issue in the Quran is an issue of belief and disbelief; it is not, by any means, an issue of political differences over programs of national development and social reform, or any other reason for which political parties are established in contemporary society.<sup>115</sup> Thus, the concept of *hezb Allah* as mentioned in the Quran is all together different from the contemporary concept of political parties. Mixing the two concepts leads to an unnecessary religious and political confusion. Some Islamic writers went even further to say mixing the two concepts is a misguidance of Islamic thought and has to be denied and, at the same time such mixing is an obvious 'intellectual terrorism' and has to be denied too.<sup>116</sup>

The principle of political pluralism was a source of confusion to the founders of *harakat al-ikhwan al-muslimeen* (Muslim Brotherhood Movement). The founder of the movement in Egypt, *Hassan al-Banna*, wrote in a letter to the fifth conference of the movement held during the forties of the twentieth century, that there is a difference between freedom of opinion, thought, expression and *shura* -which are duties according to Islam- on one hand, and fanaticism and divergence from the community which are essential to political parties and prohibited by Islam on the other hand. Hence Islam calls for unity and

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<sup>113</sup> Najjar, M. Fawzi. 'Islamic Fundamentalism and the Intellectuals: The Case of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 2000, 27(2). Pp. 177-200.

<sup>114</sup> One example of such interpretation is found in the writings of Syrian Islamic theorist Said Hawwa in his book *Jund Allah: thaqafa wa Akhlaq* literally translated as [Ethics and Culture of God's Solders] cited in Huwaidi, Fahmi. *al-Islam wa al-Dimokratyyia*, [Islam and democracy]. Cairo: Al-Ahram Publishing and Translation House, 1993. p. 68.

<sup>115</sup> Muheiei el-Din Attiah 'Mjalat' Al-Muslim Al-Mo'aser [Contemporary Muslim] 67. p. 186. Cited in Huwaidi, Fahmi. *al-Islam wa al-Dimokratyyia*, [Islam and democracy]. Cairo: Al-Ahram Publishing and Translation House, 1993. p. 67.

<sup>116</sup> Huwaidi, Fahmi. *al-Islam wa al-Dimokratyyia*, [Islam and democracy]. Cairo: Al-Ahram Publishing and Translation House, 1993. p. 70.

collaboration.<sup>117</sup> The situation was not different in India and Pakistan. The founder of the Islamist movement in Pakistan, al-Mawdudy, said in a lecture in 1939 describing his conception of Islamic State that the Islamic parliament (*majlis al-shura*) can not be divided among groups and parties; every member expresses his opinion as an individual. Islam does not accept the partisanship of consultants (MPs) to their parties whether these parties are right or wrong.<sup>118</sup> However, by the 1970s and 1980s both the Pakistani and Indian *jama'a* accepted the principle of political pluralism and worked within its framework. The Muslim Brotherhood Movement in Egypt practically followed, although there was no clear theoretical grounding in the movement's political literature until 1995. In 1995 the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood Movement re-established itself by making clear that 1) all citizens are equal irrespective of their religious affiliation and citizenship is the only parameter regarding duties and rights; 2) women are equal to men and have the right to take up any public office; 3) popular sovereignty rests upon people who are the source of legislation. The movement defended political pluralism and insisted on clear rules of accountability, separation of powers, free elections, limiting the time span of leaders to avoid despotism. The regime reciprocated by sending 45 of the Movement's leaders<sup>119</sup> to military tribunal, closing their media office in Cairo under a legislation from 1954 which considers the Movement illegal.<sup>120</sup>

In 1992 around 200 Islamic thinkers in Cairo issued a manifesto headed 'Contemporary Islamic view', which supported political pluralism.<sup>121</sup> In the same year the well-known Islamic scholar Yusuf Al-Qardawi issued a *fatwwa* (formal legal opinion or decision of a

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<sup>117</sup>Hassan Al-Banna in *Majmo'at Al-Rasa'el* [Collection of Letters] cited in Huwaidi, Fahmi. *al-Islam wa al-Dimokratyyia*, [Islam and democracy]. Cairo: Al-Ahram Publishing and Translation House, 1993. p. 72.

<sup>118</sup> Cited in Huwaidi, Fahmi. *al-Islam wa al-Dimokratyyia*, [Islam and democracy]. Cairo: Al-Ahram Publishing and Translation House, 1993. p. 73.

<sup>119</sup> They were arrested on 22/01/1995 and on the 18/07/1995 all of them were detained for the court case number 136 / 1995. Nuaihed, Waleed. 'Al-Islamyyun wa Addawlal wa Dimokratyyia' [Islamists, State, and Democracy] in al-Kuwari, Ali. (ed.) *Al-Harakat al-Islamyyia wa al-Dimokratyyia* [Islamic Movements and Democracy]. Kuwait: Dar Qirtas, 2000. pp. 66-69.

<sup>120</sup> Nuaihed, Waleed. 'Al-Islamyyun wa Addawlal wa Dimokratyyia' [Islamists, State, and Democracy] in al-Kuwari, Ali. ed. *Al-Harakat al-Islamyyia wa al-Dimokratyyia* [Islamic Movements and Democracy]. Kuwait: Dar Qirtas, 2000. pp. 66-69.

<sup>121</sup> Huwaidi, Fahmi. *al-Islam wa al-Dimokratyyia*, [Islam and democracy]. Cairo: Al-Ahram Publishing and Translation House, 1993. pp. 76-7

mufti on a matter of Islamic law) in which he considers political parties in Islamic society as a means by which political freedoms are expressed.<sup>122</sup>

### **Conclusion**

In contrast to the Western model of the democratic nation state, sovereignty in Islam is first divine and then of the nation. 'Traditional Islamic politics was shaped less by Islam as a belief system and more by the nature of the modes of production and economic requirements and cultural traditions of the territories that eventually formed the Islamic dominion'<sup>123</sup>. Today, actors involved in the making of politics in Muslim countries determine what the type of government these societies have in place, the extent to which alterations of the status quo is tolerated, if at all. There is no consensus among all political actors on one interpretation of Islam or Islamic political system. Actors are conditioned by the choices they ought to make about maximisation of utilities.

The question of 'authoritarian Islamic political culture' was emphasised by reference being made to the Middle Eastern religious culture of Islam and its institutions. Many analysts have argued that as a system of belief, the religion of Islam is based on a revealed text embodying quasi-legal ordinances, and as such, it is incompatible with democratic politics, which requires comprehensive and well-defined legal system to resolve conflicts and facilitate contractual life. Though complex, the reasons for this are essentially two-fold: on the one hand, it is argued that Islam rejects the idea of nation state and with it the modern, secular conceptions of nationalism.<sup>124</sup> On the other hand, it is claimed that Islam neither recognises a separation of temporal and spiritual power and authority nor permits intermediate institutions between the religious-political leader and the individual believer.<sup>125</sup> In Islamic societies, therefore, the argument goes, it is impossible to generate legitimacy either for the existence of a nation state or for the conduct of organised democratic politics within it. Evidence for these claims is to be found both in the problematic fortunes of liberal democratic politics in countries where a

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<sup>122</sup>Ibid. p. 77.

<sup>123</sup> Ayubi, Nazih. *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World*. London: Routledge, 2002[1991]. p .30.

<sup>124</sup> Vatikiotis, P. *Islam and the State*. London: Routledge, 1987.

<sup>125</sup> Kedourie, E. *Politics in the Middle East*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

majority of the population are Muslims (e.g. Pakistan) and in the practices of so called Islamic governments in, for example, Sudan. Table 2-2 above provides empirical evidence that refute both assumptions. Bangladesh and Indonesia, for example, are Muslim countries the majority of respondents in these two 'nations' reported attachment to the 'nation state', though 84.5 percent of Indonesians and 96.9 percent of Bangladeshi described themselves as religious people. Moreover, in Turkey where 64.4% of the population report 'above all I am a Muslim' there is a separation between religion and politics. These evidence suggest that there is more to the issue of Islam and democracy than religious tradition.

Why have Muslim states proved so resistant to democracy? There are many reasons on the Muslims' part ranging from historical, doctrinal, and practical to emotional factors and apathy. To begin with, the expression 'democracy' and its associated concepts like civil and political rights, constitutionalism, free elections, and separation of powers, are Western in their historical origins. Therefore, some Muslims, as well as other nations and communities across the world, have depicted such conceptions as alien and scarcely comprehend them as universals. Muslims' conception of the West in particular was further fuelled by the historical antagonism between Muslims and Westerners since the Crusades in the Middle Ages to the contemporary colonial confrontations in which Islam played the function of mobilisation during the independence struggle (e.g. Algeria and Egypt). Historical antagonism provided sound reasoning for some Muslims not only to be apprehensive but also to reject many Western ideas and concepts including democracy, however defined. This attitude has served the durability of authoritarian regimes in the Muslim world. Nonetheless, other colonies embraced democratic principles after independence (India) while none of the Arab states, which gained independence, embarked upon democratic process. These facts raise many questions as to why democracy did not appear to be an option for post-independence governments in the Middle East?

The historical reasons sketched above cannot be held responsible for the lack of democracy in the Muslim and Arab Worlds forever. Historical developments have

changed the way in which actors conduct their politics. Clearly, descriptive accounts suffer a serious problem of oversimplification and misreading. One reason is that not all Muslims reject the West and with it liberal democracy. As Clovis Maksoud<sup>126</sup> suggests, it is important to see Islamic revivalism in terms of both a religious and political awakening in the Muslim world. Referring to the discussion of modernism and Islam, Maksoud notes that it is possible to modernize and hence democratise without necessarily 'westernising'. He thinks this is the underpinning of much of the mainstream of the Islamic revival through the Muslim world<sup>127</sup>. Islamism, in general terms, sought to emphasise cultural distinctiveness and thus the persistence of the Islamic tradition particularly in the social realm specifically in issues related to family values<sup>128</sup>. This emphasis is not utopian. For example, 82.9 percent of Egyptians, 72.3 percent of Iranians, and 92.3 percent of Jordanians believe that 'cultural invasion by the West is very serious or serious problem facing their countries.'<sup>129</sup> There have been variations and disagreements over what to accept and what to reject, what could be accommodated in Islamic framework and what not. These differences reflect the diversity and inconsistency of interpretations by practitioners, scholars, and political leaders.

Historical experience does not explain why modern states in the Arab Muslim Middle East have failed to develop democratic polities. To be precise, why did the post-colonial independent states in the Arab Muslim Middle East not accept liberal democracy as political order? Has the culture of Islam been the cause or were there other factors at play? If the cultural heritage, which dates back many centuries, were the reason, it would

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<sup>126</sup> He is the director of the Centre for the Study of the Global South at American University and a previous Arab League representative to the UN.

<sup>127</sup> Maksoud was quoted in Timothy D. Sisk *Islam and Democracy: Religion, Politics, and Power in the Middle East*, Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace: 1992. p 16.

<sup>128</sup> Islamic movements advocate collective morality in private and public spheres. They insist on the observance of Islamic values. Some of them are more flexible than others concerning the way these morals should be observed and the political context of movement' development determines its strategy in this respect. See Esposito, J. and Voll, J. *Makers of Contemporary Islam*, Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press. 2001. the chapter on Rashid Gannoushi explains how the Tunisian political context in which Gannoushi was an activist shaped the development and strategies of the Islamic movement since early 1970s.

<sup>129</sup> The data derived from the WVS conducted in Egypt, Iran, and Jordan during 2001. The question was asked in the following way: Every country faces a number of regional and international problems. Among the following, which problems do you consider very serious, serious, some what serious, least serious, or not serious at all? 'Cultural invasion by the West'.



be plausible to explain the absence of liberal democracy in Europe up to the nineteenth century by reference to the cultural heritage of Christianity. But we are left with the question as to what extent and under what circumstances can cultural heritage, religion, and social values explain democratisation, if at all?

In sum, this chapter was primarily concerned with theoretical comparisons between Islamic and liberal democratic concepts of governance. The selected concepts examined throughout the chapter point to a very important issue regarding the selectivity of evidence to justify any position regarding liberal democracy. One can find Quranic evidence to support liberal democratic principles as suitable to Muslim societies. Also, one can find Quranic evidence to prove the opposite. It appears to be a matter of interpretation more than anything else. This conclusion has implications for the wider theoretical content of this work. In the sense that cultural essentialist arguments, based on wholly qualitative methods, are cause of confusion.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

**Theoretical Foundations: Culture, Structure *and* Choice**

## Theoretical Foundations: Culture, Structure *and* Choice

‘Theory is a collective but contentious enterprise’<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

The conventional wisdom at the theoretical level suggests that there is a clear correlation between modernity and levels of democracy at the aggregate level of entire societies<sup>2</sup> as well as the individual level.<sup>3</sup> In a nutshell, it is claimed that the higher the level of socio-economic modernity at the societal level (for example, measured as a country’s high value on the United Nations Human Development Index) the higher the probability that a state will be democratic. Not only have such claims been made for the collective level of groups or entire societies, but also for individuals. At the individual level, it is argued, an analogous relationship exists: the higher the level of socio-economic modernity (for example, a high level of formal education, cognitive skills and an occupation in the modern service sector) the higher the probability that individuals will hold democratic values. Empirical cross-national analyses generally support this claim. The Middle East, however, is an anomaly in this context: A number of countries in the region score relatively highly on conventional indicators of socio-economic development, but have low scores on widely accepted (for example the Freedom House country ratings of 2001-2002) measures of liberal freedoms and democracy.<sup>4</sup> At the individual level, although people express relatively high levels of support for democracy as an ideal form government in many Muslim countries (for example in Jordan, Egypt, Pakistan, Iran and Morocco), these attitudes are not reflected at the institutional level. This puzzle has remained largely unexplained. Conventional answers to this puzzle have usually relied on *ad hoc* explanations focusing on culture, especially Islam. In a nutshell, the argument is that Islam is the main obstacle for democracy in the Muslim World because of its traditional and anti-liberal values.<sup>5</sup> However, this monocausal *ad hoc*

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<sup>1</sup> Mark I. Lichbach & Alan S. Zukerman. ‘Research Traditions and Theory in Comparative Politics: An Introduction’ in Mark I. Lichbach and Alan S. Zukerman (eds.) *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture and Structure*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., 1997. Pp. 3-16. p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Lerner, Daniel. *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernising the Middle East*. New York: The Free Press, 1968 [1958]; Lipset, S. Martin., Seong, K.-R. & Torres, J.C. ‘A Comparative Analysis of the Social Requisites of Democracy’, *International Social Science Journal*, May 1993, 136. pp. 155-75.

<sup>3</sup> Inglehart, Ronald. *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997; Lipset, S. Martin. *Political Man: the Social Bases of Politics*. London: Heinemann, 1983.

<sup>4</sup> Inglehart, Ronald, ‘How Solid is Mass Support for Democracy and How Can We Measure it?’, *PS: Political Science and Politics*, (Forthcoming) 2003.

<sup>5</sup> See chapter one and two of this thesis for more details on this argument.

explanation is not based on sufficient empirical evidence, at least in terms of state-of-the-art survey-based research. Moreover, this view homogenises and essentialises Islam and Muslims. It also ignores the differences within Islamic societies, ignores non-cultural factors and does not provide a *testable* micro-level explanation of the causal mechanisms allegedly leading to low levels of democracy in many Islamic societies. The interpretations of religious texts, whether by Islamists or scholars of Islamic studies, ignore the potential influence of other factors such as media, learning from other countries, and the role played by political actors whether individuals, institutions, or states. They also ignore the fact that survey evidence shows a considerable degree of support for democratic norms in Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Iran, Indonesia, Bangladesh, and other Muslim countries (see chapter 5). Both explanations, modernisation-theoretic and culturalist, are relatively deterministic and have little to say about individual motivations and incentives. In other words, the emphasis is on structure rather than agency.

The aim of this chapter is to contribute to the development of a testable theoretical framework explaining variations of democracy in the Middle East without resorting to such ad-hoc and deterministic explanations. In line with a recent distinction between structuralist, culturalist and rationalist approaches to the comparative study of politics,<sup>6</sup> it will be attempted to build a synthetic and more comprehensive model mapping the complex web of structural and cultural factors as well as the instrumental motivations of actors. The possible impact of cultural factors such as Islam and religiosity has been discussed in chapter two and does not need to be repeated here. The structuralist approach will be represented by elements of classical modernisation theory, which claims that liberal democracy is a likely outcome of the process of socio-economic modernisation. However, the present model will relax the rigid and rather deterministic assumptions of modernisation theory, namely that modernisation leads to social change and that this change ultimately leads to a democratic transformation. This deterministic model is empirically untenable, because it can be shown that there are important institutional constraints controlling the outcomes of modernisation and influencing the extent to which 'modernised' individuals as well as collective actors adopt democratic values and embrace democratic practices. The

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<sup>6</sup> Lichbach & Zuckerman, 'Research Traditions', op. cit.

incorporation of elements of rational choice theory seeks to bridge the gap between structural change and behavioural outcomes. Modernisation, it will be argued, produces winners and losers. The winners control the state and its structures and act rationally to protect their gains: they do not have incentives to allow other actors (losers and weaker winners) to access state-controlled resources in a way that might potentially undermine or threaten their privileged positions. Thus, it is not in their interests to promote democratic practices. The notion of the Middle Eastern 'rentier state'<sup>7</sup> is a case in point. In other words, rather than promoting liberal democracies, many winners of modernisation in the Middle East have incentives to restrict and manipulate political opportunity structures within the state in order to enhance their own opportunities for utility maximisation (for example, financial benefits or regime survival) at the expense of the development of liberal democracy in a Western sense.

Although, broadly, the present thesis is based on a modernisation-theoretic framework, a number of extensions to modernisation theory will be proposed here incorporating elements of all three approaches – structuralist, culturalist and rationalist. These elements will drive the empirical analysis. Their impact will be tested empirically in later chapters:

- a. Our 'base-line model' is a modernisation-theoretic one and will include standard variables used to measure levels of modernity both at the aggregate level of societies and at the individual level. If modernisation theory is correct, we would expect high correlations between collective and individual socio-economic modernity on the one hand and collective and individual support for liberal-democratic values on the other.
- b. The factor 'religiosity' could be interpreted in modernisation-theoretic terms with high levels of religiosity indicating the existence of 'pre-modern' structures and values and secular values indicating modernity. However, this view would involve assumptions about the universality of the West's move from 'pre-modern' religious societies to 'modern' secular societies and a linear and deterministic interpretation of modernisation. Therefore the models tested in the following chapters will take cultural elements of Islam into account, but will interpret them as cultural variables making fewer deterministic assumptions about the link between religion and religiosity on the one hand and modernity on the other. If culturalist explanations of the absence of

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<sup>7</sup> Beblawi, H. & Luciani, G. (eds.) *The Rentier Stat.* London: Croom Helm, 1987.



liberal democracy in Middle Eastern countries (see chapters one and five) are correct, the extent of collective and individual religiosity should have an impact on support for liberal-democratic values both at the collective and individual levels. In terms of a precise hypothesis, culturalist explanations would predict a strong negative correlation between the level of religiosity and support for democratic values at the aggregate level of society as well as at the individual level.

c. The model proposed here will argue that there are winners and losers of modernisation processes. The status of winner or loser is likely to influence the attitudes towards liberal democracy. The argument developed below predicts that it may be rational for the winners of the modernisation process in Middle Eastern countries to be sceptical of liberal democracy rather than to be supportive, as the classical modernisation theories developed in the West would predict. This argument could go some way in explaining the discrepancy between modernisation and support for democracy in the Middle East.

d. We will seek to understand the link between modernisation and individual values by relying on rational-utilitarian (rational-choice) assumptions about the interaction between macro-level incentives and individual motivations. If rational-choice approaches are correct, there should be relevant institutional context factors (especially state structures), which help to preserve the durability of authoritarian regimes and influence the attitudes of – socio-economically and technologically very modernised – Middle Eastern elites, whose control over the state structures allows them to influence the incentives (or disincentives) for their broader populations to get involved in democratic politics. The durability of authoritarian or ‘partly free’ regimes is interpreted as a rational response to institutional constraints, both at elite and mass levels, rather than an expression of a culturally determined adherence to non-democratic values in culturalist terms or pre-democratic values in modernisation-theoretic terms. Elites protect their status using state institutions, and masses obey for fear of state repression.

The considerable support for democracy as an ideal form of government found in Muslim societies (see chapter 5) and the limited ability of Muslims in Middle Eastern countries to express these attitudes in legal forms of political action, demonstrate a strong indication for the presence of fairly rational responses to institutional constraints in these societies. As rational actors, individuals whether elites or masses,

adopt strategies of action that are best suited to achieve their economic, political or other goals. The striking discrepancy between a widespread desire for democracy and the political reality in many countries of the Middle East may be partly due to fear of the state, motivating people to compromise their support for democracy, at least temporarily, in order to avoid disadvantages and 'costs' in a broader sense. For the elites it would seem to be rational to encourage such a compromise in order to maintain their superior position and control of state resources. This situation creates constraints, which obstruct democratisation.

### **The Middle East in Democratisation Studies**

In studying democratisation David Potter<sup>8</sup> drawing on previous scholarly work<sup>9</sup>, introduces three main theoretical approaches that seek to explain the process of democratic transformation. These are modernisation, structuralism and the transition approach. Each of these approaches *focuses on a particular set of explanatory factors*. The *modernisation approach* emphasises the importance of socio-economic preconditions of democracy and, to a lesser extent, political culture. For *structural theories* the explanatory focus is long-term process of historical change especially changing structures of power: class, trans-national, and state structures. The historical route to liberal democracy is determined fundamentally by changing structures, not elite initiatives and choices. There are political leaders and elites who make choices, but these choices can only be explained by reference to the structural constraints and opportunities in which they find themselves. In the *transition approach* the explanatory focus is a historical- political process marked by social conflict. It is characterised by four stages: establishing national unity, inconclusive political struggle, historical moment for decision, and the habituation phase. The political elite is the prime focus for the transition approach. Little attention is paid to the masses if any at all. According to this approach the historical route to liberal democracy is determined fundamentally by the agency of elite initiatives and actions, not by changing structures.<sup>10</sup> In Lichbach and Zuckerman's more general terminology (see

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<sup>8</sup> Potter, David. 'Framework for analysis', in Potter, David. et al. (eds.) *Democratisation*. Cambridge: Polity Press. Pp. 1-37.

<sup>9</sup> Lipset, S.M. *Political Man*. London: Heinemann, 1983.; Moore, B. *Social Origins Of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. Boston, Beacon Press, 1966. Rustow, D. 'Transitions to Democracy', *Comparative Politics*, 1970, 2, pp. 337-63.

<sup>10</sup> Potter, David. 'Democratisation at the Same Time in South Korea and Taiwan', in Potter, David. et al. (eds.) *Democratisation*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997. pp. 10-22.

above), Potter's first two approaches would be structuralist, while the third one is compatible with rationalistic approaches (although, with the prominent exception of Adam Przeworski's work,<sup>11</sup> much of the work in this tradition is not necessarily in the rational-choice tradition per se).

One of the fundamental objections to purely choice-based approaches is that elite initiatives and choices never take place in a vacuum; they are shaped, to some extent at least, by structures – a set of physical and social constraints, a set of changing opportunities, a set of norms or values that can influence the content of elite choices. Socio-economic or cultural factors are examples. The structural approach to democratisation in the Middle East focuses on the structural relationships between state and society. The main point in this line of analysis is that social formations (classes, civil associations) 'are in a weak and dependent position in relation to the state, and are not capable of impelling the state towards an agenda which reflects their political interest in achieving a stake in policy making'.<sup>12</sup> The structural approach has some advantages. It uses quantifiable variables, which can be used in other contexts, and it also allows for differences between Middle Eastern states to be highlighted.

In modernisation-theoretic frameworks, modernisation is considered to be an underlying factor behind changes in social structures and elite orientations. Popular political values are considered to be important by the modernisation approach while the structural approach places less emphasis on values (although it also considers them to be somewhat important and often treats them as an outcome of structural changes i.e. functions of structures). The transition approach largely neglects the role of popular values in a transition experience as determinant variable and places more importance on the elite's political manoeuvres. My own approach suggests integrating important elements (a) of the modernisation and structural approaches with (b) cultural variables (mainly religion) and, (c) a choice-based perspective, which draws

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<sup>11</sup> See for example Przeworski, A., Alvarez, M., Cheibub, J., and Limongi, F. 'What Makes Democracy Endure?' *Journal of Democracy*, 1996, 7(1), pp. 39-55.; Przeworski, Adam. *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reform in Eastern Europe and Latin America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

<sup>12</sup> Niblock summarises the main point of structural approach to the study of democratisation in the Middle East. See Niblock, Tim. 'Democratization: A Theoretical and Practical Debate', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 1998. 25(2), p. 223.



on Potter's transition approach as well as elements of rational-choice theory. Having dealt with cultural factors in chapter one, let us now turn to modernisation theory.

Change in the Middle East, economic or political, was initiated by colonial powers via the introduction of bureaucracy and new governance arrangements. Since this change was imposed by external powers in the nineteenth century, Arab intellectuals have been confronted with the question of 'what does it mean to be modern?'<sup>13</sup> In this context, it is useful to draw the distinction between modernisation and modernity. As Derek Hopwood posits 'Modernization is the introduction into society of the artefacts of contemporary life – railways, communications, industry (less often nowadays), technology, and household equipment. Modernity (modernism) is a general term for the political and cultural process set in motion by integrating new ideas, an economic system, or education into society. It is a way of thought, of living in the contemporary world and of accepting change.'<sup>14</sup> Thus, while modernisation changes social structures, modernity reflects the extent to which society has changed in terms of practices, perceptions, attitudes, and values. Democracy is a political element of modernity.

Modernisation, first as an explanatory concept and then as a process of development, is viewed as a driving force for structural change and the creation of new social divisions, which in turn influences the social and the political values and practices of individuals and ultimately society as a whole. Socio-economic/capitalist development instigates a steady transformation of social classes in a society. The changing patterns of social class formation are important to the explanation of democratisation or the lack of it, not only because social classes change the balance of power in society, but also because of value transformation, which is often a correlate of such changes in power relations and because they explain why some countries democratised while others did not.<sup>15</sup> Socio-economic development enhances the growth of the middle

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<sup>13</sup> This question has been a subject to debate since the nineteenth century by Arab intellectuals such as Rifa'a Rafa` Tahtawi who studied in France during the nineteenth century and wrote *Takhlees Al Ebreez fi Talkhees Bareez* in which he describes modern France and compares it with the Arab world at that time especially Egypt. See Rifa'a Rafa` Tahtawi. *Complete work*, edited by Mohammed `Amara: Beirut: Al Mo`assassah Al Arabiaa Ledderasat walnasher. 1973.

<sup>14</sup> Hopwood, Derek. 'Introduction', in Hopwood, Derek. et al. *Islam and Modernity: Muslim Intellectuals Respond*. London & New York: I.B.Tauris Publishers, 2000. p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> A very good example is the work by Moore, B. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. Boston, Beacon Press, 1966.

class whose values are assumed to be essentially pro-democratic, as Lipset stresses.<sup>16</sup> Capitalist development, argue Rueschemeyer et al.<sup>17</sup>, culminates in the production of social classes such as the urban working class and the bourgeoisie for whom democratic practices are essential to protect and maintain their economic interests. However, interest in democratic practice varies across social classes, regions and political contexts. Historically, and compared cross-nationally, the middle classes have not been pro-democratic in all instances. For example, the middle class in South Korea in the 1970s and early 1980s had supported authoritarianism,<sup>18</sup> while the middle class in Brazil supported authoritarianism during late 1960s and early 1970s.<sup>19</sup> This raises doubts concerning the accuracy of Lipset's generalisation mentioned above, which are fuelled even further if we consider the middle classes in the Middle East. By and large, they have not successfully pushed for democratic practices, despite the fact that middle classes are considered to be relatively large in comparison to other classes (see Table 3-1).

The Middle East is a particularly striking anomaly in this context. So far the region has not developed sustained democratic practices. Jordan and Egypt<sup>20</sup> for example, have gone through modernisation processes, which changed their social structures. Nevertheless, both countries tend to score low on measures of democracy and freedom as compared to countries with similar size of middle class. What went wrong then? Is it the inadequacy of the modernisation theory or Middle Eastern exceptionalism that leads to this misfit of theory and data?

This discrepancy is also apparent in macro-political comparisons amongst Islamic countries (rather than comparing Islamic with non-Islamic countries), that is, controlling for factors such as religion and political traditions in a most-similar

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<sup>16</sup> Lipset, S.M. *Political Man*. London: Heinemann, 1983.

<sup>17</sup> Rueschemeyer, D., Stephens, E., and Stephens, J. *Capitalist Development and Democracy*. Cambridge, Polity Press, 1992.

<sup>18</sup> Potter, David. 'Democratisation at the same time in South Korea and Taiwan', in Potter, David. et al. (eds.) *Democratisation*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997. pp. 219-237.

<sup>19</sup> Cammack, Paul. 'Democracy and Dictatorship in Latin America, 1930-1980', in Potter, David. et al. (eds.) *Democratisation*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997. pp. 152-166.

<sup>20</sup> David Potter classifies Jordan and Egypt as partial democracies in 1975 while all other Arab states as authoritarian, twenty years later they were the only two Arab countries to be still considered as partial democracies with the rest of Arab states retaining the status of authoritarianism. See Potter, David. et al. (eds.) *Democratisation*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997. pp. 37-38.

systems design. According to Diamond, there are three fundamental levels of modernisation (high, medium and low). He defines countries whose GNP per capita

Table 3-1 Subjective evaluation of social class (percentage of respondents who described themselves as middle class (upper + lower)

Country	Middle class	Country	Middle Class
Israel	88	India	53.8
Indonesia	77.1	Spain	51.5
Bangladesh	69.1	Mexico	51
Jordan	69.1	Peru	45.1
Iran	67.5	Tanzania	43.9
Chile	66.7	Philippines	43.5
USA	66.5	Nigeria	41.4
Venezuela	64.3	S. Africa	38.6
Egypt	62.4	Morocco	38
Canada	62.1	Argentina	37.7
Japan	57.8	Zimbabwe	33
Turkey	56.9	Uganda	20
Sweden	56		

Source: WVS fourth wave 2000/2001

is between \$1,500 and \$3,500 as cases with intermediate levels of socio-economic development.<sup>21</sup> In these cases the outcome of modernisation could go either way: democracy or authoritarianism. Yet, none of the Middle Eastern states in the intermediate category developed fully-fledged democratic practices. Even more strikingly, the Gulf States, which have GNP per capita higher than the upper limit of intermediate level of \$3,500 tend to have lower scores on comparative indicators of democratisation than Middle Eastern countries in the intermediate category. Cautious and often hesitant steps towards political liberalisation took place in the *poorer* Middle Eastern and North African countries (Jordan, Yemen, Egypt, and Morocco) rather than those with high levels of socio-economic development. How could we explain this anomaly?

Literature on the political economy of the Middle East provides very useful insights to explain this anomaly. Since the early 1980s some Middle East specialists argued that there is a link between oil wealth and the lack of democracy in the Arab world.<sup>22</sup> The

<sup>21</sup> Diamond, Larry. 'Economic Development and Democracy Reconsidered', in Marks, G. & Diamond, L. (eds.) *Reexamining Democracy: Essays in the Honour of Martin Lipset*. London: Sage, 1992. p. 109.

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, Brynen, Rex. 'Economic Crisis and Post-Rentier Democratisation in the Arab World: The Case of Jordan', *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 1992, 25(1), 69-98. Brynen, Rex. Qurany Bahgat. & Noble, Paul. 'Introduction: Theoretical Perspectives on Arab Liberalization and Democratization', in Brynen, Rex. Qurany Bahgat. & Noble, Paul. (eds.) *Political Liberalization and*

essence of the argument is that oil producing countries of the region are 'rentier states', which control externally generated resources in order to enhance their autonomy. Given the fact that in these states revenues are not dependent on taxable domestic production, but rather on the international market, state decisionmakers are much less constrained by the interests of domestic actors. 'The availability of financial resources not only supports coercive apparatus of the state but also sustains massive social welfare programs and fuels powerful neopatrimonial networks based on family, tribe, and proximity to the ruling elite.'<sup>23</sup> These structures maintained authoritarian rule through buying political legitimacy (by the regimes) and obstructed political liberalisation. This process hindered the progress of civil society because states were able to provide for large segments of their societies without allowing popular participation in decision-making. It must be noted that the rentier state model is over deterministic. Political liberalisation in semi-rentier states such as Jordan, Algeria, Morocco, and recently in rentier states in the Gulf sheds some doubts on the validity and adequacy of the model as an analytical tool. Political liberalisation in most of these states was partly a result of economic crises. Moreover, the rentier state model may explain the politics of some Arab states but it does not account for the politics of other non-Arab oil producing countries like Iran, Nigeria, and Venezuela in which oil wealth had different functions.<sup>24</sup>

Moreover, acknowledging the validity of the proposition that capitalist development and modernisation would ultimately lead to democratisation; political economists also argue that modernisation process can be distorted by external structural aspects such as economic dependency or colonialism. Capitalist development in a penetrated society pursues a different course – with correspondingly different political implications from capitalist development in an industrial society. In analysing the role of corporatist state in the Middle East and its impact on political structures, Ehteshami and Murphy<sup>25</sup> argue that there is an 'apparent tendency of such states to reverse the

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*Democratisation in the Arab World. Vol. 1 Theoretical Perspectives*, Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner, 1995. p. 15.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p. 15.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, Ehtishami, Anoushiravan. & Murphy, Emma. 'Transformation of the Corporatist State in the Middle East', *Third World Quarterly*, 1996, 17(4). pp. 753-772. Also see Ehtishami, Anoushiravan. 'Is the Middle East Democratising?', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 1999,

political aspects of reform, in substance if not officially, as the economic elements take root.' They also demonstrated that the attempts by Middle Eastern states to reverse the political aspects of reform 'may be a function of the disarticulation of corporatist models for political organisation adopted in bureaucratic-bourgeois states.' They explain the argument by stating that 'as the state seeks to build a wider political base in support of its economic policies, it is itself responsible for the breakdown of the corporatist structures which have provided political stability. The political protest and challenges to the regime which result cannot be contained without resort ultimately to the authoritarian assets of the state, reversing attempts at political reform. The corporatist state is transformed into an overtly authoritarian state.'<sup>26</sup> Thus, the continuity of authoritarian political systems in the Middle East is not primarily rooted in the cultural tradition of the region. Given the nature of the state in the Middle East (a colonial creation) and its links to external structural factors (economic and political alliances with external international powers), the process of modernisation in these countries is penetrated and regimes' attempts to secure political stability tend to take an authoritarian nature.<sup>27</sup>

As indicated earlier, one of the most obvious answers to this anomaly (above) is the addition of cultural factors, especially the role of religion. In this view, religious values are not less important than other social and political values in explaining democratic transformation. They gain their political significance from being associated to religious institutions, which are socially strong and therefore tend to be politically significant especially in less secular societies. Religions are still significant because of their universality over other categorisations of values and belief systems. Many researchers on democratisation have argued that Protestantism favours liberal democracy while other religions are incompatible with it.<sup>28</sup> This view has been subject to continuous empirical investigations, which showed the weakness of this

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26(2). pp. 199-217. the latter article examines the impact of elections in middle eastern countries in the 1990s.

<sup>26</sup> Ehtishami, Anoushiravan. & Murphy, Emma. 'Transformation of the Corporatist State in the Middle East', *Third World Quarterly*, 1996, 17(4). p. 753.

<sup>27</sup> For more details about the arguments presented by political economists see Ayubi, Nazih. *Overstating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East*. London: I.B. Tauris, 1995; Murphy C Emma. *Economic and Political Change in Tunisia: From Bourguiba to Ben Ali*, London: Macmillan Press, 1999.

<sup>28</sup> Hadenius, Axel. *Democracy and Development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. pp. 118-122.

view. For example, mainly transitions to democracy of predominantly catholic societies in the second half of the twentieth century (Spain, Portugal and Latin America) cannot be explained with reference to religion. Moreover, the lack of democracy in the Middle East has been often attributed to the belief that Islam is incompatible with liberal democracy. The same line of argument stretches to Asia, where lack of democracy in South East Asia was attributed to the prevalence of Confucian values,<sup>29</sup> again the transition of South Korea and other countries in the region shed light on the invalidity of the argument.

The arguments concerning the relationship between religiosity and support for liberal democracy are set out and tested in chapters five and six of this thesis. It will be shown that a culturalist argument based on religion *alone* finds little support when put to an empirical test. It is therefore necessary to develop a more comprehensive and general framework, linking behavioural outcomes with changing cultural, social and political structures and values. Recent research on the linkage between structures and values has found that 'though cultures change in response to changes in the socio-economic, political, and technological environment, they also shape that environment in return.'<sup>30</sup> Thus, socio-economic changes could potentially strengthen authoritarianism more than democracy. This outcome depends on the survival strategies adopted by the winners and the response of losers of modernisation to the winners' strategies. The reasons for these predictions can be best understood by reference to rational choice theory (see below).

### **Winners and Losers of Modernisation: A Respecification of Modernisation Theory**

It is argued here that classical modernisation theory and its most recent variants are overly deterministic and have not adequately accounted for the absence of democracy in Islamic societies with relatively high levels of socio-economic development

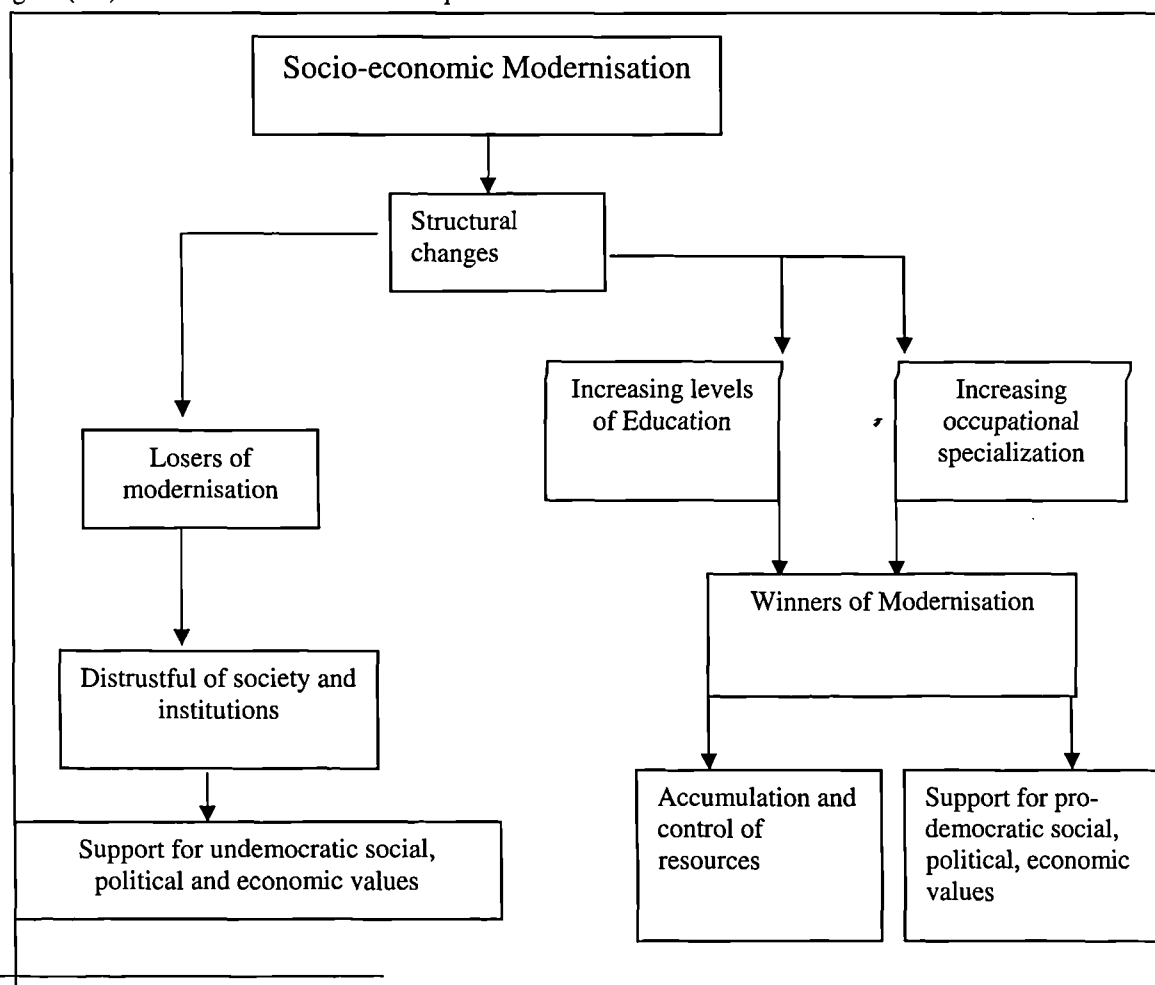
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<sup>29</sup> Pye, L. W. *Asian power and politics: the cultural dimensions of authority*. Harvard University Press, 1985.

<sup>30</sup> See Inglehart, Ronald. *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990. p. 3. See also Inglehart, Ronald and Baker, Wayne. 'Modernization, Cultural Change and the Persistence of Traditional Values', *American Sociological Review*, February 2000, pp. 19-51.; Inglehart, Ronald. *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic and Political Change in 43 Societies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997. Chapter 6. Inglehart, Ronald and Abramson, Paul. 'Measuring Postmaterialism', *American Political Science Review*, September 1999. pp. 665-677.

(particularly in the Middle East).<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, modernisation theory could be respecified in a less deterministic way as suggested the theoretical model in Figure (3-1). The model is a heuristic device not a-priori answer. In line with classical modernisation theory and its recent variants,<sup>32</sup> this model considers socio-economic development (modernisation) as a core independent variable with significant explanatory power to predict social and political change. Although this model is informed by classical modernisation theories and its most recent variants, it will avoid some of the problems often associated with modernisation theory, mainly, the deterministic assumption of a necessary link between modernisation and democratisation. The model in Figure (3-1) summarises the main theoretical argument. Modernisation leads to social change but this change does not necessarily lead to democratisation, because winners of modernisation (educated, have above average household income and do non-manual jobs) in the Middle East may compromise democracy in pursuit of private benefits (income, power status).

Figure (3.1) Modernisation and its Consequences: A Theoretical Model



<sup>31</sup> See chapter 1 for a review of empirical studies utilising modernisation theory assumptions.

<sup>32</sup> Inglehart, Ronald. *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997.

Classical modernisation theory claims that socio-economic modernisation is conducive to reasonably large-scale urbanisation and societal structural changes such as increasing levels of education and increasing occupational specialisation. Individuals who have benefited from these changes are referred to here as the *winners of modernisation*.<sup>33</sup> Through their socialisation and exposure to modern ways of behaviour, these individuals gain additional skills and information, which enable them to be socially engaged and politically involved in public affairs. Such involvement could increase their political sophistication, especially their awareness and acceptance of political pluralism. Their perceptions of life, ideas, and values are assumed to be different from those who did not benefit from these structural changes, the *losers of modernization* (no or minimal education, manual jobs, and have below average household income). *In the context of mature democracies it has been argued that the winners of modernisation are more likely to develop and maintain pro-democratic values and orientations (although they may be more critical of government performance), while losers of modernisation are assumed to be more likely to develop political apathy or undemocratic values and orientations due to the fact that they lack the necessary means to creatively articulate their interests and to participate in social and political decision making process even if given the opportunity. They may also feel threatened by modernization and be amenable to seemingly simple solutions, especially authoritarian ones. Since they do not actively relate to their social and political environment, their chances to embrace undemocratic and traditional values are high. Being marginalised by the winners of modernisation who control state institutions, losers of modernisation are likely to be distrustful of society and state institutions.*

In Middle Eastern societies and rentier states the link between gains from modernization and democratic values may follow a different logic. The winners of modernization may be interested in maintaining the (usually authoritarian) political status quo, while the losers may be more interested in democratic reform, although they may lack the material and cognitive resources necessary to support a democratic system – a factor that modernization theory draws our attention to. The hypothesis that winners and losers may respond to the same development in different ways,

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<sup>33</sup> Betz, Hans-Georg., 'Politics of Resentment: Right-Wing Radicalism in West Germany, *Comparative Politics*, October 1990, 23(1), pp. 45-60.



suggests that a choice-based framework (placing more emphasis on agency) may provide interesting answers. Elements of rational-choice theory, combined with structuralist and culturalist arguments, may illuminate some of the underlying dynamics.

### **Modernisation and Rational Choice: An Integrative Approach**

The modernisation approach introduces socio-economic factors as explanatory variables for the existence and nature of democratic values in liberal democracies and also suggests that these factors are requisites for the development and sustainability of democratic values in democratising societies. The transition approach, by contrast, stresses the dynamics of the political process in a given society emphasising the elites' political interactions, practices, initiatives and choices which elucidate and shape patterns of change in political values and preferences within the political system usually from undemocratic to liberal democratic values. Unlike this approach, the integrative approach taken here consists of three parts: 1) modernisation, which creates the conditions of survival for two groups: winners and losers; 2) religion, which shapes the socio-political value system of Middle Eastern societies (explained in chapter 2), and 3) strategies of survival which incline individuals to make rational choices in order to maximise their utilities.<sup>34</sup> Survival strategies of both groups determine whether a country is likely to democratise or not.

Rational-choice theory could help to spell out more explicitly and rigorously some of the mechanisms identified by the transition approach and to reinterpret cultural and socio-economic factors as important constraints to which rational actors respond in predictable ways. Rational-choice theory<sup>35</sup> can be defined as 'the economic study of nonmarket decision-making, or simply, the application of economics to political science.'<sup>36</sup> 'Economic theory and rational-choice theory share a set of assumptions concerning the rationality of individual choice. They overlap in their assumption and methodology and differ primarily in the contexts in which choices are made.'<sup>37</sup> It is precisely the latter point that makes rational-choice theory particularly helpful in

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<sup>34</sup> For details of rational choice theory and its assumption see Saalfeld, Thomas. 'Rational-Choice Theory in Legislative Studies: Models of Politics without Romanticism', *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, Spring 1995, 1(1), pp. 32-64;

<sup>35</sup> See Friedman, Jeffery. (ed.) *The Rational Choice Controversy: Economic Models of Democracy Reconsidered*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1996.

<sup>36</sup> Mueller, Dennis. *Public Choice II: A Revised Edition of Public Choice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989. p. 1. cited in Saalfeld, 1995. p. 35.

resolving the central question raised above: What went wrong? Given the macro-level scope of modernisation theory, it does not explain why individuals act the way they do. Rational-choice theory, by contrast, provides a coherent set of realistic assumptions, which could explain why political actors in the Middle Eastern context did not opt for democracy as an option despite the fact that conventional measures of modernisation suggest some of them should have developed democracies. This is not the place to engage in a detailed discussion of rational-choice theory.<sup>38</sup>

The basic assumption of Rational-choice theory, that is, the rationality of political actors (whether individuals, states or organisations), helps us understand why political actors choose certain behaviour in order to achieve their goals given certain constraints.<sup>39</sup> The initial conditions in which *individuals* find themselves constitute *constraints* on their behaviour. For example, winners of modernisation would have incentives to preserve the status quo of the political system (e.g. authoritarian) if the system protects their interest. Note that this reasoning would predict an outcome very different from the outcome expected by classical modernisation theory. Losers of modernisation, by contrast, would have incentives to change/reform the political system in a way that accommodates their interest, but given the winners' upper hand in state institutions and therefore their control of opportunity structures within the political system, the constraints faced by the losers tend to be formidable. Nevertheless, losers could have two fundamental choices: they submit to the winners' strategies in order to minimise the cost inflicted on them and benefit probably a little. Alternatively they could favour or seek regime change. According to most rational-choice models of protest against a non-democratic regime, the losers' choice depends very much on the expected costs (e.g., resulting from possible repression) as

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<sup>37</sup> Saalfeld, 1995. p 35.

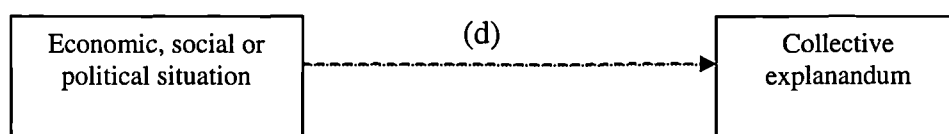
<sup>38</sup> For the debate about this issue in relation to Rational-choice theory see Friedman, Jeffery. 'Introduction: Economic Approaches to Politics', in Friedman, Jeffery. (ed.) *The Rational Choice Controversy: Economic Models of Democracy Reconsidered*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1996. pp. 8-11.

<sup>39</sup> See Lalman, David., Oppenheimer, Joe., and Swistak, Piotr. 'Formal Rational Choice Theory: A Cumulative Science of Politics, in Finifter, Ada. (ed.) *Political Science: The State of the Discipline II*, Washington, DC: American Political Science Association, 1993. p. 79.; Saalfeld, Thomas. 'Rational-Choice Theory in Legislative Studies: Models of Politics without Romanticism', *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, Spring 1995, 1(1), p. 35.

compared to the expected benefit.<sup>40</sup> Winners in the elite have the resources to manipulate the losers' cost-benefit calculations through the use of a 'carrot-and-stick' policy.

The individual cost-benefit calculations are predicted to have collective outcomes. There are three main elements in Rational-choice theory: *individuals*, *constraints*, and *collective outcomes*.<sup>41</sup> RCT combines these three elements in what is characteristically known as 'methodological individualism'.<sup>42</sup> The cornerstone of rational choice models is their focus on the individual level. Individuals have preferences defined by purposive goal seeking. These preferences do not exist in vacuum, they are conditioned by constraints. Thus, individuals have to make choices as to which course of action to take given certain constraints. Given the plurality of choices taken by different individuals, the collective outcomes are the aggregate (not necessarily additive) result of individual choices. These collective outcomes are the phenomena rational-choice models seek to explain.<sup>43</sup> The outcomes of modernisation divide actors into winners and losers. These individuals (actors) take action in order to challenge, create or maintain a collective explanandum (political system) that suits their interest. The type of political system and its institutions depends on the evaluation of costs and benefits made by actors who seek to minimise costs and maximise benefits. Figure (3-2) illustrates the linkage between the micro to the macro levels of analysis in methodological individualism and it shows the function of rational choice theory within this framework.<sup>44</sup>

Figure (3-2)  
Methodological Individualism: Linking the Micro and Macro levels of Analysis



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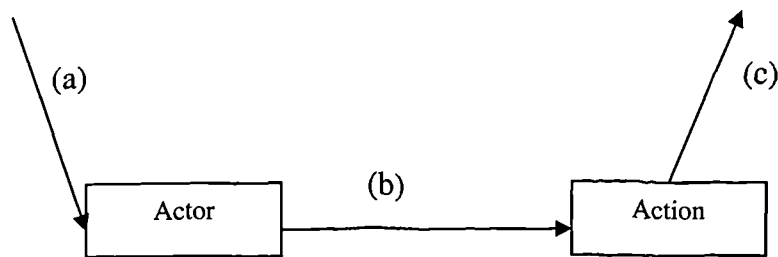
<sup>40</sup> Karklins, Rasma. & Petersen, Roger: ' Decision Calculus of Protesters and Regimes: Eastern Europe 1989,' *Journal of Politics*, 1993, 55(3). pp. 588-614.; Opp, Karl-Dieter & Gern, Christiane: ' Dissident Groups, Personal Networks, and Spontaneous Cooperation: The East German Revolution of 1989,' *American Sociological Review*, 1993, 58. pp. 659-680.

<sup>41</sup> Saalfeld. 1995. p 37.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. p 37.

<sup>43</sup> Saalfeld. 1995. p 38.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. p 38-9.



Source: Saalfeld. 1995. p 39.

The macro level is presented by upper half of the diagram ('economic, social or political situation', 'collective explanandum'), while the micro level is presented by the lower half of the diagram ('actor', 'action'). The situational factors at the macro level 'restrict the range of possible choices and determine their respective costs. They shape the 'opportunity structure''.<sup>45</sup> Opportunity structures are determined by the interests of the winners of modernisation. Under authoritarian political systems, the winners who also control state structures will restrict access to state institutions i.e. they will keep losers and weaker winners on the fringes. The political system will be closed to other actors whose entrance to it, may undermine the winners' gains. Thus, authoritarianism continues. Losers and weaker winners may *want* a democratic political system which provides checks and balances, protects the rights of individuals, and safeguards equal opportunities, and balances state-society relations, but the perceived cost of transforming these values to a political system at the macro level may hinder these individuals from taking the appropriate action.

Modernisation and modernity in the Middle East followed a course of progress that is not identical with the course of modernisation and modernity followed in the West. The factor underpinning modernisation in the West was industrialization, which changed the way in which society exchanges commodities. This process led to abandoning traditional methods of economic production. As a consequence, production relations had to change. The overriding principle was capital accumulation. In the Middle East, the path of modernisation was not a result of industrialisation. Rather it was driven by the interventionist rentier state, which imitated modernisation from above, in the form of bureaucracies, modern institutions, and state-led light industries. Thus, the Middle East 'imported' the modern outcomes of industrialisation without having actually produced them – and the associated

development of a liberal order protecting property rights and civil liberties internally. The modern (postcolonial) state, which championed these developmental endeavours, appears to be more concerned with dominating than in representing or serving the society. Nonetheless, significant changes accompanied this modernisation process.

The new bases of income generation and production were the state bureaucracy and state-owned means of production. People started abandoning the seasonal agricultural land-based production and became tied to the new realities whereby they have to make individual economic decisions and choices. The educational opportunities rapidly expanded and more specialised labour force became a necessity in order to generate income both for individuals the state (the largest provider of job opportunities). Consequently, people became more mobile. This social mobility facilitated an easier understanding and acceptance of the changes that are taking place (for example, women entering the labour force). A slight majority of Jordanians (51.4 percent) believes that it is important for a woman to have a job outside the house.<sup>46</sup> However, the course of modernisation has changed in the West, as well as in the Middle East. In the post-industrial age industrialisation is no longer a prerequisite of modernity. High-tech knowledge is boundaries-less and manufacturing is declining and is being gradually replaced by hi-tech services. Therefore, modernity in the Middle East is being acquired (in relative terms) without emulating the Western path.

Modernization is the process through which modernity is achieved. Since modernisation changes the methods of basic social relations, modern men and women question the traditional assumptions about choices and decisions in everyday life. Central to modernity has been the idea that mankind is capable of changing natural and social phenomena.<sup>47</sup> The belief in the human capacity and reason to change the traditional norms of living and thinking has had a tremendous impact not only on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries' industrial societies of the West (the centre), but also on the 'recipient' periphery. Such belief was disproportionately spread among the

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<sup>45</sup> Saalfeld. 1995. p 39.

<sup>46</sup> WVS-Jordan conducted September 2001. The question was asked in the following way: In your Opinion, how important are each of the following traits in a woman? 'To have work outside the house' 1. Very important, 2. important, 3. somewhat important, 4. not very important, 5. not at all important. The percentage reported is the sum of 1,2, and 3.

<sup>47</sup> See for example Heller, Agnes. *A Theory of Modernity*. Massachusetts & Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999. pp. 64-79.

peripheral recipients creating intellectual debate about three responses to modernity: acceptance, rejection or compromise.<sup>48</sup> However, there have been differences between Middle Eastern countries as to how to contain modernity and integrate its consequences into society. For example, the Turkish state between 1923 and the 1950s abandoned tradition and followed a secular system accepting all manifestations of modernity; some Arab countries such as Jordan and Egypt have attempted to forge compromise between tradition and modernity, while others such as Saudi Arabia insist on tradition accepting 'modern' social and political values only reluctantly- if they do so at all. Nevertheless, the impact of modernisation is being felt across the region regardless of the debate about what to accept, reject or compromise upon. 'In the contemporary world, while modernization inevitably exists, belief in total solutions has all but disappeared and progress, if made at all, is perceived as merely partial and discontinuous.'<sup>49</sup>

With the rapid advance of information technology, Middle Eastern people were not isolated from contemporary changes be economic, social, or political sphere. Individuals had to define their relationships with the past, such as tribal affiliations, rural socialisation, Bedouin ethics, or religious commitment, because modern norms of social relations have developed as repercussions of modernisation. Thus, modernisation brought about the question of the relevance of the past to modern norms. As individuals, do we still want tribal affiliations to determine our political affiliations in an age where political parties and civil society organisations are present locally as well as internationally? Do we still want to use primitive means of production where modern and timesaving machines exist? Thus, individuals not only question the past legacy but also begin to live in conditions that inevitably promote a more complex approach to life. Such conditions being brought about with a sharp discontinuity with the past raise the question of traditional versus modern values i.e. tradition versus modernity.

Modernisation promoted some structural changes in the Arab world, and the social order has slightly altered. Saad Eddin Ibrahim observes some of these changes and

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<sup>48</sup> See Moaddel, Mansoor and Talattof, Kamran. (eds.) *Contemporary Debates in Islam: An Anthology of Modernist and Fundamentalist Thought*. London: Macmillan. 2000.

attributes them to the modernisation produced by the oil wealth in the Arab world.<sup>50</sup> Since economic, social, cultural, and political changes are mutually reinforcing, the argument of determinism of any system whether economic (Marx) or cultural (Weber) remains contested. The incompatibility of any system with other sub-systems in a society leads to the diminishing of one system to the advantage of the other. Thus, if the cultural norms are incompatible with the economic system in a given society, they are unlikely to survive the pressure generated by material realities on the ground. 'Weber was correct in viewing the rise of Protestantism as a crucial event in the Modernization of Europe. However, its impact was not unique to Protestantism but was mainly due to the fact that its acquisitive rationality supplanted a set of religious norms that are common to most pre-industrial societies and that inhibit economic achievement. Protestantism was uniquely Western, but acquisitive rationality is not.'<sup>51</sup> Although modernisation was achieved first in the West, this does not necessarily mean that modernisation is equivalent to Westernisation. Modernisation in Western Europe represents only one version that is unique to European conditions. Bearing these considerations in mind, one could speak of different outcomes of modernisation. Consequently, repercussions of modernisation are not uniform.

In this line of analysis an Arab scholar who compares the renaissance of 19<sup>th</sup> century Japan to 19<sup>th</sup> century Egypt tries to answer the fundamental question why has Japan

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<sup>49</sup> Hopwood, Derek. 'Introduction', in Hopwood, Derek. et al. *Islam and Modernity: Muslim Intellectuals Respond*. London & New York: I.B.Tauris, 2000. p. 3.

<sup>50</sup> In the image of 'mechanized Bedouin' which presents the altered Bedouin life style, the images of 'lumpen capitalist', the image of 'veiled medical student', the image 'the angry Muslim militant' correspond to an urban life style, the image of 'the Egyptian peasant outside the Nile Valley' signifies a rural life style, all resemble the impact of modernisation on the traditional way of living. For example, the image of the mechanized Bedouin marks a change in the nomadic life style, which has been stable for thousands of years; nowadays Bedouins are integrating new methods into their lives. They join modern armed forces as professional members following a routine and obeying orders from their professional bosses not from tribal leaders. This is a significant change because it indicates an alteration in a long-standing tradition of patrimonial social relations. Although Bedouins have often accepted professional life, they have preferred jobs that do not sharply conflict with their nomadic values. They work as armed guards, drivers, air force pilots and commanders. These jobs are congruent with the traditional jobs and ethics with which Bedouins are familiar such as the constant travelling seeking water resources and grass fields for their herds. Since they work as army members and civil servants, by definition they are exposed to the urban life styles of the city and because they shuttle back and forth, the chance for them to introduce new ideas and methods to their communities is greater. Thus being involved in modern life their perceptions of the past will steadily change especially with the settlement in a proper household. All images mentioned above symbolize structural changes in traditional life styles. See Ibrahim, Saad Eddin. 'Images of the New Social Order', in Farah, Tawfic. (ed.) *Political Behavior in the Arab States*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1983. Pp. 163-185.

<sup>51</sup> Inglehart, Ronald. *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and political change in 43 societies*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press. 1997. p. 11.

developed in the way it did, while Egypt failed although Egypt was more advanced than Japan in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century? He answers the question by saying Japan managed to modernise without westernisation while Egypt fell in the trap of westernisation during its modernisation. Therefore, there has been a conflict between the traditional and Western values. He quotes a Japanese author to demonstrate his argument that Japan did not abandon its cultural tradition. Japan benefited from Western philosophy and norms. In Japan's modernisation those aspects of modernity were incorporated in the culture. As a result Japan preserved the continuity of its spiritual/traditional/moral principles during the modernisation process and at the same time built material cornerstones for its modern life following the rule of benefiting from all modern sciences without sacrificing tradition. The Japanese modernisation process managed to integrate immigrants from rural areas to the cities into a modern system that did not reject all traditional norms, while in Egypt the modernisation process failed to integrate immigrants into a modern system. Japan smoothly transferred traditional values to modern norms while Egypt left traditional affiliations unchanged. Thus tribal and sectarian loyalties hindered modernisation in rural areas and in contrast city dwellers were modern and westernised. Associations neither replaced tribes and religious sects nor did they modernise them. Therefore, a sense of national identity was not properly established. Another reason for failure was the building of strong army at the expense of social development.<sup>52</sup> These divisions are still very much in place in Arab countries today.

### **Modernisation and Values**

So far I have tried to illustrate ways in which modernisation brings about social change, the contingency of the modernisation process and its theoretical significance. But what I have not thoroughly discussed is the direct role of modernisation in changing the political values and practices. The central question here is: Is modernisation likely to transform the existing set of values from undemocratic/authoritarian, to democratic, and if so, how? Could it be the other way around? Although modernisation theory, in different forms, has been developing over a century, and many social theorists have stressed that economic and technological

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<sup>52</sup> Daher, Mas'oud. *Annahda al-Arabyyia wa Annahda Al-Yabanyyia: Tashaboh al-Muqadomat wa Ikhtilaf Annata`ej*, [Arab Renaissance and Japanese Renaissance: Similar Beginnings and Different Results], Kuwait: `Alam al-Ma`refa. Pp. 18-19.



changes are connected to patterns of social, and political change, it seems that there is a lot of debate and little agreement on the direction of causation. Recently, there has been a growing accumulation of evidence about specific linkages and general patterns, which proved causal relations at various levels. These patterns are to be found, for example, in the linkage between subjective and objective wellbeing, interpersonal trust (consequences of modernisation) and democracy.<sup>53</sup>

At the theoretical level it is worthwhile to mention briefly some of the themes laid out by the forbearers of social theory, Karl Marx and Max Weber. Marx proposed a theory based on economic determinism positing that the economic system of a society is determined by its technological achievements and above all the ownership of the means of production. The economic system, in turn, determines all other aspects of the society's life including the cultural consequences. Max Weber followed another approach stressing the role of culture in interaction with the economic system. For him, culture is not an epiphenomenon of the economic system: it shapes the economic system and political life. For example, the appearance of the Protestant ethics was important to the development of capitalism. Marx's approach was significantly changed by other Marxists such as Lenin who argued that the working class could not independently construct a sufficient level of class-consciousness necessary for the revolution, therefore the workers needed to be guided by vanguard of revolutionaries who are ideologically attentive. Not far from Lenin's was Mao's view of the power of revolutionary thinking. He argued that China does not necessarily require the passing through urbanisation and industrialisation to instigate a communist revolution. With a conscious and committed leadership a communist revolution could succeed even in an agrarian society. This view gained ground with the success of the Chinese communist victory in 1949.<sup>54</sup>

In the second half of the twentieth century modernisation theorists re-emphasised the role of structures in changing political values and practices. Some theorists viewed changes in the structure of the workforce as the leading cause of cultural change. The

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<sup>53</sup> See, for instance, Inglehart, Ronald. *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and political change in 43 societies*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997. Chapter 6.

<sup>54</sup> For more about this debate see Inglehart, Ronald. *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and political change in 43 societies*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997. pp. 9-10.

expansion of the workforce in the tertiary sector is said to be conducive to a parallel expansion in education, which is driven by the need for more educated, skilled, and specialised workforce. This workforce is mainly producing services instead of manufacturing raw materials. For Bell the expansion of the services sector is the crucial landmark of the coming of 'postindustrial society'.<sup>55</sup> However, the role of formal education continued to be emphasised as the main factor in shaping a 'modern world view' by other prominent modernisation theorists.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, there has been a gradual shift from physical mobility towards cognitive mobilisation. Cognitive mobilisation as a process entailing 'the dissemination of skills needed to cope with an extensive political community'<sup>57</sup> is a result of rising levels of education.

Theorists utilising the modernisation approach emphasise the role of intervening variables, which mediate between socio-economic development (modernisation) and democratic values and practices. Lipset<sup>58</sup> argues that the class struggle is determined by socio-economic development, which reduces inequalities between social classes and strengthens the middle class. Such developments, he contends, reduce the level of conflict through moderating extremist views and favour the development of democratic practice. Some of Lipset's conclusions were statistically confirmed by Hadenius.<sup>59</sup> He found a strong positive correlation between high literacy rates, as a consequence of socio-economic development, and liberal democracy. Nonetheless, he found it difficult to substantiate Lipset's contention that reductions in class inequalities help to sustain liberal democracy. However, the impact of socio-economic development is not limited to changing structural settings of a given society that are conducive to democratic values and practises, it could transform daily behaviours of citizens as consumers to a new, perhaps more comprehensive, set of social and political values including non-market situations. For example, it has been suggested the experience of being a sovereign and capable consumer (making independent

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<sup>55</sup> Bell, Daniel. *The Coming of Postindustrial Society*. New York: Basic Books, 1973; Bell, Daniel. *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*. New York: Basic Books, 1976.

<sup>56</sup> Lerner, Daniel. *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East*. New York: Free Press, 1958. Inkeles, Alex. & Smith, David. *Becoming Modern: Individual change in Six Developing Countries*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974.

<sup>57</sup> Inglehart, Ronald. *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990. p. 337.

<sup>58</sup> Lipset, Seymour Martin. *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983.

<sup>59</sup> Hadenius, Axel. *Democracy and Development*. Cambridge University Press, 1996.

choices in a market economy) could be conducive to the development similar processes in politics such as voting for a candidate who meets the needs of the voter. Since the process of choosing involves time, effort, and weighing alternatives, it is more likely for individuals to develop a pattern that is maintained through rational choice which is central to modern men and women. This pattern could be followed in subsequent choice-based decisions. Thus developing a choice and need-dependent voting decision, which would foster individualistic choices (as opposed to collective choices), would lead to a re-structuring of the social bases of political power. For example, voting would contribute to the development of individualistic behaviour ultimately culminating in questioning if not changing the traditional reference points which are normally taken into account in a time of voting decision making. This development is more likely to occur in societies where the collective identity, forged along sectarian, clannish and tribal lines, plays a significant role in determining voter choice. Such observation is evident in the Jordanian parliamentary elections of 1989, 1993, 1997 and the Lebanese parliamentary elections of August 2000.<sup>60</sup> If modernisation theory –coupled with a choice-based actor centred theory linking modernisation process at the macro level and individual responses at the micro level is correct, these points of reference (clan, tribal loyalties) should be subject to a constant but slow process of erosion due to the impact of modernisation, which gradually changes the traditional vertical social relationships to modern horizontal ones.

### **Openness of the Consequences of Modernisation**

Although modernisation studies are often based on the assumption that modernisation is a fairly universal, uniform and linear process, as far as its outcomes are concerned, it is argued here that studying individual cases reveals distinct economic experiences with unusual features specific to each case. In these cases, the exploration of causal mechanisms between economic development and democratic values and practices requires a detailed investigation of the economic processes and their social and

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<sup>60</sup> In these two countries (Jordan and Lebanon) sectarian loyalties and tribal affiliations determine to a great extent if a candidate is to be elected or not. In Jordan, for example, throughout the elections campaign tribes often insist on minimising the number of their candidates through internal elections prior to the general elections to nominate their candidates. It does not always work since other candidates who were not internally elected might pursue their campaign to the end but candidates with tribal consensus are more likely to win. (I shall come back to this point when discussing rationality as a component of political culture)

political repercussions. Such an investigation is set to reveal the correctness of the uniformity thesis. There is a sequence of logical causation. This sequence is caused by distinctive structures of capitalist development, which leads to change in the social structure. Such a process facilitates the change/modernisation of the value system and political practice. Socio-economic interests seek political representation. These interests are partly shaped by a set of supportive values, which develop simultaneously to adapt to the changes in the factual interests and in turn contribute into their development. Consequently, these interests seek to be politically represented and their demands being responded to. The very political process through which all interests are expressed facilitates the formation of a new set of political and social values and practices that are directly related to the political process, affects it and is affected by it: reciprocal pluralism.

While sharing the fundamental logic of modernisation theory, the present study is based on some scepticism about the structuralism and determinism of classical modernisation theory. It can be argued that in such modernisation processes some individuals gain more than others in terms of economy, education, information, and even the ability to choose i.e. becoming modern. It would, therefore, be an oversimplification to reduce what shapes individuals' human experience and behaviour to one single factor – socioeconomic modernisation. A modernisation process that is not based on the Western trajectory of industrialisation varies in its consequences across the social spectrum ranging from underprivileged to privileged individuals. Unequal modernisation is likely to lead to different interests, world-views, motivations, cost-benefit calculation, and political practices.

The value system of individuals is influenced by a(a) the cultural environment within which individuals are socialised, and (b) by the objective (material) reality, which limits their choices. The notion of instrumental rationality can link the modernisation process and individual responses which, in turn, contribute to collective (political) outcomes: in adapting to the individual consequences of modernisation, actors may find it beneficial – or detrimental to their interests – to support and promote liberal-democratic values or a democratic order. For example, modernisation may influence the nature and power of 'significant others' in an individual's social environment. Individuals in a tribal social environment may find it socially more 'costly' to

promote democratic values than individuals in a modern, urban, pluralistic environment. Support for a democratic political system would be more likely to occur amongst those individuals who perceive democracy as means to promote their interests, while support for an authoritarian political system would be more likely among those individuals who perceive democracy as a threat to their interests. For example, because it provides the basis for checks, balances and transparency. Instrumental rationality, therefore, allows for outcomes of modernisation process. In other words, while modernisation may be a necessary condition for democracy, it is not a sufficient one. It affects different social groups in different ways. Democratic values are more likely to be held by individuals who have been modernised, while authoritarian values are more likely to be prevalent among individuals who have not been modernised or seek protection of their traditional lifestyles and social roles, which may be threatened by modernisation or at least have had relatively low levels of modernisation such as minimal educational attainment. Bearing in mind that unequal modernisation may result in a situation in which some are far ahead of others, the assumption of instrumental rationality accounts for different responses to modernisation. The persistence of traditional or authentic norms of behaviour (tribal and sectarian allegiances) and deeply rooted values may well contradict the claim that modernisation will lead to the development of democratic civic values. Affiliation to a tribe or sect may, for example, come first as a rational choice when an individual has to make a choice at the polling box (see Tables 5-1 and chapter 5-5 in chapter 5). For example, during the 1993 parliamentary elections in Jordan a professor of linguistics voted verbally for a tribe-nominated candidate stating that 'I am illiterate, and I vote for Dr. Shakhanbeh'.<sup>61</sup> According to modernisation theory's assumption this should not happen, but it was rational for this professor to behave in the way he did. He was hoping to be the tribe-nominated candidate in the subsequent parliamentary elections of 1997. Thus, such an incident could be interpreted in two different ways. First, it is a rational behaviour, which involves the making of a decision, of that 'modern' (well educated) individual to maximise his benefits. Secondly, it is based on traditional (not civic) norms and values. Again this example,

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<sup>61</sup> I personally was in the room where this incidence took place. The professor of linguistics is Ali al-Hroot, he was the head of the Arabic language and literature department in the Faculty of Art at Mu'tah University. Later on he was appointed the dean of the faculty.

throws doubts on the uniformity and universality of modernisation theory and thus to argue for context-specific modernisation seems to be reasonable.

Thus the assumption of rationality provides a universalist (rather than a culture-specific or modernisation-theoretic, 'Western') criterion linking individual behaviour to socio-economic and political contexts in 'modern' as well as more traditional societies and groups. It could be argued that instrumental rationality is linked to modernisation as much as it is linked to tradition. In a pre-modern undemocratic environment, for example, individuals have to balance the anticipated reaction of state and significant others and their political aspirations and political behaviour. The simplistic assumption of modernisation theory, namely that democratic values are associated with modernisation can be partially challenged on the grounds that different political contexts may encounter or discover different forms of political behaviour different to conditions of modernisation. In the Middle East the modernisation process produced 'westernised' secular as well as educated and well-off 'traditional' religious individuals. The question is: are they all democrats or at least have they all developed pro-democratic values and attitudes? In general terms, at the institutional level, Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, and many other countries in the region have not witnessed a regular rotation of power indicating a real democratic transformation. That is to say: the westernised elites, which have been running these countries throughout the past fifty years, have failed to introduce democratic politics. In contrast, for instance, the 'traditional' religious individuals in Jordan represented by the Islamic Action Front Party (IAFP) are democratic according to Robinson,<sup>62</sup> who concluded that the IAFP is a 'capable' democratic political party and that it plays politics according to the rules of the democratic game. Robinson's conclusion was reached following interviews with leaders of the IAFP and interpretations of the party's manifesto. Thus, modern westernised elite did not deliver democratisation, while modern but 'traditional' (non-westernised) elites managed to build a democratic political party (IAFP), which is the strongest in Jordan. At the institutional level, as the evidence suggests, we can posit that: First, there is a missing link between the 'westernised' elite and the objective conditions (social environment) in which they live. This could be meaningfully explained by their inability to produce democratic

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<sup>62</sup> Robinson, E. Glenn. 'Can Islamists be Democrats: the Case of Jordan', *Middle East Journal*, Summer 1997, 51(3), pp. 373-387.

politics at the institutional level even in the form of active democratic political parties. They manipulated and preserved the political system to suit their political and economic interests by controlling state institutions. Therefore, they were distant from the 'traditional' elite (IAFP) and the rest of the people. Second, in contrast, the 'traditional' elite has established a very strong link with the objective reality within which they live, and with the people. Thus, they reacted to incentives created by the regime in a democratic manner. They have managed to draw support from all sectors of the society and to build a democratic institution (IAFP) in addition to many other NGOs and charities. Thus, the question remains: why the modern 'westernised' elite failed, while the modern but 'traditional' elite succeeded (as tested against democratic practice)?

Thus, the present work parts from classical modernisation theory by claiming that economic development is not always conducive to the production and development of democratic political values and practices.<sup>63</sup> Although, there is evidence to suggest that socio-economic and capitalist development is generally conducive to democratisation in most cases,<sup>64</sup> the dynamics of capitalist development, in particular, may be counterproductive. As David Beetham stated, 'the experience of being treated as a dispensable commodity in the labour market contradicts the publicly proclaimed idea of a democratic citizen as the bearer of rights in a context of social reciprocity' and 'the widespread unemployment and rapid fluctuations in market economies render voters vulnerable to demagogic mobilisation in support of authoritarian and exclusivist forms of politics.'<sup>65</sup> Thus, socio-economic and capitalist development restructures social divisions along apparent lines of education and specific job specialisation producing beneficiaries of modernisation process (winners of modernisation) and losers of modernisation. The latter group is more likely to be vulnerable to ideological demagogic and discourses while the former is more likely to be politically sophisticated and critical in evaluating the political conditions.

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<sup>63</sup> Moore, B. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. Boston, Beacon Press, 1966.

<sup>64</sup> Braizat, F. *Capitalism, Economic Development and Democracy*, paper presented to the International Political Science Association (IPSA) Congress held in Quebec, Canada between 1–5 August 2000.

<sup>65</sup> Beetham, David. 'Conditions for Democratic Consolidation', *Review of African Political Economy*, 1994, 60, pp. 157-72. p.165.

The winners and losers of modernisation are assumed to hold quite different views on the preferred political system. In the Western context of mature liberal democracies, winners of modernisation are expected to be more likely to hold democratic values than the losers of modernisation.<sup>66</sup> Vast amounts of empirical research have been conducted on this link most of which proved statistically quite strong correlation between educational attainment (high levels of which are typical of the winners of modernisation in Western societies) on the one hand and political and social tolerance, moderation, political participation, and interpersonal trust on the other.<sup>67</sup>

Our rationalist interpretation would suggest that the winners in a modern, democratic society have incentives to support and defend the socio-economic and political status quo (democracy), while the losers oppose it. In a pre-modern and pre-democratic society, those in control of the society's and state's resources may benefit from modernisation and defend the pre-democratic status quo, which helps them to defend their position. The losers may, in this case, be more interested in a more pluralistic system, which gives them a better chance to articulate their interest.

## Conclusion

The deficiency of socio-economic indicators as predictors of (the lack of) democratisation in the Middle East has made the search for other explanatory factors an immediate need. In this context, the nature of the state and its institutions was identified, as a significant factor. This analysis is conducted by research on the 'rentier states'<sup>68</sup> such as Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates' and 'semi-rentier

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<sup>66</sup> Hans-Georg Betz. 'Politics of Resentment: Right-Wing Radicalism in West Germany', *Comparative Politics*, October 1990, 23(1), pp. 45-60.

<sup>67</sup> Warren, Mark. (ed.) *Democracy and Trust*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999; Dalton, Russell. *Citizen Politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Western Democracies*. New Jersey: Chatham House Publishers, 1996.

<sup>68</sup> For example, see Luciani, Giacomo. 'The Oil Rent, Fiscal Crisis of the State and Democratisation', in Salame, Ghassan. (ed.) *Democracy Without Democrats? The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World*, London: I.B. Tauris. 1996 [1994]. Pp. 130-155. The rentier states do not tax the productive activities of their populations. Consequently, these populations have not felt the need for political representation. This view is challenged by Waterbury, who argued that the levels of taxation in Middle Eastern countries are equal or higher than other countries where democracy exists. After reaching this conclusion, Waterbury resorted to cultural explanation blaming cultural features of Islam and Arabs for the lack of democracy in the Middle East. See Waterbury, John. 'Democracy Without Democrats: the Potential for Political Liberalisation in the Middle East,' in Salame, Ghassan. (ed.) *Democracy Without Democrats? The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World*, London: I.B. Tauris. 1996 [1994]. pp. 30-31. However, rentier states produced paralysed modernisation as far the political dimension is concerned. For example, if people do not pay taxes, their interest to hold the officials accountable is likely to be minimal.



states' like Jordan.<sup>69</sup> In such states, so the argument goes, economic resources are derived from oil revenues and controlled by the state's apparatus, they are unevenly distributed among citizens to secure political loyalty to the ruling families. The principle of such politics is referred to as 'no taxation no representation', since the state as the sole provider of financial resources (extracted from oil revenues), remains largely unaccountable to the citizenry and carries out authoritarian policies. Such policies are accompanied by a firm grip by the state security apparatus, which treats any efforts to liberalise politics as a matter of national security. Activists often treated as 'political criminals' or even traitors. Thus, economic modernisation was brought about by oppressive states, which effectively controlled the economic and technological modernisation but sought to maintain the traditional social value system and traditional structures of power. Modernisation is a process and in order to deliver a democratic outcome, it should grow independently from politically motivated state intervention. State intervention, as described above, subverts the process, and reduces it to a diversity of separated dimensions where the political does not always correspond to the economic or the social. Thus, such modernisation is not expected to reshape social divisions and economic interest, which are important to the formation of class interest. Therefore, modernisation cannot be expected to have a uniform and linear impact on political development. Modernisation is context-specific process. Therefore, it should be carefully scrutinised before one can make valid generalisations. State-led economic modernisation in the Middle East has not been as effective as is in other parts of the world in bringing about democratisation. Nevertheless, economic modernisation has impacted on society<sup>7</sup> in many ways producing many societal variations. Analysts who look at the possibility of democratisation in the Middle East have largely ignored these variations.

Cultural explanations have gained ground in accounting for the lack of democratisation in the Middle East because modernisation theory did not sufficiently explain Middle Eastern 'exceptionalism'. For cultural explanations the Middle East is dominated by a deeply rooted authoritarian political culture that is resistant to change

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<sup>69</sup> Although the semi-*rentier* states are not oil producers (Jordan) they were financially supported by oil producing and exporting countries such as the Gulf States and Iraq. The support was either through expatriate workers remittances transferred to their countries like Jordan, Egypt and Syria from oil producing countries or through direct payments to the frontline states Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and

and *ipso facto* anti-democratic. This analysis has been dominant because it offers an excellent way out of the dilemma faced by classical modernisation theory and its most recent variants. Cultural explanations offer a 'way-out' of the discrepancy between the rising modernisation indicators and the bizarre slowness (in democratising countries like Jordan and Egypt) or the absence of any signs of liberal democracy in the Middle Eastern Arab countries (like Saudi Arabia and Syria). The accumulation of survey data show that more than 90 percent of respondents in Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Bangladesh, and other Muslim countries believe that democracy is better than any other form of government and yet these states are not fully democratic, raising other questions about the adequacy of conventional modernisation theory explanations to the lack of democracy in the Middle East. Although cultural explanations have been taken for granted by many analysts, they were not properly validated because the evidence used in support of these explanations were predominantly dependent on readings of doctrines by some Orientalists, mostly historians by training.

Therefore, this thesis is based on a theoretical framework that acknowledges the importance of socio-economic modernisation and cultural factors such as religion, but seeks to suggest a rational-utilitarian reinterpretation of these factors in an attempt to explain under what conditions socio-economic modernisation and secularism can be expected to lead to democratic values and practices – and under what conditions the opposite may be the case (accounting, for example, for the fact that Islamists and losers of modernisation often have more strongly developed democratic values than others).

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Egypt. See Prynne, Rex. 'Economic Crisis and Post-Rentier Democratization in the Arab World: The case of Jordan', *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, March 1992, XXV(1), pp. 69-97.

**CHAPTER FOUR**

**Survey Research in the Middle East: The Case of Jordan**

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## Survey Research in the Middle East: The Case of Jordan<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

This chapter tries to identify the importance of survey research and the problems associated with the utilisation of survey research. It uses Jordan as an Arab Middle Eastern example to show the advantages and disadvantages of utilising survey research in tackling important questions such as the relationship between Islam and Liberal democracy. Since most of the variables used in the comparative analysis (chapter 6) and the case study (Jordan) in this thesis are based on survey data, it is important to discuss some of the problems encountering survey research in Jordan. This chapter will mostly address survey research in Jordan to highlight the main issues. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to address problems of survey research in other countries included in the comparative analysis (chapter six). Additionally, it tries to examine the relevance of these

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter is based on my own first-hand experience. Between January 1995-July 1997, I worked full-time for CSS's public opinion polling unit, between August 1997-now, I have been working for CSS on survey projects and travelling to Jordan once a year in order to carry out surveys. I was also involved in the debates that took place over CSS surveys. Thus, most of the information provided in this chapter is based on what I have learnt during this experience. However, this chapter also benefited from the following standard literature on survey research: Beatty, P. 'Understanding the Standardized/Non-standardized Interviewing Controversy', *Journal of Official Statistics*, 1995, 11(2), pp. 147-160.; Belson, W. A. *The Design and Understanding of Survey Questions*. Aldershot, England: Gower, 1981.; Fowler, F. *Improving Survey Questions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1995.; Billiet, J. & Loosveldt, G. 'Interviewer Training and Quality of Responses', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1988, 51(1), pp. 190-211.; Dykema, J., Lepkowski, J.M. & Blixt, S. 'The Effect of Interviewer and Respondent Behaviour on Data Quality: Analysis of Interaction Coding in a Validation Study', in Lyberg, L. E. Beimer, P., Collins, M., et al. (eds.) *Survey Measurement and Process Quality*. New York: John Wiley, 1997. pp. 287-310.; Fowler, F. 'Reducing Interviewer Related Error Through Interviewer Training, Supervision, and Other Means', in Beimer, R.M., Groves, L.E. Lyberg, N. M. & Sudman, S. (eds.) *Measurement Errors in Surveys*, New York: John Wiley, 1992. pp. 259-278.; Bradburn, N. M. & Sudman, S. 'The Current Status of Questionnaire Design', in Beimer, R.M., Groves, L.E. Lyberg, N. M. & Sudman, S. (eds.) *Measurement Errors in Surveys*, New York: John Wiley, 1992. pp. 29-40.; Conrad, F. G., & Schober, M.F. 'Clarifying Question Meaning in a Household Telephone Survey', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 2000, 64(1), pp. 1-28.; Fowler, F. 'How Unclear Terms Affect Survey Data', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1993, 56(2). pp. 218-231.; Converse, J. *Survey Research in the United States*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.; DeVellis, R. F. *Scale Development: Theory and Applications*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1991.; Groves, R.M. *Nonresponse in Household Interview Surveys*. New York: John Wiley, 1998.; Keeter, S., Miller, C., Kohut, A., Groves, R.M., & Presser, S. 'Consequences of Reducing Nonresponse in a National Telephone Survey', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 2000, 64(2). pp. 125-148. Henry, G.T. *Practical Sampling*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1990.; Kalton, G. *Introduction to Survey Sampling*, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1983.

problems in relation to the application of survey research in Jordan. Moreover, it aims at analysing ways in which surveys help to achieve a better understanding and explanation of social and political phenomena as witnessed in the course of the socio-political and economic development of the country. It will elaborate on: problems of context, methodology, data collection and accumulation, epistemology and scope of public opinion in relation to democratisation and political support for political institutions in Jordan. Throughout the chapter empirical examples will be used from a series of surveys conducted by the Centre for strategic Studies at the University of Jordan between 1993 and 2002. The data collected through these surveys will be analysed in relation to democratic values.

Survey research is a process involving the administration of questionnaires and structured interviews to a population sample. This is normally followed by quantitative analysis of the data collected. As such, surveys are vital instruments of systematic social enquiry that have contributed to the behavioural revolution in social sciences in the West and later in other parts of the world. Although survey research, has become instrumental to the study of attitudes and behaviours of individuals, especially in the second half of the twentieth century, its application has been hindered in many Arab countries due to various intellectual, political and practical / procedural obstacles.

### **Development of Survey Research in Jordan**

Survey research has been established as a standard tool in the research repertoire of practicing social scientists in the Middle East and elsewhere. In the Middle East, the frequency and technical sophistication of surveys have increased noticeably, creating significant outcomes. Building on a long-standing tradition in the West, the Jordanian Department of Statistics (DOS) has used survey methods to close gaps between the censuses it carries out. In Jordan such regular surveys have become major sources of information; providing representative samples of the population has become a necessity to update the census's information and to keep the trends found in census data under

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continuous observation. The DOS has been conducting surveys on unemployment, demographic trends (fertility and family planning), agriculture and industry.

More recently, survey methods have been used for purposes other than in the areas mentioned above. Due to the changes that took place in the country after 1989, surveys now include the measuring of public opinion towards political matters, in particular pre-election campaigns, in order to enable candidates and governments to obtain information about voters' priorities and preferences. In conjunction with these developments, there has been a growing interest in the media and its influence on public opinion. Private-sector market research designed to understand consumer preferences has expanded not only to cover a wide range of social and political issues benefiting from the economic and political liberalisation but to carry out surveys commissioned by public bodies.

By and large, public universities, from the sixties through to the nineties, have contributed little to the expansion of survey research in Jordan. Although there have been some sporadic surveys carried out by university scholars, we cannot observe continuous and cumulative surveys tracking particular socio-political issues over time. One of the main obstacles to university-based survey research was the reality of martial law<sup>2</sup> being in force for more than three decades. Yet another factor contributing to the underdevelopment of academic survey research in Jordan was a financial one. Public universities were publicly funded, and their financial resources were insufficient to cover the costs of surveys. Moreover, intellectual debates that may involve discussion of survey research results were marginal and limited to a few social scientists who have always lacked high-quality data usually required for such debates and were largely unable to carry out surveys due to political and financial restraints.

During the 1990s, an academic research project was initiated and developed by the Centre for Strategic Studies (CSS) at the University of Jordan. In 1993, CSS carried out

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<sup>2</sup> The martial Law was imposed after the Arab-Israeli war in June 1967 it was abolished in early nineties. Under this law, academic research on political and controversial matters was censured. Moreover, some academics were forced out of their jobs because they tackled politically controversial issues or at least expressed views, which do not necessarily go along with the official stand of the state.

its first survey on *Democracy in Jordan*, which was the first step in establishing an ongoing research project designed specifically to investigate political liberalisation in the country, focusing on its prospects and realities. The CSS's efforts to establish survey research as an effective and methodologically sound tool in studying socio-political phenomena was challenged from three directions. These are the 'old guard', lack of financial resources, and intellectual objections. The 'old guard' basically consists of members of state apparatus serving in the public sector under the martial law and often linked to the security forces (powerful institutions). They depicted the information obtained from surveys as state secrets that should be kept to the state, because it could be used against the interest of the country. This view was reinforced by conspiratorial thinking often expressed by intellectuals of political trends including Islamists, Communists, and nationalists, who projected surveys as a covert method of intelligence gathering used by the West and Israel to manipulate the country. For example, the results of a survey on the Jordanian-Israeli declaration of peace in summer 1994, which showed that around 80% of the population supported a peace treaty with Israel, was interpreted in this way.<sup>3</sup> Peace opponents (Islamists, Communists, Ba'athists, and some nationalists), who had always thought that Jordanians will not support any peace deal with Israel, they argued that this survey did not reflect reality and was a conspiracy to serve Israel's interest at the Jordanians' expense. Such accusations contributed to the intensity of the debate about the validity and reliability of survey instruments in Jordan.

A few columnists considered some CSS surveys as superficial and unreflective of the social reality, which they were designed to examine. They questioned the usefulness of survey research and frequently linked surveys to conspiracies against Jordan. However, when the results of these surveys conform to their political and social beliefs, they tend to use them as evidence in support of their ideas. For example, they tend to use the results of *government performance surveys* to stage political campaigns against the government, and governments tend to use the results of these surveys to discredit opposition parties as unpopular and politically bankrupt. Thus, the 'old guard', and politicians of opposition

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<sup>3</sup> See the survey results on CSS's website [www.css-jordan.org](http://www.css-jordan.org)

parties, have not demonstrated consistent and sound methodological critique of CSS's surveys. Their criticism was mainly underpinned by political views rather than substantive technical knowledge of how surveys are carried out and analysed. Columnists who criticised CSS's surveys were largely driven by personal/political interests. For example, CSS surveys measure the popularity (readability) of daily and weekly columnists published in Jordanian dailies and weeklies, some unpopular columnists criticised CSS because they believed that they were more popular than the surveys results show. However, between 1996-2002, trends of columnists' popularity have been established. Therefore, sceptical columnists became increasingly convinced that CSS's surveys show relatively stable trends of popularity and therefore it is reasonable to accept these results.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, non-methodological criticism is fading away gradually and some intellectuals have started to engage with CSS to discuss methods of data collection and analysis. The financial aspect will be addressed below.

### **The Significance of Surveys**

To value the growing importance of survey research we ought to acknowledge the relevance of individual and group orientations to the processes of socio-political and socio-economic development. Societal development is connected to the value systems of individuals and groups in the respective society; it affects it and is affected by it. This interconnectedness involves substantive theorising and analysis about the linkage and its direction, not only by those academics who want to understand and explain patterns of development and transformation of society, but also by policy makers interested in development at the social, political, and economic levels. At all levels, survey research is primarily aimed at mapping subjective orientations and actions of individuals, their patterns, determinants, and likely repercussions. Such knowledge instigates further elaboration on the theory and management of development. Although development requires structural changes in the social, political, and economic arenas, its understanding and pursuit is, to some extent, partly determined by individuals' perceptions. Individuals'

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<sup>4</sup> For example, Yaser Abu Hilalah, a journalist with Islamist tendencies working for the most circulated daily in Jordan (Alrai) and for the Qatar-based Aljazeera TV, has participated in some of CSS surveys from beginning to end in order to observe the process. He wrote many articles for Alrai based on the results of CSS's surveys. He also covered some of CSS's surveys for al-Jazeera TV.



perceptions and state of mind make developmental goals attainable because in the final analysis developmental achievements are related to psychological awareness of material realities. At the social level, for example, one of the traditional values in the Middle East in general, and particularly in Jordan, is the big family, numerically defined, and its primordial connotations. A big family is widely perceived, especially in less developed sectors of the society, as an indicator of high social status. This perception increases the bargaining power of that family in elections time (votes for benefits). The character and essence of such phenomena can be best analysed through survey research envisaged and carried out at the micro-level. Primordial relations could be very effective tools of attitudes' formation and political behaviour. Individuals (members of clans and tribes) make rational calculations based on cost-benefit analysis. Clans and tribes are relevant to the individuals as long as they provide rewards for their members (collective or individual). It is very likely to find one family divided between many candidates because members of that family choose the type and level of political involvement that best benefits them. The best method to capture these variations at the societal level is through survey research. Although we can capture some of the variations, for example, in voting behaviour, as we shall see in chapter 6, there remain other factors to be accounted for.

Socio-political development is an essential element of the collective modernisation of society. The hesitant progress of political liberalisation is an important phenomenon in the Middle East. Survey research is needed to explore the factors that sustain authoritarian regimes in an era where transitions to democracy are taking place around the world. Exploring the social origins of authoritarian regimes in the Middle East is not less important than investigating the social basis of support for democratic values and practices. It is crucial to understand the patterns of political involvement such as civic and political engagement vis-à-vis traditional tribal social participation and to characterise the likely political outcome of each method of engagement. Measuring support for the political system is essential for the evaluation of that system's performance at the social, political, and economic levels. Furthermore, the social dynamics of the regime's mechanisms to ensure political legitimacy and stability can be

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best scrutinised through carefully designed survey research. If individuals are goal-seeking, it is likely to find support for a political system that best facilitate the achievement of their goals. Micro-level political attitudes and patterns of behaviour are important for the understanding of types of support political systems acquire. A political system may acquire obedience through oppression and individuals support that system because of fear not conviction. In a semi-democratic system (Jordan) the best way to explore these attitudes is survey research, which also enables us of linking the micro level attitudes to the macro level policies.

### **Problems of Survey Research in Jordan**

Information provided about social, political, and economic values in the Arab Middle East in general, and particularly in Jordan, is still lagging behind the state of art in Europe, North America, Latin America, Eastern Europe and South East Asia. In this respect by 1982 Jordan was far behind other Arab countries with 3% of survey research conducted in the Arab world carried out in Jordan, compared to 23% in Egypt, 18% in Tunisia and 10% in Lebanon.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, the incorporation of information about Arab Middle Eastern societies into a wider comparative framework is seriously underdeveloped. Although there have been some publications on political behaviour and development in the Arab World<sup>6</sup>, generalisable conclusions require more surveys and investigations integrating them into international and cross-national comparisons. The problem of data availability has been a major concern to students of Middle Eastern studies in politics as well as in sociology. In 1976 Zartman<sup>7</sup> observed the state of (political) behavioural studies in the Middle East by saying 'the critical mass of research has been done outside the Middle East.' He added, 'data generation and analysis in the region remain to be done', and stressed the fact that a systematic study of the region is

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<sup>5</sup> Palmer, Monte. et al *Survey Research in the Arab World: An Analytical Index*. London: Menas Press, 1982. Palmer et al reviewed virtually all English language and many French language Journals in the social sciences and visited a number of universities in the Arab World and elsewhere to search for data to construct their index. They composed a list of surveys carried out in the Arab World by 309 researchers 202 of whom are Arab.

<sup>6</sup> See for example: Farah, Tawfik. (ed.) *Political Behaviour in the Arab State*. Boulder, Colo. Westview Press, 1983. Shorter, Drederick. & Zurayk, Huda. (eds.) *Population Factor in Development Planning*, New York and Cairo: Publication Council, 1985.

<sup>7</sup> Zartman. W. 'Political Science', in Binder, Leonard. (ed.) *The Study of the Middle East: Research and Scholarship in Humanities and Social Sciences*. New York: Wiley, 1976. p. 305.

needed. Another scholar observed that there are some missing links in research on the Middle East; for example survey work in psychology and political sociology. He confirmed the need for more behavioural survey research in the region.<sup>8</sup> More than twenty years later prominent Middle East specialists who are engaged in survey research like Mark Tessler<sup>9</sup> and Mustafa Hamarneh<sup>10</sup> repeated the same idea. What applies to the Arab Middle Eastern countries in general is also applicable to the state of survey research in Jordan, although there are some problems that are not equally shared by all countries. This thesis attempts to incorporate some Middle Eastern countries into the wider comparative analysis of attitudes towards democracy and authoritarianism utilising survey data. Therefore, it is important to address some problems of survey research in Jordan in order to shed light on some of the reasons behind the underdevelopment of survey research in the region.

### Access

The development of survey research in the Middle East is facing a serious challenge and complicated circumstances. Access to existing data archives about population, economy, agriculture, and social issues is limited. For example, in Jordan the main source of information acquired by surveys about these topics is the Department of Statistics, which rarely makes data sets available to researchers. The DOS belongs to the Ministry of Planning. It is publicly funded and its main duty is to serve the government departments. In order to get hold of a data set, a researcher needs to go through a relatively long and complicated bureaucratic process. If successful s/he would obtain some data, which is usually not in electronic form and by no means sufficient and comprehensive enough to conduct an independent study. Another obstacle adding to the complexity of obtaining data is the bureaucracy in control of such data, which is often uncooperative. Additionally, there is no national data bank that contains all available data or at least a directory of institutions and researchers who have collected data. Moreover, available data sets largely lack comparability. Thus, there is a difficulty in data collection,

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<sup>8</sup> Ben Dor, Gabriel 'Political Culture Approach to Middle East Politics', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 8 January 1977. Pp 43-46.

<sup>9</sup> Tessler, Mark. *Area Studies and Social Science: Strategies for Understanding Middle East Politics*, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1999.

accumulation, and processing. These problems hinder the utilisation and analysis of existing data.

### **Financial Problems**

Although financial resources have less to do with the content of survey research, they condition, restrict, and affect the ability to carry out such research. Indigenous researchers interested in social and political issues have been unable to carry out independent surveys due to financial constraints. Public universities have lacked the funds necessary for large-scale representative surveys. Due to the absence of a national fund for research, university scholars who managed to run surveys are usually funded by donations from international NGOs or external research councils. For example, almost all surveys conducted by the Centre for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan were funded by international NGOs. This applies to most surveys in Palestine and Lebanon as well.

### **Political Problems**

The conduct of survey research in Jordan, as in other Middle Eastern countries, had been, and is currently, dependent on states' central political decisions. Prior to 1989, the freedom of political survey research in Jordan was restricted, because of its political sensitivity. There was much hesitation on the part of the governments and respondents. The sensitivity was reinforced by a tradition of political figures intervening in academic research. This phenomenon is rooted in the martial law era in Jordan where all institutions and their activities were closely observed alongside with underground political parties and professional syndicates. The situation has been slowly changing as a result of the changes that have been taking place in the government internal security doctrine. Since 1989, more relaxed and relatively human rights-friendly security forces encouraged researchers to go ahead without forgetting the possibility of being punished. Punishment could sometimes be severe, if researchers were seen to have overstepped the accepted limits. For example, Dr. Mustafa Hamarneh the director of the Centre for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan was sacked because CSS carried out surveys

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<sup>10</sup> The Director of the Centre for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan.

and published their results, which showed that more than 70% of Jordanians could not criticise the government openly because they fear governmental punishment. The government was disquieted by these results, *inter alia*, and ordered his resignation, which he did in July 1999. After a long and fierce political battle, he was reinstated in October 2000.

Until 1993 survey-oriented political research was not independently conducted and published. Since the country has entered a phase of gradual political liberalisation since 1989, there have been many attempts to implement survey methods in independent socio-political research. These attempts were not without political obstacles but have culminated in advancing the use of survey methods in the country. Ordinary people started to be more familiar with this method. Additionally, some academics and politicians are cautiously beginning to engage in debates about the results of political surveys, which are very likely to incite controversy when published.

Many Jordanian politicians felt uncomfortable with results of survey research on political matters, especially with evaluations of government performance. Some considered the publication of surveys on popular evaluations of government's performance as unnecessary, its disadvantages far exceeding its benefits. Many academics, on the other hand, believe it is important and more needs to be done. Those who were not in favour of free, independent, academic survey research during the martial-law period belong to a traditional school of politics, which consisted of two strands. They were either officials, or members of underground regime opposition. Those activists were socialised and organised in a highly restrictive way tightly controlling the flow of information. As a result, they were not prepared to accept the changing nature of public opinion. This was a result of their uni-dimensional political socialisation, which was based on ideological discourse. Those in favour of survey research are mostly educated (some in the West) and hold quite different set of political values from the traditional school i.e. they support democratic principles such as political pluralism.

Throughout the period the CSS has engaged in survey research, there have been many political attempts to block surveys on so-called 'controversial issues'. For example studying the Jordanian-Palestinian domestic and external relations was viewed by many Jordanian politicians as controversial for reasons such as the complexity of the Palestinian question and its direct impact on Jordan's politics. It was believed that the results might instigate social unrest due the sensitivity of the issue. However, political attempts to block survey research on so-called controversial issues such as the Jordanian-Palestinian relations relatively failed; the survey was eventually conducted. As a result the message was clear that other surveys on controversial issues could be carried out. Thus, as soon as the state eased its control over surveys, a quantitative leap of survey-based research occurred facilitating further improvement in the quality of surveys.

At the respondents' level, people were suspicious of any unfamiliar person on the lookout for information and reluctant to cooperate wholly, if they did not know the eventual use of the data being required. This disposition was largely caused by the legacy of the Martial Law period, characterised by the security forces arbitrary intervention in people's lives. Including arbitrary dismissal or revoking of passports of those seen as political activists and linked to ideological political parties such as the Communist Party. Respondents' consequential evasiveness is based less on cultural norms than on tangible incidents and actual experience. These experiences correspond to respondents' rational endeavour to protect their personal interests, families and community from potential reprisal.

### **Procedural problems**

In addition, researchers faced further restrictions concerning sampling frames. The Department of Statistics (DOS) controlled statistical data on the population and census-based sampling frames. Therefore, all researchers intending to conduct surveys are obliged to ask for a sample and, most importantly, permission to conduct the survey. It is understandable to ask DOS for the sample but to ask DOS for an official permission without which any researcher easily could be legally questioned is an additional hurdle. The issue of data protection had been used by DOS as a pretext to hinder research on

political issues. The control of permits by DOS was laid down in the DOS legislation of 1952, which stated that nobody or no institution shall be allowed to conduct fieldwork in Jordan without the permission DOS. DOS had been established long before The University of Jordan - first university in Jordan- was established in 1962. This statutory restriction should be rethought if independent survey research is to flourish. Therefore, seeking DOS permission is not only a restriction on academic freedom but can potentially amount to official ex-ante censorship on independent academic survey research.

### **The Problem of Paradigm**

With the increasing number of Arab scholars trained in foreign countries, social theories developed in these countries were imported and applied to the Arab world creating a debate about the validity of such applications. When many of the Arab world's senior social scientists were students in European (East and West) and American universities, their training was primarily based on psychological, institutional studies of political organisations, structural-functional and systems analyses, cybernetics and variants of information theory, pluralist, elitist, and Marxist analyses, modernisation theory, dependency and world-systems theories, and rational choice. Although there has been a lot of debate about the issue of applicability of Western paradigms to the third world including the Arab World, little progress has been made to resolve these questions. Why? Firstly, in order to introduce a creative alternative that is applicable to the Arab World, cumulative research has to be done. The circumstances mentioned above constitute a set of formidable obstacles to the accomplishment of this task. Secondly, most Arab scholars received a Western education. Even when they react against the use of foreign paradigms in their research, they still use concepts and terms associated with these paradigms. Thirdly, as one Arab scholar put it, 'a category of professional critics has developed, who do nothing but criticize and who do not really carry out research. Although many criticisms are valid, they have been repeated over and over during the last ten years.'<sup>11</sup> Fourthly, some scholars from the Arab world have taken some paradigms particularly, from the West, as universals although they were developed within a historical context

that is to some extent different from the Middle East. The assumption of universality in social science, argues Al-Sayyid, is largely unfounded.<sup>12</sup> However, these claims require some critical attention. I will try to discuss these issues with regard to survey research.

During the 1970s-1980s there has been some reluctance among Arab scholars whether to collect data at the individual level or not. This reluctance had been informed by some propositions relating to appropriateness of 'individuals' as units of analysis. One example of the problems relating to survey methods is the use of individuals as the unit of analysis. In this view, the individual makes choices conditioned by a material context, which may be considered inappropriate for the more traditional Arab societies where patriarchal family structures, clans, tribes or religious leaders have a stronger influence on individuals than the in the more individualistic West. Is it therefore impossible to take the individual as a unit of analysis? Ibrahim contends that 'the difference between Western and Arab societies is one of degree rather than of kind, but it is great enough to call into question the assumption that the individual is always the most appropriate unit of analysis. Alternatives can and should be considered, such as using social network or some other kind of collectivity. An 'ecological unit' might be family, formal social group or organization, a neighborhood, a market place, a tribe-some unit other than the individual. But we are victims of our training, and we have not been trained to consider this possibility.'<sup>13</sup> Although Ibrahim might be right to some extent, a researcher can always regroup his analytical categories to best fit the subject matter i.e. give the best possible explanation for the phenomenon in question. For example, it is always possible in survey research to regroup units of analysis (individuals) into social class, religious affiliation, political orientation, gender, and types of values in addition to other categories.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibrahim, Saad Eddin. 'Agony and Ecstasy of Social Research', in Tessler, Mark. et al, *The Evaluation and Application of Survey Research in the Arab World*. Boulder & London: Westview., 1987. p .32.

<sup>12</sup> Al-Sayyid, Mustapha Kamel. 'Political Science in the Periphery: The Case of the Arab World', paper presented to the *Congress of the International Political Science Association*, Quebec, Canada 1-6 August 2000. p. 19.

<sup>13</sup> Saad Eddin Ibrahim 'Agony and Ecstasy of Social Research', in Mark Tessler et al, *The Evaluation and Application of Survey Research in the Arab World*. Boulder & London: Westview, 1987. p. 32.



However, the 'ecological unit' Ibrahim proposes potentially has serious methodological problems. A tribe, for example, cannot be taken for granted to explain political behaviour because tribes consist of individual members whose interest may not be identical. Thus, if we use 'tribe' as a unit of analysis, there is a great risk of ecological fallacy i.e. 'the spurious inference of individual characteristics from group-level characteristics'<sup>14</sup> What we assume as explanatory unit 'tribe', could turn out to be irrelevant. Therefore, it is essential to start with the individual as the basic unit of analysis. This thesis takes the individual as its unit of analysis. Individuals are regrouped into other categories like religiosity, masses, and elites where it is deemed important to the analysis.

The unit of analysis should be determined by the nature of the investigation to be carried out. It is argued here that, in some cases, it may be appropriate to select, for example, civic associations, families, tribes, or clans as unit of analysis. Individuals are more likely to be the appropriate unit of analysis when the subject of study is related to political behaviour, socio-political values and beliefs. Despite Ibrahim's reservation, it is essential and possible to study the way individuals perceive group pressures and respond to them. In the West, for example, the individualistic survey-based approach led to major advances in the studies of the effects of class, religion, or ethnicity on individual voting behaviour. Similarly, the experience of survey research in Jordan has proved to be effective in capturing variations across the social realm which are not primarily defined by ecological units. If we have to use other units of analysis, it would be more appropriate to use other methods than surveys (e.g. document analysis). It is, however, doubtful whether any other method would capture as much information as survey methods at the individual level.

One of the key methodological questions for a survey-based study is the extent to which the social context of respondents may create bias. To begin with, one should examine the processes through which the formation and articulation of opinions takes place. If the assumption is that there is a similarity between individual's opinion formation in Jordan

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<sup>14</sup> Marshal, Gordon. *Concise Dictionary of Sociology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994. p 138.

and other societies, whether Arab or Western, then a researcher could be confident asking the same questions in either context with very minor modifications. But if this assumption is doubtful and societies vary in terms of the type and strength of social restrictions upon individual opinion formation and articulation, methodological problems arise, especially when cross-national comparisons are attempted.

In Jordan as in other parts of the Arab World identification with groups such as gender, family, clan, tribe, region, sect and religious community is central to individuals. These primordial links contribute to the way in which individuals define themselves. For an individual it is important to find the balance between his/her own aspirations, attitudes and opinions on one hand, and group expectations on the other. However, finding this balance is in itself evidence of an autonomous individual opinion. Thus, identification with a group does not constitute an absolute obstacle to the formation and articulation of personal views, expectations and perceptions.

Thus autonomous individuals in advanced post-industrial societies are not fundamentally different from their counterparts in the Arab world. There are equivalent group contexts to identify with, for example: class, religion, ethnicity, region amongst others; they all influence individuals' opinions almost in the same way as social factors influence individual opinions in the Arab world. Of course, there are differences, especially at the primordial level, but there is some evidence that advanced post-industrial societies are not atomistic in the sense of sociological 'individualisation hypothesis'.<sup>15</sup> The very diversity of opinions in Jordan testifies to the fact that both modern organisations such as civil society organisations and traditional social hierarchies are influencing individuals' opinions at various levels in complex ways. Consequently, it is hard to conceive of a human society, whether in the East or the West, in which individuals' opinions originate in absolute isolation from external influences. It is equally unrealistic to claim that views are determined by group-level associations.

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<sup>15</sup> Andre, H. J. & Schulte, K. 'Poverty Risks and the Life-cycle: The Individualisation Thesis Reconsidered', in Andre H. J. (ed.) *Empirical Poverty Research in Comparative Perspective*, 1998.; Ashgate, Aldersho; Beck, U. *Risk Society. Towards a New Modernity*. London: Sage Publications, 1992.

### **The Problem of Social Sensitivity**

Like in all societies, it is difficult to ask questions about social or political taboos. Social norms determine the type of questions a researcher can include in questionnaires or the way s/he has to phrase them. There are subjects that provoke respondents and may result in a premature termination of the interview. Generally Jordanian respondents tend to be friendly and generous with their time. For example, in some areas of Jordan, like the southern areas of Ma'an and Tafila, it is essential to have female interviewers to interview female interviewees. On one occasion where the team did not include a female interviewer, the husband of the respondent insisted that the questions were to be asked to him one by one; he then conveyed them to his wife and reported her answers back. In another incident, a female respondent expressed her unhappiness about a female interviewer who carried out the interview with her husband. These incidents, not to mention others, indicate another problem often confronted by interviewers in the fieldwork, that is, the privacy of respondent. Conducting interviews through a mediator could seriously undermine the validity of the answers especially in open-ended questions. Although these incidents do occur, their frequency is very minimal.

There are some circumstances under which the possibility to isolate the respondent from his/her social environment in order to obtain unbiased answers proves difficult. It is characteristic of developing and transforming societies, especially in rural areas, that there is a degree of group curiosity towards any stranger or new element coming in to the community. Family members and neighbours gather around to see what is going on in an interview situation and often express their own opinions about it, although they are not respondents to the questionnaire. It is an opportunity for them to say something in the presence of the 'stranger' (interviewer) that they do not usually say in their normal gatherings. Many of those bystanders ask the interviewer to interview them as well. These conditions constitute a hindrance to effective gathering of information. But through CSS's experience in fieldwork in Jordan we found that people are very receptive if asked to let the interview to be accomplished in isolation, provided acceptable cultural norms are respected (i.e. interviewer and interviewee are of the same sex). However, there are some fundamentals of popular Arab culture taught from childhood and well known to

local researchers that boost respondents' co-operation with data collectors such as the overwhelming hospitality to visitors mainly at home. Such norms encourage respondents to respond to guests' (interviewer's) requests even in cases where it involves a degree and uneasiness. These positive cultural characteristics are of a great advantage once the respondent is isolated. Generally, peculiarities traits were taken seriously by CSS to ensure that they do not affect the accuracy of collected data. In order to build mutual trust with respondents and their community, CSS has always tried to keep respondents and people surrounding them pleased and approving of surveys. Whenever the type of questions or other reasons caused uneasiness or discomfort, CSS followed up interviews by visits or telephone calls to respondents in order to explain the situation and regain the respondents' trust.<sup>16</sup>

### **Questionnaire Design: Constructing Reliable and Valid Measures**

Reliable and valid measures are crucial for the quality of surveys. Reliability of measures means that questions should produce consistent responses in comparable situations and points in time. Validity means that the answers of the questions asked correspond to the theoretical concept they are designed to measure.<sup>17</sup> Related to the questions of validity and reliability are issues of quality control (i.e. pilot testing) and good training of interviewers. There are always some questions that simply 'do not work' in the field. One of the main reasons, for such problems, in Jordan at least, is the problem of conceptualisation.

Scholars engaged in survey research usually refer to a vast body of literature produced by European and American universities in order to operationalise social and political concepts. These concepts, if taken as they are, are often very likely to be ambiguous to respondents, although they are clear to the researcher. For example, if a respondent is asked to place him/herself on a political left-right scale, the chance for the respondent to understand this question in more than one way is very high. An average respondent might

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<sup>16</sup> During a study on unemployment in Jordan conducted in 1996, for example, I accompanied the director of CSS to a household that refused to be interviewed. After the aims of the study and the importance of their co-operation to the success of the study had been explained, they agreed to be interviewed.

<sup>17</sup> See Fowler, Floyd. *Survey Research Methods*, London: Sage Publications. 2002. pp 76-100.

perceive it in religious terms, where 'left' means extreme or radical Islamism; it might mean the lowest level of religiosity according to Islamic concepts such as (*Ahl al yassar*), which literally means the people of the left who follow the devil. Again, a respondent might understand left as opposition to the regime, not only the government; this has to do with political socialisation under over thirty years of martial law, where all Communist, Marxist, Socialist Pan-Arab parties were outlawed. According to this view, the right would be pro-regime. In the pilot study for the World Value Survey conducted in Jordan during April 2000, for example, the left-right scale caused a lot of problems of understanding to respondents. When the actual WVS was conducted in September 2001 59 per cent of the respondents reported that they 'do not know'. This example, shows that importing concepts which do not have popular meaning among respondents could seriously undermine the analysis if taken at face value.

Therefore, this measure is unreliable because the question did not mean the same thing to all respondents. Thus, answers to this question cannot be taken for granted, unless operationalised in a different format like measuring support to state vs. private sector ownership of means of production, and support for well known political parties or public figures and issues defined in left-right terms. Using this latent method would solve the problem. Data obtained through similar questions to the 'political left - right' scale, cannot be directly compared to results obtained from advanced post-industrial societies. The left-right scale described above proved to be largely invalid measure in the Jordanian context. It did not correspond to the concepts it intended to measure. However, it was decided to leave it intact in the survey in order to know the extent of the problem at the national level. The remaining questions were largely understood by respondents and some modifications were made to the wordings in order to clarify ambiguous wording.

Several major empirical research programs are monitoring public support for democratic institutions, including the New Democracies Barometer, the New Russia Barometer, the LatinoBarometer, the AfroBarometer, the European Values Survey and the World Values Survey. Some degree of consensus has developed concerning which items are most effective, so that certain questions, measuring overt support for democracy, are regularly

utilized in these surveys. These questions seem well designed, and they demonstrate internal consistency: people who support democracy on one indicator, tend to support democracy on other indicators. But our faith in these measures rests primarily on their face validity: no one has demonstrated that a high level of mass support for these items is actually conducive to democratic institutions.<sup>18</sup> Some of these questions will be used in chapters 6, 7, and 8 of this thesis.

To ensure a reliable and valid operationalisation of measurements all indicators have to meet the following requirements:<sup>19</sup>

1. Simple wording that is understandable by ordinary people.
2. The logical ordering of questions to avoid confusing the respondents.
3. Ensuring that all questions mean the same to all respondents.
4. All potential answers are communicated to all respondents in the same way.
5. Avoiding long questions.
6. Avoiding to ask two questions in one.
7. In closed questions, the interviewer should read out all alternative answers as instructed.
8. In open-ended questions, the interviewer should not intervene in the respondents' answer (should not re-word the answers) and should probe further answers from the respondents.

### **Interviews and Interviewers**

Some of these requirements could be met through the good training of interviewers, especially in face-to-face interviews and telephone interviews. Since all surveys used in this work are based on face-to-face and telephone interviews, I will briefly discuss the interviewer training procedures to illustrate the significance of good training. Firstly, at CSS, all interviewers are normally holders of at least a first university degree. On rare occasions CSS recruited undergraduate diploma holders interviewers. Around 5% of the interviewers hold Masters Degrees. Some interviewers had worked for CSS on part-time

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<sup>18</sup> Inglehart, Ronald. 'How Solid is Mass Support for Democracy- and How Do we Measure it?' *PS: Political Science and Politic*, forthcoming (2003).

bases for more than 10 years. However, all interviewers have to attend a minimum of three days' training, where they receive theoretical and practical introduction to the questionnaires. This includes the geographical and demographic definitions used on the cover sheet such as the meaning of household, family, building, block, district, cluster etc. Then, they receive practical training on how to fill in the questionnaire, when they should or should not intervene. Then, through the pilot study, they go to selected areas to fill in two questionnaires each. These questionnaires are usually collected and studied to refine questions and identify mistakes that appeared in experimental fieldwork (e.g. skipping questions).

### **Design and Choice of Sampling Method: Which Sample Gives the Best Results?**

#### **National Samples**

Censuses provide data on every individual in a society. A census cannot be carried out every time we want to study a social or political phenomenon due to its high costs. An important advancement of survey research was the idea of working with a representative sample the population. The essential foundation of good sampling is to find a method to select a subset of the population by which each individual of the whole population has an equal chance to appear in the selected subset and to use the probability method for choosing the sample.<sup>20</sup> The value of early surveys since the 1950s in Jordan and elsewhere has often been limited because they relied on samples of convenience or on sampling from existing lists that excluded significant segments of society.<sup>21</sup>

Since the goal of all CSS's surveys has always been to produce data that can be subjected to appropriate statistical analysis, great care was taken to secure the best possible sample design, which guarantees the best results in sampling the population. The focus was upon the method of sampling more than it was on the results of the surveys, although they are equally important. Therefore, evaluating sampling methods highly depends on the

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<sup>19</sup> See Fowler, Floyed. *Survey Research Methods*. London: Sage Publications, 2002. pp. 76-103.

<sup>20</sup> See Fowler, Floyed. *Survey Research Methods*. London: Sage Publications, 2002. pp. 14-28.

<sup>21</sup> This might be of more relevant to countries where electorate records are available as sampling frames.

process by which the sample is selected.<sup>22</sup> All national samples for the surveys in Jordan used in this thesis were multistage probability samples.

The sample frame that was used in selecting the samples was based on the DOS's census data, which provided a frame of all housing units in the country. All samples are representative of the sample frame. They are household based samples. The sample frame excludes all non-citizens by identifying all housing units they occupy and excluding them from the sampling frame before sampling the population. The household-based sample excludes people who live in group quarters such as dormitories, prisons, nursing homes, and homes for the elderly. An important aspect of sample evaluation is to calculate the percentage of people that have the chance to be selected and ensure that every individual of the population has an equal chance to be selected.<sup>23</sup> The sample frame, therefore, limits the generalisation from these samples to the included people. Thus, it is a custom in survey research to clarify groups that were excluded. In order to address this problem, CSS followed the following procedure: if the selected respondent in a given household was unavailable (student, nurse etc.), the interviewer asks about the time when the respondent would be home and re-visit that household in order to conduct the interview. If the respondent will not come home during the survey period and thus could not be interviewed, his/her questionnaire would usually be marked unattainable. Thus, the household was covered but no interview was conducted. In order to minimise the impact of such incidents on the representativeness of the survey, CSS usually sample extra households as a precaution.<sup>24</sup>

For all surveys except one used in this work, population includes all citizens (male and female) of the country having an age of at least 19<sup>25</sup>. Eligible respondents for these

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<sup>22</sup> See Fowler, Floyed. *Survey Research Methods*. London: Sage Publications, 2002. pp. 14-28.

<sup>23</sup> See Fowler, Floyed. *Survey Research Methods*. London: Sage Publications, 2002. pp. 12-14.

<sup>24</sup> For more information about sample size see See Fowler, Floyed. *Survey Research Methods*. London: Sage Publications, 2002. pp. 34-37.

<sup>25</sup>In The World Value Survey the minimum age of respondents was 18. All other surveys used a minimum age of 19. This was due to the electoral system where people of at least 19 years old are eligible voters. CSS team has decided to use this age for surveys on democracy and government to explore more effectively the attitudes and behaviour of potential political activists or at least are assumed to be politically involved at the electoral level.





around 2400 primary sampling units (PSU's) corresponding to approximately 27% of the total number of households in Jordan. The PSU's are distributed in a total of 48 Sub-Samples called replicas. Each replica consists of 50 PSU's. The design allows using one or more replicas for any one household survey depending on the accuracy required for the survey estimates for each domain or stratum. Usually two replicas provide high accuracy. The first level of stratification is the *governorate* and the second level is stratification of localities by *community size*. Nine community size strata are used in this frame. 1) <500, 2) 500-999, 3) 1.000-1.999, 4) 2.000-4.999 5) 5.000-9.999, 6) 10.000-19.999, 7) 20.000-49.999, 8) 50.000-99.999, 9) >100.000

Within stratum 1, the localities were ordered in a serpentine manner (going from north to south). This forms the first part of the list of localities within the governorate. Next within stratum 2, the localities are again ordered in a serpentine manner, this time going from south to north. This would be the next part of the list of localities within the governorate. This procedure continued for strata 3 through 9. The blocks within localities are also ordered geographically in a serpentine manner. Such ordering provides a high level of implicit geographic and locality-size stratification. Following this ordering of localities and blocks within localities for each governorate, blocks are selected systematically with population proportionate to sizes (PPS) within each governorate.

Since the classification of urban and rural sectors within each governorate is based on the population size of the localities, the current sample design also provides implicit urban/rural stratification. The number of sample blocks selected in the urban and rural parts of each governorate is proportionate to the corresponding population. At the third stage, from listings of housing units/households, the designated number of sample housing units/households, are selected systematically, starting from a point selected at random. The number of PSU's used were divided among the respective governorates as follows (Table 4-1):

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<sup>26</sup> For more information about different types of samples see Fowler, Floyed. *Survey Research Methods*. London: Sage Publications, 2002. pp. 12-28.

Table (4-1)-Governorates and Primary Sampling Units in Jordan

Governorate	No. of PSU's used
Amman	39
Balqa	6
Zarka	14
Madaba	2
<i>Total Middle Governorates</i>	<b>61</b>
Ibrid	18
Jerash	4
Ajloun	2
Mafraq	4
<i>Total Northern Governorates</i>	<b>28</b>
Karak	4
Tafileh	2
Maan	2
Aquaba	2
<i>Total Southern Governorates</i>	<b>10</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>99</b>

An update of the 99 PSUs is usually carried out prior to any survey. A number of housing units are usually selected in each PSU based on the update (random start +interval). The estimate of housing units allows for the selection of two housing units that might be needed to allow for non-eligible housing units (empty, used for non-residential purpose, etc.) and two other housing units for non-contacts and refusals if needed.

### Public Opinion Leaders Sample-Frame

The public opinion leaders samples were drawn according to probability procedures but they were not multi-stage because the sample frames are lists of members of associations. Representative national samples capture the overall picture of a particular subject. Although they allow for examination of variations across that society, some strata may need to be studied in depth depending on the nature of the subject. Studying the Jordanian-Palestinian relations in both their domestic and external dimensions, for example, it was vital for CSS to separately study 'public opinion leaders'. It was assumed that they hold divergent views because they are more informed and efficacious in the political arena. Before that study was carried out in 1994, there had not been a sample frame designed to sample opinion leaders, which includes all individuals who are assumed to influence public opinion in Jordan.

Therefore, CSS designed a sample frame consisting of eight categories as follows:

1. Professionals (lawyers, engineers, agricultural engineers, medical doctors, dentists, and pharmacists)
2. University lecturers
3. Writers and artists
4. Political party leaders
5. University students
6. Leaders of civil society organisations
7. Businessmen
8. High ranking civil servants (including ex-ministers, parliamentarians) tribal leaders were added to this category because they are approved by the government)

This sample frame continued to develop over time because it was constantly used in all polls on the evaluation of the governments' performance and proved very important in capturing significant differences between ordinary people's opinions and 'opinion leaders' as will be shown in chapter (7). Each category of public opinion leaders varies in its size according to the number of its members.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter it was attempted to describe and discuss the methods by which these surveys form the basis of the present thesis. Generally, the development of survey research in Jordan had been facilitated by the growing need for accurate data necessary for development and planning. Yet, survey research on political matters had not been freely conducted and published until 1993. This is due to that fact that under martial law (1967-1989/90) surveys on political matters were seen to be undesirable by successive governments. Even the existing official data collected by DOS were not accessible to researchers for secondary analysis. Furthermore, financial problems greatly hindered the progress of survey research. Public universities were unable to finance large scale and continuous survey work. The private sector had little interest especially as far as political development, behaviour, and political values are concerned. Additionally, there had been other procedural problems, like the need for government permissions to conduct surveys in the country. With the DOS being the sole provider of samples and sample frames the chances for the private sector to develop alternative sample frames were minimal. Therefore, the present thesis and a number of other works emanating from CSS's activities are clarifying little-known territory.

Apart from political and financial constraints, survey research is faced with the problem of paradigm. Some have argued that the underdevelopment of social sciences in the Arab world and the fact that overwhelming majority of Arab social scientists are trained in Europe (West and East) and North America have contributed to the creation of many misunderstandings of Arab societies. This, so the argument goes, explains why researchers have tended to apply Western methods that were designed for the advanced industrial societies to Third World societies and yielded questionable results. However, it is argued here that such objections do not hold true when thoroughly scrutinised. There are some concepts that do not apply to Arab societies, among them Jordan, but this does not mean that these concepts cannot be modified to suit the context under enquiry. Using individuals as units of analysis, for example, requires a legitimate approach despite the stronger role of primordial factors in Middle Eastern Societies. Although there are some differences between the level of individuals' independence of 'Westerners' and

Jordanians, it is possible to construct reliable and valid measures that are suitable to test the universality of social theories whilst simultaneously considering the relevant context effects. The present study represents such an attempt. To ensure the representativeness of our surveys a sample design was chosen that allowed for a complete representation of the society by giving all individuals (citizens) an equal chance to be selected. More specifically, a multi-stage, stratified and replicated sample design was used in the surveys on which the present thesis is based. In any society there are differences between opinions and values at the popular level and the elite level. In order to capture these differences and to know how significant and polarised these opinions, values and perceptions are, a sample design is constructed in such a way as to allow for contrasting the elites and popular values. Group membership and other factors influencing individuals' attitudes and behaviour were captured through survey questions and cohort of individual demographic and group specific variables.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **Islam, Muslims and Democracy An Empirical Critique of Culturalist Arguments**

## **Islam, Muslims and Democracy**

### **An Empirical Critique of Culturalist Arguments**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter intends to demonstrate three objectives. Fukuyama's theory of the triumph of liberal democracy is cross culturally plausible at the attitudinal level. Fukuyama's claim that Islam is resistant to modernity (characterised by liberal democracy and capitalism) does not hold up to empirical testing. That is, using Islam as explanatory variable of democracy/authoritarianism is largely uncorroborated. The absence of democratic governments and the existence of authoritarian political regimes in the Middle East can be better explained by other theories than culture-based arguments.

Since the nineteenth century the question of Islam and modernity has been discussed in intellectual circles, the mass media, policymakers' debates, and ordinary people's discussions in both the Islamic world and the West. Throughout this time three distinct but somewhat analogous strands have emerged; the first strand believes that the religion of Islam is incompatible with modern thinking and scientific rationality, the second posits the opposite view i.e. a compatibility thesis. A third –intermediate- view posits that there are some elements that can be incorporated, adapted, and adopted by the Islamic world but simultaneously rejects other elements of modernity or deem them as alien. Needless to say that these three views have advocates in and outside the Islamic world. Their rationale to have taken a particular view may differ; a Muslim advocate of the incompatibility thesis would advance his view in the name of cultural 'authenticity' (whatever that may mean), while a Western counterpart would advance his view in the name of, for example, ethnocentricity or secularism.<sup>1</sup>

Recently, Francis Fukuyama claimed that Islam and modernity are incompatible. He argued that *'there does seem to be something about Islam, or at least the fundamentalist versions of Islam that have been dominant in recent years, that makes Muslim societies*

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<sup>1</sup> See chapters 1 and two for more details about these three views.



particularly resistant to modernity.’<sup>2</sup> For Fukuyama modernity is characterised by institutions like liberal democracy and capitalism. The prevalence of these two institutional systems in a given society qualifies that society to be ‘modern’ or, according to Fukuyama, having ‘reached the end of history’. Fukuyama remains at the macro level of analysis. Accordingly his claim will be tested at the appropriate level.

Fukuyama’s argument regarding Islam is intellectually stimulating and thought provoking. Despite the fact that the argument is interesting, it is not substantiated and lacks comprehensive empirical corroboration. Although Fukuyama makes an effort to validate it, he remains unsuccessful in his attempt to spell out sufficient conditions underpinning the basic assumption of his thesis. What makes Muslim societies resistant to modernity? And how? Such questions are left unanswered by Fukuyama. Instead Fukuyama bases his thesis on a circular argument. Because Muslim countries are not democracies (except Turkey according to Fukuyama) they qualify as ‘resistant to modernity’ - and the reason is ‘Islam’. Apparently, he uses Islam as a ‘yardstick’ that offers an easy cultural-essentialist explanation of the absence of democracy from most of Muslim Middle Eastern countries. In this he converges with other culturalists in blaming Islam for whatever goes wrong in Muslim countries. It will be demonstrated that this cultural essentialism, when empirically tested, does not hold up as a convincing explanation. This begs the question whether there is another theory or formula that can explain the undemocratic nature of political systems in most Middle Eastern countries in a more convincing way? In order to find out we must test Fukuyama’s theory in the Muslim Middle Eastern context.

In this chapter a macro level analysis will be performed where countries will be the unit of analysis.<sup>3</sup> At the macro level two statistical techniques are employed, first a correlation analysis aimed at establishing the strength of the association between the dependent

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<sup>2</sup> Fukuyama, Francis. ‘The West has Won: Radical Islam can’t Beat Democracy and Capitalism’, *The Guardian*, October 11, 2001. This article was reprinted in the *Guardian* from *Wall Street Journal*. Emphasis added. See also a more detailed article Fukuyama, Francis. ‘History and September 11’, in Booth, Ken. & Dunne, Tim. (eds.) *World in Collision: Terror and the Future of Global Order*, London: Palgrave. 2002. pp. 27-36.

<sup>3</sup> The Micro-level analysis is addressed in chapters 6, 7 and 8. The data available allow for the use of the same variables at both levels of analysis

variable 'support for democracy' and the independent variable 'religiosity with a focus on Islam'. Then, regression analysis will be used to evaluate the impact of religiosity (Fukuyama's single explanatory variable) controlling for the level of human development and regime characteristics upon support for democracy. This set of control variables has been chosen for the following reasons: the general literature on levels of, and support for, democracy since Lipset's classic studies<sup>4</sup>, has emphasised the strong association of these variables with levels of socio-economic development.<sup>5</sup> In addition, the support for democracy can be argued to be influenced by the existing political regime.<sup>6</sup> The state structure in the Islamic Middle East and the authoritarianism of its political regimes make it less likely for democracy to be seen as an accepted norm of governance by the regimes. What is particularly interesting, however, is that these regimes are lagging behind popular expectations primarily at the political front, as we shall see throughout the analysis.

Although the focus of this chapter will be on predominantly Islamic societies, other, non-Islamic societies will be included in the data set in order to have a base like for comparisons. The World Values Survey data set provides a comprehensive range of indicators across cultures regions, religions and nations. The indicators have been tested thoroughly for reliability and validity. These data will be utilised to operationalise the concepts of democracy and religion at the attitudinal level. I will be comparing Islamic societies to others and analyse these data to investigate the distribution of Islamic societies amongst all other major religions in the world. I argue that support for democratic ideals is universal, although the institutional state of democracy may not reach the ideal or falls far short of it in some societies, particularly Muslim societies. The data set, which consists of representative samples of each population, covers Islamic countries as varied as Arab-Islamic societies such as Jordan, Egypt, and Morocco and None-Arab Islamic societies such as Iran, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Turkey. Additionally, it covers countries of Latin America, North America, South East Asia,

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<sup>4</sup> Lipset, Seymour Marten. *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1983; Lipset, S. Martin., Seong, K.-R. and Torres, J.C. 'A Comparative Analysis of the Social Requisites of Democracy', *International Social Science Journal*, May 1993,136. pp. 155-75

<sup>5</sup> Vanhanen, Tatu. *Prospects of Democracy: A study of 172 Countries*. London: Routledge, 1997.

<sup>6</sup> Brynen, Rex. 'Economic Crisis and Post-Rentier Democratisation in the Arab World: The Case of Jordan', *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 1992, 25(1), 69-98.

South Asia, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Africa, and Australia. These societies represent different cultural traditions, religions, languages, and ethnicities. These data are the main source of empirical evidence used in this work.

## Fukuyama's Cultural Essentialism

Reflecting on the debate that followed the tragic terrorist attacks on the United States 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2001, Fukuyama remains convinced that there is 'nothing else towards which we could expect to evolve' but 'liberal democracy and capitalism'.<sup>7</sup> This seems to be a plausible assumption and could be tested in a straightforward way. However, Fukuyama's line of argument was diluted by rival claims and counter claims, especially after September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, such as the 'Clash of Civilisations' thesis in which Huntington argues, 'rather than progressing toward a single global system, the world remained mired in a 'clash of civilisations' in which six or seven major cultural groups would co-exist without converging and constitute the new fracture lines of global conflict'<sup>8</sup>. It seems that both theories are partly right. It will be shown in this chapter that there is a universal and overwhelming support for the values of liberal democracy and at the same time a persistence of diverse cultural heritages and traditions in Huntington's cultural zones. But does this mean that conflicts are likely to be driven by cultural differences? Are some cultures in particular (e.g. Islamic) resistant to democracy and its ideals, while other cultures are receptive of these ideals (e.g. Christian)?

Democratic peace theories suggest the answer is 'NO'. Since democracy enjoys a universal support, inter-state conflicts could be expected to be part of history. According to these theories the danger of involvement in a conflict may come about as a result of the absence of democracy in a society but quite certainly not primarily of cultural differences.<sup>9</sup> The atrocities of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 committed by Muslim ultra-extremists promoted the idea of clash of civilisations and many have taken it for granted

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<sup>7</sup> Fukuyama, Francis 'The west has won: Radical Islam can't beat democracy and capitalism', *The Guardian*, October 11, 2001.

<sup>8</sup> Fukuyama, Francis 'The west has won: Radical Islam can't beat democracy and capitalism', *The Guardian*, October 11, 2001.

<sup>9</sup> See for example Gerges, Fawaz. *America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. He concludes that the United States does not have a comprehensive, coherent policy regarding the role of Islam in the political process. He writes that there are 'major inconsistencies' between what American officials say and what they do regarding the role of Islam in the political process. However, he also says that strategic and security considerations, rather than conflicts of culture, ideology or history, have the greater influence on US thinking and on the official US foreign policy discourse on the Islamist revival. Gerges says that Clinton's own pronouncements on Islam display 'enlightened sensitivity, realism and tact,' and thus stand in stark contrast to some of the material found in the US media.

identifying an Islamic cultural 'zone' challenging the West (symbolised by the USA) and what it stands for. Even Fukuyama himself, who advocated a single model of evolution to 'modernity', has accepted a version of Muslim exceptionalism in which Islam or some versions of Islam are incompatible with modernity. Thus, he accepts part of Huntington's argument but is simultaneously reluctant to continue advocating a single trajectory to modernity. By exempting Muslim societies, Fukuyama, undermines the universality of his own thesis. Because liberal democracy and capitalism have universal appeal, Muslim societies should be attracted to them as any other society in the world.

The reasons behind the absence of democratic political practice in the Arab Islamic Middle East is the central issue that has to be addressed in order to evaluate the validity of Fukuyama's argument that the religion of Islam constitutes an obstacle to modernity, i.e. democracy and capitalism. A test of this claim requires sophisticated statistical analyses. One could ask whether religion in general constitutes a hindrance to democracy, or whether some religions are more prone to produce non-democratic values than others depending, perhaps, on whether they have been through a major reform in modern times (e.g. Protestantism).

Given the hierarchal structures of almost all religions, one could hypothesise that the very essence of religion -submission to God, and divine sovereignty- is contradictory to the very principle of democratic politics, that is, popular sovereignty (this point is discussed in chapter 2). But can we really reduce the whole issue to religion as the only factor? As the literature suggests, the answer is 'no'.<sup>10</sup> There are more factors to look at, which interact in complex ways. In the literature we find additional variables such as modernisation, industrialisation, urbanisation, literacy, colonial legacy, international trade, international political economy (weapons and oil), interpersonal trust, well-being, secularisation, social class, globalisation, openness of the economy, distribution of economic and intellectual resources, regional and international conflicts, nationalism, ethnicity, ethnic conflicts, state structure, elite orientation, and state legitimacy. All these

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<sup>10</sup> Vanhanen, Tatu. *Prospects of Democracy: A study of 172 Countries*. London: Routledge, 1997.; Rueschemeyer, D., Stephens, E.H., & Stephens J.D. *Capitalist Development and Democracy*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992.

factors play some role in determining the shape of the political system a society may have or prefer to have. The concern here is to test the impact of religiosity on support for democracy. Starting from this –deliberately- simplifying design, we will work on to more complex statistical analysis at a later stage.

History means to Fukuyama ‘the progress over the centuries toward modernity, characterised by institutions like democracy and capitalism’<sup>11</sup>. He posits that ‘this evolutionary process did seem to be bringing ever larger parts of the world toward modernity’. Fukuyama bases his argument on whether a country’s political system is democratic or not. He however, considers undemocratic political systems as a representation of ‘religious culture’ when he refers to Islam. His argument does not differentiate between authoritarian political systems and whether the people living under them desire these systems. As we shall see later in this chapter, authoritarian political systems do not have popular support among the people living under these regimes. Thus, it is a spurious association to argue that Islam is resistant to democracy because there are no democratic political systems in the Muslim world. It is argued here, the fact that a country does not have a democratic political system, does not necessarily mean that the people of that country are authoritarian. The fact that democracy is well-supported at the attitudinal level in all populations included in the sample, including Muslim populations, which are, according to Fukuyama, supposed to not to support democracy, point to a difficulty in accepting Fukuyama’s claim that Muslims are inherently anti-modern.

Globally, there are differences in the extent to which democracy and capitalism appeal to people. We can anticipate that high levels of support for democracy are likely to be found in societies where it has had functioned properly and successfully for well over a century: Western Europe and North America. However, in less developed societies, these two institutions may have even higher levels of support, because they represent the hope of the people for development, since almost all societies that embraced these institutions relatively affluent.

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<sup>11</sup> Fukuyama, Francis. ‘The west has won: Radical Islam can’t beat democracy and capitalism’, *The Guardian*, October 11, 2001.

Fukuyama argues that 'modernity has a cultural basis. Liberal democracy and free markets do not work everywhere. They work best in societies with certain values whose origins may not be entirely rational. It is not an accident that modern liberal democracy emerged first in the Christian west, since the universalism of democratic rights can be seen as a secular form of Christian universalism.'<sup>12</sup> Modernity may have a cultural basis but does it consist of religious heritage that makes democracy attainable in one society and unattainable in another? Fukuyama seems to imply that the religion of Islam cannot accommodate 'modernity'. Clearly, this cultural essentialism requires empirical examination. Because cultural values may be epiphenomenon, a more comprehensive test is required. For example, high religiosity is more likely to be found in less developed societies, while more aesthetic values are more likely to be found in rich developed societies. Therefore, levels of development are likely to condition both sets of values. In addition to the impact of socio-economic modernisation, institutional structures of states may contribute to the understanding as to why country 'A' with 90% of its population supporting the ideals of democracy is not a democracy?

Equating the universalism of democratic rights to Christian universalism seems to be an oversimplification., for all democratic states today are more or less secular. Moreover, the introduction of Christianity to Africa did not bring about Liberal democracies and equally if it is Christian universalism, why did Central and Eastern Europe, Russia and Latin America not develop liberal democracies and capitalistic free-market economies simultaneously with Western Europe? Instead they developed systems of different nature; political authoritarianism and communism as opposed to democracy and free markets. Fukuyama's cultural yardstick 'Christian universalism' does not account for Japan's democracy and free-market economy, either. Catholic Christian societies differ from Protestant Christian societies. They have embraced different patterns of development and have experienced similar circumstances to some Islamic, Buddhist, Orthodox Christian, and Confucian societies. The state of democracy in many of these societies explicitly

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<sup>12</sup> Fukuyama, Francis. 'The west has won: Radical Islam can't beat democracy and capitalism', *The Guardian*, October 11, 2001.

indicate that there is more to the story than religion and cultural tradition. Had the causes of democracy been 'Christian Universalism', as Fukuyama suggests, Catholic and Orthodox societies should have been on the same or similar levels of democracy and development. Fukuyama's cultural explanation ignores all other factors, which are important to answer the question why Muslim societies have not embraced democratic governments.

Given the weakness of cultural explanations in general and Fukuyama's in particular, I think there are two other theories that better explain the absence of democracy in the Muslim Middle East: the state institutions and structures of political opportunities available to political actors within and without the 'modern nation states' and the levels of socio-economic development. In the following section, some of the factors contributing to the continuity of authoritarian regimes in the Arab Middle East will be explored, as well and further explore the extent to which the religion of Islam has been employed to justify completely opposite political ends.

### **Strategic Rent as an Obstacle to Democratisation**

Strategic rent as an obstacle to democratisation in the Arab Muslim Middle Eastern states refers to a strategy adopted by political regimes as rational actors seeking to secure their survival. As allies of major global actors (e.g. USA), these political regimes have pursued policies aiming at securing the interest of global actors in exchange for political and economic support. These regimes depicted democracy as a threat to their survival or at least their exclusive control over resources such as oil. Some political regimes in the Muslim Arab Middle East have greatly benefited from strategic rent seeking throughout the cold war period. After the end of the cold war democratisation swept the then undemocratic countries, and it was thought that the stagnant authoritarian regimes of the Middle East would follow suit. However, stagnation continued to be the dominant feature of politics and oppression continues. The capitalist liberal democracy USA supported and legitimated dictatorial regimes like Saudi Arabia and Iran under the Shah to secure its interests. Such regimes have felt relatively secure and severe political oppression creating generations of frightened publics that cannot even think about political participation



without thinking about severe consequences such an action may ultimately entail under authoritarian regimes. Measures like passport confiscation, job dismissal and imprisonment without trial (let alone a fair one) proved very effective to prevent citizens from political involvement. Furthermore, some regimes such as the Saudi political regime have suppressed the political aspirations of their peoples in the name of Islam.<sup>13</sup> In contrast, however, Iran under an 'Islamic' regime has experienced political participation and the Iranian transition to reform the system under president Khatami is paving the way to a more democratic Iran.<sup>14</sup> In Egypt, time and again, 'the [regime] has sought to promote itself as the guardian of true legitimacy, the correct alternative to excess Islamist zeal'<sup>15</sup>. A new pretext for rent seeking and the continuation of authoritarianism was provided by the events of September the 11<sup>th</sup>.

After the 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2001, president Mubarak of Egypt said many times on TV that the regime had warned the West of the terrorist danger, but the later did not listen. While the Egyptian regime was tracing and chasing Islamic extremists, the West gave them asylum. Ironically, following the introduction of Military Courts in the USA to try terrorists, 'in an interview with the state-run daily *Al Gumhurriya*, President Hosni Mubarak referred to new anti-terror measures in Britain and America as proof that military trials and other emergency measures in place in Egypt for the past 20 years were

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<sup>13</sup> In an interview with the Kuwaiti daily *Al-Siyasa* King Fahad of Saudi Arabia said 'The democratic system prevalent in the world is not appropriate for us in this region ... our peoples in their makeup and characteristics differ from that ... world. The elections system has no place in the Islamic creed, which calls for a government of advice and consultation and for the shepherd's openness to his flock, and holds the ruler fully responsible before his people', *Mideast Mirror*, March 30, p.12. it was quoted in Sisk, Timothy. *Islam and Democracy: Religion, Politics, and power in the Middle East*, Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 1992. p .50.

<sup>14</sup> In a conference convened with the help of Bill Clinton (one of the sponsors) at New York university, Houchang Chehabi, a professor of international relations at Boston University said that there are two norms of morality in the Islamic world -- one for the public life and one for the private life. "In the public realm, the norms of the Islamic morality must be maintained. Take the case of Iran, the country of which I am a citizen. There's no doubt in my mind that Iran currently enjoys more political freedom than it ever did under the Shah. And yet, since it has a state that tells half the population -- women -- how to dress, it is perceived as being less modern and more repressive than under the Shah." See a report by Nikola Krastev titled 'Misperceptions Between Muslims And Americans Not Likely To Improve' *Radio Free Europe – Radio Liberty (RFE/RL)* Posted Tuesday January 29, 2002 - 06:47:19 AM EST. The report is available at [http://www.middleeastwire.com/islam/stories/20020129\\_meno.shtml](http://www.middleeastwire.com/islam/stories/20020129_meno.shtml)

<sup>15</sup> Ghazaleh, Pascale. 'Sex, lies and censorship', *Al Ahram Weekly*, December, 27 2001.

always the "right" policy'<sup>16</sup>. Regimes like the Saudi and Egyptian are pointing to the alternative, if it is not 'us' it would be the worst alternative: Islamic extremists. Thus such regimes have found new ways of seeking political rent and increasing their grip on power using security as justification. Similarly, the Algerian army stepped in on January 12, 1992 disregarding the majority of voters to prevent the FIS from enjoying the fruits of its electoral victory.<sup>17</sup> As a result of 'extreme measures'<sup>18</sup> taken by the military, a civil war erupted and claimed thousands of lives.<sup>19</sup> Thus the political opportunities available to would-be political actors whether Islamists or otherwise were very minimal. Such closed political systems constitute a major barrier to democracy. In this process Islam is exploited to either legitimise a regime (Saudi Arabia) or justifies the existence of a regime as the guardian of the 'modern state' against the Islamists (Egypt and Algeria).

Fareed Zakaria illustrates the point as follows: 'it is always the same splendid setting – and the same sad story. A senior American diplomat enters one of the grand presidential palaces ... from which president Hosni Mubarak rules over Egypt. ... Then the American gently raises the issue of human rights and suggests that Egypt's government might ease

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<sup>16</sup> Mubarak was reported to have told the paper "the introduction of military trials in America and a new law that allows detention without trial in Britain "proves that we were right from the beginning in using all means...[in response to] these great crimes that threaten the security of society." ... However, Mubarak denied that the military courts or the emergency laws that created them had been used against civilians. "We took some criticism because we used emergency law, but we did not use it except in confronting terrorism, and we did not and we will not use it against opinion or thought," he said. ... He added, "There is no doubt that the events of September 11 imposed a new concept of democracy that differs from the concept that Western states defended before these events, especially in regard to the freedom of the individual." ... Hafez Abu Seada, the secretary-general of the Egyptian Organization of Human Rights (EOHR), told the Middle East Times that the government had been using the courts to stamp out opposition and freedom of expression. For example, Saad Eddin Ibrahim, a lecturer at the American University of Cairo and a human rights activist, has been the most prominent non-violent campaigner to face the "special courts" in recent years. In May 2001, he was sentenced by a state security court to seven years in prison for "receiving funds from abroad without government permission, embezzling funds and spreading misinformation and rumors abroad." This interview was summarised by Amil Khan for Middle East Times and posted on Free Saad Eddin Ibrahim campaign on Tue Jan 1, 2002 1:29 pm see: [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/free\\_saadeddin\\_ibrahim/message/143](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/free_saadeddin_ibrahim/message/143).

<sup>17</sup> For a detailed account and a chronological order of the events in the Algerian case see John Esposito and John Voll (1996) *Islam and Democracy*, Oxford: Oxford University press. Pp: 50-172.

<sup>18</sup> In a Lecture by Dr. Ahmed Kenioua on "Algeria on the Eve of the Elections", Center for Strategic Studies, University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan, 13 February 2002. Dr Kenioua emphasised this point. See an abstract at [http://www.css-jordan.org/activities/lectures/01\\_02/2002/kenioua.htm](http://www.css-jordan.org/activities/lectures/01_02/2002/kenioua.htm)

<sup>19</sup> Gerges comments that "the Bush administration's response to the Algerian crisis was notable largely for its passivity, in contrast to its outspoken record in advocating political pluralism elsewhere." A commitment to democracy and to political pluralism would seem to entail support for the FIS. Yet the Bush administration gave no such support.

up on political dissent, allow more press freedoms and stop jailing intellectuals. Mubarak tenses up and snaps, "If I were to do what you ask, the fundamentalists will take over Egypt. Is that what you want?" The diplomat demurs and the conversation moves back to the last twist in the peace process.<sup>20</sup> Egypt is not the only country in the Middle East that uses such discourse. The Palestinian authority uses this discourse too. "When President Bill Clinton urged Yasir Arafat to sign on the Camp David peace plan<sup>21</sup> in July 2001, Arafat is reported to have responded with words to the effect, "If I do what you want, Hamas will be in power tomorrow." The Saudi monarchy's most articulate spokesman, Prince Bandar bin Sultan, often reminds American officials that if they press his government too hard, the likely alternative to the regime is not Jeffersonian democracy but Islamic theocracy."<sup>22</sup> In Tunisia too Bin Ali has exploited the 'Islamist threat' to justify his authoritarian rule.<sup>23</sup>

Therefore, the state structure in the Middle East, and current political regimes' fear of radical and moderate political Islam, makes the introduction of democratic politics a risky game for these regimes. Thus, it is not a rational option for these regimes to pursue democratic politics. In Egypt democratic parliamentary elections are, to a great extent, manipulated by the regime.<sup>24</sup> Moderate Islamic activists who wanted to be part of the

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<sup>20</sup> Zakaria, Fareed. 'How to save the Arab World', *Newsweek*, December 24, 2001, CXXXVIII (26). pp. 24-29.

<sup>21</sup> Palestinian officials deny that there was a genuine peace deal on offer at Camp David; the Palestinian minister Nabil Shaath said in an interview with the *Time* magazine 'the Israelis did not offer Palestine on a silver platter. There was no sovereignty over the air, over the sea, over the borders. Nothing for the Palestinian refugees. It was a bum deal'. *Time Magazine*, April 15, 2002, p 63.

<sup>22</sup> Zakaria, Fareed. 'How to save the Arab World', *Newsweek*, December 24, 2001, CXXXVIII (26). Pp. 24-29.

<sup>23</sup> Sadiki, Larbi. 'Bin Ali's Tunisia: Democracy by Non-Democratic Means', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 2002, 29(1). Pp. 57-78. Sadiki made this very clear on page 68.

<sup>24</sup> The elections of November 1995 were extensively denounced as fraudulent by many independent observers. See, for example, Egyptian Organisation of Human Rights (EOHR) *Democracy Jeopardised: Nobody 'Passed' the Elections: The EOHR Account of the Egyptian Parliamentary Elections*. 1995. Moreover, in a censured article titled 'Egypt Marks 15 years of Mubarak' in *Middle East Times* the writer says: 'The great political liberalizations of the Mubarak regime occurred in the first half of his administration. They peaked around 1987, with the election of a parliament dominated one-third by the opposition. But the last few years, particularly 1995, saw the erosion of those democratic gains. The year-long press law campaign humiliated the opposition parties, and while it left them with their freedoms essentially intact, it showed them that those freedoms were a matter of presidential whim. The People's Assembly elections told the parties that, though their participation in elections was welcomed cosmetically, they could never expect a real share in power'. Among the reasons for censorship MET lists 'Discuss modern, unorthodox interpretations of Islam.' It seems that the Egyptian political regime defends an

political process and participate in decision-making were not allowed to freely run for seats in the last elections of 2000.<sup>25</sup> The security forces detained many of them. The moderate Islamic parties in Jordan and Morocco have participated in elections and gained parliamentary seats. For example, the Islamic brotherhood movement in Jordan participated in the cabinet holding five ministerial offices in 1990-1991. They won 22 seats in the 1989 parliamentary elections and 16 in 1993 elections. In 1997 they boycotted the general elections because they thought the government was trying to undermine them by introducing a new electoral system, which was designed (according to the Islamic Action Front Party- IAFP) to reduce their chances of acquiring more seats in the parliament. In January 2002, the IAFP conference was held in an atmosphere where the moderate members' opinion prevailed by electing a moderate leadership that is expected to lead the party to participate in the upcoming general elections scheduled for summer / autumn of 2002.<sup>26</sup> On the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 2002 the regime postponed the elections until spring 2003 citing 'regional circumstances' as an obstacle.<sup>27</sup> Ironically, on the 20<sup>th</sup> of August (5 days later) the PM of Jordan said 'Difficult regional circumstances

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interpretation of Islam that justifies the despotic nature of the regime. A challenge to the established religious authority "Al-Azhar" would mean a challenge to its guardian (the current political regime). <http://metimes.com/2K2/issue2002-5/methaus.htm>

<sup>25</sup> During the election campaign the authorities arrested a large number of Islamists in an attempt to thwart them of standing for the elections.

<sup>26</sup> During the last week of January 2002 the IAFP internal polls for a new Shura Council – the policy making body of the party– reflected a landslide victory for the moderates. They won 80% of the 120 seats council, while the 'hawks' won 14 seats only. The moderates secured all but one seat in the executive committee. <http://www.jordantimes.com/sun/homenews/homenews3.htm>. Sunday the Third of January 2002.

<sup>27</sup> Many observers of Jordanian politics (myself included) interpret the decision to postpone the election and leave the country without an elected parliament for the period between June 2001 and spring 2003 is attributed to the regime's fear of the opposition (Islamic, Pan-Arab, and Left parties) winning a majority because of the Palestinian and Iraqi crises. I think this fear is largely unfounded. The latest data available from Jordan strongly support this claim. Only 17% will vote to 'Islamic Trend' and only 6.7% reported that The Islamic Action Front Party represents their aspirations. The latter figure is down from 70.5% in 1996, 66% in 1997, 59.5% in 1998, 60.6% in 1999, 52.4% in 2000, 18.5% in 2001, and 7% in September 2002. Centre for Strategic Studies (CSS) (2002) Democracy In Jordan Survey, Amman: CSS. Pp 25-27.

must not hamper Kingdom's reforms,'<sup>28</sup> The PM's words are understood as including political reform.<sup>29</sup>

The apparent pattern of regimes' behaviour in many Arab Middle Eastern countries is that they use a democratic discourse to justify undemocratic practices. For example, when they talk about Islamic radicalism as the likely alternative to them, one would understand that they have good sense of what their people want. If this is the case why do these regimes need to torture and imprison many of their political opponents? They do everything at their disposal to stay in power. 'These men fear a public that they barely know'<sup>30</sup> as one commentator has put it.

### **Political Opportunity Structures<sup>31</sup>**

The structures of political opportunities<sup>32</sup> in Arab Middle Eastern countries contribute to explain the outcome of political Islam within the body politic<sup>33</sup>. Political Islam –as a likely alternative to the current regimes- is used by the same regimes to justify dictatorial governance. Not all Islamists are radicals. They can be successfully accommodated within the political systems as the Jordanian experience suggests.<sup>34</sup> Excluding and outlawing them is very likely to be counter-productive. As victims of political oppression they are more likely to increasingly get support from the public. A sympathetic public,

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<sup>28</sup> Jordan Times on the 20<sup>th</sup> of August 2002, front page. Given the fact that he was brought up and live most of his life in the UK and USA, the king was perceived to be a democratic ruler but his endorsement of his government recommendation to postpone the elections twice, evaporated the hopes of most of those (my self included) who had hoped that he will enhance democracy in Jordan.

<sup>29</sup> Since the dissolution of parliament in June 2001, the government introduced more than 100 provisional legislations restricting public freedoms, increasing prices, doubling compulsory insurance on cars among host of other issues. No elected body proved these legislations.

<sup>30</sup> Zakaria, Fareed. 'How to save the Arab World', *Newsweek*, December 24, 2001, CXXXVIII (26). P. 29.

<sup>31</sup> The concept as analytical tool was introduced by Kitschelt, Herbert. 'Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest: Anti-Nuclear Movements in Four Democracies', *British Journal of Political Science*, 1986, 16. pp. 57-85.

<sup>32</sup> For a detailed account of the concept of Political Opportunity Structure, see McAdam, Doug. 'Political Opportunities: conceptual origins, current problems, future directions' in McAdam, Doug., McCarthy, John., & Zald, Mayer. (eds.) *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. pp. 23-40.

<sup>33</sup> Unfortunately there has not been a quantification of the concept in the literature on the Middle East, therefore I am using the concept as an analytical tool to describe state structure in terms of openness and closeness to political groups.

<sup>34</sup> Moaddel, Mansoor. *Jordanian Exceptionalism: A Comparative Analysis of State-Religion Relationship in Jordan, Iran, and Syria*. New York: Palgrave, 2002.

having experienced the failures of Arab Nationalism and Arab-socialism to deliver on political, social and economic issues in the past, is more likely to see the Islamic alternative as an appealing political discourse. As a result the regimes will continue to use the 'Islamic alternative threat' to justify more political oppression. The more these systems remain 'closed' to political Islam in the political process, the more radicalisation can be expected.

The political opportunities available within the political process either facilitate or hinder the inclusion of political Islam. The strategies of political actors depend on the openness or closedness of the political process in a country. A closed political process is likely to produce confrontational political action as the literature on social movements suggests.<sup>35</sup> For example, the development of Islamic liberalism in Egypt during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century was obstructed by state's policies which in turn indirectly - and perhaps unconsciously - paved the way to the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. Throughout the second half of the twentieth century the hostile approach of the Egyptian state towards political Islam in general contributed to radicalising Islam and fostering traditional fundamentalist interpretations among factions of the Muslim Brotherhood movement. Similarly, the rise of the *Front Islamique du Salut* (FIS) in Algeria partly as a protest movement is due to the strategies used by the authoritarian political regime that governed Algeria since independence in 1962 and failed to deliver sufficient socio-economic development, which could have transformed the deprived segments of the Algerian society and provided it with a modern prosperous life style. The Algerian ruling elite (including the army generals) had not left a room of manoeuvre for political dissent to fairly express its views. Conversely, the Jordanian political regime followed a cooptation approach, which worked in favour of both the Muslim Brotherhood movement and the regime. This strategic alliance between the two

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<sup>35</sup> See, for example, Tarrow, Sidney. 'States and Opportunities: The Political Structuring of Social Movements', in McAdam, Doug., McCarthy, John., & Zald, Mayer. (eds.) *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. pp. 41-61.; Oberschall, Anthony. 'Opportunities and Framing in the Eastern European revolts of 1989', in McAdam, Doug., McCarthy, John., & Zald, Mayer. (eds.) *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. pp 93-121.; Jenkins, J. Craig. & Klandermans, Bert. (eds.) *The Politics of Social Protest: Comparative Perspectives on States and Social Movements*. London: UCL Press, 1995.

political actors provided the political regime with political legitimacy (which it desperately needed throughout the second half of the twentieth century especially during the fifties and sixties). In exchange the Muslim Brotherhood movement was allowed to function through a charity (The Islamic Centre Society).<sup>36</sup>

The impact of political opportunities available to political actors within the electoral systems explains the fluctuations in political Islam's gains depending on the context. For example, in Turkey, the considerable gains of Islamists in 1995 general elections 'had more to do with state manipulation of the electoral system than with the spread of Islamism.' The Turkish state had tried a political strategy to keep Kurds out and minimise their chances of acquiring seats in parliament. The government 'raised the threshold of its proportional representation system to 10 percent of the vote both nationally and regionally.' Given the revolutionary history, *inter alia*, of the Kurds, they were unlikely to reach that threshold and therefore, 'they pooled their votes with Islamist candidates from the Welfare Party, increasing the latter's margin of victory and thus insuring a sympathetic ear in parliament.'<sup>37</sup> This example illustrates the centrality of the political process rather than the ideology, whether Islam or Socialism, in the oscillation of political actors ebbs and flows.

As the previous discussion suggests, in most Middle Eastern countries, the strategies of political regimes and state structures are among the most important impediment to democracy. Regimes came to power through military coups d'état or hereditary traditional monarchies installed by the colonial powers in most cases. Both types of regimes implemented patronage policies to secure political legitimacy. Many of these regimes were under-achievers in economic terms. Only three countries are ranked among

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<sup>36</sup> Since its establishment in 1946 the Islamic Centre Society has built a huge network of affiliated organisations. For example they built 2 hospitals in Amman and Aqaba in addition to another 14 health clinics in other areas, and 40 schools and kindergartens. Islamic Centre Society, *Annual Report*, Amman: Islamic Centre Society, 1995.

<sup>37</sup> Schwedler, Jillian. 'Islamic Identity: Myth, Menace, or Mobilizer?', *SAIS Review*, 2001, 21(2). pp. 8-9. also available at [http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/sais\\_review/v021/21.2schwedler.htm](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/sais_review/v021/21.2schwedler.htm). accessed 24 June 2002. It is as yet unclear whether similar mechanisms were at work in the elections of November 2002, contributing to the triumph of the Justice and Development party.

the category of high human development by the UNDP<sup>38</sup> (Kuwait, UAE and Qatar). Needless to say that they are all oil-producing countries, whose ranking is largely due to their high GDP derived from oil revenues. Attributing this ranking to a western type capitalistic development would be misleading. Nonetheless, although meagre levels of socio-economic development are present in the region, regimes are finding themselves increasingly under internal and external pressure to open the systems up for more political participation. The internal pressure is not strong enough to force the regimes to liberalise politics expeditiously because socio-economic development in these countries has contributed little to the detraditionalisation of these societies. Kuwait, for example, has a male-elected parliament. Women were denied the right to stand as candidates let alone voting. In 1999 the Qatari leadership introduced the right for women to stand as candidates in elections to local councils. Some Qatari commentators consider it a promising experience. This view is also shared by the Jordanian politician and feminist Hayat `Atiya because it is the first of its kind in the conservative Gulf region and the Emir of Qatar promised more in the near future.<sup>39</sup> In March 1992, the Saudi king appointed a *majlis al-shura*, a consultative council, for the first time in modern Saudi history.<sup>40</sup> This hesitant progress is far from being a representative democracy. Only in February 2002 did Saudi journalists form a professional association.<sup>41</sup> These initiatives are introduced by the ruling elites to ease external and internal pressure. These steps are far from having a major impact on political decision-making but, nonetheless, are steps forward. Islamist groups neither initiated these marginal openings in the Gulf nor had they hindered them previously. They were based on elite initiatives to alleviate pressure and shore up the legitimacy of the regimes.

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<sup>38</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report*. New York: UNDP, 2001. pp. 141-144

<sup>39</sup> See the debate about the impact of these elections was broadcasted on Al-Jazeera TV channel on the 12/03/1999. One of the female Candidates to these elections (Dr. Jehan Elmer from University of Qatar) was a participant in the debate along with Mohamed al-Ka`bi who won a seat in these elections, Dr. Mohammed al-Kuwari Director of the Gulf Centre for Human Development, and Hayat `Atiya a Jordanian politician, women's movement activist, and commentator.

<http://www.aljazeera.net/programs/opinions/articales/2001/11/11-29-3.htm>

<sup>40</sup> Sisk, Timothy. *Islam and Democracy: Religion, Politics, and power in the Middle East*. Washington: United States Institute of Peace, p. 50.

<sup>41</sup> Saudi Press Agency reported on Tuesday 19/02/2002.



Will institutions of modernity work only in the West or there is something broader in their appeal that will allow them to make a headway elsewhere? Fukuyama believes they do have a universal appeal and the 'proof lies in the progress that democracy and free markets have made in regions such as East Asia, Latin America, orthodox Europe, South Asia and even Africa.' He goes on to say the proof 'lies also in the millions of developing world immigrants who vote with their feet every year to live in western societies.' He turns to Islamic societies to say there is something about Islam '*that makes Muslim societies particularly resistant to modernity*'.<sup>42</sup> Addressing Islam, Fukuyama argues that 'Islam is the one major world culture that arguably does have some very basic problems with Modernity.'<sup>43</sup> Here he drops one of his criteria (capitalism) and posits that in the whole Islamic world only one country (Turkey) 'qualifies as a democracy'. Fukuyama defines a country as democratic 'if it grants its people the right to choose their own government through periodic, secret-ballot, multi-party elections, on the basis of universal and equal adult suffrage.'<sup>44</sup> According to this definition, argues Fukuyama, the Islamic republic of Iran is a good example of a democratic country. But, he adds, 'Islamic Iran, however, is not a liberal state; there are no guarantees of free speech, assembly, and, above all, of religion.'<sup>45</sup> The reason why liberalism did not extend to the Middle East according to Fukuyama is: *Islam*. He posits that 'there have been pressures for greater democracy in various Middle Eastern countries like Egypt and Jordan, following the Eastern European revolutions of 1989. But in this part of the world [the Middle East], *Islam has stood as a major barrier to democratisation*. As demonstrated by the Algerian municipal elections of 1990, or by Iran a decade earlier, greater democracy may not lead to greater liberalization because it brings to power Islamic fundamentalists hoping to establish some form of popular theocracy.'<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Fukuyama, Frances. 'The west has Won: Radical Islam can't beat democracy and capitalism', *The Guardian*, October 11 2001. (emphasis added.)

<sup>43</sup> Fukuyama, Francis. 'History and September 11', in Booth, Ken. & Dunne, Tim. eds. *World in Collision: Terror and the Future of Global Order*. London: Palgrave, 2002. p. 31.

<sup>44</sup> Fukuyama, Frances. *The end of History and the Last Man*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1992. p. 43.

<sup>45</sup> Fukuyama, Frances. *The end of History and the Last Man*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1992. p. 44.

<sup>46</sup> Fukuyama, Frances. *The end of History and the Last Man*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1992. p. 347. (Emphasis added.)

Clearly, Fukuyama adopts and promotes a cultural argument. By emphasising Islam as *the* obstacle he underestimates –or ignores- the dynamics of political processes within which political Islam functions. He also makes assumptions and takes them for granted as facts. Support for illiberal democracy (Iran) can best be explained by reference to political actors’ strategies and tactics within socio-economic and socio-political circumstances. Also, the same process can explain support for liberal democracy. As Katerina Dalacoura forcefully argues ‘if liberalism and Islamic Liberalism are bound together in Middle Eastern societies, the implication is that secularism is not an essential requirement for liberalism. The input of Islamic liberalism in political culture would not be authoritarian, although it would undoubtedly be conservative, as in the case of Christian Democratic parties in the European experience.’<sup>47</sup> Using Islam as central variable to either justify (like the rulers of the region) or explain (like some theorists) the absence of democratic political practice in the Middle East, involves misconceptions and serious oversimplifications. Political actors - whether individuals, political parties, elites, mass social movements or governments,- constitute essential instruments in the understanding of why democracy has not yet fully-fledged in the Muslim Middle East.

### **Reductionism: Essentialising Islam, Ignoring diversity**

Fukuyama’s proposition that greater democracy may lead to electoral victory for Islamic fundamentalists is plausible but not a necessarily consequence of liberalisation. It depends on political, social and economic contexts. Any Muslim society, as any other society in the world, has a diversity of opinions, competing political forces and interests. They are not politically homogeneous societies. For example, the legacies of secular Arab Nationalism created a segment of the population that upholds such views. The same is true for the communists and Islamists. Such political allegiances exist alongside other loyalties such as tribal and ethnic ones. Islamic political groups and parties constitute part of a hotchpotch of political ideas and ideologies. Their success and failure depends on the extent to which they respond –more or less credibly- to the electorate’s problems. Voters in Muslim societies are as diverse in their political preferences and priorities as those in

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<sup>47</sup> Dalacoura, Katerina *Islam, Liberalism and Human Rights*. I.B. Tauris: London, 1998. p. 192.

any other political community. This can be demonstrated empirically through factor analysis (principal component analysis).

Factor analysis 1) enables us to assess the factorial validity<sup>48</sup> of the questions, which make up our scales by telling us the extent to which they seem measure the same concepts or variables. For example, if people respond in similar ways to questions concerning political Islam as they do to those about tribal loyalties, this implies that these two concepts are not seen as being conceptually distinct by respondents. If, however, their answers to the political Islam items are statistically unrelated to the ones to tribal loyalty items, there would be surely empirical reasons to distinguish them as two distinct influences on voting behaviour. 2) If we have a huge number of variables, factor analysis can determine the degree to which they can be reduced to a smaller set. The purpose of such reduction is aimed at trying to make sense of the bewildering complexity of social behaviour by reducing it to a more limited number of factors. Exploratory principal component analysis of a representative sample in Jordan in 1997 democracy survey reveals six factors that Jordanian electorates take into account when making voting decisions (Table 5-1) below.

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<sup>48</sup> See Frankfort-Nachmias, Chava. & Nachmias, David. *Research Methods in the Social Sciences* (Fourth edition), London: Edward Arnold. 1992. pp 442-443.

Table (5-1) Rotated Component Matrix of factor loadings<sup>49</sup>

	Components (factors)					
	1 Personal Competence	2 Clan Affiliation	3 Political Experience	4 Religion	5 Israel	6 Gender
If the candidate was erudite about the country's and citizen's problems	.779					
If s/he had enough time to tag along the constituency's problems	.741					
If s/he was an intellectual	.724					
If s/he was valiant	.683					
If s/he was able to speak and persuade people	.607					
If s/he was able to question the government regardless of any personal interest	.607					
If s/he was one of the clan's members		.896				
If s/he had the clan consensus		.868				
If s/he had a personal relationship with you (relative, friend, know him)		.745				
If s/he had served in high ranking governmental posts			.723			
If s/he had influence within the government institutions			.695			
If s/he was a well known figure in the kingdom			.667			
If s/he was a member of the Islamic Action Front Party (IAFP)				.778		
If s/he was a religious person				.683		
If s/he was an Imam (mosque preacher or pray leader)				.657		
If s/he was against the peace process with Israel					-.830	
If s/he was supportive of the peace process with Israel					.799	
If s/he was a member of a political party (except the Islamic Action Front)						.762
If s/he was a woman						.578
<b>Total variance explained (57.83%)</b>	<b>16.01</b>	<b>11.23</b>	<b>9.758</b>	<b>8.32</b>	<b>6.81</b>	<b>5.69</b>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Factor loadings less than .500 were suppressed.

Table (5-1) above represents a rotated component matrix. It illustrates the complex conceptual diversity of a Muslim society voters' political preferences and priorities; it

<sup>49</sup> The common variation between a set of items is used as the base for dimension or factor extraction. The assumption is that the variables or items that can be represented by a single dimension will be correlated highly with this dimension. A factor loading represents the correlation between an item and factor. The items with the highest loadings on each factor are the ones that are the best indicators for these factors. In this table only items with very strong correlations are shown, usually factors below .30 are considered too weak. The extent to which each factor is explained by items' loadings is reflected by the percentage of explained variance. Generally, factors with the highest percentage of explained variance provide the most parsimonious representation of the items. See Frankfort-Nachmias, Chava. & Nachmias, David. *Research Methods in the Social Sciences* (Fourth edition). London: Edward Arnold, 1992. pp. 442-443.

shows that a representative sample of the Jordanian society allows us to extract six factors (conceptually distinct underlying dimensions) describing the voters' political reasoning decisions as far as their candidate preferences are concerned. For example, factor (religion) could be interpreted as 'Islamic dimension'. It consists of a) political Islam (i.e. if the candidate is a member of the Islamic Action Front Party (IAFP), and b) religiosity (if the candidate is a religious person and/or Imam). Thus a candidate with Islamic qualities would appeal to a certain segment of the population but definitely not to the whole electoral body. Clearly some Jordanian voters do not have a conceptual separation between Islam as a private religious practice and political Islam as a domain of public sphere. The two levels are interlinked and very likely inseparable. Had Jordanians shown conceptually distinct differences between these two aspects of Islam, we would have been able to establish whether the religion of Islam -as perceived and practiced by ordinary Muslims- has the potential of secularism.

Factor one (personal competence) could be interpreted as the political and social capabilities of a candidate. Jordanian electorates do consider a vibrant political personality (persuasive, erudite, intellectual, critical, honest) when making voting decisions. Factor two (clan affiliation) reveals a traditional 'rationale', that is, a primordial and kinship bond to a candidate is an important independent dynamic in voting behaviour. Loyalty to clan member is the most important element in this factor followed by 'clan consensus'<sup>50</sup>, factor three (political experience) reflects political performance and popularity of a candidate as yet another autonomous dimension defining the voters' political behaviour. Factor five (Israel) reflects a candidate's position on regional political issues, which stands out as a conceptually distinct criteria in voting decision making. The regional circumstances created by Arab-Israeli conflict have an impact on voting behaviour; a candidate who supports the peace process with Israel appeals to a segment of the electorate, which definitely will not consider voting for a candidate who opposes the peace process with Israel. Finally, a dimension that could be

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<sup>50</sup> Clan consensus refers to a well known practice in Jordan usually surfaces in the run-up period for elections whether local or national. It is a process by which hopeful 'politicians' present themselves to their respective clans for nomination as the 'clan candidate' meaning the winner in the clan internal elections he/she will get all the votes of those who agree to the process. Of course there are variations in the scope and inclusiveness of this process but it is best seen as a grassroots democratisation.

labelled as gender (factor six) reflects political polarisation is a further distinctive factor influencing voting behaviour; electorates who are likely to vote for any political party except the IAFP are more likely to opt to vote for a women candidate. This is a very important underlying dimension that exposes the polarisation between different value systems in the Jordanian society. IAFP voters hold a traditional value system in which women are subject to traditional structures and gender roles: domestic household duties are the domain of female involvement, even if she works in a full-time job. Therefore, electorates who consider voting for a party other than IAFP, are more likely to consider voting for a female candidate.

The preceding empirical analysis reveals that the political scene of Jordan as a Muslim society is a very diverse one; there is, therefore, no empirical justification to predict the only outcome of greater electoral democracy would be extreme radical political Islam, which hopes to establish a theocracy, monarchy or nomocracy. There are other reasons besides Islam that people consider when making voting decisions like the primordial loyalties. These loyalties are not static; they change as time goes by, provided a modernisation process is taking place and gradually transforming the society.

The evidence we have sketched above are not from a non-traditional society and yet we have seen a shift from traditional values to 'modern' i.e. factor 6 above as opposed to factor 2. The conclusion that religion/Islam is only one amongst many factors (and not necessarily the most important one) influencing voters' choices is supported by the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood movement in the 1989 parliamentary elections in Jordan obtained 22 seats out of 80 i.e. only 27% of the seats (factor one) in Table (5-1). However, the most important factor explaining voter behaviour is the personal competence of candidates. This reinforces the multi-dimensionality of voting behaviour and falsifies the claim that the outcome of free elections will bring about a victory of Islamists who seek to establish an anti-modern theocracy. Unfortunately, we cannot make valid generalisations for all Muslim societies; however, it is safe to conclude that if such results are obtained in one Muslim society (which they were), we should be able to obtain

results leading to similar patterns in other Muslim societies bearing in mind contextual differences.<sup>51</sup>

Traditional bonds and values influence the Jordanian voters' choices more than civic values and modern bonds do. Table (5-2) about the priorities Jordanian voters consider when voting (below) reveals that tribal loyalties and religiosity (characteristics prevailing in traditional societies) top the list of priorities. However, organised political Islam (in the form of IAFP) is not the most important factor in determining voters' political choices. Tribal loyalties are far more important than religiosity and all other candidate characteristics. Additionally, the percentage of Jordanian voters whose choices are primarily influenced by the candidates personal competence is higher than the percentage of voters whose choice is primarily influenced by the question whether or not the candidate is a member of the IAFP.

Table (5-2) illustrates the priorities that the electorates follow in electing their parliamentary representatives

Priorities	%
1 If the candidate was one of the clan members	26.02
2 If he was a religious person	17.51
3 If he had knowledge about the country's and citizen's problems	15.40
4 If he had already served his constituency	13.17
5 If he was intellectual	12.36
6 If he was valiant	12.48
7 If he had enough time in order to follow the district problems	11.2
8 If he was against the peace process with Israel	5.88
9 If he had the clan consensus	4.72
10 If he did support the peace process with Israel	3.99
11 If he was a member in the Islamic Action Front Party (IAFP)	3.71
12 If she was a women	3.50
13 If he was having a personal relationship with the voter	3.34
14 If he was living in the same district	2.40
15 If he was a member in political party except (IAFP)	2.00
16 If he was able to speak and persuade people	1.79
17 If he was able to question the government regardless of any personal interests	1.66
18 If he had influence within the government institutions	1.56
19 If he was a mosque speaker or mosque leader in pray (Imam)	0.98
20 If he was well known in the kingdom	0.44

These priorities were refined according to the following method: respondents were asked to state if they would consider any of the priorities listed in the table in electing a candidate; then they were asked to choose the most important one for them. Source: Centre for Strategic Studies, *Democracy in Jordan*. Amman: Centre for strategic Studies, 1997. pp. 31-32.

<sup>51</sup> One might argue that the Algerian elections outcome in 1992 leads to the opposite conclusion. We have to emphasise the contextual factors at play in such situation. Perhaps the most important factor is the failure of the Algerian regime to deliver effective governance and implement universal socio-economic programs. This failure caused massive dissatisfaction with the regime and the people protested that failure by voting Islamists on a larger scale. More details on this point will follow in the coming sections.

The evidence that Fukuyama and many others (e.g. orientalists) utilise to argue that *Islam has been a major barrier to democratisation* are selective, reductionist and -not surprisingly- do not make a strong case for valid generalisations across the Islamic world. For example, representatives of this orientalist approach have argued that the Algerian municipal elections of 1990, and the elections Iran a decade earlier, imply that greater democracy may not lead to greater liberalization because it brings to power Islamic fundamentalists hoping to establish some form of popular theocracy.<sup>52</sup> I contend that greater electoral democracy did not bring to power Islamic fundamentalists in Jordan, Morocco, or in Yemen. Greater democracy, however, did bring political liberalisation of varying degrees in Jordan, Yemen, Kuwait, and Morocco. In Algeria and Iran there are specific contextual factors at work that do not extend to all Islamic countries.

In Algeria the closed political system was expected to generate political radicalisation of opposition groups whether these groups are Islamic ideologues or otherwise. The FIS option to resort to non-democratic means, i.e. political violence, it must be noted, was a response to the fact that they had been deprived of their political victory in the elections. It is a peaceful democratic revolution that failed to acquire power. The Algerian political system contributed to the intensity of the violence and radicalisation of the opposition by taking extreme measures like the provocative army intervention.

The Iranian revolution too was not a product of 'greater democracy', as Fukuyama suggests.<sup>53</sup> On the contrary, it was a revolution against an authoritarian and corrupt political system under the Shah, which did not redress the grievances of the Iranian population.<sup>54</sup> Thus, the rise of the Algerian and the Iranian Islamists cannot be attributed solely to 'greater democracy' and, therefore, cannot be used as a yardstick to generalise on the diverse 'Muslim world'. The circumstances that led to the Iranian revolution and the rise of FIS in Algeria are typical for the majority of Arab countries today. These

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<sup>52</sup> Fukuyama, Frances. *The end of History and the Last Man*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1992. p. 347.

<sup>53</sup> Fukuyama, Frances. *The end of History and the Last Man*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1992. p. 347.

<sup>54</sup> For a detailed account of the causes of the Iranian revolution see Moaddel, Mansoor. *Class, Politics, and Ideology in the Iranian Revolution*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993. Especially pp. 65-84. The book is very rich in explanatory details and sufficiently covers state-society relations in the period leading to the revolution.



regimes' failure to improve living standards may well lead to another 'Iranian revolution' or FIS in any of them. Ironically, support for Islamists is very likely to increase as current regimes' failures accumulate. Then these regimes will have even a stronger case to argue that it is either 'us' (authoritarian and corrupt) or the Islamists. In this way and if these regimes do not liberalise, the basic reasons leading to more support for Islamists will remain in place. Then greater democracy may lead to Islamists victories and 'theocracies' across the region.

Political rights and civil liberties in Iran and Algeria prior to the Islamists victories were similar to most Arab countries today. Freedom House<sup>55</sup> surveys rated Algeria as a 'not free' country between 1972 and 1988, as 'partly free' between 1989 and 1991, and as a 'not free' from 1992-2001. Iran was rated as 'not free' between 1972 and 1977, 'partly free' between 1978 and 1980, 'not free' between 1981 and 1983, 'partly free' from 1984 to 1987 and 'not free' from 1988 to 2001. The evidence supports the hypothesis that political oppression, combined with the failure of these regimes to deliver socio-economic gains to the population,<sup>56</sup> was the main motivating force underpinning the radicalisation and rise of Islamic opposition. By contrast, Saudi Arabia, delivered relative economic prosperity -but not human development- derived from oil resources. Therefore the political regime, though oppressive, did not counter a severe political challenge from disadvantaged segments of the population. Moreover, the control of economic resources was concentrated in the hands of the few (Saudi royal family) that distributed wealth

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<sup>55</sup> Freedom House, *Freedom in the World Country Ratings: 1972-73 to 2000-01*. New York: Freedom House. 2001. <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

<sup>56</sup> Moaddel, Mansoor. *Class, Politics, and Ideology in the Iranian Revolution*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993. He argues that 'while various features of the state contributed to the form of the revolutionary movement of 1977-79, the state's strategy for economic development affected the distribution of wealth, patterned class conflict, and, therefore, determined its content. The main beneficiaries of economic development in the 1960s and 1970s were international capital and the dependent bourgeoisie who, behind the protective shield of the state, were able to dominate the economy and reap substantial profit. The petty bourgeoisie, the merchants, and landowners, were antagonized by state economic policies. Industrial development, state policies of various sorts (such as the licensing system), credit allocation, and the establishment of farm corporations and agribusiness undermined the interests of these classes. Consequently, the dependent bourgeoisie and international capital faced the opposition of the indigenous social classes on two levels. On the market level, their increasing dominance over national market provoked the hostility of the petty bourgeoisie, the merchants, and the landowners. On the production level, the process of capitalist development and the economic difficulties in the mid- to late 1970s brought about capital and labor conflict. These overlapping conflicts underlay the revolutionary conjuncture of 1977-79.' p. 65.

largely via patron-client relationships to guarantee social basis of political support by passive acceptance of the status quo, not via active political participation. Consequently, it is reasonable to conclude that it is the strategy of the political regime that determines the popularity of Islamists.

### **Diversity of interpretation within Islam<sup>57</sup>**

Interpretations of Islam are as diverse as any other religion or belief system in the world. Traditional Islamic fundamentalism exists analogously with Islamic modernism. This has always been the case since the nineteenth century.<sup>58</sup> A collection of articles, treatises, and exposés written by prominent Muslim theologians, scholars, and academics display the diversities of Islam in theme and orientation ‘that demonstrate the dynamic nature of the religion of Islam, far from its image that has been portrayed in certain media as monolithic and stagnated system of ideas [which apparently Fukuyama took for granted]. This dynamism is naturally a function of the changing social conditions in time and space.’<sup>59</sup> Islamic modernists such as *Jamal al-Din al-Afghani* – continually travelling in the Middle East and lived in Egypt for eight years, the most fruitful period of his career (1839-97)<sup>60</sup>, *Muhammed Aduh* (1849-1905), *Ali Abd al-Raziq* (1888-1966), *Qasim Amin* (1856-1908), *Rafi` al-Tahtawi* (1801-73) from Egypt; *Sayyid Ahmad Khan* (1817-98),

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<sup>57</sup> This section draws on Moaddel, Mansoor. & Talattof, Kamran. *Contemporary Debates in Islam: An Anthology of Modernist and Fundamentalist Thought*. London: Macmillan Press, 2000. pp. 1-20.

<sup>58</sup> Dalacoura, Katerina. *Islam, Liberalism and Human Rights*, London: I.B. Tauris, 1998. pp. 76-106. Dalacoura demonstrated that the socio-economic and socio-political conditions in Egypt during the 1920s and 1930s led to the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and the discredit of Islamic modernism. It is not the religion of Islam itself rather it is the response to the material conditions of the society that favours one strand of interpretation of Islam over the other. Dalacoura confirmed this conclusion again in another two case studies Egypt 1970s-1990s and Tunisia 1970s-1990s.

<sup>59</sup> Moaddel, Mansoor. & Talattof, Kamran. *Contemporary Debates in Islam: An Anthology of Modernist and Fundamentalist Thought*, London: Macmillan. 2000. p 1.

<sup>60</sup> Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839-97) ‘although politically he displayed a strong anti-West stance, intellectually some of the crucial elements in his views on religion and society were developed in relation to and influenced by the modernist discourse of nineteenth-century Europe. One such element was Guizot’s (1890) idea of civilisation. Afghani subscribed to evolutionary thinking and the belief in human intellect as the prime mover of social progress and human civilization. Thus when he spoke of the decline of Islam, he did not mean Islam as a religion, but as a civilization’. ... ‘Where Afghani’s commitment to modernity and human reason is revealed in no uncertain term is in his exchange with Renan (1883), who had criticized Islam and early Arabs for being hostile to scientific and philosophical inquiry ... Afghani criticized Renan for advancing a racist argument, that the Arabs by nature were hostile to science. He contended that all peoples in their early stage of development were incapable of accepting reason to distinguish good from evil. Hence, the presence of prophets and teachers become necessary to guide these peoples.’ See Moaddel, Mansoor. & Talattof, Kamran. *Contemporary Debates in Islam: An Anthology of Modernist and Fundamentalist Thought*. London: Macmillan, 2000. p. 13.

*Chiragh Ali* (1844-95), *Amir Ali* (1849-1928), and *Shibli Nu`mani* (1851-1914) from India, advanced an interpretation of Islam that is compatible with modernity. The scientific accomplishments of the West engrossed Islamic modernists. They embraced Newtonian conception of the universe, Spencer's sociology, and Darwinian evolutionism and Western style of living. Their thinking challenged the traditional thought of Muslims and the traditional conservative *Ulama*. Islamic modernists 'formulated Islamic methodology in a manner congruent with the standards of nineteenth-century social theory; and affirmed the validity of the scientific knowledge, even though it was not based on Islam; favored democracy and constitutionalism, and the *de facto* separation of religion from politics; and formulated modernist discourse on women by rejecting polygamy and male domination.'<sup>61</sup> Islamic fundamentalists, by contrast, took an opposite stand on many of the issues raised. They 'rejected the notion of social evolution and portrayed the West as having an aggressive political system, exploitive and materialistic economic institutions, and decadent culture. Rather than attempting to reform and modernize Islam, they aimed at Islamizing virtually all social institutions. They rejected the separation of religion from politics, defended Islamic political hierarchy in society, and male domination and polygamy in the family'<sup>62</sup>

This diversity of ideas points to a pluralistic environment, which undermines any attempts to describe the whole Muslim world or Islam as resistant to modernity. Fukuyama's propensity to advance a cultural-essentialist argument made him evade and overlook the diversity of the Muslim world. Therefore, he threw the baby out with the bath water. His generalisation about Islam is hard to ignore; methodologically, he did not provide sufficiently nuanced reasoning to support his claim. He, however, posits that Turkey is the only Muslim country that qualifies as a democracy.<sup>63</sup> Turkey, according to Fukuyama's own definition, does not qualify as a democracy. For Turkey is classified by Freedom House<sup>64</sup> as a Partly Free country with a Political Rights score of 4 and Civil

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<sup>61</sup> Moaddel, Mansoor. & Talattof, Kamran. *Contemporary Debates in Islam: An Anthology of Modernist and Fundamentalist Thought*. London: Macmillan, 2000. pp. 2-4.

<sup>62</sup> Moaddel, Mansoor. & Talattof, Kamran. *Contemporary Debates in Islam: An Anthology of Modernist and Fundamentalist Thought*. London: Macmillan, 2000. p 4.

<sup>63</sup> See the section on political opportunity structures in this chapter.

<sup>64</sup> <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

Liberties score of 5, it shares similar freedom status with other Muslim countries as Table (5-3) below illustrates.

Table (5-3) Freedom House scores (2000-2001) for a number of Muslim countries

Country	Political Rights	Civil Liberties	Index score out of 14*
Turkey	4	5	9 PF
Indonesia	4	4	8 PF
Malaysia	5	5	10 PF
Bangladesh	3	4	7 PF
Jordan	4	4	8 PF
Kuwait	4	5	9 PF
Morocco	5	4	9 PF
Pakistan	4	5	9 PF
Iran	6	6	12 NF

\*14 means not free (NF) while 2 means free, and PF means Partly Free country.

The diversity of the Muslim world is not only reflected in discussions within intellectual circles. Evidence of diversity can be seen in the existence of organisations with rival political projects. Political Islam alludes to a complex socio-political phenomenon, which includes many competing movements, which are often hostile to each other (for example the Afghani factions). The diversity of the political spectrum in Jordan indicates huge and sharp differences in political and social ideas even among emphatically Islamic groups. For example, the Jordanian Islamic Action Front Party would seem to be very moderate political force<sup>65</sup> accepting the constitution, whilst the outlawed *Hizb Al-Tahrir Al-Islami* (the Islamic Liberation Party) advocates a very radical interpretation of Islam and does not recognise any man-made constitution. The Arab Islamic Democratic Movement – legal political party- stands in sharp contrast to both of the aforementioned parties; it advocates a liberal interpretation of Islam supporting democracy and human rights. Other Muslim groups subscribe to ideologies that are liberal and illiberal, communist (Leninist, Stalinists or Trotskyist), socialist, or nationalist ideologies. Political parties carrying these ideologies are legal political forces in many Muslim countries such as Jordan and Morocco.

<sup>65</sup> Some hardliners within the ranks of IAFP disagree with party's participation in government. For example, Dr. Mohamed Abu Faris by arguing that 'as long as today's communities do not govern themselves by God's rulings and do not refrain from cherishing Islam as the sole source of legislation, partaking in government can only lead to perplexity and damage'. Conversely, Dr. Omar al-Ashqar from within the moderate ranks takes the opposite stand and justifies that by political conditions. See Hani Hourani et al. *Islamic Movements in Jordan*. Amman: Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, 1997. pp 33-34. In February 2002 the moderates secured 13 out of the 14 executive council seats with one going to a hardliner. See <http://www.jordantimes.com/Sun/homenews/homenews3.htm> (03/02/2002).

So far I have argued at a general level that Fukuyama's sweeping assumptions about Islam as resistant to modernity are oversimplified. In the following sections I will demonstrate that the correlation he claims to be true do not hold up empirically, even if we accept his theoretical assumptions.

### **Empirical Analysis**

In the following sections empirical tests of the relationship between individuals' religiosity and attitudinal support for democracy will be performed. In order to establish whether there is an association between religiosity and support for democracy, a bivariate analysis will be utilised. After establishing the extent of association between religiosity and support for democracy, a multivariate regression analysis will be performed in order to find out which variable has the strongest impact on support for democracy. In the multivariate analysis we will control for the impact of religion, democratic tradition, and human development. The analysis will be at the aggregate level; countries will be used as units of analysis. The data for each country is aggregated from individual responses to the WVS questionnaire. The sample included here contains 62 countries. When the analysis is performed on pair wise exclusion of cases, and non-WVS variables are included the number of observations for each variable vary from one test to another. For example, we have more observations available for the human development variable than we have for support for democracy. Differences in the number of observations do not constitute an obstacle to the analysis.

#### **1. The Dependent Variables for Comparative Analysis**

*Support for democracy as an ideal form of government (3 indicators):*

Individuals can weigh different types of political regimes against each other and express a preference for one of them. Regime performance must be measured in such a way that does not reflect an assessment of the current incumbents in office when respondents are asked to compare and evaluate four distinctive political systems.<sup>66</sup> The survey question must also allow people to differentiate between a preferred political system and the

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<sup>66</sup> Klingemann, Hans-Dieter 'Mapping Political Support in the 1990s: A Global Analysis', in Norris, Pippa. (ed.) *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Governance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. pp. 35-36.

political system under which they currently live.<sup>67</sup> Three indicators from the *World Values Survey* will be used to test if there is a covariation between religiosity and support for democracy.

**Indicator 1:** preference for a democratic political system<sup>68</sup>

*I'm going to describe various types of political systems and ask what you think about each as a way of governing this country. For each one, would you say it is a very good, fairly good, fairly bad, or very bad way of governing this country? Having a democratic political system.* For the correlation analysis carried out below, I am using the percentage of people in each country that responded 'very good' i.e. they considered a democratic system to be 'very good'.

**Indicator 2:** democracy is better than any other form of government

*I'm going to read some things that people sometimes say about a democratic political system. Could you please tell me if you agree strongly, agree, disagree or disagree strongly, after I read each of them? Democracy may have some problems but it's better than any other form of government.* For the correlation analysis carried out below, I am using the percentage of people in each country who agreed or strongly agreed.

**Indicator 3:** This indicator captures support for an authoritarian political system with a strong head of government who does not have to bother with parliament and elections.

*I'm going to describe various types of political systems and ask what you think about each as a way of governing this country. For each one, would you say it is a very good, fairly good, fairly bad, or very bad way of governing this country? Having a strong head of government who does not have to bother with parliament and elections.* For the correlation analysis carried out below, I am using the percentage of people in each country who reported very good or good.

## **2. The Independent Variable for Comparative Analysis**

The main independent variable used here is subjective religiosity. If Fukuyama and other culturalists were right in using Islam as the explanatory variable for absence of democracy from Muslim countries, we would find a cluster of Muslim countries on all indicators. The analysis below is a test of hypothesis. As we shall see, Islamic countries do not conform to the explanation offered by culturalists. There is not an Islamic cluster

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<sup>67</sup> This point will be empirically illustrated later in the next chapter when analysing support for democracy in the case study: Jordan.

<sup>68</sup> The latest data available for each country from the WVS are used. The available data cover 62 countries from the third wave (1995-97) and fourth wave (1999-01) of WVS.

differentiating Muslim from non-Muslim countries. Variations between Muslim countries are bigger than variations between Muslim and non-Muslim countries. The variable which reveals these findings is subjective religiosity.

*Independently of whether you go to religious services or not, would you say you are...*

1. *A religious person*
2. *Not a religious person*
3. *A convinced atheist*

For the correlation analysis carried out below, I am using the percentage of people in each country who described themselves as religious people.

### **Comparative analysis**

All the data used here are obtained through representative surveys in the 62 societies included in the analysis and allow for generalisations to be made on these societies as a whole although they are based on individual responses. Aggregate data are better suited to test Fukuyama's argument and to capture the 'cultural' environment than individual level data, although the results will be decided against individual-level data, the analysis in this section is meant to ascertain whether there are clear differences between Islamic societies and other societies with various religious, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The primary objective of the exercise is to measure support for democracy at the aggregate level and observe the impact of religiosity on democratic and authoritarian orientations of the countries included in the analysis for which data are available. In the following sections a correlation analysis is presented in order to establish the covariation between support for democracy and religiosity. Then, the association between religiosity and support for authoritarianism is examined for two reasons: 1) to establish whether there is an association between religiosity and support for democracy, and 2) to validate support for democracy i.e. is authoritarianism rejected by those supporting democracy?

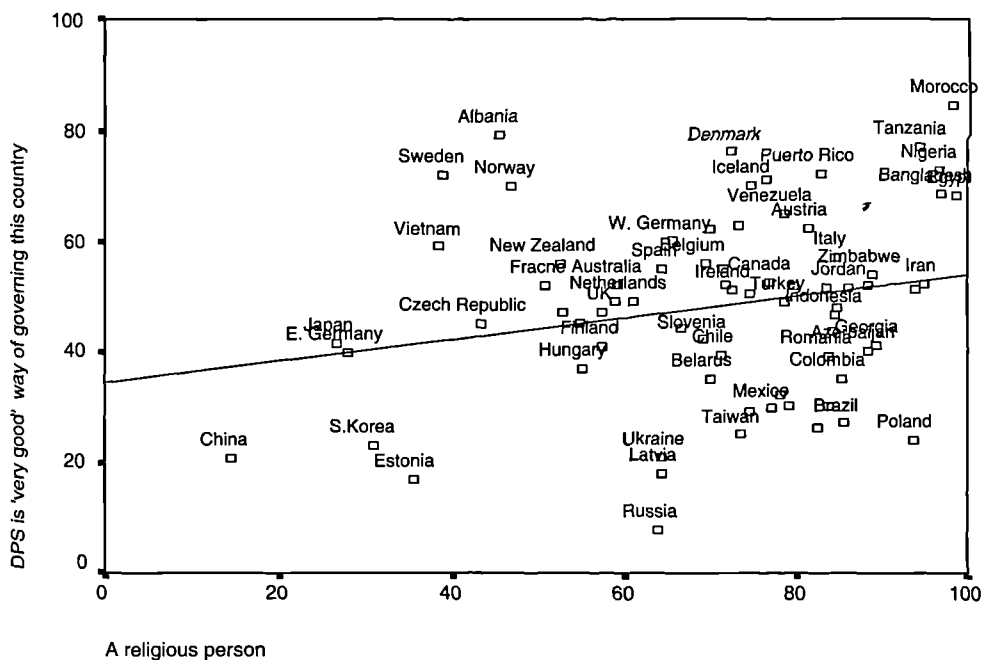
### **Religiosity and Support for Democracy as an Ideal Form of Government**

1) A democratic political system (DPS) is a 'very good' way of governing this 'country'

The correlation between support for DPS as a v. good way of governance and religiosity is positive but statistically insignificant at the five-percent level. This finding refers to the

covariation between religiosity in general (whatever religion) and strong support for democracy. if Fukuyama was right, Islamic countries with a high percentage of religious people should be in lower right corner of figure (5-1). Predominantly Islamic societies show very high levels of support for a DPS as a very good way of governing their countries, while simultaneously showing high levels of religiosity. Although Egypt is the most religious Islamic society (98% of Egyptians identify themselves as religious people), it scores 40% higher than the most religious predominantly catholic society (Poland) on support for DPS as a very good way of governance. In the Islamic societies, support for democracy on this indicator did not fall below 40% of the population, (while the majority of societies under 40% are Christian Catholic, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox). Furthermore, the highest scoring society on this indicator is Morocco with 84% of its population supporting PDS as very good way of governance. Some Islamic countries score as high as USA, France and Netherlands. Among the 16 countries that have percentage scores between 49 and 52 are Turkey (49%), Jordan (51%), and Iran (52%) sharing similar percentage values with Netherlands (49%), USA (51%), India (52%), Canada, Australia, and France (52% each). Albania, a country with 65-70% of its

Figure (5-1) correlation between support for democratic political system and religiosity.



$r=.217, p=.065$

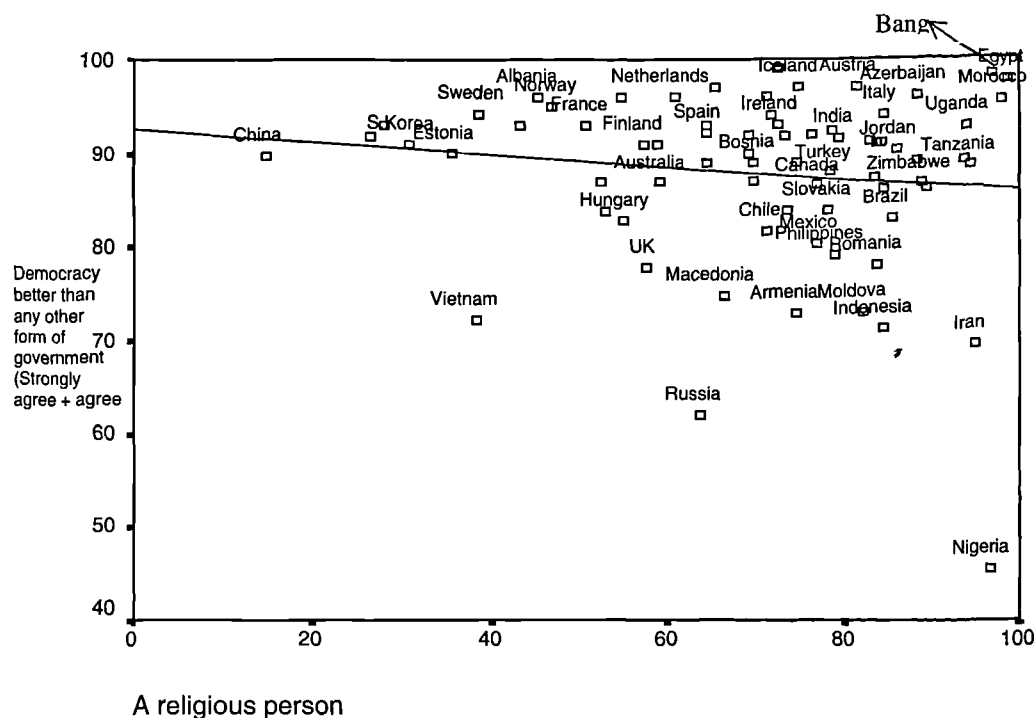


population Muslims and 20 to 30 Christians (Orthodox and Catholic)<sup>69</sup> shows a very high value on this indicator. However, a cluster of four ex-communist countries (Russia, Estonia, Latvia, and Ukraine) can be spotted as the lowest-scoring on support for a DPS as a v. good way of governance. Moreover, Bangladesh, Egypt, and Morocco have similar value as Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. This could be interpreted as showing that people in Islamic societies tend to have a preference for democracy; but what makes it less possible for them to achieve democratic political governance? An attempt to answer this question will be presented in chapter 9 of this thesis. However, it is clear that current political regimes in most of the Muslim world are lagging behind popular expectations with regard to levels of democracy. Thus, Fukuyama's claim about Muslims as resistant to democracy is not supported.

2) Democracy Better than any other form of government (% agreed)

On this indicator the overall correlation between religiosity and support for democracy-

Figure (5-2) correlation between support for democracy and religiosity



<sup>69</sup> 2001 Annual Report on International Religious Freedom: Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, October 26, 2001 United States Commission on International Religious Freedom view at: [http://www.uscirf.gov/dos01Pages/irf\\_albania.php3](http://www.uscirf.gov/dos01Pages/irf_albania.php3)

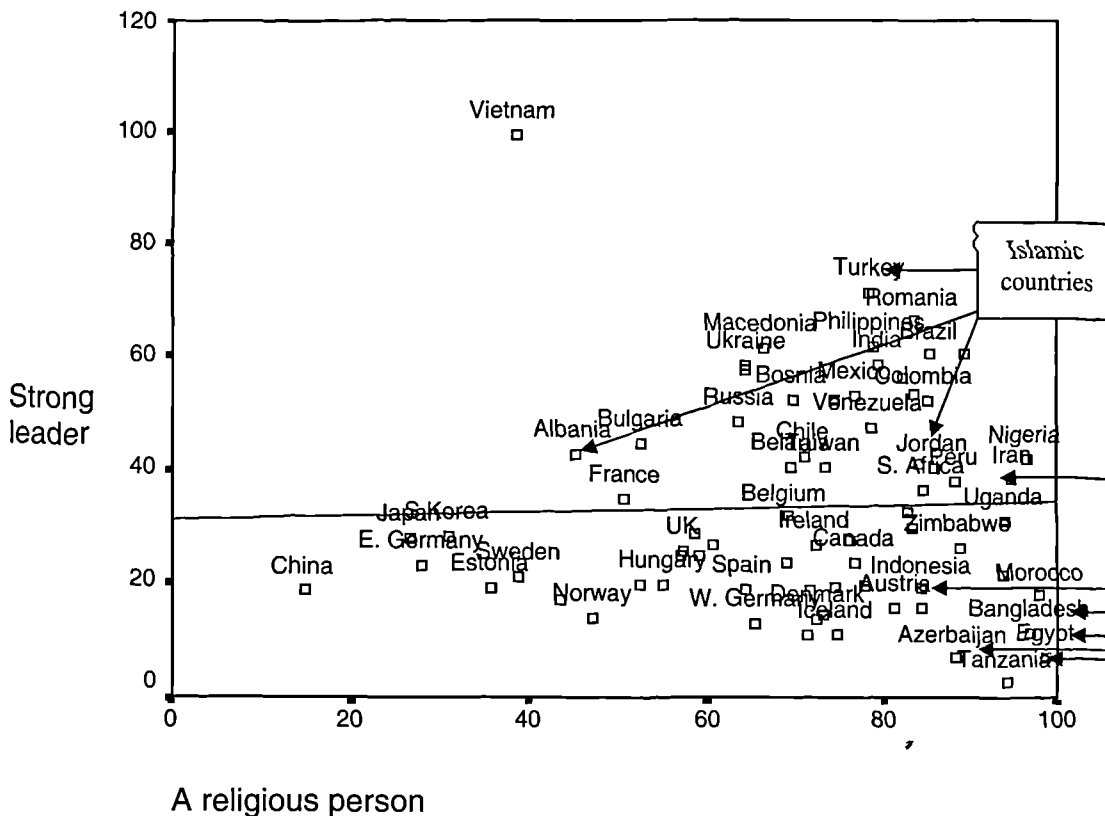
$r = -.146$   $p = .220$

measured as the percentage of people in a country who agreed to the statement that 'democracy may have some problems but it is better than any other form of government' is negative and statistically insignificant at the five-percent level. By and large, the Islamic societies included (Bangladesh, Turkey, Morocco, Egypt and Jordan) are not unique in showing high levels of support for democracy simultaneously with high levels of religiosity. These Islamic societies are not off line with predominantly Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox societies like Poland, Venezuela, Italy, USA, Georgia, Lithuania, Hindu/Muslim India, and Confucian Japan. Societies like Japan, E. Germany, Sweden are the least religious in our sample and among the most supportive of democracy. However, support for democracy tends to decrease marginally and statistically insignificantly with increases in aggregate religiosity. This relationship does not apply to all countries. Outliers include the USA which has a value of (83%) on religiosity and (87%) on support for democracy, or Nigeria with (97%) and (45%) respectively. Generally, as we found that high support for democracy is a cross cultural phenomenon, lower levels of support for democracy are also cross cultural and to be found in Orthodox and Catholic Christian societies like Russia, Moldova, Armenia, Macedonia and Romania as well as Islamic countries like Iran and Indonesia. Nonetheless, with the exception of Nigeria none of the countries in the sample analysed has support levels for democracy below 62% (Russia). This supports Fukuyama's thesis of universal support for democracy. However, his other claim cannot be supported. That is, had Fukuyama been right about Islam as a hindrance to democracy, the Islamic societies with high levels of religiosity should cluster near the right corner at the bottom of Figure (5-2). A glance at the scatterplot leaves us with the observation that Islamic societies are mostly clustering near the top right corner (Egypt, Morocco, Bangladesh, Azerbaijan, Jordan, and Turkey) with high levels of religiosity and high levels of support for democracy.

3) Religiosity and support for authoritarianism; support a strong leader who does not have bother with parliament and elections (very good + good) as a way of governing this 'country'

Overall religiosity is practically uncorrelated ( $r = .040$ ) with authoritarianism in our sample of countries (Figure 5-3). Nevertheless, there are some interesting variations with regard to the relationship between authoritarianism and religiosity in Islamic societies. Two major Islamic countries (Egypt and Turkey) represent extreme cases in the distribution; Turkey with (72%) of the population supporting saying that it is good or very good to have leader

Figure (5-3) correlation between support for authoritarianism and religiosity



$r = .040, p = 0.741$

who does not have to bother with parliament and elections is the second highest and Egypt with a value of (7%) is the second lowest with regard to the prevalence of authoritarian attitudes in respective societies. Moreover, other Islamic countries like Morocco, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh and Indonesia show very low levels of support for authoritarianism along with Denmark, Norway, Tanzania, Austria, Iceland, Sweden and West Germany. The cases of Egypt and Turkey perhaps could be partly explained by the

historical experiences of these two countries. The Turks may 'want another Kemal Atatürk' as one Turkish political scientist put it.<sup>70</sup> The Egyptians, perhaps, do not want another Nasser, Sadat, or Mubarak. All of them were strong authoritarian leaders but the Egyptian leaders are seen to have failed to deliver modernisation, which Atatürk is often seen to have delivered to Turkey. The predominantly Hindu India<sup>71</sup> the largest democracy in the world, displays quite high aggregate levels of support for authoritarian leadership. Bangladesh<sup>72</sup> and Azerbaijan<sup>73</sup> are low on authoritarianism with (12%) and (7%) of the population respectively supporting the authoritarian statement. The Jordanian case with (42%) of the population supporting the authoritarian statement is not very surprising. The image of the late King Hussein (died 1999) as a strong leader who managed to survive all the political turbulences of the Middle East during his 47 years of rule, undoubtedly has a huge impact on two generations of the Jordanian public that were brought up under his rule. Islamic Iran with a value of (39%) on support for authoritarianism is not far from Roman Catholic Peru (39%), predominantly Christian South Africa (37%), predominantly Roman Catholic France (35%), Orthodox/Catholic Belarus (41%), or Confucian Taiwan (41%). However, the dispersion of Islamic societies with regard to aggregate support for an authoritarian regime also lends little support to the cultural essentialist proposition that Islam as belief system makes its followers prone to authoritarian values. Our data suggest that high levels of religiosity tend to be associated with stronger support for authoritarian orientations. At the aggregate level Protestant and Confucian societies seem to have relatively low support for authoritarian orientations. But they are unexceptional; they share similar values with developed and developing countries with Catholic, Orthodox, and Islamic cultural traditions.

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<sup>70</sup> This was the answer given to me by Prof. Yilmaz Esmer from the department of political science at Bogazici University in Istanbul during the World Values Survey Conference in Stellenbosch University - South Africa, 17-20 November 2001.

<sup>71</sup> In India 82.4 percent of the population Hindu, Muslims 12.7 percent, Christians 2.4 percent, Sikhs 2.0 percent, Buddhists 0.7 percent, Jains 0.4 percent, and others, including Parsis (Zoroastrians), Jews, and Baha'is, 0.4 percent see: [http://www.uscirf.gov/dos01Pages/irf\\_india.php3](http://www.uscirf.gov/dos01Pages/irf_india.php3)

<sup>72</sup> Sunni Muslims constitute 88 percent of the population. About 10 percent of the population are Hindu. 2001 Annual Report on International Religious Freedom: Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, October 26, 2001 United States Commission on International Religious Freedom view at [http://www.uscirf.gov/dos01Pages/irf\\_banglade.php3](http://www.uscirf.gov/dos01Pages/irf_banglade.php3)

<sup>73</sup> Azerbaijan population consists of 90 percent Muslim 3% Christian and approximately 1% Jewish. See 2001 Annual Report on International Religious Freedom: Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, October 26, 2001 United States Commission on International Religious Freedom view at: [http://www.uscirf.gov/dos01Pages/irf\\_azerbaij.php3](http://www.uscirf.gov/dos01Pages/irf_azerbaij.php3)

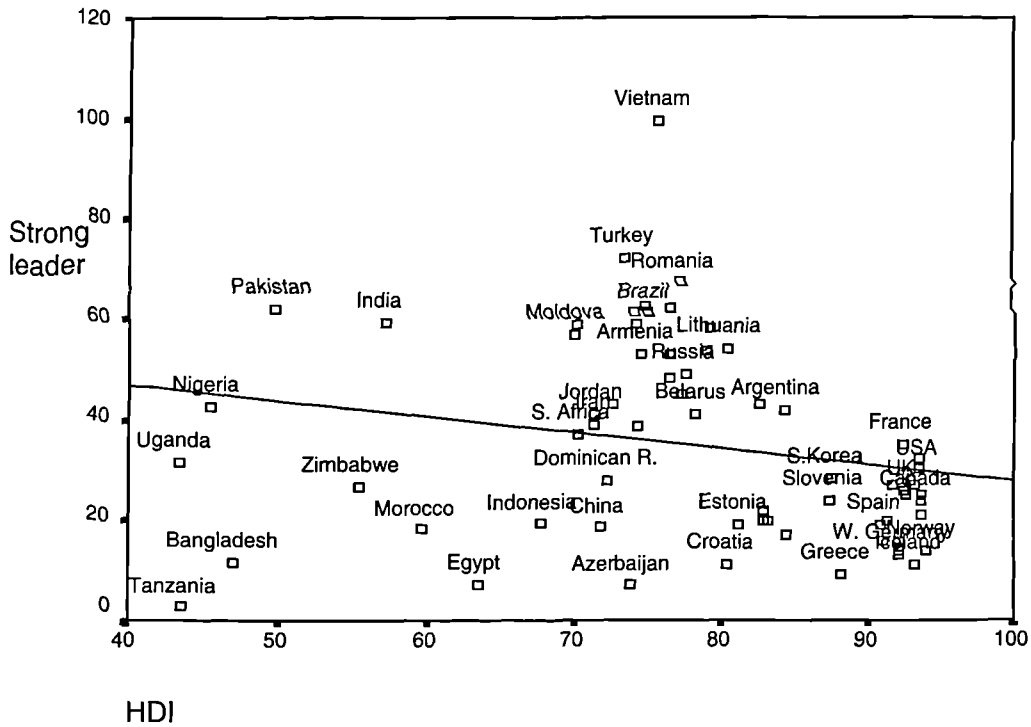
This suggests that there is more to explore than just a religious tradition in order to understand authoritarian orientations in a society. One can, therefore, conclude that there is enough empirical evidence to suggest that Fukuyama's claims about Islam as a culture resistant to democracy and (by implication prone to authoritarianism), are largely unfounded. Cultural generalisations do not seem to offer much to the understanding of socio-political phenomena like democracy or authoritarianism. Fukuyama, like many orientalist, has rightly used evidence from the Middle East today (no Islamic country can be counted as a democracy) to support his sweeping generalisation about the culture of Islam as being anti-democratic. He, like many others, has failed to address the need for more complex multivariate explanations accounting for political and economic factors as well as culture.

### **Alternative Explanations**

Having eliminated religiosity as significant variable in explaining authoritarianism (at least when taken in isolation from other variables), we must explore other variables that could improve our understanding of support for authoritarianism in a multivariate design. Amongst the many variables that could be included in such analysis is Human development. It is one possible explanation. The bivariate correlation between Human Development Index and aggregate support for a strong authoritarian leader reveals a negative correlation (-.220). The scatter plot (Figure 5-4) below points to two main conclusions about the relationship between human development and aggregate support for authoritarianism. First, high levels of human development tend to be associated with low aggregate support for authoritarianism. Second, high aggregate levels of support for authoritarianism tend to be associated with low and medium levels of human development. The first conclusion is best demonstrated by a cloud of countries concentrated at the bottom right corner of Figure (4) below representing highly developed societies with *overall* low levels of support for authoritarianism. In other words, none of the highly developed societies demonstrate medium or high support for authoritarianism. In a relative contrast to this, we found that societies with low (India and Pakistan) and medium human development (Turkey, Romania, Philippines, Georgia,

Ukraine, Moldova, Latvia and Macedonia) tend to have a high percentage of people supporting authoritarianism. However, there are exceptions to this. Muslim societies like Egypt, Azerbaijan, and Bangladesh, are amongst those least supportive of authoritarianism.

Figure (5-4) correlation between aggregate support for authoritarianism and religiosity



$r = 0.220, p = 0.072$

The relative contribution religiosity makes to aggregate support for authoritarian rule can only be ascertained in a multivariate design. In the next section, other variables will be introduced in a multivariate design in order to control for the impact of years of uninterrupted democracy, religiosity, Islam (dummy variable), and Human development on support for democracy. We will attempt to answer the question as to why the high levels of support for democracy as an ideal form of government found in Islamic societies did not materialize in democratic government in most Muslim countries?

## Multivariate Analysis

It has been argued that there are two main reasons why democracy did not appear to be a preferable form of government in most Islamic countries. Some scholars argue that Islam constitutes a major obstacle to democracy in the Muslim world.<sup>74</sup> Other scholars have argued that due to low levels of socio-economic development, Muslim countries have not established the necessary conditions for democracy.<sup>75</sup> These two explanations have some problems. The cultural explanation (Islam), it is contended here, has not been properly substantiated. The modernisation explanation, although plausible on theoretical and empirical grounds, has not been tested in combination with cultural variables in order to establish its relative importance. The analysis presented here attempts, on one hand, to control for the impact of modernisation measured by the *Human Development Index* on 1) aggregate popular support for democracy as an ideal form of government and 2) uninterrupted democracy on the other. The latter variable (years of uninterrupted democracy) captures the political structure of a society and the possibility that education and socialization in democratic systems and the absence of experiences of repression may have strong influence on the citizen's attitude to authoritarianism. The variable 'Years of uninterrupted democracy' measures the performance of political systems not the popular attitudes to democracy. Therefore, political regimes may perceive democracy as a threat to their survival. Consequently, they are likely to act rationally in order to preserve the status quo regardless of popular support for democracy. Thus, it is important to separate these two levels: the performance of political systems and popular attitudes towards democracy. It is common that the two levels are confused. For example, one might argue that none of the Muslim countries is a democracy. This may be true. However, we cannot take an authoritarian political system (for example Egypt and Saudi Arabia) as a representation of Islam and Muslims because these political systems are not elected. It is also important to include religiosity in our models in order to determine whether it plays a role in hindering democracy.

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<sup>74</sup> See, for example Fukuyama, Francis. 'History and September 11', in Booth, Ken. & Dunne, Tim. eds. *World in Collision: Terror and the Future of Global Order*, London: Palgrave. 2002. pp 27-36. For other cultural explanations see chapter one of this thesis.

<sup>75</sup> Vanhanen, Tatu. *Prospects of Democracy: A study of 172 Countries*, London: Routledge. 1997.

In order to determine the impact of the independent variables on support for democracy, I will introduce two regression models:

**Model 1:** the dependent variable is support for democracy (democracy better than any other form of government)

The independent variables are: 1. years of uninterrupted democracy, 2. human development index (HDI), 3. religiosity and 4. Islamic countries.

**Model 2:** the dependent variable is years of uninterrupted democracy

The independent variables are: 1. Human development index, 2. religiosity, and 3. Islamic countries.

Model one aimed at explaining what is the most important factor that determines aggregate support for democracy as an ideal form of government among the explanatory variables utilized. Model two is aimed at explaining years of uninterrupted democracy as a political regime i.e. what is the most important factor in sustaining democracy amongst the variables employed in the model.

It is important to make clear that there are many other variables that could be used to explain the support for democracy but what concerns us here is the impact of modernisation, religiosity, and political opportunity structures. The latter is embedded in the variable 'Years of uninterrupted democracy'. In a democratic political system the political opportunity structures are clearly defined in legal terms, while in non-democratic political systems, political opportunity structures are hampered and outlawed by the political systems as a rational response to perceived threat from other groups.

### **Formulating the Hypothesis**

Hypothesis 1: Human development is more important than any other factor in explaining support for and continuity of democracy.

Hypothesis 2: Continued experience and socialization in a democratic system determines the aggregate level of support for democracy as an ideal form of government.

Hypothesis 3: Religiosity, in general, hinders popular support for democracy.



Hypothesis 4: Islam (dummy variable). If a country is predominantly Muslim, support for democracy is low and thus it is unlikely to develop a democratic political system.

### **Correlation Analysis**

Before testing the hypotheses using a multivariate OLS regression model, a bivariate correlation matrix gives first indications of the correlations between these variables. The correlation matrix in Table (5-4) below reveals that the dependent variable (support for democracy measured by the percentages of the population who agree that democracy may have some problems but it is better than any other form of government) is correlated moderately and positively with the Human Development Index (.295) and this correlation is significant at the five percent level. Support for democracy is more likely to be associated with increasing levels of human development. Democracy is more likely to be institutionalized as levels of development increase. Also, support for democracy correlates negatively (-.485) with authoritarian orientations and this correlation is significant at the one-percent level. This means that support for democracy is unlikely to be found amongst people supporting authoritarianism. Moreover, support for democracy correlates positively (0.302) and significantly at the five-percent level with years of uninterrupted democracy. This implies that there is a positive link between socialization in a democratic system and levels of support for democracy as an ideal form of government. This correlation may turn out to be spurious when we control for the impact of other variables. Moreover, support for democracy correlates positively but weakly and insignificantly with Islamic countries.

Years of uninterrupted democracy correlates negatively (-.269) with religiosity. This negative correlation is significant at the five-percent level. Religiosity here consists of all religions included in our sample. Religiosity is likely to hinder democracy and a country being Muslim does not seem to hinder support for democracy but it surely correlates negatively and significantly with years of uninterrupted democracy. Obviously, given the fact that none of the Islamic countries have had a continuous democratic experience, we should expect a significantly negative correlation between the variables 'Islamic countries' and 'years of uninterrupted democracy'.

Table (5-4) Pearson Correlation (pair wise exclusion of missing values)

	HDI	Democracy better than any other form of government	Percent of religious persons	Islamic countries	Years of uninterrupted democracy 1920-2000	Strong leader (Authoritarianism)
HDI	1	.295*	-.519**	-.400**	.708**	-.220
	N= 81	67	68	81	74	68
Democracy better than any other form of government	.295*	1	-.146	.055	.302*	-.485**
	N= 67	74	72	74	68	73
Percent of religious persons	-.519**	-.146	1	.316**	-.269*	.040
	N= 68	72	81	81	69	72
Islamic countries	-.400**	.055	.316**	1	-.321**	-.121
	N= 81	74	81	97	79	75
Years of uninterrupted democracy 1920-2000	.708**	.302*	-.269*	-.321**	1	-.376**
	N= .000	.012	.026	.004	.	.001
Strong leader (Authoritarianism)	-.220	-.485**	.040	-.121	-.376**	1
	N= 68	73	72	75	69	75

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Data for HDI were extracted from the UNDP. Human Development Report, New York. UNDP. 2001. Data for the variables support for democracy, Percent of religious persons, and authoritarianism, were extracted from the WVS third wave 1995-1996 and forth wave 2000-2001. Data for years of uninterrupted democracy were taken from two sources: 1) Iglehart, Ronald. Modernisation and Postmodernisation, Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1997. Appendix 3 table A.1. pp 357-8. 2) Freedom House Indexes. 2001. I relied on the FH data to count the number of years a country was considered 'Free' from 1973-2000.

Religiosity correlated positively with support for authoritarianism but this correlation is very weak and insignificant at five-percent level. The fact that religiosity correlates positively but weakly and insignificantly with support for democracy and support for authoritarianism renders the utilization of religiosity as an explanatory variable largely unconvincing. If we look at the relationship between support for authoritarianism and all other variables in the correlation matrix above, we observe-as expected- that support for authoritarianism inversely related to support for democracy, it is the second strongest significant negative correlation in the matrix. However, we are quite sure that religiosity is very likely to coincide with human underdevelopment; the strongest negative and significant correlation in the matrix above is between HDI and religiosity. This resonates

with the classical modernization theory, which claims that religiosity is more likely to be found in less developed societies.<sup>76</sup>

### Testing the Regression Models

In Model one (Table 5-5) we found that R=46.4, R square=21.5. The regression analysis reveals that the most important variable in our model is HDI with a standardized coefficient Beta of .437 and t value 2.125, while religiosity came out to be a statistically insignificant variable in explaining support for democracy, although the regression sign is as predicted in Hypothesis 3 (negative). The other important variable in explaining support for democracy is that if a country is predominantly Muslim (the variable Islamic country in the model). This variable with a standardized coefficient Beta of .371 and t value 2.583. indicates that there is stronger support for democracy in

Table (5-5) regressions Coefficients

Dependent Variable: Democracy better than any other form of government (Strongly agree + agree)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	60.256	14.511		4.152	.000
	Islamic countries	9.585	3.711	.371	2.583	.012
	HDI	.341	.161	.437	2.125	.038
	% of religious persons	-3.198E-02	.068	-.064	-.469	.641
	Years of Uninterrupted Democracy 1920-2000	3.129E-02	.052	.105	.606	.547

Data for HDI were extracted from the UNDP. Human Development Report, New York. UNDP. 2001. Data for the variables support for democracy, Percent of religious persons, and authoritarianism, were extracted from the WVS third wave 1995-1996 and forth wave 2000-2001. Data for years of uninterrupted democracy were taken from two sources: 1) Iglehart, Ronald. *Modernisation and Postmodernisation*, Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1997. Appendix 3 table A.1. pp 357-8. 2) Freedom House Indexes. 2001. I relied on the FH data to count the number of years a country was considered 'Free' from 1973-2000.

predominantly Islamic societies even if we control for level of development, years of uninterrupted democracy, and aggregate levels of religiosity. The years of uninterrupted democracy have a statistically insignificant positive effect on support for democracy. It

<sup>76</sup> This is relevant because democracy constitutes part of human development / modernization. Democratic tradition is more likely to be found in developed societies, developed and democratic societies are more likely to be less religious and largely less supportive of authoritarianism. see Welzel, Chris. Inglehart, Ronald.& Klingmann, Hans-Dieter. 'Human Development as a Theory of Social Change: A cross Cultural Perspective', paper presented to the World Values Survey conference at University of Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch, South Africa from 17-21 November 2001.

was expected that democratic tradition should be important in that respect. In sum, all signs are as expected except the sign for the Dummy variable Islamic country. This means that, hypothesis 4 is rejected. If a country is Islamic levels of popular support for democracy are high. However, the second part of hypotheses 4 remains unexplained. That is, given the high levels of popular support for democracy as an ideal form of government in Islamic societies, why these societies have not embraced democratic political systems?

These results point to the weakness of the alleged essentialist argument, which mainly blames the based on Islam for the lack of support for democracy in the Middle East and attribute the unrealized fortunes of democracy in the Middle East to Islamic mentality, political culture, belief system, and teachings. The present analysis shows the desire for democracy in Islamic countries is not low, but higher than in non-Islamic countries.

But what happens if we replace attitudes (support for democracy) with stability of democracy (uninterrupted years of democracy) as dependent variable? After all, Fukuyama's argument is primarily concerned with the real world of behavioural and institutional variables. In Model two (Table 5-6): R=73.9, R Square= 54.7. In this model we replaced the dependent variable with 'years of uninterrupted democracy'. This model explains 54.7 of the variance on the dependent variable; most of it is attributed to HDI,

Table (5-6) regression Coefficients. Dependent: Years of Uninterrupted Democracy 1920-2000

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Coefficients		
2	(Constant)	-166.445	36.156		-4.603	.000
	Islamic countries	3.836	10.017	.044	.383	.703
	HDI	2.042	.330	.777	6.182	.000
	% of religious persons	.149	.174	.089	.859	.394
	Democracy better than any other form of government	.205	.338	.061	.606	.547

which has a standardized coefficient Beta .777 and a t value of 6.182. The three other variables are statistically insignificant at the five-percent level including the dummy variable Islamic countries. What does this mean? It is obvious that the cultural variable religion has no leverage as far as durability of democracy in concerned. Human

development is the only variable in the model that has strong and significant influence on the development of democracy. As far as Muslim countries are concerned, the absence of democracy in these countries is not attributable to the religion of Islam or its cultural traits. Human development is the most important factor in facilitating and maintaining democracy. Religion whether Islam, Christian or any other religion does not account for the presence or absence of democracy.

## Conclusion

Although Fukuyama's argument regarding the prevalence of liberal democracy holds up to empirical examination, his claim pertaining to 'Islam' as 'resistant to modernity' (including liberal democracy) is not supported when empirically tested. The cultural essentialist argument as applied by Fukuyama is epistemologically dogmatic. It is dogmatic in the sense that it makes him envisage isolated examples as complete truths and *totally* explains a complex phenomenon, although they are partial truths that can only *assist* in explaining socio-political phenomena. This point is made very clear through Fukuyama's own examples: He posits that 'Islam ... is the only cultural system that seems regularly to produce people ... who reject modernity lock, stock and barrel.'<sup>77</sup> Essentialising Islam as an independent variable, to explain very complex socio-political phenomena in the Middle East or elsewhere, does not seem to be a good strategy for analysis and research; other factors such as the level of human development ( a measure of socio-economic modernisation) must be included in order to account for a comprehensive understanding of Muslim societies. Most importantly, perhaps, the role of the postcolonial 'modern' state in the Middle East in distributing economic resources is vital to the understanding of the durability of authoritarian, patriarchal, and patrimonial political regimes in the region.<sup>78</sup>

High levels of Religiosity in a society do not seem to be conducive of high support for democratic ideals. The two indicators of 'support for democracy' we have analysed in relation to religiosity have shown negative correlations of various degrees. If there are any general patterns pertaining to specific religions in the literature (and quantitative analysis carried out in this thesis) historically Protestant societies seem to be the only societies that show a cluster with high support for democracy. All other societies, especially Catholic and Islamic, seem to vary considerably, and the variance within these groups of societies is larger than the differences between them. This can be clearly seen

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<sup>77</sup> Francis Fukuyama (2001) 'The west has won: Radical Islam can't beat democracy and capitalism', *The Guardian*, October 11. To be fair there are Muslims who reject modernity (e.g. Taliban) but it would be overly simplistic and reductionist to generalise that on all Muslims and Islam.

<sup>78</sup> Luciani, Giacomo, (ed.) *The Arab State*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.

in levels of support for a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections (authoritarianism); in some Islamic societies such as Turkey aggregate support for authoritarianism, is extremely high, whereas it is extremely low in other Muslim societies such as Egypt and Azerbaijan.

The variations between societies of diverse religious heritages that we have seen in the analyses in this chapter points to general patterns with regard to the relationship between religiosity and democracy. These variations indicate that there are other variables that we should take into account in order to better understand the factors underlying support for democracy and authoritarianism. The examination of the impact of the levels of human development on support for, and stability of democracy in the societies we have looked at demonstrates that the covariation between Islam and the lack of democracy is spurious. Concentrating on religion as the sole independent variable (as Fukuyama essentially does) is misleading.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **Islam and Democracy in Jordan**



## Islam and Democracy in Jordan

### Introduction

This chapter intends to elaborate on the argument that Islamic values and practices as such do not necessarily constitute a hindrance to support for democratic ideals. In order to investigate the argument thoroughly we will take the analysis from the aggregate level (chapter 5) to the individual level within Jordan. In this context I am neither concerned with Islamism as political ideology nor Islamists as political activists. Rather, the objective of this chapter is to offer an analysis into the relationship between religiosity in an Islamic context and support for democratic values. In the previous chapter, where the unit of analysis was the nation-state, we have established that support for democracy as an ideal form of government is universal though it varies from one belief system to another; if anything Protestant societies represent a coherent group that is constantly showing a clear pattern of support for democracy with very little variation. This group also shows a pattern of minimal support for authoritarian orientations and high support for democracy. Muslim, Orthodox and Catholic societies, however, do not represent any coherent pattern. Some of them are very supportive of authoritarianism (or democracy) while others are not.

The Muslim societies represent interesting cases. Although support for democracy is high in all of them, some (like Turkey) nevertheless show high levels of support for authoritarianism. Others (like Egypt and Azerbaijan) demonstrate very low levels of support for authoritarian leadership. Jordan, like Iran, is situated in the middle between these extremes. In that sense it could be seen as an 'average' case. Since large individual-level data sets are available, we will use appropriate statistical techniques for the individual level data. Mainly, I am going to analyse the Jordanian data using the variables used to test Fukuyama's thesis at the macro level (chapter 5) in order to establish the basis for an in-depth analysis for this Muslim society.

## Democracy in the Jordanian Context

### The meaning of democracy

Definitions of democracy –as essentially contested concept- vary considerably from one scholar to another, from one community to another, and from one ordinary person to another<sup>1</sup>. However, an emphasis on liberty and equality of individuals is shared among almost all theorists of democracy.<sup>2</sup> Some have restricted the definition to ‘rotation of power’, which on its own does not account for inclusion and exclusion of groups from the political process. For example, if a minority is deprived from ‘proper’ representation and legally and/or practically disenfranchised in a system where rotation of power takes place, that country does not meet the criteria of a fully fledged ‘democracy’. Turkey’s de-facto exclusion of the Kurdish nationalist parties, activists and media is a case in point. Such exclusion, *inter alia*, left Turkey with a ‘partly free’ status according to the Freedom House country ratings of 2001. Rotation of power must be underpinned by liberty and equality of all citizens in order to be democratically meaningful.

In its surveys CSS’s research team on democracy in Jordan asked respondents about the meaning of democracy. This is intended to validate responses to other questions measuring the level of democracy Jordan has achieved since the introduction of the democratisation process in 1989. Many observers have speculated that Jordanians will identify democracy with socio-economic development. The harsh economic situation that hit the country in 1988 involving increasing levels of unemployment and poverty underpinned this speculation. However, over thirty years of antagonistic security policy towards political activists and freedom of expression, political association, and assembly left the population with a desire to express its views. The opportunity to do this appeared when rioting over rising food and fuel prices erupted in many cities of the country

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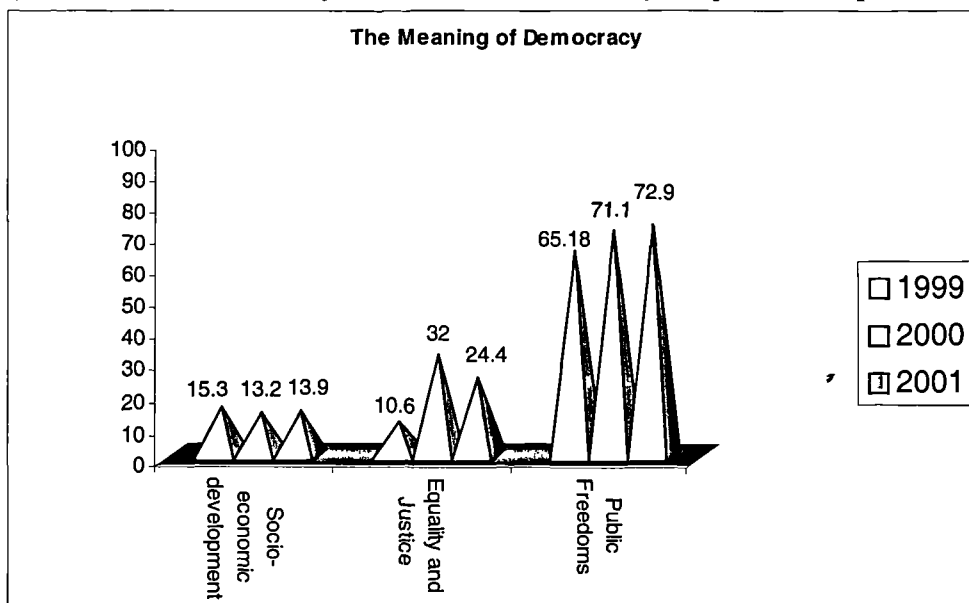
<sup>1</sup> See for example, Thomassen, Jacques. ‘Support for Democratic Values’, in Klingemann and Duchs (eds.) *Citizens and the State*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995. Janos, Simon. *Popular Conceptions of Democracy in Post-Communist Europe*, University of Strathclyde Studies in Public Policy No. 292. 1996. Beetham, David. *Defining and Measuring Democracy*. London: Sage. 1994.

<sup>2</sup> Dahl, Robert. *On Democracy*. New Haven and London: Yale university Press. 1997. Especially chaps 6 and 7.

starting from the most economically deprived city of Ma`an. The slogans of these demonstrations were mainly about eradicating corruption, political freedoms and accountability of the government to an elected parliament. The political regime of late King Hussein responded by sacking the prime minister and his cabinet and then announcing parliamentary elections in the autumn of 1989. Against this background the political process of democratisation was launched.

A pugnacious martial law period of three decades had produced a frightened public as much as it had created a desire for freedom of expression, political rights and civil liberties. Thus, it is not surprising to see the majority of Jordanians associating public freedoms (freedom of opinion, press, demonstration, protest, and joining political parties) with the concept of ‘democracy’.<sup>3</sup> This could be largely a context-bound phenomenon.

Figure (6-1) *In your opinion, what are the conditions/factors that have to be present in a country to describe that country as a ‘democratic country’? Open-ended question.*



Data Source: CSS’s surveys on democracy for 1999, 2000, and 2001.

Given the specificity of the Jordanian circumstances, a freedom-based concept of democracy is conceivable. The increasing association of public freedoms with the

<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, I cannot compare this to any other Arab country because I am not aware of any published empirical evidence from other Arab countries on the meaning of democracy among the public.

concept of democracy far exceeds the association of democracy with socio-economic and socio-cultural attributes. As Figure (6-1) above shows for 2001, the majority of Jordanians (73%) defined democracy with reference to civil liberties, which represents an increase over percentages reported in 2000 and 1999. It is this meaning of democracy that we should keep in mind when discussing democracy in the Jordanian context. It seems that in the Jordanians have hierarchy of values which they associate with democracy; they give priority to civil liberties, other qualities of democracy are present in their political culture: equality and justice ranked second in importance. These categories, although conceptually distinct in Jordanian public opinion, are not completely rigid. Since the survey question on the definition of democracy was open-ended, the categories we see in the graph below are aggregated from all answers obtained in the surveys for the respective years.

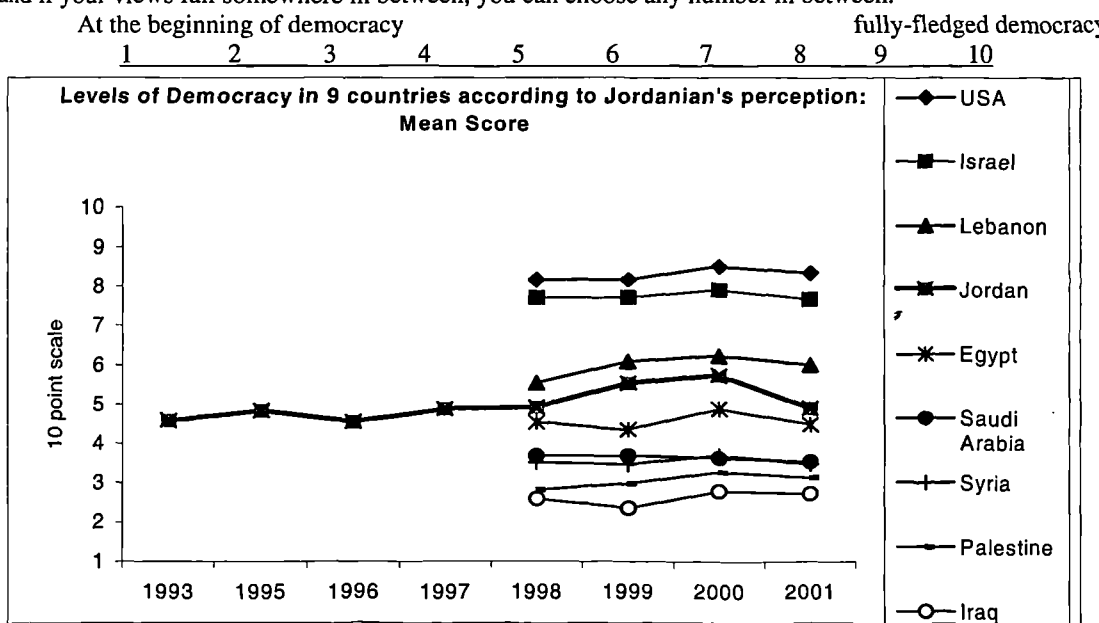
So far we have sketched the meaning of democracy in the Jordanian political culture. Given that democracy for Jordanians means public freedoms (political rights and civil liberties), it is imperative to examine the extent to which Jordanians believe that these freedoms are guaranteed in Jordan and in other countries. This examination will be carried out after we discuss levels of democracy because there is a link between the two, i.e. Jordanians evaluate the level of democracy according to their respective definition of democracy.

### **Levels of democracy**

The meaning of democracy is conceptually clear in the Jordanian political culture. The scores/ratings that Jordanians gave to established democracies such as the USA and Israel are consistent over time and reflect the reality of the status of democracy in these societies where periodic elections, rotation of power, political competition among rival political parties take place and above all civil liberties and public freedoms are widely respected and constitutionally safeguarded. Had Jordanians held an ideological objection to democracy, they would not have given Israel a consistent rating over three years i.e. sharp fluctuations would have been present. This consistency still holds up when they are asked to evaluate the levels of democracy in other countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq,

Syria and the Palestinian Authority. These countries received relatively low scores (meaning not democratic). Moreover, these scores are very close, if not entirely consistent, with the Freedom House scores for these countries on Freedom Status. The mean scores indicate that Jordan's level of democracy fluctuates around 5 out of ten. Thus democracy at the institutional level lags behind public expectations; 94.4% of the Jordanian population believe that having a democratic political system is very good or good way of governing the country. If we translate the mean score value of 5 out of 10 as 50% out 100% and compare that to the desirability of democracy among Jordanians we come up with a result of around 44% democratic deficit. Also, the mean scores point to the stability and consistency of the population's perception of democracy. Had the population been confused about the meaning of democracy, they would have given inconsistent scores for each of the countries included in the question in respective years.

Figure (6-2) I'd like you to tell me your views on various issues regarding Jordan's transition to democracy. Where would you place Jordan's democracy on a scale from 1 to 10? 1 means Jordan is still at the very beginning of democracy; 10 means Jordan is a fully-fledged democracy; and if your views fall somewhere in between, you can choose any number in between.



The same question about the perceived quality of democracy was asked to the Jordanian respondents about, the United States of America, Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine (Palestinian National Authority), Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Israel. Comparing the values of these countries on their respective scales demonstrates the high extent to which Jordanians identify liberal democracy with Western countries (including Israel). Data source: CSS's surveys on democracy in Jordan between 1993 and 2001.

Fluctuations in the scores the Jordanian respondents gave for Jordan's level of democracy between 1993 and 2001 fell within the range of one scale point. There were two years in which the score was above five, in 1999 and 2000. These peaks reflect the sense of optimism, which accompanied the inauguration of King Abdullah as successor to the throne<sup>4</sup>. However, in 2001 the score dropped to 4.9 from 5.7 in 2000. During this period the country went through an uneasy time due the impact of the Palestinian *Intifada* (uprising) against the Israeli occupation. Few disruptive and sometimes violent demonstrations by groups supporting the uprising persuaded the government to ban all political demonstrations and rallies -including peaceful ones- fearing a spill-over of violent demonstrations across the country threatening security. Political parties, activists, civil society organisations including the Arab Organisation of Human Rights interpreted these measures as deterioration of civil liberties and political rights in the country. Also on the 16/06/01 the government dissolved the parliament and postponed the general elections to be 'held soon' but 'not very soon'<sup>5</sup>. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 2002 the king postponed the elections again and promised that elections will take place in spring 2003. This situation, fuelled by enormous increases in prices, which is not matched by equal increase in pay, is likely cause the public to see the quality of democracy deteriorating further. As a result, the public had felt and reported democratic deficit in the year 2001.

To validate Jordanians' evaluations of the levels of democracy in Jordan, it is also possible to compare the survey-based responses to the Freedom House ratings of Jordan between 1993 and 2001 (Figure 6-3). On average, in the period from 1993 to 2001 the combined Freedom House ratings for Jordan adding the scores for 'political rights and civil liberties' produced by Freedom House fluctuated around 8 out of 14, being slightly higher than the middle value (7) of the scale. This is very consistent with the Jordanians' 'self evaluation' of the level of democracy in their own country. In 1993 the Freedom House score peaked to 10, meaning a freer country, but dropped in 1999 to 7 and in 2000 and 2001 increased to 8 again. Thus, Jordan is characterised as Partly Free by Freedom

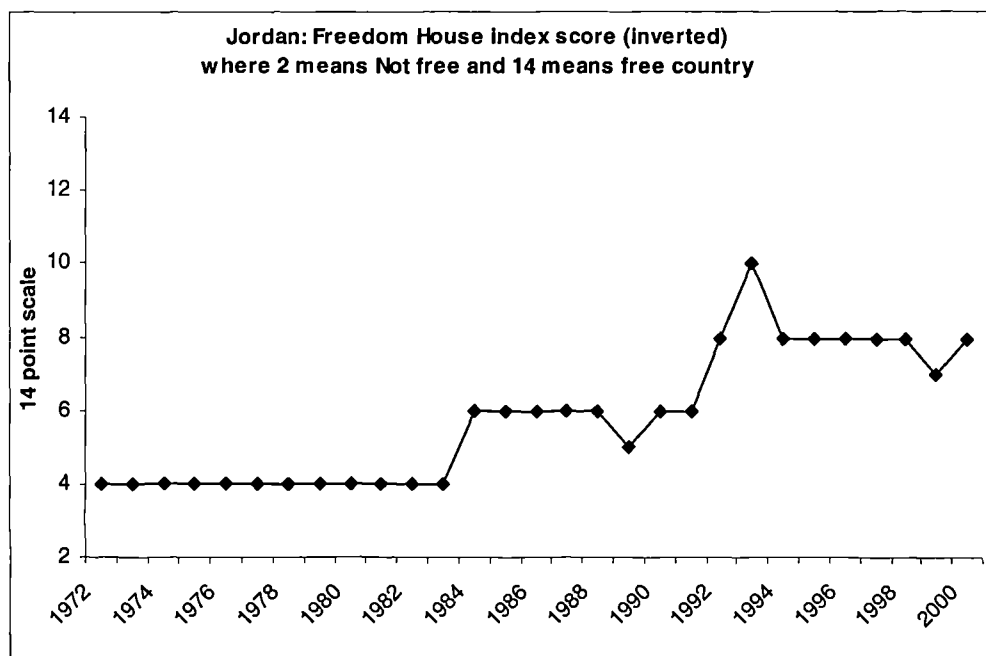
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<sup>4</sup> Dr. Mustafa Hamarneh, the director of the Centre for Strategic Studies, put this interpretation forward. He pointed this out during a meeting held at the centre to discuss the results of the democracy survey in early September 2001.

<sup>5</sup> A Jordanian official was quoted as saying in the Jordan times, 17.06.2001.

House, which is largely confirmed by Jordanians' evaluation of the status of democracy in their country.

Figure (6-3) Freedom House ratings for Jordan between 1972-2001.



Data source: Freedom House Country Rating, 2001.

### Civil Liberties and Political Rights: Are they Safeguarded?

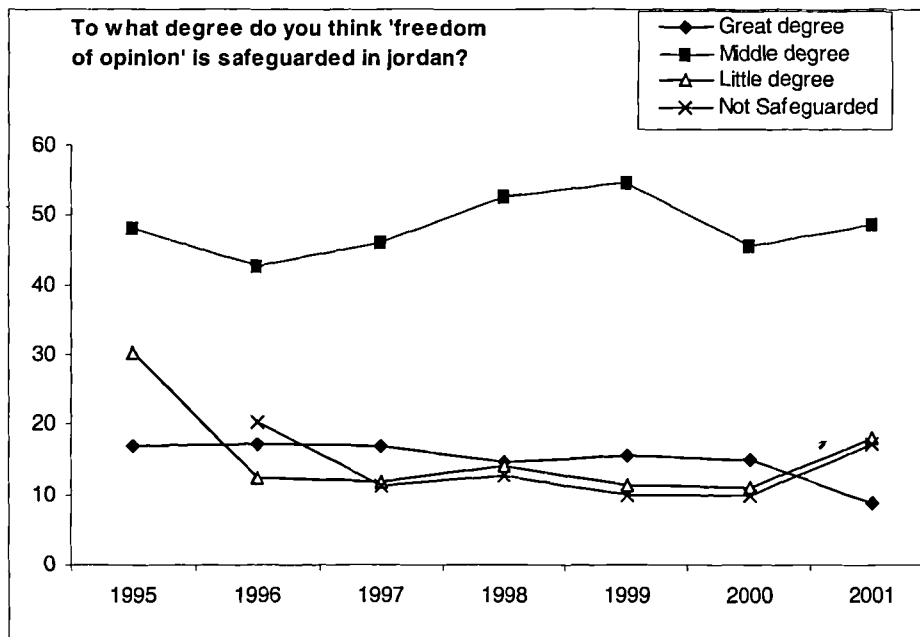
Given the strong and effective presence of the state in public life particularly in political life, public freedoms are one arena where the state is expected to deliver by easing its grip on media, political parties, civil society organisations, and above all by endorsing citizens' political involvement. Although the constitution explicitly provides guarantees for civil liberties and political right, the practices of the state's apparatus, especially the security forces, are not always tolerant of oppositional citizens' constitutional rights. Restrictive practices flourished during the martial law era and continued to be a strong norm even after the democratisation process took place in 1989<sup>6</sup>. Safeguarding civil liberties means that, in addition to the legal guarantees the state, society must tolerate two types of expression as democratic constitutional rights: *saying* and *doing*.

<sup>6</sup> The Jordanian security forces (*Mukhabarat*) interrogated me on many occasions between 1993-1999. They 'accused' me of belonging to political parties 'which have external links' namely the Ba'ath Arab Socialist Party. At the time of interrogation this party had been a legal party since 1992.

### Saying: Verbal Political Participation

Although the constitution clearly states the right of citizens to freely express their views, the empirical reality of freedom of expression in Jordan lags far behind its ideals. 'Saying' is measured by the degree to which the *freedom of opinion (expression)*, and of the *press* are legally and practically safeguarded. 'Saying' is seen to be relatively safeguarded: two indicators used suggest that there is a small segment of the population holding the belief that freedom of expression is safeguarded to a *great degree*. On average between 1995 and 2001 only 15% of the Jordanian population believe that freedom of expression is safeguarded to a *great degree*, while 12% believe that it is *not safeguarded*. The majority of the population believe that the freedom of expression is safeguarded to some degree (48%).

Figure (6-4) Jordanians' perceptions of the degree to which freedom of expression/opinion is safeguarded



Data source: CSS's surveys on democracy in Jordan between 1995 and 2001.

Ideally, in a democracy, freedom of expression should be unreservedly safeguarded and more importantly citizens should be aware of that. The perceived freedom of expression is likely to have implication for political involvement. If citizens are suspicious about the extent to which they can express their views without risking disadvantages, it is likely that they will be less likely to get involved in the political process. This abstention could



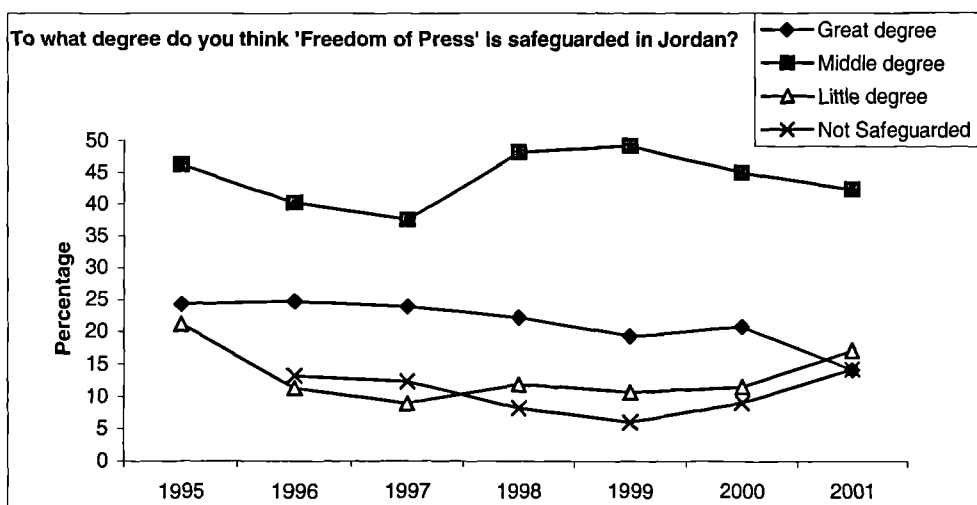
be interpreted as political apathy. By contrast, it could be argued it is a rationale response to the political environment. If the cost of political involvement is high or outweighs the benefits, individuals are more likely to keep out of it. Some theorists (mainly orientalists) have argued that there are cultural traits derived from Islamic tradition that encourage people to be politically apathetic. By contrast, some others (mainly Islamists) have argued that Islam encourages vocal opposition and it is the duty of the Muslim to correct the ruler; some even consider it as a form of Jihad.<sup>7</sup> On balance, if the state is less tolerant towards vocal political opposition, and more importantly if citizens are manifestly apprehensive about their security as a consequence of political involvement, neither 'orientalists' nor 'Islamists' (culturalists) are offering a sufficient explanation as to why some people are keeping away from political involvement. Therefore, their cultural essentialism becomes largely irrelevant in this context because the heart of the matter is left unexplained. Our data are far more in line with an explanation treating Jordanians as rational individuals, putting their short-term security on political attitudes first by avoiding political confrontations, which may lead to a decrease in their sense of security.

In addition, the freedom of expression is not only influenced by the state as a political actor. Those who advocate it also could be its ferocious adversaries. There are religiously defined taboos that are beyond compromise at least for Islamists. For example, Islamists and traditional people in Jordan, as it may be the case in other Muslim countries in the Middle East, are likely to be less tolerant towards open/public discussions of sexuality, apostasy, abolishing polygamy and other issues. An Islamists would fiercely defend freedom of expression but within the codes of morality to which he/she adheres. The existence of taboos in public life is seen as a major barrier to the expansion of freedom of expression. Thus, a 'cultural' explanation does have something to offer in understanding the nature of the issues (especially social issues) that are permissible, while the response to the political structure is rational.

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<sup>7</sup> Such arguments are presented in chapter 1 and 2.

Figure (6-5) perceived levels of 'freedom of press' in Jordan between 1995 and 2001.



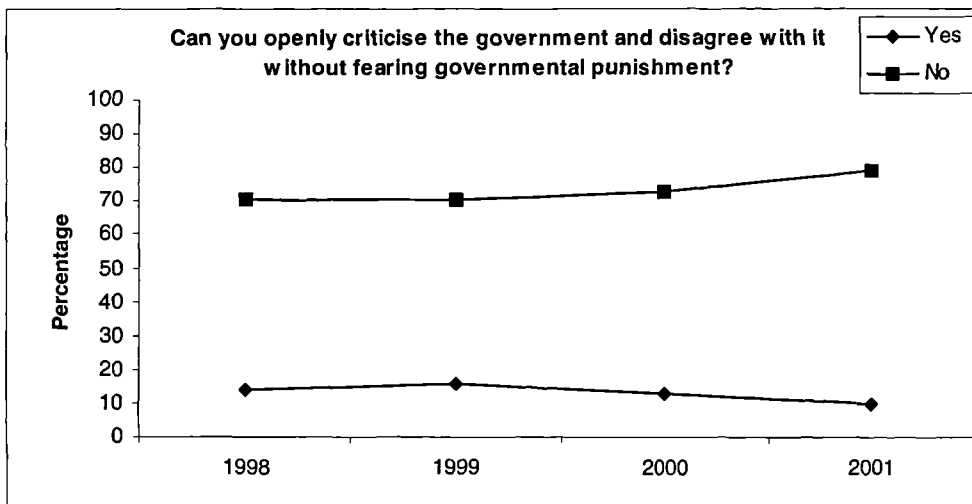
Data source: CSS's surveys on democracy in Jordan between 1995 and 2001.

If religious and political (e.g. the royal family) barriers facing freedom of expression are broken it is perhaps easier to rupture the structure of 'taboosim' all together. Printed press and the media is the setting for such debates to take place. The freedom of the press in Jordan is perceived as safeguarded to a higher degree than the freedom of opinion. On average, between 1995 and 2001, (22%) of the population reported that it is safeguarded to a great degree and (44%) to a middle degree, while only (9%) reported that it is not safeguarded. But this falls short of the requirements of democratic politics. A democratic polity requires a sense of confidence in the system (as we shall see in the next chapter); the press provides a unique platform for citizens (especially the elite) to test the limits of the regime's political tolerance. Generally, if people have doubts about the extent to which the media can freely functions, as it is the case in Jordan, there are fewer chances for the public to test the system responsiveness.

Although the majority of respondents believe that freedom of press is safeguarded to various degrees, there is a suspicion that the room for manoeuvre in the press is rather limited as the empirical evidence suggests. Political groups must feel a sense of security in order to express their political views.

The evidence presented above suggests that less than a third of the population is convinced that they can voice their political concerns believing that they have an unquestionable right to do so and this right is legally, politically, and socially safeguarded. Moreover, around half of the population believe that they can voice their political concerns, but that is not without a certain risk to themselves. Because they believe that freedom of expression is safeguarded to a middle degree, there seem to be a degree of distrust in the political process with regard to the ability to freely and actively participate in the political process. Given that more than two thirds of the population have reservations of varying degrees in respect of freedom of expression, a sense of political insecurity is widespread and it is likely to hinder democratisation.

Figure (6-6) Perceived risk of verbal political participation



Data source: CSS's surveys on political participation (1998) and on democracy in Jordan between 1999 and 2001.

Therefore, it is not at all surprising to see more than two thirds of the population (see Figure 6-6) fear verbal political participation because the cost imposed by the authorities as consequence of such participation is too high to bear. In many ways citizens' doubts about the extent to which they can express their views is likely to widen the gap between ordinary citizens and the political elite. This might lead to popular alienation from the political system and hence may become a source of destabilisation. Such a pessimistic scenario is not without empirical foundations. More than three quarters of the Jordanian population do not think they can criticise the government and disagree with it without

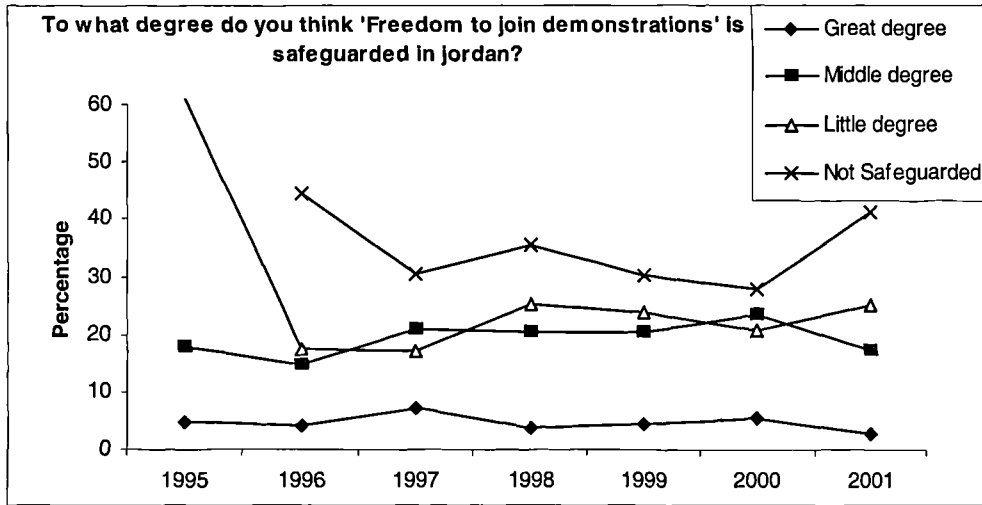
fearing governmental punishment (Figure 6-6). So far, the poor status of perceived freedom of expression 'saying' has been explored. In order to match this to active involvement in politics, the next section evaluates the extent to which political involvement by 'doing' is safeguarded and whether citizens think they can take political action without fearing governmental punishment.

### **Doing: Direct Political Participation**

Democratic political practice requires the opportunity for citizens to be actively involved in the political process even if this involves legal opposition to the government's policies. Involvement develops civic practices and values essential for the development of a participatory democratic polity. To ensure that such results are obtainable, political action also requires a favourable environment that does not punish citizens for legal political activities impeding the development of democratic politics. In order to assess the extent to which political action is perceived to be tolerated in Jordan, we will explore Jordanians' perceptions of their 'freedom to do'.

'Doing' is measured by the degree to which the *freedom to join demonstrations, sit-ins, and political parties* are seen to be safeguarded in Jordan. The safeguards are perceived to be provided by the government as the sole executive authority responsible for with the implementation of the *legal codes organising state-society relations*. The empirical evidence available points to a rather bleak situation in which 'doing' is seen to be risky. Between 1995 and 2001 the majority of the population believed that the participation in participatory protest guaranteed. Only (5%) of the population hold the view that freedom to join demonstrations is safeguarded to a 'great degree', while (27%) and (30%) believe that it is safeguarded to a 'little degree' and not safeguarded, respectively. Even if we combine the percentage of those believing it is safeguarded to a 'great degree' with those believing this to be true to 'middle degree' we end up with less than a quarter of the population (24%). Moreover, there is a decline in the number of people believing that freedom to join demonstrations is safeguarded to a great degree over time (1995-2001).

Figure (6-7) the perceived degree to which the 'freedom to join demonstrations' is safeguarded in Jordan

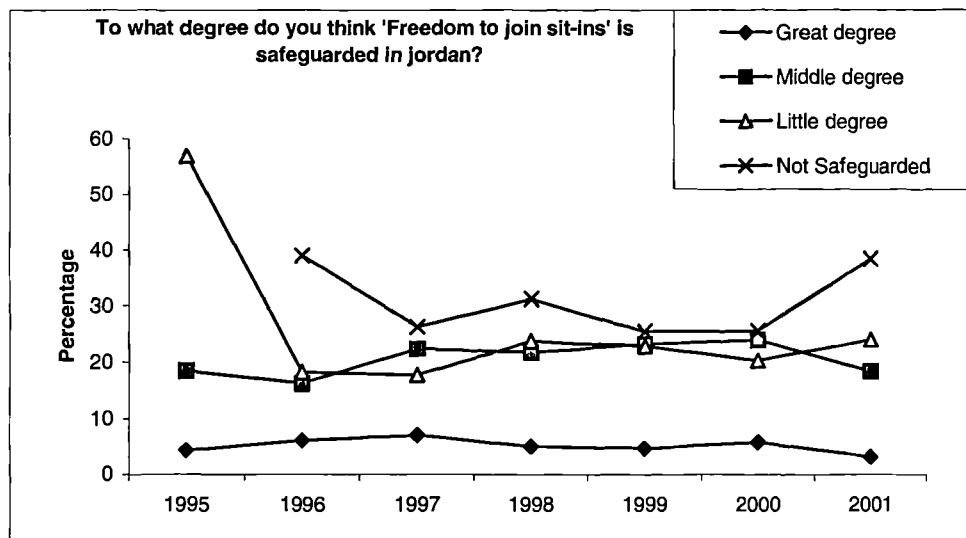


Data source: CSS's surveys on democracy in Jordan between 1995 and 2001.  
 Note: in 1995 survey the option 'little degree' was not given to respondents, when it was given in 1996 survey the percentage of those believing 'it is not safeguarded' decreased.

This trend is also reflected in an increase in the number of people holding the opposite view, especially between the years 2000 and 2001. However, this is not a cultural attitude that Jordanians have inherited. It is an attitude that developed as a response to coercion and often considerable perceived cost of participation especially between 1950s to early 1990s. It flows from this that those taking direct political action are considered to be taking a high risk. Therefore, it is not surprising at all to find that only (3.1%) say that they have attended lawful demonstrations and (6.2%) reported they might do, while (90.7%) reported they would never do. As far as unofficial strikes are concerned only (1.4%) have done, (2.8%) might do, and (95.8%) would never do.

The pattern mentioned above is repeated for other forms of direct political action. The percentages for sit-ins, for example, reinforce the impression that political protest is generally seen to be high-risk activity. Twenty-six percent and (27%) believe it is safeguarded to a 'little degree' or 'not safeguarded', respectively.

Figure (6-8) the perceived degree to which the 'freedom to join sit-ins' is safeguarded in Jordan

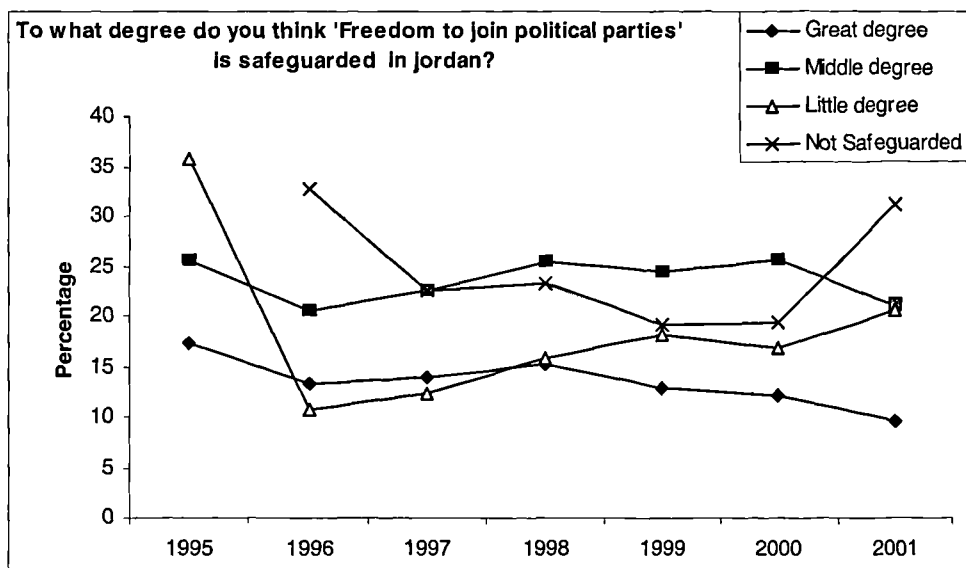


Data source: CSS's surveys on democracy in Jordan between 1995 and 2001.

Note: in 1995 survey the option 'little degree' was not given to respondents, when it was given in 1996 survey the percentage of those believing 'it is not safeguarded' decreased.

Structured political organisations and institutions are vital to the development and functioning of democracy. Political parties perhaps are the most important amongst all, not only because they provide the platforms necessary for political competition but also because they offer democratic political education. Ideally, all citizens have the right to form and join legal political parties. This right is constitutionally guaranteed. The empirical reality falls far short of the constitutional ideals. Popular views on the 'freedom to join political parties' is somewhat different from the pattern demonstrated for the previous two indicators. Only (14%) of the population believe that the freedom to join political parties is safeguarded to a 'great degree', while (21%) believe that it is not safeguarded. Accordingly, we have a situation in which nearly one-fifth of the population view joining political parties as a high risk. It must be noted that the expectation of personal risks may have been realistic until 1992. Since then its intensity has decreased but did not completely disappear. The cost factor is very important because nearly two thirds of the population do not believe that it is completely risk-free to join political parties (Figure 6-9).

Figure (6-9) the perceived degree to which the 'freedom to join political parties' is safeguarded in Jordan



Data source: CSS's surveys on democracy in Jordan between 1995 and 2001.

Note: in 1995 survey the option 'little degree' was not given to respondents, when it was given in 1996 survey the percentage of those believing 'it is not safeguarded' decreased.

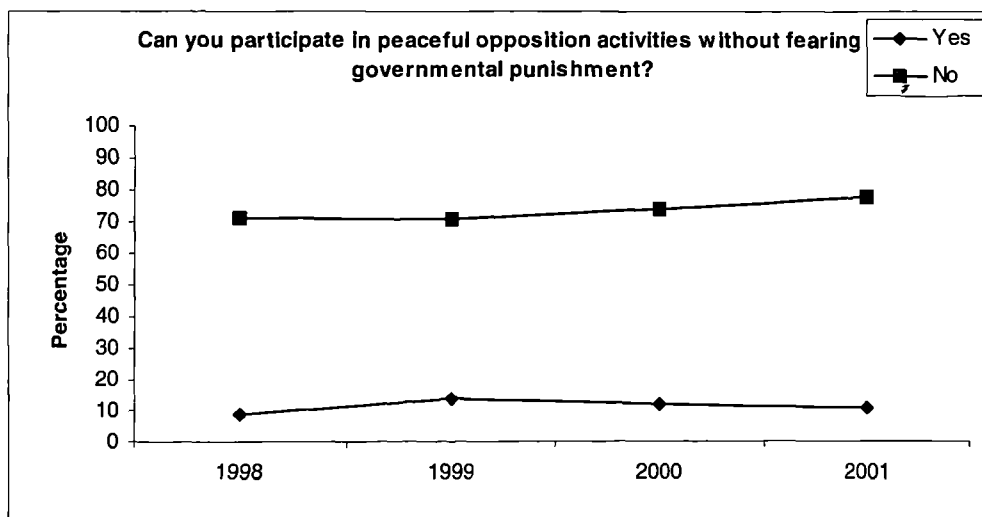
### Explaining the Pattern: High Cost and Low Engagement

The discussion of the degree to which public freedoms are legally and practically safeguarded point to the substantial role of the state in fostering/deteriorating political liberalisation and democratisation. If democratisation is to bear fruit in Jordan, the state must take action to ease political expression and participation. The state could reduce the cost involved for individuals to take political action, whether by 'saying' or 'doing'. The relatively high cost imposed by the state is sufficient to deter individuals from participating in politics. Consequently, liberal democracy may never get a chance to become embedded in political culture and practice. Given the very strong desire for democracy in Jordan (see above) this may create tensions in the future. A viable political system ought to be responsive to the needs of its citizens. Since Jordanians desire democracy and they associate it with civil liberties and political rights more than anything else, the state of public freedoms in the country is lagging behind and this is not very promising as far as democratic political development is concerned. One might argue that low levels of political participation do not necessarily mean low levels of democracy. This is true in an established democratic system but not necessarily true for a

democratising political system. In a democratising political system like Jordan civil liberties and political rights are perceived to be ‘not safeguarded’. By contrast, in an established democracy civil liberties and political rights are taken for granted by the people and protected by law. The evidence presented above suggest that this is not the case in Jordan. It is for this reason that the state ought to safeguard civil liberties and political rights.

The evidence presented above significantly supports claims that the political regime ought to facilitate, not hinder, political participation. For each of the five indicators of perceived public freedoms, less than one quarter of the population believes that such freedoms are safeguarded to a ‘great degree’. This means that around three quarters of the population perceive risk of varying degrees, if they were to voice political grievances whether by ‘saying’ or ‘doing’. ‘Saying’ is still in a better situation than doing. Only (5%) of the population are convinced that they can take political action such as demonstrations or sit-ins with the belief that their right and freedom to do so is safeguarded, while more than three quarters of the population think it is risky of varying degrees (although to varying degrees). The evidence below (Figure 6-10) reinforces this conclusion. Around three

Figure (6-10) Perceived risk of unconventional political participation



Data source: CSS’s surveys on political participation (1998) and on democracy in Jordan between 1999 and 2001.



quarters of the population do not think they could participate in peaceful oppositional activities without the risk of governmental punishment. So far we have established that the state plays a significant role, as perceived by the people of Jordan, in increasing the political risks of political articulation and participation and constraining the exercise of democratic rights. The diagrams comparing popular perceptions over time (1995-2001) demonstrate variations which can be explained as responses to a liberalisation of the regime in the mid nineties and a return to a strong perception of risk in 2000 and 2001, arguably resulting from the changing security environment in the country. It is now time to turn to the question of Islam and democracy in the Jordanian context in order to empirically test whether the cultural argument, i.e. Islam (rather than the state) is hindering democracy, provides a more convincing interpretation of the data.

### **Islamic Religiosity and Support for Democracy**

Having established that the meaning of democracy in the Jordanian public opinion is not fundamentally different from the 'Western' conceptions and that lack of political involvement can be plausibly explained as a rational response to what Freedom House classifies as a 'partly free' state, we turn to the relationship between democracy and Islam in the Jordanian context. The main purpose of this analysis is to test whether there is a general association between Islam and support for democracy. In order to achieve this task a method of cross-tabulation will be used. The independent variable is religiosity. For each indicator, I will provide some descriptive statistics such as a frequency table, mean, mode, and median. These statistics are essential to the understanding of the distribution of attitudes on a four-point scale. Then, a cross-tabulation between the independent variable –religiosity- and each dependent variable will be presented.

In order to obtain a thorough understanding of the association, if any, between religiosity and support for democracy, we have to examine the difference between subjective and objective religiosity and carry out the analysis accordingly. Subjective religiosity is defined as the respondent's description of him/her self as a religious person, while objective religiosity is measured by religious commitment operationalised as the frequency of daily prayers an individual performs whether in or outside a mosque.

## Operationalisation of Variables

The variables were operationalised as follows:

### a) Subjective Religiosity

Independently of whether you go to religious services or not, would you say you are...

1. A religious person
2. Not a religious person
3. A convinced atheist

Table (6-1) Independently of whether you go to religious services or not, would you say you are...

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A religious person	1039	85.0	85.9	85.9
	Not a religious person	170	13.9	14.1	100.0
	Total	1209	98.9	100.0	
Missing	Not specified	12	1.0		
	Do not know	1	.1		
	Total	13	1.1		
Total		1222	100.0		

Data source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001.

### b) Objective religiosity

Usually, how many times a day do you perform daily prayers at the Mosque?

0. None at all
1. One or two times a day
2. Three times a day
3. Four times a day
4. Five times a day

Usually, do you pray outside the Mosque?

0. None at all
1. One or two times a day
2. Three times a day
3. Four times a day
4. Five times a day

An index of objective religiosity was constructed and regrouped to three categories

(Table 6-2)

1. Pray five times a day
2. Pray less than five times a day
3. Do not pray at all

Table (6-2) Objective Religiosity

		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Pray 5 times a day in or outside mosque	855	80.8	80.8
	Pray less than 5 times a day in or outside mosque	59	5.6	86.4
	Do not pray at all	144	13.6	100
Missing	NA/DK	64		
Total		1222		

Data source: optional questions added to the WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001.

### Formulating the Hypotheses

In the comparative analysis in the previous chapter we have seen that the relationship between Islam and democracy is spurious. When taking the analysis to the individual level, will this relationship hold up? Based on the conclusions of comparative analysis, we would expect that overall there will be little association, if any, between Islam and support for democracy. In order to test this general hypothesis we will break it down to three sub-hypothesis.

*Hypothesis I:* although the overwhelming majority of the Jordanian population (94.4%) believe that it is very good or fairly good to have a democratic political system as a way of governing the country, this attitude is not significantly associated with Islam whether measured subjectively or objectively.

*Hypothesis II:* although the overwhelming majority of the Jordanian population (89.4%) agree strongly or agree to the statement that democracy may have some problems but it's better than any other form of government, this attitude is not significantly associated with Islam whether measured subjectively or objectively.

*Hypothesis III:* although more than half of the Jordanian population (58%) believe that it is bad or very bad to have a strong head of government who does not have to bother with parliament and elections, this attitude is not significantly associated with Islam whether measured subjectively or objectively.

In the coming section I will analyse the link between Islam measured by subjective religiosity followed by a section devoted to Islam measured by objective religiosity.

### The Relationship between Support for Democracy and Subjective Religiosity

Three dependent variables measuring support for democracy and its alternative (authoritarianism) are crosstabulated with subjective religiosity to explore -at the micro level- the correlation, if any, between Islam and democracy. A descriptive frequency table is introduced to show the distribution of respondents in the population for each of the dependent variables. Next, the interpretation of each crosstabulation is offered followed by the relevant statistics. A chi-square test will be used to test for statistical significance at the five-percent level. It should be noted, however, that while the chi-square measure may indicate that there is a non-random relationship between two variables, it does not provide any information about the strength or direction of the relationship.

Table (6-3) H. 1 What do you think about having a democratic political system as a way of governing the country, would you say it is a very good, fairly good, bad or very bad?

		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	VERY GOOD	540	50.5	50.5
	FAIRLY GOOD	469	43.9	94.4
	BAD	50	4.7	99.1
	VERY BAD	10	.9	100.0
Total		1069	100.0	

Mean = 1.56, Mode = 1, Median = 1. Data source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001.

The cross-tabulation (Table 6-4) below shows no statistically significant relationship between religiosity and support for having a democratic political system. Knowing religiosity will not reduce the error in predicting support for democratic political system (Lambda score is .000.) However, there is a very small and insignificant difference between religious and non-religious people pertaining to support for a democratic political system. The chi-square test ( $p = .545$ ) suggests that we cannot reject the null hypothesis of independence between the variables 'support for democratic political

system' and 'subjective religiosity'. This means that the two variables vary independently from one another. Thus, subjective religiosity does not help us to explain support for, or absence of support for, democracy in the Jordanian context. Islam measured by subjective religiosity is an irrelevant variable for the explanation of support of democracy or the lack of it. For this reason, we need to look for other variables that could offer a better and perhaps more substantial explanation to make the case for the cultural argument.

Table (6-4) a crosstabulation between support for democracy and religiosity  
Democratic Political System X Subjective Religiosity

			A religious person	Not a religious person	Total
Democratic Political System	Very good or Fairly good	Count	858	141	999
		% within Religious person?	94.6%	93.4%	94.4%
		% of Total	81.1%	13.3%	94.4%
	Bad or Very bad	Count	49	10	59
		% within Religious person?	5.4%	6.6%	5.6%
		% of Total	4.6%	.9%	5.6%
Total	Count	907	151	1058	
	% within Religious person?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	85.7%	14.3%	100.0%	

Pearson Chi-Square is .366 with 1 degree of freedom and *p* value of .545. (Insignificant at .005 level)

Data source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001.

Table (6-5) **H. II:** I am going to read some things that people sometimes say about democratic political system. Could you please tell me if you agree strongly, agree, disagree or disagree strongly with ...  
Democracy may have some problems but it's better than any other form of government?

		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree Strongly	395	38.2	38.2
	Agree	528	51.2	89.4
	Disagree	74	7.2	96.6
	Disagree strongly	35	3.4	100
Total		1032	100	

Mean = 1.76, mode = 2, median = 2.

Data source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001.

The cross-tabulation (Table 6-6) below shows a very weak relationship between religiosity and support for democracy. Knowing religiosity will not help to reduce the

error in predicting support for democracy (the Lambda score is .000.). When support for democracy is measured in this way, there is a slightly significant difference between religious and non-religious people. The evidence suggests that the percentage of religious people agreeing to the statement that ‘democracy may have some problems but it is better than any other form of government’ is 7 percentage points lower than the percentage of non-religious people who agreed to it. This difference is statistically significant (Pearson Chi-square 6.596 and  $p = 0.010$ ) and points to a tendency among the non-religious to prefer democracy to all other forms of government. The Chi-Square test suggests that we can reject the null hypothesis of independence between the variables ‘democracy better than any other form of government’ and ‘subjective religiosity’. The implication of this test means that the two variables are not independent from one another. Nevertheless, the low Lambda value of (0.00) suggests that the association is significant but very weak. The reason for this may be that the number of non religious people in the sample is very small if compared to the religious people.

Table (6-6) a crosstabulation between support for democracy and subjective religiosity

		Subjective Religiosity X Democracy better than any other form of government		
		Religious person?		Total
		A religious person	Not a religious person	
Agree	Count	770	144	914
	% within Religious person	88.4%	95.4%	89.4%
	% of Total	75.3%	14.1%	89.4%
Disagree	Count	101	7	108
	% within Religious person	11.6%	4.6%	10.6%
	% of Total	9.9%	.7%	10.6%
Total	Count	871	151	1022
	% within Religious person	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	85.2%	14.8%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-Square is 6.596 with 1 degree of freedom and  $p$  value of .010. (significant at 0.05 level)

Data source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001.

Table (6-7) **H. 3** What do you think about *having a strong head of government who does not have to bother with parliament and elections as a way of governing the country*, would you say it is a very good, fairly good, bad or very bad?

		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 VERY GOOD?	166	15.1	15.1
	2 FAIRLY GOOD	294	26.9	42.0
	3 BAD	389	35.5	77.5
	4 VERY BAD?	247	22.5	100.0
	Total	1096	100.0	

Mean = 2.65, mode = 3, median = 3

Data source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001.

The somewhat inconclusive results so far necessitate the examination of further indicators such as the relationship between Islamic religiosity and authoritarianism. The cross-tabulation (Table 6-8) shows an extremely weak and statistically insignificant association between subjective religiosity and support for a 'strong head of government who does not have to bother with elections and parliament' (authoritarian leadership). Knowing religiosity will not help to reduce the error in predicting support for authoritarian leadership (the Lambda value is again .000.) Although, religious people appear to be less in favour of authoritarian leadership, these variations are statistically insignificant (Pearson Chi-Square 1.156 and  $p = .282$ ). Thus we cannot reject the null hypothesis of independence between the variables support for a strong authoritarian leader and subjective religiosity.

Table (6-8) a crosstabulation between subjective religiosity and authoritarianism

**Strong authoritarian leader X subjective Religiosity**

		Religious person?			
			A religious person	Not a religious person	Total
Strong authoritarian leader	Very good or fairly good	Count	383	68	451
		% within 148. Religious person?	41.0%	45.6%	41.6%
		% of Total	35.3%	6.3%	41.6%
	Bad or very bad	Count	552	81	633
		% within 148. Religious person?	59.0%	54.4%	58.4%
		% of Total	50.9%	7.5%	58.4%
Total	Count	935	149	1084	
	% within 148. Religious person?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	86.3%	13.7%	100.0%	

Pearson Chi-Square is 1.156 with 1 degree of freedom and *p* value of .282. (insignificant at .005 level)  
 Data source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001.

The analysis above allows two broad conclusions. First, there is no significant relationship between subjective religiosity (Islamic religiosity here), and support for democracy as an ideal form of government or its alternative authoritarianism. Support for democracy is independent from the impact of religion. Second, religiosity in Jordan's Muslim society has no significant correlation with support for authoritarian leadership; if anything religious Muslims tend to less supportive of authoritarian leadership than non-religious Muslims. Subjective religiosity is not a convincing explanation of support for democracy or authoritarianism.

### **The Relationship between Support for Democracy and Objective Religiosity**

So far the analysis has taken people who identified themselves as religious as the subject of investigation. For such people, the link with support for democracy is weak or



statistically insignificant. The task of thoroughly examining the link between religiosity and democracy, (and conversely) authoritarianism, requires a more detailed analysis of people who are 'committed Muslims' i.e. those who perform all daily prayers whether at home or at Mosque. Taking the analysis a step further to examine the committed Muslims' attitudes towards democracy and authoritarianism, will give us more confidence in evaluating the extent to which practicing Muslims support democratic ideals. To perform this task, it is imperative to separate –for analytical purposes– practicing from non-practicing Muslims. For this purpose I have aggregated individuals who have reported to perform five prayers a day whether in or outside a Mosque. The assumption behind this exercise is that, if a person makes the effort to pray five times a day, it would mean that this individual is a committed and practicing Muslim. Moreover, he/she is exposed to religious ideas more than other individuals as the Mosque provides an opportunity for people to interact and exchange ideas. People who meet five times a day are likely to establish social and possibly political bonds. This classification will give us an additional tool to analyse the relationship between religiosity on the one hand, democracy, and authoritarianism on the other. Since we have separated fully practicing from non-fully practicing Muslims, we have a more solid ground to test the thesis that Islam is incompatible with democracy.

### ***H I. Support for a Democratic Political System and Objective Religiosity***

The attitudes of practicing Muslims are assumed to be different from those of non-practicing Muslims as far as support for democracy is concerned. According to the cultural-essentialist argument, practicing Muslims should be sceptical of democracy and less likely to support its ideals. The evidence suggests that there is no association between the attitudes of practicing Muslims and support for democracy. Support for democracy is statistically independent of religiosity, even if it is measured objectively using a behavioural rather than an attitudinal indicator like in the previous section. The cross-tabulation (Table 6-9) below suggests that the attitudes of practicing Muslims do not significantly differ from those of non-practicing Muslims; 94.4% of the former believe that it is very good or good to have democratic political system to govern Jordan, while 93% of those who do not pray at all (not committed Muslims) hold the same views.

The Lambda measure of association for this cross-tabulation is .000; this means that knowledge of the independent variable (objective religiosity) does not reduce the error in predicting the dependent variable (support for democracy) at all. Moreover, the Chi-Square test suggests that we cannot reject the null hypothesis of independence between the variables support for democratic political system and objective religiosity. The association between the two variables is weak and insignificant at the .005 level as the *p* value of .725 suggests.

Table (6-9) a crosstabulation between support for democracy and objective religiosity

		Democratic Political System X Objective Religiosity				Total
		Religious commitment				
			Pray 5 times a day in or outside mosque	Pray less than 5 times a day in or outside mosque	Do not pray at all	
Democratic Political System	Very good or Fairly good	Count	707	49	120	876
		% within Religious commitment	94.4%	92.5%	93.0%	94.1%
		% of Total	75.9%	5.3%	12.9%	94.1%
	Bad or Very bad	Count	42	4	9	55
		% within Religious commitment	5.6%	7.5%	7.0%	5.9%
		% of Total	4.5%	.4%	1.0%	5.9%
Total	Count	749	53	129	931	
	% within Religious commitment	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100%	
	% of Total	80.5%	5.7%	13.9%	100%	

Pearson Chi-Square is .643 with 2 degrees of freedom and *p* value of .725.

Data source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001.

## H II. Democracy Better than any other form of Government and Objective Religiosity

In contrast to the attitudinal operationalisation of 'subjective religiosity', there is no relationship between 'objective religiosity' (measured a behavioural indicator) and support for democracy measured by a dichotomous agree/disagree statement. Respondents were asked to express their views on the statement: 'democracy may have some problems but it is better than any other form of government'. Nearly nine tenth (89.4%) of respondents agreed to the statement, while (10.6%) disagreed (Table 6-10). When cross-tabulated with objective religiosity, (88.6%) of the committed Muslims and

(91.4%) of the non-committed Muslims agreed to the statement (Table 6-10) despite this difference with slightly more support for democracy among ‘non-religious’ the Lambda value is (.000) suggesting that knowledge of the objective religiosity does not reduce error in predicting support for democracy as an ideal form of government at all. The Chi-Square test suggests that we cannot reject the null hypothesis of independence between the variables democracy better than any other form of government and objective religiosity. Thus, the association between the two variables is weak and insignificant at the 0.05 level as the *p* value of .154 suggests.

Table (6-10) a crosstabulation between support for democracy and objective religiosity  
Democracy better than any other form of government X Objective religiosity

			Religious commitment			Total
			Pray 5 times a day in or outside mosque	Pray less than 5 times a day in or outside mosque	Do not pray at all	
Democracy better than any other form of government	Agree	Count	630	52	117	799
		% within Religious commitment	88.6%	96.3%	91.4%	89.5%
		% of Total	70.5%	5.8%	13.1%	89.5%
	Disagree	Count	81	2	11	94
		% within Religious commitment	11.4%	3.7%	8.6%	10.5%
		% of Total	9.1%	.2%	1.2%	10.5%
Total	Count	711	54	128	893	
	% within Religious commitment	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100%	
	% of Total	79.6%	6.0%	14.3%	100%	

Pearson Chi-Square is 3.743 with 2 degrees of freedom and *p* value of .154.

Data source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001.

### H III. Authoritarianism and Objective Religiosity

Overall, subjective religiosity tends to be positively correlated with authoritarian orientations as the comparative aggregate analysis as the previous chapter suggests. So far, however, this relationship did not hold up when analysing individual level data on ‘subjective religiosity’ in Jordan. The analysis in the previous section revealed no significant association between ‘subjective religiosity’ and authoritarian orientations. Will this conclusion be confirmed in an analysis of the relationship between objective religiosity and authoritarianism at the individual level in Jordan? Indeed it does. The cross-tabulation (Table 6-11) below reveals no significant difference between committed

Muslims' and non-committed Muslims' attitudes towards authoritarianism. The majority of practicing Muslims (57.9%) and (54.5%) of non-fully committed Muslims believe that it is 'bad' or 'very bad' to have a 'strong head of government who does not have bother with parliament and elections'. Their rejection of authoritarianism is quantitatively more pronounced than amongst non-religious Muslims, although the difference is statistically insignificant at the five-percent level. If we applied a less strict ten-percent criterion of significance the difference would be significant, a Chi-square of 5.113 and given  $p = 0.078$ .

Table (6-11) a crosstabulation between authoritarianism and objective religiosity

		Authoritarianism X objective Religiosity				Total
		Religious commitment				
		Pray 5 times a day in or outside mosque	Pray less than 5 times a day in or outside mosque	Do not pray at all		
Authoritarianism	Very good or fairly good	Count	321	15	60	396
		% within Religious commitment	42.1%	27.8%	45.5%	41.7%
		% of Total	33.8%	1.6%	6.3%	41.7%
	Bad or very bad	Count	442	39	72	553
		% within Religious commitment	57.9%	72.2%	54.5%	58.3%
		% of Total	46.6%	4.1%	7.6%	58.3%
Total	Count	763	54	132	949	
	% within Religious commitment	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	80.4%	5.7%	13.9%	100.0%	

Pearson Chi-Square is 5.113 with 2 degrees of freedom and  $p$  value of .078.  
Data source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to repeat the aggregate analyses of ‘between country variations’ (chapter five) and focus on Jordan alone and investigate whether assumptions about a link between Islamic religiosity and lack of support for democracy holds at the individual level (‘within –country variation’). The focus on a single country also allowed us to go into greater depth in analysing popular perceptions of democracy and ensure that the meanings Jordanians tend to associate with democracy are not fundamentally different from those held in ‘the West’. The meaning that Jordanians associate with democracy is strongly linked to the guarantee of civil liberties and political rights (including freedom of the press, association, and expression). Although democracy as an ideal form of government is considered to be very desirable by the overwhelming majority of Jordanians, they tend to be critical in their assessment of the current state of democracy in their country. This means that the perceived level of democracy in Jordan has not yet passed the relative ‘success’ threshold and its empirical reality lags behind popular expectations. Why has this been the case? Some have argued that the religion of Islam is the reason why democracy has not developed not only in Jordan but also in the whole Islamic Middle East. The factor ‘Islam’ was examined in this chapter (as in the previous chapter) drawing on different measures and methods to determine whether it was the obstacle. Religiosity was used as independent variable and variables measuring support for democracy or rejection of authoritarianism were used as dependent variables. The analyses yielded at best a very weak correlation between Islam and support for democracy/authoritarianism; Islam is largely an irrelevant factor in explaining variations in support for democratic values in Jordan. What is the reason then?

The simple comparisons of variations in risk perceptions for different forms of contentious political participation as well as relatively institutionalised forms of participation (e.g. party membership) allow some plausible conclusions. The risk of

facing a coercive state response is an important factor. In an environment of political instability like the Middle East, the interest of the political regime of a given country greatly determines whether that country can establish a democratic political order. In Jordan, the interests of the political regime, mainly its survival, depended on launching the process of democratic transformation in 1989, but subsequent events proved that democracy, no matter how weak it was, and accountability might be a cause of the regime's vulnerability. Therefore, the regime managed to introduce measures (specifically the electoral system of 1993) in order to control and constrain the dynamics of this process. Yet, this strategy may prove to be short-sighted. The regime's cautious attitude towards political associations such as political parties hindered their ability to recruit the human capital necessary for their functionality/ needed for a functioning democratic process. It is therefore not surprising that we found a tiny proportion of the public believing that they can join political parties, demonstrations, and sit-ins. The political regime had kept the cost involved for individuals to cross certain political lines relatively high. The perceived high cost of contentious political participation significantly reduced the chances of individuals' civic engagement, which is essential for the development of a democratic political culture and participatory political practice. For that reason, attributing the absence of democratic practice in Jordan to Islamic cultural traits seems to be a strong oversimplification based on very little empirical evidence, but concealing political realities that cannot be ignored.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **Regime Support**

## Regime Support

### Introduction

In the previous analyses we have seen that a huge majority of the Jordanian population supports democracy. The trend line for Jordan in the time series graph at the beginning of the previous chapter demonstrates a gap between the desire for democracy as political system and the evaluation of the levels of democracy in Jordan. Why is this the case? Is the high level of support for democracy as an ideal form of government found in Jordan an expression of dissatisfaction with the current regime? In other words, is the support for democracy a result of low satisfaction with, and low support for, the current political system? In short, how much support does the current political system have? How much support for pluralistic institutions that are associated with fully-developed liberal democracies (Parliament, political parties) exists? What are the implications of the support (or the lack of it) for the current regimes' institutions for the future of democracy in Jordan? To what extent is popular dissatisfaction with the performance of the current regime a source of support for the democratic values (as an alternative)? How influential are these factors in comparison to the religious beliefs and practices?

In order to answer these questions we will draw on Easton's<sup>1</sup> classical concept of regime support and its most recent applications.<sup>2</sup> Easton distinguishes between types and objects of political support. Types refer to diffuse and specific forms of political support. Objects of support refer to the political community, the regime, and the incumbent authorities. These elements of political support will be operationalised and analysed in order to establish whether these aspects of political support are empirically separable. To accomplish this and to give a clear background picture of the political support in Jordan, each of the variables included in the analysis will be described in statistical terms. Then, we will perform factor analyses in an attempt to separate the dimensions of political support. Next, we will estimate the influence of different dimensions of political support

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<sup>1</sup>Easton, David. 'A Reassessment of the Concept of Political Support', *British Journal of Political Science*, 1975, 5, 435-57.

<sup>2</sup>Norris, Pippa (ed.) *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Governance*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1999.



on support for democracy, controlling for religiosity in multivariate logistic regression model.

Two sources of survey data are used to carry out this analysis. First, the World Values Survey (Jordanian Data set), second the Centre for Strategic Studies' surveys on Democracy in Jordan, and also CSS's surveys on evaluations of perceived government performance. These data sets provide a wide range of measures for political support. It is regrettable that not all the measures are included in a single survey. Therefore, I synthesise separate measures without compiling them into a single data set (it is technically impossible). Thus, the analysis is carried out on independent data sets but in accordance with the theoretical framework of 'political support'. For example, government performance surveys do not include measures of diffuse support (political community) but provide detailed measures on specific support i.e. of what people expect the prime minister to do and satisfaction with the outcome of government performance on various issues of public interest including enhancing democracy, eradicating corruption, solving the problems of unemployment and poverty in the country.

## Political Support

How effective is the institutional base of democracy in Jordan? Having ruled out Islam as a factor influencing democracy measured by subjective and objective religiosity, does perceived regime performance have an impact on the satisfaction with the level of democracy? This question and its answers are essential to the understanding of the dynamics and mechanisms of democratisation and authoritarianism in Jordan. Therefore, in this chapter, I will introduce some analyses specifically addressing such issues.

The literature on regime support provides a very useful theoretical framework for the task at hand. Because it is a multi-dimensional conceptual framework, it provides us with a comprehensive method to separate specific from diffuse support. Specific support relates to regime performance (government, parliament, and political parties), while diffuse support relates to the extent to which members of the political community relate to regime institutions.

Theorists of democracy and institutions assert that the durability of political regimes, especially democracies<sup>3</sup>, rests on the extent of the populace's support for the regime.<sup>4</sup> Any political regime needs political support in order to survive. David Easton describes support as 'an attitude by which a person orients himself to an object either favourably or unfavorably, positively or negatively. Such an attitude may be expressed in parallel action. In short, in its common usage support refers to the way in which a person evaluatively orients himself to some object through either his attitudes or his behaviour.'<sup>5</sup> This general meaning of support has been broken down into two main types of support within the context of systems analysis: specific and diffuse support.<sup>6</sup> This implies that political support is multi-dimensional and its constituents range from symbolic to material support.

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<sup>3</sup> Norris, Pippa (ed.) *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Governance*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1999.

<sup>4</sup> Easton, David. *A Framework for Political Analysis*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall. 1965; Easton, David. 'A Reassessment of the Concept of Political Support', *British Journal of Political Science*, 1975, 5, 435-57.

<sup>5</sup> Easton, 'A reassessment', p. 436.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* p. 436.

### Specific and Diffuse Support

According to Easton, diffuse support is a deep-seated set of attitudes toward politics and operation of the political system that is relatively impervious to change. Diffuse support has also been interpreted as measuring the legitimacy of a political system or institutions. In contrast, specific support is closely related to the actions and performance of the government or political elite.

In working democracies sometimes evidence of public discontent is no more than dissatisfaction with the incumbents of office. This is a normal and perhaps healthy aspect of the democratic process.<sup>7</sup> In non-democracies, however, it is difficult to evaluate whether public dissatisfaction with regime performance reflects discontent with the incumbents or the institutions of the system itself. This is because there is not a transparent system of power rotation, accountability, checks and balances. At times, although discontent with the incumbent may be widespread, the regime may appear to be trusted by the public. This is because the regime is 'the underlying order of political life'.<sup>8</sup> Discontent may or may not be a force for political change. A non-democratic political system may or may not change to democratic norms if discontent continues to be present. As Easton puts it 'it is the unpredictability of the outcome of the relationship between political dissatisfaction and tension on the one hand and the acceptance of basic political arrangements that constitutes a persistent puzzle for research.'<sup>9</sup> This puzzle is evident in the case of Jordan which we are trying to analyse here. Because of this problem, and the fact that Jordan is not a democratic state, we cannot use all the conventional components of the concept of political support in the manner utilised in the study of western liberal democracies.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, we will limit the analysis to the dimensions of political support uncovered by the factor analysis we intend to carry out below. We anticipate at least two dimensions to be revealed by factor analysis.

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<sup>7</sup> Dalton, Russell. 'Political Support in Advanced Industrial Democracies', in Norris, Pippa (ed.) *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Governance*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1999. pp 57-77.

<sup>8</sup> Easton, op.cit. p. 436.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p. 437.

<sup>10</sup> See for example, Norris, Pippa. (ed.) *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Governance*, Oxford: Oxford University press. 1999.

### **Specific Support**

The distinctiveness of specific support, argues Easton, 'lies in its relationship to the satisfactions that members of a system feel they obtain from the perceived outputs and performance of the political authorities.'<sup>11</sup> Individual members of the system may show more support for the political system, if the perceived system outputs are seen as beneficial to the members. This type of support is object-specific in two senses. 1) Specific support is a *response* to the authorities; it is only indirectly relevant, if at all, to the input of support for the regime or political community. 2) It is directed to the perceived decisions, policies, actions, utterances or the general style of these authorities. Specific support depends on the extent to which members of the system relate their needs, wants, and demands to the behaviour of the political authorities including all public officials.<sup>12</sup> In this sense specific support relates to chief executives, legislators, judges, administrators (local and national) police, army, and courts (legally system). If these properties of specific support are perceived positively by the members of the system – members evaluate them as successful- then the political authorities are seen to be trustworthy in terms of delivery of benefits to the members. By contrast, if political authorities are evaluated as unsuccessful by the members, then these authorities are seen to be untrustworthy or at least do not meet the expectations of the members. This has implications for non-democratic systems as much to democratic ones.

### **Diffuse Support**

Diffuse support is different from specific support in the sense that, as Easton puts it, 'it refers to evaluations of what an object is or represents- to the general meaning it has for a person – not of what it does. It consists of a reservoir of favourable attitudes or good will that helps members to accept or tolerate outputs to which they are opposed or the effects of which they see as damaging to their wants'.<sup>13</sup> Perceived benefits of system performance may vary (rise and fall) while diffuse support, 'in the form of generalized attachment, continues.'<sup>14</sup> If, however, diffuse support is negative, it 'represents a reserve

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<sup>11</sup> Easton. op. cit. 437.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p. 438.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. p. 444.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. p. 444.

of ill-will that may not easily be reduced by outputs or performance.’<sup>15</sup> Diffuse support has three properties.

First, in contrast to specific support, it has the property of durability. This does not mean that durability of diffuse support does not change. It fluctuates but in a slower manner. Because of its sources, diffuse support ‘tends to be more difficult to strengthen once it is weak and weaken once it is strong.’<sup>16</sup> That means diffuse support is usually independent of fluctuations in evaluation of regime performance. People may be dissatisfied with and critical of the performance of parliament, government, and other state institutions but they may not demand abolishing these institutions. Thus, they value the institutions in spite of low levels of satisfaction with their performance. However, continuous erosion of specific support over long periods may lead to attrition in diffuse support.

Second, the political community underpins the regime as whole and constitutes an essential aspect of diffuse support. Political community is usually understood to mean a basic attachment to the nation beyond the present institutions of government and a general willingness to co-operate together politically.<sup>17</sup> A sense of a viable political community is an essential element of diffuse support. If members are not entirely confident in the viability of the state (political regime), which depends on the existence of political community, then diffuse support is undermined. In such circumstances, the regime may resort to coercion and/or political manoeuvring to establish diffuse support. In this sense, diffuse support is not a given fact, it is made. In their attempts to create diffuse support, political systems –especially non-democracies- may resort to direct ‘loyalty-buying’ policies. Such policies are present in the authoritarian rentier and semi-rentier states of the Middle East.<sup>18</sup>

Third, diffuse support stems from two sources: socialisation and experience. Belonging to a political community, appreciation of the political system and its institutions may be

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid. p. 444.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p. 444.

<sup>17</sup> Norris, op. cit. p 10.

<sup>18</sup> See for example Beblawi, H. and Luciani, G. (eds.) *The Rentier State*, London: Croom Helm. 1987; Luciani, Giacomo, (ed.) *The Arab State*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1990.

taught in childhood and adult socialisation. Socialisation tends to make members identify with basic political objects (e.g. parliament) through indoctrination. The diffuse support resulting from such a process may not be rational. Experience may rationalise diffuse support. Members may or may not appreciate the political objects for the symbolism they represent. Members are likely to support political objects if they think that this support will lead to benefits to the members.

According to Easton diffuse support for the political authorities and regime will typically express itself in two forms: trust and in belief in the legitimacy of political objects.<sup>19</sup> We will focus on trust as an indicator of diffuse support. Legitimacy will not be analysed because we do not have empirical data on its constituents.

### **Trust**

Trust is defined as ‘the probability ... that the political system (or some part of it) will produce preferred outcomes even if left untended. In other words, it is the probability of getting preferred outcomes without the group doing anything to bring them about. They or others may do things to influence this probability...’<sup>20</sup> Trust in the institutions of the political system would mean that ‘*members would feel that their own interests would be attended to even if the authorities were exposed to little supervision or scrutiny. For the regime, such trust would reveal itself as symbolic satisfaction with the process by which the country is run.*’<sup>21</sup> Political systems, whether democratic or not, would not be able to last long without such diffuse support. At times, political systems may implement coercion in order to secure obedience (e.g. Iraq, Syria, and Saudi Arabia). At other times, political systems may pursue a combination of coercion and other means (e.g. persuasion) in order to secure stability (e.g. Jordan and Morocco). The underlying issue here is that political systems need a certain level of popular trust. Political systems tend to gain this trust, at least in part, through a process of socialisation. The political system may convince the public, or some segments of it, that it is their civic duty to trust the authorities. ‘In this way, trust as a sentiment about both incumbents and their offices is in

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<sup>19</sup> Easton, op. cit. p. 447.

<sup>20</sup> Gamson, W. *Power and Discontent*, Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey. 1968. p. 54. cited in Easton op. cit. p. 447.

<sup>21</sup> Easton, op. cit. p. 447. italics added.

some degree sheltered from conflict and may survive the actions of particular occupants of authority roles.’<sup>22</sup>

Members’ experience with authorities constitutes another source of trust. The performance of authorities may foster or discourage popular trust in the institutions of the political system. Popular trust ‘may become detached from authorities themselves and take the form of an autonomous or generalized sentiment towards all incumbent authorities and perhaps the regime as well.’<sup>23</sup> However, when respondents to the WVS survey in Jordan were asked about the extent to which they have confidence in the institutions of the political system, not all of them have dealt with these authorities (i.e. not all of them have had an experience with the institutions) but it is a general sense of confidence in these institutions that the variable ‘confidence in institutions’ captures. If experience is a possible base for establishing trust, we are confronted with *the problem of interpretation*. Is experience-based trust a form of specific or diffuse support? Easton tackles this tight spot by acknowledging that, although experience-based trust as an element of diffuse support can be conceptually distinguished from specific support, ‘empirically they may shade into each other at some point.’<sup>24</sup> In the case of Jordan, the evidence suggest that trust in the institutions of the political system measures diffuse rather than specific support. As we shall see later in this chapter, there is a considerable gap between specific and diffuse support indicators.

### **Operationalising the Dimensions of Political Support**

Now we turn to test the regime support model in the Jordanian context aiming at establishing whether Jordanians conceptually differentiate the levels of regime support or have a blurred understanding of it. Building on David Easton’s work Pippa Norris, Hans-Dieter Klingemann, Russell Dalton and others<sup>25</sup> developed and tested a fivefold conceptual framework identifying five levels of political support Figure (1).

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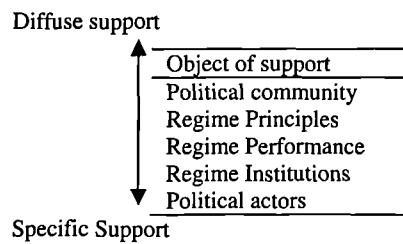
<sup>22</sup> Ibid. p. 448.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p. 448.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. p. 448.

<sup>25</sup> Norris, Pippa. (ed.) *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Governance*, Oxford: Oxford University press. 1999.

Figure (7-1) The conceptual Framework for Political Support



Source: Norris, Pippa, *Critical Citizens*, 1999, p. 10.

We do not expect to find the five objects of support in Jordan. These five objects have not been found when tested empirically in established liberal democracies. Previous research<sup>26</sup> on established and new democracies identifies –in empirical terms- three objects of political support for a political system: the political community, regime principles, and regime performance. Regime principles in democracies were identified and operationalised as ‘support for democracy’. This object of political support does not apply to Jordan because Jordan is not a democracy. It is a political system that contains some democratic elements but these elements are not sufficient to classify it as a democratic political system whether we go by the standard definitions of democratic political systems<sup>27</sup> or the Jordanian public opinion (chapter 6). It is also not entirely authoritarian. Therefore, we cannot use support for democracy amongst the Jordanian population as an indicator of regime principles despite the fact that the majority of Jordanians prefer to have a democratic political system. Nonetheless, we can measure and analyse support for the Jordanian political system in terms of political community (national unity), regime institutions, and regime performance. These three objects of political support fall within the conceptual framework of political support outlined in Figure (7-1) above. The operationalisation of these three objects is described below.

<sup>26</sup> Klingemann, Hans-Dieter. ‘Mapping Political Support in the 1990s: A global Analysis’, in Norris, Pippa. (ed.) *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Governance*, Oxford: Oxford University press. 1999. pp31-56.

<sup>27</sup> Dahl, R. *Polyarchy; Participation and Opposition*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press. 1971; Dahl, R. *Democracy and its critics*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press. 1989.



## Variables Measuring Political Support in Jordan

It is essential to provide some descriptive statistics of these indicators in order to establish the extent of variation within each variable. The Political Community<sup>28</sup> (National Unity), is measured by the following variable (Table 7-1). On average, the Jordanian people are proud to be Jordanian. Two thirds reported to be 'very proud' (66.5%) and (30.5%) said they are 'quite proud'. This brings the total to (97%) of the Jordanian population who are proud of their national identity. That means, there is a very strong sense of (political community) national unity, which constitutes an essential element of diffuse support for the political system. The Jordanian population has manifested a multifaceted levels of identity. When respondents were asked to choose 'which of the following describes you best?' 1) above all I am a Jordanian, 2) above all I am an Arab, and 3) above all I am a Muslim, the majority (71.6%) reported that 'above all I am a Muslim', and only (14.6%) said above all I am Jordanian. There seems to be a discrepancy here. A sense of Islamic identity among Jordanians, as the evidence suggest, does not seem to undermine their

Table (7-1) Political Community: 'How proud are you to be Jordanian?'

		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very proud	807	66.5	66.5
	Quite proud	371	30.5	97.0
	Not very proud	12	1.0	98.0
	Not at all proud	1	.1	98.1
	I don't see myself as Jordanian	23	1.9	100.0
	Total	1214	100.0	
Missing	Do not know	8		
Total		1222		

Mean score = 1.40, Mode=1, and median = 1.

Data Source: WVS (the Jordanian data set) conducted in September 2001.

national identity as Jordanians. Thus, it is reasonable to suggest that the existence of a multifaceted identity does not necessarily reduce the value of using the 'national pride' as an indicator for political community. National pride refers to a 'nation state', whereas identification with Islam refers to a belief system, which does not have a nation state. In international survey research on political values, diffuse support for the polity as a whole

<sup>28</sup> A common variable often used to measure political community is the 'willingness of individual to fight for a country', unfortunately this variable is not available in our data set therefore I used substitute variable in addition to national pride.

is often captured by questions on national pride. Although national pride may capture a sense of political identity, it does not necessarily mean a strong generalised identification with the country's main political institutions. The basis of national pride may, for example, be ethnicity or some other sense of belonging.

*Confidence in Regime Institutions* is measured by the following variables (Table 7-2). *Confidence in regime institutions denotes diffuse support as outlined by Easton's concept of political support above.* Although questions about confidence in the main political institutions of a country belong to the standard repertoire of comparative research in political values, the status of such questions is not entirely clear, because it is empirically difficult to separate out the generalised satisfaction with an institution as institution and the satisfaction with the incumbents exercising authority within, and on behalf of, such institutions. Therefore, Norris (see Figure 1 above) has given them an intermediary status between the extreme poles of diffuse support for a national 'community' and specific support for the policy outputs generated by the respective system. This empirical problem will be addressed below.

Table (7-2) I am going to name a number of institutions. For each one, could you tell me how much confidence you have in them: is it a great deal of confidence, quite a lot of confidence, not very much confidence or none at all? The 'armed forces' ...

Institution	Great deal	Quite a lot	Not very much	None at all	Total 100%
The armed forces	63.5	28.9	6.6	1	100
The police	59.7	31	7.3	1.9	100
The intelligence forces	57.2	32.5	7.2	3.1	100
The national government	52.1	31.3	12.4	4.2	100
The justice system	51.2	36.0	9.3	3.6	100
Education system	48.0	39.1	9.6	3.2	100
Parliament	30.3	34.8	21.2	13.7	100
The civil service	26.1	39.6	32.2	11.0	100
Political parties	11.5	14.8	28.3	45.3	100
Average confidence in the system	44.4	32	14.9	9.6	100

Data Source: WVS (the Jordanian data set) conducted in September 2001.

As Table (7-2) illustrates, there is a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the core regime institutions: the army, police, intelligence services, national government, justice system, education system, the parliament, and the civil service. Political parties, however,

are not perceived by the public as trustworthy. The development of the Jordanian political system has something to offer regarding this phenomenon. The state has been the largest employer for the past fifty years. Its main institutions were massive recruiters of the labour force. This process has tied people's perceptions to the institutions that control the resources of the state. A rational response to survival needs. In this process, the regime imposed a martial law for over 30 years (1967-1990) which outlawed political parties and hindered the legislative process. Only in 1989 parliamentary life was resumed. As a result of the martial law, pluralistic institutions (parliament and political parties) were seen to be outside the regime's interests. Hence, pluralistic institutions were marginalised by the political regime and therefore they did not have the necessary resources for development. Logistical resources were under firm control by the core state intuitions, which denied other forces outside the state access to them.

This process left little room of manoeuvre for other forces in the society. One plausible interpretation of Jordanians' attitudes towards regime institutions is that they confirm *rational behaviour of the regime and the people*. The regime manipulated state resources and distributed them in a manner consistent with its survival strategy. Regime's strategy of benefits distribution proved very effective at the popular level. Therefore, it does not seem to be unreasonable to suggest that positive popular evaluations of the regime institutions reflect the result of a long term investment made by the regime to boost its base of support and discredit rival political forces in the country. Thus, diffuse support for the political regime has been based in experience and indoctrination. It has both qualities: long-term socialisation and also long-term experience.

Regime Performance is measured in two different ways. Firstly, it is measured by broad-spectrum indicators denoting satisfaction with life as whole (Table 7-3) and (Table 7-4). Secondly, it is measured by indicators specifically addressing the performance of office holders over several points in time between 1995-2001 as demonstrated in Figures (7-2) to (7-7) below. First we will discuss the broad-spectrum indicators and we turn the performance indicators later on in the chapter.

The happiness variable (Table 7-3) taps a general feeling of subjective wellbeing expressed by Jordanian respondents living under circumstances (political and otherwise)

Table (7-3) Taking all things together, would you say you are:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very happy	156	12.8	12.8	12.8
	Quite happy	857	70.1	70.4	83.2
	Not very happy	152	12.4	12.5	95.7
	Not at all happy	53	4.3	4.3	100.0
Missing	Do not know/NA	8	.7		
Total		1222	100.0		

Mean = 2.08, mode = 2, median = 2.

Source: WVS (the Jordanian data set) conducted in September 2001.

created by the political regime. However, the political regime is not the only factor influencing how people feel about their wellbeing. There are other factors, but what makes this indicator of a particular importance and interest is the fact that because the state (the political regime) is not a democracy and people are not totally free to express their grievances through legitimate institutional channels of communications, happiness taps a general feeling of subjective wellbeing, which is in a way an approximation of the 'environment' of regime performance. The majority of Jordanians (83.2%) describe themselves as very happy or quite happy with life a whole.

Table (7-4) How satisfied are you with the financial situation of your household? If (1) means you are completely dissatisfied on this scale, and (10) means you are completely satisfied, where would you put your satisfaction with your household's financial situation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Dissatisfied	151	12.4	12.4	12.4
	2	51	4.2	4.2	16.6
	3	94	7.7	7.7	24.4
	4	104	8.5	8.5	32.9
	5	374	30.6	30.7	63.6
	6	118	9.6	9.7	73.3
	7	135	11.0	11.1	84.4
	8	67	5.5	5.5	89.9
	9	40	3.3	3.3	93.2
	Satisfied	83	6.8	6.8	100.0
Missing	DK/NA	9	.7		
Total		1222	100.0		

Mean score = 5.09, median = 5, mode = 5.

Source: WVS (the Jordanian data set) conducted in September 2001

Satisfaction with the financial situation of the respondent's household taps the subjective evaluation of material wellbeing, which is a reflection of the economic performance of the political regime. Because individuals are influenced by the macro-level economic environment created by the regime. On this indicator, unlike the previous one, only a slight majority (mean score 5.09) expressed satisfaction with financial situation of their households.

The two indicators analysed above (subjective wellbeing and satisfaction with the financial situation of the household) indicate that, on average, Jordanians are quite happy with the performance of the political regime as whole. Nonetheless, this expressed satisfaction could potentially fall to below average (specially on the second indicator). It could well be for this reason that Jordanians show high support for democracy as an ideal form of government. Perhaps, for them a democratic government would minimise the perceived flaws in the system which could potentially improve lifestyle.

In sum, there is a relatively high level of support for the political system in Jordan. The system is not a democracy and not entirely authoritarian. The core institutions of the system have high levels of popular support; the society values them as integral part of the system. Pluralistic institutions (parliament and political parties) have relatively lower levels of mass support. Political parties remarkably lacked popular support; they ranked the lowest among all institutions included in the analysis (Table 7-2), they are not valued by the society as integral part of the system. This, however, cannot be interpreted as mass support for authoritarian orientations among Jordanians. Had Jordanians been culturally predispositioned as supportive of authoritarianism, the majority of them (58.0%) would have not said that authoritarian leadership is bad or very bad system of government for Jordan (Table 7-5).

Table (7-5) I am going to describe various types of political systems and ask what you think about each as a way of governing this country - Having a strong head of government who does not have to bother with parliament and elections

		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Good	166	15.1	15.1
	Fairly Good	294	26.9	42.0
	Bad	389	35.5	77.5
	Very Bad	247	22.5	100.0
Missing	DK/NA	126		
Total		1222		

Mean = 2.56, Mode= 3, and Median = 3.

Source: WVS (the Jordanian data set) conducted in September 2001.

### Factor Analysis

The factor analysis performed below aimed at finding out whether components of the concept of political support are empirically separated. Exploratory principal component analysis of Jordan's data reveals three conceptually distinct factors: regime institutions, regime performance, and political community (national unity). Regime institutions and political community reflect diffuse support and regime performance reflect specific support for the political system.

Table (7-6) Principal Component Analysis, Rotated Component Matrix(a)

Variables	Components		
	Regime institutions	Regime performance (output)	Political community (National unity)
Happiness with life in general		.748	
Satisfaction with the financial situation of your household		-.777	
The armed forces	.733		
The police	.786		
The Civil service	.616		
Directorate of Intelligence	.771		
The justice system	.729		
The government	.805		
Political parties			.797
National Unity			-.544
Total variance explained = 56.59	32.62	12.50	11.46

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. a Rotation converged in 4 iterations. Factors loading below 0.50 were suppressed. N = 1222 respondents. Data source; WVS (the Jordanian data set) conducted in September 2001.

Generalised support for Jordan as a political 'community' is very strong. But does that really mean there is also strong support for the country's institutions in a generalised

sense (rather than support, or lack thereof, for the incumbents and policy outputs)? Principal-component analysis is a technique that allows us to use the inter-correlation of all variables listed in Tables (7-1) to (7-6) to search for underlying dimensions. If the correlation matrices converge, principal-component analysis can help to reduce a large number of variables to a smaller set of underlying factors, or dimensions. Previous research in the field<sup>29</sup> has shown that the underlying factors can often be interpreted as close variants of the Eastonian dimensions of diffuse and specific support. Table (7-5) reports the results of a principal-component analysis. It amongst others it presents the correlation coefficients of each variable in Tables (7-1) to (7-5) with the three orthogonal factors (underlying dimensions) extracted after a Varimax rotation (correlations are only reported for those variables whose correlation is at least 0.50). The extraction of orthogonal factors can be described as a technique identifying dimensions that are practically independent of each other (i.e., the factors are not correlated). In our present context this may provide the opportunity of separating those components in the support for institutions that are attributable to generalised, 'diffuse' support for institutions as such from components that express satisfaction or dissatisfaction with these institutions' perceived effectiveness.

The principal-component analysis presented above allows us to extract three main factors from the variables in Tables (7-1) to (7-5). The first and – measured by its contribution to explain the overall variance – most important factor is one that could be interpreted as generalised diffuse support for a number of organisations including the armed forces, the police, the civil service, the Directorate of Intelligence, the justice system and – with the highest correlation – the government. All factor loadings are positive. To be clear, the factor loadings reported in Table (7-6) do not suggest stronger or weaker support for the abovementioned organisations, they suggest the strength of the correlation between support (or non-support) for these organisations and the scores each individual respondent has on the underlying first factor. In other words, the loadings suggest the extent to which a variable 'represents' the underlying dimension. Given the fact that satisfaction with the government has the relatively highest loading of 0.805, it can be

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<sup>29</sup> Klingemann, 1999.

concluded that satisfaction with the government is the single variable that would represent this dimension best, although satisfaction with the police, the Directorate of Intelligence and the justice system are nearly as important.

The second factor extracted loads highly on the two questions capturing specific support: satisfaction with the financial situation of the respondent's household and happiness with life in general. Both variables have loadings of above 0.7, although they are in different directions (indicated by a negative sign for satisfaction with the household's financial situation and a positive sign for happiness with life in general). This is simply a consequence of the coding of the variables in the questionnaires. Satisfaction with the household's financial situation was coded from 1 (minimum) to 10 (maximum), whereas happiness with life in general was coded the other way around (1 very happy and 4 not happy at all).

The factors extracted so far can be interpreted in a reasonably straightforward way as representing specific support (factor 2) and the generalised, 'diffuse' component of institutional support (factor 1). The third factor is more difficult to interpret. Two variables (questions) have loadings of over 0.50: proud to be Jordanian (negative loading) and confidence in political parties (positive loading). This third factor can, therefore, be interpreted to represent a national-unity dimension. Respondents who are proud to be Jordanian tend to express little confidence in political parties, which are seen to be divisive. Vice versa, respondents who express considerable confidence in political parties, tend to score less highly on the national-pride variable. Thus, in the context of Jordanian politics and society, national pride seems to be a distinctive dimension separate from generalised diffuse support. It seems to have strong connotations of national unity and rejection of the perceived divisiveness of partisanship. Given the importance of party competition for models of liberal democracy, this seems to suggest a tension between national identity and a basic mechanism of democracy. But it is important to stress that this situation is very likely to be the result of more than thirty years of martial law rather than cultural characteristics.



Table (7-7) logistic regression- Support for democracy is the dependent variable

	Variables in the Equation	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1	FAC1_2 (regime institutions)	.335	.139	5.804	1	.016	1.399
	FAC2_2 (regime performance)	-.065	.123	.278	1	.598	.937
	FAC3_2 (political community)	.243	.118	4.269	1	.039	1.275
	RELIG (subjective religiosity)	-.942	.474	3.940	1	.047	.390
	Constant	3.002	.455	43.566	1	.000	20.119

The most important question in our context, however, is the extent to which support for liberal-democratic principles is motivated by dissatisfaction with the existing regime, and how the strength (or absence) of such a negative motivation compares to the importance of religious convictions. What would our theoretical expectations be? If support for democracy was 'negative', that is, predominantly an expression of dissatisfaction with the current, according to the Freedom House classification 'partly free' regime, there would be a significant effect especially of the two first underlying dimensions (factors) in our principal-component analysis on support for democratic values. This effect would be expected to be negative, that is, people identifying with the existing regime would be expected to be less supportive of liberal democracy than respondents who say they are dissatisfied, and vice versa. If religious convictions are the key factor and Fukuyama and others were right, then we would expect respondents with high levels of religiosity to be less supportive of democratic values than respondents with lower levels. The advantage of the multi-variate logistic regression analysis carried out and reported in Table (7-7) above is that it allows us to statistically control both sets of variables (diffuse and specific support for the political regime as well as religiosity), that is, we will be able to establish the 'net effect' of each variable controlling for variations of all other independent variables. A logistic regression model was preferred to an ordinary least squares (OLS) model, because of the way the dependent variable (support for liberal democratic values is coded in the questionnaire). The dependent variable consists of four answer categories (democracy better than any other form of government, strongly agree, agree, disagree and disagree strongly) which hardly constitute interval-level, which is required for an OLS model. Therefore, the dependent variable was dichotomised collapsing the answer categories 'disagree' and 'disagree strongly' into a category 'no or little support for liberal-democratic values' and the answer categories 'agree strongly' and 'agree' into a category 'support for liberal-democratic values'. This will constitute our dichotomous

dependent variable 'support for democracy'. In our sample, 76 respondents do not support democracy, whereas 624 respondents support democracy.

The results of the logistic regression analyses are reported in Table (7-7). Support for democracy (dichotomised) was regressed on the three factors (underlying dimensions) extracted from the questions capturing diffuse and specific regime support) as well as religiosity. In the interpretation, we will concentrate on the size of the exponent of the regression coefficient B and the statistical significance. An exponent of B of 1 suggests that there is no relationship between the dependent and the respective independent variable. An exponent over 1 suggests a positive statistical relationship, an exponent below 1 suggests a negative relationship. The factor capturing specific support (satisfaction with financial situation of the household loading highly on factor 2) has no significant impact and is virtually neutral. There is a strong and significant association between the first factor (confidence in the institutions of the existing Jordanian state) and support for liberal democracy. Given the 'direction' of coding of the questions pertaining to confidence in the institutions of the Jordanian state, the interpretation of regression analysis suggests that respondents who have *little* confidence in the institutions tend to be *more* favourably disposed to liberal-democratic values than those who have full confidence. This relationship is statistically significant at the five-percent level. Also, persons with low or negative scores on the national-unity dimension are significantly more likely to be supportive of democracy than others. Finally, high levels of religiosity reduce the probability of a person having liberal-democratic values significantly at the five-percent level. In other words, we observe a combination of political and religious motivations. Jordanians who are religious, generally supportive of the existing institutions and generally prepared to value party competition higher than national unity will tend to be more supportive of liberal-democratic values than those who do not. Interestingly, the dissatisfaction with the regime's short-term performance (specific support) is statistically insignificant. Political and religious values are relevant, although the overall fit of the model is not fantastic, as a Nagelkerke R-square of 0.051 suggests.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> However, the Nagelkerke R-square should not be read like the R-square in an OLS regression. It tends to be lower and is not untypical in the social sciences.

This is likely to be due to the strong quantitative predominance of respondents favouring democracy (see above).

The descriptive statistics of the variables provided earlier on fulfil the task of explaining the extent of support the Jordanian political regime has amongst the masses. Regime performance is not limited to broad-spectrum captured by the regime institutions, regime performance factors (above). There is another level which is more specific regarding the political authorities (the political elite). Political elite's performance is essential part of the political support framework. Therefore, in the following sections we will take the analysis a step further to evaluate the performance of the successive governments of Jordan, the parliament, and political parties. The analysis of this specific level support will enable us of delineating variations between perceived diffuse support for these three institutions and perceived specific support regarding their performance.

### **Specific Support**

In none-democratic or partly-free polities, there may be broad popular support for liberal democracy. Should that be the case, the regime's legitimacy will depend heavily on specific support, if it is to retain a degree of legitimacy. Alternatively, there may be institutions such as the monarchy in Jordan which are pre-democratic in their origin (although they may be transformed), but may enjoy considerable diffuse support and enhance the legitimacy of the regime irrespective of specific policy outcomes or a gap between expectations and perceived reality of the political order. In Jordan the regime institutions, though undemocratic, comprise considerable source diffuse legitimacy.

Specific support for political actors such as the prime minister, the cabinet and members of parliament is better understood as measuring their performance rather than their the symbolic value of the offices. We have already established the extent of diffuse support for the parliament as an institution in (Table 7-2) above. Because we are clear about regime institutions, we can confidently measure incumbents' performance without necessarily confusing the two levels. By so doing, we have a reliable instrument to differentiate mass support for the institution from support for the occupants of the offices

of the institution. Has confidence in those political actors declined or did they meet popular expectations? This is a question of great importance to distinguish the two levels of regime support.

Regime performance is vital to the understanding of the development of democracy especially in newly democratising societies. Regime performance potentially legitimatises or de-legitimises regime principles. If regime institutions are effective in delivering what they are expected to deliver, we should expect a positive public evaluation of both the regime's underlying principles and main institutions whether democratic or autocratic. This also implies a positive public evaluation and approval of regime principles whether democracy, autocracy or mixed system of both. Equally, regime institutions may not be popular due to their ineffectiveness to deliver, but does this situation affect regime principles? In other words does ineffectiveness of government, parliament, political parties, judicial system, education system, police, armed forces, and civil service erode support for the regime? Could the liberalisation and steps towards democratisation of Jordan be blamed for the regime's failure to deliver economic security to all citizens? After all, critics have attributed the deterioration of the Jordanian economy since 1989 to the democratisation process forgetting that the democratisation process was a result of the economic failure of the martial-law governments under which Jordanian foreign debts reached around 8 billion dollar by 1988, which amounts for 159% of GNP. Nonetheless, democracy as we have demonstrated above is a desirable form of government for the majority of the population.

Attributing the ineffectiveness of the regime's institutions to democracy -no matter how im/mature- *per se* is misleadingly simple and in methodological terms equally equivalent to attributing the absence of democracy to cultural traits such as Islam or tribalism for that matter. A political regime that is interested in maximising the likelihood of its internal survival, could turn to *hampered democracy* as a mean not as an end. Such a scenario bears some truth for the Jordanian political regime. For example, since 1991 onwards Jordan embarked on the peace process with Israel and in order to ensure that the expected peace treaty will pass through the parliament without major problems, a new

electoral system was proposed by the government aiming at reducing the chances of opposition to acquire more seats in the elections of autumn 1993. The new electoral system was heavily criticised by intellectuals, professional syndicates, left wing, pan-Arab, and the Islamic Action Front parties. The opposition (within and without parliament) requested the King to hold an unusual session of the parliament to discuss the proposed electoral system; the king's response was to dissolve the parliament on 04/08/1993 practically paralysing any attempt to convene a parliamentary session and issued a royal decree to hold the elections on the 17<sup>th</sup> of November 1993. This electoral system produced the expected outcome, reducing the opposition chances and increasing the representation of passive conformism. This suggests that there are limits to democracy and how far it could go. These limits are not entirely limited to Jordan. The post independence states in most third world postcolonial 'nation states' share these limits. Time and again, these limits are often reinforced by the state-dependent political and economic elites because democracy will provide mechanisms of checks and balances and above all accountability, which is very likely to run against their interests.

Knowledge of the effectiveness of regime institutions is vital to the understanding of regime principles in a fully-fledged democracy. In a democratising country like Jordan regime performance does not necessarily reflect regime principles or what the people of Jordan believe regime principles ought to be (*democracy*). *There are many reasons* underpinning such view. In established democracies the channels of governance and accountability are clear to the public, while in Jordan these channels are largely blurred. For example, the king has the power to dissolve the parliament any time he wishes, appoints and dismisses the prime minister and cabinet members. Although the king exercises these powers and many more, he is above accountability according to the constitution. Therefore, the government could in effect hide behind the king's power and avoid serious parliamentary accountability. However, measuring governments' performance on the basis of government's declared output is, in my view, unreliable to a great extent. Because governments, particularly, undemocratic ones tend to exaggerate output figures. Therefore, it is safer to measure government performance by asking the people subject to its decisions in order to reach meaningful conclusions.

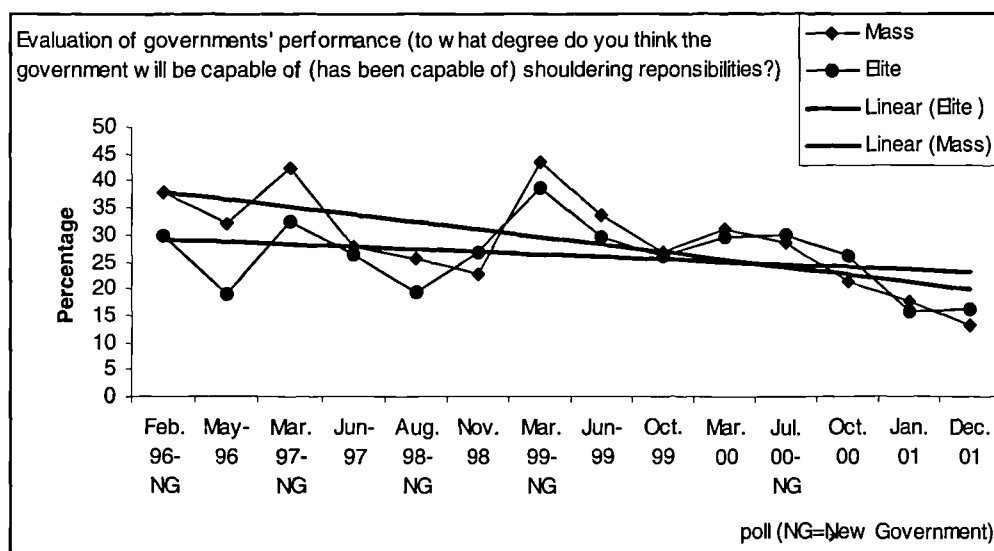
## Evaluating Specific Support

We are seeking to identify the extent to which satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a given set of authorities can be traced directly to the perceived policies of general performance of those authorities.

## Government Performance between 1996 and 2001

Evaluation of government performance as presented in Figure (7-2) below, reflects the public perception of how will the cabinet will do after its formation and the successive polls reflect how well the government has done so far (NG in the graph denotes the formation of new cabinet). Popular satisfaction with the performance of successive

Figure (7-2) Mass and Elite evaluations expected and perceived government performance



Data source: CSS's surveys on government performance between February 1996 and December 2001.

governments has been measured in 13 surveys conducted in the period between February 1996 and December 2001. For the purpose of this chapter it is sufficient to use one indicator: *'To what degree do you think the new government will be capable of shouldering the responsibilities in the time to come?'* This variable was asked in this format after the formation of new governments. To evaluate governments' performance after formation in 100 days, 200 days, and a year in office, the question was asked as follows: *'To what degree do you think the government has been capable of shouldering responsibilities since its formation up to now?'* The former question reflects confidence

in the government as an institution, while the latter question reflects perceived government performance between formation and the time of the poll.

For the analysis presented here, I have chosen to trace changes in the percentage of respondents (mass and elite) who have reported great confidence in successive governments i.e. those reported the government will be or has been capable of shouldering responsibilities of governance to a 'great degree'. The description here will be limited to this group of respondents. The percentages of respondents that reported 'medium level', 'little', or 'no' confidence in the governments capabilities to deal with the country's problems will not be included in the analysis here.<sup>31</sup> The rationale underpinning this selection is that: those who have a 'great deal' of confidence in the government' constitute a solid base of diffuse and specific support for the government. Diffuse support is captured the expectations of government, while specific support is captured by evaluations of perceived actual performance of the government. Variations in this group's attitudes is believed to be a good indicator of popular specific support for the government.

Government performance has been affected by the frequent change of governments and reshuffles. In the period between 1989-2001 eleven governments had been formed, all were reshuffled at least once. The average life of these governments was around one year. This conforms to a pattern in Jordan's politics; in the period between 1960 and May 2002 the average age of governments is 337 days, or roughly 11 months. Each government starts its term in office with high expectations about improvement of living standards, eradication of corruption, unemployment and poverty.<sup>32</sup> Also new governments tend to be expected to enhance the democratisation process, expand civil liberties political rights.<sup>33</sup> Overall, there has been relatively precipitous decline in governments' perceived performance between 1996 and 2001 the period for which data are available. Figure (7-2) reports the percentage of people experiencing *high* degree of confidence in incoming

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<sup>31</sup> These data are available in reports published by the Centre for Strategic Studies at the university of Jordan on Government Performance between 1996-2001. Summaries of these reports are available at CSS' web site [www.css-jordan.org](http://www.css-jordan.org)

<sup>32</sup> These three issues were reported by respondents to CSS's surveys on government performance.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

governments both at elite (see a description of the elite sample in chapter 4) level. The trend lines demonstrate that popular confidence in new governments (denoted by NG in Figure 7-2) has declined over the period 1996-2001. Why has this been the case? Our data do not provide any explanation as such, but a brief review of the events in the period will bring out some possible reasons.

One explanation may be found in the frequent changes of government. This may have allowed the King to 'sack' unsuccessful governments or ministers. The downside is the popular esteem of government remains low, even when low perceived governments' performance is primarily due to lack of adequate resources available to these governments to tackle the longstanding issues. In addition, these governments have pursued a cautious policy regarding democratisation despite strong popular demand. Themes such as 'responsible democracy' meant to some governments the possibility to crack down on press freedom and freedom of expression when they were criticised in the media. As a result people began to face the fact that the incoming government was not going to be better than the outgoing one as the trend line in (Figure 7-2) demonstrates. Evaluations of government performance show popular confidence in successive governments is fading away. A look at the evaluations by the elite (Opinion leaders) in our samples reveals a similar trend.

The elites seem to follow the same pattern as the masses regarding confidence in the likely and perceived actual performance of governments. However, there are some differences in the extent of confidence. When these surveys began in 1996 the elites appeared to be more critical and less confident than the masses. Overtime the differences disappeared. In December 2001 (the latest data appoint in Figure 7-2) we have slightly more confidence among Opinion leaders. In November 1998 when elite confidence in government performance was lower than the mass confidence, the government was changed. Both masses and elites' confidence in the new government increased but not for long. After 100 days in office, the perceived performance of the government plunged and since then the pattern of decline in confidence continues. Even the formation of a new



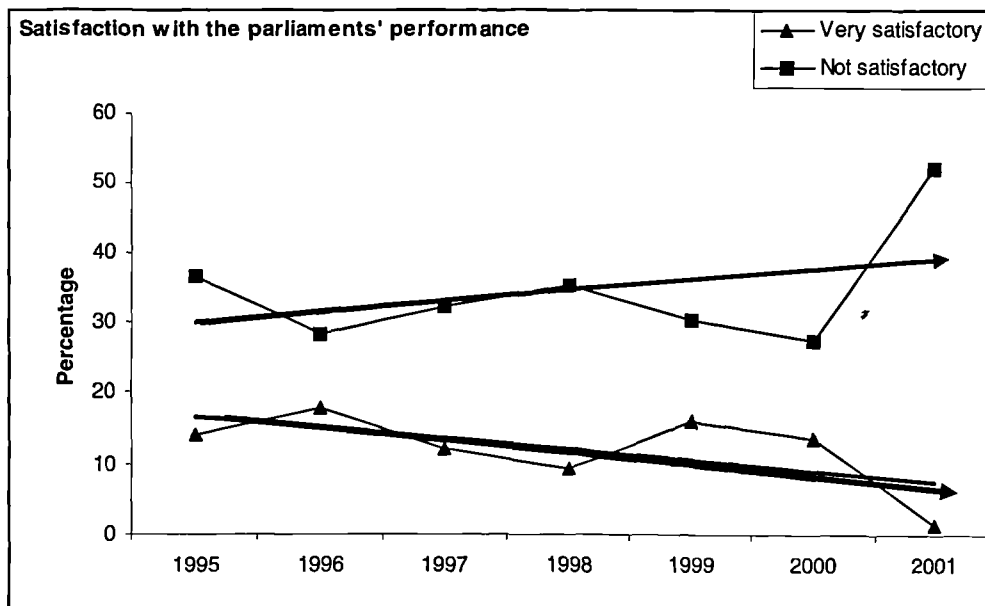
government in July 2000 did not cause an increase of confidence in expected and perceived government performance.

Overall, the decline of confidence in successive incoming governments' capabilities is also evident in the mirroring percentages of people reported governments were either incapable or capable to little degree and medium degree of shouldering the responsibilities of governance. Thus, while the percentages of confident people in governments' performance have decreased, the percentages of the sceptical people have increased. The same pattern was traced in regard to perceived actual performance of the successive governments.

### Parliaments' Performance (1993 and 1997 parliaments)

Popular satisfaction with performance of the parliament as an essential institution for democratic accountability reflects the degree to which people are satisfied with the way

Figure (7-3) popular satisfaction with parliament's performance between 1995-2001



Data source: CSS's surveys on democracy in Jordan between 1995 and 2001.

democracy is developing in their country. Also, it reflects the ability of the institution to deliver on issues of public concern especially economic security issues like unemployment and poverty. In democratising countries the two levels overlap in the public's understanding of the role of parliament. Although one may believe strongly in

democracy as the ideal form of government, a lack of confidence in democratically elected institutions would suggest that the desire expressed for democracy in principle may be shallow and based on an elite understanding of how democratic institutions work.

The weak and declining confidence in parliament is likely to be the result of the domination of the executive over the legislative and the judicial branches,<sup>34</sup> a typical phenomenon in non-democracies. Figure (7-3) reveals a continuous decline of the levels of satisfaction with parliament's performance, which reached alarming levels in 2001, when only (1.5%) of the Jordanian population were very satisfied with the performance of the parliament. In the descriptive statistics provide above, we have established that there a relatively high level of diffuse support for the parliament as an institution among Jordanians. Here, we are addressing the levels of specific support to the parliament; the perceived actual performance of the authorities (incumbents) of the parliament. Do low levels of specific support mean people do not want democratic institutions such as parliament?

If perceived actual performance of the parliamentary authorities continues following this pattern of decline, then we may face a serious problem convincing the increasingly dissatisfied people (52.7%) of the population with MPs performance of the value of parliament as a *democratic institution, because long term persistence of low specific* support to parliamentary authorities may cause the public to reconsider the value of the institution per se. So far this does not seem to have taken place. But the possibility that it will, is quite likely if perceived MPs performance does not improve. The systematic pattern of declining satisfaction with MPs performance as shown by the trend line (Figure 7-3) highlights not only a crises of confidence in the performance of MPs, but also the need for reform and empowerment from within: empowerment against the dominating

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<sup>34</sup> Professor Ali Mahafzeh has successfully demonstrated in details how the executive in dominates other branches of government. Many observers may not share his analysis and conclusion (especially establishment advocates) but given his involvement in political life, access to the ruling elite, and above all his over 30 years-long academic career as a professor of modern and contemporary history, I have no doubt that his analysis and conclusion are very convincing and logical. See (in Arabic) Ali Mahafzeh (2001) *Restricted Democracy: the case of Jordan 1989-1999*, Beirut: Centre for Arab Unity Studies. Particularly chapter eight.

powerful executive authority and reform of the electoral system that ensures the election of a 'representative' parliament.

In 2001 when respondents were asked to evaluate the performance of three parliaments elected in 1989, 1993, and 1997, a third of the population reported no difference between the three, while a quarter reported that they did not know. These percentages can be interpreted in different ways, but obviously one cannot conceal the crises MPs have with the public. However, 12.3% reported that 1989 parliament was more effective compared to 13.1% for 1993 parliament and 12.6% for 1997 parliament. These figures reflect a consensus on the evaluation of the MPs performance as ineffective. Ideally the performance of the parliament should improve if the democratisation process is moving forward and accordingly the 1997 parliament should have been the most effective because of the supposed accumulation of democratic experience. The evidence neither suggests nor supports this scenario. The short time span of 12 years (three parliaments) might not have been enough to fairly judge the performance of the MPs parliament, but had the parliaments' effectiveness been improving, respondents would have gradually reflected it.

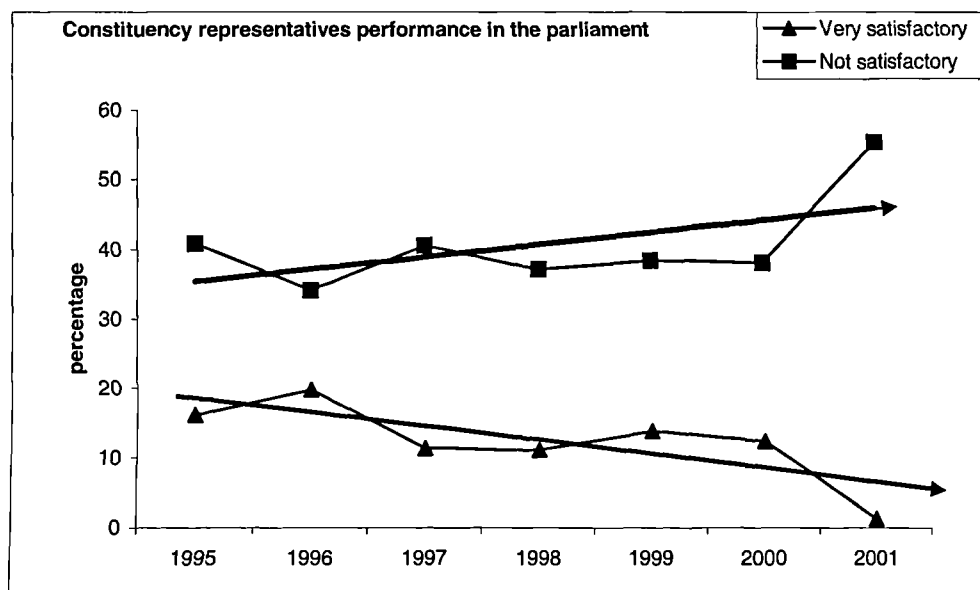
How can we explain the low and declining confidence in performance of MPs in the Jordanian parliament? Subordination of parliament by the executive is seen to have some effect on the performance of MPs. My reading is that the governing political elite prefers a weak and government-dependent parliament in order to pursue its agenda. The manipulation of parliament manifests itself in patterns of nepotism and favouritism; MPs uncritically supporting the government enjoy substantial benefits for their constituencies such as appointments in governmental posts.<sup>35</sup> This method of benefits distribution is limited to a small number of citizens (the inner circles of MPs), thus the majority of the public interests are untended to.

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<sup>35</sup> Many ordinary people had expressed anger and frustration arguing that the MPs have betrayed them and accepted bribery from the government. Also, MPs were accused of seeking personal benefits rather than looking after the interests of their constituencies. I personally observed such attitudes not only at the mass level but also among the elite. Moreover, in 1994 the king decided to allow all MPs to buy cars without paying any duties to the customs department and later all the senators were given the same benefit while ordinary people had to pay. This was seen as unlawful discrimination, which obviously did not help the parliament to improve its monotonous image.

Popular satisfaction with the individual members of parliament as constituency representatives (Figure 7-4) does not deviate from the general pattern outlined above. The persistence of this pattern confirms the deteriorating confidence increasingly felt by the public regarding incompetence of representatives elected to the parliament. With (55.4%)

Figure (7-4) Satisfaction with constituency representatives in the parliament



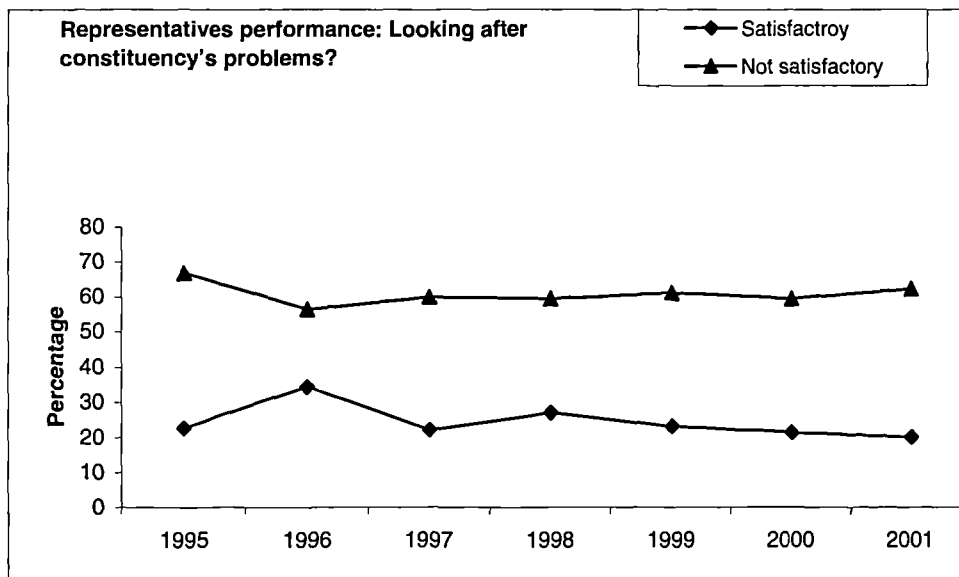
Data source: CSS's surveys on democracy in Jordan between 1995 and 2001.

of the population expressing their dissatisfaction with performance of their constituency representatives, confidence in the members of parliament is low. Other indicators reaffirm this outcome: in 2001 only (1%) of the population reported that they were very satisfied with the frequency of contact between constituency representatives and the electorate, while (31.7%) were not satisfied at all. Moreover, (55.8%) of the population reported that they were not satisfied with the performance of their constituency representatives as agents holding the government accountable, while only (1.3%) of respondents were very satisfied.

The evidence presented so far points to an escalating crisis of confidence in members of parliament as well as the performance of the institution as a whole. Jordanians MPs are not seen to compensate perceived failure to hold the executive accountable. In 2001, around two thirds of the population are not satisfied with the performance of MPs and the

percentages of those satisfied are declining while the dissatisfaction is increasing. These evidence suggests that there is a crisis of legitimacy. The inability of the parliament and its members to shoulder the responsibilities of representation, legislation, and look after the interests of the voters has de-legitimised the effectiveness of parliament in the public's eye. Thus, the experience with MPs performance has effectively eroded some of the diffuse support for the institution. As Easton's theoretical framework of political support suggests,<sup>36</sup> if this trend continues, it will weaken diffuse support for parliament.

Figure (7-5) Satisfaction with MPs performance in 1993 and 1997 parliaments



Data source: CSS's surveys on democracy in Jordan between 1995 and 2001.

Democracy cannot function effectively without a minimum of support for parliament representing the various political currents of the society.<sup>37</sup> Unfortunately, we do not have data for the same indicators presented above to trace the performance of 1989 parliament, which was according to many observers a strong parliament which managed to challenge the established 'power centres' by probing corruption allegations<sup>38</sup>. Nonetheless, the two

<sup>36</sup> Easton. Op. cit. p. 444.

<sup>37</sup> See, for example, Mezey, Michael, *Comparative Legislatures*, Durham, NC. Durham University Press, 1979; Dalton, Russell. 'Political Support in Advanced Industrial Democracies', in Norris, Pippa (ed.) *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Governance*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1999. pp 57-77; Fuchs, Dieter. & Klingemann, Hans-Dieter. 'Support for Democratic System', in Klingemann, Hans-Dieter. & Fuchs, Dieter. (eds.) *Citizens and the State*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

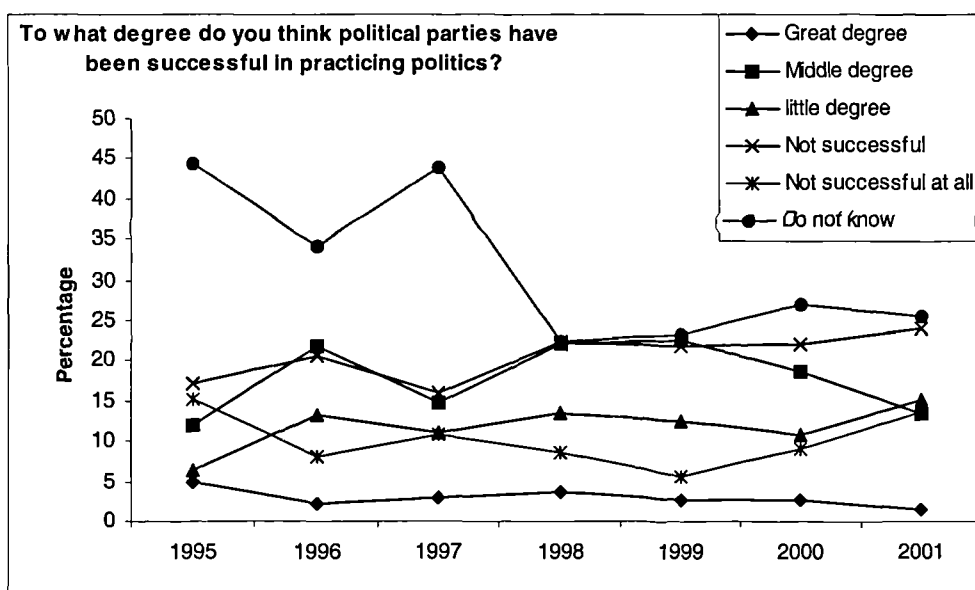
<sup>38</sup> These efforts did not go that far because the MP who was the driving force behind it was arrested by the security forces and trailed in a state security court over accusations of forming a militia to overthrow the king. Of course he denied all these allegations but nonetheless he was imprisoned. Since then all corruption

parliaments for which we have data for detailed indicators over the past ten years, which cover much of the democratisation period (1989-2001) provide sufficient evidence to evaluate the performance members of parliament.

### Performance of Political Parties

Perceived performance of whether political parties have been successful in the public domain refers to specific support for the political system. Political parties have not fared much better in terms of popular confidence in their perceived actual performance. On

Figure (7-6) Popular evaluation of political parties performance between 1995 and 2001.



Data source: CSS's surveys on democracy in Jordan between 1995 and 2001.

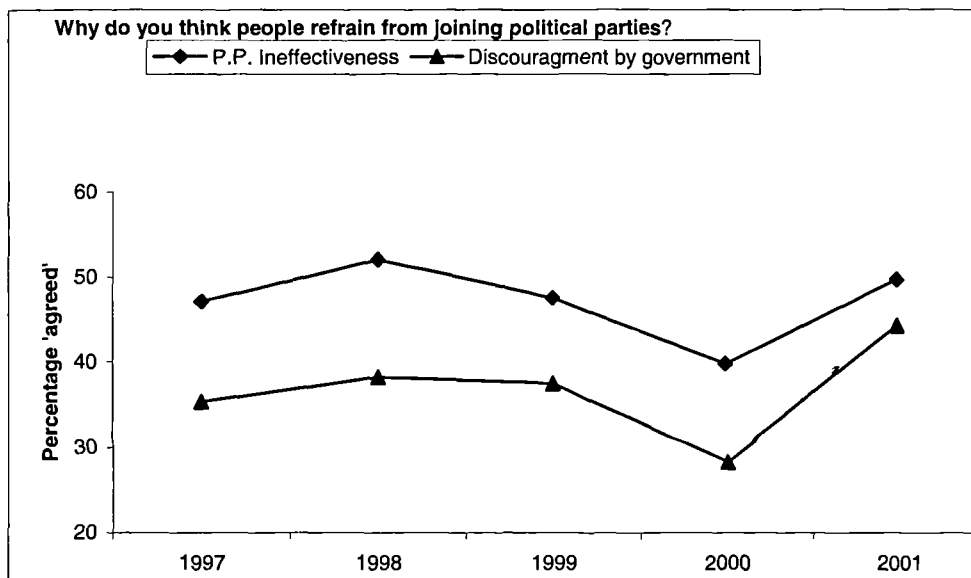
average less than 5% of the population reported that political parties were successful to a 'great degree' between 1995-2001. the greater the respondents' political knowledge, the lower their confidence in parties tend to be. For example, between 2000-2001 the percentage of respondents who think that 'political parties have not been politically successful' and 'have not been successful at all' increased, while the percentage of those who think that political parties have been 'successful to a great degree decreased' (Figure 7-6). Why have political parties been perceived as ineffective?

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files were laid to rest. It was widely believed that his trial was a fabrication by the affected power centres to prevent him from probing their files.

There are some contextual factors explaining the perceived failure of political parties in public opinion. Some of these factors are internal to the political parties others are external. External factors include the perceived negative attitude governments seem to have had towards political parties. This attitude had its roots in the period of martial law, but as the evidence suggests in 2001 (44.3%) of the population agreed that the government discourages people from joining political parties (Figure 7-7). This is still the case even 10 years after abolishing martial law. Government discouragement means a lack of human capital resources essential for the functioning of political parties. Moreover, the perceived reliance of some political parties on clannish, tribal, and geographical support is viewed by (46.6%) of the population as a reason why political parties have not been seen to be politically successful. Given these external limitations of political parties, we should not expect high levels of popular confidence in their performance.

Figure (7-7) popular perceptions of the reasons behind low engagement with political parties



Data source: CSS's surveys on democracy in Jordan between 1995 and 2001.

Internal factors include the low levels of financial and organisational capital given the restrictions imposed on them by the government. For example, in 2001 (40%) of the population agreed that the financial resources of the political parties are insufficient, while (15.5%) disagreed and (30.15%) did not know. Similarly (42.5%) agreed that the

organisational resources of the political parties are insufficient, while (12.4%) disagreed and (30.2%) did not know. Moreover, the legislation on political parties did not provide for public financial assistance of any kind to the parties. Therefore, political parties were left to rely on the rather meagre membership fees. The skimpy resources of political parties did not allow for the development of serious political programs and therefore (49.7%) of the population reported that the political programs of political parties do not address the real issues of concern to the people, which is why they are seen to have been unsuccessful.



## Conclusion

In this chapter an attempt was made to evaluate political support for the current political regime in Jordan. We attempted to map political support by answering a set of questions pertaining to regime support. The most important question in this context was to investigate whether high levels of support for democracy as an ideal form of government in Jordan represent dissatisfaction with the performance of the current political regime. The results of our logistic regression suggests that regime performance has no significant impact on support for democracy. Levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the performance (output) of the political regime are not significantly related to support for democracy. Also, the logistic regression analyses suggests that respondents who have little confidence in regime institutions tend to be more favourably disposed to liberal-democratic values than those who have full confidence. Moreover, persons with low or negative scores on the national-unity dimension are significantly more likely to be supportive of democracy than others. Finally, high levels of religiosity reduce the probability of a person *having liberal-democratic values significantly at the five-percent level*. In other words, we observe a combination of political and religious motivations. Jordanians who are religious, generally supportive of the existing institutions and generally prepared to value party competition higher than national unity will tend to be more supportive of liberal-democratic values than those who do not. Interestingly, the dissatisfaction with the regime's short-term performance (specific support) is statistically insignificant.

In other words, there is a relatively high level of support for the political system in Jordan. The system is not a democracy and not entirely authoritarian. The core institutions of the system have high levels of popular support; the society value them as integral part of the system. Pluralistic institutions (parliament and political parties) have relatively lower levels of mass support. Political parties remarkably lack popular support; they ranked the lowest among all institutions included in the analysis (Table 7-2), they are not valued by the society as integral part of the system. This, however, cannot be interpreted as mass support for authoritarian orientations among Jordanians. Had Jordanians been culturally predisposed as supportive of authoritarianism, the

majority of them (58.0%) would have not said that authoritarian leadership is bad or very bad system of government for Jordan as shown in (Table 7-5) above.

Regime performance at the specific level was taken to a more detailed investigation in which the performance of the government, parliament, and political parties was brought in via time series data. This analysis revealed that parliament, government, and political parties performance have not impressed the public. Masses and elites alike have a tendency to show that their already modest confidence in the successive governments' capability to shoulder the responsibilities of governance is increasingly declining. The regime's strategy of frequent change of governments and reshuffles is losing pace. Lately the public –masses and elites- are realising that governments' changes are not generating the hopes that they used to produce earlier among the public. If this pattern continues, one would wonder what strategy -if any- the regime would pursue to keep the hope of the people in a better life alive. There are two probable alternatives: First, is to resort to genuine democracy. This option is more plausible because its cost is relatively low. Democracy has high levels of support in the society and there is a sense of political community, which is needed for a democracy to work. The second is to retreat from the democratisation process and possibly impose a martial-law-like system where by any expression of frustration with the political life in the country would be treated as a matter of national security and thus justify oppression. The latter option could be resorted to if the levels of specific support continue declining and the incumbents reach a bankruptcy of popular support.

Well, is the Jordanian political regime lagging behind popular expectations? The evidence suggests that there is a reasonable level of diffuse support for the political regime. Also, on a more detailed level specific support for the political system –measured by performance of successive governments, parliaments, and political parties- is rather weak as compared to diffuse support. The performance of the regime all together is lagging behind popular expectation. There is a relatively obvious gap between levels of diffuse support and levels of specific support. The absence of proper democratic practice in Jordan could be, as the evidence overwhelmingly suggest, attributed to the survival

strategy of the regime and the implications of that on governments' behaviour which have to ensure it.

Adding to the findings of the previous chapter, we can safely conclude that there are more important issues to be addressed than 'cultural traits' when addressing the problem of democracy in Jordan. Satisfied respondents with the political regime (people who have high levels of confidence in the existing regime institutions) tend to be less supportive of democracy than those who express less confidence in regime institutions. The satisfaction factor is far more important than the cultural factor (religiosity). The evidence we analysed in this chapter suggest that 'culture' (measured by Islamic religiosity) is not the most important factor in explaining the underdevelopment of democracy in Jordan. This defies the conventional wisdom of orientalist and culturalists, who tend to use the variable 'Islamic culture' as the main and often the only explanatory variables when explaining the underdevelopment of democracy in the Muslim world. However, these factors will be put to a more rigorous and comprehensive models in the next chapter in order to establish the net effect they have when controlling for other socio-economic and socio-political variables.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **Socio-economic Sources of Support for Democracy and Authoritarianism**

## Socio-economic Sources of Support for Democracy and Authoritarianism

### Introduction

In chapters five and six we established that the association between Islamic religiosity and support for democracy and authoritarianism tends to be statistically insignificant and weak at the aggregate and individual levels. In chapter seven we also concluded that individuals perceive political action as a high-risk activity, which is arguably one of the main reasons why the desire for democracy does not translate into effective pressure for democratic change. In the previous analyses we did not disaggregate the data to analyse variations among different social groups. In this chapter we intend to disaggregate the data in order to establish whether there are variations among societal groups regarding support for democracy and authoritarianism. This will also allow us to test some of the claims of modernisation theory at the individual level.

For this purpose we intend to test the association between some individual resources<sup>1</sup> on the one hand and support for democracy and authoritarianism on the other. Individual resources as used in this work comprise of education, job specification skills, and wealth (household annual income), variables that capture the essence of modernisation-theoretic studies. Other social stratification categories such as ethnicity, urban-rural divide, subjective social class, and age are also analysed in order to determine whether they influence support for democracy and authoritarianism. Each of these categories may or may not influence individuals' attitudes toward democracy and authoritarianism but it is important to investigate these underlying social structures in order to fulfil two objectives. Firstly, there is a theoretical significance of this exercise, that is, as explained in chapter three, there are winners and losers of modernisation process. Winners of modernisation as rational actors are expected to preserve their gains; by implication they may support the existing political system that could potentially increase these gains. By contrast, losers of modernisation, also conceived of as rational actors, are expected to be critical of the existing political system which they often blame for their predicament.

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<sup>1</sup> See Parry, Geraint., Moyser, George., and Day, Neil. *Political Participation and Democracy in Britain*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp 63-84.

Thus, they may have direct interest in supporting an alternative political system in order to improve their chances of material gains.

There are certain social structures that indicate the interest of their members in a dynamic modernisation process. Social class is one of these indicators. For example, the working class being in an inferior material position to the middle and upper classes may be expected to be critical of the political system and its members are more likely to support an alternative political system in order to improve their material position in terms of wealth. Education is another indicator of social stratification which may influence individuals' attitudes towards the political system. Individuals with high levels of education may have more support for democracy than those who have no formal education or low levels of education. This rests on the assumption that individuals with more knowledge may prefer a democratic political system as a mechanism to settle political differences peacefully. Nonetheless, we may find more support for democracy amongst individuals with low levels of education because they may think that their chances of getting a better education will improve with democratic political system. These questions beg empirical testing.

In the following sections of this chapter we test the association between individual and group (social stratification indicators) resources on one the hand and support for democracy and authoritarianism in the Jordanian context on the other. This will be carried out using bivariate crosstabulations. Each independent variable of individual and group resources will be correlated with the two dependent variables (support for democracy and authoritarianism). After establishing whether there are relationships or not, we intend to carry out a multivariate analysis of these variables in order to examine the net effect of each independent variable on the dependent variables controlling for all other variables. In addition to the variables that constitute the focus of this chapter, we will bring in subjective religiosity and the three underlying dimensions of regime support found in chapter seven (regime institutions, regime performance, and political community). This exercise will allow us to determine the net effect socio-economic modernisation in the sense of the third chapter controlling for religiosity and the support

for the Jordanian state role of the Jordanian state on popular support for democracy and authoritarianism.

### Democracy and Authoritarianism

The dependent variables (support for democracy and authoritarianism) used in this chapter based on the same operationalisation used throughout this thesis. We aggregated responses to these variables into two categories for each variables. For ‘support for democracy’ the percentages of those who ‘strongly agreed’ and ‘agreed’ to the statement ‘democracy may have some problems but it is better than any other form of government’ were added up, and the same was applied to those who ‘strongly disagreed’ and ‘disagreed’ (Table 8-1).

Table (8-1) Support for democracy (Democracy better than any other form of government )

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	109	8.9	10.6	10.6
	Agree	922	75.5	89.4	100.0
	Total	1032	84.4	100.0	
Missing	System	191	15.6		
Total		1222	100.0		

Data Source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001.

Authoritarianism is measured by the preference to a ‘strong head of government who does not have to bother with elections and parliament’. For this variable the percentages of those who preferred a strong authoritarian leader (reported ‘very good’ or ‘fairly good’) were added up, and the same was applied to those who reported ‘fairly bad’ or ‘very bad’ (Table 8-2).

Table (8-2) support for authoritarianism (Is it good or bad to have a strong head of government who does not have to bother with elections and parliament?)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Good	460	37.6	42.0	42.0
	Bad	636	52.0	58.0	100.0
	Total	1096	89.7	100.0	
Missing	System	126	10.3		
Total		1222	100.0		

Data Source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001.

In the following sections we will carry out crosstabulations between these two dependent variables and variables measuring individual’s personal resources and their location in the system of social stratification that are particularly suitable to establish whether a

person is likely to be a winner or loser of socio-economic modernisation process emphasized in modernisation theories. For each crosstabulation we will present two statistical tests Chi-square and Lambda. These tests will tell us how strong the association between these variables is and whether the association between the dependent and independent variables are statistically significant or not. We will start with the individual resources: education, wealth, and job specialisation.

### **Individual Resources**

'Resources' as an analytical concept is usually used in studying political mobilisation and participation.<sup>2</sup> Resources mean -among other things- material wealth, education, and skills. These resources could constrain or promote individuals' attitudes towards politics and their ability to benefit from the socio-economic modernisation process experienced by Jordanians; these resources can be mobilised in order to further the interest of those who possess them. Individuals possessing these resources are more likely to mobilise them in order to maintain or increase their gains in a given political context and against the background of socio-economic modernisation. In democratic societies individual resources could be more important than in non-democratic societies. In the former, individuals' political rights and civil liberties are guaranteed while in the latter they are not. Thus, in non-democratic societies individual resources may act as mobilising force at the attitudinal level (i.e. scarcity or availability of resources may influence individuals' perceptions of the political system). In a sense, they may change individuals' political ideas about the political system under which they live. Individuals may not be able to take political action in order express their views but they may be willing to express political preferences in another setting (i.e. as respondents to a survey questionnaire).

In this context we will examine the impact of individual resources on orientations towards democratic and authoritarian rules in the Jordanian context. As we have established in chapter seven, Jordan is classified as a 'partly free' country according to the Jordanian public opinion and the Freedom House data. Jordanians have experienced a political system which has authoritarian and democratic traits. Certainly there are

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid. pp 64-67.



segments of Jordanian society that benefited from the political system both when it was completely authoritarian and when it was liberalised. However, the respondents to the WVS survey in 2001 were at least 18 years old and above. Those respondents were socialised under the authoritarian rule of the Jordanian political system. The youngest respondent to the survey was born in 1983 i.e. six years before the political liberalisation of the country started. The relative political openness of the political system since 1989 gave Jordanians a feeling of democratic freedom. In addition to exposure to other democratic experiences (for example, Israel) Jordanians have developed a clear concept of democracy (as we saw in chapter seven). So far we do not know whether individual resources acquired under the authoritarian regime make a difference to Jordanians' attitudes towards democracy and authoritarianism. Education is the first of the individual resources that we will examine. Before we proceed, one caveat is necessary. Resources may not be equally important to all individuals. Nevertheless, they may give us an indication of the social basis for support for either democracy or authoritarianism.

### **Education**

Education is seen to be a very important factor because it can improve individuals' capacity to articulate what is best for them and to benefit from the socio-economic modernisation process of the past decades. High levels of education can be considered as skills acquired by individuals in order to better their chances in life. Individuals with high levels of education can be seen as better equipped to evaluate various types of political systems. In the context of Western democracies people with higher levels of education are more likely to prefer democracy over other forms of government. In the Jordanian context the opposite may well be the case, as hypothesised in chapter three. Below we will test whether education has an impact on orientations towards democracy and authoritarianism. Table (8-3) below presents the distribution of levels of education in the sample. Because we have nine categories for the variable education, these categories will be regrouped in order to facilitate crosstabulations as will be explained below. Education will be reclassified twice in order to establish whether inclusion of respondents with no formal education will influence the overall associations between education and support for democracy and authoritarianism.

Table (8-3) What is the highest educational level that you have attained?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No Formal Education	108	8.8	8.9	8.9
	Incomplete primary school	75	6.1	6.1	15.0
	Complete primary school	340	27.8	27.8	42.8
	Incomplete Secondary school: technical/Vocational type	65	5.3	5.3	48.1
	Complete Secondary school: technical/Vocational type	67	5.5	5.5	53.6
	Incomplete secondary: university-preparatory type	99	8.1	8.1	61.7
	Complete secondary: university-preparatory type	167	13.6	13.7	75.4
	Some University-Level education, without degree	192	15.7	15.7	91.1
	University-Level education, with degree + further higher education	109	8.9	8.9	100.0
	Total	1220	99.8	100.0	
Missing	DK/NA	2	.2		
Total		1222	100.0		

Data Source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001.

**Classification one:** the variable education is reclassified into three categories (Table 8-4). The first category (Low Education) includes respondents with 'no formal education', 'incomplete primary education', and 'complete primary education'. The second categories (Intermediate Education) includes 'Incomplete Secondary school: technical/Vocational type', 'Complete Secondary school: technical/vocational type', and 'complete secondary: university-preparatory type'. The third category (High Education) includes 'some university-level education, without degree', and 'university-Level education, with degree + further higher education'. The rationale behind this

Table (8-4) Education – classification one

	Level of Education	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Low	523	42.7	42.8	42.8
	2 Intermediate	397	32.5	32.5	75.4
	3 High	301	24.6	24.6	100.0
	Total	1220	99.8	100.0	
Missing	System	2	.2		
Total		1222	100.0		

Data Source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001.

classification is that these categories represent low, intermediate, and high levels of education respectively.

Education and Support for Democracy. The crosstabulation below (Table 8-5) shows that the association between education and support for democracy is weak and statistically insignificant at the five percent level. It also shows that the variations between levels of education are very small and have no significant association with support for democracy. This conclusion is supported by chi-square value of 2.461. Also Lambda test of association produced a value of (.000) meaning knowledge of the independent variable (education) will not help in reducing the error in predicting support for democracy.

Table (8-5) a crosstabulation between 'Support for democracy' and 'education'

		Levels of Education				
		Low	Intermediate	High	Total	
democracy better than any other form of government	Disagree	Count	47	32	30	109
		% within Education	12.4%	8.9%	10.4%	10.6%
		% of Total	4.6%	3.1%	2.9%	10.6%
	Agree	Count	332	329	259	920
		% within Education	87.6%	91.1%	89.6%	89.4%
		% of Total	32.3%	32.0%	25.2%	89.4%
	Total	Count	379	361	289	1029
		% within Education	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	36.8%	35.1%	28.1%	100.0%

Chi-Square value = 2.461 with 2 degrees of freedom and  $p=.292$ . insignificant at the 5% level.  
 Data Source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001.

Education and Support for Authoritarianism. Table (8-6) shows that rejection of authoritarianism tends to increase as levels of education increase. Respondents with intermediate levels of education tend to reject authoritarianism more than any other category. Despite these variations the association between education and support for authoritarianism is also statistically insignificant at the five percent level. A Lambda value of (.000) also suggests that knowledge of education does not help reducing the error in predicting support for authoritarianism.

Table (8-6) a crosstabulation between support authoritarianism and education

		Levels of Education				
			Low	Intermediate	High	Total
Authoritarianism	Good	Count	198	144	116	458
		% within Education	45.2%	39.0%	40.6%	41.9%
		% of Total	18.1%	13.2%	10.6%	41.9%
	Bad	Count	240	225	170	635
		% within Education	54.8%	61.0%	59.4%	58.1%
		% of Total	22.0%	20.6%	15.6%	58.1%
Total	Count	438	369	286	1093	
	% within Education	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	40.1%	33.8%	26.2%	100.0%	

Chi-Square value = 3.430 with 2 degrees of freedom and  $p=.180$ . insignificant at the 5% level.

Data Source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001.

Although there appears to be some association between low levels of education and support for authoritarianism, we cannot reject the null hypothesis, i.e. that the association is non-existent in the population. That means respondents' schooling under authoritarian rule made little difference to their orientations towards the political system.

**Classification two:** education categories were regrouped in a different way in order to exclude respondents with 'no formal education' from the low levels of education category, 'basic and secondary' were regrouped in one category, and the category of 'higher education' remained unchanged (Table 8-7).

Table (8-7) education – classification 2

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No formal education	108	8.8	8.8	8.8
	Basic and secondary	814	66.6	66.6	75.4
	Higher education	301	24.6	24.6	100.0
	Total	1222	100.0	100.0	

Data Source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001.

Table (8-8) below shows that the association between support for democracy and education is even weaker than in Table (8-5) above. Variations among basic and secondary education on one hand, and higher education on the other decreased substantially, while respondents with 'no formal education' appear to be less supportive of democracy than educated respondents. This conclusion is supported by a low chi-

square value .870 and a  $p$  value = .647 meaning that the association is weak and statistically insignificant. This result is also confirmed by Lambda value (.000) meaning knowledge of education does not reduce error in predicting support for democracy. The same results were also obtained when we crosstabulated education (classification two) with authoritarianism (Table 8-9) below.

Table (8-8) a crosstabulation between 'support for democracy' and 'education' (classification 2)

		Education			Total	
		No formal education	Basic and secondary	Higher education		
Democracy Better than any other form of government	Disagree	Count	8	71	30	109
		% within Education	14.3%	10.3%	10.4%	10.6%
		% of Total	.8%	6.9%	2.9%	10.6%
	Agree	Count	48	616	259	923
		% within Education	85.7%	89.7%	89.6%	89.4%
		% of Total	4.7%	59.7%	25.1%	89.4%
Total	Count	56	687	289	1032	
	% within Education	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	5.4%	66.6%	28.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square value = .870 with 2 degrees of freedom and  $p=.647$ . insignificant at the 5% level.  
Data Source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001

Table (8-9) a crosstabulation between support for authoritarianism and education (classification two)

		Education			Total	
		No formal education	Basic and secondary	Higher education		
Authoritarianism	Good	Count	34	310	116	460
		% within Education	41.0%	42.6%	40.6%	42.0%
		% of Total	3.1%	28.3%	10.6%	42.0%
	Bad	Count	49	417	170	636
		% within Education	59.0%	57.4%	59.4%	58.0%
		% of Total	4.5%	38.0%	15.5%	58.0%
Total	Count	83	727	286	1096	
	% within Education	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	7.6%	66.3%	26.1%	100.0%	

Chi-Square value = .403 with 2 degrees of freedom and  $p=.818$ . insignificant at the 5% level.  
Data Source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001

In sum, therefore, support for democracy and authoritarianism seems to vary independently from education. Despite the fact that respondents with low levels of education seem to be more supportive of authoritarianism and less supportive of democracy, these variations are weak and statistically insignificant. In the next section we will examine whether there is an association between another indicator of individual resources and support for democracy and authoritarianism.

## Wealth

This indicator of individual resources is measured by respondents' self-reporting of their household annual income in Jordanian Dinar in September 2001. This indicator was regrouped into two categories in order to facilitate presentation and crosstabulations as follows: First, the average household annual income was calculated on the 16-category scale below (Table 8-10). The average was 4.38 approximately 2400 Jordanian Dinars<sup>3</sup>. Second, the indicator was recoded into two categories 'below average' and 'above average' (Table 8-11).

Table (8-10) Household income a year JDs

Category		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	Less than 1200JD a year	202	16.5	17.9	17.9
2	1200-1799	209	17.1	18.5	36.4
3	1800-2399	172	14.0	15.2	51.6
4	2400-2999	152	12.4	13.4	65.1
Average = 4.38					
5	3000-3599	82	6.7	7.2	72.3
6	3600-4199	70	5.7	6.2	78.5
7	4200-4799	51	4.2	4.5	83.0
8	4800-5399	48	3.9	4.2	87.3
9	5400-5999	34	2.8	3.0	90.3
10	6000-6599	41	3.3	3.6	93.9
11	6600-7199	16	1.3	1.4	95.3
12	7200-7799	16	1.3	1.4	96.7
13	7800-8399	11	.9	1.0	97.7
14	8400-8799	1	.1	.1	97.8
15	8800-9199	5	.4	.4	98.2
16	More than 9200	20	1.7	1.8	100.0
Total		1128	92.3	100.0	
Missing	Not specified	13	1.1		
	DK	81	6.6		
	Total	94	7.7		
Total		1222	100.0		

Mean score = 4.38 (this means that the average household income is around 2400 JD a year)

Data Source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001

<sup>3</sup> In September 2001 (the time of data collection) one Jordanian Dinar was exchanged for 1.30 US Dollar.

Table (8-11) household income (below and above average)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below average	734	60.0	69.3	69.3
	Above average	325	26.6	30.7	100.0
	Total	1059	86.7	100.0	
Missing	System	163	13.3		
	Total	1222	100.0		

Data Source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001

Wealth and Support for Democracy. The association between wealth and support for democracy is weak and statistically insignificant (Table 8-12). Respondents with below average household income are less supportive of democracy than those above average. Despite the variations between these two groups regarding support for democracy, one cannot read much into it because knowledge of income distribution does not help to reduce the error in predicting support for democracy (Lambda value: .000). Thus, support for democracy is almost equally shared by respondents of the two groups. Will this similarity remain when we test the association between wealth and support for authoritarianism?

Table (8-12) a crosstabulation between support for democracy and household income (below and above average)

			Household income		
			Below average	Above average	Total
Democracy better than any other form of government	Disagree	Count	74	25	99
		% within Household income	12.2%	8.6%	11.0%
		% of Total	8.2%	2.8%	11.0%
	Agree	Count	533	266	799
		% within Household income	87.8%	91.4%	89.0%
		% of Total	59.4%	29.6%	89.0%
Total	Count	607	291	898	
	% within Household income	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	67.6%	32.4%	100.0%	

Chi-Square value = 2.599 with 1 degree of freedom and  $p=.107$ . insignificant at the 5% level.

Data Source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001

Wealth and Support for Authoritarianism. The crosstabulation between wealth and support for authoritarianism (Table 8-13) reveals that there is a strong and statistically significant relationship between support for authoritarianism and above-average household income. In other words, respondents from richer households tend to express more support for authoritarianism than respondents from poorer households. A majority of respondents within the below-average category (60.4%) think that it is 'bad' to have a

strong leader who does not have to bother with elections and parliament. By contrast, a majority within the above-average household income category (51.1%) think that it is 'good' to have a strong leader who does not have to bother with elections and parliament. This outcome is supported by the relatively high value of chi-square (11.298) and the association between household income and support for authoritarianism is statistically significant at one-percent level ( $p = .001$ ). A Lambda value of (0.00) means that knowledge of levels of household income helps us to reduce the error in predicting support for authoritarianism. This finding is out of line with classical modernisation theory, but in line with the rational-utilitarian reformulation suggested in the third chapter of this thesis.

Table (8-13) a crosstabulation between support for authoritarianism and annual household income

			Household income		Total
			Below average	Above average	
Authoritarianism	Good	Count	256	159	415
		% within Household income	39.6%	51.1%	43.4%
		% of Total	26.8%	16.6%	43.4%
	Bad	Count	390	152	542
		% within Household income	60.4%	48.9%	56.6%
		% of Total	40.8%	15.9%	56.6%
Total	Count	646	311	957	
	% within Household income	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	67.5%	32.5%	100.0%	

Chi-Square value = 11.298 with 1 degree of freedom and  $p = .001$  significant at the 1% level.

Data Source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001

The association between support for authoritarianism and above average household income could be partly explained by the role of the political regime under King Hussein between 1952 and 1999. During this period the regime invested considerable resources in order to create a social base of support. This manifested in cash payments and other forms of support for influential tribal leaders and social notables in exchange for political loyalty to the political regime. Moreover, the same period witnessed massive urbanization and migration from rural to urban areas resulting in the development of relatively big cities. This urbanization brought with it commerce, which depended to a large extent on the state (the largest employer) contracts. Politically loyal merchants were in an advantageous position because they had easier access to state resources via



contracts and appointments to high-ranking positions in the state bureaucracy. There has been a convergence of interests between the authoritarian regime of King Hussein and some segments of the Jordanian society. These segments had benefited from the political system which happened to be authoritarian which is why there is still a preference for this type of politics amongst the more affluent Jordanians.

### Job Specialisation

Job specialisation as an indicator of individual resources was measured by the survey question in Table (8-14). This variable was recoded into two categories, 'manual' and

Table (8-14) In which profession/occupation do you or did you work? If more than one job, the main job?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Employer/manager of establishment with 10 or more employees	11	.9	.9	.9
2	Employer/manager of establishment with less than 10 employee	68	5.5	5.7	6.6
3	Professional worker lawyer, accountant, teacher, etc	122	10.0	10.2	16.8
4	Supervisory - office worker: supervises others.	38	3.1	3.2	20.0
5	non-manual - office worker: non-supervisory	29	2.4	2.4	22.4
6	Foreman and supervisor	29	2.4	2.5	24.9
7	Skilled manual worker	130	10.6	10.9	35.8
8	Semi-skilled manual worker	32	2.6	2.7	38.5
9	Unskilled manual worker	27	2.2	2.3	40.8
10	Farmer: has own farm	11	.9	.9	41.6
11	Agricultural worker	21	1.7	1.8	43.4
12	Member of armed forces, security personnel	86	7.0	7.2	50.7
13	Never had a job'	589	48.2	49.3	100.0
	Total	1193	97.6	100.0	
Missing	Not specified	30	2.4		
Total		1222	100.0		

Data Source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001

'non-manual' jobs (Table 8-15) in order to reduce the categories to a manageable number suitable for crosstabulations. In line with our rational-utilitarian reformulation of modernisation theory, is hypothesised that respondents with non-manual jobs are more likely to support democracy and less likely to support authoritarianism. The reason behind this hypothesis is that non-manual jobs require substantial knowledge acquisition and diversity. Therefore, individuals in such jobs are more knowledgeable than those in

manual jobs and thus more likely to benefit from the continued existence of the status quo. We will examine whether this classification make a difference regarding support for democracy and authoritarianism in Jordan.

Table (8-15) Job Specialisation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Manual job	307	25.1	50.9	50.9
	Non-Manual job	297	24.3	49.1	100.0
	Total	604	49.4	100.0	
Missing	System	618	50.6		
Total		1222	100.0		

Data Source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001.

Job Specialisation and Support for Democracy. The crosstabulation between job specialisation and support for democracy shows a very weak and statistically insignificant association between the two variables. Job specialisation does not seem to influence support for democracy substantially (Table 8-16). Respondents with manual

Table (8-16) a crosstabulation between support for democracy and Job specialisation

			Job Specialisation		Total
			Manual job	Non-Manual job	
Democracy better than any other form of government	Disagree	Count	18	28	46
		% within Job Specialisation	7.2%	9.9%	8.6%
		% of Total	3.4%	5.3%	8.6%
	Agree	Count	233	254	487
		% within Job Specialisation	92.8%	90.1%	91.4%
		% of Total	43.7%	47.7%	91.4%
Total	Count	251	282	533	
	% within Job Specialisation	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	47.1%	52.9%	100.0%	

Chi-Square value = 1.281 with 1 degree of freedom and  $p=.258$  insignificant at the 5% level.

Data Source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001

jobs tend to be more supportive of democracy than respondents with non-manual jobs but the variations are statistically insignificant. Knowledge of respondents' job specialisation does not help reducing the error in predicting support for democracy (Lambda value: .000). Does job specialisation make a difference regarding support for authoritarianism?

Job Specialisation and Support for Authoritarianism. Overall, the association between job specialisation and authoritarianism is weak and statistically insignificant. As with

attitudes towards democracy, respondents with non-manual jobs tend to be more supportive of authoritarianism (44.9%) than respondents with manual jobs (38.7%). However, it is evident that these variations are statistically insignificant at the five-percent level, and knowledge of job specialisation is unlikely to help reducing the error in predicting support for authoritarianism (Lambda value: .000).

Table (8-17) a crosstabulation between authoritarianism and job specialisation

		Job Specialisation			
		Manual job	Non-Manual job	Total	
Authoritarianism	Good	Count	104	127	231
		% within Job Specialisation	38.7%	44.9%	41.8%
		% of Total	18.8%	23.0%	41.8%
	Bad	Count	165	156	321
		% within Job Specialisation	61.3%	55.1%	58.2%
		% of Total	29.9%	28.3%	58.2%
Total		Count	269	283	552
		% within Job Specialisation	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	48.7%	51.3%	100.0%

Chi-Square value =2.189 with 1 degree of freedom and  $p=.139$  insignificant at the 5% level.

Data Source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001.

In sum, therefore, the hypothesised association between job specialisation and support for democracy and authoritarianism proved to be weak and statistically insignificant. Job specialisation was found to be a very weak indicator in predicting support for different types of political regimes. The small variations between respondents with manual and those with non-manual jobs are statistically insignificant.

### Group Resources

In the previous sections we examined the association between individual level resources (micro level resources) including education, household income, and job specialisation. We found no significant associations between education, and job specialisation on one hand and support for democracy and authoritarianism on the other. The only variable that showed a strong association with support for authoritarianism was household income; respondents with above-average annual household income tend to support authoritarianism more than respondents with below-average annual household income. This association was found to be significant at the one-percent level. In the next sections we will examine broader macro-level variables relating to social stratification such as

subjective social class, rural-urban divide, age, and ethnicity in order to establish whether these group characteristics have an association with support for democracy and authoritarianism in the Jordanian context. Group resources are not strictly defined in terms of specific properties. They are, however, meant to capture 'environmental' factors that are felt among certain social strata. For example, variations in the attitudes of different age groups could reflect cohort-specific socialisation, which might have been influenced by a certain set of events or regime properties in a given period of time. Let us first look at social class.

### **Social Class**

Social class is considered to be one of the important factors in determining the type of political attitudes and individual may have. Despite the assertion that middle classes are the backbone of democratic transformation<sup>4</sup> there are variations between middle classes in different societies. The middle classes have not always been pro-democratic. For example, the middle class in South Korea in the 1970s and early 1980s had acceded to authoritarianism,<sup>5</sup> while the middle class in Brazil supported authoritarianism during late 1960s and early 1970s.<sup>6</sup> The data we are working here are derived from subjective evaluation of social class in Jordan. These attitudinal data are taken at face value because our data set does not contain measures of objective social class indicators (such as car and property ownership). Also, the conventional variables usually included in building social class indexes (such as education and wealth) were used, and analysed independently in the previous sections of this chapter.

### **Subjective Social Class**

Subjective social class is measured by the survey question presented in Table (8-18) below. More than two thirds of the Jordanian population describe themselves as middle class (71.3%). This includes upper middle class (25.8%) and lower middle class (44.8%). This variable was recoded to three categories: upper class, middle class, and working

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<sup>4</sup> Lipset, S.M. *Political Man*, London: Heinemann. 1983.

<sup>5</sup> Potter, David. 'Democratisation at the same time in South Korea and Taiwan', in David Potter et al (eds.), *Democratisation*, Cambridge: Polity Press in association with the Open University. 1997. pp.219-237.

<sup>6</sup> Cammack, Paul. 'Democracy and Dictatorship in Latin America, 1930-1980', in David Potter et al (eds.), *Democratisation*, Cambridge: Polity Press in association with the Open University. 1997. pp 152-166.

class (Table 8-19). The reason why this variable was recoded is that initial testing showed no significant differences between sub-divisions within the three main social classes. That is, when crosstabulated with support for democracy the chi-square value was (6.798) with 4 degrees of freedom and  $p = .147$ . (insignificant at the five percent level). When the recoded social class variable was crosstabulated with support for democracy the result was chi-square value (3.807) with 2 degrees of freedom and  $p = .149$ . (insignificant at the five percent level). Taking this into account, the recoded variable will be used in the subsequent analyses.

Table (8-18) 'People sometimes describe themselves as belonging to the working class, the middle class, or the upper or lower class. Would you describe yourself as belonging to the:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Upper class	8	.7	.7	.7
	Upper middle class	309	25.2	25.8	26.5
	Lower middle class	537	43.9	44.8	71.3
	Working class	225	18.4	18.8	90.1
	Lower class	119	9.7	9.9	100.0
	Total	1198	98.0	100.0	
Missing	Not Specified	7	.6		
	Do not know	17	1.4		
	Total	24	2.0		
Total		1222	100.0		

Data Source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001.

Table (8-19) Social Class (recoded into three categories)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Upper class	8	.7	.7	.7
	Middle Class	846	69.2	70.6	71.3
	Working class	344	28.2	28.7	100.0
	Total	1198	98.0	100.0	
Missing	System	24	2.0		
Total		1222	100.0		

Data Source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001.

Subjective Social Class and Support for Democracy. The crosstabulation between social class and support for democracy (Table 8-20) below reveals that social class is weakly and insignificantly associated with support for democracy. An individual's position in the social system does not help predicting his/her support for democracy (Lambda value:

.000). Although there are relatively large variations between the upper class and the other two classes, these variations are statistically insignificant. This may be due to the small number of respondents in the upper-class category. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that in the sample the upper class is the least supportive of democracy (because the number of respondents is very small we have to be cautious about making generalizations).

Table (8-20) a crosstabulation between support for democracy and social Class

		Social Class				
			Upper	Middle	Working	Total
Democracy better than any other form of government	Disagree	Count	2	83	23	108
		% within Social Class	25.0%	11.3%	8.2%	10.6%
		% of Total	.2%	8.1%	2.3%	10.6%
	Agree	Count	6	649	256	911
		% within Social Class	75.0%	88.7%	91.8%	89.4%
		% of Total	.6%	63.7%	25.1%	89.4%
Total	Count	8	732	279	1019	
	% within Social Class	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	.8%	71.8%	27.4%	100.0%	

Chi-Square value = 3.807 with 2 degrees of freedom and  $p = .149$  insignificant at the 5% level.  
Data Source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001.

Subjective Social Class and Support for Authoritarianism. The crosstabulation between social class and authoritarianism reveals that there is a very weak association between the two variables (Table 8-21). There seems to be a strong agreement between the middle and the working classes on the rejection of authoritarianism. As with support for democracy, knowledge of an individual's position in the social system does not help reducing the error in predicting support for authoritarianism (Lambda  $\nu$  value: .000).

Table (8-21) a crosstabulation between authoritarianism and social class

		Social Class				
			Upper class	Middle Class	Working class	Total
Authoritarianism	Good	Count	3	321	132	456
		% within Social Class	37.5%	41.7%	43.3%	42.1%
		% of Total	.3%	29.7%	12.2%	42.1%
	Bad	Count	5	448	173	626
		% within Social Class	62.5%	58.3%	56.7%	57.9%
		% of Total	.5%	41.4%	16.0%	57.9%
Total	Count	8	769	305	1082	
	% within Social Class	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	.7%	71.1%	28.2%	100.0%	

Chi-Square value = .283 with 2 degrees of freedom and  $p = .868$  insignificant at the 5% level.  
Data Source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001.

In sum, social class is neither associated with support for democracy nor with support for authoritarianism. The very weak associations between social class and support for democracy and authoritarianism are statistically insignificant. Therefore, we can conclude that social class in the Jordanian context (taken in isolation) is largely irrelevant to the explanation of orientations and attitudes towards different types of political systems.

### Rural-Urban Divide

In order to establish whether living in a 'modern' urban environment is conducive to the development of pro-democratic attitudes, we used the information about size of the town in which the survey interview took place. Town size is measured by the number of people living in the town according the Jordanian Department of Statistics census data. Table (8-22) below represents the distribution of town size in eight categories. It is assumed that urbanisation increases as the number of residents increases in a geographical place. The Department of Statistics in Jordan considers a town of 5000 inhabitants and more to be 'urban'. This criterion seems somewhat low. Therefore, I regrouped this variable into two categories: places up to 9999 inhabitants are classified as rural and semi-rural areas, and places with a population of 10.000 and more are classified as urban and semi-urban areas (Table 8-23). In this section we intend to test whether urbanisation has an association with attitudes towards different political regimes.

Table (8-22) Size of town (inhabitants)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Under 2,000	108	8.9	8.9	8.9
	2,000 - 5,000	143	11.7	11.7	20.6
	5 - 10,000	79	6.5	6.5	27.1
	10 - 20,000	97	7.9	7.9	35.0
	20 - 50,000	161	13.1	13.1	48.2
	50 - 100,000	118	9.7	9.7	57.8
	100 - 500,000	228	18.7	18.7	76.5
	500,000 and more	287	23.5	23.5	100.0
	Total	1222	100.0	100.0	

Data Source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001.

Table (8-23) Rural-Urban divide

Population size in towns and cities	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
up to 9999	331	27.1	27.1	27.1
10.000 +	891	72.9	72.9	100.0
Total	1222	100.0	100.0	

Data Source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001.

Support for Democracy and Rural-Urban Divide. The crosstabulation between urbanisation and support for democracy reveals weak and statistically insignificant association between the two variables (Table 8-24). People living in rural and semi-rural areas tend to be more supportive of democracy than people living in urban areas. This finding goes against the linear hypothesis of modernisation theory, which suggests that residents of urban areas tend to support democracy more than residents in rural areas. The variations found between respondents from rural and urban areas are very small and statistically insignificant as the chi-square value of (1.145) and  $p$  value of (.285) show. Knowledge of an individual's location in urban or rural areas does not help reducing the error in predicting support for democracy as Lambda value of (.000) suggests. Therefore, we cannot, at this stage, argue strongly against the modernisation theory hypothesis.

Table (8-24) a crosstabulation between support for democracy and rural-urban divide

		rural-urban divide			
			up to 9999	10.000 +	Total
Democracy better than any other form of government	Disagree	Count	23	86	109
		% within Rural Urban divide	8.8%	11.2%	10.6%
		% of Total	2.2%	8.3%	10.6%
	Agree	Count	238	684	922
		% within Rural Urban divide	91.2%	88.8%	89.4%
		% of Total	23.1%	66.3%	89.4%
Total		Count	261	770	1031
		% within Rural Urban divide	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	25.3%	74.7%	100.0%

Chi-Square value = 1.145 with 1 degrees of freedom and  $p=.285$  insignificant at the 5% level.

Data Source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001.

Support for Authoritarianism and Rural-Urban Divide. The crosstabulation between urbanisation and support for authoritarianism reveals a weak and statistically insignificant association between the two variables (Table 8-25). The variations between respondents from rural and urban areas are very small and statistically insignificant as the chi-square value of (.248) and  $p$  value of (.618) show. Knowledge of an individual's location in



urban or rural areas does not help to reduce the error in predicting support for authoritarianism as the Lambda value of (.000) suggests.

Table (8-25) a crosstabulation between support for authoritarianism and rural-urban divide

		Rural Urban divide			
		up to 9999 inhabitants	10.000 +	Total	
Authoritarianism	Good	Count	127	333	460
		% within Rural Urban divide	43.2%	41.5%	42.0%
		% of Total	11.6%	30.4%	42.0%
	Bad	Count	167	469	636
		% within Rural Urban divide	56.8%	58.5%	58.0%
		% of Total	15.2%	42.8%	58.0%
Total	Count	294	802	1096	
	% within Rural Urban divide	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	26.8%	73.2%	100.0%	

Chi-Square value = .248 with 1 degree of freedom and  $p=.618$  insignificant at the 5% level.

Data Source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001

In sum, rural-urban location and support for democracy and authoritarianism are virtually unrelated if analysed in a bivariate design (i.e. not controlling for other variables). The small variations among respondents from rural and urban areas of Jordan are statistically insignificant. Our knowledge of individuals' geographical location in terms of the rural-urban divide does not reduce the error in predicting support for democracy and authoritarianism.

### Age

The variable 'age of respondent' was recoded into six age groups (Table 8-26). The youngest respondent to the survey was born in 1983. Around 15% of our respondents were born before the independence of the country in 1946, and around 78% were born between 1952 and 1983, this group was born under the authoritarian rule of King Hussein.

Table (8-26) distribution of age groups in the survey sample

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-25	331	27.1	27.1	27.1
	26-35	375	30.7	30.7	57.8
	36-45	220	18.0	18.0	75.8
	46-55	144	11.8	11.8	87.6
	56-65	95	7.8	7.8	95.3
	66 +	57	4.7	4.7	100.0
	Total	1222	100.0	100.0	

Data Source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001

Support for Democracy and Age Groups. Overall, there is no statistically significant association between different age groups and support for democracy (Table 8-27). The age group that is least supportive of democracy is those between 46 and 55 years of age. This group comprises 106 of the total 1032 valid cases for this crosstabulation. It was socialised during its formative years, between 1955 and 1970, under severe political repression, and two major wars with Israel, most notably the 1967 war. At the time political dissent was treated as treason. Perhaps these are some of the cohort-specific background factors explaining why this group is not as supportive of democracy as other cohorts. However, these variations are statistically insignificant. Knowing an individual's age group will not help reducing the error in predicting support for democracy.

Table (8-27) a crosstabulation between support for democracy and age groups

		Age Groups						Total	
		18-25	26-35	36-45	<b>46-55</b>	56-65	66 +		
Democracy better than any other form of government	Disagree	Count	27	36	17	<b>18</b>	6	4	108
		% within Age Groups	9.0%	10.8%	9.2%	<b>17.0%</b>	9.0%	9.8%	10.5%
		% of Total	2.6%	3.5%	1.6%	<b>1.7%</b>	.6%	.4%	10.5%
	Agree	Count	274	297	167	<b>88</b>	61	37	924
		% within Age Groups	91.0%	89.2%	90.8%	<b>83.0%</b>	91.0%	90.2%	89.5%
		% of Total	26.6%	28.8%	16.2%	<b>8.5%</b>	5.9%	3.6%	89.5%
Total	Count	301	333	184	<b>106</b>	67	41	1032	
	% within Age Groups	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	<b>100.0%</b>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	29.2%	32.3%	17.8%	<b>10.3%</b>	6.5%	4.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square value = 6.044 with 5 degrees of freedom and  $p=.302$  insignificant at the 5% level.

Data Source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001

Support for Authoritarianism and Age Groups. Overall, there is no statistically significant association between different age groups and support for authoritarianism (Table 8-28). The small variations found amongst different age groups are statistically insignificant (chi-square value 2.566 and  $p = .767$ ) and do not tell us much regarding support for authoritarianism. Knowing an individual's age group will not help reducing the error in predicting support for authoritarianism.

Table (8-28) a crosstabulation between support for authoritarianism and age groups

		Age Groups						Total	
		18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	66 +		
Authoritarianism	Good	Count	128	137	85	59	32	18	459
		% within Age Groups	42.1%	40.1%	43.6%	46.8%	40.5%	36.7%	41.9%
		% of Total	11.7%	12.5%	7.8%	5.4%	2.9%	1.6%	41.9%
	Bad	Count	176	205	110	67	47	31	636
		% within Age Groups	57.9%	59.9%	56.4%	53.2%	59.5%	63.3%	58.1%
		% of Total	16.1%	18.7%	10.0%	6.1%	4.3%	2.8%	58.1%
Total	Count	304	342	195	126	79	49	1095	
	% within Age Groups	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	27.8%	31.2%	17.8%	11.5%	7.2%	4.5%	100.0%	

Chi-Square value = 2.566 with 5 degrees of freedom and  $p=0.767$  insignificant at the 5% level.

Data Source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001

In sum, we found no significant association between age groups and support for democracy or authoritarianism. The variations among different age groups are statistically insignificant and knowing them will not help reducing the error in predicting support for democracy or authoritarianism. The last variable we intend to examine here is ethnicity.

### Country of Origin

This variable consists of two major groups living in Jordan: Jordanians and Palestinians (Table 8-29). Given the composition of the Jordanian society and the role played by the political regime during the September 1970 civil war in Jordan, one would assume that Jordanians (East bankers) and Palestinians (West bankers) have different orientations towards the political system. The Palestinians are likely to express stronger support for democracy because democracy could potentially give them full political and civil rights in Jordan, while Jordanians are likely to express stronger support for the authoritarian political system which claims to represent them with some favouritism.

Table (8-29) distribution of respondents according to their 'country of origin'

	Country of Origin	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Jordan	628	51.4	52.1	52.1
	Palestine	578	47.3	47.9	100.0
	Total	1206	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	16	1.3		
Total		1222	100.0		

Data Source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001

Support for Democracy/Authoritarianism and 'Country of Origin'. The crosstabulation between support for democracy and country of origin (Table 8-30) reveals that there is a weak association between the two variables and this association is statistically insignificant at the five-percent level; the chi-square value is .626 and  $p = .429$ . Thus, the assumption that Jordanians and Palestinians have significantly different orientations towards different political regimes does not hold up to empirical testing. Knowing whether a respondent is Jordanian or Palestinian will not help reducing the error in predicting support for democracy. Also, we did not find any significant association between support for authoritarianism and country of origin.

Table (8-30) a crosstabulation between support for democracy and ethnicity

		Ethnicity			
		Jordanian	Palestinian	Total	
Democracy better than any other form of government	Disagree	Count	51	56	107
		% within Ethnicity	9.8%	11.3%	10.5%
		% of Total	5.0%	5.5%	10.5%
	Agree	Count	470	439	909
		% within Ethnicity	90.2%	88.7%	89.5%
		% of Total	46.3%	43.2%	89.5%
Total	Count	521	495	1016	
	% within Ethnicity	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	51.3%	48.7%	100.0%	

Chi-Square value = .626 with 1 degree of freedom and  $p = .429$  insignificant at the 5% level.

Data Source: WVS the Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001

In sum, differences between Jordanians and Palestinians regarding support for democracy and authoritarianism are weak and statistically insignificant. Knowing the country of origin of respondents in Jordan will not help to reduce the error in predicting support for either democracy or authoritarianism.

### **Multivariate Logistic Regression Analysis**

The bivariate analyses presented above show that the assumed associations between support for democracy and authoritarianism on one hand and socio-economic indicators on the other do hold up to empirical testing if taken one by one. Only one variable (wealth measured by household income) shows a significant association with support for authoritarianism. This analysis is important because it enhances our understanding of the underlying micro-sociological factors associated with support for different types of political regimes.

However, bivariate analyses are by design incapable of accounting for the possible interactions between variables (e.g. age and class and urbanity). In order to address this issue, two multivariate logistic regression models will be introduced. In the first model ‘support for democracy’ will be the dependent variable and in the second model this will be replaced by ‘support for authoritarianism’. The independent variables used in the previous chapters and in this chapter, will be included in both regression models. In chapter five we used religiosity and socio-economic development as independent variables, in chapter six we focused of religiosity (subjective and objective), in chapter seven we developed another three independent variables measuring aspects of regime support by extracting factor loadings on regime institutions, regime performance, and political community. In this chapter we introduced some socio-economic and socio-political indicators. All these variables will be included in the regression models.

The reason why these variables are included is to find out what is the most important factor in determining support or rejection of democracy and authoritarianism net of all these factors. The following regression models will help finding out the net effect of religiosity, socio-economic modernisation, and satisfaction with the regime’s policy output on support for democracy and authoritarianism controlling for other variables.

### Variables

#### Variables used for logistic regression

Variable	Coding
Support for democracy	0=disagree 1=agree
Support for authoritarianism	0=bad 1=good
Social class	0=working 1=middle +
Age groups	Age groups from young to old
Education	0=low 1= high
Urban	0=rural 1=urban
Income	0=below average 1=above average
Country if origin	0=Palestinian 1=Jordanian
Job specialisation	0=manual 1=non-manual
Religious	0=non-religious 1=religious
FAC1-2 regime institutions	Scores of factor loadings
FAC 2-2 regime performance	Scores of factor loadings
FAC 3-2 political community	Scores of factor loadings

Variables from WVS – Jordanian data set conducted in September 2001.

### Model One: Support for Democracy as Dependent Variable

Table (8-31) Logistic regression –model one

	Variables in the equation	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1(a)	AGE	-.223	.161	1.914	1	.166	.800
	JOB	-.568	.470	1.459	1	.227	.567
	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	-.167	.448	.139	1	.710	.846
	H.INCOME	.326	.472	.476	1	.490	1.385
	<b>URBAN</b>	<b>-2.572</b>	<b>1.103</b>	<b>5.433</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>.020</b>	<b>.076</b>
	EDUCATION	-.312	1.185	.069	1	.792	.732
	RELIGIOSITY	-.409	.667	.376	1	.540	.664
	<b>FAC1_2 (regime institutions)</b>	<b>.795</b>	<b>.291</b>	<b>7.457</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>.006</b>	<b>2.215</b>
	FAC2_2 (regime performance)	-.099	.239	.173	1	.677	.906
	FAC3_2 (political community)	.265	.257	1.069	1	.301	1.304
	SOCIAL CLASS	-.467	.498	.882	1	.348	.627
	Constant	6.692	1.904	12.354	1	.000	805.829

The logistic regression model in Table (8-31) reveals that there are two statistically significant variables. The first significant factor influencing support for democracy in Jordan is confidence in the existing regime institutions (FAC1\_2). This variable is statistically significant at the five percent level (.006). Respondents who are dissatisfied with regime institutions are more than twice as likely to support democracy than those who have high levels of confidence in regime institutions. The second important factor influencing support for democracy is the rural-urban divide. This variable is statistically significant at the five percent level (.020). If a respondent lives in a rural area he or she is far more likely to support democracy than if they live in urban areas. The exponent of B of (0.20) indicates that the probability of a person supporting democracy decreases by approximately 98% if a person lives in an urban area. This result is inconsistent with modernisation theory, but is compatible with the rational-utilitarian model sketched in chapter three. The influence of rural-urban divide on support for democracy did not come out in the bivariate analysis above. It was uncovered only when we controlled for the impact of other variables. All other factors included in the model, including religiosity, are statistically insignificant.

In sum, knowledge of confidence in regime institutions and whether a person lives in urban or rural area in Jordan have a significant impact on his or her support for democracy. The analysis in this model confirm the previous findings that Islamic

religiosity has no influence on support for democracy (or lack thereof). Islamic religiosity turned out to be a largely insignificant factor in explaining attitudes towards democracy as an ideal form of government. The exponent of B are compatible with a rational-utilitarian framework but (especially the impact of urbanity) inconsistent with classical modernisation theory. Does Islamic religiosity explain support for authoritarianism? The following section will answer this question.

### Model Two: Support for Authoritarianism as Dependent Variable

Table (8-32) Logistic regression –model two

	Variables in the equation	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1(a)	AGE	-.115	.092	1.569	1	.210	.891
	<b>JOB SPECIALISATION</b>	<b>.704</b>	<b>.261</b>	<b>7.290</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>.007</b>	<b>2.021</b>
	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	-.081	.247	.108	1	.743	.922
	H.INCOME	.410	.255	2.579	1	.108	1.507
	<b>URBAN</b>	<b>-.310</b>	<b>.276</b>	<b>1.267</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>.260</b>	<b>.733</b>
	EDUCATION	-.295	.601	.241	1	.624	.745
	RELIGIOSITY	-.438	.299	2.149	1	.143	.646
	<b>FAC1_2 (regime institutions)</b>	<b>-.578</b>	<b>.137</b>	<b>17.781</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.561</b>
	FAC2_2 (regime performance)	-.119	.132	.812	1	.368	.888
	FAC3_2 (political community)	-.047	.130	.131	1	.718	.954
	SOCIAL CLASS	.094	.263	.127	1	.721	1.099
	Constant	.404	.757	.284	1	.594	1.498

The logistic regression model in Table (8-32) confirms the previous finding confidence in the existing regime institutions (FAC1\_2) is a crucial factor. This variable is statistically significant at the one percent level (.000). Respondents who are dissatisfied with regime institutions (expressed low levels of confidence in regime institutions) are less likely to support authoritarianism than those who have high levels of confidence in regime institutions. The second important factor influencing support for authoritarianism is job specialisation. Respondents with non-manual jobs tend to be more supportive of authoritarianism than those with manual jobs. This relationship was not statistically significant in the bivariate analysis above; it became conspicuous only when we controlled for impact of other variables on support for authoritarianism. The job specialisation variable is statistically significant at the one-percent level (.007). All other factors included in the model are statistically insignificant. The only factor that we had found in the bivariate analysis above to have a significant association with support for

authoritarianism was wealth measured by annual household income. When we controlled for other variables, this influence disappeared. Again, the influence of Islamic religiosity on support for authoritarianism turned out to be statistically insignificant at the five percent level.

As with support for democracy, the multivariate regression of support for authoritarianism on a number of independent variables demonstrates that variables typically associated with culturalist (religiosity) and classical modernisation-theoretic (high income, education, job specialisation and urbanity) frameworks do not have significant impact or do work in the predicted causal direction. Dissatisfaction with the existing regime is the most consistent statistically significant indicator of pro-democratic and anti-authoritarian attitudes. The unexpected causal direction of job specification as predictor of anti-authoritarian attitudes (people with non-manual jobs being more likely to favour authoritarianism than others) is compatible with our rational-utilitarian reformulation of modernisation theory but not with classical modernisation theory.



## Conclusions

The aim of this chapter was to examine the association between support for democracy and authoritarianism in the Jordanian society on one hand and socio-economic indicators on the other. These indicators include variables of individual resources such as education, wealth, and job specialisation and group resources such as social class, rural-urban divide, age, and country of origin. The statistical method used in the analysis were crosstabulations, which allow us to perform Chi-square tests and the calculation of Lambda as measure of association. Among all socio-economic variables tested in a bivariate design, we found only one variable that had significant association with support for authoritarianism, that is, wealth (measured by annual household income). The higher the household income, the higher the probability of a person supporting authoritarianism. The bivariate analyses of all other variables revealed no significant relationship with either support for democracy or authoritarianism.

The multivariate analyses carried out confirmed one of the main results of the seventh chapter: people that are dissatisfied with the current regime are more likely to have pro-democratic and anti-authoritarian attitudes. Variables traditionally associated with cultural (religiosity) and classical modernisation-theoretic (job specialisation, urbanity, high income, and high levels of education) approaches do not have the predicated impact. The exponents for urbanity and job specialisation in the multivariate models confirm the impression gained in the bivariate analyses, namely that our rationalist reformulation of modernisation theory accounts at least for some of the variation of the dependent variables, pro-democratic and authoritarian attitudes. In other words, the 'winners' of modernisation in Jordan are sceptical of moving the political status quo towards a more democratic state, whilst the 'losers' are more interested in further democratisation.

## **Conclusion of the Thesis**

### **Conclusion of the Thesis**

The main aim of this thesis was to examine the role of culture (religiosity) as explanation for variations in the support for democracy and authoritarianism in the Muslim Middle East with particular focus on one Muslim country, Jordan. The results of our bivariate and multivariate designs showed that Islamic culture (measured by subjective and objective religiosity) is a statistically insignificant factor in explaining support for democracy and authoritarianism at the aggregate and individual levels of analyses.

The romantic, rational, and empirical scholarly works examined in Chapter One point to problems and gaps in the study of the association, or lack of it, between Islam, Muslims and liberal democracy. The basic problem lies in the theoretical and methodological inadequacy of culturalist approaches. In the culturalist works reviewed here, no coherent and empirically testable theoretical framework could be identified that adequately explains the complexities and the realities of the Middle East. Instead, there are many assertions and impressions, which are often based on rather anecdotal evidence. For example, the extensive use of proverbs, religious texts, political speeches, and poetry leaves one wondering about the reliability of such 'evidence' in explaining complex social and political structures in the Middle East or elsewhere. The Quranic text, as chapter two suggests, is an open book, which could justify many positions regarding governance. One author can find Quranic evidence to support a high degree of compatibility between Islam and liberal democratic principles, while another can find the opposite. The differences amongst Muslims today regarding various interpretations of the Quran support this claim. Nevertheless, there are certain traditional social values - that are understood to be Islamic- that do not conform to liberal democratic principles. Such values are not static. They do change as socio-economic modernisation progresses. Liberal democracy as a mechanism for solving political differences peacefully is desired by the majorities of Muslims (chapter 5).

The emphasis placed on 'Islam' as the crucial explanatory variable as far as liberal democracy is concerned obscures other important factors which can better explain the discrepancy between the desire for liberal democracy in Muslim societies and its

underdeveloped empirical reality. In this context, socio-economic modernisation and choice-based rationalistic assumptions may have better explanatory value. As outlined in Chapter Three, the outcomes of modernisation processes are not uniform. Modernisation produces winners and losers. These two groups strive to improve or maintain their chances. The winners, especially under authoritarian political regimes, usually seek to preserve the status quo which benefits them. Thus, it is in their direct interest to support and defend authoritarianism as a political model if they perceive it as protective of their material gains (resources and power positions). By contrast, the losers of modernisation under authoritarian political regimes are more likely to support an alternative political system, which may improve their chances of a better life. However, they may be reluctant to actively push for an alternative to authoritarianism because the perceived risks and costs are relatively high and this is when a rationalistic framework becomes particularly useful. In this view acceptance of authoritarian rule is a rational response to state repression rather than a cultural disposition. The choices made by losers and winners of modernisation are politically contextual. The political process determines the direction in which each group will go. Both respond to incentives offered by the political system. Those controlling the political system are interested in its survival, thus they act rationally to minimise the risks, which may accompany any democratic opening. If the regime considers the risks of political liberalisation to be threatening (giving the losers and weaker winners of modernisation access to resources previously controlled by the regime and the winners of modernisation) then such evaluations may reduce the chances of political liberalisation significantly.

In order to test these assumptions we needed empirical evidence at the aggregate and individual levels. Chapter Four describes the method of survey research utilised in collecting data, which enabled us of carrying out empirical tests cross-nationally (Chapter Five) and at the individual level in Jordan as a case study (chapters, Six, Seven, and Eight). Chapter Four describes in details survey research procedures, methods, and problems in Jordan.

Cross-national analyses were carried out at the aggregate level in order to establish whether subjective religiosity is statistically associated with support for democracy and authoritarianism. Since many cultural arguments are theoretically at the collective, cultural level, such an approach is appropriate to explore the collective-cultural dimension of the research questions. Average measures of subjective religiosity were used for correlation analyses including Islamic and non-Islamic societies. The analyses corroborates that our theoretical conclusions in Chapter Two about the diversity of Muslim societies. Muslim societies do not form a peculiar cluster. The main point is that one cannot reduce the diversity of Muslim societies to one factor ('Islam') that explains why these societies do not have liberal democratic political regimes, as Fukuyama has done.

It is true that high levels of religiosity in a society do not seem to be conducive to high support for democratic ideals. The two indicators of 'support for democracy' we have analysed in relation to religiosity have shown negative correlations of various degrees. Yet, if there are any patterns pertaining to specific religions in the literature (and quantitative analysis carried out in this thesis) Protestant societies seem to be the only societies that form a cluster with relatively high levels of support for democracy and rejection of authoritarianism. All other societies, especially Catholic and Islamic, seem to vary considerably, and the variance *within* these groups of societies is larger than the differences between them. This can be clearly seen in levels of support for a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections (authoritarianism); in some Islamic societies such as Turkey aggregate support for authoritarianism, is extremely high, whereas it is extremely low in other Muslim societies such as Egypt and Azerbaijan. These variations indicate that there must be other variables that should be taken into account in order to better understand the factors underlying support for democracy and authoritarianism. When we control for the impact of the levels of human development (an important modernisation-theoretic concept) on support for, and stability of, democracy in the societies we have looked at, the evidence demonstrates that the covariation between Islam and the lack of democracy is spurious. Concentrating on

religion as the sole independent variable (as Fukuyama essentially does) is therefore misleading.

In Chapter Six we repeated the aggregate analyses of ‘between-country variations’ (Chapter Five) and focused on Jordan alone in order to investigate whether assumptions about a link between Islamic religiosity and lack of support for democracy holds at least at the individual level (‘within –country variation’). The focus on a single country also allowed us to go into much greater depth in analysing popular perceptions of democracy and ensure that the meanings Jordanians tend to associate with democracy are not fundamentally different from those held in the ‘West’. The meanings that Jordanians associate with democracy are strongly linked to the guarantee of civil liberties and political rights (including freedom of the press, association, and expression). There is no evidence for any claims that democracy is defined or understood in a different way. Although democracy as an ideal form of government is considered to be very desirable by the overwhelming majority of Jordanians, they tend to be critical in their assessment of the current state of democracy in their country. This means that the perceived level of democracy in Jordan has not yet passed the relative ‘success’ threshold and its empirical reality lags behind popular expectations. Why has this been the case? Some have argued that the religion of Islam *is* the reason why democracy has not developed not only in Jordan but also in the whole Islamic Middle East. The factor ‘Islam’ was examined in Chapter Six (as in Chapter Five) drawing on different measures and methods to determine whether it is the obstacle to support for democracy. Religiosity was used as independent variable and variables measuring support for democracy and authoritarianism were used as dependent variables. The analyses yielded at best very weak correlations between Islamic religiosity and support for democracy/authoritarianism; Islamic religiosity is largely an insignificant factor in explaining variations in support for democratic values in Jordan.

The simple comparisons of variations in risk perceptions for different forms of contentious political participation as well as relatively institutionalised forms of participation (e.g. party membership) allow some plausible conclusions that support a theoretical framework, which includes at least elements of a rational-actor model. The

risk of facing a coercive state response is an important factor in people's willingness to get involved in politics. In an environment of political instability like the Middle East, the interest of the political regime of a given country greatly determines whether that country can establish a democratic political order. In Jordan, the interests of the political regime, mainly its survival, depended on launching the process of democratic transformation in 1989, but subsequent events proved that democracy, no matter how weak it was, and accountability might be a cause of the regime's vulnerability. Therefore, the regime felt it needed to introduce measures (specifically the electoral system of 1993) to control and constrain the dynamics of this process. Yet, this strategy may prove to be short-sighted. The regime's cautious attitude towards political associations such as political parties hindered their ability to recruit the human capital necessary for their functionality and needed for a functioning democratic process. It is therefore not surprising that we found a tiny proportion of the public believing that they can join political parties, demonstrations, and sit-ins. The political regime had kept the perceived cost involved for individuals to cross certain political lines relatively high. The perceived high cost of contentious political participation significantly reduced the chances of individuals' civic engagement, which is essential for the development of a democratic political culture and participatory political practice. The empirical results in Chapter Six lend more support to rationalistic actor-based explanations than a culturalist explanation based on religiosity. For that reason, attributing the absence of democratic practice in Jordan to Islamic cultural traits seems to be a strong oversimplification based on very little empirical evidence, but concealing political realities and incentives that cannot be ignored.

Chapter Seven demonstrates that there is a relatively high level of support for the existing political system in Jordan. According to the Freedom House classification, the system is neither entirely democratic nor entirely authoritarian. It is 'partly free'. The core institutions of the system (e.g. the government, the police, army, and the justice system) have high levels of popular support; people value them as integral part of the system. Pluralist institutions (parliament and political parties) have relatively lower levels of mass support. Political parties are lacking popular support. David Easton's concepts of 'specific' and 'diffuse' support were used to examine the structures of support in Jordan.

Our analyses of specific support revealed that parliament, government, and political parties performance have not impressed the public. Masses and elites alike have a tendency to show that their already modest confidence in the successive governments' capability to shoulder the responsibilities of governance is declining over time. Yet, the evidence also suggests that there is a significant level of diffuse support for the political regime. The perceived performance of the regime is lagging behind popular expectations as far as democracy is concerned. There is a gap between (high) levels of diffuse support and (low) levels of specific support. The contrast between high levels of diffuse support for the existing political system and the sceptical evaluation of its democratic nature is superficially paradoxical. The data seem to suggest however, that a strong emotional attachment to the Jordanian nation-state and its main symbols can coexist with a desire for more democracy.

In Chapter Seven we evaluated political support for the current political regime in Jordan. The most important question in this context was to investigate whether high levels of support for democracy as an ideal form government in Jordan represent dissatisfaction with the performance of the current political regime or the importance religious factors. The results of our logistic regression model suggest that regime performance in terms of specific outputs has no significant impact on support for democracy. Levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the performance (output) of the political regime are not significantly related to support for democracy. However, the logistic regression analyses suggest that respondents with little confidence in regime institutions in general tend to be more favourably disposed to liberal-democratic values than those who have full confidence. Moreover, persons with low or negative scores on the national-unity dimension are significantly more likely to be supportive of democracy than others. Taking regime support into account, high levels of religiosity reduce the probability of a person having liberal-democratic values significantly at the five-percent level. In other words, in the multivariate statistical models in Chapter Seven, we observe a combination of political and religious motivations as causes of support for democracy.



At any rate, we can conclude that there are more important issues to be addressed than 'cultural traits' when addressing the problem of democracy in Jordan. Respondents who are satisfied with the political regime (people who have high levels of confidence in the existing regime institutions) tend to be less supportive of democracy than those who express less confidence in regime institutions. The statistical analyses show that the satisfaction factor is far more important than the cultural factor (religiosity). The evidence analysed in Chapter Seven suggests, therefore, that 'culture' (measured by Islamic religiosity) is not the most important factor in explaining the underdevelopment of democracy in Jordan. This defies the conventional wisdom of orientalists and culturalists, who tend to use the variable 'Islamic culture' as the main and often the only explanatory variables when explaining the underdevelopment of democracy in the Muslim world.

In Chapter Eight we examined the association between support for democracy and authoritarianism in the Jordanian society on one the hand and socio-economic and socio-political indicators on the other. These indicators were selected to test the predictions of modernisation-theoretic frameworks and include variables of individual resources such as education, wealth, and job specialisation as well as group resources such as social class, rural-urban divide, age, and country of origin. Among all socio-economic variables tested in a series of bivariate models, we found only one variable that had significant association with support for authoritarianism, that is, wealth (measured by annual household income). The higher the household income, the higher the probability of a person supporting authoritarianism. This finding is incompatible with traditional modernisation-theoretic frameworks. The bivariate analyses of all other variables revealed no significant relationship with either support for democracy or authoritarianism.

The multivariate analyses carried out in Chapter Eight confirmed one of the main results of the seventh chapter: people who are dissatisfied with the current regime are more likely to have pro-democratic and anti-authoritarian attitudes. Variables traditionally associated with cultural (religiosity) and classical modernisation-theoretic (job

specialisation, urbanity, high income, and high levels of education) approaches do not have the predicted impact. The exponents for urbanisation and job specialisation in the multivariate logistic regression models confirm the impression gained in the bivariate analyses, namely that our rationalist reformulation of modernisation theory distinguishing between winners and losers of modernisation with their different expectations and incentives accounts at least for some of the variation of the dependent variables, namely pro-democratic and authoritarian attitudes. In other words, the 'winners' of modernisation in Jordan are sceptical of moving the political status quo towards a more democratic state, whilst the 'losers' are more interested in further democratisation.

In sum, both aggregate and individual-level analyses of survey data suggest that Islam is not the 'enemy' of liberal democracy or the 'friend' of authoritarianism in the Middle East (aggregate data) or Jordan (individual-level data). Classical modernisation-theoretic variables explain levels of democracy generally at the aggregate level, although the Middle Eastern countries tend to be anomalies. At the individual level, the results of our analyses of Jordan are largely incompatible with classical modernisation-theoretic predictions. The results of our analyses are more compatible with rationalist interpretations and a rationalist re-formulation of modernisation theory. People who are dissatisfied with the regime status quo tend to be more supportive of democracy and more sceptical of authoritarianism in Jordan. This is entirely consistent with the attempt of rational-choice theory to reconstruct people's attitudes and behaviour as a result of their (assumed) cost-benefit analyses. These results are consistent with the conclusions drawn from the analyses of the perceived risk of different forms of political participation. People who could be seen as the 'winners' of socio-economic modernisation in Jordan are not - as would be predicted by classical modernisation theory - more likely to be pro-democratic and anti-authoritarian, but the other way around. This finding can be explained plausibly by taking the state structure (which rewards loyalty to the existing regime) and people's rational response to the ensuing political opportunity structure into account, but is much harder to reconcile with culturalist and classical modernisation-theoretic frameworks.

The essence of this thesis is that the traditional modernisation-theoretic frameworks and culturalist arguments were found to be very weak predictors or explanatory variables regarding support for democracy in the Middle East. Rationalistic approaches have much better explanatory value regarding support for democracy or authoritarianism in the Middle East. Actor-based models revealed major weaknesses associated with two of the main frameworks extensively utilised in the literature on the question of democracy in the Middle East, namely modernisation-theoretic and culturalist approaches.

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