



Civil Society, Democracy, and the Middle East

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The term "civil society" has gained currency as an important factor correlating with democratization in developing countries (LDCs), including those in the Middle East. Civil society is used to label groups contrasted to the state, regardless of purpose or character. Their mere existence and function is thought somehow to deter the state's power and increase prospects for democratization.

This concept's broad usage sometimes makes civil society seem indistinguishable from society as a whole. Further, the precise components of civil society supposedly causing or correlating with democracy's emergence are left to speculation.(1) Moreover, there is an understating of how the state can spoil prospects for democratization. The state's influence on society is as important--or more important--than society's influence on the state.(2)

This paper argues that democracy's onset is more a function of the distribution of socioeconomic and political resources among organized groups--including the state--than of such groups' mere existence. It also offers some explanatory variables to help measure prospects for democratization for LDCs in the Middle East, though this approach can be applied elsewhere as well.

THE MIDDLE EAST IN THE CIVIL SOCIETY DEBATE

The expression "civil society" is used today to indicate how clubs, organizations, and groups act as a buffer between state power and the citizen's life. Thus, in the absence of such associations, the state

dominates socioeconomic and private affairs, intensifying the state's authoritarian

tendencies.(3) Modern states have become more efficient in using persuasive and coercive means to achieve their goals. In the Middle East, oil revenues, expanded militaries, and the growing group of state bureaucrats, technocrats and professionals have increased the state's capabilities. But declining oil revenues in the 1980s and the 1990s have forced states in the Middle East to make structural adjustments, through limited privatization (e.g., Jordan, Syria), reduction in government subsidies (e.g., Iran, Iraq), and increased borrowing or aid from abroad (e.g., Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Iran).(4) Nonetheless, in the Middle East, state financial and coercive power remains strong and far superior to resources available to its social, economic, and political opposition. The challenge to the state by the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, or the National Salvation Front (FIS) in Algeria, for example, have failed to change the state's domestic and foreign policies. (5)

Recent expectations for the emergence of civil society and democracy in the Middle East--intensified in the post-Cold War era--must be viewed with caution, specifically, the premise--reversing long

previous belief--that states in the Middle East are weak and societies are strong. The Iranian revolution, the rise of Islamist movements in the 1980s, and declining oil prices are underscored as reasons for optimism about the rise of civil society in the region. This has led to growing interest in state-society relations and prospects for civil society's emergence.(6) Today, most scholars confidently affirm that "both intermediate powers and autonomous social groups exist in the Middle East." (7)

However, the civil society debate on the Middle East has focused on changes in formal governance procedures rather than substantive change in state-society relations. The emergence of state-regulated quasi-pluralism in countries like Egypt or Jordan is seen as a shift from one-party rule to pluralism, involving the rise of numerous political parties and associations. (8)

Islam is correctly seen as a force which can be compatible with a modernization process and with democracy. But the augmentation of political parties in the area may be more a result of the state's adjusting to pressure from Islamic groups and their allies than a genuine, broader political opening. Middle East political parties remain largely ineffective, playing mostly a ceremonial role serving to legitimate state policies. Moreover, embryonic associations, though they exist, are poorly organized and remain dependent on patrons within the state. As Carrie Rosefsky Wickham put it in discussing Egypt, "The emergence of independent sites of social and political expressions within an authoritarian setting is not the same as the emergence of civil society, at least not in its liberal conception." (9)

Thus, despite the new optimism, serious questions on the status of civil society in the Middle East remain unanswered. How really autonomous are socioeconomic and political groups in the region and how do we measure the degree of

autonomy? Does autonomy necessarily imply the presence of well-organized, institutionalized groups and associations capable of counterbalancing the state's power? How weak or strong are states, given the decline in their financial bargaining power in the 1980s and 1990s? What role do external forces play in the formation of civil society and democracy? A serious shortcoming of studies on civil society generally is the absence of empirical studies that systematically measure and establish correlation between civil society and democracy. (10)

This paper's thesis is that the disproportionate growth in the state's strength vis-a-vis the society leaves the latter still at the former's mercy. The major obstacles to inaugurating democracy are the presence of strong states and weak societies, where not only are there no effective groups and associations to limit the state's power but also the majority of people, due to uneven and rapid modernization, remain poor and uneducated.

The rise of civil society and democracy necessitates a certain level of socioeconomic development but, more important, it requires a balanced development. Balanced development in turn depends on the state's role and policies vis-a-vis the society.

Indeed, it is quite possible for societal preconditions for democracy to exist and yet authoritarian rule to persist where the state refuses to give in to pressures from society for popular participation. The dominant position of the state has meant the rule of politics by powerful families, elites, and military and bureaucratic sub-classes. The emergence and growth of independent groups and associations, in contrast, has been slow. A primary agent of civil society, labor unions, remain either non-existent or are repressed by the state. Elites in charge of the state which might be willing to open the system to popular participation usually face

a weak, divided society, making political reform a dangerous enterprise.

In other words, the inauguration, and stability, of democracy is possible not only when its social requisites are present, but also when the state-society relationship is one of balanced power.

DEMOCRACY AND ITS PREREQUISITES

Lipset's hypothesis that, "the more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances that it will sustain democracy," has been very influential in contemporary explanations of democracy. (11) Lipset also emphasizes education as a necessary condition for inaugurating democracy. Others have argued that particular social and political structures must be in place before democracy can occur. (12) For example, in his later studies, Dahl's explanation of democratization expanded from addressing extreme inequalities in the distribution of such key values as income, wealth, status, knowledge, and military prowess to include extreme inequalities in political resources. (13)

Economic inequality within countries is important to the extent that it influences the distribution of power resources. (14) An implication of a high concentration of wealth in the hands of landlords, influential families, and political elites is that the population on the whole will be deprived of basic necessities of life, like adequate health care, education and housing. The level of socioeconomic development relates to the emergence of various groups and associations that is defined as the growth of civil society. The rise of civil society and democracy is impossible where people must constantly worry about the basic necessities of life. Tatu Vanhanen has argued, "The relative distribution of economic, intellectual, and other power resources among various sections of the

population is the fundamental factor that is assumed to account for the variation of political systems from the aspect of democratization." (15)

MEASURING THE STRENGTH OF SOCIETY

The Quality of Human Development

The problem with the alleged association between economic development and democracy is that the former is often measured using a country's Gross National Product/Gross Domestic Product and their growth. These figures are, however, a better indicator of a country's overall wealth than of its overall level of development. The relative development of a country should be associated more accurately with the quality of life of its citizens. The Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI) is a better indicator of the level of human development of a country. As Morris M. Morris puts it, "The traditional measure of national economic progress--the gross national product (GNP) and its component elements--cannot very satisfactorily measure the extent to which human needs of individuals are being met, nor should it be expected to do so." (16) There is no automatic policy relationship between any particular level or rate of growth of GNP and improvement in such indicators as life expectancy, death rates, infant mortality, and literacy.

A more recent measurement of the quality of development is the United Nations Development Project's Human Development Index (HDI). HDI combines indicators of social development, namely, life expectancy, mean years of schooling, and adult literacy, with an indicator of economic development--Gross Domestic Product (GDP). When HDI scores of countries are compared with the rank of these countries in terms of their GNP per capita, an obvious disparity appears in the two different methods. (17)

The Real GDP per head used in HDI is adjusted for purchasing power parity, making comparisons of GDP across countries even more accurate. The presumption here is that not only is HDI a good indicator of the development level, it also indirectly reflects the distribution of socioeconomic power resources. Where the population on the whole is economically and socially more prosperous, it is less likely that economic resources are highly concentrated. Further, it is reasonable to assume that HDI scores also reflect, to some extent, occupational diversification within the country. The inclusion of GDP per capita in HDI measures the level of productivity and wealth of an economy. The higher the GDP per capita, the higher the level of urbanization, industrialization, and occupational diversification, since high GDP is unlikely to be associated with agrarian economies. In short, HDI measures the strength of a society in terms of the distribution of socioeconomic power resources (see appendix). (18)

Appendix Column 1, lists the HDI scores for 22 countries. As discussed above, a certain level of socioeconomic development is a necessary, but not sufficient, precondition for inaugurating democracy. In terms of level of socioeconomic development then, setting aside Israel (0.928) which is already considered a democracy, Kuwait (0.824), UAE (0.776), Turkey (0.745), Saudi Arabia (0.722), Libya (0.711), and Syria (0.709) are countries with most plausible prospects for establishing democracy. Jordan (0.690), Iraq (0.686), Tunisia (0.673), Iran (0.666), Algeria (0.581), Oman (0.594), Egypt (0.526) Morocco (0.519), and Pakistan (0.408) are less plausible future democracies. Yemen (0.325), Afghanistan (0.210), and Sudan (.265) are among relatively less-developed Middle Eastern countries, with prospects for democracy least plausible. The absence of democracy in

the high-oil-income/low-population countries of the Gulf and North Africa is mainly due to these states' patrimonial rule and an organizationally weak labor force. The overwhelming presence of foreign workers in these countries has also played against the native laborers' attempt to organize themselves in labor unions and federations. This will be discussed further below.

The publication of *Capitalist Development and Democracy* has made a major contribution to our understanding of democratization and its causes. This study by Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Evelyne Huber Stephens, and John D. Stephens takes a structuralist approach in explaining the relation between capitalism and democracy. The authors emphasize class interests and alliances, state structures and transnational power structure, as well as the often missing link in discussion of democratization, the role of the working class. The authors conclude that the real source of persistent democratic drives is working class mobilization that, in combination with middle class activism, can bring a political configuration favorable to democracy.

But Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens contend that the more resources the state controls and the more independent the state elites are from other socioeconomic classes, the more likely that an authoritarian regime will take hold. They also argue that the dependent position of periphery countries in the world system involves mechanisms unfavorable to democracy in general. (19)

Organized labor, as well as professional groups and associations, are potentially parallel groups limiting the state's power. Powerful labor federations and confederations points to an ability to use such tools as collective bargaining, strikes, and other means to compete with both the state and corporate interest groups. (20) It is in labor's interest to push for political

democratization, since this would improve its bargaining position vis-a-vis the state and business groups. Organized labor has the potential capability to either cripple or boost the economy (e.g., the oil workers' strike during the Iranian revolution) and therefore be a formidable force checking the state's power.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL UNITY OF LABOR (OUL)

The strength of labor--the Organizational Unity of Labor (OUL)--is measured here according to the following criteria: (1) the number of trade unions and affiliates; (2) the actual number of workers unionized, and their percentage of the total labor force; (3) the degree of government control; and (4) labor's opportunity to strike, both on paper and in practice. (See Appendix) In a separate study, a robust correlation has been observed between Organizational Unity of Labor and democracy. (21)

Appendix Column 2, lists the OUL scores for selected countries. Organized labor remains basically weak and unorganized, with the exception of Israel, in the Middle East. The presence of strong and repressive states in the region has meant the preservation of the ruling elites' privileges and resistance to share political power. Only in Egypt (.45), Turkey (.4), Jordan (.35), Morocco (.35), Pakistan (.35), Tunisia (.25), and Algeria (.25) has labor made limited strides in establishing itself as a national political force, exerting some political influence in the political process. Organized labor in the remaining states is yet to emerge (e.g., the Gulf States, Saudi Arabia), or must await a more tolerant state to become organizationally and politically effective (e.g., Iran, Iraq, Yemen, Syria, Libya, and Oman), or await a return of political stability (e.g., Afghanistan, Sudan). Cultural Approach

A number of studies have discussed the relationship between beliefs, attitudes and culture, participation and democracy. (22) Samuel Huntington blamed Islamic revivalism and Shi'a fundamentalism for a lower probability of democratic development in Islamic countries. (23) He argued that all religions, including Protestantism and Catholicism, possess some elements clearly undemocratic and others favorable to democracy. What seems to be the case is that beliefs and values held by people in any cultural setting are susceptible to change over the years as societies become wealthier and more educated. This is not to say that people necessarily become more secular or democratic, but that people become more receptive to ideas and beliefs that are in opposition to their previous orientation.

Huntington points out, for example, that democratization of Catholic countries shows democracy can take root in non-Protestant countries. In his later study, Huntington still held that Islamic (and Confucian) cultures pose serious obstacles to democratic development, although he began to question the insuperability of these obstacles. He claims there are also a few elements within Islam and Confucianism that make both religions receptive to democracy. (24)

The Western misperceptions of Islam stem from a long history of mutual distrust, criticism, and condemnation. (25) Recent studies on "militant Islam [have] unfortunately reinforced the conclusion that it is only through emancipation from Islam (passing through the stages of enlightenment and secularization) that Muslims can hope to advance on the road to liberty and democracy." (26) This is not to forget the serious scholars of Islam in the West who have contributed to accurate representation of Islam.

Cultural studies for the purpose of making generalizations about political

systems and the nature of democratic participation within different cultural contexts have been of limited use. The role and impact of ideology in society, as in religion's case, is "linked more to structural and organizational realities" than ideological or religious doctrines.(27)

Islam is no more innately anti-democratic than Judaism or Christianity. And the popularity of Islam in the 1980s is largely a reflection of the bankruptcy of other alternatives posed to resolve social ills than some inevitable preference for authoritarianism or an anti-democratic society. It is economic crisis, coupled with a crisis of legitimacy in most Muslim states, has encouraged and strengthened religious opposition. But religious groups and movements and their leaders can be pragmatic contenders for state power as much as their secular counterparts. Islamic candidates and organizations have participated in elections in Algeria, Tunisia, the Sudan, Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, and Kuwait as well as Pakistan, and Malaysia.

In countries such as "Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, and Pakistan, Islamic organizations have been among the best-organized opposition forces, and are often willing to form alliances or cooperate with political parties, professional syndicates, and voluntary associations to achieve shared political and socioeconomic reforms."(28) The case of post-revolution Iran, in particular, and the other self-declared Islamic states like Pakistan and Saudi Arabia provide vivid examples of the triumph of realism over ideology and rhetoric. In short, Muslim groups and associations have the capacity to contribute positively to the development of civil society and democracy in the Middle East and elsewhere in the Muslim world.

MEASURING THE STRENGTH OF THE STATE

The strength or weakness of the state in developing countries must be looked at in the context of the state's position vis-a-vis society. The state might appear omnipresent and strong where a society is weak, or the state might appear weak relative to a society well-organized into groups. In advanced industrial democracies, the state's primary role is the preservation of peace, order, and security, along with some redistribution policies (e.g., welfare programs). The role of the state in the economy remains far less involved where private business dominates. This does not prove that the state in the developed countries is weak. On the contrary, the state is very strong, as shown by its ability to tax and regulate. But the limits to government's power in the developed countries arise from groups with tremendous economic and political power of their own, organized into pressure groups.

States in the Middle East share similar characteristics with those in other developing countries. Thanks mainly to oil dollars, foreign military and financial support, and the weakness of local political opposition, Middle Eastern states have expanded their power over the past few decades. States in the region dominate the society and economy to the extent that they have become centers of tremendous wealth and prestige. Even the local bourgeoisie, in theory a major force for democratization, is very highly dependent on the state for financing, contracts, employment, and protection. Indeed, the weakness of the middle class--and its economic dependence on the state--is a key factor in the state's continuing power. (29)

Through revenue-raising measures and expenditures, governments influence the distribution not only of income (and wealth) but also of political power. Through public policies aimed at land reform, education, nationalizing the economy, and "laws governing labor-management and landowner-peasant relations, the state has

the potential to alter the relative power of various groups with implications for their success in non-state political interactions (such as collective bargaining)." (30)

In fact, the real locus of state power in LDCs has largely had an informal, not institutional, basis. Personal, family and group ties help sustain the executive power of the ruling elites. The sheikdoms of the Persian Gulf are perhaps the primary examples of extreme personalized autocratic rule. On the other extreme, Turkey, Tunisia, and other countries show a changing state-society balance, with institutionalization of power relationships is gradually undermining informal and arbitrary power associations.

One index for measuring these factors is the percentage of the central government's total tax revenues obtained from direct taxes on income, profits, and capital gains. However, given the poor statistical data available on tax structure and collection in the Middle East, alternatives measures for such countries must be considered. This study suggests that the central government's annual expenditures as percentage of GNP is a reliable alternative to measure the strength of the state. (See appendix.) The contention here is that states with larger expenditures in both public and private sectors are in a better position than states with smaller resources to manipulate social groups that may otherwise compete with the state for power. (31)

Ruling elites in the Middle East, along with their allies in top level positions in the state's institutions and agencies, continue to resist pressure for power-sharing. The prospects for democracy increase only when the growth and strength of rival social, economic, and political groups' pushing for power-sharing leaves the weakened state with no choice but to loosen its grip on power.

Conversely, society persists as weak and powerless, and thus unable to check on

the power of the state, as long as socioeconomic structure remains underdeveloped (e.g., people remain illiterate, poor, undereducated, etc), and opposition to the state, like labor unions, remains poorly organized. Structural changes within the society can produce demands for democratic participation in power-sharing, leading to increasing pressure on the dominant elites--inside and outside of the state domain--to let go of power. Of course, the state might choose to use force on some level to continue its monopoly over socioeconomic resources and political power. But a continuing coercive policy can prove more harmful than beneficial to the political elite in the long run, especially where modernization process has led to the growth of a vibrant, organized civil society. The rise of new social groups and classes (e.g., bureaucrats, technocrats, business and professional groups, labor) in the modernization process usually leads to changes in state-society relations. The ruling elite either tries to preserve its status by accommodating to some extent the demand for wider political participation and better economic opportunities (e.g., Turkey, Tunisia, Jordan), or resists any meaningful concession to the opposition, increasing the risk for eventual political instability (Oman, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, Egypt, Pakistan, Iran before the revolution), or they choose a policy of oppression (e.g., Libya, Algeria, Syria, Iraq).

Of course, the collapse of the state is also possible through political revolutions from above, as happened with the former Soviet Union and the East European countries. In such cases, the loss of authority of the state creates a vacuum of power where competition by rival groups to take control of the state becomes possible. (32) This is most evident in the case of Afghanistan.

FINDINGS

It has been widely argued that civil society is on the rise in the region and that therefore prospects for democracy in Middle Eastern countries look promising. The proponents of this argument, however, have lacked precision in the definition, function, and measurement of "civil society." The distinction between the society and a civil society has been unclear. Mainstream social science students of democracy, on the other hand, have argued that Middle Eastern countries generally lack the preconditions necessary for inaugurating democracy. Islam as a religion and dominant states in these countries are cited as primary forces hindering democratization in the region. But regardless of outlook, the literature on democracy and democratization has paid scant attention to the state's crucial role vis-a-vis its society. The socioeconomic requisites for democracy are often emphasized, but the distribution of power resources among social groups, and the degree of concentration of power in the state relative to the society has been given less attention.

What is most crucial and most often neglected is the distribution of socioeconomic and political power resources both within society and between the society and the state. Elites in charge of the state machinery do not voluntarily relinquish their hold on power unless challenged by rising social, economic, and political organizations. Ideally, however, successful challenges for democratization take place and endure in societies where no one group, including the state, has the opportunity to monopolize power. An implication of the structural approach adopted here is that cultural explanations of democratization (e.g., Islam as inherently antithetical to democracy) are rejected.

The predicted democracy scores are based on such variables as the human

development index, organizational unity of labor, and central government expenditures as percentage of gnp, as indicators on the level of political rights and civil liberties (e.g., the level of democracy) in these countries. Given the predicted democracy scores, prospects for democratization in the region remains bleak. Only Israel is qualified as a democracy, and Turkey (4.1), Morocco (5.0), Jordan (5.0), Pakistan (4.7), Egypt (4.9), and UAE (4.9) fall within the partial democracy category (predicted scores between 3 and 5). Prospects for democratization in the rest (Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Syria, Afghanistan, Yemen, Algeria, Libya, Lebanon, Qatar, Bahrain, and the Sudan) remains uncertain. Authoritarianism persists due to either a weak society, strong state, or both.

Thus, prospects for democratization in the Middle East are less promising than the defenders of civil society would have us believe. The working class remains disorganized and politically powerless, as the level of Organizational Unity of Labor remains low. This has meant that labor organizations, where they exist, remain isolated from the political process, with little chance for political influence. Organized labor in Turkey, Egypt, and to a less degree in Jordan, Tunisia, and Morocco is in a better position to challenge their state, but not without the help of the middle class.

The financial capability of the state, at the same time, remains high, as data on central government expenditures indicate. States in Tunisia, Morocco, Oman, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, and Yemen have developed strong ties with economic elites, and are thus very resistant to drastic political reforms. Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States continue to rely on traditional sources of legitimacy, e.g., Islam and monarchy, in combination with policies of coercion and co-optation to maintain the political status quo. The Afghan and Sudanese governments have yet to reestablish their monopoly over

socioeconomic resources after the conclusion of civil wars.(33) Society remains weak vis-a-vis the state particularly in Morocco, Egypt, the Sudan, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Yemen. Only Turkey appears to have a better chance for democracy. In fact, Turkey is already considered a democracy or a near-democracy by some.

The removal of patrimonial relationship between the state and society in the Gulf States can enhance prospects for democracy. However, the absence of an indigenous organized labor in these countries makes the establishment of democracy quite unlikely.

Ideally, the emergence of civil society in the Middle East, and in LDCs generally, will occur when well-institutionalized, well-organized groups are in a position to exert effective pressure on ruling elites to open the political system. Both strong states and weak societies are barriers to democratization in developing countries, including the Middle East.

APPENDIX

Primary Indicators of Socioeconomic, Political, and State Strength in the Middle East

Democracy Democracy
Socioeconomic Political State Power Scores Scores

HDI OUL Govt % gnp Observed Predicted
1980-92 1980-1992 1980-1992 1980-94
1980-94

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Israel	0.928	1.00	57.5	2.0	1.6
Turkey	0.745	0.40	25.3	3.6	4.1
Morocco	0.519	0.35	32.2	4.6	5.0
Pakistan	0.408	0.35	20.5	4.5	4.7
UAE	0.776	-0-	15.1	5.3	4.9
Egypt	0.526	0.45	42.6	5.0	4.9
Jordan	0.690	0.35	42.3	4.7	5.0
Tunisia	0.673	0.25	36.1	5.1	5.3
Iran	0.666	0.10	22.6	5.7	5.4
Kuwait	0.824	0.10	34.2	5.1	5.5

Syria	0.709	0.10	31.3	6.6	5.6
Iraq	0.686	0.10(1979)	43.4	6.9	6.1
S.Arabia	0.722	0-	44.3	6.5	6.1
Oman	0.594	0-	49.9	5.9	6.5
Afghan.	0.210	0-	(b)	--	6.8 --
Algeria	0.581	0.25	--	5.7	--
Bahrain	0.790	0.10	--	--	--
Lebanon	0.565	0.20	--	--	--
Libya	0.711	0.10	30.1(80-88)	6.5	--
Qatar	0.802	-0-	--	--	--
Sudan	0.265	-0-	17.6(80-88)	6.1	--
Yemen(AR)	0.325	0.10(c)	37.9(80-88)	5.2	--

Sources: (1) For HDI (col. 1) The Economist, May 26, 1990, p. 81; UNDP Human Development Report, United Nations, 1993. Column 1 scores are averaged, based on 1987 and 1992 scores.

Organizational Unity of Labor (OUL) is calculated by the author for 1987 and 1992 and then the average scores are reported here. For detail, see Ali Abootalebi, "Democratization in Developing Countries: 1980-1989," Journal of Developing Areas 29 (July 1995): 507-30. (3) For scores on central government expenditures as percentage of gnp (col. 3), see World Development Report, World Bank,(Oxford University Press, 1992 and 1993). Column 3 scores are averaged scores for data available for 1980-1992. Yemen (1988) refers only to the Yemen Republic prior to its unification with South Yemen in the summer of 1990. Observed democracy scores are averaged for 1980-1994 period. Predicted democracy scores are based on explanatory variables introduced in this study (human development index, organizational unity of labor, and central government expenditures as percentage of gnp), and like observed democracy scores, point to the level of political rights and civil liberties (e.g., the level of democracy) in these countries.

Sources for each subcategory of OUL (col. 2): (1) Martin Upham, ed., Trade Unions of the World 1992-93, 3rd ed. (London: Longman Group, 1991); (2) F. John Harper,

ed., *Trade Unions of the World* (Keesing's Reference Publications, 1987). (3) *The Encyclopedia of the Third World*, 2nd ed., 1987. For Observed Democracy scores, see Raymond D. Gastil, *Freedom in the World: Political Rights and Civil Liberties 1986-1987* (New York: Westport, 1987); James Finn, ed., *Freedom in the World: The Annual Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties, 1994-95* (New York: Freedom House, 1995).

** The percentage of labor unionized is calculated from the total number in the economically active labor force divided by the number of workers unionized. Column 2 scores are averaged OUL scores for 1987 and 1992. Note that this refers to:

a: (Averaged central government expenditures as percentage of GNP, 1980-1992). b) Afghanistan has "trade union primary organizations," not trade unions. c) Yemen has "trade union committees.

Unity of Labor is calculated using the following values:

1. degree of government control: 0=no control of unions; 1=total control

2. opportunity to strike: 0=no opportunity to strike; 1=total freedom to strike

3. organizational unity: 0=no unity of labor; 1 = complete unity In calculating these components, close attention has been paid to the following sub-components:

1. degree of governmental control:

1. whether government allows labor to organize and form unions;

2. Percentage of total economically active unionized labor;

3. whether government allows labor organizations to participate in political activities, such as associations with opposition political parties;

4. extent to which government allows freedom of collective bargaining to labor union(s), federation(s) and confederation(s).

2. opportunity to strike:

1. whether strikes actually have taken place in a given country, and if so, how frequently, wherever the data was available;

2. whether government response to strikes has been violent or not;

3. if the government has ratified one or both ILO Conventions no. 87 (freedom of association and protection of the right to organize, 1948) and no. 98 (right to organize and collective bargaining, 1949).

3. organizational unity of labor:

1. The total number of trade unions, federations, and confederations in the country. The assumptions that the more centralized the labor organizations (one confederation or two or three take charge of labor business in all sectors of the economy), the more the ability of labor to pursue its interests. Thus decentralized labor movements, where many unions exist without much inter-organizational cohesiveness, are weak and the opportunity is low for labor to stand up to the government pressures for concessions.

2. whether labor organizations are affiliated with political parties or not; that is, the degree of political independence of labor. In many countries, labor organizations are tools in the hands of the government and its affiliated ruling political party; the degree of penetration of labor organizations by the ruling political party is high.

3. the degree of governmental control and the opportunity for legal strikes, also crucial for organizational unity of labor, therefore affecting the score of each country in this category.

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Analysis, CIRA14 (March 1998): 30-33; "Civil Society, Democracy, and the Middle East," Middle East Review of International Affairs, Vol. 2, no. 3, August 1998; "Islam, Islamists, and Democracy," Middle East Review of International Affairs, Vol. 3, no. 1, March 1999; "Ideological Currents in Islam" Center for Iranian Research and Analysis, CIRA, forthcoming. His book, Islam and democracy: State-Society Relations in the Developing Countries, 1980-1994 by Garland Publishing is forthcoming.

NOTES

1. For a brief review of different approaches to "civil society," see "Introduction" Theoretical Perspectives on Arab Liberalization and Democratization," in Rex Brynen, Bahgat Korany, and Paul Noble, eds. Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World: Theoretical Perspectives, vol. 1 (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1995).

2. See, Ali R. Abootalebi, "Democratization in Developing Countries: 1980-1989," *Journal of Developing Areas* 29 (July 1995): 507-30.

3. For brief backgrounds on civil society see Ernest Gellner, "Civil Society in Historical Context," *International Social Science Journal* (August 1991): 495-510. See, also Muhammad Muslih and Augustus Richard Norton, "Political Tides in the Arab World," *Foreign Policy Association*, no. 296 (Summer 1991), p. 11.

4. The state and the state-society relations in the Middle East have become subject of many debates in recent years. See, for example, Joel S. Migdal, "Strong States, Weak States," in Myron Weiner and Samuel P. Huntington, eds. *Understanding Political Development* (Boston: Little, Brown and company, 1987); Giacomo Luciani, ed. *The Arab State* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990); Roger

Owen, *State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East* (New York: Routledge, 1992); Sami Zubaida, *Islam, The People and the State: Political Ideas and Movements in the Middle East* (London: Tauris, 1993); Abootalebi, "Democratization in the Developing Countries;" Augustus Richard Norton and Farhad Kazemi, eds., *Civil Society in the Middle East*, 2 vols. (New York: Brill, 1994, 1996).

5. Economic decline, due to declining oil and gas prices, and foreign aid, has forced states in the Middle East to "liberalize" the economy and withdraw from such sectors of the economy as education, health, and welfare. The state's control of the national economy (e.g., government's high level share of the total expenditures in the economy, as a percentage of Gross National Product), however, remains intact. Furthermore, the dominant presence by the state in all aspects of social and political life of citizens, since virtually the rise of the modern state in the Middle East and elsewhere in developing countries, has made it very resistant to sharing political power with opposition. For, example, The "powerful interventionists state" remains the "structural factor" responsible for the absence of democracy in the Arab World. See, Emmanuel Sivan, "Constraints and Opportunities in the Arab World," *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 8, 2 (April 1997): 102-13, see particularly pp. 10-11.

6. See, for example, the article by Emmanuel Sivan for the Social Science Research Council project on Civil Society in the Middle East, entitled "The Islamic Resurgence: Civil Society Strikes Back," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 25 (1990): 353-64. See also Michael Hudson, "After the Gulf War: Prospects for Democratization in the Arab World," *Middle East Journal*, 45, no. 3 (Summer 1991): 407-26; John Esposito and James Piscatori,

"Democratization and Islam," *Middle East Journal*, 45, no. 3 (Summer 1991): 427-40.

7. Sadowski, Yahya, "The New Orientalism and the Democracy Debate." *Middle East Report* (July-August 1993): 14-21, see p. 17.

8. Hudson, "After the Gulf War."

9. See Carrie Rosefsky Wickham's analysis of the case of Egypt, "Beyond Democratization: Political Change in the Arab World," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 27, 3 (September 1994): 507-09, 507.

10. An implicit objective of this paper is to remind the reader of the scarcity of empirical studies in analyses of civil society and democracy in discussions of democracy and democratization in the Middle East. I have elsewhere proposed, operationalized, and measured correlations between the explanatory variables proposed here and democracy in developing countries, including the Middle East. See Abootalebi, "Democratization in Developing Countries."

11. Martin Seymour Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (Doubleday, 1959), p. 75.

12. Robert Dahl, *Who Governs?* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1961); Arend Lijphart, *The Politics of Accommodation: Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968); Dankwart A. Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model," *Comparative Politics*, 2 (April 1970): 337-63.

13. Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1971); Robert Dahl, *Modern Political Analysis*, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1976).

14. Kenneth A. Bollen and Robert W. Jackman, "A Political Democracy and the Size Distribution of Income," *American Sociological Review*, 50 (August 1985): 438-57; Edward N. Muller, "A Dependent

Economic Development, Aid Dependence on the United States, and Democratic Breakdown in the Third World." *International Studies Quarterly*, 29 (1985): 445-69.

15. Tatu Vanhanen, *The Process of Democratization: A Comparative Study of 147 States, 1980-88* (New York: Crane Russak, 1990), pp. 47-51.

16. John W. Sewell et al., *The United States and World Development: Agenda 1977*, Overseas Development Council (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1977), p. 147; cf. James A. Bill and Robert Springborg, *Politics in the Middle East*, 3rd ed. (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1990), p. 16. For the discussion of the construction of PQLI and its theoretical underpinning, see Morris David Morris, *Measuring the Condition of the World's Poor: The Physical Quality of Life Index*, the Overseas Development Council (New York: Pergamon Press, 1979).

17. To deduce the Human Development Index for 1987, UNDP researchers designed a minimum value and a desirable value for each of three indicators--Life expectancy at birth (1987); adult literacy rate (% in 1985); and Real GDP per head, adjusted for purchasing power parity (1987). Minimum values were set equal to the lowest actually observed in 1987: 42 years for life expectancy (as in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and Sierra Leone), 12% for adult literacy (as in Somalia) and \$220 for purchasing power (as in Zaire). Desirable values were at 78 years for life expectancy (as in Japan), 100% for adult literacy, and \$4,861 for purchasing power (the average official poverty line for nine industrial countries, adjusted for purchasing power parity). Moreover, to reflect 'diminishing returns in the conversion of income into the fulfillment of human needs,' logarithms rather than absolute values of purchasing power were used. HDI is a simple average of the three categories. For the original scores on HDI, see *The Economist*, May 26, 1990, p. 81. For the 1992 scores used in this study, see United

Nation Human Development Report (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1994).

18. A colleague has questioned the validity of the presumed association between HDI and democratization. As already mentioned in the body of the paper, HDI includes four variables: GDP per capita, literacy, mean years of schooling, and life expectancy. The relationship between economic growth and level of education and democratization has already been discussed, both in this paper and by others. The third variable in HDI, life expectancy, by itself might not be a relevant variable measuring democratization. But life expectancy, as an indication of the health status of population, is correlated with democratization in that it is related to the overall social development of any given society. These taken together measure the level of socioeconomic development. To reiterate, it is presumed here that socioeconomic, and not merely economic, development is correlated with democratization.

19. See Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Evelyne H. Stephens, and John D. Stephens, *Capitalist Development and Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

20. For discussions of corporatism, see Philippe C. Schmitter, *Still the Century of Corporatism?* in Frederick Pike and Thomas Stritch, eds., *The New Corporatism* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1974); Schmitter and Gerhard Lehbruch, eds., *Trends Toward Corporatist Intermediation* (Beverly Hills, Calif: Sage, 1979); John H. Goldthorpe, ed. *Order and Conflict in Contemporary Capitalism*, 1985.

21. See Abootalebi, "Democratization in Developing Countries."

22. Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1941); Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press 1958); Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney

Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963); Gerhard Lenski, and Jean Lenski, *Human Societies* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1974); Samuel H. Barnes, Max Kaase, et al, *Political Action: Mass Participation in Five Western Democracies* (Beverly Hills, Calif: Sage, 1979); Almond and Verba, *The Civic Culture Revisited* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980); Bollen and Jackman, "Political Democracy; Ronald Inglehart, *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990); John Esposito and John Voll, *Islam and Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). Also see Rex Brynen, Bahgat Korany, and Paul Noble, eds., *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World: Theoretical Perspectives*, 1 (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1995).

23. Samuel Huntington, *Will More Countries Become Democratic?* *Political Science Quarterly*, 99, no. 2 (Summer 1984): 193-218.

24. Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).

25. See John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1992).

26. For a critical view of the prevalent views on Islamic movements and the issue of democracy, see Gudrun Kramer, "Islamist Notions of Democracy," *Middle East Report*, July-August 1993): 2-8.

27. Rueschemeyer, et al., *Capitalist Development and Democracy*, 1992, p. 50. Also see, Brynen, Korany, and Noble, *Political Liberalization and Democratization*, 1995.

28. Esposito, *Islamic Threat*, pp. 206-7.

29. The decline in financial capability of the state in the Middle East in the 1980s and 1990s has forced it to give a freer hand to the private sector, with the state cutting back

its involvement in such areas as education, health, and welfare. The state, however, remains authoritarian and unwilling to genuinely share political power. See, Sivan, "Constraints and Opportunities in the Arab World."

30. As quoted in Bruce E. Moon and William J. Dixon, *Politics, the State, and Basic Human Needs: A Cross-National Study*, *American Journal of Political Science*, vol. 29, no. 4 (November 1985): 661-94. See also Peter Evans, *Dependent Development: The Alliance of Multinational, State, and Local Capital in Brazil* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979).

31. As for theoretical justification, it is clear that a state may be large without being strong. That is, the size of the state bureaucracy and its various organizations and institutions is not necessarily an indication of a strong or a weak state. On the other hand, the bigger the relative size of the state machinery, the better the opportunities for extraction of resources. In this case, then, a broader measure of state strength is needed (e.g., the state tax revenues). The tax revenue portion of the central government's total revenue for most LDCs is not available, making its use to measure state strength in LDCs, almost impossible. Given the limitations on data available in LDCs, this study has utilized the best alternative measure of state strength. It is plausible to argue that central government expenditures, as a percentage of GNP, reflects the government's capability to control resources and the way resources are distributed. The central government expenditures as percentage of GNP, if viewed from this perspective, is then an appropriate measure of state strength.

32. The uneven distribution of power in Yugoslavia, for example, led to a bloody civil war. Indeed, the outcome of the struggle for democracy in Russia and the East European countries will be determined

through a power struggle among rival groups. This is not to ignore the ethnic dimension of the ongoing conflict. The occurrence of conflict over ethnicity is fundamentally a reflection of the uneven distribution of power resources. Ethnicity, with informal family and group politics, loses its importance as societies get more organized and institutionalized. The parochial and patrimonial nature of politics in many of the developing countries is associated with the control of politics and vital economic resources by powerful families, clans, and informal groups. The prospects for democratization will increase when groups compete for resources through institutions, not informal avenues such as family or clan ties, personal connections.

33. Lebanon was not initially included in this study because of date unavailability. The post civil war Lebanese government is still struggling to establish its control over the national territory, given Israeli and Syrian military presence, as well as the Iranian influence through Hizballah. These external forces and the presence of a weak society (e.g., moderate HDI and weak OUL) are obstacles for the future of democracy in Lebanon