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Democratization in the Middle East

- A Comparative Case Study

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Abstract

One of the unsolved puzzles in democratization studies today is the prevalence of authoritarian regimes in the Middle East. Previous comparative studies have overlooked the region because it does not contain a single case of successful democratization. Middle Eastern scholars, on the other hand, tend to lack the theoretical tools on what it would take for this area to democratize. The purpose of this study is to elucidate the factors behind the level of (non-)democratization in the MENA-region. I will argue that democratization in the Middle East takes place on three different levels: international, national and societal. The study combines statistical data with process tracing analysis, in order to corroborate the evidence. Twelve variables, covering a wide range of democratization theories, are tested on four cases: Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. From this, I am able to confirm or discard certain theories, as well as establish the factors that are relevant for each case. Among other things, I am able to refute the claim that a Muslim population affects democratization negatively; to confirm the validity of the rentier state theory; to show that path dependency and political parties matter; and that FDI and aid can play a part in the future democratization of the Middle East.

Key words: Democratization, Middle East, case study, MENA-region.

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Abbreviations

ABEDA	Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa
AFESD	Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development
AKP	Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)
AMF	Arab Monetary Fund
BBP	Büyük Birlik Partisi (Grand Unity Party)
BPC	Broad Popular Coalition of Principlists [Iran]
BSEC	Black Sea Economic Cooperation Zone
CAEU	Council of Arab Economic Unity
CE	Council of Europe
CHP	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People’s Party)

CP	Colombo Plan
D-8	Developing Eight
DSP	Demokratik Sol Partisi (Democratic Left Party)
DTP	Demokratik Toplum Partisi (Democratic Society Party)
EAPC	Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organization
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FH	Freedom House
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IDB	Islamic Development Bank
IIPF	Islamic Iran Participation Front
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
LAS	League of Arab States
MB	Muslim Brotherhood
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MHP	Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (Nationalistic Action Party)
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDP	National Democratic Party [Egypt]
NFC	National Front for Change [Egypt]
NWP	New Wafd Party [Egypt]
OAPEC	Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries
OIC	Organization of the Islamic Conference
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
RWB	Reporters Without Borders
SECI	Southeast Europe Cooperative Initiative
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
UFP	United Front of Principlists [Iran]
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WDI	World Development Indicators [World Bank]
WEO	World Economic Outlook [IMF]
WTO	World Trade Organization
ÖDP	Özgürlük ve Dayanışma Partisi (Freedom and Solidarity Party)

1 Introduction

Many of the major recent political events in the world during the 21st century have been connected to the Muslim world in general and to the region known as the Middle East in particular. The events of 9/11 on the US East Coast, the so called pre-emptive war on Iraq, the issue of Iran's nuclear programme, the war on terrorism, the prolonged conflict between Israel and Palestine all provide clear and vivid examples of international conflicts where states other than the directly affected have become involved. Not only states, but also international institutions such as the UN Security Council, IAEA, NATO and the EU have been forced to turn their attention to this conflict-ridden and often contested part of the world. In short, dealing with issues arising from this area has often been a pressing topic on many top-level meeting agendas.

The reason for this is not only due to the fact that the area is conflict-stricken. The region's high supply of energy resources in the form of oil and natural gas makes it a strategically important area, both for economic and security reasons, not the least for the United States and rising super powers like China. The geographical location as an intersection between Africa, Asia and Europe has made it a long-time meeting place and important hub for commercial trade between other parts of the world, long before the vast resources of fossil fuels and minerals were known. The region has a long and proud history, dating back to what we know as the "cradle of civilization" of Mesopotamia and hosting a number of empires, notably the Persian and the Ottoman Empires. Last, but of course not least, the Middle East is home to the three monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam and harbours many of the places which are holy to these faiths.¹

From a Global Studies perspective, therefore, this area clearly demands attention for a number of reasons, but most of all for its salience in shaping the global agenda of contemporary world politics. Within Political Science, it is not only the sub-fields of International Relations (IR) and Peace and Conflict Studies which take an interest in studying this region. For scholars of comparative studies of democratization, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) remain one of the major unsolved puzzles. In 1991, Samuel P. Huntington published his seminal work "The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century". What he referred to was that democratization, on a global scale, seemed

¹ See for example Long, David E., Bernard Reich and Mark Gasiorowski (eds.) (2007) *The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa*, Boulder: Westview Press, p3ff

to have occurred in waves, with the first one lasting from 1828-1926, the second one from 1943-1962 and the third and latest one beginning in 1974.²

What is puzzling is that the MENA-region as a whole was left remarkably untouched by this “third wave”. With the exception of Israel, there are no stable democracies in the Middle East today. This striking fact has led many researchers to try to discover the lowest common denominators for the countries in this region, to help explain why it is so democracy-resistant. There are a number of common features, of course. Three of the most commonly mentioned ones are, to put it very simply, race, religion and rents. The fact that the majority of the population is of Arab ethnic origin, with a common language and cultural heritage based on nomadic tribes and patriarchal values, might have influenced the way they understand democracy and their view on how to govern their countries.

In fact, Alfred Stepan with Graeme B. Robertson (2003) did find the gap of electoral competitiveness to be “Arab”, whereas Steven Fish (2002) argued that the best explanation for authoritarian government was to be found in higher levels of female subordination. However, Fish’s study was a large-N study of Muslim-majority countries in general, not only in the Middle East. In their assessment of electoral competitiveness in the Muslim world, Stepan and Robertson conclude that there is “no comparative Muslim gap whatsoever when it comes to political rights” and that the fault line runs between the Arab and the non-Arab world, rather than the Muslim and the non-Muslim world.³ These cultural arguments have been contested in a recent study (2008) made by Amaney Jamal and Mark Tessler, with data from the Arab Barometer survey project. As their study shows, there is in fact strong support for democracy in the Arab world: “as high as or higher than in any other world region”. If the Middle East is less democratic than other world regions, it is not due to its people’s attitude towards democracy, which in turn does not depend on their ethnic background or religious conviction.⁴

This rather simplistic view is also contested by historian Roger Owen (2004), who argues that the area does not differ from other Third World countries with a colonial history. The Arab nationalism, or pan-Arabism, which in part defines the region, was mainly a counter reaction to this colonial heritage. The rents, finally, refer to the substantial income coming mainly from oil exports, which has allowed many of the states to fund government services without taxing their people. This has led to the paraphrased maxim of “no representation without taxation” being employed, thus shutting the public out from participating in decision-making.⁵ The rentier state theory would explain why the

² Huntington, Samuel P. (1991) *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, p16. In retrospect, the Third Wave ended in 1994 with the first democratic election in South Africa, after Huntington’s book was written.

³ Stepan, Alfred with Graeme B. Robertson (2003) “An ‘Arab’ More Than ‘Muslim’ Electoral Gap”, *Journal of Democracy*, 14:3, pp35 et passim; Fish, M. Steven (2002) “Islam and Authoritarianism”, *World Politics*, 55, pp4-37

⁴ Jamal, Amaney and Mark Tessler (2008) “Attitudes in the Arab World”, *Journal of Democracy*, 19:1, pp97, 108

⁵ Posusney, Marsha Pripstein (2005) “The Middle East’s Democratic Deficit in Comparative Perspective” in Posusney, Marsha Pripstein and Michele Penner Angrist (eds.) *Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Regimes*

developmental theory does not apply to the MENA-region. According to the latter, the degree of electoral contestation should increase as a country's relative wealth increases. This proposition is "among the strongest and best-corroborated findings in all of social science" and yet it fails to explain why the opposite correlation applies to these countries. On the other hand, scholars like Jan Teorell (2008) refute the notion that oil wealth should hinder democratization. Eva Bellin (2004) suggests that the factors that make the region democracy-resistant are not unique to the Middle East. What is unique is the combination of factors.⁶

1.1 Research Questions and Purpose

The overall research question is:

- ***What factors – contingent or in combination - explain the current level of (non-) democratization in the Middle East?***

More specifically, I will also answer the following questions:

- ***Which theories are relevant for explaining the democratic deficit in the Middle East?***
- ***On what levels does democratization in the Middle East work?***
- ***Are there any case-specific traits?***

All in all, it can be concluded that democratization in the Middle East, as well as in other parts of the world, is not dependent upon a single factor but on a variety of much contested and sometimes also contending factors. The aim of this study is twofold. First, it will bring out and test different theories and hypotheses brought forward regarding the region or the world in general, but most of the times tested in single case studies or on a global level (large-N studies). Previous small-N studies, on the other hand, have concentrated on single, not multiple factors. This lacuna will be remedied by combining a new set of variables with a new set of cases. In that sense, this is a theory-testing study. Secondly, this study will combine the conventional wisdom of democratization theory with the particular region of the Middle East, since this area has so long eluded the comparative study of democratization on a global level. The democratic gap continues to puzzle and therefore demands explanation. My study will make clear which factors make the region democracy-resistant. By triangulating my sources and methods, using statistical material, historical analysis and case study method, I will not

and Resistance, Boulder, London: Lynne Rienne Publishers, p6; Owen, Roger (2004) *State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East*, (3rd ed.) London and New York: Routledge, ppixii, 59

⁶ Posusney, p6; Stepan, p33; Teorell, Jan (2008) *Determinants of Democratization: Explaining Regime Change in the World 1972-2002*, Department of Political Science, Lund University (forthcoming), p12; Bellin, Eva (2004) "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective", *Comparative Politics*, 36:2, p152f

only be able to draw conclusions about the region as a whole, but also to extend my findings to similar cases outside the region. In doing so, this study is also theory-generating in a longer perspective.

1.2 Definitions

The first definition that needs to be made is that of *the Middle East*. For the purpose of this study I will use the terms Middle East, Middle East and North Africa and the MENA-region interchangeably, denoting the following 20 countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, the Palestinian Authority, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen. I have thus excluded five countries which are members of the Arab League but situated further south in Africa: the Comoros Islands, Djibouti, Mauritania, Somalia and Sudan. This is more or less the same definition as Larry Diamond uses in his 2002 article on “hybrid regimes”, but I have chosen to include the Palestinian Authority (PA), since it is a recognised state within the Arab League. Bellin (2004) uses the same definition as I do but also includes Sudan, which I find somewhat inconsistent.⁷

The second definition I need to make is the one of *democratization* and *democracy*. Although the cases in my study have thus far reached different levels of democratization, I do not assume that democratization is therefore a one-way process where one step logically follows another. Indeed, all of the three waves referred to earlier by Huntington were followed by “reverse waves”, in which some of the previously democratized countries reverted to non-democratic rule.⁸ Following Teorell, “democratization implies the process through which countries become democratic. But this of course begs the question what is meant by democracy.”⁹

Building upon concepts developed by Robert A. Dahl and Joseph Schumpeter, I will adopt the following definition: a political system is considered to be democratic when “its most powerful collective decision makers are selected through fair, honest, and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote. [...] It also implies the existence of those civil and political freedoms to speak, publish, assemble, and organize that are necessary to political debate and the conduct of electoral campaigns”. By and large, this follows Huntington’s definition of democracy. However, unlike Huntington, I do not understand the concept of democracy as a

⁷ Bellin, Eva (2004) p153, note 1; Diamond, Larry (2002) “Thinking About Hybrid Regimes”, *Journal of Democracy*, 13:2, p31

⁸ Huntington, p15f; Of course, Huntington was not aware that the third wave would be followed by a reverse wave, though he did discuss the possibility; *ibid*, p290ff. That a third reverse wave did occur is my own interpretation. See also Teorell, p7f

⁹ Teorell, p27

dichotomy (countries are either democratic or not), but as a scale (countries may be more or less democratic).¹⁰ This is because a continuous concept fits the purpose of my study better, since none of the cases at hand can be defined as democracies, as stated above.

1.3 Delimitations

By providing a definition of the area I want to study, the spatial delimitation is already made. Temporally, I will focus on the current state and level of democratization, meaning the early 21st century. However, in order to explain this, it will sometimes be necessary to go back in time and look for events and turns that have shaped the current conditions. Historically, I will therefore go as far back as the early 20th century, when the modern history of this region began. Theoretically, I will try to use the most recent and up-to-date theories on democratization and the Middle East, with Huntington's Third Wave as the starting point. Further delimitations and choices will be discussed in connection with the relevant topic: methods, material, cases and variables.

1.4 Disposition

The following section will provide a brief overview of recent literature on democratization, authoritarianism and the role of religion. From this survey, I have compiled a number of tentative factors, which seem to have an impact on the state and level of (non-) democratization in the Middle East. The methodological chapter will discuss the choice of different methods, the variables and the material, as well as sampling and description of cases. It also contains a short discussion of validity and reliability. The ensuing chapters contain the analysis, which is divided into two major parts: one more quantitative (statistical) and one more qualitative (comparative). The first part discusses each case separately and the second part each variable. Chapter 6 concludes the thesis by summarizing and discussing my findings, as well as pointing towards suggestions for further research.

¹⁰ Huntington, p7, 11f

2 Theoretical discussion

After the Third Wave, comparative scholars turned their attention to the consolidation of new democracies, rather than democratic turnovers. Another strand began classifying the states in between liberal democracies and closed dictatorships, recognising that there were a number of “hybrid regimes”. When dealing with the Middle East in particular, there was a tendency to treat authoritarian states as something *sui generis*, apart from democratic ones. A third trend picked up the relevance of religion, which Emile Durkheim, Max Weber and Karl Marx, among others, had argued would become irrelevant.¹¹ The literature is subsequently full of hypotheses, suggestions, tentative conclusions and theories about the crucial factors behind democracy in the Middle East and elsewhere. Some of them stress structural factors, others strategic ones, while a third group tries to accommodate both of them. I will summarize these hypotheses in a theoretical model and sum up the relevant variables at the end of this section.

2.1 Democratization

According to Jan Teorell (2008), democratization processes have thus far been explained in roughly four different ways: modernization theory (structural), the transition paradigm (strategic), the social forces paradigm (actor-centered), or the economic approach (game-theoretic). Teorell draws the conclusion, among others, that democratic diffusion through regional organizations may promote democracy, but not hinder authoritarianism. On the contrary, modernization hinders authoritarian reversal, but does not promote democratic transition.

While Teorell acknowledges that all four theories may partly explain democratization, all of them also contain serious flaws. The economic approach needs to incorporate the concept of authoritarian bargains in order to become more fruitful, while moving away from its focus on redistributive inequality. The social forces approach has focused too heavily on the concept of social class and the strategic approach on elite actors, without understanding what drives them. In addition, the modernization theory only applies to

¹¹ Norris, Pippa and Ronald Inglehart (2004) *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p3

the consolidation of, not the transition to democracy and its focus should be on media proliferation rather than education, economic growth or industrialization.

When it comes to the MENA-region, Teorell refutes the cultural interpretation and the rentier state theory, but also a number of other “pet explanations”, such as identity politics and colonialism. He also notes that a) one democracy-hindering factor seems to be a predominantly Muslim population and b) the cleavages that matter when it comes to the democratic deficit in the Middle East are religious, not cultural.¹²

In 2002, Thomas Carothers proclaimed “the end of the transition paradigm” in his article bearing the same name. This paradigm, built upon the works of for example Dankwart Rustow, Guillermo O’Donnell and Philippe Schmitter, had emphasized the importance of elections, focused on actor-centered or strategic explanations rather than structural, assumed that democratic shifts would be followed by periods of consolidation and overlooked the challenges of state-building along with democracy-building, as well as the fact that states showing signs of democratization may turn into something else.

Carothers asserted that the two most common types of patterns in the gray zone between democracy and dictatorship were “feckless pluralism” and “dominant-power politics”. Several countries in the Middle East belonged to the latter, with large gaps between the ruling elite and its citizens and most of the opposition residing in civil society. What he proposed to be done was to focus on political party development and socioeconomic aid, especially in the form of privatization programmes. In other words, impetus for democracy has to come both from within the country and without.¹³

Only three months after Carother’s article was published, *Journal of Democracy* featured a set of articles devoted to “elections without democracy”. In one of the articles, the journal’s co-editor Larry Diamond (2002) was “thinking about hybrid regimes” and electoral authoritarianism. Using Freedom House rankings combined with other data, he attempted to classify the world’s regimes into six different categories, ranging from liberal democracy to politically closed authoritarian. Notably, all of the countries in the MENA-region, except Israel and Turkey, were classified as authoritarian.¹⁴

Stepan and Robertson’s article (2003) not only ruled out Islam as a cause for this electoral deficit, but also the developmental theory and the hypothesis of ethnolinguistic fragmentation. They therefore suggested that the antidemocratic features of the MENA-region must be explained by political, rather than ethnic or religious, particularities. These particularities were identified as high concentration of traditional autocratic monarchies, high military spending, pan-Arabism or pan-Islamism and authoritarianism.¹⁵

¹² Teorell, pp8ff, 17ff

¹³ Carothers, Thomas (2002) ”The End of the Transition Paradigm”, *Journal of Democracy*, 13:1, pp5-21

¹⁴ Diamond, p29ff; Israel was denoted liberal democracy, whereas Turkey was labelled “ambiguous”. However, Diamond noted that virtually all ambiguous regimes could also be classified as “competitive authoritarian”, which would leave only Israel as democratic (ibid, p26).

¹⁵ Stepan, p40f

2.2 Authoritarianism

A couple of years later, Marsha Pripstein Posusney and Michele Penner Angrist's co-edited volume on "Authoritarianism in the Middle East" (2005) addressed this issue. Although previous scholars had called for attention to the cultural context, this view was not supported here. Nor was the role of declining rents upheld as a necessary or sufficient pre-requisite to democratization in the region, although it may affect liberalization and pluralisation. Among structural factors affecting democratization, a greater emphasis was put on political institutions such as government agencies, parties and elections.

Turning to strategic factors, the role of human agency was explored in the form of ruling elites, opposition and international actors. This was a conscious effort from the editors to bring together the structural modernization or preconditions school with the more actor-centred or strategic transitions paradigm. In particular, they highlighted the importance of institutions as backdrops for decisions made by different actors and showed how these institutions thus can act as bridges between contingent choices and other variables.¹⁶

Jason Brownlee picks up the thread of institutions in his "Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization" (2007). What separate unstable regimes from durable dictatorships, he argues, is institutional differences in the form of ruling parties, which organize national decision making and regulate elite relations. Brownlee's study is a small-N case study of two Middle Eastern (Iran and Egypt) and two Asian (Malaysia and the Philippines) cases, showing that there are intra-regional differences as well as cross-regional similarities.

Building on Barbara Geddes' terminology of military, personalistic and single-party regimes, Brownlee demonstrates how institutions are more influential than elections for regime stability or breakdown. These institutional legacies are shaped by the early interplay of key political actors at the inception of power. How rulers gained their power to begin with, for example through military coups or revolutions, will affect their hold on power. Brownlee thus calls for closer attention to historical context and causal mechanisms, such as critical junctures, when assessing the most determinative structures. Elections, on the other hand, are downplayed as a factor.¹⁷

In a previous article (2004), Eva Bellin asserted that the exceptionalism of the MENA-region is not so much in absent prerequisites for democracy, as in present factors fostering robust authoritarianism. Some of them are specific for the region, such as the role of rents and international support, whereas others, like lack of popular mobilization and institutionalization of the security apparatus, are not unique. What distinguishes the region is the combination of factors upholding authoritarian regimes.¹⁸

¹⁶ Posusney, pp4ff, 12ff

¹⁷ Brownlee, Jason (2007) *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp2, 10, 14, 18, 24f, 30, 44

¹⁸ Bellin (2004), p152

2.3 Religion and Politics

In her review article from 2008, Bellin neatly summarizes the study of politics and religion within the fields of comparative politics and international relations (IR). According to “the secularization theory”, modernization would lead to the erosion of religion and thus render it irrelevant to study, comparativists thought. In an effort of bringing religion back in, a significant number of case studies were conducted towards the end of the last century. However, they mostly lacked in theoretical ambition and it was not until the last decade when comparative work on religion in politics really began to link agency and structure, ideas and institutions, contingency and path-dependence, using a range of approaches comprising of rational choice as well as historical analysis.¹⁹

The first major trend was to apply microeconomic analysis and rational choice in what was called “the religious economy school”. This school used the metaphor of church as economic firm and stressed the importance of institutional structures, leadership and religious competition in creating religious engagement. The latter version of a supply-side theory also became known as “the religious market theory”. However, comparativists also came up with a demand-side theory to counter this. Another comparative approach was to use historical analysis, in this case to account for variation in state accommodation of Muslim religious practice in Western Europe. The authors tested four different hypotheses and found two of them to be valid: the political opportunity structure and the church-state legacy. This emphasizes the power of path dependence in shaping political outcomes, but also the role of historical legacy in shaping religious accommodation.²⁰

Relying on public opinion surveys and large-N studies, Norris and Inglehart (2004) managed to show that the secularization theory was partly valid, since religiosity was negatively correlated to economic development, whereas secularization and modernization were positively correlated. In addition, they refuted Huntington’s theory of a “clash of civilizations” based on cultural differences between the Christian West and the Islamic East. Although Huntington was right that culture matters, he was wrong about what it matters for. Norris and Inglehart found evidence that cultural and religious values do impinge on attitudes towards sexuality and equality between the sexes, but none to suggest that core political values on representative democracy are affected.²¹

Moreover, the secularization theory focused on industrialized societies in the economically developed world and thus predicted a decline in the salience of religion on the international agenda. What it did not predict was the demographic trend in secular societies, which has meant that they now constitute a dwindling share of the world population. The

¹⁹ Bellin, Eva (2008) “Faith in Politics: New Trends in the Study of Religion and Politics”, *World Politics*, 60, p317ff

²⁰ Bellin (2008), p319-30, 334ff

²¹ Norris and Inglehart, pp134f, 222; this is also confirmed by the study by Jamal and Tessler. (See note 4, supra.)

conclusion is that rich societies do become more secular, but at the same time the world as a whole is becoming more religious.

Norris and Inglehart finds the explanation for this in something they call the “existential security hypothesis”. According to this hypothesis, religiosity persists among poor and vulnerable populations, who do not feel that survival is secure enough to be taken for granted. By contrast, secularization occurs among prosperous, secure nations, whose people have a sense of existential security. Modernization and secularization, in turn, have a negative impact on fertility rates. Norris and Inglehart conclude that the transition from agrarian to industrial society brings broadly similar trajectories, affecting the state of human security.²²

2.4 Conclusions from previous research

The constructivist approach adopted by for example Teorell, Brownlee, Posusney and Angrist, strongly suggests that structures must be combined with agency in the future study of politics, religion and democratization. Moreover, the historical dimension and the impact of critical junctures and path dependency have not been widely used within democratization theory. This is where studies like Brownlee’s and the ones on religion, reviewed by Bellin, have an important point to make. The position may be elaborated on as follows: historical context determines structure, which in turn determines the range of choices available for certain key actors, including the possible lack of options. The strategic choices these actors make, for example regarding allies and partners, will affect the final outcome.²³

History + Structure + Agency

In addition, the international dimension cannot be overlooked, as suggested by Bellin, Posusney and Angrist, Teorell and Carothers. International factors have an impact on historical events as well as actors in the form of elite and opposition, but also on national structures, such as the formation of government agencies and institutions:

International context
+
History + Structure + Agency

Finally, all of the above-mentioned factors, whether structural, strategic, international or historical, also have an impact on another key institution: political parties. If the regime type

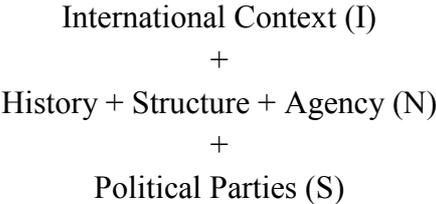
²² Norris and Inglehart, pp4ff, 14, 25, 216f

²³ Cf. Angrist, cited in Posusney, p8

in question is liberal enough to allow for elections, these elections must also allow for independent parties to partake if they are to be considered free and fair. In order to achieve democracy, all three structural components must be in place and working: government institutions, elections and parties. All three must also be democratic, which means that none of them will function properly if one of them is corrupt or repressing any of the others.

Whereas regime types and elections have been widely treated within the existing democratization literature, institutions in the form of parties have attracted more interest from scholars focusing particularly on authoritarianism. This is not a coincidence. Although Carothers asserts that democracy promoters must devote more time and energy towards the development of political parties, this is more of a practical suggestion to the international community, than a recommendation for comparative scholars. Among the actors involved, the interplay between elite and opposition has also been dealt with substantially, whereas the impact of international ones has been widely overlooked. I will consequently argue that democratization takes place on three different levels: the international (I), the national or state-level (N) and the societal or domestic level (S):

Figure 1: Theoretical model of democratization factors



In order to test several different factors, levels and hypotheses, I will examine the variables summarized in Table 1 below. The variables will be operationalized further under Methodology, section 3.2. Although they are generally chosen based upon what Teorell and Stepan consider democracy-impacting factors, I have rated them positive or negative in accordance with what the original theory posits and not what Teorell and Stepan suggest they should be. For example, Teorell considers heterogeneity, oil rent and colonial history to be neutral or non-factors, whereas Stepan considers international support to be a negative factor.²⁴ It should also be noted that I have not considered it relevant to include all of the factors tested by Teorell and others. Instead, I focus on the ones that seem relevant for the MENA-region, either because it is explicitly stated in the literature or because they fit my theoretical model. I have also tried to cover a broad range of theories, both with positive and negative effects on democratization and covering all three levels of my model.

²⁴ Teorell, p212; Stepan, p42

Table 1: Theory testing variables

Variable	Theory/hypothesis	Democratic impact*	Level
1. Population density	Structural theory	Positive	Societal
2. Religion	Cultural theory	Negative	Societal
3. Heterogeneity	Consolidation theory	Negative	Societal
4. Political parties	Institutional theory	Positive	Societal
5. Free media	Modernization theory	Positive	National
6. Economy	Developmental thesis	Positive	National
7. Oil revenue	Rentier state theory	Negative	National
8. Military spending	Security hypothesis	Negative	National
9. Internat'l support	Strategic theory	Positive	International
10. Dem. neighbours	Democratic diffusion	Positive	International
11. Pan-Arabism	Regional diffusion	Negative	International
12. Colonial history	Path dependency	Negative	International

*According to original theory

Figure 2: Hypothesis (I + N + S = D)

$$\begin{array}{c}
 \text{International Context (I)} \\
 + \\
 \text{History + Structure + Agency (N) = Level of Democratization (D)} \\
 + \\
 \text{Political Parties (S)}
 \end{array}$$

Building on the model of democratizing factors established in Figure 1 above, I am offering a diagram of my hypothesis in Figure 2 above. Although I do believe that the factors have an impact on one another (as discussed under section 2.4, above) I have chosen to regard these factors as supplemental, meaning that it is their combination that in sum affects the final outcome. I will thus not try to establish or test any causal relationships between these factors, nor try to set up any kind of causal chain. This is because I want to avoid the notion that democratization follows a logical step-by-step pattern, where one factor automatically leads to another (cf section 1.2, above). Path dependency is one among several theories to be tested, but contingent, strategic and structural factors must also be accounted for.

3 Methodological choices

This chapter will present my cases and the methods to be employed, discuss validity and reliability, operationalize the variables and describe the sampling procedure. According to John Gerring (2007), “the strongest defence of a case study is that it is quasi-experimental in nature. This is because the experimental idea is often better approximated within a small number of cases that are closely related to one another, (...) than by a large sample of heterogeneous units”. He continues, however, by arguing that the divide between large-N cross-case studies and case studies must be overcome, since they complement each other and researchers “*must* engage both styles of evidence”. He concludes: “Properly constituted, there is no reason that case study results cannot be synthesized with results gained from cross-case analysis, and vice versa”.²⁵

This is similar to the so-called *mixed methods approach* described by John W. Creswell (2003). The advantage of this approach is that it offers both the structure of quantitative research and the flexibility of qualitative research. In contrast to the traditional concept of triangulation, where for example two qualitative methods can be used, mixed methods purposely combine quantitative and qualitative techniques. Since all methods have limitations, the idea is that “biases inherent in any single method could neutralize or cancel the biases of other methods”. Obviously, things are not always that simple. Adopting several methods also means that the research project will take longer time to conduct, but this is probably outweighed by the fact that the researcher gains a fuller understanding of the object of study.²⁶

Gerring summarizes the advantages of conducting case studies thus: in general, they are better at generating hypotheses than large-N studies and for providing insight about causal mechanisms. Their scope of proposition is deeper and their internal validity stronger. This is all due to that “it is easier to establish the veracity of a causal relationship pertaining to a single case (or a small number of cases) than for a larger set of cases”. In addition, case studies are more advantageous when the population of cases is heterogeneous and the data availability is concentrated. This also involves a number of trade-offs, since case studies are, in general, less good at hypothesis-testing, establishing external validity or a broader scope of proposition.²⁷ When it comes to the trade-off between particularizing and generalizing however, Gerring claims that case studies are “studies both of something particular and of

²⁵ Gerring, John (2007) *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p12f

²⁶ Creswell, John W. (2003) *Research Design. Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (2nd ed.) Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, pp15, 23

²⁷ Gerring, pp38, 43

something more general”. He explains: “Case study research format generally occupies an in-between methodological zone that is part ‘idiographic’ and part ‘nomothetic’ [...] The defining characteristic of the case study is its ability to infer a larger whole from a much smaller part”.²⁸

Ultimately, the research method has to fit the purpose of the study. Taking the above mentioned trade-offs into consideration as well as the purpose of this study, I have thus chosen to apply a small-N comparative case study method. This will allow me to make use of different types of data and analytical techniques, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of my findings. Both Gerring and Creswell suggest that quantitative data analysis should be mixed with the more qualitative results from the case study. Therefore, I will operationalize the variables in such a way that they can be measured statistically. Drawing on available material in existing databases, I will make an analysis of the variables based on statistical data.

On the other hand, James Mahoney and Daniel Schensul (2006) suggest that statistical analysis may overlook the actual causes of outcomes. In their view, events in the past can affect the future, although these events may be “temporally lagged”. According to one interpretation, early events matter more than later ones in determining the final outcome, since shifts are made increasingly difficult over time. To be able to escape from this historical path dependence, a critical juncture has to occur. This critical juncture will channel the future movement into a specific direction, thereby limiting the range of future possibilities. In other words, the critical juncture provides a turn or shift from one path of development to another. Brownlee defines moments of regime formation as an example of such critical junctures. Similarly, Owen implicitly argues that countries with a similar past will have similar trajectories.²⁹

In order to account for the more qualitative evidence, I will adopt a technique called process tracing, as described by Gerring. This is a technique which rests on the conclusion that “in case study research evidence pertaining to X_1 and Y is often opaque, and must therefore be supplemented by another form of analysis that has come to be known as *process tracing*”. This technique, “when employed in an adjunct fashion, is not intended to bear the entire burden of an empirical study. It offers supporting evidence”. In addition, Gerring states that “process tracing is convincing insofar as the multiple links in a causal chain can be formalized, that is, diagrammed in an explicit way (...) and insofar as each micro-mechanism can be proven”.³⁰

²⁸ Gerring, p76ff

²⁹ Mahoney, James and Daniel Schensul (2006) “Historical Context and Path Dependence” in Goodin, Robert E. and Charles Tilly (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*, New York: Oxford University Press, pp457, 460ff; Brownlee, p35, note 14; see Owen, supra, note 5

³⁰ Gerring, pp173, 181ff

3.1 Validity and reliability

Despite the many available text books on research designs, I still consider Robert K. Yin's (1994) volume on case study research and methods to offer the most appropriate criteria for judging the quality of case studies. Yin identifies four such criteria: construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability. He also offers a number of tactics to help passing these tests. Obviously, it is not always possible to employ all of these tactics in a single study, since this depends on the methods and material being used. For example, the trade-off between internal and external validity has already been touched upon briefly above, under section 3. However, Yin argues that when dealing with case studies, the analogy of generalizing from sample to universe is wrong, since this only applies to the type of statistical generalization used in large-N studies.³¹

In a case study, by contrast, analytical generalization is used to generalize the results to a broader theory. By using *replication logic* in a multiple-case study, it is possible to meet the criterion of *external validity*, even in a small-N study. This differs from Gerring's definition of external validity, which rests upon the representativeness of the sample. By relying on Yin's definition instead, I will argue that the findings of my study are generalizable to unstudied cases within the population of the MENA-region, if they can be replicated within the four cases of my sample. If they cannot be replicated within the sample, it still might be possible to transfer them to cases outside the population, if these new cases are deemed sufficiently similar to the original case at hand.

Regarding *internal validity*, this has partly been addressed by Gerring in relation to process tracing (see section 3, above). In short, the argument should be clarified, "preferably with the aid of a visual diagram or formal model" and then each stage of the model needs to be verified.³² What needs to be done, subsequently, is to provide a diagram or model for my argument and then verify the relationships between the links of my model. The model I will use is the hypothesis illustrated in Figure 2 under section 2.5, above. There are five factors in that model, operating on three different levels (I, N and S) and each of these factors need to be related to the outcome, D. If no such relationships can be shown, my model has failed.

However, if relationships on the other hand can be established, I must make sure that the inferences these relationships are built upon are not false. Yin suggests the tactics of pattern-matching, explanation-building and time-series analysis to overcome these problems. Pattern-matching refers to comparing "an empirically based pattern with a predicted one". If the patterns coincide, internal validity is strengthened. Explanation-building is a special type

³¹ Yin, Robert K. (1994) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (2nd ed.) Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, pp33, 36. N. b. that what I refer to as "large-N studies" is what Yin calls "survey research" and Gerring "cross-case studies"; see Gerring, p213

³² Gerring, pp184, 217; n. b. that this is different from Yin, who defines internal validity as the establishment of a causal relationship, as distinguished from a spurious relationship: see Yin, pp33, 36f

of pattern-matching, where “the goal is to analyze the case study data by building an explanation about the case”. An important aspect of this is to “entertain other *plausible or rival explanations*”, in order to show that these alternative explanations cannot be built from the same case study findings.³³

Although I am aware that the falsification of a rival theory does not automatically entail the verification of the proposed theory, it may enhance the probability. Therefore, I am testing a number of different theories, as shown above in Table 1, section 2.4. Time-series analysis applies to studies where observations are made over a previously specified period of time. Therefore, I will not be able to use it for my purposes. Turning to *construct validity*, this refers to “establishing correct operational measures for the concepts being studied”. In other words, making sure that we are measuring what we have intended to measure. The problems of construct validity may be overcome by employing multiple sources of evidence, by establishing a chain of evidence or by having a draft report reviewed by key informants.

I have chosen to employ the first two of these strategies, since there are no key informants in my study who can review the draft report. Instead of relying on a single source of evidence, I will make use of both documents and archival records, hoping that the findings from these different sources will corroborate each other and thereby strengthen my hypothesis. In addition, I will try to maintain a chain of evidence by using “clear cross-referencing to methodological procedures and to the resulting evidence”. This will also increase the *reliability* of my study, as will the documentation of each step of my research procedure. Yin proposes “to make as many steps as operational as possible” and to maintain a case study protocol as well as a database to make sure that the study can be reproduced with the same results.³⁴ To sum up, the problems of validity and reliability may be overcome by triangulating data sources, theories and methods, by repeating tests and building strong evidence for each case and, finally, by closely documenting the whole research process.

³³ Yin, pp33, 106, 110f

³⁴ Ibid, pp33f, 37, 98f

3.2 Operationalization and Material

Table 2: Operationalization of variables

Independent variable(+/-)*	Operationalization	Measured by:
1. Population density (+)	Density of population Urbanization	Population over size Urban population
2. Religion (-)	Religious diversity and Muslim population	Religious fractionalization Share of population (%)
3. Heterogeneity (-)	Ethnic diversity Linguistic diversity	Ethnic fractionalization Linguistic fractionalization
4. Political parties (+)	Active parties during last election	Nr of parties in parliament Nr of active political parties
5. Free media (+)	Level of press freedom	Int'l ranking by RWB Int'l ranking by FH
6. Economy (+)	Economic development	GDPpc, Annual growth
7. Oil revenue (-)	Income from oil exports	Share of total exports (%)
8. Military spending (-)	Share of GDP (%) Armed personnel	Share of GDP (%) Nr of armed personnel
9. International support (+)	Foreign aid, FDI and trade (imports and exports)	Foreign aid, FDI Share of GDP (%)
10. Democratic neighbours (+)	Diffusion from neighbouring countries	Level of democracy in neighbouring countries
11. Pan-Arabism/-Islamism (-)	Arab/Islamic Regional Organizations	Regional organization membership
12. Colonial history (-)	Foreign rule/occupation	Nr of yrs under foreign rule Number of independent yrs

* Negative or positive effect on democratization

Table 2 above illustrates how the variables have been operationalized in order to be measured in figures (except variable 11). In order to do this, I will use archival records from public databases. In addition, the variables will be analysed using other sources of documentation, as mentioned above under section 3.1. More specifically, I will use recent text books and articles which treat the subject of democratization in the Middle East in some form, either from the perspective of democratization, authoritarianism or Islam, or by providing a historical account of the region. By recent, I am referring to texts written in the 21st century, thereby taking stock of previous research.

The advantages and disadvantages of using documents and archival records are practically the same. Their strength is that they are unobtrusive and can be accessed at any time, which also means that they are stable and can be reviewed repeatedly, both by the researcher herself and by others who may want to verify the data. Furthermore, they are precise and cover many details over a long time-span, while saving the researcher the time of transcribing. On the other hand, their accessibility or retrievability may be low, the material may be incomplete or inaccurate and they may be biased regarding selectivity or reporting. To counter these limitations, I will try to use sources which are available from public libraries

and databases. Moreover, I will use multiple sources for each variable to get a fuller picture of each and every one of them. Lastly, to counter the weakness of selectivity and bias, I will remain aware that the material was produced under specific circumstances and for a specific purpose or audience, other than this study.³⁵

3.3 Sampling of cases

I have already indicated that I distinguish between large-N studies, small-N studies and single case studies. In the end, they are all case studies and therefore much of the same logic and principles apply, regardless of whether the study in question examines one, many or a few cases. What constitutes “many” or “a few” depends ultimately on the population of cases. Naturally, comparative case studies demand at least two cases, although temporal comparisons can also be made within the same case looking at different points in time.³⁶ In this study, I will take a closer look at four of the 20 different countries situated within the geographical, but also historical and cultural region of the Middle East. The decision to make a small-N study, rather than covering the whole region, is a conscious choice to be able to delve deeper into the specific traits which characterize the region without focusing too much on a single case. As Creswell (2007) notes: “There is not a set number of cases. Typically, however, the researcher chooses no more than four or five cases”.³⁷

The selection of countries is made based on a number of different criteria. First of all, I wanted them to have reached different levels of democratization, to be able to compare what factors have determined these different levels. This sampling strategy is what Gerring refers to as the *diverse-case* method for choosing cases. The advantage of this technique is that “a full range of variation is likely to enhance the representativeness of the sample of cases chosen by the researcher”. In fact, it “often has stronger claims to representativeness than any other small-N sample”. In addition, it introduces “variation on the key variables of interest”. There are thus several reasons for choosing this strategy.³⁸ Similarly, John Creswell (2007) recommends us “to select unusual cases in collective case studies and employ maximum variation as a sampling strategy to represent *diverse cases* and to fully describe multiple perspectives about the cases”.³⁹

Secondly, I wanted them to be of roughly the same size, since size seems to be a factor which is correlated with regime type. According to Teorell, large geographical size

³⁵ Yin, p80ff; Creswell (2003), p187

³⁶ Gerring, p28

³⁷ Creswell, John W. (2007) *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (2nd ed.) Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, p76

³⁸ Gerring, p97ff

³⁹ Creswell (2007), p129 [my emphasis]

makes countries “significantly more likely to experience decreases in their level of democracy”. In addition, countries with populations over one million are less likely to be democracies, according to Diamond.⁴⁰ Thirdly, I needed cases which had been sufficiently treated within the existing literature, since I have no access to first-hand material. Creswell (2007) suggests that case studies inherently draw on multiple sources of information. Having enough information about the case(s) is thus a crucial and relevant criterion for selecting the case(s).⁴¹ Fourthly, I wanted them to have been independent for a reasonably long period, in order to have time to build up their respective state institutions. In fact, there were only four countries that were – at least nominally – independent before the Second World War.⁴² Following these criteria, I thus ended up with the subsequent four countries: The Arab Republic of Egypt, The Islamic Republic of Iran, The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and The Republic of Turkey.⁴³

It might be argued that my cases are so different to begin with, that there is no wonder they have reached different levels of democratization. Indeed, there might be little reason to expect them to be democratic at all. The question is *why* we expect them to be different from each other and which inherent qualities in each case make us believe this? This is the purpose of comparing them with each other: not only to determine what separates them from countries outside the region, but also what separates them from each other. Another purpose is to test the above-mentioned variables and theories, to see whether they fit these specific cases. Perhaps a certain combination of variables will fit one case but not the other, or perhaps some can be discarded altogether, whereas others will stand the test.

3.4 Comparative case description

According to Diamond’s classification of regime types, regimes are first of all either democratic or non-democratic. Democratic regimes may fulfil the minimalist definition of democracy (like Schumpeter’s) and be electoral, or a more demanding definition (like Dahl’s) and be liberal. Non-democratic regimes are either closed or electoral, where the latter can also be either competitive or hegemonic. Among my four cases, Turkey is the most democratic (or least authoritarian) one, followed by Iran, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, which is a “politically closed authoritarian” regime. Egypt is defined as “hegemonic electoral authoritarian”, whereas Iran is “competitive authoritarian”. Turkey is “ambiguous” since it could either be defined as electoral democratic or competitive authoritarian, leaning more towards the latter.

⁴⁰ Diamond, p27; Teorell, p211

⁴¹ Creswell (2007), pp73, 76

⁴² Owen, p8

⁴³ Henceforth referred to as Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

However, Diamond concedes that this classification is offered “more in an illustrative than definitive spirit”.⁴⁴

Comparing with Stepan and Robertson’s table of electoral over- and underachievers in Muslim-majority countries, Turkey is defined as “electorally competitive”. It should be duly noted that Stepan and Robertson are measuring electoral competitiveness, rather than establishing regime types. Although they also depend in part on Freedom House data, they are measuring over a longer time period (1972-2002), whereas Diamond’s classification is a “snapshot” scheme from the end of 2001. The important point is that both studies rank my four cases in the exact same order, with Turkey being electoral competitive as predicted, with a GDP per capita (GDPpc) over 5,500 US dollars (USD) and some experience of robust electoral rights. Iran is “theoretically indeterminate”, with a GDPpc between 3,500 and 5,500 USD and no experience of robust electoral rights. Egypt is “electorally non-competitive” as predicted, with a GDPpc below 3,500 USD, whereas Saudi Arabia is an “electoral underachiever”, with a GDPpc well above 5,500 USD.⁴⁵

In both studies, Turkey and Iran are more electorally competitive than Egypt and Saudi Arabia, which confirms the thesis of an Arab more than a Muslim gap. Turkey is the smallest of my cases with 770,760 square kilometres, but has a large population of 75,829,900 inhabitants. Iran has almost as many inhabitants, 72,211,700, but is significantly larger with its 1,636,000 square kilometres. Egypt has the largest population, 76,840,000, and a land area of 995,450 km². Saudi Arabia is the largest country, 2,149,690 km², but has the smallest population of 25,292,800 inhabitants. This broadly confirms Teorell’s suggestion that the larger the less democratic, since Turkey is most democratic and smallest, whereas Saudi Arabia is the biggest and least democratic.⁴⁶

Finally, they were all independent since before the Second World War. Turkey was formed after the fall of the Ottoman Empire during World War I. After losing most of its territory in the Sèvres peace treaty, Kemal Atatürk managed to renegotiate the borders of Turkey and declare the new republic in 1923. In Iran another military officer, Reza Khan, took power and declared the new Pahlavi dynasty in 1925. Egypt formally gained its independence from Britain in 1922, but was practically under British control until the military coup in 1952. Saudi Arabia was formed after the al Saud family had recaptured Riyadh and managed to reunite it with the rest of the country. The kingdom of Saudi Arabia was declared in 1932.

⁴⁴ Diamond, pp25f, 28, 31

⁴⁵ Stepan, p34

⁴⁶ Figures on land area, excluding waters, taken from CIA World Factbook (2009), available at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>, retrieved on 2009-05-11; population figures from United Nations Statistics Division (2008) “Indicators on population”, available at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/socind/population.htm>, retrieved on 2009-05-12

4 Analysis I: Statistical Evidence

This section will analyse the twelve variables and my four cases on a case-by-case basis. All variables will thus be treated separately within each case. I will start with the most democratic of the four cases and then treat every case in turn, finishing with the least democratic one in the following order: Turkey, Iran, Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

4.1 The Republic of Turkey

1. Population density: As noted above under section 3.4, Turkey has a population of 75,829,900 people. That gives a fairly high population density, when plotted against land area: 98 inhabitants per square kilometre. When taking into account that 69% of the population lives in cities, one can easily imagine that the population density is even higher among the urban population.⁴⁷

2. Religion: Turkey has a Muslim population of 99.8%, which makes it one of the least religiously fractionalized (value: 0.0049) countries in the world. This figure includes Sunni as well as Alevi Muslims. The remaining 0.2% is mainly Christians and Jews.⁴⁸

3. Heterogeneity: There are two major ethnic and linguistic groups in Turkey: Turks and Kurds. The Turkish make up 80% of the population and the Kurds roughly 20%. Therefore, ethnic and linguistic diversity is low: 0.3200 and 0.2216, respectively.⁴⁹

4. Political parties: As of January 31st, 2009, there are now seven parties represented in the Turkish Grand National Assembly: Justice and Development Party (AKP), Republican People's party (CHP), Nationalist Action Party (MHP), Democratic Society Party (DTP),

⁴⁷ CIA Factbook, *Country profile: Turkey*, 2009-05-11. For obvious reasons, I have chosen to exclude water areas when calculating population density. I am thus using the same figures on land area as provided above under section 3.4. (Cf note 45, supra.)

⁴⁸ Ibid; Alesina, Alberto et al (2003) "Fractionalization", *Journal of Economic Growth* 8, pp163, 188

⁴⁹ Ibid; all fractionalization values are a measure of the probability that two randomly selected individuals from a population belong to different groups. A value close to 0 thus equals low probability of fractionalization, whereas a value close to 1 equals high probability of fractionalization. See also Teorell, p226

Democratic Left Party (DSP), Freedom and Solidarity Party (ÖDP) and Grand Unity Party (BBP). There were fourteen parties who participated in the last election on July 22nd, 2007. Nine of them received votes, but only three of them made the 10% barrier. DSP ran on CHP's party list and the rest entered as independents.⁵⁰

5. Press freedom: As far as I am aware, there are two major international rankings of press freedom: Reporters Without Borders (RWB) and Freedom House (FH). RWB ranks 173 of the world's countries using a scale from 1-100, where 1 is the most free and 100 is the most repressive. Turkey scores 22.75 on the scale, which makes it the 102nd country on the ranking list. Freedom House also uses a scale from 1-100, but assesses more countries (195) and divides them into free, partly free or not free. With a score of 51, Turkey is denominated "partly free", ranking 106 on FH's index. On both lists, Turkey ends up just below the middle, which asserts that the rankings are more or less correct.⁵¹

6. Economy: Turkey's General Domestic Product (GDP) was 729.443 US billion dollars in 2008. This generated a GDP per capita of 10,471.686 USD, following IMF calculations and data. The annual percent change of GDP is set to 1.060%, which is very low compared to previous years, when it was between 4-4.6% according to WTO and World Bank data. However, I have chosen the IMF figures because they have the most recent and updated ones and when comparing data from previous years, they do not deviate much from other sources. They do differ somewhat slightly in population figures and this affects the GDPpc value, especially for Turkey. Nonetheless, I have chosen their data when calculating the GDPpc, but remain with the UNDP figures for the variable of population density, since I find the UNDP data on population more trustworthy when compared to other sources. The important issue is to use the same sources when comparing between cases later on.⁵²

7. Oil revenue: According to the WTO database, 10.0% of Turkey's total exports consist of fuels and mining products. I have not been able to find any more detailed data than this on oil revenue in any of the other databases. The definition thus includes ores, minerals, fuels and non-ferrous metals, but not steel, iron, chemicals or other raw materials. However, sometimes approximations will have to do and I find this to be the most appropriate one for my uses.⁵³

⁵⁰ CIA Factbook, *Turkey*, 2009-05-11; "Turkey 2007 General Election Results", BBCTurkish.com, http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkish/indepth/story/2007/07/070719_election_results_en.shtml, retrieved on 2009-05-13

⁵¹ Reporters Without Borders (RWB), "World Press Freedom Index 2008", available at http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=29031, retrieved on 2009-05-13; Freedom House, "2008 Freedom of the Press World Ranking", available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=442&year=2008>, retrieved on 2009-05-13

⁵² IMF World Economic Outlook (WEO) Database April 2009, available at <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2009/01/weodata/index.aspx>, retrieved on 2009-05-12; cf. WTO Statistics Database, April 2009, <http://stat.wto.org> and World Bank WDI (World Development Indicators) Database, April 2009, <http://www.worldbank.org>; n. b. that their figures are from 2007.

⁵³ WTO (2009), Technical notes, available at <http://stat.wto.org/CountryProfile/WSDBCountryPFTechNotes.aspx?Language=E>, retrieved on 2009-05-13

8. Military spending: It is common practice to state not only how much countries spend on their military in percentage of GDP, but also how large their supply is of men under arms.⁵⁴ In Turkey, there are 823,000 armed personnel, according to 2007 figures. When it comes to military spending, two available sources provide these figures: the CIA Factbook and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, SIPRI. What is striking about these figures is how much they differ from each other. The 2005 figures from CIA (3.4%) are significantly higher for Turkey than the ones from SIPRI in 2006 (2.9%), despite that SIPRI expresses their figures in 2005 exchange rates and prices. Although SIPRI's figures are more recently updated and also provide the actual amount (11,080 US million dollars), I am providing both figures for illustrative purposes.⁵⁵

9. International support: I have divided international economic support into four categories: imports, exports, foreign direct investment (FDI) and foreign aid. The first two are expressed in percentage of GDP and the last two in US dollars. I am relying here on 2007 World Bank data. Turkey's imports of goods and services amounted to 27% of GDP and their exports to 22% of GDP. They received a Balance of Payment (BoP) net inflow of FDI worth 22,195 US million dollars and in addition 797 US million dollars were received as official development assistance and official aid.⁵⁶

10. Neighbouring countries: Turkey shares borders with the following eight countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Iran, Iraq and Syria. I have used Freedom House (FH) scores to compute their mean level of freedom, which is 5.9, meaning "not free". Turkey's own score is 3, which means partly free. Only Greece and Bulgaria have lower scores than Turkey and are free. The remaining ones range between 4 (Georgia) and 6.5 (Syria). Armenia and Georgia are partly free, like Turkey. The FH scale ranges from 1 = highest level of freedom and 7 = lowest level of freedom. Countries ranging from 1-2.5 are free, 3-5 are partly free and 5.5-7 are not free.⁵⁷

11. Regional organizations: As a non-Arab country, Turkey is not a member of any regional Arab organization. It is a member of two pronounced Islamic organizations: Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and OIC (Organization of the Islamic Conference). Both promote Islamic solidarity, but the OIC has a broader range of culture and politics, whereas the IDB focuses on economic aid and development. A third organization, Developing Eight (D-8) has only Islamic members, but focuses on developing countries' trade relations and standards of

⁵⁴ See e.g. Bellin (2004), p147f; Gause III, F.Gregory (1995) "Regional Influences on Experiments in Political Liberalization in the Arab World" in Brynen, Rex, Bahgat Korany and Paul Noble (eds.) *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World* (vol. 1) Boulder, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, p285

⁵⁵ SIPRI, Facts on International Relations and Security Trends (First), available at <http://first.sipri.org/>, retrieved on 2009-05-12; cf. CIA Factbook (2009). N. b. that SIPRI's GDP figure differs from the one used for variable 6.

⁵⁶ WDI Database, April 2009, <http://www.worldbank.org>, retrieved on 2009-05-12; n. b. that WDI's GDP figures differs from the one used for variable 6.

⁵⁷ CIA Factbook, *Turkey*, 2009-05-12; Freedom House, "Combined Average Ratings: Independent Countries, 2008", available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=410&year=2008>, retrieved on 2009-05-12

living.⁵⁸ Much of the same can be said about ECO (Economic Cooperation Organization), which cooperates on communication, culture, tourism and trade, but where the majority of members also are Islamic countries (the seven “stan”-countries in Central Asia plus Azerbaijan and Iran. Kazakhstan is not a Muslim-majority country).⁵⁹

Turkey’s remaining memberships are all tied to either Europe or the West in general. They include BSEC (Black Sea Economic Cooperation), which works for regional stability through economic cooperation, the Council of Europe (CE), the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) and SECI (Southeast European Cooperative Initiative). The majority of Turkey’s regional organization memberships are thus economic.⁶⁰

12. Colonial history: During the past 100 years, Turkey was never formally occupied except for a brief period after the First World War, when Greek troops invaded the country with support from the British. These troops were eventually defeated by Mustafa Kemal and Turkey has thus been independent for 86 years, since 1923.⁶¹

Table 3: Turkey

Variables measured:	Outcome:
1a. Population (2008)	75,829,900
1b. Population density (2009)	98/km ²
1c. Urban population (2008)	69%
2a. Muslim population (2009)	99.8%
2b. Religious fractionalization (2001)	0.0049
3a. Ethnic fractionalization (2001)	0.3200
3b. Linguistic fractionalization (2001)	0.2216
4a. Political parties in parliament (2009)	7
4b. Political parties in last election (2007)	14
5a. Press freedom, RWB (2008)	Rank: 102 (173), Score: 22.75/100
5b. Press freedom, FH (2008)	Rank: 106 (195), Score: 51/100, Partly free
6a. GDP (2008) in current USD billions	729.443
6b. GDPpc (2008) in current prices, USD	10,471.686
6c. Annual % change in constant prices (2008)	1.060%
7. Oil revenue (2007) in % of total exports	10.0%
8a. Military spending (2006) in % of GDP	2.9% (11,080 USD millions)/5.3% (CIA)
8b. Armed personnel (2007)	823,000

⁵⁸ The members of D-8 are: Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey. Nigeria has a Muslim population of 50%, which makes Islam the largest religion there. I therefore count it as a Muslim country too. Source: CIA Factbook (2009), Appendix B

⁵⁹ The members of ECO are: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Kazakhstan has a Muslim population of 47% and a Christian population of 46%. Source: CIA Factbook (2009), Appendix B

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Özdalga, Elisabeth (2008) “Det Osmanska Arvet” (in Swedish), lecture delivered at Uppsala University, 2008-11-11

9a. Imports (2007) in % of GDP	27%
9b. Exports (2007) in % of GDP	22%
9c. FDI (2007) in current USD millions	22,195
9d. Aid (2007) in current USD millions	797
10. Neighbouring countries (2008) FH mean	5.9 (2 free, 2 partly free, 4 not free)
11. Regional organization membership (2009)	BSEC, CE, D-8, ECO, EAPC, EBRD, IDB, OIC, OSCE, SECI
12a. Years of foreign rule since 1900	5 (1918-1922)
12b. Independent years (2009)	86 (Since 1923)

4.2 The Islamic Republic of Iran

1. Population density: Iran has a population of 72,211,700 inhabitants, which gives a population density of 44 per square kilometer. 68% of the population lives in cities.⁶²

2. Religion: 98% of the Iranians are Muslims. The majority are Shi'a (89%), but there is also a Sunni minority (9%). The remaining 2% are Zoroastrians, Jews and Christians. Religious fractionalization is thus low, 0.1152.⁶³

3. Heterogeneity: Only about half of the Iranians are Persian (51%). A significant share is Azeri (24%), Gilaki or Mazandarani (8%), and Kurds (7%). Smaller minorities include Arabs (3%), Lur, Baluchi and Turkmen (2% each). This makes Iran an ethnically diverse country with a fractionalization value of 0.6684 for ethnicity and 0.7462 for language.⁶⁴

4. Political parties: Iran lifted its 13-year old ban on political parties in 1998. This short formation period means that political parties in the Western sense are rare. However, political organizations and pressure groups are common and usually form loose coalitions ahead of elections, although the 290 members of parliament are elected on an individual basis. Five seats are reserved for religious minorities (Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians). The rest of the Majles Shoraye Eslami (Islamic Consultative Assembly) can be divided into three major blocs: conservatives, reformists and independents. The conservatives, in turn, consist of two major groups: the United Front of Principlists (UFP) and the Broad Popular Coalition of Principlists (BPC). The reformists' two main groups are the Islamic Iran Participation Front (IIPF) and the Organization of Mujaheddin of the Islamic Revolution and Civil Servants. In the 2008 election, the conservatives gained about 200 seats, the reformists about 50 and

⁶² Where nothing else is stated, I have used the same sources for Iran, Egypt and Saudi Arabia as for Turkey.

⁶³ CIA Factbook, *Country Profile: Iran*, 2009-05-14; Alesina et al, p186

⁶⁴ Ibid.

independents about 40. Ten independent candidates later joined the conservative group and another ten joined the reformist group.⁶⁵

5. Press freedom: On RWB's ranking, Iran is very close to the bottom of the list: 166 out of 173, with a score of 88.33 out of 100. Similarly, FH's ranking places Iran as 185 out of 195 with a score of 85 out of 100. Following FH terms, this makes Iranian media not free.⁶⁶

6. Economy: Iran's GDP in 2008 was an estimated 344.820 billion US dollars in current prices. The GDPpc is calculated to 4,731.961 current US dollars and the annual percent change rate is 4.514%.⁶⁷

7. Oil revenue: 87.3% of Iran's total exports come from fuels and mining products, as defined by the WTO.

8. Military spending: According to SIPRI, Iran spends 7,677 US million dollars or 4.6% of its GDP on the military and has 440,000 men under arms. The CIA figure for 2006 is significantly lower: 2.5% of the GDP.⁶⁸

9. International support: Iran's imports of goods and services amounted to 22% of GDP and its exports to 32% of GDP in 2007. 754 US million dollars were invested as FDI and an additional 102 US million dollars were received as foreign aid.

10. Neighbouring countries: Iran has seven bordering countries (Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey and Turkmenistan) with a mean FH score of 5.2. This borders on FH's definition of partly free, whereas Iran itself is not free, with an FH score of 6. Four of the neighbouring countries are not free, but two of those and the additional partly free countries have lower scores than Iran.

11. Regional organization: Iran is also a non-Arab country, but is as an oil-exporter member of OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries), which are predominantly Arab (7 out of 13 members) and Muslim (10 out of 13 members). Eight of the members are also situated in the MENA-region (the remaining countries are Angola, Ecuador, Indonesia, Nigeria and Venezuela). Iran is, together with Turkey, a member of the OIC, IDB, ECO and D-8. Moreover, it is a member of the Colombo Plan (CP), which promotes social and economic development in Asia and the Pacific.

⁶⁵ Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Parline Database, available at <http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/parlinesearch.asp>, retrieved on 2009-05-14; CIA Factbook, *Iran*, 2009-05-14

⁶⁶ Freedom House, 2008; RWB, 2008

⁶⁷ IMF WEO Database, 2009-05-12

⁶⁸ See discussion above, section 4.1, variable 8.

12. Colonial history: During the First World War, British, Turkish and Russian troops occupied what was then called Persia. After a treaty with Britain in 1919, Persia virtually became a British protectorate. In 1921, Reza Khan took power through a military coup and managed to dispose of the previous Qajar ruler in 1925. He then installed himself on the monarchical throne as Reza Shah Pahlavi. During the Second World War, Iran was once again occupied, this time by British, American and Soviet forces. Reza Shah was forced into exile and replaced by his son, Mohamed Reza. The occupying forces withdrew after the war. If counting out the years under foreign occupation, Iran has thus been independent for 80 years since 1925.⁶⁹

Table 4: Iran

Variables measured:	Outcome:
1a. Population (2008)	72,211,700
1b. Population density (2009)	44/km ²
1c. Urban population (2008)	68%
2a. Muslim population (2009)	98%
2b. Religious fractionalization (2001)	0.1152
3a. Ethnic fractionalization (2001)	0.6684
3b. Linguistic fractionalization (2001)	0.7462
4a. Political parties in parliament (2009)	NA* = major blocs: 3, major groups: 4
4b. Political parties in last election (2007)	NA* = individual candidates
5a. Press freedom, RWB (2008)	Rank: 166 (173), Score: 80.33/100
5b. Press freedom, FH (2008)	Rank: 185 (195), Score: 85/100, Not free
6a. GDP (2008) in current USD billions	344.820 (est.)**
6b. GDPpc (2008) in current prices, USD	4,731.961
6c. Annual % change in constant prices (2008)	4.514%
7. Oil revenue (2007) in % of total exports	87.3%
8a. Military spending (2006) in % of GDP	4.6% (7,677 USD millions)/2.5% (CIA)
8b. Armed personnel (2007)	440,000
9a. Imports (2007) in % of GDP	22%
9b. Exports (2007) in % of GDP	32%
9c. FDI (2007) in current USD millions	754
9d. Aid (2007) in current USD millions	102
10. Neighbouring countries (2008) FH mean	5.2 (3 partly free, 4 not free)
11. Regional organization membership (2009)	CP, D-8, ECO, IDB, OIC, OPEC
12a. Years of foreign rule since 1900	7 (1914-21) +4 (1941-45) =11
12b. Independent years (2009)	84 (-4) = 80

*NA = not applicable

** est. = estimated figure

⁶⁹ Owen, pp21f, 80f; Long, p48f

4.3 The Arab Republic of Egypt

1. Population density: Egypt's population amounts to 76,840,000 inhabitants, out of which 43% live in cities. The population density is 77 per square kilometre.

2. Religion: 90% of the Egyptian population are Muslims, predominantly Sunni. The largest religious minority are the Copts, which constitute 9% of the remaining Christian population. The religious fractionalization value for Egypt is 0.1979.

3. Heterogeneity: The ethnic diversity is somewhat lower than the religious one, 0.1836. According to the 2006 census, 99.6% of the population are Egyptians. Linguistic fractionalization is even lower, only 0.0237. Arabic is the official language.⁷⁰

4. Political parties: Egypt's legislative body consist of two chambers: Majlis al-Sha'b (People's Assembly) and Majlis al-Shura (Consultative Council). Out of their 454 and 264 seats, respectively, 444 and 176 are elected by popular vote. The president appoints the remaining seats. There are four approved parties represented in the People's Assembly today. The biggest one is the National Democratic Party (NDP), which has 320 seats. In addition, the banned Muslim Brotherhood (MB) managed to get 88 seats as independents, making it the second biggest party after the NDP. The New Wafd Party (NWP) secured six seats in the last election and the Nationalist Progressive Unionist Grouping (Tagammu) got two. The Tomorrow Party (al-Ghad) got one seat and the remaining ones went to independent candidates generally supporting the NDP. Tagammu, MB and NWP were all part of a coalition group called NFC (National Front for Change). The NFC contained eight other parties, but none of them were elected.⁷¹

5. Press freedom: Egypt ranks 146 on RWB's list and 161 on the FH list. It received the scores of 50.25 and 59 respectively and was thus denoted partly free.

6. Economy: Egypt's GDP is 162.164 US million dollars with an annual growth rate of 7.155%. This is fairly high, but considering that the GDP is fairly low, it is not unreasonable. The GDPpc is set to 2,160.891 US dollars.

7. Oil revenue: The oil income for Egypt constitutes 54.6% of the total exports, including fuels and mining products.

⁷⁰ CIA Factbook, *Country Profile: Egypt*, 2009-05-14; Alesina et al, p185

⁷¹ CIA Factbook, *Egypt*, 2009-05-14; IPU Parline Database, 2009-05-14

8. Military spending: According to SIPRI, Egypt has 423,000 men under arms and uses 2.7% of its GDP on military spending, which is equivalent to 2,674 US million dollars. CIA offers a somewhat higher figure: 3.4%.

9. International support: Egyptian imports amounts to 35% of GDP and the exports to 30% of GDP. It receives 11,578 US million dollars in BoP net inflow FDI and an additional 1,083 US millions in development aid and assistance.

10. Neighbouring countries: Egypt shares borders with four countries: Gaza, Israel, Libya and Sudan. With a mean FH score of 5.4 they are not considered as free, except for Israel. Egypt's own score of 5.5 is lower than the remaining three countries.

11. Regional organizations: As an Arab country, Egypt enjoys membership in a number of Arab organizations: Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (ABEDA), Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD), Arab Monetary Fund (AMF), Council of Arab Economic Unity (CAEU), League of Arab States (LAS) and Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC). It is also a member of IDB, OIC and D-8.⁷²

12. Colonial history: Egypt was occupied by British forces in 1882 and declared a British protectorate in 1914. It received nominal independence in 1922 but remained under British control until the Free Officers' coup d'état in 1952. It has thus only been independent for 57 years.⁷³

Table 5: Egypt

Variables measured:	Outcome:
1a. Population (2008)	76,840,000
1b. Population density (2009)	77/km ²
1c. Urban population (2008)	43%
2a. Muslim population (2009)	90%
2b. Religious fractionalization (2001)	0.1979
3a. Ethnic fractionalization (2001)	0.1836
3b. Linguistic fractionalization (2001)	0.0237
4a. Political parties in parliament (2009)	4 approved, 1 illegal
4b. Political parties in last election (2007)	12 approved, 1 illegal
5a. Press freedom, RWB (2008)	Rank: 146 (173), Score: 50.25/100
5b. Press freedom, FH (2008)	Rank: 124 (195), Score: 59/100, Partly free
6a. GDP (2008) in current USD billions	162.164
6b. GDPpc (2008) in current prices, USD	2,160.891
6c. Annual % change in constant prices (2008)	7.155%

⁷² CIA Factbook (2009), Appendix B

⁷³ Long, p405ff; Owen, pp7, 17ff, 24

7. Oil revenue (2007) in % of total exports	54.6%
8a. Military spending (2006) in % of GDP	2.7% (2,674 USD millions)/3.4% (CIA)
8b. Armed personnel (2007)	423,000
9a. Imports (2007) in % of GDP	35%
9b. Exports (2007) in % of GDP	30%
9c. FDI (2007) in current USD millions	11,578
9d. Aid (2007) in current USD millions	1,083
10. Neighbouring countries (2008) FH mean	5.4 (1 free, 3 not free)
11. Regional Organization membership (2009)	ABEDA, AFESD, AMF, CAEU, D-8, IDB, LAS, OAPEC, OIC
12a. Years of foreign rule since 1900	8 (+30) = 38 (1914-1922/52)
12b. Independent years (2009)	87 (-30) = 57

4.4 The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

1. Population density: Due to its small population (25,292,800) in relation to its size, Saudi Arabia has a population density of only 12 inhabitants per square kilometre. Large portions of the desert land are also uninhabited; 82% live in cities.

2. Religion: Saudi Arabia's population is 100% Muslim. Yet the religious fractionalization value is 0.1270. This is probably because the latter value counts Saudi Arabia's 5,576,076 non-nationals residing in the country, whereas the first figure only refers to Saudi Arabians.⁷⁴

3. Heterogeneity: Linguistic fractionalization in Saudi Arabia is low (0.0949); virtually everyone speaks Arabic. Ethnic fractionalization is somewhat higher: 0.1800, which confirms that non-Saudi inhabitants are counted too. 90% of the population is Arabic; the remaining 10% is Afro-Asian.⁷⁵

4. Political parties: There are no parties in Saudi Arabia. The legislative branch is the Majlis al-Shura (Consultative Council) with 150 members appointed by the king. In 2003 the Council of Ministers announced that it would introduce elections incrementally over a period of four to five years for a third of the members of the Consultative Council, but to this date no such elections have been held or announced. In 2005 Saudi Arabia held its first municipal elections, to fill 50% of the local seats. Only nationals with ID cards could vote, which in effect meant that no women could take part. Political parties are banned and must operate

⁷⁴ Alesina et al, p188; CIA Factbook, *Country Profile: Saudi Arabia*, 2009-05-15

⁷⁵ Ibid.

from abroad, but they are few and not very influential. Further elections were due this year, but have been postponed.⁷⁶

5. Press freedom: RWB ranks Saudi Arabia as 161 out of 173 with a score of 61.75. Freedom House ranks it 175 out of 195 with a score of 81, meaning not free.

6. Economy: The estimated GDP for Saudi Arabia in 2008 is 481.631 US billion dollars in current prices. With a relatively small population, this generates a high GDPpc: 19,345.256 US dollars. The annual growth rate is 4.630%.

7. Oil revenue: This is the largest post in Saudi exports, amounting to 88.2% of total exports.

8. Military spending: As much as 8.5% of GDP, or 28,926 US million dollars, are spent on the military. CIA's figure is even higher: 10% of GDP. By contrast, the country only employs 106,000 men under arms.

9. International support: 38% of GDP consist of imported goods and services, compared to 65% of GDP worth of exports. Saudi Arabia is also a net donor of foreign aid and FDI: 131 US million dollars are donated as development assistance and official aid and 8,069 US million dollars are invested as FDI.

10. Neighbouring countries: Saudi Arabia is surrounded by seven neighbouring countries: Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Three of them are partly free and four not free. Their mean level of freedom is 5.1. Saudi Arabia's freedom score is 6.5, which is higher (meaning less free) than any of its neighbouring countries.

11. Regional organizations: Saudi Arabia is a member of the same organizations as Egypt, except for CAEU (Council of Arab Economic Unity) and D-8. In addition, it is a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and OPEC.⁷⁷

12. Colonial history: The Arabian Peninsula was occupied by Ottoman and Egyptian powers during the 19th century and the al Saud family was forced into exile in Kuwait. In the early 20th century they returned and took control of the capital, Riyadh. It then took 30 years of

⁷⁶ Ghattas, Kim (2005) "Saudi's first exercise in democracy", *BBC News Middle East*, 10 February 2005, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4252305.stm, retrieved on 2009-05-15; Butt, Gerald (2005) "Profile: Saudi political opposition", *BBC News Middle East*, 10 February 2005, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3772583.stm, retrieved on 2009-05-15; Whitaker, Brian (2009) "Hello, democracy – and goodbye", *The Guardian*, 24 February 2009, available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/feb/24/saudiarabia>, retrieved on 2009-05-15; CIA Factbook, *Saudi Arabia*, 2009-05-15

⁷⁷ CIA Factbook, Appendix B

struggle to unify most of the peninsula under the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932. Since the kingdom was restored, it has enjoyed 77 years of uninterrupted independence.⁷⁸

Table 6: Saudi Arabia

Variables measured:	Outcome:
1a. Population (2008)	25,292,800
1b. Population density (2009)	12/km ²
1c. Urban population (2008)	82%
2a. Muslim population (2009)	100%
2b. Religious fractionalization (2001)	0.1270
3a. Ethnic fractionalization (2001)	0.1800
3b. Linguistic fractionalization (2001)	0.0949
4a. Political parties in parliament (2009)	NA = no parties
4b. Political parties in last election (2007)	NA = no elections
5a. Press freedom, RWB (2008)	Rank: 161 (173), Score: 61.75/100
5b. Press freedom, FH (2008)	Rank: 175 (195), Score: 81/100, Not free
6a. GDP (2008) in current USD billions	481.631 (est.)
6b. GDPpc (2008) in current prices, USD	19,345.256
6c. Annual % change in constant prices (2008)	4.630%
7. Oil revenue (2007) in % of total exports	88.2%
8a. Military spending (2006) in % of GDP	8.5% (28,926 USD millions)/10% (CIA)
8b. Armed personnel (2007)	106,000
9a. Imports (2007) in % of GDP	38%
9b. Exports (2007) in % of GDP	65%
9c. FDI (2007) in current USD millions	-8,069
9d. Aid (2007) in current USD millions	-131
10. Neighbouring countries (2008) FH mean	5.1 (3 partly free, 4 not free)
11. Regional Organization membership (2009)	ABEDA, AFESD, AMF, GCC, IDB, LAS, OAPEC, OPEC, OIC
12a. Years of foreign rule since 1900	30 (1902-32)
12b. Independent years (2009)	77

⁷⁸ Long, p85ff; CIA Factbook, *Saudi Arabia*, 2009-05-15

5 Analysis II: Comparative Analysis

1. Population density: A by-product of Teorell's large-N study is that population density affects the prospect of democratization positively; that is, the higher the population density, the more likely is a country to democratize. Furthermore, urbanization, as part of socioeconomic modernization, is a robust impediment to de-democratization. In other words, it is democracy-consolidating.⁷⁹ Since urbanization in some sense increases the population density, this makes perfect sense. For Turkey, this certainly seems to be true: it is both densely populated and has a large urban population. In terms of population density, Iran and Saudi Arabia are less densely populated, but on the other hand they have a large share of the population living in cities. For Egypt, it is the other way around: it has a low level of urbanization, but is quite densely populated.

The general trend is thus that lower levels of population density and urbanization do seem related to higher levels of authoritarianism, but two values stand out: Egypt's population density and Saudi Arabia's level of urbanization. The latter can be partly explained by the fact that the Arabian peninsula to a great extent consists of harsh, dry, uninhabitable desert where only 1.67% is arable land.⁸⁰ In addition, Saudi Arabia's level of democracy is very low to begin with (FH score: 6.5) so there is so to speak not much democracy to be consolidated. Population density is also extremely low, which makes it less likely to democratize in the first place. Regarding Egypt, 2.92% of its land is arable and its significantly larger population is dispersed along the Nile rather than living in cities, which makes it more difficult to consolidate any democratic achievements. Although the Nile valley is densely populated, Egypt's major cities are concentrated to the Nile delta and the Suez Canal and the fact that the majority of people does not live in cities seems to make it less likely to democratize.⁸¹

The conclusion is that countries must first of all be densely populated to be likely to democratize and secondly, if they are densely populated, they should also be highly urbanized to increase this likelihood. Scoring high on just one of the values does not help, since high urbanization must be preceded by high population density and vice versa: high population density must be followed by high levels of urbanization to increase the prospects for democratization. My findings thus support Teorell's theory of these structural, social determinants and this seems to apply to the whole region.

⁷⁹ Teorell, pp114, 211ff

⁸⁰ CIA Factbook, *Saudi Arabia*, 2009-05-16

⁸¹ CIA Factbook, *Egypt*, 2009-05-16

2. Religion: According to secularization theory, religion has a negative impact on democracy. This is refuted by the studies by Stepan and Robertson and by Norris and Inglehart. What the latter study shows is that there is an intervening factor, economic development, which is negatively impacted by religiosity. According to Teorell, however, there seems to be a correlation between Muslim population and non-democratization on the one hand and between religious fractionalization and non-democratization on the other. These factors both impede democratic upturns and trigger downturns.⁸²

This leads to a somewhat contradictory picture: if religious fractionalization is low due to a very large Muslim population, should we expect this country to be more or less democratic? Turkey illustrates precisely such a case, being the least religiously diverse country with the largest proportion of Muslims. This suggests that religious fractionalization matters more than a Muslim population, which is confirmed by Stepan and Robertson, who did not find any negative correlation between Islam and democracy.

As regards Turkey, Iran and Egypt, the trend is quite clear: the more heterogeneous and the less Muslim, the more authoritarian. The fact that Saudi Arabia's fractionalization value is close to that of Iran's, suggests that less than 98% are in fact Muslim, when counting the whole population and not just Saudi citizens. Non-nationals make up about a fifth of the population and about half of those are non-Muslims, coming mainly from Asia and Africa. The reason for stating that Saudi Arabia is 100% Muslim is that no other religion is officially recognised, but this does not mean that other religions do not exist there. What it does mean is that no other religion can be practised in public.⁸³

Similarly, Alevi Muslims in Turkey and for example Bahai followers in Iran are either not recognised or forbidden. Another problem is that religious fractionalization measures do not distinguish between different versions of Islam, as they do with for example Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox Christians. This suggests that religious diversity in fact may be higher than the Alesina study shows, which clearly shows that the material is biased. Nevertheless, Muslim population does not seem to be correlated to democracy as much as religious diversity. Of course, all of my cases have very large Muslim populations, but even Teorell confirms that the democratic gap appears to be regional rather than religious.⁸⁴

3. Heterogeneity: According to consolidation literature, lack of homogeneity is a problem which threatens democratic survival.⁸⁵ In other words, it is democracy-destabilizing, rather than democracy-consolidating. Ethnic and linguistic fractionalization is relatively low in Turkey, but even lower in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. This suggests that even if Turkey is moving towards liberal and not just electoral democracy, it may encounter problems consolidating it, due to its heterogeneity. This is underlined by the fact that the Kurdish minority and in particular Turkey's way of handling that issue has historically been a major

⁸² Teorell, p212; cf. supra, notes 3, 21

⁸³ US Department of State (2008) "Saudi Arabia: International Religious Freedom Report 2008", available at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2008/108492.htm>, retrieved on 2009-05-16

⁸⁴ Teorell, p13

⁸⁵ Jung, Courtney (2006) "Race, Ethnicity, Religion" in Goodin and Tilly (eds.), p360f

obstacle for democratic reform. On the other hand, Egypt and Saudi Arabia should have less problems consolidating democracy, once they choose going down that path. Iran is the most ethnically and linguistically diverse of these countries, but this has not hindered it from becoming more electorally competitive than both Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The conclusion is that ethnolinguistic diversity does not hinder democratic transitions, but as consolidation theory predicts, it complicates democratic consolidation.

4. Political parties: According to Angrist, the number of parties is one of the critical characteristics of a party system.⁸⁶ Building on this observation, I propose that the number of active and elected parties is a measure of electoral freedom and competitiveness, which is a crucial component of democracy.⁸⁷ As noted above, Saudi Arabia has neither parties, nor national elections. In Egypt, multiparty politics are severely limited. Constitutional amendments from 2005 require official parties to have 5% of support from the elected MPs in both legislative chambers.⁸⁸ One third of the seats in the upper house, Majlis al-Shura, are appointed by the president. Constitutional amendments in 2007 could further extend the Majlis al-Shura's powers from being previously mainly consultative. The 2007 amendments also abolished judicial supervision of the elections and banned all religiously based parties, such as the Muslim Brotherhood. All party formation must be approved by the government.⁸⁹

Although Iran's parliamentarians are elected individually, they are also screened before participating, but not by the government. Unlike Egypt, where political activities based on religion are forbidden, candidates for the Majles must be deemed suitable by a religious body, the Council of Guardians. This body also supervises the national elections in general and validates the final election results.⁹⁰ There are essentially three mechanisms that constrain electoral competitiveness in Iran: the highly regulated election process itself, the domination of public space by the regime and the control over elected bodies by unelected ones.⁹¹ In Turkey, the military has intervened five times during the last 50 years, at roughly ten-year intervals: 1960, 1971, 1980, 1997 and 2007. In 1960, they closed down the ruling party, in 1971 all Islamic parties and in 1980 all parties. In the so called post-modern coup of 1997, the ruling party was forced to resign after a military memorandum. In 2007, another military memorandum was posted on the internet and forced the government to call for new elections after a stalemate in parliament, where the opposition boycotted the sessions.⁹²

In short, one could say that in Turkey political parties are checked by the military, in Iran by the clergy, in Egypt by the hegemonic ruling party and in Saudi Arabia by

⁸⁶ Angrist, Michele Penner (2005)a "Party Systems and Regime Formation" in Posusney and Angrist (eds.), p119f

⁸⁷ This does not imply that two-party systems would be any less democratic than multiparty systems, but rather that there needs to be more than one viable alternative in a liberal democracy.

⁸⁸ Brownlee (2007), p150

⁸⁹ CIA Factbook, *Egypt*, 2009-05-16; IPU Parline Database, "Egypt: Majlis Ash-Shura", available at http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2374_E.htm, retrieved on 2009-05-16

⁹⁰ CIA Factbook, *Iran*, 2009-05-16; IPU Parline Database, 2009-05-16

⁹¹ Keshavarzian, Arang (2005) "Contestation Without Democracy" in Posusney and Angrist (eds.), p71f

⁹² Özdalga, 2008-11-11; IPU Parline Database, 2009-05-16

the monarch. This would explain why Egypt and Saudi Arabia are more authoritarian: in these regimes, the rulers are more intimately intertwined with the governing institutions than in Iran and Turkey. In fact they *are*, in some sense, the state. The ruling party in Egypt controls not only the government, but also the parliament and the security forces. In Iran, there may be no parties as such, but on the other hand there is no dominant ruling party either. The theocratic institutions of wali-e faqih (Supreme Leader), the Council of Guardians and the Expediency Council all provide checks on the popularly elected parliament, the president and the Assembly of Experts, but they are independent bodies who allow a higher degree of pluralism and competition than Egypt.⁹³ In Turkey, the military has become less involved in politics over time. Their main concern is to uphold a secular state. The conclusion is that the number of parties matters, but so does the electoral rules and the degree of freedom these parties are permitted. This confirms the hypothesis about the importance of institutionalised parties for democracy.

5. Press freedom: Freedom of the press is another democracy-consolidating factor, meaning that the higher the press freedom, the less likely is a country to revert towards authoritarianism.⁹⁴ The rankings reveal that if Iran is more permissive towards political associations, it is the other way around when it comes to press freedom. Both lists place Iran near the bottom, even lower than Saudi Arabia. This means that Iran is less likely to uphold any of its democratic achievements, since its press is not free. Egypt, on the other hand, is less likely to become more authoritarian than it already is, since its press is partly free. The theory may in part explain why Iran has not democratized further, but also why Egypt has not reverted to become more authoritarian.

However, I do not find strong support for this theory in my data, or a consistent pattern for the region. The case that stands out is Iran, which needs further explanation of its exceptionally deviant scores. Perhaps controlling the press makes up for not being able to control who wins the next election, or can it be explained by the fact that Iran is an Islamic state? The other Islamic state among my samples is Saudi Arabia, which suggests that secularism may be connected to press freedom. Norris and Inglehart note that values and norms toward for example work ethic, democracy and sexuality are transmitted by the mass media today. On the other hand, Iran is not among the most religious societies. Although religion is regarded as important, few actually participate in religious practice and regular worship and their faith is also coupled with a strong belief in science.⁹⁵ In sum, the theory does not explain why Iran is not more authoritarian, given its low freedom of the press.

6. Economy: The developmental theory proposes that as a country's relative wealth increases, so does the degree of electoral competitiveness. When examining the cases' GDP and GDP per capita, this seems to apply to all except Saudi Arabia, who has the highest GDP per capita and the second highest GDP while being the most authoritarian. When including the annual

⁹³ See Brownlee (2007), passim

⁹⁴ Teorell, pp211, 213

⁹⁵ Norris and Inglehart, pp17, 60, 67f, 223

growth rate, however, the pattern is almost reversed: Egypt has the highest growth rate and Turkey the lowest, whereas Saudi Arabia is once again second. This could be due to a number of rival explanations: the figures are uncertain or incorrect; they do not measure what they are intended to measure (i.e. do not uphold the criterion of construct validity); the growth rate reflects the impact of the global financial crisis, or; the theory is incorrect.

To begin with the figures, they are taken from the IMF World Economic Outlook (WEO) Database, which was last updated in April 2009. The figures refer to the 2008 GDP and are in the cases of Iran and Saudi Arabia estimates. The annual growth rate is calculated from GDP in national currencies, but for comparison, I have adopted the converted GDP value in US dollars. Every added number and calculation means a greater degree of uncertainty, but what matters here is not so much the exactness of the actual figures, as their intra-related relationship. I have chosen the IMF Database because it is the most up-to-date. To confirm that the figures are correct, I have looked at the 2007 figures from the IMF and compared it with 2007 figures from the WTO and the World Bank. Since they were all very close to each other, I took it as an indication that the 2008 figures are also correct.

Regarding the construct validity, GDP, annual growth and GDP per capita are established ways of measuring countries' economies. Other means include measuring GNI (gross national income) or basing the values on purchasing-power-parity (PPP). The latter would include further calculations and I did not deem it necessary for my purposes. The difference between GDP and GNI is that the former refers to the value of goods and services produced within a country, whereas the latter is the GDP with the addition of income from abroad, to put it simply. Since I wanted the most recent figures, I set for the GDP value, since IMF does not include GNI measures in their data.

Comparing the annual growth rate figures with the previous year seems to suggest that the world economic crisis has had an impact. Notably, Turkey's growth rate has gone down from 4.7% to 1.1% and Iran's growth rate is down from 7.8% to 4.5% (estimated value). Saudi Arabia is only down by 1.1% and Egypt with less than 0.1% (estimated values). Employing 2007 figures would thus generate a very different pattern, which suggests that looking at the growth rate for only four cases in a specific year might not be a satisfactory way of measuring their economic status. In that case, they should be disregarded. Egypt and Saudi Arabia do seem to be less affected by fluctuations in the world market and Egypt and Iran generally seem to have higher growth rates than the two richer countries, but overall Turkey's economy is stronger in terms of GDP, which supports the development theory.

On the other hand, Saudi Arabia is also doing well, especially in terms of GDP per capita, which would refute the development theory and support for example the rentier state theory instead. The findings are thus inconclusive: the GDP measures indicate some, but not full support for the development theory and the growth rate figures rather suggest the opposite. I thus find no strong evidence for the development theory, even if discarding the growth rate figures.

7. Oil revenue: Turning to the variable on oil income, the rentier state theory is supported in the cases of Saudi Arabia and Iran, where oil rents amount to nearly 90% of their total exports. It is also supported in the case of Turkey, where oil revenue is conversely low. The

fact that Iran is a more oil-rich country than Egypt explains its relatively high value, but over 50% of Egypt's total exports also consist of oil income, which I find supportive of the rentier state theory.⁹⁶ According to Teorell, “natural resource abundance in terms of fuels and minerals ... [is] *not* robustly related to democratization”. However, this finding may be due to sample selection and controls.⁹⁷

I would still argue that the theory holds for my population of cases. This is supported by Bellin, who contends that “exceptional access to rents has nurtured a robust coercive apparatus in many states across the region”.⁹⁸ It is further supported by Angrist, who argues that oil rent helps upholding the disparity between incumbent and opposition power, which in turn will sustain authoritarian rule in the region.⁹⁹ In fact, it may not be so much that oil revenue hinders democratic transitions as it can act as support for authoritarianism. Michael Ross (2001) finds tentative support for three causal mechanisms relating oil and authoritarianism: the rentier effect (“no representation without taxation”), the repression effect (Bellin's argument) and the modernization effect, whereby pre-industrial countries are less likely to become democratic.¹⁰⁰ The latter is further supported by Inglehart, who argues that high existential security leads to “post-material” values, such as individual liberty and gender equality, which in turn facilitates democratic transition.¹⁰¹

Ross also asserts that his conclusions are not particular for the Middle East, but extends to other oil-rich countries in the world. Teorell's sample is much larger and includes non-oil-rich countries too. This difference in sample selection would partly explain why his results differ from Ross's. The significance of oil's impact on democracy also lessens when controlling for regional diffusion, which happens to be lower for oil-rich countries. Consequently, lower levels of democracy in these countries would depend on lack of regional diffusion, rather than high oil incomes. Teorell still contends that sample selection seems to matter more than controls.¹⁰² I will return to the matter of regional diffusion below, but my conclusion is that the rentier theory is still valid for my cases, though it may need further evidence to be supported outside the MENA-region.

8. Military spending: As regards military spending, I am adopting the more traditional definition of existential security, which refers to military security and the territories of nation-states.¹⁰³ My hypothesis is that nations which experience existential threats to their security spend more of their GDP on armed forces, which in turn affects democracy negatively. Following CIA figures, higher military spending seems to be related to authoritarianism, with the exception of Turkey. However, the same pattern is not discernible in SIPRI's figures, which I find more trustworthy. If looking at the actual amount of money spent, the pattern is

⁹⁶ Cf Bellin (2004), note 46

⁹⁷ Teorell, pp64f, note 14; p212

⁹⁸ Bellin (2004), p148

⁹⁹ Angrist, Michele Penner (2005)b “The Outlook for Authoritarians” in Posusney and Angrist (eds.), pp222, 228

¹⁰⁰ Ross, Michael L. (2001) “Does Oil Hinder Democracy?”, *World Politics* 53:3, p356f

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, p352; cf. Norris and Inglehart, p138

¹⁰² Ross, p356; Teorell, p65, note 14

¹⁰³ Norris and Inglehart, p14

reversed, with the exception of Saudi Arabia. Although the percentage values provided by SIPRI suggest that Turkey is a smaller spender than Iran, Turkey's GDP is so much higher than Iran's that they still spend significantly more in terms of sums of money than the Iranians.

The figures for Saudi Arabia are, according to SIPRI, slightly overestimated, whereas the figures for Iran are slightly underestimated. This is why I find CIA's figures less accurate, since their values are even higher for Saudi Arabia and concurrently even lower for Iran. The reason for Iran's values being underestimated is that their paramilitary forces are not included. SIPRI defines military expenditure as current and capital expenditure on armed forces (including peacekeeping forces), defense ministries (and equivalent bodies), paramilitary forces (including training and equipment for military operations) and military space activities.¹⁰⁴

Saudi Arabia still seems to fit the security hypothesis, whereas none of the others do. Turning to the data on armed personnel, the pattern is clear: the more democratic, the more men under arms. The role of the Turkish military was briefly touched upon above, in relation to political parties. Ever since the military-friendly Republican People's Party (CHP) was defeated in Turkey's first multiparty election in 1950, the military and the civil politicians have engaged in a kind of power struggle. Military coups and interventions has been a non-democratic way of upholding Officer Kemal Atatürk's twin principles of nationalism and secularism.¹⁰⁵

The link to existential threats refers in the Turkish and Saudian cases mostly to terrorism and in Iran to its isolated stance against Israel. It is somewhat surprising that Egypt's figures are not higher, considering their terror-related problems and repressive regime. My conclusion is that the existential security hypothesis, as I have framed it, cannot be upheld. This is despite the claim by Stepan and Robertson that "the geopolitical and military conflict with Israel (...) is a key aspect of (...) the Middle East's distinctive political identity" and thus authoritarian-upholding.¹⁰⁶

Bellin suggests that, although the security apparatus in the Middle East is exceptional, this may have other reasons such as international support and high rents, which are two unique traits of the region. She also refutes Stepan and Robertson's claim, arguing that "the robustness of coercive apparatuses in Arab states correlates neither geographically nor temporally with the threat posed by Israel". Lastly, she explains why there is no direct link between the size of the military and the level of authoritarianism: "As long as the coercive apparatus is subject to civilian control, large size is compatible with democracy".¹⁰⁷

9. International support: My initial hypothesis was that large volumes of trade would indicate a liberalized economy, which should then support democratization. This is clearly not

¹⁰⁴ The SIPRI definition of military expenditure, available at http://www.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/mex_definition.html, retrieved on 2009-05-17

¹⁰⁵ CIA Factbook, *Turkey*, 2009-05-17; Long et al, p25

¹⁰⁶ Stepan, p41f

¹⁰⁷ Bellin (2004), p144ff, 151, 156, note 44

the case, which is illustrated by the values for import and export. Teorell's large-N tests confirm that "economic freedom (...) is *not* robustly related to democratization". In fact, the opposite relation is suggested by my data. This is also confirmed by Teorell, who posits that "countries whose economies are largely dependent on foreign trade, are significantly more likely to experience decreases in their level of democracy". He further suggests that gross capital flows, including foreign direct investment (FDI), is not robustly related to democracy.¹⁰⁸

This is, however, supported by my data. Turkey receives the highest amount of FDI, whereas Saudi Arabia is a net supplier of it. Iran must here be exempted, since economic sanctions restrict other countries from investing in Iran. The figures on foreign aid are also supportive although Egypt, being the poorest country, receives the most. The conclusion from these figures would be that foreign trade is negative for democracy, whereas foreign aid is positive. The literature, however, is not entirely conclusive when it comes to international support and its relationship to authoritarianism. Bellin proposes that "[p]laying on the West's multiple security concerns has allowed authoritarian regimes in the region to retain international support. The West's generous provision of this support has bolstered the capacity and will of these regimes to hold on".¹⁰⁹

For Brownlee, on the other hand, it is rather the lack of constraints from external powers that bolsters authoritarianism: "For example, the current Saudi Arabian and Egyptian regimes receive large amounts of military and, in the case of Egypt, economic aid with few political strings attached".¹¹⁰ Carothers is suggesting something along the same line when he writes about "bridging the longstanding divide between aid programs directed at democracy-building and those focused on social and economic development". He also stresses the importance of political party development, "especially through measures aimed at changing the way political parties are financed". Merely financing NGOs is inadequate in helping the encouragement of alternative power centers.¹¹¹

Vickie Langohr pursues the same argument when writing: "One such factor that has impeded democratization in several liberalizing Arab regimes has been the rise of advocacy NGOs (...) rather than parties". Langohr contends that the weakness of opposition parties in the region is partly due to lack of foreign funding, whereas "[t]he poverty of many opposition parties contrasts sharply with the propitious financial environment for Arab NGOs".¹¹² To sum up, financial aid can be harmful if not directed at the right target and with the necessary constraints attached. Above all, economic aid should either be directed towards helping to build up democratic opposition parties or be tied to democratic advancements of the regime.

¹⁰⁸ Teorell, p211f

¹⁰⁹ Bellin (2004), p149

¹¹⁰ Brownlee, Jason (2004) "Political Crisis and Restabilization" in Posusney and Angrist (eds.), p59

¹¹¹ Carothers, p19

¹¹² Langohr, Vickie (2004) "Too Much Civil Society, Too Little Politics?" in Posusney and Angrist (eds.), pp194, 205f

One reason why this has failed to happen is that the most viable alternatives in many countries in the Middle East are Islamist opposition parties. These are often excluded from the political process, as in Egypt, and in addition receive no international support. It is quite significant that in the two cases where Islamists are included in the political process, Turkey and Iran, electoral competitiveness has proceeded further. Paradoxically, although it was the pro-EU platform that helped bringing the Islamist-rooted AKP to power in Turkey, the party's victory has also made the EU more wary of accepting Turkey as a member.¹¹³

As US allies in the region, Turkey, Egypt and Saudi Arabia receive diplomatic and military support without being pressured to reform. Turkey's relationship with Europe would explain its willingness to do so nevertheless, whereas Egypt's large amounts of foreign aid with "no strings attached" would explain why it lacks incentive to reform. Iran and Saudi Arabia are more or less independent of foreign aid: Iran as being subject to sanctions and Saudi Arabia as a net donor. Therefore, they also lack the necessary incentives to reform. This interpretation, taking stock of qualitative findings rather than just quantitative, illustrates the importance of combining sources and data to arrive at the correct conclusion. My data on trade supports Teorell's conclusion, whereas my data on aid was inconclusive and therefore needed a fuller interpretation.

Teorell is probably correct that FDI cannot be robustly correlated to democracy, since my data points in different directions. This is where each case needs to be thickly described or process-traced, in order to make sense of the data. The conclusion is that large amounts of foreign aid can uphold authoritarian regimes (Egypt) if there are no constraints tied to it, but if there are strong incentives to reform, they will (Turkey). Punitive measures, as in cutting off foreign aid and investment, are ineffective (Iran), and this is also the case if the country is entirely independent of foreign aid and investment due to for example oil rents (Saudi Arabia). The figures on FDI and aid are quite telling when comparing with the figures on oil income: high oil revenue corresponds with smaller amounts of foreign aid and FDI, and vice versa. This implies further support for the rentier state theory.

10. Neighbouring countries: A different kind of international support can come from neighbouring countries. The hypothesis is that if a country is surrounded by democratic countries, it is more likely to democratize through what is called the democratic diffusion effect. In order to test this, I have looked at Freedom House scores for surrounding countries and compared them with the scores of my cases. The pattern reveals that Turkey, although being the most free of my cases (FH score 3), has the most repressive neighbours, with a mean score of 5.9 out of 7. Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, has the least repressive neighbours (mean score: 5.1), but is the most authoritarian regime (FH score 6.5). At a first glance, the hypothesis is thus not upheld.

However, if taking into account the number of free neighbouring countries, rather than their mean score, a different picture is revealed. Turkey has two free neighbours, Egypt one and the others none. This is actually consistent with Freedom House's own ratings,

¹¹³ Long et al, p26

since they rate Turkey as the most free, then Egypt (FH score 5.5), followed by Iran (6.0) and Saudi Arabia. This ranking makes the mean scores of neighbouring countries negatively correlated to each country's own score, but perhaps it is the number of democratic countries that matters and not the number of authoritarian ones. Another way of looking at it is to compare each country's score with all the surrounding ones separately. This reveals that Turkey and Egypt are practically surrounded by countries which are more repressive than themselves, whereas Saudi Arabia and Iran are surrounded by countries which are less repressive than themselves. Yet again, the hypothesis is refuted.

On the other hand, Jean Grugel writes that Western proximity implies advantages, since democratic consolidation historically has fared best in Europe, where there are closer links to established democracies. Teorell also concludes that neighbour diffusion is positively related to democracy.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, it seems like the proximity of established democracies matters more than the proximity of autocracies. There is thus some support for the diffusion effect if choosing to look only at democratic neighbouring countries. The Freedom House ranking also suggests that Egypt is a more free country than Iran. This is supported by Polity IV rankings, but not by the regime classifications made by Stepan and Robertson or Diamond.¹¹⁵

11. Regional organizations: The third variable measuring international influence and support is looking at regional organization membership. According to my hypothesis, as stated by Stepan and Robertson, pan-Arabism or pan-Islamism has a negative impact on democratization because it weakens national identity. My first intention was to measure subjective identity, but since I was not able to access the material needed for this, I recoded this variable to measure regional membership in Arab or Islamic organizations. I then decided to contrast this with membership in other regional organizations, since two of my cases are non-Arab countries. I have also excluded international organizations which are neither Islamic nor exclusively connected to the region, such as OECD, NATO and NAM.¹¹⁶

Regional organizations are robustly related to democratic upturns, if the organizations themselves are classified as democratic. Teorell's definition is "the average degree of democracy among the countries belonging to the same regional organization".¹¹⁷ This reasoning is similar to the neighbouring diffusion effect: democracy is supposed to "rub off" on the less democratic members. Whether the organizations themselves are democratically run or not does not seem to matter. In Turkey's case, the regional memberships are largely connected to Europe and to different economic cooperations. Out of

¹¹⁴ Grugel, Jean (2002) *Democratization: a critical introduction*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, pp238, 245; Teorell, p211

¹¹⁵ Polity IV offers an alternative ranking to Freedom House, using a scale from -10 to +10, where +10 means consolidated democracy. Turkey is ranked +7, Egypt -3, Iran -6 and Saudi Arabia -10. Source: Marshall, Monty G. and Keith Jagers (2007) "Polity IV Country Reports 2007", available at <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity06.htm>, retrieved on 2009-05-20

¹¹⁶ Turkey is a member of the first two and all the others are members of the Nonaligned Movement (NAM). Source: CIA Factbook (2009), Appendix B

¹¹⁷ Teorell, p232

ten regional organizations, four can be defined as Islamic (D-8, ECO, IDB and OIC). In the case of Iran, five out of six regional organizations are Islamic (the same as Turkey, with the addition of OPEC). The remaining one is the Colombo Plan (CP), which illustrates Iran's connection with Asia.¹¹⁸

When it comes to Egypt and Saudi Arabia, all of their regional memberships are Islamic (nine out of nine for both), since Arab organizations are per definition also Islamic. The prevalence of Arab organizations clearly illustrates how Arab identity, being restricted to a smaller region, has played a more important part than pan-Islamism. Therefore it may not be possible to measure it this way, comparing two Arab countries with two non-Arab countries. The conclusion is that both Egypt and Saudi Arabia have been driving forces behind pan-Arabism, which can be seen through their involvement in Arab organizations, whereas in Iran's case, pan-Islamism has been a similar strategy to build allies. Turkey has a larger involvement in European and Western organizations, but also tries to keep a foothold in the region of the Black Sea and Central Asia, through its memberships in BSEC and ECO.

Previous studies using Turkey as a pathway case for regional diffusion show that membership in democratic regional organizations affects democratization, but not consolidation, positively.¹¹⁹ Could the relative repressiveness of the remaining three countries be explained by their lack of membership in democratic regional organizations, or by their high involvement in Islamic and Arabic organizations as an expression of their pan-Arabic or pan-Islamic identity? I am hesitant to draw any far-reaching conclusions here, because as noted above, I have not been able to measure national identity per se, to see if weak national identity is related to weak democratization. Nor is it established that weak national identity is in fact an outcome of strong pan-Arabic or pan-Islamic identity, as Stepan and Robertson suggest. However, the data is not insupportive of the hypothesis; it merely demands more evidence to be convincing.

12. Colonial history: The only country among my four cases that was actually colonised in the 20th century is Egypt. Iran was occupied during both World Wars, whereas Turkey and Saudi Arabia have enjoyed their independence without interruptions since their states were founded in their present form. My hypothesis was that a shorter period of independence would lead to a more authoritarian state, as would a longer period of foreign occupation. On a comparative level there is some support for this, as Turkey and Iran have been independent for 80 years or more, while at the same time they have only been occupied by foreign forces during shorter periods (less than ten years at a time) during the last 100 years. Saudi Arabia and Egypt, on the other hand, have been independent for shorter periods of time (less than 80 years) and had to struggle for their independence much longer (at least 30 years). On the

¹¹⁸ The CP is a borderline case of a regional organization, since it extends all the way to the Pacific. However, much as Turkey's regional memberships extend into Europe, Iran cooperates more closely with other Asian countries, being excluded from the Arab organizations.

¹¹⁹ Pevehouse, Jon C. (2005) *Democracy from Above: Regional Organizations and Democratization*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p149; cf Teorell, supra, note 111

contrary, Teorell finds no support in his data for a relationship between colonial origin and democratization.¹²⁰

However, international influence may take other forms than outright colonisation. Owen writes: “Such was Britain’s and France’s strength that even the rulers of nominally independent countries like Turkey, Egypt and Persia (...) were forced to recognize the new boundaries and the new order, while those like Adb al-Aziz Ibn Saud, who aspired to create a new state in Arabia after his defeat of the Hashemites, knew that he could only achieve this goal with British assistance and support”.¹²¹ Up until World War II, Iran was virtually a British protectorate and more recently, Egypt, Turkey and Saudi Arabia have all enjoyed US support in different forms: Egypt is the second largest receiver of US aid after Israel; Turkey is a NATO member and ally; Saudi Arabia is a long-time ally for oil and regional security.¹²² Nevertheless, these types of data can not be measured in figures and are not directly related to colonial heritage, which suggests that there might be a problem of construct validity here.

¹²⁰ Teorell, p79

¹²¹ Owen, p7

¹²² Long et al, pp48, 110, 430

Table 7: Comparative case summary

Variables:	Turkey:	Iran:	Egypt:	Saudi Arabia:
1a. Population	75,829,900	72,211,700	76,840,000	25,292,800
1b. Density	98/km ²	44/km ²	77/km ²	12/km ²
1c. Urbanization	69%	68%	43%	82%
2a. Muslims	99.8%	98%	90%	100%
2b. Religious fractionalization	0.0049	0.1152	0.1979	0.1270
3a. Ethnic fractionalization	0.3200	0.6684	0.1836	0.1800
3b. Linguistic fractionalization	0.2216	0.7462	0.0237	0.0949
4a. Political parties, parliament	7	NA = coalitions (3), groups (4)	4 approved, 1 illegal	NA = no parties
4b. Political parties, election	14	NA = individual candidates	12 approved, 1 illegal	NA = no national elections
5a. Press freedom, RWB	Rank: 102 (173) Score: 22.75/100	Rank: 166 (173) Score: 80.33/100	Rank: 146 (173) Score: 50.25/100	Rank: 161 (173) Score: 61.75/100
5b. Press freedom, FH	Rank: 106 (195) Score: 51/100	Rank: 185 (195) Score: 85/100	Rank: 124 (195) Score: 59/100	Rank: 175 (195) Score: 81/100
6a. GDP (US bil.)	729.443	344.820 (est.)	162.164	481.631 (est.)
6b. GDPpc (USD)	10,471.686	4,731.961	2,160.891	19,345.256
6c. Annual growth	1.060% (4.7%)	4.514% (7.8%)	7.155% (7.1%)	4.630% (3.5%)
7. Oil revenue (% of total exports)	10.0%	87.3%	54.6%	88.2%
8a. Military spending	2.9% of GDP 11,080 US mil.	4.6% of GDP 7,677 US mil.	2.7% of GDP 2,674 US mil.	8.5% of GDP 28,926 US mil.
8b. Armed personnel	823,000	440,000	423,000	106,000
9a. Imports	27% of GDP	22% of GDP	35% of GDP	38% of GDP
9b. Exports	22% of GDP	32% of GDP	30% of GDP	65% of GDP
9c. FDI	22,195 US mil.	754 US mil.	11,578 US mil.	-8,069 US mil.
9d. Foreign aid	797 US mil.	102 US mil.	1,083 US mil.	-131 US mil.
10. Neighbouring countries	5.9 (2 free, 2 partly free, 4 not free)	5.2 (3 partly free, 4 not free)	5.4 (1 free, 3 not free)	5.1 (3 partly free, 4 not free)
11. Regional organization membership	BSEC, CE, D-8, ECO, EAPC, EBRD, IDB, OIC, OSCE, SECI	CP, D-8, ECO, IDB, OIC, OPEC	ABEDA, AFESD, AMF, CAEU, D-8, IDB, LAS, OAPEC, OIC	ABEDA, AFESD, AMF, GCC, IDB, LAS, OAPEC, OPEC, OIC
12a. Years of foreign rule	5 (1918-1922)	7 +4 =11 (1914-21, 1941-45)	8 (+30) = 38 (1914-1922/52)	30 (1902-32)
12b. Independent years	86	84 (-4) = 80	87 (-30) = 57	77

6 Final Discussion

This chapter will sum up the findings from the analysis and reflect over some of the problems encountered on the way. More specifically, it will evaluate the validity and generalizability of the theories tested and point out which variables that are relevant for each case. Lastly, it will draw some general conclusions and point to lessons for further research.

6.1 Summary of findings

1. The hypotheses that high population density and high levels of urbanization lead to higher levels of democratization were supported in my data, under the condition that both of these demands are met within the same case.
2. Low levels of religious fractionalization are also related to higher democratic levels, but in this case the material was partly flawed, as it did not fully reflect all aspects of religious heterogeneity. Moreover, I found no support that a large Muslim population would lead to lower levels of democracy.
3. Ethnolinguistic diversity does not prevent democratic transitions, but it does hinder democratic consolidation, as predicted by the theory and supported by my data.
4. The number of political parties matters, since there must be at least one viable alternative to the ruling party. This is not the case in Egypt, where one party dominates, or in Saudi Arabia, where there are no parties. The hypothesis is thus upheld.
5. I found no concluding evidence, neither in my statistical nor in my process-tracing data, that higher levels of press freedom would lead to better consolidated democracies. However, this may be due to that a purely democracy-consolidating variable is not relevant to test on non-democratic regimes, or that my sampling of cases was too narrow to show a consistent pattern. For Turkey and Saudi Arabia, however, the figures were as expected.
6. The developmental theory turned out to be partly valid as regarding GDP and GDP per capita. For annual growth rate, however, construct validity could not be upheld. Furthermore, it did not seem to apply to the case of Saudi Arabia, which demonstrated figures in support of

the rentier state theory instead. The conclusion is that the developmental theory does not apply to the MENA-region as a whole, though it might fit certain cases.

7. Despite the findings of the Teorell study, the rentier state theory turned out to be valid for all four cases and thus for the whole MENA-region. Depending on Ross's study, I presume that this would extend to cases outside the Middle East too, on condition that one studies oil-rich countries and not random countries.

8. The existential security hypothesis was supported in the case of Saudi Arabia regarding their military spending, but not their armed forces. The hypothesis as a whole could therefore not be confirmed. This was another example of problems with construct validity, since large military forces are not incompatible with democratic rule.

9. My hypothesis that international trade would be positive for democracy was firmly discarded by the data. Instead, Teorell's finding that large trade volumes are negative for democracy was validated. I did find some support that FDI and foreign aid can have positive effects if they are combined with the right incentives. Large amounts of aid and FDI with no strings attached has a negative impact on democratization. This refutes Teorell's idea of FDI as a "non-factor". I also found further evidence for the rentier state theory, since independence from foreign aid and FDI was related to large oil revenues.

10. The diffusion effect from neighbouring countries only seemed to work for democratic countries, since having at least one democratic neighbour was related to a more positive rating by Freedom House and Polity IV. The fact that the countries with such neighbours (Turkey and Egypt) were surrounded by countries with more repressive ratings than their own did not matter.¹²³ Conversely, the countries with lower ratings were surrounded by countries with less repressive ratings than themselves, but no democracies. This would suggest that only democratic neighbours matter and not the number of repressive neighbours.

11. The diffusion effect from regional organizations showed greater reliability, but has validity problems. Even if the two most authoritarian of my cases happen to be members of a greater number of Arab and Islamic organizations than the other two, this is clearly due to the fact that they are Arabic countries and therefore have entry to such organizations.¹²⁴

Apart from this problem of construct validity, largely due to sampling restrictions, there is also a problem of internal validity, since all the links in the causal chain cannot be verified. Although membership in Islamic organizations can be a measure of a pan-

¹²³ This was the fact regardless of if the democratic neighbour was included in a mean score, or excluded when comparing on a country-to-country basis.

¹²⁴ If only taking into account Islamic organizations where all four have entry possibilities, the two least authoritarian cases actually demonstrate a higher number of such memberships, since organizations like D-8 and ECO consist of Muslim-majority countries (with the exception of Kazakhstan).

Islamic identity, it is not established that a weaker national identity follows from this, or that this in turn leads to lower levels of democracy.

12. The theory of path dependence finds some support among my cases: longer periods of independence suggest less authoritarian rule, whereas longer periods of foreign occupation is related to more authoritarianism. The operationalization of this variable can be questioned, however, since only one of the cases was actually colonised and all four cases have long histories of foreign relations which need to be evaluated on a qualitative basis rather than quantitative.

6.2 Reflections on validity

Table 8: Theoretical validity

Theory:	Turkey	Iran	Egypt	Saudi Arabia
1. Structural theory	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. Cultural theory	Partly	Partly	Partly	Partly
3. Consolidation theory	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4. Institutional theory	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5. Modernization theory	Yes	No	No	Yes
6. Development theory	Partly	Partly	Partly	No
7. Rentier state theory	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
8. Security hypothesis	No	No	No	Yes
9. Strategic theory	Yes	NA*	No	Yes
10. Democratic diffusion	Partly	NA*	Partly	NA*
11. Regional diffusion	Not valid	Not valid	Not valid	Not valid
12. Path dependency	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

*Not applicable

As Table 8 above illustrates, five of the theories tested seem to be valid for all four cases and thus for the MENA-region as a whole:

- Structural theory (population density + urbanization);
- Consolidation theory (ethnolinguistic fractionalization);
- Institutional theory (political parties);
- Rentier state theory (oil income); and
- Path dependency theory (colonial history).

In addition, five are partly valid and may extend to cases outside the region as well:

- Cultural theory (religious fractionalization, but not Muslim population);
- Modernization theory (press freedom, valid for Turkey and Saudi Arabia, but not for Iran and Egypt);
- Development theory (GDP and GDP per capita, but not annual growth and not for Saudi Arabia);
- Strategic theory (FDI and aid can be positive or negative, but trade is negative); and
- Democratic diffusion (valid for Turkey and Egypt, not for Iran and Saudi Arabia).

The remaining two are not valid:

- The security hypothesis (military spending + armed personnel, except for Saudi Arabia); and
- Regional diffusion (membership in regional organizations), due to lack of construct validity.

That the last two are not valid for the Middle East does not imply that they may not work elsewhere, especially since there were problems with internal and construct validity in these variables. In retrospect, I should perhaps have anticipated the problem of construct validity in using the number of armed personnel as a measure of authoritarianism, since there are clear examples of democratic countries with large military forces, Turkey being one of them.

I was also hesitant to use membership in Arab organizations as a measure of pan-Arabism, since all of my cases were not Arabic. This was mainly due to that I had to recode the variable at a very late stage, but perhaps I should not have used the variable at all. I also had a problem with construct validity in the variable for annual growth rate (variable 6c). This, however, was not foreseeable, since annual growth rate is a common way of measuring countries economic development, but this is perhaps more common in time-series analyses and I could certainly have been more attentive to that fact.

Three other variables caused me some additional trouble, namely variables 2 (religion), 5 (press freedom) and 12 (colonial history). As mentioned above, the material available on religious fractionalization was not explicitly produced for the purpose of this study and thus classified the determinant religion into the following four groups: Roman

Catholic, Protestant, Muslim or Other.¹²⁵ Needless to say, such a categorization is not entirely relevant when performing a study of the Middle East. Nevertheless, it was the only study on religious heterogeneity that I was aware of and had access to at this time.

As regards press freedom (variable 5), the only problem was really that the data for Iran stood out so much, whereas Egypt’s figure should have been somewhat higher, indicating a lower ranking. The rankings from Reporters Without Borders, Freedom House and Polity IV also suggest something else, namely that Egypt is more democratic (or less repressive) than Iran. When determining what classification of regime types to use, I could certainly have depended on these rankings, rather than the categories suggested by Stepan and Robertson or Diamond, especially since the latter was offered “more in an illustrative spirit”.¹²⁶

However, this was a judgment call from my side and in this case I preferred to rely on democratization and regime type theorists, rather than international ranking lists. It was also easier to compare the theory of an Arab gap when classifying the cases like this and with many of the variables it made more sense to present them in this order. I do not deny that, like Diamond, this is not a definitive categorization and for some variables it may have made more sense to rank them differently. I still maintain that this order is the most rational one when following my definition of democracy. This is because that definition puts the emphasis on elections, supplemented by civil and political rights, rather than the other way around.¹²⁷ Lastly, variable 12 (colonial history) should perhaps have been operationalized differently, instead of being measured quantitatively. It should at least have been supported by more qualitative data to be convincing, since only one of the cases is a former colony.

Table 9: Cases and relevant variables*

Cases:	Valid	Partly valid	Not valid	Not applicable
Turkey	1a-c, 3a-b, 4a-b, 5a-b, 6a-b, 7, 9c-d, 12a-b	2b, 10	2a, 6c, 8a-b, 9a-b, 11	
Iran	1a-c, 3a-b, 4a-b, 6a-b, 7, 12a-b	2b	2a, 5a-b, 6c, 8a-b, 11	9a-d, 10
Egypt	1a-c, 3a-b, 4a-b, 6a-b, 7, 12a-b	2b, 10	2a, 5a-b, 6c, 8a-b, 9a-d, 11	
Saudi Arabia	1a-c, 3a-b, 4a-b, 5a-b, 7, 8a, 9c-d, 12a-b	2b	2a, 6a-c, 8b, 9a-b, 11	10

* For legend of variables, see Table 7, p45

Table 9 above summarizes the variables that are relevant for each case. Many of them are valid or partly valid, but there are also a quite a few which are not valid. There are also more variables that are valid for Turkey than for the other cases. Since more variables

¹²⁵ Alesina et al., p192

¹²⁶ Cf. supra, p19

¹²⁷ Cf. supra, p4

were not applicable on Iran, this case has the fewest valid variables. There is also some overlap between Iran and Saudi Arabia on the one hand and Turkey and Egypt on the other, especially regarding partly valid variables. This suggests that the rankings by Reporters Without Borders, Freedom House and Polity IV may have a point to make. On the other hand, there is also some overlap between Turkey and Saudi Arabia, especially regarding valid variables, which suggests that “extreme” cases are easier to evaluate and classify.

The validity of my hypothesis is summarized in Table 10 below. It seems like the societal level comes out strongly in favour vis-à-vis the other levels in influencing democracy. Institutional, structural and historical factors also seem to have more impact than strategic or international ones. This finding is consistent with Brownlee’s claim that foreign powers seem to affect domestic events reactively, rather than propel them.¹²⁸ In all fairness, however, the majority of variables tested can be classified as structural. Many of them are easier to measure statistically, which would explain why they attracted so much attention to begin with. Future studies would be well advised to consider alternative methods and triangulation strategies. Other lessons for the future are summarized below in section 6.3.

Table 10: Validity of hypothesis

Theory	Level	Validity	Democratic impact
1. Structural	Societal	Valid	Positive
2. Cultural	Societal	Partly valid	Negative
3. Consolidation	Societal	Valid	Negative
4. Institutional	Societal	Valid	Positive
5. Modernization	National	Partly valid	Positive
6. Development	National	Partly valid	Positive
7. Rentier state	National	Valid	Negative
8. Security	National	Not valid	Negative
9. Strategic	International	Partly valid	Positive
10. Diffusion	International	Partly valid	Positive
11. Regional	International	Not valid	Negative
12. Path dependency	International	Valid	Negative

¹²⁸ Brownlee (2007), p211

6.3 Further research

To sum up, most of the variables are either fully or partly valid for most of the cases and thus worth testing further on similar cases, within or outside the region. Even the theory on regional diffusion could be tested further, granted that it is operationalized differently. What my findings suggest is the following:

1. The rate of urbanization in densely populated countries should be able to predict movements towards democratization.
2. The cultural argument, that Muslims are less predisposed to democracy, should be refuted once and for all. Using a different set of controls would probably present a whole different picture. Religious fractionalization matters, but the material needs updating and revising before it can be applied to the Muslim world with the same accuracy as in the Christian version.
3. Ethnolinguistic heterogeneity poses a problem for democratic consolidation. Further studies are needed on how this diversity can be overcome, not just in MENA-countries.
4. The number of political parties matters. This cannot be just a figure on paper – there has to be solid alternatives for power to be rotated. Further research needs to show how means can be directed to build viable opposition parties in authoritarian states.
5. The relationship between press freedom and authoritarianism in Iran and Egypt is not made clear by this study. Future studies are encouraged to elucidate this relationship.
6. Annual growth rate may not be a correct way of measuring national economies spatially in snapshot studies and should thus be avoided in this type of study. In addition, the development theory does not fit cases that are pathway cases of the rentier state theory.
7. Future research on the rentier state theory should take into consideration the findings by Norris and Inglehart and focus on oil-rich states. Including oil-poor countries demands awareness of how this will affect the outcome.
8. Saudi Arabia is also a pathway case for the security hypothesis. To validate this hypothesis, a more concentrated case study of Saudi Arabia is needed, as well as comparisons with countries outside the MENA-region.

9. Further research is needed to show when, how and why FDI and foreign aid matters for democratization.
10. Further studies are also needed to show why having a democratic neighbour matters more than having a repressive one.
11. It would be interesting to follow up on the study by Stepan and Robertson and try to verify (or falsify) their claim that stronger Arabic or Islamic identities lead to weaker national identities, which in turn leads to weaker democracies. The latter is partly supported by the fact that ethnolinguistic heterogeneity hinders democratic consolidation.¹²⁹
12. The argument of colonial history needs to be further supported by strong, qualitative evidence-building to a much larger extent than was provided here. However, such thick descriptions need to be well aware that there is a tendency of foreign powers to affect domestic politics reactively.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ For the reverse side of the claim, that a common identity is needed because democracy works best when there is cohesion and capacity for consensus, see e.g. Jung, p368

¹³⁰ Brownlee (2007), p211

7 Executive summary

The aim of this study was to explain the low levels of democratization in the Middle East by bringing together different theoretical schools and perspectives. The lack of democratization in the region as a whole has provided a puzzle for both democratization scholars and Middle Eastern experts alike. The problem is that neither of them has so far been able to solve this puzzle in a satisfactory way. This study answers the following questions: which previously known democratization factors are relevant for the Middle East and North Africa? Are there any case-specific traits? On what levels does democratization work and which theories are most suitable for explaining the democratic deficit in this region?

Previous studies have until quite recently focused more on the strategic factors, in the form of elite actors, social forces or through game theoretical approaches. Necessary and sufficient structural pre-requisites for democratization have either been criticized or discarded altogether. More recent studies, however, have tried to combine strategic and structural factors in their quest for a solution to the democratization puzzle. There have also been efforts to recognize that there are factors which influence democracy negatively as well as positively and that factors with a positive impact can either be democracy-initiating or democracy-consolidating. This is despite the fact that the so called transitions paradigm was refuted quite strongly at the beginning of the 21st century.¹³¹

In my survey of the relevant democratization literature, I have found at least 20 different variables which seem to have an impact on democratization. In a conscious effort to include only the most relevant ones, I decided to reduce the number of variables to twelve. To reduce them even further would have meant a trade-off between finding the relevant combination of factors which affect democratization in the Middle East on the one hand, and making a more traditional case study with just a few variables on the other. Instead of testing a few variables on many cases, I decided to test many variables on a few cases, since I believe this would enhance the ability to draw more general conclusions from my study about the MENA-region as a whole.

To be able to generalize, I was careful to pick a sampling procedure for my cases that would maximize my possibility to do so. Using a strategy called the diverse-case method I came up with four different cases: Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. Drawing on statistical material from public databases, I evaluated each case separately first. The second part of the analysis compared these findings with qualitative text material, which enabled me to build a stronger argument about each variable from a comparative case perspective. My

¹³¹ Carothers, Thomas (2002) "The End of the Transition Paradigm", *Journal of Democracy*, 13:1, pp5-21

hypothesis was that five separate types of factors would in combination have a distinct impact on the level of democracy in each case. The five factors were: international, historical, structural, strategic and institutional. In addition, I believed that democratization would take place on three different levels: the international level, the national and the societal.

As I was able to show, all of the variables on the societal level were either valid or partly valid, which means that they are the most salient ones in creating favourable conditions for both transitions to and consolidation of democracy. In addition, they included both structural and institutional factors. The cultural theory was only partly valid because I found no supporting evidence that Islam as a religion would make populations more negative towards democracy.

On the national level, on the contrary, the only valid theory was the rentier state theory, which posits that high oil income will make regimes more democracy-resistant. This certainly seems to be true for the MENA-region as a whole, but one has to distinguish between oil-rich and oil-poor cases. However, indirectly many Arab states do receive their share of these incomes in the form of foreign aid from their more oil-rich neighbours, such as Saudi Arabia.¹³² On the other hand, a strong economy and high levels of press freedom turned out to be only partly valid for two of the cases, whereas high military spending was only valid for one case.

Similarly, international factors seem to have a low level of explanatory value for these cases. Foreign direct investment and foreign development aid are deemed to be useful tools for anyone interesting in pursuing the cause of more rapid democratization in the Middle East, whereas large trade volumes and high dependence on foreign trade have a negative effect. Unfortunately, I had to discard the identity variable due to problems with construct validity and access to the relevant material. Democratic diffusion from neighbouring countries only seems to have a partial effect on two of the cases, whereas longer periods of colonial rule and foreign occupation seem to have a negative effect. Conversely, longer periods of independence are likely to have a positive effect on democracy.

My major findings can be summarized thus:

- Societal factors matter more than national and international
- The cultural argument about Islam and democracy being incompatible can be refuted
- The rentier state theory is valid for the MENA-region
- FDI and development aid should be utilised more in the future of democratic endeavours in the Middle East
- History matters: the fact that many of the countries in the MENA-region have become independent recently may be a factor which explains why they have not democratized sooner
- The institutionalization of political parties matters: this affects the will and capacity of people to organize and build viable alternatives to repressive power institutions

¹³² This can clearly be seen in Saudi Arabia's figures for foreign aid, which denominates them as a net donor, as well as in their high level of involvement in regional economic cooperation organizations with an Arab profile; cf. Table 6, p32

My conclusions from this study are that pre-conditions for democracy are not enough; they are necessary but not sufficient components of democracy-building. Agency is required as soon as a window of opportunity or so called critical junctures open up, but for these critical junctures to occur there has to be favourable conditions or strong incentives for elite actors to embrace a new way of ruling. It is possible that these favourable conditions can be created by international actors by providing such strong incentives. The obvious example is Turkey, whose negotiations about EU membership has made the country more transparent, brought an Islamic party to power and made the military less influential over time.

The question is if there are similar incentives to provide for the other countries in the MENA-region? The chances look slim at the moment. The only other country with a democratic neighbour among my four cases is Egypt, and that neighbour is Israel. As comparative scholars Alfred Stepan and Graeme Robertson argue, the “Arab-Israeli conflict” may play a part in Middle Eastern countries’ distinctive political identity.¹³³ However, if the United States is willing to pay off countries like Egypt because it helps them “buy peace with Israel”, as Stepan and Robertson suggest, this might be a good opportunity to attach some more conditions to this 2 billion dollars-a-year subsidy?¹³⁴

There has recently been some stirrings in Saudi Arabia as well, indicating that people there have begun pressuring for more reform, even if it takes time. The promise of more elections is a start, although the process has been stalled at the moment. In Iran, a presidential election is coming up at the very time of writing this thesis. It still remains to be seen what the outcome of that election will be.

¹³³ This is refuted by Eva Bellin. See Bellin (2004), p151

¹³⁴ Stepan, p42

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