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BARRIERS TO DEMOCRACY IN THE ARAB WORLD

by

MOHAMMAD HUWEIH

Under the Direction of Michael Herb, PhD

ABSTRACT

With the exception of Tunisia, there are no democracies in the Arab world. This paper attempts to address why that is the case. The paper focuses on some possible answers. Islam, oil, and Western intervention are seen as obstacles to democracy. I argue that another factor is being overlooked. These variables may answer the question, but secular elites are the most serious obstacle to democracy in the Arab world.

I focus on Algeria and Palestine briefly, showing the secular parties response to electoral defeat and the intervention of the West. I also explore Egypt and Tunisia and the secular elites response to Islamist winning elections.

I find that secular elites are an important obstacle to democracy hindrance, but not in all cases.

INDEX WORDS: Islamism, Oil, Secular, Democracy, Algeria, Palestine, Tunisia, Egypt, West

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MOHAMMAD HUWEIH

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Masters of Art

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

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by

MOHAMMAD HUWEIH

Committee Chair: Michael Herb

Committee: Syed Rashid Naim

Abbas Barzegar

Peter Lindsay

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Studies

College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this paper to my heart and soul, Jannah.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to analyze the reasons for the lack of democratic regimes in the Arab world. There are scholars that examine multiple variables to explain the lack of democracy. The variables are oil, Islam, and Western intervention. These variables help to describe why democracy is lacking in the Arab world, but they are not sufficient enough to answer the question.

My expected result for this study is that secular elites hinder democracy. Oil, western intervention, and Islam as variables can describe the lack of democracy, but it is not the full picture. I believe that secular elites is a stronger factor in explaining the lack of democracy¹ in the Arab world.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The four variables that may explain the lack of democracy in the Arab world are oil, Islam, western intervention, and secular elites. For the variables oil, Islam, and Western intervention, I do not attempt to prove or disprove whether they hinder democracy, but merely explain what scholars have written about the variables.

2.1 Oil as a Variable

The lack of democracy in the Middle East, some scholars argue, is the results of oil Arab countries have. It is the resource curse that hinders democratic movements in the Arab world. The argument that attempts to prove that oil hinders democracy is largely based on regression models and data points.

¹ Robert Dahl defines democracy as effective participation, voting equality, knowledge on the issue and its alternatives, control over what issues are placed on the agenda, and all or most adults should be included in the process (36-38).

The research done by Michael Ross and others shows that an increase in oil exports does have a negative effect on democracy. It does not, however, have an effect on all countries in the same way. Oil is a wealth generator, the research shows, and affects poorer and undemocratic countries in a different way than it would affect richer democratic countries. Kevin Tsui found that there is a causal link with oil discovery and slow democracy for countries that were previously undemocratic (Tsui). He found that oil discovery does not affect democratic countries in the same way. Similarly, Michael Ross finds a link between poorer countries with oil and lack of democracy. “Barrel for barrel, oil harms democracy more in oil poor countries than in oil-rich ones” (Ross 344). Poor countries that have oil tend to be authoritarian and the prospect of democracy is low.

One characteristic of oil that helps empower authoritarian governments is it allows the society to become a rentier state. Rentier, according to Ross, allows the government to derive their wealth from a resource rather than the citizens of the state. This makes the population complacent because they would be taxed little or none at all, making the leaders unaccountable (Ross). Even with a complacent citizenry, the state is able to fund a major security apparatus that would prevent citizens from pushing for reform (Ross).

There is a large wealth of oil in many Arab states, and all those states do have authoritarian governments. The regression model shows the link between oil wealth and authoritarian form of governments. With these regressions, the resource curse may not be enough to explain the lack of democracy in the Arab world. A study done by Stephen Haber and Victor Menaldo found that the data was inconclusive on the resource curse. They studied 53 countries and found that 19 of those countries that relied on resources had a higher polity score after the discovery of oil. There were another 19 countries that were autocratic before oil discovery and continue to be

autocratic after oil discovery. Twelve of those 19 were in the Middle East and North Africa.

The argument the literature makes is that these countries would have become more democratic if it was not for the oil discovery. Haber and Menaldo argue that oil was not the decisive factor that is pushing these countries to authoritarian rule. The resource curse, the authors argue, does not explain the lack of democracy.

The effect of oil on democracy has been documented, but it is not the full picture, according to Sven Oskarson and Eric Otteson in an article that explores Michael Ross' study. There are other regional factors that better explain the persistence of autocratic regimes besides oil. According to Michael Herb, countries without democracy and wealth would already be predisposed to autocracy. The lack of oil wealth would not preclude them from being authoritarian.

Based on the data, the resource curse is an important factor in showing why poorer countries lack democracy. In the Arab world, the factor is not enough to answer the question of why democracy does not exist because there are other factors that can better describe the lack of democracy. According to Herb, there might be "regional factors that can better explain the persistent authoritarianism" in the Arab world (Herb 311).

2.2 Islam as a Variable

A regional factor that may hinder democracy in the Arab world is Islam, which is something Arab countries have in common. It could explain the lack of democracy in non-oil countries, as well as oil rich countries. The argument is made that the more Muslims in a country, the less democratic the country.

I divide the literature on Islam into four schools of thought. The first school argues that democracy is alien to Islam and that Muslims are used to oriental despotism or obedience. The second school explores the regression models that show the link between Islam and authoritarian

rule. The third school explores the reasons behind these numbers, the support for democracy on the ground, and whether a causal link can be made between Islam and authoritarian rule. The last school explores Islamist² and moderation theory.

Scholars argue that Islam and Muslims are unable to be democratic. The reason is democracy is an alien concept in Islam and for Muslims. Elie Kedourie believes Islam is not compatible with democracy. The primary reason is that Arabs want to live under Sharia Law, which according to Kedourie is not compatible with democracy. Another reason is that nowhere in Islamic political culture is there a tradition of democracy. The concepts of sovereignty, representation, elections, and popular suffrage are essential to democracy but are all alien to Islamic political traditions. Islamic culture, according to Samuel Huntington, is in large part to blame for the failure of democracy in the Arab world. Arabs cannot be democrats because they are obedient to their leaders. Going against authoritarian leaders would be a violation of Islam (Kedourie). It is a religious duty to be obedient to the leader, even a bad one, because the threat of chaos is worse than a bad leader. "Passive obedience to any ruler who had hold of power, however he came by it, and whether he was bad or mad, was a religious duty (Kedourie 7). Kedourie called it oriental despotism, where the state is stronger than society. Pushing for democracy would be seen as an attack on the Islamic society.

Bernard Lewis echoes Kedourie's sentiment. He notices that the most common regime type in the Muslim world is autocracy. Muslims are used to authority and are traditionally obedient to their leaders. The evidence of this religious obligation to be obedient to the ruler is found in the *hadith* or Islamic traditions and sayings of the Muslim Prophet Muhammad. The contrast with Kedourie is that Lewis believes Muslims can be open to democracy because there is a tradi-

² Islamists are a diverse set of groups, but in essence they "find the blueprint for social, moral, political, and economic reform in the teachings of the Islamic faith" (Schwedler 349).

tion in the *hadith* where the people went against the ruler. This suggests that even though Islam may hinder democracy, it can become compatible with democracy

Many of these writers believe that Islam is undemocratic, and if given an opportunity to partake in elections, would use those elections to come into power and create a totalitarian state. Bernard Lewis called it “one person, one vote, once” (Gerges 22). It would give the fundamentalists an opportunity to replace the authoritarian regime with their own authoritarian regime, with the goal of global hegemony.

Islam is called “an aggressive revolutionary movement as militant and violent as the Bolshevik, fascists, and Nazi movement of the past” (Gerges 22). If allowed to participate in the democratic process, it would replace the authoritarian regime with a theocratic regime. Arabs do not have the rational mind to make a rational choice in elections. Elections are seen as the quickest way to produce a militant Islamist regime (Gerges 21).

This perspective on Islam is not enough to prove that Islam hinders democracy. It is an analysis that is not based on case studies. The scholars argue that Islam is undemocratic and that it cannot be given an opportunity to disprove this assessment because it would be authoritarian if it were given an opportunity to partake in elections. A better way to look at Islam is through data analysis.

When looking at the data and running the regressions, there is a correlation between greater Muslim population and less political rights in society (Pryor). Frederic Pryor found that Arab countries have less political rights than non-Arab countries. According to Stephan and Robertson, measuring with Freedom House and Polity Project shows that only Lebanon had any democracy for three consecutive years and none had for five consecutive years (Robertson). Samuel Huntington pointed out that Lebanon ceased to be a democracy after the Muslim popula-

tion became greater in number than the Christian population, further proving the correlation does exist. M. Steven Fish concludes that there is a correlation between the variable Islam and authoritarian governments (Fish).

The findings are not conclusive, because a correlation was found, but there is no causation proven. The regression model would not be able to show that Islam as a variable causes authoritarian regimes. Not enough evidence exists to say there is causation. Islam does not cause a lack of democracy (Fish). Muslim perspective on democracy actually shows that they are pro-democratic. Fish found that Muslims are open to democracy with a fusion of Islam. This fusion, Fish argues, is not any different than the rest of the world (Fish). According to Fish, Mark Tessler comes up with the same conclusion. He found that 90% of Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, and Jordan believe that democracy is better than any other form of government. He concludes that Islam itself has a limited impact on views about democracy. He refutes previous statements of scholars and critics by saying, “cultural explanations alleging that Islam discourages or even prevents the emergence of support for democracy are misguided, indeed misleading” (Fish 245).

The argument is made that Islamist are not democratic (Kedourie). They have radical positions that do not adhere to democratic principles. Hamas, al-Qaeda, Hezbollah, and militant Salafi groups, for example, use political violence to achieve their goals. Fundamentalist groups “seek a fundamental alteration of existing political, economic, and social relations” (Schwedler 350). These radicals would not be able to adhere to democratic principles, with the positions they hold.

The question that arises in the moderation theory is whether radical Islamist group can become moderate³ when they enter the political system. Güneş Murat Tezcür argues that a large body of literature shows that Islamist parties with radical views have a large incentive to moderate their views once they enter the electoral arena (Tezcür 1). An example of radical parties that moderated their views was socialist parties. They became domesticated as a result of their pursuit of votes and organizational survival. In order to become politically viable and not alienate a large part of the population, socialist parties develop “‘centrist’ political platforms rather than radical platforms that have little public appeal” (Tezcür 3).

There are examples of radical Islamist that have moderated their stance. An example is the Muslim Brotherhood. The Brotherhood moved from the radical influence of Sayyid Qutb to the more participatory politics of founder Hassan al-Banna. This shift saw the Brotherhood embrace democracy and electoral elections (Schwedler 355). Schwedler finds that “incentives alter strategic choices, which lead to the moderation of behavior, which in turn leads to ideological moderation” (Schwedler 355).

The problem with pointing at Islam as the hindrance to democracy is the lack of examples today. Most countries in the Arab world are secular in nature. There has been no election where Muslim party won and created a theocratic regime. There is no evidence of causation between more Muslims and less political rights. If there were elections, studies suggest that Islamist parties that may be radical could moderate and be democratic. I believe the factors that cause a lack of democracy is not Islam.

³ Moderation is connected to the acceptance of liberal notions of individual rights, tolerance, pluralism, and cooperation. To be moderate, the actor must be able to accept other perspectives as legitimate (Schwedler 352) they must be able to follow the rules of the game (353).

2.3 Western Intervention as a Variable

Another factor that may hinder democracy in the Arab world is western intervention, which happens often in Arab countries.

One reason why the West would not support democracy is because if it does so, it would open the Arab country to an Islamist regime that would discard any future elections. Bernard Lewis justifies an anti-democratic stance in the Arab world because the Arab world has not emancipated themselves from Islam. The Arabs have not accepted what Bernard Lewis calls a Christian remedy for a Christian illness, which is a separation of church and state. In order for the Arab world to become secular, the West must support dictatorships that enforce this secularism. If the West does not support these secular dictators, Islamist dictators would replace them (Lewis). Even though Bernard Lewis believes that the Arab world is free and their lack of democracy is their own making, the evidence suggests that the West has embraced this thinking. The West does interfere and support autocratic elites that are against democracy. It is “a new form of submission to the same old colonial powers” (Hamdi 85).

A second reason for the West to not support democracy in the Arab world is it would put in power those that would not have the United States interest in mind. Noam Chomsky argues that if there was a democracy in the Arab world and public opinion had an influence on policy, the West would be “tossed out of the Middle East” (Chomsky). Paul Salem states that the West, particularly the United States “has too much at stake, especially in the Gulf, to tolerate, much less encourage, strong democratization movements that might result...in a shift of policy. He argues that allowing democratization might result in a leader like Mosaddegh in 1950s Iran, a figure that shifted his country away from the West (Salem).

Western intervention hinders democracy, insofar as those democracies are anti-Western or are against US interest. “The people were sovereign only insofar as they choose leaders who did not contend with US power” (Brownlee 101). The western powers are not against democracy. They are just more interested in regional security (Brownlee 5).

Autocratic regimes that benefit them would be better than attempting to be democratic and threatening the status quo. Even with democracy, the threat of having a democratic regime that is not friendly to western interest is not worth the cost. Even the Carter Administration acknowledged that by stating that the free movement of oil is the most important thing (Brownlee). If a democratic movement may threaten this oil, then the movement must be stopped.

Western powers will only tolerate friends in power. There are a few cases where this is clearly evident. An example is in Algeria. When the military responded with a coup after FIS won the election in 1991, the West was in support of the coup. The State Department responded by saying that the coup was constitutional (Gerges). James Baker called the FIS “antithetical to the West- to democratic values, free market principles, and the principles and values we believe in” (Gerges). France took a more pro-coup stance by pressuring Algeria to stay the course against the FIS (Esposito & Voll).

Even in cases where the Western power does not specifically support antidemocratic actions, its inaction says otherwise. An example is the response of the United States to the military coup in Egypt against the democratically elected president. As the president and his allies are arrested and the military took over, the United States had no choice but to follow its own law and cut off the one and a half billion dollars in financial assistance to the country (Baker). The United States, however, hesitates to call it a coup, and therefore would rather not cut off funds. President Obama avoided the use of the word coup and Congress would hesitate to cut off funds be-

cause they did not favor the Muslim Brotherhood (Baker). The inaction is an endorsement of the coup.

The stance of the West is to block democracies in the Arab world, either through direct action, or in the case of Egypt, through inaction. According to Chomsky, internal discussions in 1958 and a memorandum by the National Security Council explains that the perception in the Arab world is that the United States blocks democratic movements and supports dictators. The memorandum further states that this perception is accurate and the United States should be blocking democracy and supporting dictators. That is in fact the policy of the United States. They support dictators who crush any democratic uprisings (Chomsky).

As the memorandum demonstrates, the United States does interfere in the Arab world. The polemic writer Joseph Massad documents this examples the United States intervening in the Arab world the 1950s under the Eisenhower Administration to fend off the Soviet influence in the Middle East. He argues that during this time, the United States financed intellectuals to “exalt the virtues of the liberal West”. He argues that recent history also sees United States sponsoring Arab intellectuals to support US liberal ideas. These liberals, he argues, have caused disastrous results in the Middle East that is worse then radical Islamist groups such as the militant group known as Islamic State and Al-Qaeda. He states “Arab liberals and Arab liberalism have been a principal enemy of social, political and economic justice across the Arab world during the last half century.

Western intervention as a variable, however, does not show the full picture. The West does not always prevent democracy. It had initially pushed for democracy in Palestine before pushing against the results. It has pushed for democracy in Iraq after the toppling of Saddam Hussein, in Libya after the international campaign to enforce the responsibility to protect, and in

Egypt after the ouster of Mubarak. The West can hinder democracy, but recent history suggests that it does not do so all the time.

2.4 Secular Elites⁴ as a Variable

The last variable I will discuss is the role secular elites in hindering democracy in the Arab world.

Being secular does not necessarily mean being undemocratic. The problem with secular elites is that they adapt their ideology based on the western framework. This framework sees the indigenous population as backwards and the Western secular ideology as the only thing that can save and modernize society.

The Arab world was ruled by the Ottoman Empire before the First World War. With the defeat of the Ottoman Empire and the victory of France and Britain in the war, the power dynamics of the Arab world changed. Britain and France administered and ruled the former Ottoman territories of Palestine, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. The French also attempted to colonize Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia after the Second World War (Ismael & Ismael).

According to Franz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth*, the aim of the colonizers was to convince the indigenous population that it was being saved from the darkness. If the colonizers ever left, the indigenous population would “regress into barbarism, degradation, and bestiality” (149). Colonialism is like “a mother who constantly prevents her basically perverse child from committing suicide or giving free rein to its malevolent instinct” (149). For the Arab world, Fanon states that the colonizers see the pre-colonized history of the indigenous people “steeped in barbarity” (151). Britain and France taking over the Arab world is a way to save it from itself.

⁴ Secular elites are those in the political arena who believe in the civil state over the religious state. In the case of Egypt and Tunisia, they are mostly united in their opposition to the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt and Ennahda of Tunisia.

As the Arab world began gaining independence from the British and French powers, a new class of Western educated elites replaced the colonizers. Any fear that the Arabs would go back into the darkness would be curtailed since the new rulers would govern in a similar way as the old colonizers. Colonial bureaucrats replaced the colonial powers. This new ruling class that was groomed by their colonial masters, “were socially, culturally, and above all, politically alienated and perceived as alien within their own societies” (Ismael & Ismael 233). They were not a part of the indigenous population, but a part of the colonial power structure that governed before.

An example of secular elites saving their society from the indigenous population that would turn its back on modernity is seen in recent Egyptian events. The Egyptian state had been secular under Nasser, Sadat, and Mubarak. With the ouster of Mubarak and the election of the Muslim Brotherhood’s Morsi, the secular elites of Egypt allied themselves against the new regime. Their grievance was that Morsi monopolized power, failed to respect the rule of law, and infringed on the rights of dissenters. The result is the demand of the ouster of Morsi to uphold democratic principles. Khaled Abou El-Fadl, the Chair of the Islamic Studies Interdepartmental Program at UCLA, argues that what he calls “the secular intelligentsia of Egypt” betrayed the revolution when they supported the ouster of Morsi. The reason behind the betrayal is “they imagined themselves as the one and only true possessors of legitimacy...because they and they alone possess the civilizational and intellectual values necessary for the progressive order in which true democracy...can be achieved” (El-Fadl). To the secular elites, Islamists had no legitimacy to govern, even when they were chosen in democratic elections. It was the secular elites pre-ordained power to govern. El-Fadl further argues that this is not just an Egyptian problem. He believes that in the Arab world, the secular elites are locking the region into a “near perpetual

circle of self-defeatism” with their idea that they can be democratic even as they act undemocratically.

President Barak Obama, in his 2009 Cairo speech, stated that democracy is through consent, respect of minorities, tolerance, compromise, and placing the interest of your people above your party. Mustapha Tlili in the New York Times argues that Morsi did not follow every ingredient for democracy that Obama listed in his one year in office. Like El-Fadl stated about the grievances of secular intelligentsia regarding Morsi, Tlili has similar grievances. Tlili argues that the West, specifically the United States, should help promote secularism, rather than support Tunisia’s Ennahda or Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood. Secular democrats, he argues, sparked the Arab Spring. With Islamism on a retreat with Ennahda defeated in recent elections and the Muslim Brotherhood forced out of power, he argues, the United States should engage with secular parties whom embody tolerance, moderation, rule of law, women’s rights and constitutional freedom.

These ideas on governance in the Arab world can be summed up as Islamist are illegitimate even when elected, and secular elites are legitimate even when unelected. This idea that secular elites are the only ones that can govern the society is documented in Tunisia and Egypt, which I examine, as well as other countries like Palestine and Algeria.

3 RECENT DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS

Besides Tunisia and Egypt, there are other Arab countries that experienced democratic elections. In a similar way to Egypt, these countries regressed back to authoritarian or one party rule. In the case of Palestine in 2006, this occurred because of the ruling secular Fatah party and western intervention. In the case of Algeria in 1991, this occurred because of the ruling National Liberation Front (FLN) with the West showing either indifference or support.

3.1 Palestine

After the death of Yasser Arafat, Mahmoud Abbas succeeded him as president. Abbas would later win the 2004 presidential election. The legislative election was scheduled for 2005. It was later postponed to January 2006. The Bush Administration advocated for the election to be held, even though Fatah needed more time to be able to compete (Rose). According to Muhammad Dahlan, a member of Fatah, stated that everyone was against the election (Rose).

Naturally, the United States, Israel, and Fatah would be against the election if the results were favorable to Hamas. Hamas is considered a terrorist organization by Israel the United States and the European Union (Erlanger 2006a). They are seen as an Islamist political movement “that refuses to recognize the legitimacy of Israel and glorifies grotesque forms of political violence against civilians” (Brown 2006: 3).

Hamas, however, was victorious against Mahmoud Abbas’ Fatah party, taking 76 out of 132 seats, while Fatah won 43 seats. That is 57.6 percent for Hamas and 32.6 percent for Fatah. This ended forty years of the secular Fatah party rule (Erlanger 2006a).

Even before Hamas formed a government, the world started working against the Palestinian Authority (PA). Israel started to withhold 55 million dollars a month in customs and duties it collects for Palestinians because of the victory of Hamas (Erlanger 2006b). Also, before the formation of the new government, the United States, the European Union, the United Nations, and Russia, also known as the Quartet, threatened to isolate and cut monies to a new Hamas government, unless they accept Israel, reject violence, and accept past Palestinian-Israeli agreements.

The United States, which advocated for the elections under George W. Bush, worked to isolate the new government by undermining it financially. With the help of the European Union, the United States was able to push the government into near bankruptcy. The Hamas-led PA

“cannot pay its teachers, clerks, or police; build roads; improve sanitation; or develop irrigation” (Brown 2006). This would eventually lead to disorder and decay.

Mahmoud Abbas and his Fatah party also worked to undermine the Hamas government, but only after some prodding by the United States. The party had been given weaponry and recognition by the United States and Israel to further isolate Hamas. Confidential documents obtained by Vanity Fair shows that former President George W Bush, former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, and former Deputy National Security Advisor Elliott Abrams created an initiative that armed Fatah to give it “the muscle it needed to remove the democratically elected Hamas-led government from power” (Rose). According to a talking point memo left by a State Department envoy, the United States pressured Mahmoud Abbas to oust Hamas from power if they did not abide by the conditions of the Quartet (Rose).

Before the Hamas coup in Gaza, a classified cable leaked by Wikileaks showed that Fatah had been seeking help from Israel to attack Hamas (Ravid). There were weapon transfer from Egypt to Fatah that was orchestrated and supported by the United States, Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia to strengthen Mahmoud Abbas and weaken Hamas. Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, an Israeli cabinet minister, said the weapon transfers were intended to aid Mahmoud Abbas in holding “his own against those organizations that are trying to spoil everything” (Erlanger 2006c). This was in reference to Hamas.

This eventually led to the civil conflict where President Mahmoud Abbas dissolved the government, which in turn forced Hamas to take over Gaza and Fatah was only able to rule the West Bank, therefore dividing the country. An Israeli analyst of Palestinian affairs, Danny Rubinstein, believes the reason for the breakup between Gaza and the West Bank lies in the inability of Fatah to share power in the PA with Hamas, the victors of the elections in 2006. He stated that

Fatah “was forced to overrule Palestinian voters because the entire world demanded it do so” (Erlanger 2007). David Wurmser, the former Chief Middle East Advisor to former Vice President Dick Cheney, who resigned a month after the Hamas coup in Gaza, stated that Hamas took Gaza because they were pushed to do so by the actions of Fatah. “It looks to me that what happened wasn’t a coup by Hamas but an attempted coup by Fatah that was pre-empted before it could happen” (Rose).

In this case, the barrier to democracy were many actors. The secular elites were a large factor, but they were prodded and empowered by the West to undue the will of the people. Hamas itself was not governing well, but many factors were against them. Money was drying out because the international community, as well as Arab nations refused to fund the PA. Money that belonged to the PA was being held by Israel. The West then pressured Fatah, and Fatah obliged.

The barriers to democracy in this case are the Fatah ruling party and the Western powers that pressured them to stand against Hamas.

3.2 Algeria

The wealth of Algeria was decreasing as the oil market experienced a steep decline in the 1980s. This decline in oil wealth, as well as an increase in foreign debt, decreased revenue, and a disenchanted population marked “the most precarious stage of its modern history” (Takeyh 63). In 1988, Algeria saw massive unrest gripping the cities of Constantine, Oran, and Algiers (Brumberg). This public discontent resulted in riots that caused the death of at least 400 people (Wright 134).

As a result of this upheaval, President Chadli Benjedid ended one-party rule and opened the system to reform and create democracy, against the will of the ruling FLN party. This allowed

the Islamist party Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) to become “big winners in Bendjedid’s liberation” (Brumberg 60).

The opening of the society involved two phases (Wright). The first phase was the local election in 1990, which saw the FIS upsetting the ruling FLN party by grabbing two thirds of the 48 regional assembly and 55 percent of the 1,541 municipal councils. The FLN came in second with 29 percent of the regional assemblies and 32 percent of the municipal councils (Brumberg). The second phase was elections to the national parliament. It was divided into two rounds. The first round was in December 1991, which saw the FIS do very well, while the FLN doing embarrassingly worse. From the 430 member parliament, the FIS won 189 seats. The FLN came in third with only 16 seats. The secular Berber based Front for Socialist Forces came in second with 20 seats (Ibrahim 1991a). The second round would have been the runoff election where it would determine who wins the 225 seats that would be up for grab. The FIS would only need 27 of those seats to secure a majority in parliament (Ibrahim 1991a). It was expected that the FIS would win the run-off elections and have a “decisive parliamentary majority” in the January 16 elections (Wright 135).

The secular response to the FIS victory was democratic at first. The ruling party, the press, and other secular parties urged the estimated 40 percent of Algerians who did not vote in the elections to turn out for the run-offs on January 16, 1992 to prevent the country from turning into a religious state (Ibrahim 1991b).

Five days before the scheduled elections, the Defense Minister forced President Bendjedid to resign. A five man High State Council would replace him and elections would be suspended. Afterwards, the FIS would be banned, the leadership would be detained, and supporters would be

sent to detention camps. Local elected officials were arrested as the previous election results were cancelled (Wright 135).

The democratic opening that started with Bendjedid quickly ended. The secular ruling party would not allow it. For the most part, it was an internal secular response, like Egypt, that ended the democratic experience. The Western response to the coup was a mixture of silent acceptance and outright cheering. The United States was quiet for the most part. The State Department responded by saying that the coup was constitutional (Gerges). James Baker called the FIS “antithetical to the West” (Gerges 76). France took a more pro-coup stance by pressuring Algeria to stay the course against the FIS (Esposito & Voll).

In the case of Algeria, the barrier of democracy was the ruling party with the tacit approval of the Western powers, especially France.

3.3 Conclusion

In the case of Algeria, it was clear that the military, civil leaders, and secular parties did not want to see the Islamist victorious in the election. The West did not intervene after the coup, but they were passive in their denunciations or in some cases, very supportive and inciting the military to further push out the Islamist. There was no sanctions, condemnations, or anger at the antidemocratic actions of the Algerian regime by the Western powers.

In Palestine, it was a similar story. Fattah did not want to see Hamas victorious in the election. The pressure, however, was from the West to push Hamas out. Ultimately in both cases, it was the actions of the ruling secular power and the support of the Western powers that undermined the democratic elections in Algeria and Palestine.

4 CASE STUDIES

4.1 Egypt

Egypt has gone through major political events since the beginning of the Arab Spring. For the purpose of this paper, I explore some of the history from 1952 to 2011, and a large focus on the events from 2011 to 2014.

Egypt's transition started after the events in Tunisia, in the beginning of 2011. With the secular revolt in Tunisia against the secular Ben Ali regime, the spark of the Arab Spring was ignited. Egypt followed Tunisia with a secular revolt against the Mubarak regime. Tunisia saw the ouster of Ben Ali from power and replaced with a technocratic government. The military, the judiciary, and the UGTT all played a role in driving the old regime out. Similarly, Egypt saw the ouster of Mubarak with the military playing an important role. In both cases, during the early stages of the revolt was mostly directed by secularists while the Islamists remained, for the most part, on the sidelines and were not as active in the beginning.

While the revolts in Tunisia and Egypt saw parallels, the transition to democracy was dissimilar. In Tunisia, for instance, the military receded to the background and allowed a transitional government to form. In Egypt, the military played an active role in the ouster of Mubarak and the transition after the fall of the regime. The people, in other words, were the mechanism for the change, but the old regime was in control of the transition.

This transition in Egypt had the goal of insuring that the military did not lose its influence and power and to ensure that the secular state remained. This latter goal would be shared by secular elites inside the old regime, as well as outside of it. This relationship between the secular elites and the military would undermine any hope of a democratic transition.

4.1.1 The Role of the Military in Egyptian Society

In order to understand the position of the military in present day Egypt, we must examine the historical position of Egypt. The power of the Egyptian army was not always at the levels seen during the ouster of Mubarak. Between the World Wars, the army was weak. It began to evolve after the 1948 war against Israel. The defeat of the Egyptian army undermined the monarchy (Lokesson & Kordunsky). The war revealed the weakness of King Farouk's regime, which in part suffered from widespread graft and corruption. As a result of the defeat of Egypt in the Israeli War for Independence and the corruption of the Egyptian regime, the Free Officers Movement, led by General Naguib, led a coup against the King on July 23 1952 (New York Times). After the coup, Egypt saw the rise of Gamal Abdel Nasser, which led to the beginning of six decades of secular authoritarian rule.

4.1.1.1 The Rise of Gamal Abdel Nasser

The rise of the military began with Nasser and continued with Sadat and Mubarak. The initial reason for the coup was the officers' dissatisfaction with the incompetence of the government (New York Times). Nasser, in particular, wanted to change society, and to empower people previously marginalized by the old regime. According to Aljazeera, "Nasser's aim was to improve the conditions of the peasant majority" (Al Jazeera 2008). In order to accomplish this, Nasser wanted to establish land reform, create a free educational program for girls and boys, and to improve the medical industry. He declared to the Egyptian man and woman, "raise your head fellow brother, the end of colonialism has come" (Al Jazeera 2008). He wanted to elevate his fellow citizen.

Nasser's goal in attaining power may not have been simply to represent the masses, but he did not come from an upper class, nor was his cohort of officers very well off. The coup that

removed the King was not aimed to protect the role of the military, nor guarantee its economic wealth. The Free Officers Movement was not trying to protect their economic power because they had little economic power to begin with. In contrast to the coup against the King, the ouster of Mubarak was to protect the economic power of the army. The army of Mubarak was a part of the upper class. “For the first time an Egyptian leader from the people and not from the upper classes, was able to win the hearts of the Arab people” (Al Jazeera 2008).

4.1.1.2 After Nasser

This weak and middle class army after the coup began to change with Nasser’s successor. Anwar El Sadat, who was also an officer who helped lead the coup against the monarchy, came to office in 1970. Unlike Nasser, whom fought a costly war against Israel that resulted in a weakened Egypt, Sadat fought a war and saw victory in 1973. Egypt gained back the Sinai, which was lost under Nasser, as a result of the 1978 Camp David Accords after the war and the Egyptian military regained its reputation (Lokesson & Kordunsky).

Anwar El Sadat was assassinated, and Hosni Mubarak came into power in 1981. Like Sadat and Nasser, Mubarak was from the military. After the last war, Sadat made peace with Israel. This peace would give dividends to the military under Mubarak’s rule, which allowed for the military to become an economic powerhouse with massive holdings. Backed by American aid, as well as economic holdings in Egypt, the military became an economic power. The power of the military, leading up to the end of the Mubarak era, was unrivaled in Egyptian society (Lokesson & Kordunsky).

The military is equipped with vast real estate and resources. It allowed the military to “insinuate itself into civil society through business, its holdings ranging from bread factories to chemical plants to hotels” (Lokesson & Kordunsky). These resources, as well as the economic

interests the military has acquired over the years, has allowed the military to be a Brahmin-like⁵ class in Egyptian society (Hubbard). Ben Hubbard of the New York Times quotes Steven Cook, a Middle East expert at the Council on Foreign Relations, saying that the military “live in a class apart, with their own social clubs, hotels, hospitals, parks and other benefits financed by the state.”

This status in Egyptian society contrasts with the humble beginnings of the Free Officer Movement that came from the middle class. Today, the role of the military is to elevate its upper class members. The accumulation of resources, not the plight of the people, would dictate any response to a threat of the status quo.

4.1.2 The Coup against Mubarak

Hosni Mubarak’s time in power was on the decline, as the Arab Spring erupted, most notably in Tunisia and Egypt. In his last stand, Mubarak attempted to reassert himself as the leader by shutting down the Internet and using the security apparatus to stop the massive protests that were calling for his departure (Kirkpatrick 2011d).

The 18-day revolt led by the young people of Egypt culminated with the ouster of Hosni Mubarak on the 11th of February 2011 (Kirkpatrick 2011a). The military eventually decided to forgo their neutrality and took a stand with the people against Mubarak. They stated that their duty was to the people of Egypt (Lokesson & Kordunsky). Mubarak stepping down overturned six decades of Arab secular dictatorship (Kirkpatrick-2012b). With his departure, the military took over during the time of transition.

This time period was seen as a successful revolution of the people. For the second time in the Arab Spring, the people forced the ouster of their dictator, with the assistance of the mili-

⁵ A hereditary based system, the son follows the father in his career and joins the closed social circle of the Egyptian military (Hubbard).

tary. For the first time since the coup against the King by the Free Officers Movement, the people seemed to be in control. The people were able to force change in leadership.

The reality was that the people were not in control. The military made a choice to side with the people against Mubarak to safe guard their interest and control the transition themselves. The military, the old regime elements, the Muslim Brotherhood and the secular movement that becomes co-opted by the military will hamper the transition away from Mubarak.

4.1.2.1 Military Asserts Control

After the ouster of Mubarak, it became clear that the military and old regime elements would become an obstacle to democratic transition. These old regime institutes are secular in nature, but they are not to be equated with the secular elites.

The change from the secular Mubarak was not a real change. The secular institute of the military was still in control. The neutrality of the military during the protest was not a move of support for the people, but more of a calculated act by the military to retain its power and prestige in society. The interest of the military is to preserve its place in the political order. The military did not want to align themselves with Mubarak, to ensure that they did not fall with the regime. They wanted to protect their own business and institutional interest, as well as avoiding any instability. The result of this coup was an exit of one Arab secular dictator and the replacement was the secular institute that the Arab dictator came from and worked closely with.

In the Tunisian case, the ouster of Ben Ali saw the military recede to the background. The military of Egypt, on the other hand, decided to rule the country through its Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF).

During the rule of SCAF after the ouster of Mubarak, there had been a call by the people for the military to cede power to a civilian authority. When elections did occur, the fear that

arose from secular groups and the old regime is that they would lose power to the well organized Muslim Brotherhood. The writing of the Constitution and election to parliament and the presidency would be overshadowed by this fear as Islamists gained power through the ballot box. Emad Gad, a leader of the Secular Democratic Party's parliamentary bloc stated that he feared the power of the Islamist. There was a fear by SCAF and some secular elites that they would lose power when a civilian authority takes control of the government (Kirkpatrick 2012a).

This dual fear was to be handled by an attempt to preserve the role of the military, and to protect the secular nature of the state through supra-constitutional principles. The Deputy Prime Minister at the time, Ali al-Silmi, introduced a draft that would allow SCAF to retain its power (Elyan & Awad). This document, which is called the Declaration of the Fundamental Principles for the New Egyptian State, or Al-Selma Document for short, would also neutralize an Islamist victory in the elections. Those that support the army asserting its role believe that it would stop the Islamist from grabbing too much power (Elyan & Awad).

The document preserved the power of the military. It protected the military budget from parliamentary oversight, and allowed the military to retain its power to veto decisions pertaining to war. The document also defined the state as civil and democratic in order to guard against a theocracy (International Crisis Group). There is a provision of the document that gives SCAF control over how the constitution would be written. The military would have the mechanism for rejecting a provision to the constitution that had been proposed by the assembly. If a provision is "contrary to the basic tenants of the state and of Egyptian society," the Supreme Council would have the power to require the Constitutional Assembly to reconsider the provision. If the assembly rejects this request, the Supreme Constitutional Court would make a binding ruling (Consti-

tution Net). This would curtail the power of the assembly and hypothetically disallow provisions that are not secular in nature.

The goal of Al-Selma Document was to diminish the consequences of an Islamist victory. It would undermine the elected parliament and expand the power of the military. The document would formalize “the military’s role as guardians of ‘constitutional legitimacy’” (International Crisis Group). It would essentially give the military the same role as Turkey’s military in guarding the secular nature of the state and the role of the military in Egyptian society.

The authorities eventually withdrew the document (International Crisis Group). The spirit of the document, however, was still implemented.

4.1.3 The Judicial Coup

Those that would continue to undermine Egypt’s transition towards democracy were not the secular elites of society, but rather the secular institutes of the Mubarak regime. Two of these institutes were the judiciary and the military.

The make-up of the judiciary and the military, especially the Supreme Constitutional Court (SCC) and SCAF are holdovers of the Mubarak regime. They still hold power and sway after the ouster of Mubarak. The bureaucracy and police are also holdovers. The framework of the authoritarian regime of Mubarak was not destroyed with Mubarak’s ouster. It survived even as Egyptians voted for a parliament and president. The military never ceded power to the elected parliament or president (Kirkpatrick 2012c). The society was still authoritarian even with Mubarak out. They remained authoritarian and are still rooted in the old regime.

The judiciary was not always fully rooted in the Mubarak regime like the military was. There was a body of the judiciary that tried to be independent. In the middle of the 1980s to the early 2000s, the judiciary became a headache to the Mubarak regime. Mubarak had to sidestep

them in order to rig elections and try suspected terrorists (Brown 2012a). During the revolution, they were seen by the Egyptian people as “an island of integrity, rather than a co-opted group” (Brown 2012a). They even dissolved the old regime’s National Democratic Party, which was an act against Mubarak and in support of the revolution.

After the mostly secular revolution, the Judiciary changed course and acted undemocratically when it became clear who would win the elections.

In December of 2011, elections were held for the People’s Assembly and the ceremonial Consultative Assembly. The elections were spread out during a two-month period. The results saw the Muslim Brotherhood’s Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) with a plurality in the People’s Assembly (Tucker 2012). This elected body had the duty to create a 100 member Constitutional Assembly, which is assigned with drafting a new constitution after the election. This parliament, however, was dissolved in June 2012, two days before the run-off election for president was going to be held (Tucker 2012). The SCC dissolved parliament “on the grounds that members of the FJP and other parties had contested plurality seats while their parties ran lists as well” (Tucker 2012). This puts into question the legitimacy of the Constitutional Assembly and its power to draft a constitution.

Nathan Brown, a scholar who has expertise in Arab law and constitutionalism, believes there is a sound legal argument to be made that there is a precedent for the SCC to dissolve parliament, as they have done in years past under Mubarak (Brown 2012b). The SCC had dissolved parliament in 1987, three years after the election, in 1990, three years after the election and in 2000 right as parliament was completing its term (Brown 2012b). For 2012, Nathan Brown believes that the SCC ruled in haste, which is not how the SCC usually deliberates. It is an act that resembles something else. “What was beginning to look like a coup in slow motion is no longer

moving in slow motion” (Kirkpatrick 2012a). Nathan Brown believes it to be a judicial coup (Brown 2012b).

The Islamists were in control of parliament and that threatened the historically secular nature of the Egyptian state. Emad Gad welcomed the resolution because he feared the Islamist in power would threaten the secular order of Egypt (Kirkpatrick 2012a). Anwar El Sadat, the nephew of former President Sadat, and a member of the dissolved parliament, stated the generals “want to make sure before they leave that the constitution is not monopolized by any group or direction...they would like to make sure this is a civil state,” as opposed to a religious one (Kirkpatrick 2012c). These events are reminiscence of decades previous. David Kirkpatrick of the New York Times sees it as similar to events that have occurred before where “secular elites have cracked down on Islamists poised for electoral gains, most famously when the dissolution of Algeria’s Islamist-led parliament started a civil war 20 years ago” (Kirkpatrick 2012a).

After the dissolution of parliament, SCAF announced a supplementary constitutional declaration (Brown 2012b). The document gives SCAF legislative power and complete control of army affairs. It also gives SCAF a significant role in the drafting of the constitution. This was done with no public input that suggests, according to Nathan Brown, “the generals are not comfortable with the democratic process” (Brown 2012b). This was the completion of the coup.

The dissolution of parliament and the SCAF taking over the writing of the constitution was done because of the ruling of the SCC. There was a specific judge that rationalized and articulated the reasons for it. Tahani el-Gebali, the deputy president of the SCC, advised the generals to not cede authority to a civilian government until a constitution is written. The military generals were planning with Judge el-Gebali to preserve their power and block the Islamist from gaining power. The ultimate goal was to create a Turkish model where the military retained

power over the elected government to preserve the secular nature of the state (Kirkpatrick 2012c). With these actions, the historically independent judiciary seems to have been fully co-opted into the deep state.

4.1.4 The Coup Against Morsi

From the beginning of the ouster of Mubarak, leading up to the coup against Morsi, the secular institutes have undermined those that were elected into office, as well as the spirit of the democratic transition. They have been the largest hindrance to a democratic Egypt. The secular elites that were not connected to the regime did not play a pivotal role until they were coopted by the military. The cooption would change the dynamics in Egypt from that of the old regime undermining, to the secular elites working with the old regime to undermine democratic transition in Egypt.

The problem with having a democratic transition is the inability of the secular elites to compete against the well-organized Muslim Brotherhood. Mohamed Nasheed, a political activist, proposed a solution to this kind of problem. Before an authoritarian leader can be disposed, the secular activists need to ensure that they can compete for power in the post-authoritarian society. Nasheed faulted the leftist because they did not build a political party in which they can unify under. With all their focus on ousting Mubarak, liberals were unable to plan for the post-Mubarak Egypt. Nasheed said “there was no point overthrowing a regime if we weren’t in a position to win an election or govern properly.” Because Egyptian secularists could not succeed in elections, the overthrow of Mubarak did not help them attain power. Since the Mubarak regime has been overthrown, and the secular parties are expected to lose, the only alternative is to empower the military to control the transition.

Nasheed was right about secular parties losing. The Muslim Brotherhood won parliament, and the presidency. Mohamed Morsi became the first democratically elected president of Egypt, and he was a member of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Morsi was ousted through a military coup. Unlike the Free Officers Army and the charismatic Nasser who ousted the King in 1952 to empower Egyptian society, the military and Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, with the backing of secular leaders, ousted Morsi to preserve the role of the military.

4.1.4.1 The Deep State Response

The ouster of Morsi was orchestrated by the deep state, the holdovers of the Mubarak era. Besides the unfriendly judiciary and military, the bureaucracy that was a holdover did not respond well to the Morsi administration. The security apparatus persecuted the Muslim Brotherhood under Mubarak, refused to patrol in full force under Morsi (Kirkpatrick 2013). Basic law and order was not upheld. When Morsi was ousted, the police celebrated and went back to work. Other bureaucratic agencies were dragging their feet when it came to basic needs. There were gas lines, power cuts, and rolling black-outs that only were restored or returned after the ouster of Morsi (Kirkpatrick 2013).

The argument was made by Nathan Brown that Morsi had to step down voluntarily because of inflation, unemployment, power outages, fuel shortages, increased sectarianism, and increased authoritarianism (Brown 2013). The country could not wait another three years of his rule. After the military forced Morsi out, it seemed some of the reasons Brown mentioned were not completely Morsi's fault, but the actions or inactions of the deep state. The energy crisis and the lack of police presence miraculously ended with the ouster of Morsi (Kirkpatrick 2013). It was "a collection of rude youth, power-hungry secular politicians, old regime elements, and

scheming security services” that have conspired to set the revolution back because Islamists were elected by the people (Brown 2013). With the old regime still in power and conspiring, Morsi was unable to take full control of his government.

4.1.4.2 The Secular Response

The military forced out Morsi, arrested him, his cabinet, and other leaders, and froze their assets. The subsequent month saw massive arrests and killings of Muslim Brotherhood members and sympathizers (Judis). The constitution was also suspended. The deep state applauded these actions. The military was aided by the secular elites, who were also against the Morsi administration. The secular elites, those that are not part of the old regime and believe in democracy, were against the first democratically elected president.

One such figure is former head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mohammed el-Baradie. He proclaimed on CNN that the ouster of Morsi was not a coup, it was a recall. He supported the ouster and the initial crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood (Judis). When the ouster occurred, he was standing next to Abdel Fattah el-Sisi as a sign of support for the military. He also served in the interim government as the Vice President of International Affairs (CBS News).

Naguib Sawiris, a billionaire Egyptian businessman from the Coptic Christian community was another figure that supported the ouster of Morsi. He benefited greatly during the Mubarak regime and is a part of the deep state. Sawiris financially supported the Tamarood movement, which mobilized and demanded the ouster of Morsi (Dreyfuss). He founded the group and gave them offices and the infrastructure to gather signatures and mobilize the public (Swanson). His organization, as well as others, mobilized pro-democracy secular individuals against Morsi.

It was framed as a democratic move to force the ouster of Morsi. The Egyptian ambassador to the U.S., Mohamad Tawfid, said it was instituted by the people. Egyptian liberals agreed. Ahmed Maher, founder of April 6 group as well as many members of his group, supported the coup (Kirkpatrick 2012b). Khaled Montaser, a liberal columnist, called the Islamist worse than criminals and psychopaths that are treasonous and terrorists. For the majority of secularist, they “joined in the jubilation of the defeat of the Muslim Brotherhood, laying into any dissenters” (Kirkpatrick 2012b).

4.1.4.3 Military/Secular Collaboration

The result of the ouster of Morsi was supposed to correct the course of the revolution back towards democracy. Mohammed El-Bariedy called it a recall of an elected president. Morsi lost his mandate and had to step down or be forced out, secularist argued on June 30th 2012. The military intervened and allowed for the democratic project to continue. As long as the Egyptian is not a member or sympathizer of the Muslim Brotherhood, he or she is free to partake in the political process. Mohamed Tawfik argues that “elections are important, the ballot box is important, but the ballot box is not a blank check” (Swanson).

The massive protest that demanded the ouster of Morsi, led by the Tamarod movement, was seen by these Egyptian secularist as a legitimate recall of the democratically elected president. The secular opposition was acting democratically, and the military decided to implement the will of the people. Sisi stated on July 3rd, as a justification for the ouster of Morsi, that “the armed forces couldn’t plug their ears or close its eyes as the movement and demands of the masses (calls) for them to play a natural role” (Giglio). What is ignored is that the deep state, the military, the judiciary, as well as the security apparatus, continually undermined the Morsi regime. When the Tamarod movement formed, these institutes, through the media, showed the

secular activists that they were against the regime and are willing to work together. Mohab Doss, one of the founding members of Tamarod, said that there was direct communication between Tamarod and these state institutes (Giglio). He would later say that these institutes actually directed Tamarod (Frenkal). They worked together to insure the people went out to protest, which would give the military a reason to intervene.

According to the New York Times, there were leaked recordings that have not yet been authenticated alleging that the United Arab Emirates gave Sisi as Defense Minister, money for a protest campaign against Morsi. Besides the financing, the New York Times reported that “the Emirates and the Egyptian military played active roles in organizing the protests” (Kirkpatrick 2015). Parts of the call were referencing a Tamarod bank account (Kirkpatrick 2015). This further validates Doss’ claim that Tamarod and the military worked together, and that the military was driving the protests. The idea that Sisi acted in response to protests would be false based on these allegations. The recall was orchestrated by the deep state. If Morsi was undemocratic, the deep state was far more undemocratic. The military was undemocratic as well, not implementing the will of the people, but implementing the will of secular elites and its own will.

4.1.5 Concluding Egypt

The result of the ouster of Morsi was supposed to correct the course of the revolution back towards democracy. Mohammed El-Bariedy called it a recall of an elected president. Morsi lost his mandate and had to step down or be forced out, secularist argued on June 30th 2012. The military intervened and allowed for the democratic project to continue. As long as the Egyptian is not a member or sympathizer of the Muslim Brotherhood, he or she is free to partake in the political process. Mohamed Tawfik argues that “elections are important, the ballot box is important, but the ballot box is not a blank check” (Swanson).

This ouster, however, was not a correction of the revolution towards democracy. On its own, if the secular elites worked on their own to push Morsi out and the military simply responded to the people, it would still not be a democratic move. As evidence is uncovered showing that the military pushed for protests through monetary and verbal support in order to justify the intervention of the military, the more June 30th 2012 seems to be the death of the revolution.

The military as a hindrance to democracy is a strong variable in Egypt. That variable was used as a tool by secular elites to correct the course of an Islamist victory. The perception, based on the behavior of the secular elites is that they cannot win elections through the 'important' ballot box, unless Islamist like the Muslim Brotherhood are forbidden from partaking in the election. As Dr. Reza Pankhur, a political scientist who was imprisoned by the Mubarak regime, stated "unable to win any elections, presidential, parliament, or otherwise, they are now rising into government on the back of tanks" (Judis). Secular groups do not have broad appeal. Ultimately, the secular groups as well as elements of the old regime believe "that Egyptians must be called to the ballot box only on condition that they reject Islamist" (Brown 2013b).

After the third coup, Egypt was back towards its old self. Protesting the regime could land activists, both secular and Islamist, in prison. The security apparatus became abusive again, elections were neither free nor fair, there were mass death sentences issued by the judiciary, and it was business as usual. The election of Sisi saw increased repression and assaults of election monitors. Ahmed Maher had this fear when he said "when they screw us again like they did in 2011, what would I tell people" (Kirkpatrick 2012b). He was referring to the military taking power in 2011, and possibly doing the same thing after the ouster of Morsi.

In the case of Egypt, the actors that hindered democracy were the old regime and the secular elites that supported them. The deep state and the old regime elements are secular and

would never want to give up power to those that would threaten their status in the previous regime. The secular groups who decry the regime are also against democracy, because they have been unsuccessful in gaining power through elections. Unlike Tunisia, when secular parties are not successful in the ballot box, they use the military to undo the results.

4.2 Tunisia

Tunisia has gone through major political events since the beginning of the Arab Spring. For the purpose of this paper, I explore those events leading to the first free and fair presidential elections in Tunisia since independence. I explore Tunisia from its independence from France in 1956 to the end of 2014 with a strong focus on the events from the beginning of the Arab Spring in December 2010 to the presidential elections on December 2014.

4.2.1 Introduction

Tunisia became an independent country from France in 1956. From independence to 2011, Tunisia was ruled by the authoritarian figure Habib Bourguiba and his successor Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. That authoritarian rule ended when the spark of the Arab Spring, and in particular, the Jasmine Revolution of Tunisia, begun in December 17, 2010. That spark occurred when a fruit vendor “set himself on fire in order to protest the harassment he was suffering at the hands of local officials” (Schreader).

Mohamed Bouaziz was a street vendor who sold his produce to provide for his family. The morning of the incident, it was alleged that a female police officer slapped Bouaziz, forced him on the ground, and took his scale and produce. Bouaziz went to the local municipality building and demanded a meeting to redress his grievances. He was refused. In an act of defiance, Bouaziz poured flammable liquid all over his body and set himself on fire (Al Jazeera 2011).

As a result of the economic and political conditions in Tunisia, Bouaziz became a symbol of the hardships of the people. It led to a spark that led to the end of the 55 years of authoritarian rule, and the beginning of a democratic transition in Tunisia.

4.2.2 Habib Bourguiba

Habib Bourguiba was the first president of modern day Tunisia, taking over the country after the French ceded control of the nation and Tunisia declared independence. Bourguiba was a French educated statesman who was influenced greatly by the Third Republic's staunch secular government (C. Brown). His rule attempted to emulate the secularism of the Third Republic, as well as Mustafa Kemal's Post Ottoman Turkey (Stepan). It was a "liberal and secular program of dynamic modernization" (C. Brown 56). It was "peppered in harsh denunciation of 'so-called religious beliefs'" (Stepan 99).

Habib Bourguiba was a secularist that believed in the separation of mosque and state. He believed that the Islamists were an existential threat to the Tunisian state (Koplow). There was no room for any opposition, including religious. This secularism sometimes showed Bourguiba's disdain for Islam in public. In the early years of Tunisian independence, he called the hijab, the scarf that women wear over their heads, an "odious rag" (Koplow). Regarding Ramadan, he would state that "a modern nation cannot afford to stop for a month every year" (Shadid). He sought to end fasting during the month of Ramadan (Habib Bourguiba). He made it a point to drink juice on public television during the month of Ramadan (Shadid). He showed himself as anti-Islamist and at times, against Islam itself.

4.2.3 Zine El Abidine Ben Ali

Bourguiba's successor, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, came into power from a bloodless coup in 1987, on the grounds that Bourguiba was going senile (Stepan). The fear Ben Ali had was that

Bourguiba was persecuting Islamist in a harsh manner, and that it would result in an open conflict with the Islamists.

After the coup, there was an opening in the Tunisian political arena. Ennahda, the Islamic oriented political party was still banned, but many of its members were released from prison and it was able to participate in parliamentary elections in 1989 by running independent candidates. Even with allegations of voter fraud, Ennahda was able to win 15% of the nationwide vote, as well as 30% of the vote in Tunis (Stepan). The secular opposition, outside of the ruling party, did surprisingly poor.

With the exception of the ruling secular party, the opposition secular parties were taken aback with their limited appeal. This created a polarization between the more successful Islamists and the less successful secular parties. This polarization, as well as the ongoing civil war between Islamists and the military throughout the 1990s in neighboring Algeria, made Ben Ali the only one that can prevent Tunisia from moving away from secularism and into an Islamist governed society and civil war (Stephan).

For some of the secularist, the poor election results in the 1989 parliamentary election, as well as the Algerian civil war, made democracy less appealing as it did not seem like a way for them to attain power. In order for secularist to maintain some power, they must embrace the secular regime. In order for Ben Ali to ensure his rule, he had to become more like his predecessor and limit political freedoms. Democracy will only result in an Islamist victory that the secular parties and Ben Ali want to avoid. The secularists can embrace democracy when they know they have broad popular appeal. Until then, their ally would be Ben Ali and his secular authoritarian regime. The polarization taking place in Algeria between the Islamist and the government allowed Ben Ali to prolong his authoritarian rule. Ben Ali used the fear of Islamist as a way to

prolong his regime by stating that he is the only one that can prevent them from coming to power (Stepan 101).

This is not to make a general statement on all secularists in the society. This is specifically for the secular parties that were co-opted by the regime. They were co-opted because of their lack of appeal in the election and because that was the only way for them to have power in the Ben Ali regime, considering that Ben Ali was against the Islamist and secular parties that were against his rule.

4.2.4 Round One: Transition to Democracy

In 2011, the Ben Ali regime had fallen. The security apparatus and former members of the ruling parties had been taken out of power. The country of Tunisia would seem to be starting over with a new political process. This process now allows Ennahda, the Islamist party that was banned under Ben Ali, to compete in elections. What would become an obstacle to this democratic transition? The fear would be, like Egypt, that the old establishment, and secular elites would be an obstacle to democracy.

The fall of the regime was largely a secular event. The secular elite had turned against the secular Ben Ali regime. The challenge to the regime came from secular intellectuals, lawyers, and trade unionists. The Islamists were mostly absent (Schraeder & Redissi). The Islamists were absent because they were either in exile or in prison (Koplow). Another reason may be that there is a strong sense of secular belief in the society where Tunisians see a need for a separation between mosque and state (Schraeder).

4.2.4.1 Old Regime Institutes

The old regime institutes such as the military and the *Union Générale Tunisienne du Travail* (UGTT), followed the path of the mostly secular anti-regime protests in their call for

the ouster of Ben Ali. The UGTT was an organized union of Tunisian workers. It has 24 regional unions, which were intense critics of the Ben Ali regime (Schraeder & Redissi). When Ben Ali was taken out of power, members of his regime attempted to run the country through an interim government. Critics of this move formed the Council for the Protection of the Revolution, which comprised of over two dozen organizations, most notably the Islamist Hizb al-Nahda and the UGTT. They organized sit-ins at Kasbah Square, which was the seat of government, and clashed with riot police who were serving the government. The demonstrations ended when the government resigned and a new interim government came to power (Schraeder & Redissi).

One of the major institutes of Tunisian society, the military, played an essential role in upholding the transition away from authoritarian rule. Ben Ali ordered the military during the uprising, to quell the protesters. Instead of taking the side of the secular regime, the military, under General Rachid Ammar, refused to open fire on demonstrators. The military decided that Ben Ali must leave, and they allowed him to flee the country. After the downfall, the military secured major cities and crossroads to keep the peace. They also explicitly stated that they would not play a political role in Tunisian society. The army, a secular institute of the regime, was taking a neutral position and not interfering in the country's politics (Schraeder & Redissi).

These old regime institutes, as well as the mostly secular protests led to the ouster of the Ben Ali regime and the beginning of a democratic transition. The Tunisian revolt against the regime was a secular revolt for democracy. In this case, the secular elites drove Tunisia towards democracy.

4.2.4.2 Elections

When democratic elections do take place, the response of the secular elites would determine whether they believe in democracy or whether they will hinder democracy because of a

fear that the victors of a free and fair election would not be them but rather the Islamist Ennahda party.

Usually during contentious elections, opposing parties like to label their opponent as the worst thing that can happen to the country. In Tunisia, it is a similar story. The difference lies in the historical tension between secular parties and Islamist parties. The fear is that the rhetoric might go beyond just words and the secular parties would oust an Islamist-led government, like secularist did in Algeria in the 1990s or Palestine in 2006. Secularist warn that Islamist hijack democracies through elections to justify authoritarian rule. John L. Esposito points out that the “after glow of the Arab Spring is threatened today by the legacy of dictatorship and the resistance and antidemocratic agenda of entrenched elites, and liberal secularist minority” (Esposito 2011). The rhetoric is not just rhetoric, if the results are not what the secularist want.

Some of the rhetoric before the elections tried to portray Ennahda as backwards and against progress. Supporters of the Centrist Progressive Democratic Party launched an ad campaign dubbed “The Day After.” They portrayed a Tunisia under Islamist rule which curtailed political rights, had decreased business because of a decline in tourism, and women became prisoners in their own homes (Warrick). Another party, the leftist Pole Democratique Moderniste, also campaigned on an anti-Islamist message. Ahmed Najid Chebbi, founder of PDP, believes that if Ennahda is victorious, it would “not only threaten personal liberties, but will prevent the integration of Tunisia into the world economy and destroy jobs” (Warrick).

The elections came and went with no glitches. Capping off the Jasmine Revolution and the unprecedented ouster of Ben Ali, Tunisians went out and voted on the make-up of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) in the first free and fair elections in the country’s 55-year history. It was an “exemplary election by global standards” (Tucker 2011). The result of the

election saw Ennahda with 41% of the vote (Kirkpatrick 2011b). The makeup of the NCA, which was tasked with creating a constitution, would be Ennahda coalition. The coalition included the secular Congress for the Republic and Ettakatol (Kirkpatrick 2011c).

4.2.5 Round Two: Turmoil

2012 and 2013 was marked by unrest in Tunisia. There was a growing extremist threat, economic problems, as well as two highly public assassinations that put more pressure on the ruling coalition. Also during this time, a new opposition was being formed as a counterweight to Ennahda. Nidaa Tounes, which was officially licensed in July 2012, was to become the main secular opposition to Ennahda (Wolf).

Ennahda was seen as unable to address the problems of Tunisian society, and many people believed they needed to go. In similar ways to Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood, Tunisia's Ennahda polarized the public by the way they governed. The turmoil resulted from the economic condition, the public assassinations of secular leaders Chokri Belaïd and Mohamed Brahmi, increase in sectarianism, as well as the constitution not being ratified and the NCA mandate ending (Sullivan). At this juncture, the difference between Egypt and Tunisia lie in the final response of the secular elites and the Islamist.

4.2.5.1 Secular Response

The response to the unrest in Egypt was the ouster of Morsi by a coup carried out by the military, with the full support of the secular elites. This coup emboldened the secular elites of Tunisia in their struggle against Ennahda. Street activist launched a Tunisian version of Egypt's Tamarod movement, whose street protest helped lead to the ouster of Morsi. Mohamed Bennour, the spokesperson for Tamarod of Tunisia, says the aim of the group is to overturn the Constituent Assembly and establish a new caretaker government. Bennour told reporters, "Tunisia's young

are following in the footsteps of young Egyptians” (Amara 2013a). The goal is to demand the ouster of Ennahda in Tunisia like the Egyptians did against Morsi.

The main secular opposition, Nidaa Tounes, congratulated Egyptians on the ouster of Morsi. Its leader, Beji Caid Essebsi, whom was a former official under the Ben Ali regime, “accused Islamists of seeking to control all aspects of the state and criticizing their economic and political management” (Amara 2013b). This criticism is similar to that of Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood before they were ousted from power. Ahmed Sadik, a leader of the late Belaid’s leftist Popular Front, threatened mass protest if Ennahda does not meet their demands. “We will go for it by imposing the will of popular pressure” (Amara 2013b). Hama Hammami, another opposition leader, invited Tunisians to enter civil disobedience to protest against the assassination of Brahmi, as well as uproot the ruling party from power because of their incompetence (Brahim). After the assassination of Brahmi, Jibhat Shaabia of the Popular Front, as well as Nidaa Tounes and other civil society activist, demanded the dissolution of the Ennahda led government “to correct the course of the revolution and spare the country further economic and security afflictions” (Salah).

As a result of the pressure, the President of the NCA from the junior coalition partner, secular party Ettakatol, Mustafa Ben Jaafar froze the legislative work of the government until talks begin between Ennahda and the opposition. This further empowered the opposition to call on Ennahda to dissolve government. Sofian Chourbi, an opposition activist stated that the suspension of the government, as well as the mass mobilization would bring about change to Tunisia just like Egypt (Amara & Solomon 2013a).

Political analyst Youssef Ousaslatti stated that Tunisia is not immune to the events in Egypt. “The Brothers in Tunisia may face a similar fate, especially in light of an unprecedented rap-

prochement between divergent political currents in the opposition to remove Islamist from power” (Amara 2013b). Another analyst, Sofian Ben Farhat called it the end of political Islam in Arab Spring countries, and Tunisia may be next (Amara 2013b).

Tunisia, however, is not Egypt. This language used by the secular elites against Ennahda is similar to the language used by the secular elites of Egypt in advocating for the ouster of the Muslim Brotherhood. The Tamaroud movement of Tunisia is a fraction of the size of the Egyptian counterpart, but the other individuals are considered the main opposition to Ennahda. The difference between the call for the ouster of Ennahda and the ouster of Morsi is the Tunisian secular elites do not have enough of the old regime conspiring with them in the same way as the Egyptian old regime conspired with the secular elites of Egypt.

4.2.5.2 Old Regime Response

The main difference between Tunisia and Egypt in their response to an Islamist power that the secular elites wanted out is the support by remnants of the old regime. The old regime, mainly the judiciary, the Tunisian labor union UGTT, and the military did not take a position that would support a coup against the Tunisian government. The response of the old regime institutes forced the opposition to “come to the negotiating table with Ennahda” (Grewal).

In Egypt, the military, bureaucratic remnants of the old regime, as well as parts of the judiciary, allowed for the ouster of the Muslim Brotherhood. In Tunisia, the judiciary was unable and the military was unwilling to play a role (Grewal). The military plays an apolitical role and is not as powerful in Tunisia as the Egyptian military is in Egypt. The UGTT, however, has a lot of weight in Tunisian society, and could be what the secular elites can use to force Ennahda out of power.

The UGTT, which has been courted by the opposition, came out in support of a technocrat government. The UGTT is a leftist workers body that is close to the secular movement that is a part of the old regime that wants the ouster of Ennahda and is seen as the counterpart to the Egyptian army in its power to force Ennahda out of power (Amara, Solomon 2013b). They have 800,000 members and can potentially cripple the economy with mass demonstrations. UGTT can potentially undermine the regime by orchestrating mass protests. A single day of strikes in July cost the country hundreds millions of dollars and dropped the currency to its lowest point against the dollar (Amara 2013c). The economic turmoil, which is one of the reasons for the demand for the ouster of Ennahda, has been made worse by UGTT when it demands strikes. In September, they threatened to strike further if the government does not step down (Reuters).

4.2.5.3 Conclusion of Round Two

The political party that wins an election usually has an opposition party that tries to challenge the new regime in power. In Tunisia, the secular parties challenged the Islamist Ennahda. The difference though lies in the intent of the secular opposition. They not only challenged Ennahda, they attempted to undermine the regime in power because Islamist cannot have legitimate democratic power.

Some of the secular opposition took a stance in support of a coup against Ennahda. Even though it did not result in an outright ouster of the ruling party, the rhetoric of secular leaders, street activist, and the ideological support they received from the UGTT attempted to push Tunisia towards the path of Egypt. One reason for the civil unrest was the economic turmoil. Even though the UGTT attempted to disrupt society by calling on strikes, which worsened the economic turmoil and put more pressure on Ennahda, the coup did not manifest.

A few things curtailed any chance for a coup. The primary reason is the Tunisian society does not have a political army that would interfere like the Egyptian army did in Egypt. Even though the military did play a role in overthrowing Ben Ali, it is politically weak and it has little economic privileges to protect, unlike the Egyptian army (Amara 2013c).

The fact that the secular elites were unsuccessful at fully undermining the regime was not because they were inherently democratic, but rather because they did not have the tools that the Egyptian secular parties had. They did not have the full state undermining the government and conspiring with the secular elites, which was the case in Egypt. The inability and the lack of desire of the army to play a role forces the secular opposition to use other means to oust the Islamist regime. Those means were through the democratic process.

The ouster of Morsi quickly led to the crackdown on the Muslim brotherhood and a return to an authoritarian secular regime. The Muslim Brotherhood would not be able to partake in future political process because by the end of the year it was deemed a terrorist organization (Fahim). For Tunisia, Ennahda eventually stepped down from the pressure, and a technocratic government took over with elections scheduled for 2014 (Bouazza & Schemm). There was no crackdown on Ennahda and they would be able to participate in the political process.

4.2.6 Concluding Tunisia

After the finalization of the constitution, Ennahda stepped down from power and elections were set for the end of 2014 for parliament and president. The main opposition party is Nidaa Tounes. The make up of Nidaa Tounes are supporters of Tunisia's Destourian movement, trade unionists, leftists, independents, and former members of Ben Ali's disbanded Constitutional Democratic Rally party. It is a wide range of individuals, but they agreed to join as a coun-

terweight to Ennahda (Wolf). Their leader is former Interim Prime Minister Beji Caid Essebsi, who also ran for president after parliamentary elections.

The fear of the secularist was that when Islamist came into power, through elections, they would be able to hijack democracy and create an Islamist authoritarian state. Bernard Lewis calls it one person, one vote, once. Even though this fear is not based on previous experience where Islamist came into power and became authoritarian, the fear is very legitimate. An example was seen in Algeria in the 1990s where Islamists were trying to win elections. Even though the FIS was advocating pluralism, one leader of the party, Imam Ali Belhadj, stated that Islam rejects Western democracy and that “One does not vote for God...One obeys him” (Brumberg 65). The rhetoric of Islamist does not help curtail the fear. The counter fear espoused by John Esposito is that the old secular elites would take Tunisia back to a dictatorship. He believes the Arab Spring is threatened “by the legacy of dictatorship and the resistance and antidemocratic agenda of entrenched elites and liberal secularist minority” (Esposito 2011).

Ennahda ceded power, taking away any fear that they may create an Islamist authoritarian government. With Nida Tounes being victors in parliamentary elections, winning on a platform that their opposition were "retrogressive, uncultured and uncompromising" (Marks). With 39.71% of the vote, and Ennahda receiving the second most votes with 31.79%, the Islamist were swept out of power (Gall). The response of Ennahda was not to have a presidential candidate. Nida Tounes, meanwhile, runs in the presidential election, solidifying control of parliament and the presidency.

In the case of Tunisia, the secularist demonstrated a position that was undemocratic after the first election did not go their way, based on their actions. Ultimately, they competed in elections in 2014 and won, showing they can be democratic when they do win. In order for Tunisian

secularist to save Tunisia from Islamist, they had to be undemocratic. With Ennahda winning the election, the secularist attempted to undermine the new regime. With the secular party victorious, now they can act democratically because they won the election, albeit by 8 points.

5 CONCLUSION

The three variables that I discussed in the literature review were oil, Islam, and western intervention. These variables have their advocates and their critics. The data on oil suggests that the more oil a poorer country has, the less likely it can become democratic. The data on Islam suggests that the more Muslims in a country, the less democratic the country is. It can be argued that these correlations are simply correlations, and not causations. The third variable, western intervention can be seen in cases like Algeria in the 1990s and Palestine in 2006. In other cases, like Iraq, Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt, the west did not directly intervene to undermine the democratic process. It is beyond the scope of this paper to argue the merits of these variables. They are factors that may describe the situation in the Arab world, but they are not enough to fully explain the lack of democracy.

The cases of Palestine and Algeria demonstrate that another explanation is needed. In these cases, the west did intervene to undermine the democratic process. There was another driving force that undermined the process as well. It was the secular elites that were governing the country before the election that were threatened by the rise of Islamist parties via the ballot box. The response of Algeria was to suspend elections indefinitely, void previous elections, and arrest Islamist elected officials and party members. The response in Palestine was to disallow the Islamist from governing and even taking arms against them.

The western intervention, especially in Palestine, was an important factor in undermining the democratic process. The secular elites were as important as well.

In the cases of Tunisia and Egypt, the secular elites were even more important as they undermined the democratic transition away from the old regime. The West has been known to support brutal secular dictators in the Arab world, but they did not attempt to undermine the democratic process after the fall of the dictators like they have done in the past.

In the case of Tunisia, the secular elites worked hard to undermine the Islamist ruled government. The secular elites had some help from the deep state, but only the UGTT. Ultimately, it was not enough to force the Islamist out of power. They volunteered to relinquish power. The secular elites were then able to attain power through the ballot box, with the Islamist in the opposition. In the case of Egypt, it was the deep state that co-opted the secular elites in undermining the Islamist led government. That led to a coup and a return to authoritarian rule. In both cases, the secular elites were initially undemocratic because they were unable to compete against the well-organized Islamist parties.

The other variables cannot fully describe the situation in the Arab world. I argue that another factor can better explain the lack of democracy in the Arab world. This factor is secular elites.

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