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A rough journey: Nascent democratization in the Middle East

Albrecht Schnabel

The tumultuous and frustrating escalation of violence between Israelis and Palestinians, particularly since 2000, the continuation of international sanctions against Iraq and its suffering population, the continuing violence in Algeria, and high levels of structural violence committed by authoritarian governments in virtually all states of the region – all these are constant reminders that the societies in the Middle East are still far removed from a condition of stable peace. Conflict, violence, and repression, particularly in this era of globalization, produce economic and social stagnation that will marginalize these countries, and the region overall, even further in an environment in which peace and political stability are the basic foundations for economic competitiveness in the global economy. This is not to speak of the immense human suffering produced by internally and externally initiated, supported, and manipulated violence and instability.[1]

There are many reasons for the region's political instability, economic plight, and human suffering. However, the lack of open political systems, heavy-handed authoritarian rule by autocratic governments, and most governments' violent and repressive struggles with opposition movements and groups are key factors in limiting these societies' potential for human, economic, and social development.[2] Genuine democratization, if successful and sustained, can produce accountable, transparent, participatory, inclusive governance, instead of exclusive and repressive rule. Liberalization of political and economic systems throughout the region

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could support domestic peace and, by extension, strengthen regional peace and stability. Of course, a transition from autocratic and closed systems to open and democratic ones cannot be realized without pain. Thus, the contributors to this volume recognize and discuss the experiences of, and potentials for, instability created by political and economic transition processes. Transition pains, however, can be reduced if the society is in general receptive to political, economic, and cultural opening, and if it already displays a civic political culture that has been carefully promoted and groomed by civil society throughout the years and decades preceding the official initiation of a democratization process. Unfortunately, as several chapters in this volume show, few authoritarian governments in the region allow, let alone encourage, civil society to thrive and prepare the population, political parties, and movements to contribute constructively to eventual democratization.

Despite the acknowledged (and experienced) problems of intermittent democratization pains, this group of authors believes that, certainly in the long term, democratization is a positive and worthwhile endeavor for all societies of the region. What is required is not the immediate (or even eventual) adoption of full-fledged Western-style liberal democracy, but a gradual process toward more participation in the political and economic life and governance of the country, in harmony with religious norms and teachings respected throughout society. The question is not whether democracy would be an asset for peace and justice in the Middle East, but which path toward a more participatory and accountable political system should be embraced as one that would suit each society. Moreover, as Majid Tehranian argues in chapter 5, democratization is a journey, a process; it is not a condition. Each society's journey is, and should be, unique to its own historical, traditional, cultural, economic, and political environment. The vehicle, speed, and route taken to embark on the journey toward democratization are as individual as are the end results. Each society should have the right to take its individual journey. There is some agreement among the contributors to this volume that the journey is best started through gradual, controlled democratization. Democratic institution-building must match the (re)development of civil society, nourishing a political civic culture that helps all segments of society recognize the benefits of democratization – in the form of more equitable, accountable, transparent, and good governance by all and for all. The events of 11 September 2001 in particular, and the subsequent political, economic, and military campaign against terrorism, led by the United States but internationally supported, have taught us an important lesson: in the absence of justice, development, and responsible and good governance, ''uncivil'' society will thrive in the shadow of legitimate grievances that cannot be expressed through constructive and non-violent political

channels. Although good governance and development will not eradicate the desire of a few to bring great havoc upon their own people and others, they will likely remove the explicit and implicit popular support that terrorist groups enjoy (and on which they depend as they search for combatants, funding, and places to hide and train).

There are only few or, as some would argue, no established democracies in the region, and, at best, some fledgling experimentation with democratization, driven – as well as hindered – by cautious steps toward political liberalization. In this context, discussions about the utility of democratization in preventing structural and direct violence within and between the societies of the Middle East can as yet be only an academic exercise. However, in the long run there is a possibility for democracy to unfold in the region. A number of main challenges need to be overcome to make this happen: Islamic fundamentalism; the negative role of external great powers; the Israeli–Palestinian conflict; the legacy of a long history of violence; and clashes between Western and local/regional political and spiritual norms and values.[3]

There is hope for progress if the countries in the region become more prosperous, more cooperative, less influenced by the preferences of external powers, and supported and assisted by the international community, which would in turn be represented by a restructured, reformed, and neutral United Nations. Of course, meeting these conditions represents a formidable, possibly insurmountable, challenge. However, some progress is taking place: there is evidence that secularization and religiosity can exist in harmony, that political leaders are able to balance tradition and modernity, and that both spirituality and physical life can prosper in the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-religious societies of the Middle East. Democracy, if based on a solid civic culture, can provide the glue for the functioning of such multi-faceted societies. Democracy can provide opportunities to address and resolve inevitable frictions in non-violent and constructive ways. All the while, constructive problem-solving at the domestic level may then spill over to interstate relations as well.

There is reason to believe (however faint it may be) that the societies of the Middle East are not condemned or cursed to endure violence, injustice, and marginalization in the global economy forever. Solutions to these problems exist. Democratization is part and parcel of any serious strategy to liberate the region from the scourges of war and injustice and from the highly politicized interpretation and distortion of religious teachings that, in their original meaning, are meant to encourage, not undermine, the construction of tolerant, just, and inclusive societies.

This chapter outlines the background of this research project, its aims, and its main findings. It serves not only as an introduction to the chapters

that follow but also as a summary and synthesis of the main arguments presented throughout the book.

Objectives

This book addresses a number of key issues that will determine failure or success in establishing sustainable democratization efforts in the region. Peace and stability, both domestic and interstate, and both negative and positive, are necessary for democratization processes to take hold. Simultaneously, democratization is necessary for peace and stability to unfold and, most importantly, to endure. Attempts to pursue peace without democratization, or democratization without peace, exacerbate instead of reduce the prospects of tension and war within and between the countries of the Middle East. The following issues are thus explored in one or more of the chapters in this volume, in the context either of the entire region or of a sub-region or an individual country: the relationship and inter-relationship of peace and democracy;[4] the current state of democratic development in individual countries; and the roles played by international organizations and civil society actors in the democratization processes of individual countries as well as in the region in general.

Country analyses consider, among others, patterns of democratization (top–down versus bottom–up, or immediate versus gradual processes of democratization); costs and benefits of democratization; barriers to and support for democratization; the relationship between civil society and the state; internal and external factors of democratization; the relationship between Islam and Islamic movements and democratization; experiences of democratic transition processes and resulting national and regional peace dividends; and the interdependence of development, peace, and democratization and political and economic transition.

This volume considers trends toward genuine democratization. In that context, much discussion focuses on types and levels of political liberalization. The contributors are aware that political liberalization and political democratization are two processes that must be distinguished from each other. Whereas democratization, with a focus on popular political participation and elite accountability, requires political liberalization (the promotion of individual freedoms and rights), the latter can happen without the former. Although political liberalization can be witnessed throughout much of the Middle East, movement toward genuine democratization, enshrined and consolidated in both constitutional arrangements and political practices, is rare.[5] Yet, as one regional analyst argues, "[i]t is no longer possible to delay the establishment of the pluralistic, democratic state in our Arab world because we need the benefits that

such a state provides – good governance, marked by transparency, accountability and participation at the grass-roots level in the march of the nations."[6] The following chapters explore the extent of genuine progress toward democratization and the degree to which it has in fact been eluding the region despite the urgency with which true change must be pursued if the countries of the region are to overcome the "tremendous challenges ... in achieving the levels of human development that only good governance, including its political aspects, can ensure."[7]

Defining democracy and democratization

Throughout the volume, varying definitions of the term "democracy" are used and discussed.[8] This reflects the diversity of approaches taken by different contributors to evaluate the progress made in the region toward democratization, and it explains why some contributors are more optimistic while others are less optimistic about the region's prospects for both democratization and resulting peace dividends. Such disagreement is of course not unique. As Schmitter argues, "[a]cross time and space – not to mention culture and class – opinions have differed concerning what institutions and rules are to be considered democratic ... [while] ... [t]he concrete institutions and rules which have been established in different 'democratic' countries have similarly differed."[9] Recognizing these differences in definition and expectation and accepting the fact that there is more than one "ideal" model of democracy – in a universal but also, much more significantly, in a regional context – are key to peaceful relations among nascent democracies and to relations between them and established democracies. As Schmitter further notes, "[g]iven the positive connotation which the term [democracy] has acquired, each country tends to claim that the way its institutions and rules are structured is the most democratic ... [while] ... [t]he 'others,' especially one's enemies and competitors, are accused of having some inferior type of democracy or another kind of regime altogether."[10] Such arrogance breeds resentment, which, in the long run, breeds violence. In particular, the application, experience, and debate surrounding the validity of the democratic peace are thus in no small measure highly dependent on the compatibility of definitions and expectations of what constitutes a democracy, as well as on a thorough understanding and appreciation of the vulnerabilities generated by the transition process from autocracy to democracy.[11]

   The contributors to this volume utilize different interpretations and definitions of democracy. Tom Najem borrows David Potter et al.'s definition of democratization, describing it as a movement "from less accountable to more accountable government, from less competitive (or

non-existent) elections to freer and fairer competitive elections; from severely restricted to better protected civil and political rights, and from weak (or non-existent) autonomous associations in civil society to more autonomous and more numerous associations.''[12] Najem further defines democratization as progressive evolution of these components (account-ability, elections, civil and political rights, and autonomous associations) in the context of, and conditioned by, state and political institutions, economic development, social divisions, civil society, political culture and ideas, and transnational and international engagements. The end product is a minimalist definition of democracy, which, according to Bruce Russett, ''[i]n the contemporary era ... denotes a country in which nearly everyone can vote, elections are freely contested, the chief executive is chosen by popular vote or by an elected parliament, and civil rights and civil liberties are substantially guaranteed.''[13]

For Kamel Abu Jaber, universal suffrage and free elections are only rudimentary components of a democracy. These must be enhanced by constitutional limitations on the government, the rule of law, and the protection of human rights. Amin Saikal also argues that some forms of popular representation and electoral legitimacy are far from sufficient to proclaim democratic governance and are often simply used to practice what is no more than concealed authoritarianism. A minimalist definition of democracy, based on popular power and popular sovereignty, must be the beginning, not the end, of a democratization process. Only when supplemented with constitutionally enshrined separation of powers, political pluralism, and individual rights and freedoms can a minimalist concept serve as the basis for the development of a liberal, pluralist, tolerant, and stable society.

Etel Solingen uses Robert Dahl's more inclusive concept of ''polyarchy,'' with the following seven pillars: elected officials; free and fair elections; inclusive suffrage; right to run for office; freedom of expression; alternative information protected by law; and associational autonomy.[14] This definition is still very limited and focuses mainly on structures. Moreover, these requirements are relatively easy to meet, even without significant loss of power for political leaders, and they also do not extend democracy to the economic, social, and cultural aspects of political life.

Majid Tehranian describes democratization as a journey, a journey toward, as Lincoln put it, ''government of the people, by the people, and for the people.'' Tehranian points to four main elements of this advanced, and much more comprehensive, concept: political, economic, social, and cultural democracy. Political democracy consists of popular sovereignty; universal suffrage; protection of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; majority rule and minority rights; fair representation and periodic elections; peaceful succession; direct voting (referenda) on critical issues such as rule of law, *habeas corpus*, bill of rights, and re-

sponsibilities of citizenship. Economic democracy features protection of property; free markets; free competition; government regulation of trade and investment to ensure the absence of monopolies and the presence of fair standards in trade, competition, health, and environment. Social democracy means social security for the unemployed, the retired, pregnant women, and children; and provision of public health, education, and welfare. Finally, cultural democracy requires universal education; access to means of communication; and freedom of identity, including speech, assembly, religion, language, privacy, and lifestyle. This is a very comprehensive, but also very demanding, slate of key components that must be met by true democracies to qualify as such.

Gerald Steinberg takes a different approach. He focuses on a socio-religious interpretation of democracy. Religious democracy recognizes the supremacy of religious teachings and writings. Leaders make rulings based on scriptures and receive authority from religious institutions, while the populace expects rulings and policies to be in harmony with religious principles. Although this approach seems to clash with the broader, seemingly more inclusive, definitions mentioned above, a number of contributors argue that most religious teachings, particularly those of Islam and Christianity, embrace, support, and in fact demand obedience to values and norms that resemble modern concepts of democracy. If properly interpreted, religious authority can be reconciled with secular democracy; on the other hand, narrow or abusive interpretations of religious teachings may create the perception of supposed incompatibility and conflict.

To return to Schmitter, "no single set of institutions and rules – and, above all, no single institution or rule – defines political democracy. Not even such fundamental characteristics as majority rule, territorial representation, competitive elections, parliamentary sovereignty, a popularly elected executive, or a 'responsible party system' can be taken as its distinctive hallmark."[15] Democracy is a composite of rules, freedoms, and relationships, in each and every case defining a certain stage of evolution in the relationship between the rulers and the ruled – gradually bringing both closer together in continuous evolution until they overlap in near-perfect congruence. This journey toward "good governance" inevitably takes different paths, at different speeds, in different political, economic, cultural, and social contexts.

Chapter summaries

The contributions in part I of this volume focus on the importance of conflict prevention and peacebuilding in promoting lasting intra- and interstate peace in the region. They discuss the role of democratization in

an eventual (yet still largely hypothetical) democratic peace in the region and the evolving role of the United Nations in determining war and peace throughout the Middle East. Chapter 2, by Albrecht Schnabel, argues that peace management, conflict prevention, and post-conflict peacebuilding are key concepts that need to inform internal and external assistance in the long process toward building stability, security, and, eventually, prosperity in the region. The chapter presumes that only a working ''security community,'' based on the provision of human security in domestic politics and of regional security in states' relations with their neighbors, can offer lasting regional peace and stability. The realization of both negative and positive peace must be the goals, as well as the driving forces, of transition processes throughout the region. This process must be fostered from outside and must embrace the assistance of benevolent external actors, including international organizations such as the United Nations. This requires the condemnation of peace spoilers – domestic (individuals or radical movements) as well as international (individual states and international organizations).

Sustainable democratization can be achieved only if the following conditions are met. Democratization has to come from below and from above. Although top–down gradualism is crucial in preventing abrupt dislocations and crises during transition periods, parallel efforts to support civil society are crucial in creating sustainable democracies that can withstand occasional regression from above. Moreover, democratization processes are sustainable only if minorities are protected; democratization will fail if the majority rules through the oppression of minority populations. In addition, successful democratization efforts have to go hand in hand with solid economic performance, political stability, and the unimpeded development of civil society.

Ultimately, the region as a whole will prosper in the age of increasing economic globalization only if it can rid itself of war and persistent violence. So far the region has not done well in bridging its differences and in coming to terms with post–World War II (let alone post–Cold War) realities. Even if domestic stability improves and democratization progresses, the countries of the region need to settle their differences and struggles over contested territories before interstate cooperation can succeed. Although contested borders and territories are at the moment the key issues of international conflict, they will eventually be superseded by competition over access to water and other scarce natural resources. The region must create a solid foundation for regional cooperation and trust before it can embark on solving such future problems. If current struggles over land and borders are not resolved, future problems will only compound regional instability, and further conflicts over old and new security issues will be unavoidable.

Major international actors in the region, such as the United States, must not dodge their responsibility for regional peace-making; American support for Israel's policies in the region and American and Soviet intervention in regional politics during the Cold War have in large part created or compounded many of today's problems. The Soviet Union has disappeared, but the United States survived the Cold War and has to confront its Cold War legacy in this, and other, regions of the world. Although the chapter makes some references to the application of its arguments in the Middle East, it remains largely at the theoretical level, leaving the practical application of the discussion to subsequent chapters that pick up on many of the main themes raised in Schnabel's examination.

In chapter 3, Etel Solingen examines the prospects of democratic peace pervading the Middle East. She discusses the theoretical assumption that democracy is an important prerequisite for international peace, because democratic regimes tend not to fight other democracies. According to this hypothesis, the presence of democratic regimes throughout the Middle East would be the guarantor of stable peace and would, in addition to creating more just and participatory states, effectively prevent interstate conflict in the future. However, democracies do fight non-democratic regimes, so the presence of only one "spoiler," one autocratic regime, would severely limit the opportunities for regional democratic peace and a regional security community of the type discussed in Schnabel's chapter. Solingen shows that, so far, the application of the democratic peace hypothesis in the Middle East can be little more than an academic exercise because few, if any, of the countries in the region are well-functioning, full-fledged democracies (with the possible exception of Israel).

Moreover, periods of peaceful relations between former antagonists in the region cannot be explained by successful democratization processes – democratization is in its nascent stage throughout much of the region. Other factors, such as economic liberalization or the unpredictable emergence of enlightened or moderate leaders, have so far been more potent factors in explaining why former foes have opted for cooperation instead of confrontation. Nevertheless, because democratization offers an avenue for more active participation in national decision-making processes, further entrenchment of popular participation in the political process and public demands for fair, legitimate, and representative governance will strengthen democracies. This will limit unpredictable and arbitrary rule, which triggers domestic and international instability and conflict. Solingen further shows that fear of violence and instability in transition processes clearly pose threats to regional stability. In fact, interaction between weak and battered transitional democracies may be more fragile and conflict prone than that between stable autocracies.

Solingen observes that democratization processes, where they have taken place, happened top down not bottom up. Although this process offers less opportunity for public initiative and participation, it prevents the dramatic (and traumatic) consequences of often violent struggles between the various groups competing for power, influence, and public support. Slower but gradual progress toward democratization, initiated and controlled from above, even if accompanied by undemocratic measures to neutralize spoilers of the democratization process (such as radical religious or nationalist movements), can in the long run lead to functioning democracies. Solingen sees reason to believe that Islamic forces may in the long run be ''co-opted'' or enticed into democratic processes. This is the case when governments successfully respond to the needs of minority populations, and when all political movements have opportunities to participate in the political process. When democratization is parallelled by economic development, rising standards of living, and increased domestic and international peace, rank-and-file allegiance to radical movements has proved to be quite volatile, further improving chances for successful transitions.

Democratization in individual countries would presumably benefit from the resolution of interstate conflicts in the region. What has the United Nations done, and what can it do, to facilitate solutions to the various violent conflicts plaguing the region to this day? In chapter 4, Amin Saikal examines the role of the United Nations in the Middle East, with a focus on the Iran–Iraq war, the post–Cold War confrontation with Iraq following its attack on Kuwait in 1990, and the evolution of the state of Israel since World War II. Saikal shows how the United Nations' key role in the creation of Israel, which alienated the Arab communities in the region, made it difficult for the organization to play a constructive part in the decades-long peace process between Israel and the Palestinians. Additionally, the increasingly pro-Palestinian stance of the General Assembly in the wake of decolonization and increasing membership of formerly colonized and disenfranchised communities throughout the developing world created distrust of the United Nations among Israel and its Western supporters (particularly the United States).

Successive wars in the region involved the United Nations not as a power broker but as a key agency in delivering humanitarian assistance and in implementing and monitoring peace agreements and cease-fires. The implementation of Security Council resolutions that offered opportunities for durable solutions depended largely on US support and initiative. Thus, little happens in the region without explicit encouragement or pressure by the United States, particularly when it concerns Israel's security status.

During the Cold War, many Arab countries were backed by either the

Soviet Union or the United States, and various autocratic governments were propped up and supported by one or other of the superpowers for purely strategic reasons. UN involvement in the region was stifled by America's veto power in the Security Council and its strong support of Israeli policies in the region. The United Nations was called upon to implement Security Council resolutions that would not be honored by Israel, or to clean up the post-war disorder created by externally incited and/or supported wars (UN Emergency Forces I and II). As Saikal puts it, the United States tended to act at the expense of the United Nations. Although ending the Iran–Iraq war was a success story for the United Nations, this was possible only because the United States endorsed UN mediation (it saw no strategic gain in taking the lead by itself), Gorbachev supported a stronger United Nations, and the warring parties had reached a stalemate. In contrast, the United Nations' role in the Gulf War was mainly driven by the United States. The United States needed and received a ''vague conceptual endorsement'' from the United Nations to pursue what it considered to be a necessary response by the remaining superpower in a unipolar post–Cold War international order. The United States acted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter in expelling Iraq from Kuwait. To this day it continues air strikes against Iraq and it enforces economic sanctions that have long been considered unnecessary and inhumane by large parts of the international community (including the United Nations itself).

Saikal's concluding comments do not hold much hope for a more effective role of the United Nations in stabilizing the Middle East. For this to happen, he argues, three steps have to be taken: Western powers have yet to agree on a post–Cold War international order (and the United States' role in it); the United Nations has to undergo structural reforms to adjust the organization and its activities to post–Cold War realities; and the United Nations has to be provided with adequate resources and mandates enabling it to perform the tasks currently performed by the United States. Unfortunately, these three points are at the heart of the United Nations' limited capacity, even in fulfilling the tasks entrusted to it by the Security Council. The United Nations is by design an instrument in the hands of the international community or, more accurately, in the hands of a few powerful actors that, in different constellations, at different times, dominate and determine international politics. These limitations apply to the United Nations' activities not only in the Middle East but anywhere in the world. New agreements on a post–Cold War order, UN reform, and increased funding are of course desirable and would alleviate some of the United Nations' current inadequacies, but in the short run they are unrealistic goals. The United Nations' role in the Middle East will likely continue to be muted by

American willingness (or absence thereof) to pressure Israel into cooperation with its Arab neighbors, the Palestinians in particular. In that case, the United Nations will remain relegated to play second fiddle to American regional strategic policies and preferences.

The chapters in part II examine the relationship between Islam, secularization, and prospects for democratization. Is the embrace of Islamic religion and culture throughout the Arab nations of the Middle East an obstacle to justice, stability, development, and democracy in the region, as often assumed? In chapter 5, Majid Tehranian explores the uneasy relationship between the mosque and the state throughout the Arab Middle East. Islamic teachings originally envisioned the unity of state and religion (whereas Christianity did not), but periods of unison eventually gave way to periods of separation between mosque and state. As Tehranian shows, colonial powers' preference for top–down political rule in their colonies limited democratization processes. Democratization and liberalization were driven from above, by a small elite who had studied abroad and decided that economic liberalization was inevitable if state and nation were to survive in a competitive regional and international industrial economy. However, little was done to create a broad-based civic political culture. The results are now visible: with the recent advent of modernity and the communications revolution, it is now the lower strata of the population, marked by allegiance to traditional Islam, that threaten to uproot the secularized elite.

The suppressed masses are the main force in slowing down, halting, or even reversing secularization – by utilizing democratic processes. Moreover, top–down democratization has not resulted in the creation of a broad-based civic culture and democratic political institutions and processes. As Tehranian argues, ''although some Middle Eastern societies have made halting progress toward political democracy, most of them have failed to make any significant strides toward social or cultural democracy.'' In countries where rulers continue to buy the population's allegiance and loyalty by providing social services and low taxes (financed through exports of mostly oil or gas), calls for further participation in the political and economic life of the country become louder nevertheless. However, this does not necessarily mean that these societies embrace secularization, which has been tainted by former elites' embrace of Western customs and cultural, political, and economic attitudes. In the name of secularization and the search for pre-Islamic identities, these societies have experienced a roller-coaster ride in their search for cultural identity. Tehranian takes us through various stages of Islamization and/or secularization: from periods of convergence between mosque and state; to periods of secularization and the suppression of the mosque by the state; to confessional systems; to examples of uneasy but successful co-existence of mosque and state.

Coexistence, along with confessional systems and constitutional regimes, seems most promising in the context of the multi-ethnic, multi-religious, quasi-secularist societies of the region. Most importantly, political democratization must give rise to economic and cultural democratization. Only then will democratic structures offer opportunities to all for political, cultural, and economic participation, while preventing majority rule of either secularized or ultra-conservative groups. A combination of the reforms implemented by Ataturk and Reza Shah with more broad-based grassroots input, support, and strong constitutionalism could bring stability, peace, and justice to countries individually and to the region as a whole.

Mark Tessler, in chapter 6, examines a crucial piece of the larger puzzle examined in this book: what do public attitudes tell us about the linkage between Islam and democracy? Are public attitudes toward more democratization and political openness influenced by religiosity and adherence to Islamic belief? Popular perceptions in Western societies, often resembling anecdotal stereotypes, hold that Islam and democracy are mutually exclusive concepts, and that levels of piety and acceptance of democratic principles are inversely correlated; that is, the more religious a person is, the less likely it is that he or she will embrace democratic principles. As Tessler reports, such perceptions of the relationship between piety and democracy in the region may be misinformed by Western experiences. In West European and American societies, more religious people indeed tend to hold more conservative views and attitudes toward governance and domestic and foreign policies. Tessler's study shows that, at least in Morocco and Algeria, this is not the case.

If one assumes that the embrace of and commitment to civic virtues are key requirements for the creation and maintenance of stable democracies, it is crucially important to study, monitor, and access public attitudes toward democratic principles and policies that support secularization and democratization. There have been very few attempts systematically to study the impact of Islamic religious attachments on individuals' attitudes toward democracy and governance. Tessler's original study and conclusions show that, ''despite some statistically significant relationships, Islam appears to have less influence on political attitudes and behavior than is frequently suggested by students of Arab and Islamic society.'' Moreover, in the context of his examination of the Moroccan and Algerian societies, Tessler shows that Islam is not necessarily an obstacle to democracy. Islamic attachments do not seem to obstruct the emergence of an open political culture, and thus eventually of sustainable democracy. Interestingly, the only significant correlation between piety and political conservatism was found among women, who seem to fear greater economic inequality between the sexes as an indirect consequence of a liberal political and economic order.

The third and final part of the book examines democratization processes and their contributions (or lack thereof) to domestic and regional peace in the context of a number of case studies: Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan; Israel; Iran and Iraq; Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. In chapter 7, Kamel Abu S. Jaber shows that Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan are all characterized by incomplete democratization processes, which have produced the requisite institutional arrangements yet with only limited powers and legitimacy vested in them. In fact, as Abu Jaber points out, the most significant political forces, those that make, break, and shape democratization processes, are individual leaders and their personalities. Abu Jaber demonstrates that democratization in the Arab world usually takes a top–down approach, is applied arbitrarily, and is hostage to internal and regional conflicts. The region is in need of more than purely symbolic democracy. However, a certain period of top–down rule in the democratization process is required to balance and stabilize the effects of economic, political, and cultural reforms. These reforms establish the foundations for a solid civic culture and instill faith in democracy and government among ordinary citizens. This will help overcome the frustrations that exist over persisting authoritarian rule of the state.

As Abu Jaber argues, Syria's democratization process has been characterized by several coups d'état, multiple constitutions, and the Ba'th party's tight and autocratic grip on power, but also by some limited economic liberalization. Lebanon is characterized by strong sectarianism and both coexistence and segregation of different religious groups. Lebanon enjoyed some autonomy under Ottoman rule, and its Christian population developed strong ties with Rome. The French ''adoption'' of Lebanon heralded an era of Westernization. In the wake of the 1926 liberal constitution, high political posts and parliamentary seats were divided among the four main religious groups. The remaining 14 groups, however, have been excluded from holding high office. Although the Lebanese enjoy some freedoms, democracy is still at a very rudimentary stage. Nevertheless, commitment to a free press, a functioning parliament, and growing civil society have helped build a relatively strong sense of identity among the Lebanese.

Jordanians enjoy similarly basic political freedoms. Jordan's Hashemite lineage has offered secular and religious legitimacy to the state, which supports an institutionalized, moderate political system. The country benefits from an almost homogeneous population, with political representation offered to minority groups. Even during periods of transition and heavy-handed rule from the top, only little violence has occurred. Under martial law, opposition parties continued to operate, suffering only limited repression. Many of their leaders were later brought into high-ranking government posts. Jordan's kings have managed to

lend legitimacy to a patriarchal monarchy with democratic character-istics. Abu Jaber concludes by discussing the merits of opting for the Jordanian approach, especially given his preference for state-driven de-velopment. He argues for a relativist approach to defining and designing democratization processes in the region, to allow for deviations from idealized (Western) concepts of democracy.

In chapter 8, Gerald Steinberg examines the relationship between de-mocracy and peace in the context of Jewish political tradition. In general, he argues that the authority of democratic and secular institutions finds widespread support among both religious and secular communities in Israel. He identifies the biblical call for the protection of the land of Israel as the key issue over which Israel's religious and secular leaders struggle in their search for a common ground. Nevertheless, and particu-larly after Prime Minister Rabin's assassination in the wake of the im-plementation of the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords, support shifted away from the insistence on the territorial integrity of Israel to an emphasis on the preservation of life and peace, and thus – despite the recent escalation of violence – the continuation of the peace process with the Palestinians and other Arab neighbors.

Steinberg describes the difficulties and complexities involved in the creation of the modern Jewish state – a mix of traditional religious structures and norms with democratic institutions and principles of late nineteenth-century Europe. The Jewish population inevitably became divided between secular and religious groups. Secular institutions, in-cluding courts, often stood in stark contradiction to religious norms. The "land for peace" approach taken by secular governments to pursue peace talks with the Palestinian community is a particularly tricky issue: ultra-orthodox religious leaders insist on the biblical right to all of Israel's territories, to the point where they incite the army to reject government orders that call for the removal of settlers who are in violation of the government's peace agreements. Steinberg shows how the land for peace approach has triggered violent antagonism between secular and ultra-orthodox Jews, who clearly subjugate secular rule to biblical rule. Never-theless, several groups within the religious community give priority to democratic governance and the preservation of life over the call to protect Jewish lands. Steinberg notes, however, that incomplete democ-ratization in countries throughout the region may at this stage be bene-ficial to Israel, because popular support for negotiations with Israel has been far weaker among Arab populations than among their politi-cal leaders. Democratic systems would give stronger voice and muscle to pro-Palestinian sentiments, which would create further antagonism against Israel and its current policies and actions vis-à-vis the Palestinian population and state.

Balancing religious Zionists (who do not recognize the legitimacy of secular authorities and consider them a threat to the safety and integrity of the Jewish state of Israel) with both secular and moderate religious communities is a difficult and delicate task. Although moderate forces have been gaining strength in both government and religious circles, tensions between Jewish traditions and secular political structures and political preferences will continue. Steinberg notes that both secular and religious schools are engaging in campaigns to promote democratic values (and Israel's commitment to them) among the younger generation. In the long run, this will strengthen public support for peace agreements and for an independent Palestinian state and the willingness to support the dismantling of illegal settlements. External factors, however, do play an important role in this development, including democratization processes among neighboring Arab societies and the level of daily violence caused by ongoing hostilities.

In chapter 9, Amin Saikal explores the relationship between peace and democratization processes in Iran and Iraq. He shows that Western-style liberal democracy may not be suitable for many countries in the region. On the contrary, regional leaders have used Western models to create sham democracies that are in reality forms of veiled authoritarianism, created to maintain an appearance of commitment toward the democratization process and intended for internal and external consumption. Saikal argues that more recognition and credit should be granted to indigenous attempts to develop local versions of civil society and democracy, based on the conditions and traditions of each country. Iran's attempts to create an Islamic version of civil society and democracy, with the participation and protection of minority groups, may serve as a model for other local attempts to develop democracies that go beyond minimalist definitions of democratic governance (popular power and popular sovereignty) and facilitate gradual and non-violent reforms of internal and external political processes. The Ijtihadis' approach outlined by Saikal closely resembles efforts by moderate Jewish religious leaders to reconcile biblical norms with socio-political realities, discussed in the preceding chapter.

Saikal calls for commitment to move beyond minimalist forms of democracy. Systems that are democratic in form and authoritarian in substance produce violence through the exclusion of some parts of the population. Overly enthusiastic attempts to embark on Western-style democratization, as experienced during the Shah's reign in Iran, will lead to violence if no effort is made to integrate religious forces that have for a long time defined a society's political, social, and cultural life. If radical religious and secular groups are persecuted rather than integrated in the transition process, counter-revolutions and violence will result, particu-

larly when reform processes (as has been the case in Iran) fail to produce the economic gains expected by the public.

The war with Iraq successfully deflected the public's attention from the lack of reform dividends and improvements over the previous regime. Khomeini's ability to appease both Jihadis and Ijtihadis created a basic level of coexistence between modernizers and traditionalists. After the war, however, continuing socio-economic problems and efforts by Ijtihadis to portray Islam as compatible with democracy, along with a solid electoral process, brought Khatami to power in July 1997. Khatami's embrace of Islamic civil society and democracy and his commitment to dialogue between civilizations have produced a version of democracy that is different from, but not necessarily in opposition to, Western concepts and expectations. An inclusive approach that pursues progress in the context of freedom of thought and expression (and thus supports a vibrant civil society) offers opportunities to respect Islamic traditions within a more open, participatory society. Jihadis feel that the principles and aims of the revolution are being undermined. Balancing their interests with reforms certainly slows down the democratization process, but it keeps it on track and – most importantly – non-violent.

In contrast to Iran, Iraq has experienced nothing but violence and autocratic rule under the 30-year dictatorial regime of Saddam Hussein. Saddam's preference for a violent and repressive culture, backed during the Cold War with petro-dollars and some American support, offers no scope for democratic reform or the evolution of a functioning civil society. His tragic and misguided decision to attack Kuwait, and the subsequent Gulf War, robbed Iraq of most of its sovereignty, weakened its domestic structures, and is still continuing to impose great pain on Iraq's population. Even if Saddam is removed from power, the prospects for democratic reform are scant after decades of suppression and the virtual extinction of Iraq's former middle class.

In chapter 10, Tom Najem examines democratization processes in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. In all four states, he argues, overwhelming state power has inhibited the development of civil society and a solid democratic political culture that could serve as the foundation of democratic processes once the current regimes leave power. Najem argues that Islamist forces are not, as modernization theorists would have it, responsible for the lack of democratization processes in otherwise semi-modern, semi-developed societies. Rather, structural issues, internal as well as external, have served as obstacles to political, economic, and cultural opening. It is here that the four states differ from each other: different combinations of structural forces created or supported strong authoritarian states that are vehemently opposed to political, cultural, and economic liberalization. Najem argues that under such conditions

only intense external pressure or internal pressure from powerful and widely supported civil society organizations could trigger movement toward real democratization. He examines a number of key factors in the progress (or lack thereof) of each country's democratization process: the role of the state and political institutions; economic development; social divisions; civil society; political culture and ideas; and transnational and international engagements.

Morocco features some rudimentary democratic characteristics, including a limited pluralist system and civil society, although they are tightly controlled by the monarchy. Islamist groups and others who question the legitimacy and policies of the monarchy are excluded from the political process. There is some limited inclusion of opposition forces, but only to the extent that the king's authority is not threatened. Although Morocco has no significant oil resources, the state still uses economic ''carrots and sticks'' to control powerful economic and urban classes. Civil society enjoys only limited autonomy. The monarchy's link to Islamic tradition effectively curtails the strength of Islamist opposition groups. Algeria's struggle with Islamist political forces helps the monarchy in solidifying support for the status quo. While the IMF and the World Bank pressure the state to liberalize, fears of Algerian-style violence contain external pressure for political reforms. The new king's actions to reform the political system and promote human rights are positive steps but are not indicative of any limitation of the king's powers.

Algeria's authoritarian military state is at war with strong and popular Islamist forces that show little commitment to democratic ideals. Najem shows that the consequences of Algeria's liberal reforms in the early 1990s served as an example of the danger posed by political reforms in a society that lacks a broad-based democratic political culture. Free elections brought Islamist groups with anti-democratic platforms to power, triggering the state's refusal to hand over political control. This was the precursor to a decade of violence and internal conflict and military rule. International fears of the prospect of an Islamist state have so far fueled external support for the military regime.

Also in reaction to Algeria's experience, Tunisia's government refuses to allow Islamist groups to participate in the political process. Whereas the 1970s had brought some liberalization, economic decline and social inequities led to opposition to the regime throughout the 1980s, culminating in a coup. The new government embarked on a reform process to open up the political system, effect a reconciliation with opposition groups, and revive the country's political, economic, and cultural life. Nonetheless, it marginalized the strongest Islamist group (Mouvement de la tendance islamique), which became progressively more radical, trig-

gering increasingly repressive policies by the state. The gains of initial liberalization were lost and the stand-off between the repressive regime and the Islamist opposition continues to this day.

Libya is ruled by an authoritarian state, with no immediate chances for democratization or the evolution of a functioning civil society. Qaddafi's rentier state uses oil money to buy off political opposition, to appease the population, and to strengthen the state's grip on the political, economic, and social life of the entire society. Although the regime's legitimacy and authority were under threat in the wake of international sanctions, declining oil prices, tribal instability, and Islamist opposition, the lifting of UN sanctions and an increase in oil revenues have stabilized Qaddafi's grip on power. Without a democratic political culture or civil society, there is little hope for political liberalization, even should Qaddafi's rule come to an end.

Najem shows that, for a variety of reasons not directly related to the influence of Islam, a number of countries in the region are cursed with authoritarian governments that are in full control of political, economic, and social life, with no or little intention of allowing civil society and democratic political processes to flourish. With no pro-democratic forces waiting in the wings, even a crisis or the collapse of current regimes will not necessarily lead to improved prospects for democratization. Continued violence and the instability of political transitions would hinder positive reforms and increased prospects for domestic and regional peace.

Lessons

Despite the differences and difficulties in defining minimally acceptable features of a democracy, all authors agree on at least the following: none of the constituent states in the region, with the exception of Israel in certain specific ways, has reached a level of democratization that would guarantee a path toward sustainable democracy and prevent a future return to non-democratic governance and de-secularization and de-liberalization of the economy and society. Moreover, the absence of stable democracies increases actual and potential instability throughout the region. Repression of opposition forces and suppression of civil society development are but a few examples of the structural violence created by authoritarian or quasi-democratic regimes. Although many factors contribute to the propensity of nations to wage either war or peace against their own populations and their neighbors, socially, politically, and economically stable systems certainly raise the odds that peace prevails over

war. We are undoubtedly many years away from reaping peace dividends from sustained democratization processes in the Middle East. In addition, most contributions to this volume show that, if anything, reform processes toward political, economic, and cultural liberalization have so far brought much instability and violence to the region, as traditional (often religious) values continue to clash with secular ethics, norms, and practices.

Four issues are particularly important in preventing transitional violence and in neutralizing threats to nascent democratization processes. First, broad sectors of the population need to be familiar with, and ideally fully embrace, civic virtues and a democratic political culture, manifested through the presence of a healthy, functioning, and influential civil society. Second, political leaders must be fully committed to reform processes, to the extent that they are prepared to relinquish some of their own powers to strengthen democratic governance. Third, regional conditions must be favorable – including the resolution of grave problems that divide the region and pitch individual states or groups of states against each other (such as the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, the ongoing military campaign against Iraq, or the support by some, and objection by others, of America's continued "war on terrorism"). Fourth, external conditions must be conducive to conflict resolution and peace, including the absence of manipulative external powers' involvement in regional politics and the presence of international economic conditions that will allow Middle Eastern countries to bear the cost of democratic governance and the provision of social and other services that are necessary to maintain popular support during the inevitable ups and downs of transition and reform periods.

Transitions to democracy can be violent – more violent than the structural violence that is ever-present under authoritarian rule. On the one hand, democratization processes are stifled because of fears that an opening of the system might trigger the rise of democratically elected, but anti-democratically inclined, political parties and movements. On the other hand, commitment to democratization is necessary to establish, it is to be hoped at some not too distant point in the future, a more accountable, just, and transparent political order. Most contributors agree that, in order to push forward democratization processes while advancing internal and regional peace, reforms must be gradual and monitored and controlled from the top, and they must be supplemented by a similarly gradual process toward the establishment of a broad-based and broadly supported civil society. Only such gradual reform processes will be successful in the end. Democratization is, as described so aptly by Majid Tehranian, a "journey" that takes time to be completed, not an event that can be planned and executed at will.

Notes

1. For an estimate of the human and material costs of the various armed interstate and intrastate conflicts in the Middle East between 1948 and 1992, see Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World: An Overview," in Baghat Korany, Rex Brynen, and Paul Noble, eds., *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World: Theoretical Perspectives*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1995, p. 35, Table 2.1.

2. See the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Arab Human Development Report 2002*, New York: UNDP, 2002, for a strong call for Arab societies to further human development through, among others, education, economic growth, poverty reduction, democratization, and regional cooperation.

3. For previous studies on prospects for, trends in, and obstacles to democratization in the Middle East, see the two-volume series edited by Baghat Korany, Rex Brynen, and Paul Noble, *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World: Theoretical Perspectives*, and *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World: Comparative Experiences*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1998.

4. Although democratic peace theory is mentioned by a number of contributions to this volume, and discussed more prominently in chapter 3, the volume will deal only marginally with it. For democratic peace theory to be tested in a regional context, a minimum of two (and preferably more) established democracies would be required before a meaningful examination of the results of the propositions of the theory is possible. This is not currently the case in the Middle East.

5. See UNDP, *Arab Human Development Report 2002*, particularly chapter 7 on "Liberating Human Capabilities: Governance, Human Development and the Arab World," pp. 105–20.

6. Leila Sharaf, as quoted in UNDP, *Arab Human Development Report 2002*, p. 115.

7. UNDP, *Arab Human Development Report 2002*, p. 106.

8. For some seminal writings on the processes of democratization, see Robert A. Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1971; Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe C. Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead, eds., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Prospects for Democracy*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986; Robert A. Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989; Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset, eds., *Politics in Developing Countries: Comparing Experiences with Democracy*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1990; Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991; Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996; and Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999. For a very recent discussion, see *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 13, no. 3, July 2002, on the theme of "Debating the Transition Paradigm."

9. Philippe C. Schmitter, "Some Basic Assumptions about the Consolidation of Democracy," in Takashi Inoguchi, Edward Newman, and John Keane, eds., *The Changing Nature of Democracy*, Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 1998, p. 32. *The Changing Nature of Democracy* was the first book in a series of studies on democracy and democratization undertaken by the United Nations University. The present book is part of this series.

10. Ibid.

11. On this discussion, see, for instance, Rudolph J. Rummel, "Democracies Don't Fight Democracies," available at http://www.peacemagazine.org/9905/rummel.htm; Miriam

Fendius Elman, ed., *Paths to Peace: Is Democracy the Answer?* Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1997; Thomas Schwartz and Kiran Skinner, "The Myth of Democratic Pacifism," *Hoover Digest*, No. 2, 1999; Spencer R. Weart, *Never at War: Why Democracies Will Not Fight One Another*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997; Michael E. Brown, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Steven E. Miller, eds., *Debating the Democratic Peace*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996; Torak Barkawi and Mark Laffey, eds., *Democracy, Liberalism, and War: Rethinking the Democratic Peace Debate*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001; and Paul H. Huth, *The Democratic Peace and Territorial Conflict in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming in 2003.

12. David Potter, David Goldblatt, Margaret Kiloh, and Paul Lewis, eds., *Democratization*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997, p. 6.

13. Bruce Russett, "A Structure for Peace: A Democratic, Interdependent, and Institutionalized Order," in Inoguchi, Newman, and Keane, eds., *The Changing Nature of Democracy*, p. 160.

14. Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics*, p. 221.

15. Schmitter, "Some Basic Assumptions," p. 33.