Multidisciplinary Studies in Politics and Governance

Editors

Amelia Hadfield, Andrej J. Zwitter, Christian Haerpfer and Kseniya Kizilova

COGITATIO

Table of Contents

Article

Decentralised Local Governance and Poverty Reduction in Post-1991 Ethiopia: A Political Economy Study

Yeshtila Wondemeneh Bekele * and Darley Jose Kjosavik

Department of International Environment and Development Studies, Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Norway;
E-Mails: yeshitila.bekele@nmbu.no (Y.W.B.), darley.kjosavik@nmbu.no (D.J.K.)

* Corresponding author

Abstract
After 1991, Ethiopia has introduced an ethnic federal governance system constituting nine regional states and two autonomous city administrations, Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. The restructuring of the state seemingly led to the decentralisation of power to the regions and Woreda (district authority) levels local governance structure in 1995 and 2002 respectively. The purpose of this article is to examine the practices of decentralised local governance in Ethiopia in general and the local governance performance at the level of peasant association (Kebele) in particular. The article also analyses the link between the local governance and poverty based on three indicators: decentralisation and self-rule (DSR), local capacity for planning (LCP), and effectiveness of local governance system (ELGS). Data was collected from eight selected Kebeles of three different regional states through household survey, qualitative interviews and focus group discussions. The study shows that while the power and control of the central government is well established, the Kebeles lack the capacity and resources to deliver development. The LCP at Kebele level is weak because of organisational incapacity and institutional constraints related to DSR. The ELGS is also poor since Kebeles do not have any fiscal rights and administrative power for the reasons associated with DSR and LCP. The government has been implementing poverty reduction strategies using productive safety net programmes and farmer training centres. These, however, have not had the desired outcome due to organisational and institutional incapacitation of Kebele administrations.

Issue
This article is part of a multidisciplinary issue of *Politics and Governance*, edited by Andrej J. Zwitter (University of Groningen, The Netherlands) and Amelia Hadfield (Canterbury Christ Church University, UK)

1. Introduction

In 1991, The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) established an ethnic federal governance system, which constitutes nine regional states and two autonomous city administrations (Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia and Dire Dawa). Furthermore, the government implemented a third restructuring of the State in 1995 under the new Constitution, which is based on the principle of ethnic federalism that divides power between federal and ethnic-centred territorial Regional States (RS). As a result, power has been shared with the Regions that led to the emergence of a new power structure at the centre and peripheries. The decentralisation process was further extended to Woreda (district) in 2002, based on the devolution of finance, human resources and political power from regions to the fourth tier of local governance structure at the Woreda level[1].

---

[1] Woreda is an Amharic term that refers to the next administrative tier after the regional level of government (similar to a district in many other countries). It is managed by an elected council of members and a strong executive that is derived from the council.

The purpose of this article is to examine the practices of decentralised local governance in Ethiopia in general and the local governance performance at selected Peasant Associations (PA) or Kebele, the lowest level local administration[2]. It also elucidates the governance principles and practices based on primary empirical data gathered through household survey, interviews and focus group discussions. Primary data sources at the national level include Government Institutions' White Papers supplemented with key informant interviews.

The link between local governance and poverty is analysed based on indicators developed for the purpose, such as decentralisation and self-rule (DSR), local capacity for planning (LCP), and effectiveness of local governance system (ELGS). In order to attain this objective, the article addresses the following research questions: What are the emerging governing practices in post-1991? Is poverty being adequately addressed through decentralised local governance structures in post-1991 Ethiopia?

The following section (i.e. Section two), discusses the decentralised local governance framework of poverty analysis which is developed based on review of relevant literature. Section three explicates the methodology and study context. Section four discusses an emergent post-1991 local governance practice in Ethiopia based on review of relevant literature and data from the field study. Section five presents the local governance system and institutional structure based on empirical data and relevant literature reviews. Section six analyses the decentralised local governance practice and poverty reduction experience at Kebele level administration. A brief conclusion, stitching together the main elements of the overall argument is delineated in section seven.

2. Decentralised Local Governance: A Conceptual Framework

Governance is an elusive term (Meuleman, 2008). In academia, there are controversies about governance as a concept. Some scholars consider governance as an ideological imposition against developing countries to reconstruct the state structure in accordance with neo-liberal orientation (Harrison, 2004). In fact, governance is different from government in the sense that government is the structure and function of public institutions, while governance is the way government gets its job done in cooperation with other stakeholders (Kettl, 2015). In other words, it implies a process.

The term governance denotes different meanings for different people. For some scholars, it refers to a mechanism of creating a newly ordered rule and collective action (Stoker, 1998). For others, it implies a new pattern of decision-making and platform for participation (Chhotray & Stoker, 2009). For others, it still signifies a new technique and mode of governing practice (Dean, 2010;

Miller & Rose, 2008). Some consider it as the totality of relations among actors in addressing societal problems (Meuleman, 2008).

Decentralized and strong local governance system is considered as a prerequisite for sustainable development and poverty reduction. Decentralised local governance is a system of decision-making or a framework for participatory resource and political management at a subnational level of administration (Ali Khan, 2013). It constitutes two major elements: decentralisation and local governance. Local governance is a set of institutions, actors, mechanisms and processes created by the constitution through which local people articulate their interest, negotiate their difference, exercise their right and make decisions (Shah, 2006). Whereas, decentralisation denotes the transfer of power from national to subnational structures of government, assigning resources to local authorities through de-concentration, delegation, or devolution. The decentralisation process constitutes four major interrelated components, namely political, administrative, fiscal and economic (Boko, 2002; Schneider, 2003).

Political decentralisation marks the transfer of political power to the subnational echelon of administration. The decentralisation of power gives autonomy to local authorities to make independent planning and decisions on important local matters (Schneider, 2003; Treisman, 2007). The fiscal decentralisation devolves resources to local authorities to carry out their activities, and coordinate and lead local economic development initiatives (Boko, 2002; Davoodi & Zou, 1998; Schneider, 2003). Economic decentralisation expedites liberalisation of the economy by transferring public sector services to private or voluntary associations, allowing the market to take a leading role in resource generation and allocations. Moreover, most of the service provisions are privatised; a significant degree of deregulation under market (the private sector) system coordinates basic services including health, education, water, electricity and others (Schneider, 2003; Treisman, 2007). For the purpose of this article we combined and adopted perspectives illustrated by both Shah (2006) and Ali Khan (2013). We define decentralized local governance as the institution, or structures, which exercise self -rule right, participatory planning process and delivering capacity of social service at the local level to meet or satisfy the need of local people. This definition captures the indicators we developed in the framework of analysis in Figure 1.

In retrospect, in this framework of analysis, poverty reduction efforts at localities require Decentralization and self-rule right (DSR) rights. DSR consolidates Local Capacity for Planning (LCP), which is a pivotal instrument in local economic development and mobilisation of resources. The local actors in pursuit of their interests are motivated to take part in local governance processes in order to get access to and control over resources. The in-

---

[2] Kebele is an Amharic word which means neighbourhood referring to the lowest grassroots administrative unit after the Woreda, recognized by both federal and regional constitutions as lower echelon of local administration in both urban and rural areas.
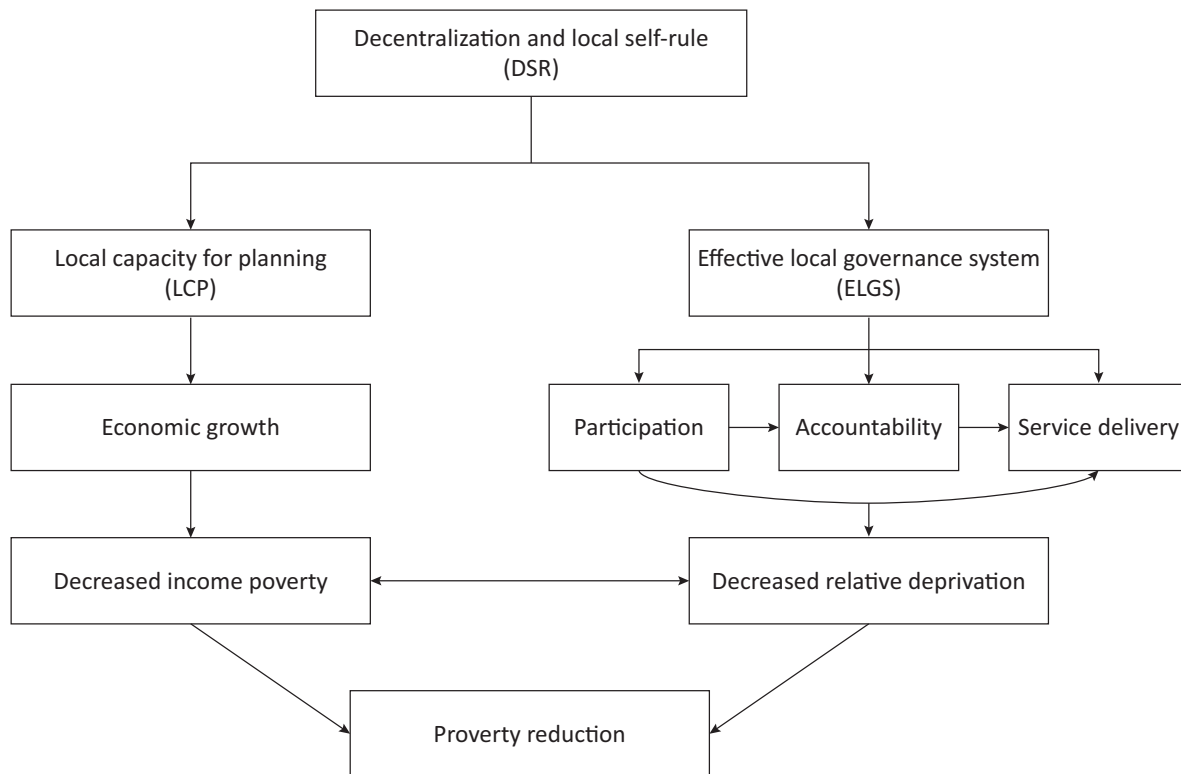
Figure 1. Framework for decentralised governance. Source: Adapted and modified from Ali Khan (2013).

teraction of these actors prompts local economic development, which is key in the reduction of income poverty at localities as illustrated in Figure 1.

In addition to LCP, as depicted in Figure 1, DSR is assigned the role of building an effective local governance system (ELGS), a vital instrument for addressing poverty-reduction, relative deprivation and social exclusion at localities. ELGS improves the service delivery capacity of local governance systems. Because the transfer of power, resources, and responsibilities encourages representation, accountability together with participation, inclusive development, and empowerment to make collective decisions based on local people's interest. It also motivates local entrepreneurial capacities in the provision of improved service delivery. However, decentralised governance is not always successful. At times it may result in unexpected indirect consequences, particularly in multi-ethnic societies. It is therefore, not heretic to propose that, if a dominant ethnic group controls financial, human resources, and political power, the subsequent struggle for resources may spark resource-based ethnic conflicts.

3. Methodological Considerations

A mixed methodology research approach is adopted, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. Purposive sampling was employed to select multi-layered study areas from region, zone, district, and Kebele; while, systematic random sampling method was used to frame sample size, select households and to draw their views

from local areas. Data was collected from three purposefully selected regions, which represent different agroclimatic zones, livelihood patterns, ethnicity, and historical traditions. Gamo highlands represents the 'Enset' (false banana)-based livelihood, highland agro-climatic zone, minority ethnic group from southern Ethiopia. Jimma represents the cash crop-based livelihood, mid land agro-climatic zone, Muslim and majority Oromo ethnic groups. Deberberhan area represents grain crop-based livelihood, low and high land agro-climatic zones, and majority Amhara ethnic group. Accordingly, the quantitative data was collected from a total of 518 households in eight rural Kebeles.

For data collection, we used both structured and semi -structured questionnaires. Likert scale questions were used for the survey, and a series of interviews and focus group discussions were held with key informants of the study and local peasants. The respondents for the questionnaire survey were farmer households who were randomly chosen from the selected Kebeles. The key informants included Kebele administrators, development agents, peasants, and scholars who are informed of the setting. The socio-economic background of the respondents of the household survey are given in Table 1.

Table 1 depicts that the majority of respondents are male (93.2%, $N = 483$), and their main occupation (livelihood) is agriculture (92.5%, $n = 479$). In terms of education, most of the respondents are primary school dropouts (45.8%, $n = 237$) and others are illiterate (42.9%, $N = 222$). About a third (29.6%, $n = 154$) of the households earn a monthly income below 300

Table 1. Socio-economic background of respondents ($N = 518$). Source: Survey data (2011/2012).

Background	Category	N	%
Occupation	Farmer	479	92.5
	Others	39	7.5
Education	Illiterate	222	42.9
	Primary	237	45.8
	Secondary and above	59	11.3
Gender	Male	483	93.2
	Female	35	6.8
Household income (in ETB)	< 100 ETB	118	22.8
	101–300	154	29.7
	301–500	124	23.9
	> 500 ETB	122	22.6
	Total	$N = 518$	100%

Ethiopian Birr (USD 15.8). Nearly 80% of the respondents described their income as less than USD 30 (which is below the USD 1.25 per day poverty line).

4. Post-1991 Local Governance Practice in Ethiopia

The ethnic federal system that was established in post-1991 Ethiopia constitutes nine regional states and two autonomous administrative cities. The decentralized power of the state is divided between the Federal and National Regional States in conformity with the 1995 Constitution. Each region has been awarded a quasi-sovereign status and self-rule authority, enshrined in separate autonomous Constitutions. Regions have also assumed the power and right to prepare their own socio-economic development plan, to mobilise resources and to allocate and utilise regional budgets. Both federal and regional constitutions have ensured authority for self-rule and share-rule at all levels of administration (Abbink, 1997; Fiseha, 2006).

Articles 50 and 51 of the 1995 Constitution enlist the powers and responsibilities of both Federal and Regional states. The decentralisation of power from centre to regions is carried out in terms of ethnic representations, ethnic geography and historical role of ethnic groups. The system developed is akin to neopatrimonialism but has a character of consensual democracy (Chanie, 2007; Mengisteab, 2008). The decentralisation has created a different locus of power in the regions by incorporating emerging ethno-elites. It has also introduced a kind of participatory and accommodative governance structure both in the region and at the centre (Fiseha, 2006). Apart from political and economic decentralisation, an emerging new governing practice of the post-1991 period manifests multiculturalism, developmentalism, socio-cybernetics and statistical-based governance as major characteristics of governance.

Multiculturalism is the widely applied governance approach in the post-1991 period. It is used as a means of engendering legitimacy and constructing governable subjects under a plea for ethnic equalities. It is rationalised on the tenet of national operation and implies that the fundamental problem of the Ethiopian state emanates from 'unequal ethnic relations'. The rationale further asserts that political engineering under broader framework of '*Andet Ethiopia*' (a unitary State or one Ethiopia), adhering to the Pan-Ethiopia project, did not succeed because of assimilation policy by previous governments. The core governance problem was articulated as a lack of political settlement and an inclusive governance structure to accommodate the competing interests of ethnic groups. Therefore, promotion of cultural pluralism in the new multiculturalist governance is seen as an indispensable means to avoid ethnic rifts and to emancipate the masses from abject poverty (Fiseha, 2006; Turton, 2006).

The ethnic federalism can be viewed as a pioneering effort similar to Haile Selassie's modernisation endeavour of the mid-1900s. Many scholars argue that the approach is not optimal. Nevertheless, it has brought significant dynamics to the political, economic and social settings of the country. Politically, revolutionary democracy and ethnic federalism have emerged as leading agencies; economically, a free market economy with a bigger role for the state has been introduced, and socially, cultural pluralism, with Amharic notion of '*BehereBehereseboch*' that refers to nation and nationality, became a catchphrase of daily life and a powerful discursive narrative of political mobilisation.

Multiculturalism prompts the rise of ethno-elites in the regions with strong sentiments of ethnic identity (Abbink, 2009). The central government has crafted a controlling mechanism against these 'unruly' elites, based on the principle of democratic centralisation. However, the growing patronage practice has been posing a threat to democratic transition and consolidation. The ethnic politics prompts recruitment to political offices and access to jobs to be along ethnic lines. To this end, the rising ethno elites have organised a complex informal network both in their respective regions and national gov-

ernment to control, survive and dominate the politics (Abbink, 2009; Chanie, 2007).

Developmentalism is another governing approach that has emerged since 2001 following the split in leadership of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and intensified by the election crisis of 2005. The government has apparently been articulating that achieving an accelerated development was indispensable for the survival of the nation (Gebresenbet, 2014). Consequently, it claims a dominantly leading role in both the economy and politics. It has been justifying the rationale to do so grounded on narratives of poverty reduction and sustainable development. The trend ushers in a new economic and political governance approach with the main objective of mainstreaming national politics. For example, the controversial large-scale agricultural investments which some scholars and rights groups identified as 'land grabbing' has been introduced (Lavers, 2012; Makki & Geisler, 2011). The new large-scale agricultural investment projects dispossess properties, particularly land from smallholding farmers and the urban poor who are considered unproductive. Land is subsequently transferred to an emerging national private sector and international investors.

Access to land has given way for a new rising ethno-elite class. Hence, families and close allies of these rising ethno-elites have accumulated enormous wealth from a heavily regulated land market supervised and operated by Federal and Regional governments (Lavers, 2012; Makki & Geisler, 2011; Pausewang, 2004). They have emerged as politically and economically powerful family elites with strong bases in the regions. The trend marks the new economic governance features that emerged from the reconfiguration of political structures and consolidation of ethno-elite powers.

Socio-cybernetics is another emerging governance instrument, widely applied in the post-1991 period. It refers to communication and controlling methods in the governing process that rely on information processing capacities (Pierre & Peters, 2000). One of the remarkable features of this period is the massive capacity for steering, which is supported by the application of information and communications technology (ICT). The government has introduced and expanded ICT into districts and remote rural areas through the so-called WAN (wide area network) and various nets such as School-Net, Woreda-Net, Agri-Net, HER-Net, Revenue-Net and Health-Net programmes (Lessa, Belachew, & Anteneh, 2011).

The new ICT-driven governance has increased the penetration and information-gathering capacity of the state by penetrating into remote rural areas. The massive broadband internet connection installations, the expansion of community radio, improvement of telecommunication (free-call service, teleconferencing and other methods, particularly mobile phones) all over the country have, therefore, significantly improved the controlling and communication capacity of the state (Belachew, 2010).

Apart from ICT, the government has created a complex and sophisticated network of political control of all rural households, which is nicknamed 'one to five'. It has created a multiple but hierarchical layer of organisation that encompasses the various segments of the society including the youth and women. These networks comprise the popular wing, '*Hezibawi Kenefe*', together with the government wing, '*Mengestawi Kenefe*', and the political wing, '*Derjitawi Kenefe*'. The Government has assigned each household to at least one of these organisational structures. It has also devised a mechanism to tie one to the other and to intertwine all of them together under one locus of control. These complex threads of organisations and networking give the government absolute social and political control over the respective localities (Snyder et al., 2014).

Likewise, the incorporation of peasants into a complex web of political control, one to five and other networking, is also used as a means of infusing ideology. The farmers have been ensnared by the reigning ideology of the government. The ideology is inculcated through a series of meetings, indoctrination and in public discussions. Peasants also receive formal ideological training through farmer training centres (FTCs). Therefore, the government is rather successful in turning peasants into subjects. In all study areas, the majority of farmers seemed to be strong supporters of the government and displayed a rather uniform character and thinking, regardless of geographic and other considerations. The operations of modern government, according to Miller and Rose (2008), advance through the accumulation and tabulation of facts about the governed subjects. Hence, the government employs organised statistical techniques to calculate tax returns, adopt social reforms and compute the gross national product, growth rates of different economies, rates of inflation and the money supply. From these calculations and tabulations emerge written reports, drawings, pictures, numbers, charts and graphs, for use as a means of governing citizens.

In post-1991 Ethiopia, the government has intensified the application of advanced statistical methods to analyse and depict the economic, social and political status of the country. It also consolidated and expanded the capacity of the Central Statistical Authority (CSA)—a government agency responsible for collecting and disseminating statistical data. This agency generates statistical data of various development indicators under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED). According to a scholar we interviewed, 'EPRDF employed statistical techniques to convince first single-digit and then double-digit economic growth and miracles of economic growth since the mid-2000s to the people at large and the international community, in particular'[3]. The statistics-based governance applications have greatly helped the government to disclose its performance and engender legitimacy as developmental state. In the next section, we briefly discuss the evolu-

---

[3] Interview with a scholar in February 2012, Addis Ababa.

tion of local governance institutions, the practice of decentralized local governance in post-1991 and the performance of selected local governance institutions based on three indicators (DSR, LCP and ELGS).

5. Local Governance and Local Institutions in Post-1991 Ethiopia

The local governance system constitutes integrated institutions of production and governance that surround and connect local communities. It incorporates different kinds of social, economic and political organizations and functions. Some notable examples of local level governance systems are community resource mobilization orders, social engagement and reciprocity instruments, security arrangements, asset management, conflict resolution mechanisms, infrastructure and sector services development apparatus (Bardhan, 1991; Saito, 2008). In Ethiopia's case, local governance is organised under Kebeles.

5.1. The Local Governance Structure: A Historical Perspective

Historically, the local administration institutions were evolved during the reign of Menlik II (1886–1913), as garrison towns known as 'Ketamas' or district towns. Because of the limited penetration capacity, the state could not establish local administration at all rural localities. It was operating from garrison towns. During the reign of Haile Selassie, the local governance restructuring was initiated under 1944 and 1966 proclamations, but could not establish administrative units in the local realm (Ayele, 2011; Zewde & Pausewang, 2002). The state, using the district towns as a springboard, had been transferring investible surplus of product from the rural areas through tax, compulsory contribution and other mechanisms. No meaningful public investments were made in rural areas.

The 'Derg' or the military regime had established the grassroots local governance structures (Kebeles) under proclamations 31 and 71 of 1975 (Engdawork, 1995; Mammo, 1999). The role of the Kebeles was limited to land redistribution, local policing and coordinating social services. They were not given or allowed any mandate to plan and execute local development activities. In fact, the creation of the local administration structure had reduced routine local governance service provision.

Like its predecessor, the 'Derg' Government did not make significant public investments in the rural sector. Rather, it forced the rural people to become organised under cooperative groups, which were modelled after the former Soviet Union and imposed a compulsory grain quota delivery. The grain quota delivery system was aimed at ensuring sustainable and cheap supply of basic food commodities to the growing numbers of urban people, to quell any possible political opposition from the critical urban mass. The rural Kebeles have therefore been used as means for appropriating surplus product and transferring surplus to urban areas where the government sought to establish a political base (Abegaz, 2004; Pausewang, 2004). Eventually, political engineering brought neither economic development nor agrarian transformation to rural areas.

In sum, in post-1991 Ethiopia, the EPRDF has continued to use the Kebele as local structure without making any significant structural changes. The legal structure of the local governance was based on Article 39(3) and 50(4) of the 1995 Ethiopian Federal Democratic Republic (EFDR) constitution. The local authorities (Kebeles) have not been assigned any specific powers, except the Woreda or district authorities, which are authorised to initiate, plan and execute development activities. Hence, the power of the local authority is confined to the delivery of basic services as before (Assefe & Gebre-Egziabher, 2007; Ayele, 2011).

5.2. The Local Governing System and Leadership

The administration structure of the current Kebele institutions comprises of an elected council of 100 members known as 'Yemeto Shengo', an executive committee of five to seven members 'Kebele Cabinet', a social court known as 'Frede Shengo' and a local militia force which is known as 'Tataeki'. A diagrammatic representation of the institutional structure of Kebele is given in Figure 2 below.
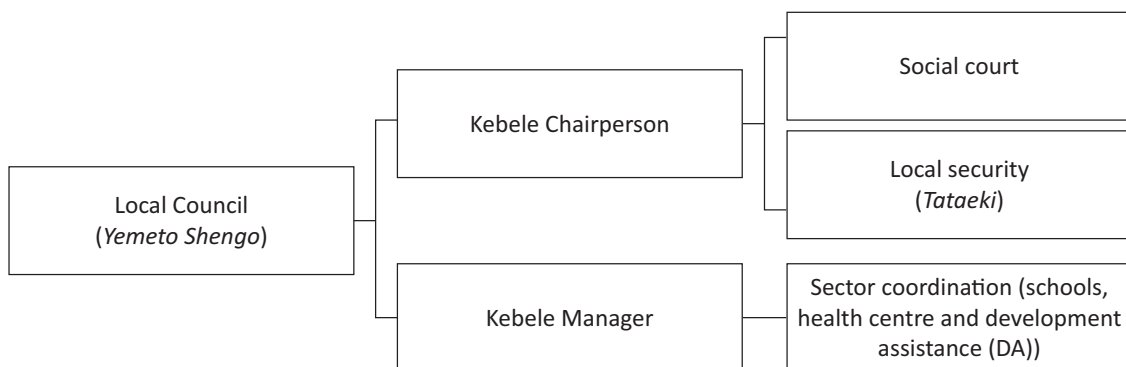
Figure 2. The institutional structure of Kebele. Source: Sketched by the authors based on the information from local authorities.

The main responsibilities of the Kebele council and executive committee are endorsing the development plan, which is prepared by and directed from Woreda authorities, ensuring the collection of land and agricultural income tax, organising local labour and in-kind contributions to development initiatives, and mitigating local conflicts within the jurisdiction of local community social courts. Kebeles also steer the delivery of basic social services such as education and health in their respective localities in consultation with the Woreda and coordinators of the services at Kebele level such as school and health centre heads (Snyder et al., 2014).

Regarding local leadership, Kebele authorities are led by an executive body of five to seven cabinet members including chairman, three council members, a Kebele manager assigned by a Woreda, development agent, health extension officer and school director. The manager, who is reasonably educated, salaried and appointed by a Woreda, recently emerged as the most influential actor in the local affairs. In addition to the Kebele manager, development agents also play an important role in issues related to agricultural production and coordinating farmer training centres (FTCs) (Lefort, 2010).

5.3. Decentralisation and Local Governance Performance in Post-1991 Ethiopia

Decentralisation of power to sub-national administration is considered as an essential instrument for augmenting local economic development. It promotes empowerment to encourage different actors (state and non-state) to take part in coordinated development activities of localities (Bardhan & Mookherjee, 2006; Saito, 2008). It also helps to enhance service delivery and inclusive development. According to Grindle (2007), decentralisation may not necessarily result in faster, inclusive and sustainable development. We identify three major indicators: DSR, LCP and ELGS as indicators to measure local governance performance at Kebele level.

5.3.1. Decentralisation and Self-Rule (DSR)

The EPRDF-led government has applied decentralisation as a key means of political settlement and engendering legitimacy. The decentralisation process was undertaken in two phases: to the regions in 1995 and to the Woredas in 2002 (Assefa & Gebre-Egziabher, 2007). The decentralisation of power to the regions primarily gave self-governance right but has also substantially furthered the shared-rule right to fair and equitable representation in the federal state (Abbink, 1997; Turton, 2006).

The first phase of decentralisation was implemented between 1991 and 2001. It was aimed at creating and consolidating regional national government's capacity for self-rule and was designated as mid-level decentralisation. The legality of the decentralisation process was stipulated in the transitional charter (1991) and the Federal Constitution (1995). In this phase of decentralisation, political, fiscal and administrative powers were transferred to the regional states. National regional governments have been entrusted with all legislative, executive and judicial powers in respect of all matters within their jurisdiction, except those that fell under the federal–state domain such as defence, foreign affairs, and economic policy (Assefe & Gebre-Egziabher, 2007).

The second phase of decentralisation, involving district level decentralisation programmes (DLDP) and urban management programmes, took place in 2002. This phase resulted in the restructuring of institutions at Woreda level administrations, together with devolution of political and fiscal power from regions to Woredas. DLDP devolved a considerable portion of human and financial resources in the form of a block grant to Woreda by rolling down power and resources from zones (the third tier of administration above Woreda) to Woreda level. The Woredas were also given autonomous right to plan and implement development activities within the bounds of resources available to them (Snyder et al., 2014).

Rural Kebeles have not experienced any significant change in its nature nor in its structural dimension. Though the government claims that implementing agriculture-led industrialisation will place the rural people at the centre of the policy locus, there is no elaborate institutional framework, which is capable of transforming the fragmented smallholding agriculture and the subsistence livelihood of the rural people at grassroots level. The decentralisation process floated in the regional and to some extent at Woreda levels. As one local official of the rural Kebele of Jimma area noted:

> "We have neither full power to make decision on our local matters nor resources to stimulate local based development activities. We simply wait for order from Woreda officials. If the government devolves the full power to make decisions based on our people's interest and even to collect or develop limited resources in order to speed up local development, we can make a big difference. Lack of power has really constrained us not to fully commit to community development. Take a watershed management programme. It is a good example. It is quite essential for local people but most local people are against it. They do not feel a sense of ownership."[4]

As noted by this local official, Kebeles have neither fiscal power with relevant resources nor are they allowed to generate local finances. The mandates of tax and other collections are given to the Woreda authorities. The Kebele officials are not allowed to engage in any finance-related matters (Yilmaz & Venugopal, 2008). This has implications for the effective functioning of the local institutions. The powerlessness of Kebele was reinforced in the view of local farmers in the Azo and Dorze areas of the Gamo highlands. They preferred the manager to the

---

[4] Interview with local official in February 2013, Jimma area.

Kebele chair. As one farmer in Azo Gule noted:

> "The Kebele leaders do not have the real power to make decisions. The political power is vested on the Woreda leaders. Therefore, they are simply carrying out orders given from the Woreda. The Woreda propose, develop and simply request the local people to approve their decision. What we do is simply approving their decision through the council and Kebele administration."[5]

During the household survey, the respondents were asked about their opinion on decentralised governance. Table 2 presents the findings of the household survey about decentralisation of power and resources at Kebele level.

As depicted in Table 2 below, regarding decentralisation and local self-rule in the respective local communities, the respondent view indicates that 19.3% ($N = 100$) disagreed and 36.7 ($N = 190$) were undecided about the questions. The mean value is 3.03. The majority of the local people seem not to agree with decentralisation of power and self-rule practices in their local arena. The result of the survey is also consistent with what we observed in the field. The Kebeles lack substantive power and they are under the shadow of the district (Woreda) administrations. They do not exercise autonomous political, fiscal and administrative responsibilities, although they do exercise limited administrative prerogatives. They are, nevertheless, under strict Woreda dominance.

5.3.2. Local Capacity for Planning (LCP)

LCP is one of the major aspects of decentralised local governance processes. It refers to the institutional and policy capacity of local actors in performing their respective responsibilities. The policy capacity refers to the ability of local actors to contextualise the policy direction and allocate scarce resources to implement policy (Painter & Pierre, 2005). Local institutional capacity denotes specified rules, procedures, and norms that govern interactions of local institutions by delineating their role and responsibilities with adequate conflict mitigation mechanisms (Peters & Pierre, 1998). Hope (2008, p. 152) describes institutional capacity as 'the competency of individuals, public sector institutions, private sector entities, civil society organisations, and local communities to engage in activities in a sustainable manner that permit the achievement of beneficial goals'.

LCP gives local people the opportunity to develop a feasible development plan responding to the prevailing local social problems and available resources. It enhances local people's capacity to efficiently utilise available resources by prioritising their pressing social problems according to the available resources. Moreover, it helps to synergise the local plan with national, indigenous knowledge, cultural context and agro-ecology settings of the society. Furthermore, it also gave a sense of ownership and an opportunity to the local people to decide on their own matters (Saito, 2008).

Articles 39(3) and 50(4) of the Federal and Regional Constitutions of Ethiopia confer power on local authorities to make a local development plan and coordinate development initiatives. Although the power to prepare development plan is given to the Kebele authorities, they do not fully exercise this power. In fact, they provide input for an annual development plan which is prepared by Woreda authorities (Snyder et al., 2014). This trend affects the LCP and institutional capacity of the local authorities to coordinate development efforts. Table 3 presents the household survey results concerning local capacity for planning in selected Kebeles. A farmer in Goshe Bado Deberberhan area stated:

> "Comparing to the Derg regime, the current Kebele administration is better. The chairperson and other committee members were more accessible to the local people. They listen to the people. However, they had had a big problem regarding planning and coordinating activities. The problem is attributed to skill gap and lack of power. They do not have sufficient capacity so that the Woreda officials did the planning task. Go and ask our officials who has prepared this year local plan? They would tell you the Woreda did that."[6]

The farmer's remark echoed in a similar conversation with local officials. Snyder and others who researched on local planning practice (see Snyder et al., 2014) found that Kebeles were involved in the initial planning process

---

[5] Interview with local farmer in Azo Gule in January 2012, Gamo highland.
[6] Interview with local farmer in Goshebado in December 2013.

Table 2. Response to the statement 'local governance is decentralised and all-inclusive'. Source: Survey data (2011/2012).

Indicators			Household ratings (%)						
	Mean	SD	*DK*	*SD*	*DA*	*UD*	*AG*	*SA*	Total
Local authorities are decentralised and all inclusive	3.03	1.17	30(5.8)	10(1.9)	100(19.3)	190(36.7)	152(29.3)	36(6.9)	518(100)

Notes: DK = don't know, SD = strongly disagree, DA = Disagree, UD = Undecided, AG = Agree, and SA = Strongly Agree; figures in parentheses are percentages.

(giving input) but Woreda authorities made the final decision regarding the plan. The respondents' views regarding Kebele's capacity to make and implement local plans are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 reveals that the majority of respondents (around 32.4%, $N = 168$) were undecided and a significant number of respondents (32.2%, $N = 167$) do not believe in local authorities independent capacity to plan and implement. Poor organisational capacity in terms of physical facilities, human and financial resources were also observed during field visits. Although the population and territorial size of the Kebeles have been changed; neither new institutional innovations nor improved organisational structures have developed to accommodate the dynamism. Hence, the Kebeles' local capacity to make plans remains limited. The findings of the survey also confirm this fact.

5.3.3. Effective Local Governance System (ELGS)

An ELGS comprises local institutional capacity for service delivery, accountability and responsiveness of local authorities, and participation and inclusion of the local people in the local governance system. All these dimensions of ELGS indicate the level and scope of local governance effectiveness and efficiency under decentralised governance notions. Effective service delivery to the poor is an integral aspect of poverty reduction efforts (Bonfiglioli, 2003; Grindle, 2007). The basic social services allow poor people to be productive members of the society. Therefore, the provision of services including education, health, family planning, road, electricity, water, agricultural support and security are essential in poverty reduction effort.

Ideally, accountability and responsiveness allow the local people to call officials and to hold them accountable to their performance. It is also an effective means to control corruption and embezzlement of meagre resources at localities (Rao & Berg, 2005). Participation and empowerment in the local governance practice is another major aspect of local governance effectiveness (Bonfiglioli, 2003). As Alsop (2004) and Green (2012) note, poverty, power and right are inexorably interconnected. According to Alsop (2004, p. 4), political empow-

erment that marks 'increasing the capacity of individuals and groups to make choices and to transform these choices into desired actions and outcomes' has had a significant impact on transforming the dependent poor into productive citizens.

Though the rural Kebeles represent the wider and larger segment of the society (83% of the Ethiopian population), they exercise very limited administrative power which is delegated by Woreda authorities. Their accountability is upward and not to the local people (Ayele, 2011). Their ability to deliver adequate and fast local services is severely constrained by resource problems. As one farmer noted in focus group discussion in Dawa, Jimma area: "The Kebele authorities try to give us a swift response to most of our questions at their best. However, because of resource problems, we were not getting adequate services"[7].

As we witnessed in the fieldwork, most of Kebele administration runs with a shortage of resources. They did not even have a well-organised archive and record system, let alone necessary services. It is very difficult to get basic information about the Kebele.

Regarding participation, the current Kebele structures were much appreciated by local people in most of the study areas. Most of the farmers interviewed were involved in Kebele activities in one way or another.

Table 4 presents the views of local people from the study areas about local governance effectiveness in their respective localities.

The first statement addressed local service delivery. As we can see from the result, the overwhelming majority of respondents (mean value 3.46, supposing 4 amounted to agreement) were not satisfied and 38.6 per cent ($N = 200$) agreed with statement, 12% ($N = 62$) strongly agreed and 33.8% ($N = 177$) were 'undecided'. The second statement was 'the local governance system is all-inclusive and participatory'. The overall mean value obtained from the respondents on this was 3.45. This means most of the respondents seemed to agree that the existing local system is participatory and all-inclusive. Accordingly, 42.9% ($N = 222$) and 10.2% ($N = 52$) of the respondents 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed' with the statement respectively. The third statement was about accountability of local authority to local people. Again,

---

[7] Focus group discussion in February 2013, Dawa, Jimma area.

Table 3. Response to the statement 'local authority has the capacity to make and implement local plan'. Source: Survey data (2011/2012).

Indicators			Household ratings (%)						
	Mean	SD	DK	SD	DA	UD	AG	SA	Total
Local authorities have independent capacity to make local development plan and implement them	2.97	1.02	3(0.6)	18(3.5)	168(32.4)	167(32.2)	125(24.1)	37(7.1)	518(100)

Notes: DK = don't know, SD = strongly disagree, DA = Disagree, UD = Undecided, AG = Agree, and SA = Strongly Agree; figures in parentheses are percentages.

Table 4. Response to the statements regarding local government effectiveness (service delivery, accountability, participation). Source: Survey data (2011/2012).

Indicators			Household ratings (%)						
	Mean	SD	DK	SD	DA	UD	AG	SA	Total
Local service delivery is not adequate	3.46	0.93	2(0.2)	3 (0.6)	76(14.5)	177(33.8)	200(38.6)	62(12)	518(100)
The local governance is inclusive and participatory	3.45	0.97	9(1.7)	6(1.2)	55(10.6)	174(33.6)	222(42.9)	52(10)	518(100)
Local authorities are accountable to the local people	3.83	0.86	0	3(0.6)	22(4.2)	158(30.5)	213(41.1)	122(23.6)	518(100)

Notes: DK= don't know, SD = strongly disagree, DA = Disagree, UD = Undecided, AG = Agree, and SA = Strongly Agree; figures in parentheses are percentages.

as evident in the results, the overwhelming majority of respondents believed that local officials are accountable to the local people. The mean value is 3.83 (almost agreement) and 41.1% (N = 213) and 23.6% (N = 122) 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed' to the question respectively. However, as we witnessed in the field work and evidences gathered during key informant interviews, the accountability of the Kebele authorities is upward to the Woreda level administration.

6. The Practice of Decentralised Governance and Poverty Reduction at Kebele Localities

Participatory decentralised local governance is generally better informed about the needs and preference of local community than central government, which has limited opportunities to access the reality from a distance. In decentralised governance, monitoring and controlling of local agents is easier (Bonfiglioli, 2003). Local people hold the elected officials accountable, and poor people get the opportunity to voice their interest in the political decision-making process. Moreover, the devolution of power gives more responsibility, ownership and incentives to the local people (Green, 2012; Saito, 2008).

The effectiveness of decentralised governance depends on the institutional capacity of local authorities and policy implementation capacity (poverty reduction strategies) by the state. Likewise, poverty needs to be addressed through effective policy instruments that are supported by workable institutions at all level of administration (Treisman, 2007). Institutional capacity has several dimensions such as human capital, infrastructure (physical capital) and capacity to deliver services. Institutional capacity is critical in implementing decentralised governance. Poor quality of institutions may cause resource embezzlement, delay or denial of service delivery to the local people, and in the worst case, sluggish local economic performance. Institutions, therefore, are quite essential to fight against poverty (Painter & Pierre, 2005; Treisman, 2007).

The policy capacity (for developing poverty reduction strategies) is another major factor in decentralised

governance. It guides the process of decentralised governance towards mitigating poverty challenges. As decentralised governance transfers power and resources to lower echelons of administration, it allows participation, fair resource distribution, empowerment and responsiveness. Decentralised governance thus creates a conducive ground for policy implementation (Painter & Pierre, 2005).

As we noted earlier, the decentralisation of power to local governance institutions drifted at Woreda level administration. Although the majority of the people live in rural localities, decentralisation of power and devolution of resources has not extended to the grassroots administration (Zewde & Pausewang, 2002). The poverty reduction efforts coordinated from Woredas have been implemented through three major approaches, namely enhancing agricultural productivity through improved technology, developing resilience to vulnerability and food insecurity through a Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) which aims to build assets and livelihoods of vulnerable households, and resettling farmers from drought-prone areas into fertile but less inhabitable locations in selected lowland areas of the country. For example, Woreda Agriculture and Rural Development Bureau (WORAD) coordinates the PSNP. The main responsibility of governing the PSNP is vested in specifically established Woreda Food Security Task Forces (WFSTFs). Figure 3 below describes the implementation of the PSNP at Kebele level administration. The Woreda task force coordinated by WORAD consists of WFSTFs, the Woreda Food Security Desk (WFSD) and the Woreda Office of Finance and Economic Development (WOFED).

At the Kebele level, the FSTF comprises of the selected council members, the chair of the Kebele, development agents and the Kebele manager. The role of the Kebele in the implementation of PSNP is limited to the selection of eligible households to the programme, collecting complaints from the beneficiaries and organising public meetings for the Woreda officials. Woreda, however, carries out the overall programme. Even the decision whether the household is to remain part of the programme or not is made by Woreda. Figure 3 presents the governing process of PSNP.
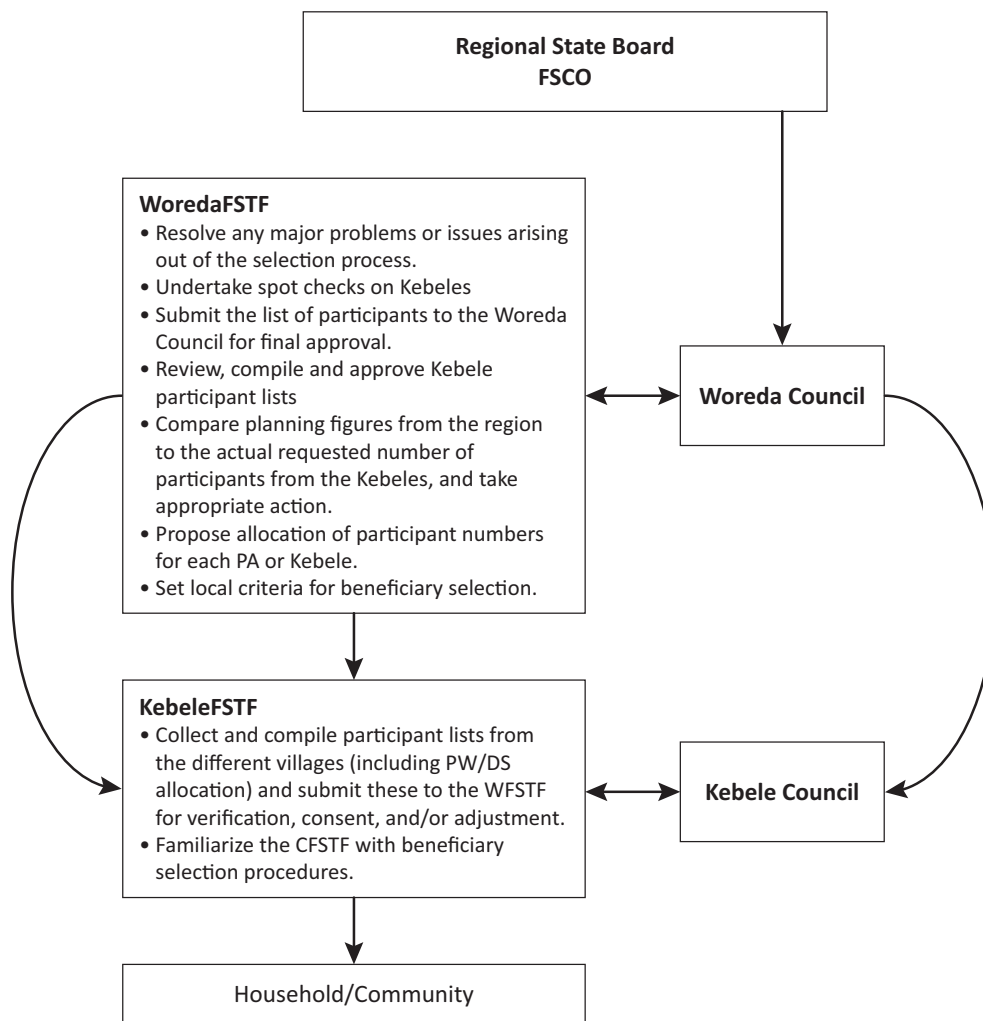
Figure 3. PSNP governance framework at Kebele level. Source: Sketched by the authors.

Taking this figure into consideration, the role of the Kebele in poverty reduction is trivial. Most of the Kebele administrations could not provide accurate information about the magnitude and depth of poverty in their localities. They do not have information systems about basic data on demography or economic matters (such as land size, productivity, income, non-farm income, type of crop production), agro-ecology, vulnerability, types and level of technology, social service provision, or rural infrastructure coverage (electricity, road, telephone, water). In the areas where this research was conducted—Azo Gule, Chano Mile, Amaraena Bodo, Gerema, Merewa, Alyu Amba, and Goshe Bado—the researchers witnessed this fact. However, it should be noted that Alyu Amba, Chano Mile and Goshe Bado were relatively in a better condition compared to others as they did store some basic information about the area.

Another poverty mitigation mechanism at Kebele level is FTC. The FTC is considered a cornerstone to support small-scale agriculture in rural Ethiopia, and was introduced in 2002 in each rural Kebele. Three development agents are assigned to each FTC. They are trained in crop science, livestock, and natural resource man-

agement. There are nearly 8,500 such centres throughout the country. The government's plan is to establish about 15,000 centres in the near future. About seven to ten committee members including development agents and selected model farmers manage the centre. The Kebele Chairperson is in charge of coordinating the FTC. The Committee's responsibility includes planning, examining the training and demonstration activities offered by the FTC. It also organises and maintains a demonstration field. The FTC provides training and technical assistance in the application of improved technology, production systems, market-orientated information, seed and seedlings of new crops, vegetables, fruit and forage varieties. FTC is part of the initiative to modernise and improve the agricultural system production in each Kebele.

FTC and PSNP are the two institutional (infrastructural) settings to address poverty at Kebele level. FTC aims to reduce poverty through intensification and diversification of agricultural products. It also provides assistance on market-related information and non-farm work opportunities to diversify the income of the farmers. The PSNP is the social protection programme for ensuring food security for vulnerable and food-insecure

poor households through direct assistance (cash or food) and food-for-work arrangements. The implementation of both modalities have been limited by lack of fiscal and political power in Kebele administration.

The role of the Kebele in the PSNP is to identify and select beneficiaries for the Woreda authorities. Kebeles did not assume power and necessary resources to implement both PSNP and FTC initiatives because the government has not been providing substantial public investment in rural Kebeles. It seems to adhere to the same policy as the Derg governments. Therefore, lack of incremental rural public investment has remained the major challenge in tackling rural poverty. The resource transfers from rural areas to the centre have consolidated the power structure of the state, but prevent trickle-down to the poor, reinforcing dependency and systematically perpetuating poverty.

Some scholars criticise the poverty reduction scheme as top-down in that it conceives of the poor as subjects ultimately dependent on the state for their well-being. This understanding of the poor as subject involves a policy implication and consequence. Rather than ensuring the well-being of citizens, the government seems to be concerned with guaranteeing its own survival by amassing support from the poor subjects. Poverty reduction efforts are political in that poor households are allowed support on condition that they fully support the regime. For instance, in the case of the PSNP, poor households are identified and selected by WFSTF at Kebeles chaired by the Kebele chairperson. In most cases, the Kebele authority handpicks farmers who are loyal to the regime as a reward.

In our study, we also asked the peasants whether the PSNP was politically tied. The following tables present the results.

Tables 5 and 6 portray that majority of the respondents tend to believe that the PSNP is tied to political mo-

tives. A total of 24.7% ($N = 128$) of the respondents were 'undecided' on the issue while 28.1% ($N = 149$) and 7.5% ($N = 39$) of respondents 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed' respectively. Majority of the respondents in Dawa (37.7%, $N = 26$; 31%, $N = 22$) agreed and strongly agreed respectively and in Azo Gule Kebele (52.9%, $N = 37$; 14.3%, $N = 10$) 'agreed', and 'strongly agreed', respectively that the PSNP is tied to political motives.

The goal of the state, therefore, appears to be consolidating its control over the society rather than reducing poverty. Consequently, poor people get less consideration for empowerment and participation. Moreover, the practice maintains a dependency syndrome on aid among a wide spectrum of rural people who believe they are eligible for aid in response to their loyalty and support of the government (Dercon, Gilligan, Hoddinott, & Woldehanna, 2009).

7. Conclusion

In post-1991 Ethiopia, an ethnic federal governance system was established, comprising Regional Governments and a Federal State, apportioning the state power between the two according to the 1995 Constitution, which is based on ethnic geography and identity. Each Region has been accorded a quasi-sovereign status and has awarded a self-rule right with the autonomy to have separate regional constitutions. In addition to an ethnic federal governance system, the state introduced decentralisation of power to local governance structure in 2002. Accordingly, the Woreda level of administration gave some political, fiscal, and administrative power to the Woreda authorities. They also assumed a mandate to plan and coordinate development activities at Kebele and Woreda administration level. However, Kebeles, as the lower echelon of local administration, have not experienced any significant change.

Table 5. Response to the statement whether PSNP is a political tool of Government. Source: Survey data (2011/2012).

Indicators			Household ratings (%)						
	Mean	SD	DK	SD	DA	UD	AG	SA	Total
The PSNP is politically tied	2.81	1.36	49(9.5)	25(4.8)	128(24.7)	128(24.7)	149(28.1)	39(7.5)	518(100)

Notes: DK = don't know, SD = strongly disagree, DA = Disagree, UD = Undecided, AG = Agree, and SA = Strongly Agree; figures in parentheses are percentages.

Table 6. Respondents' view about PSNP connection to political motives based on beneficiary Kebeles. Source: Survey data (2011/2012).

Indicators			The PSNP is tied to political agenda						
			DK	SD	DA	UD	AG	SA	Total
Kebele	Dawa	%(N)	0(0)	5.8(4)	10.1(7)	14.5(10)	37.7(26)	31.9(22)	100%(69)
	Azo Gule	%(N)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	32.9(23)	52.9(37)	14.3(10)	100(70)
	AlyuAmbaZuria	%(N)	0(0)	13.9(10)	52.8(38)	29.2(21)	4.2(3)	0(0)	100(72)

Notes: DK= don't know, SD = strongly disagree, DA = Disagree, UD = Undecided, AG = Agree, and SA = Strongly Agree; figures in parentheses are percentages.

The skills, knowledge and experiences of the Kebele administrations are inadequate in terms of organisational and institutional capacities, nor are they entitled to exercising any significant political, fiscal and administrative power. They simply serve as agents of district authorities. They are neither budgeted nor allowed to generate any local finances. Their role in local development activities and poverty reduction, therefore, is limited institutionally. In this study, three indicators were used to examine the role of Kebeles in local development activities, delivery of services to the local people and poverty reduction efforts. Based on the indicators DSR, LCP and ELGS as elucidated in this study, the role and performance of the Kebeles seem to be unsatisfactory.

DSR was not implemented at the Kebele level, and the findings indicate that the Kebeles lack the capacity and resources to deliver development. A system of upward accountability of the local officials to Woreda was established rather than downwards to the local people. The LCP is weak at Kebele level because of weak organisational capacity and institutional constraints related to DSR. The ELGS is poor since Kebeles did not assume any fiscal right and administrative power for the reasons associated with DSR and LCP.

The government enacted three major policy strategies to address rural poverty. These are: a) enhancing agricultural productivity through improved technology, b) developing resilience to vulnerability and food insecurity through PSNPs, which aim to build assets and c) improve livelihoods of vulnerable households, and resettlement of farmers from drought-prone areas to fertile but less inhabitable locations in selected lowland areas of the country. However, all these efforts are coordinated and managed by the Woreda administration. For example, two major poverty alleviation programmes operate at Kebele level, these being the PSNP and FTC. The first programme aims to support food-insecure and vulnerable households and the second is intended to increase the productivity of local households through the application of improved inputs for agricultural production via training and field demonstrations. However, as noted in this article, neither programme is fully functional because of lack of resources and power. Therefore, the absence of effective decentralised governance practice at local level in fact gravely constrains the performance of poverty reduction efforts and curtail local development initiatives.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

References

Abbink, J. (1997). Ethnicity and constitutionalism in contemporary Ethiopia. *Journal of African Law*, *41*(2), 159–174. doi:10.1017/S0021855300009372

Abbink, J. (2009). The Ethiopian Second Republic and the fragile "social contract". *Africa Spectrum*, *44*(2), 3–28.

Abegaz, B. (2004). Escaping Ethiopia's poverty trap: The case for a second agrarian reform. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, *42*(3), 313–342. doi:10.1017/S0022278X04000217

Ali Khan, S. (2013). Decentralization and poverty reduction: A theoretical framework for exploring the linkages. *International Review of Public Administration*, *18*(2), 145–172. doi:10.1080/12294659.2013.10805256

Alsop, R. (2004). *Power, rights and poverty reduction*. In R. Alsop, (Ed.), Power, rights and poverty: Concepts and connections. Washington DC: World Bank.

Assefe, T., & Gebre-Egziabher, T. (2007). *Decentralization in Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa: Forum for Social Studies.

Ayele, Z. (2011). Local government in Ethiopia: Still an apparatus of control? *Law, Democracy & Development*, *15*(1). doi:10.4314/ldd.v15i1.7

Bardhan, P. (1991). *The economic theory of agrarian institutions*. Oxford University Press.

Bardhan, P. K., & Mookherjee, D. (2006). *Decentralization and local governance in developing countries: A comparative perspective* (Vol. 1). Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

Belachew, M. (2010). *E-government initiatives in Ethiopia*. Paper presented at the 4th International Conference on Theory and Practice of Electronic Governance, Beijing, China. doi:10.1145/1930321.193033

Boko, S. H. (2002). *Decentralization and reform in Africa*. New York: Springer Science & Business Media. doi:10.1007/978-1-4615-1111-3

Bonfiglioli, A. M. (2003). *Empowering the poor: Local governance for poverty reduction*. New York: United Nations Publications.

Chanie, P. (2007). Clientelism and Ethiopia's post-1991 decentralisation. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, *45*(3), 355–384. doi:10.1017/S0022278X07002662

Davoodi, H., & Zou, H. (1998). Fiscal decentralization and economic growth: A cross-country study. *Journal of Urban Economics*, *43*(2), 244–257. doi:10.1006/juec.1997.2042

Dean, M. (2010). *Governmentality: Power and rule in modern society* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

Dercon, S., Gilligan, D. O., Hoddinott, J., & Woldehanna, T. (2009). The impact of agricultural extension and roads on poverty and consumption growth in fifteen Ethiopian villages. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, *91*(4), 1007–1021. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8276.2009.01325.x

Engdawork, D. (1995). Agricultural producer cooperatives: Some lessons of experience from Ethiopia. *GeoJournal*, *36*(4), 353–360. doi:10.1007/BF00807950

Fiseha, A. (2006). *Federalism and the accommodation of diversity in Ethiopia: A comparative study*. Oisterwijk: Wolf Legal.

Gebresenbet, F. (2014). Securitisation of development in Ethiopia: The discourse and politics of developmen-

talism. *Review of African Political Economy*, *41*(sup1), S64–S74. doi:10.1080/03056244.2014.976191

Green, D. (2012). *From poverty to power: How active citizens and effective states can change the world*. Warwickshire: Practical Action Publishing.

Grindle, M. S. (2007). *Going local: Decentralization, democratization, and the promise of good governance*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Harrison, G. (2004). *The World Bank and Africa: The construction of governance states*. London: Routledge.

Hope, K. R. (2008). *Poverty, livelihoods, and governance in Africa: Fulfilling the development promise*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kettl, D. F. (2015). *The transformation of governance: Public administration for the twenty-first century*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Lavers, T. (2012). 'Land grab'as development strategy? The political economy of agricultural investment in Ethiopia. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, *39*(1), 105–132. doi:10.1080/03066150.2011.652091

Lefort, R. (2010). Powers–mengist–and peasants in rural Ethiopia: The post-2005 interlude. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, *48*(3), 435–460. doi:10.1017/S0022278X10000297

Lessa, L. F., Belachew, M., & Anteneh, S. (2011). *Sustainability of E-Government project success: Cases from Ethiopia*. Paper presented at the AMCIS, Detroit, MI.

Makki, F., & Geisler, C. (2011). *Development by dispossession: Land grabbing as new enclosures in contemporary Ethiopia*. Paper presented at the International Conference on Global Land Grabbing, Sussex, UK.

Mammo, T. (1999). *The paradox of Africa's poverty: The role of indigenous knowledge, traditional practices and local institutions. The case of Ethiopia*. Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press.

Mengisteab, K. (2008). Identity politics, democratisation and state building in Ethiopia's federal arrangement. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, *7*(2), 63–92. doi:10.4314/ajcr.v7i2.39411

Meuleman, L. (2008). *Public management and the metagovernance of hierarchies, networks and markets: The feasibility of designing and managing governance style combinations*. Berlin: Springer Science & Business Media.

Miller, P., & Rose, N. (2008). *Governing the present: Administering economic, social and personal life*. Cambridge: Polity.

Painter, M., & Pierre, J. (2005). *Challenges to state policy capacity: Global trends and comparative perspectives*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. doi:10.1057/9780230524194

Pausewang, S. (2004). *The need for a third alternative: The amputated debate on land tenure in Ethiopia*. Paper presented at the XI World Congress of Rural Sociology, Trondheim, Norway.

Peters, B. G., & Pierre, J. (1998). Governance without government? Rethinking public administration. *Journal of Public Administration: Research and Theory*, *8*(2), 223–243. doi:10.1093/oxfordjournals.jpart.a024379

Pierre, J., & Peters, G. B. (2000). *Governance, politics and the state*. London: Palgrave Macmilan.

Rao, N., & Berg, R. (2005). *Transforming local political leadership*. New York: Palgrave.

Saito, F. (2008). *Foundations for local governance: Decentralization in comparative perspective*. Heidelberg: Springer Science & Business Media. doi:10.1007/978-3-7908-2006-5

Schneider, A. (2003). Decentralization: Conceptualization and measurement. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, *38*(3), 32–56. doi:10.1007/BF02686198

Shah, A. (2006). *Local governance in developing countries*. Washington DC: World Bank Publications. doi:10.1596/978-0-8213-6565-6

Snyder, K. A., Ludi, E., Cullen, B., Tucker, J., Zeleke, A. B., & Duncan, A. (2014). Participation and performance: Decentralised planning and implementation in Ethiopia. *Public Administration and Development*, *34*(2), 83–95. doi:10.1002/pad.1680

Stoker, G. (1998). Governance as theory: Five propositions. *International Social Science Journal*, *50*(155), 17–28. doi:10.1111/1468-2451.00106

Treisman, D. (2007). *The architecture of government: Rethinking political decentralization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511619151

Turton, D. (2006). *Ethnic federalism: The Ethiopian experience in comparative perspective*. Oxford: James Currey.

Yilmaz, S., & Venugopal, V. (2008). *Local government discretion and accountability in Ethiopia* (International Studies Program Working Paper, 8–38). Washington DC: World Bank.

Zewde, B., & Pausewang, S. (Eds.). (2002). *Ethiopia: The challenge of democracy from below*. Uppsala and Addis Ababa: Nordic Africa Institute.

About the Authors

Yeshtila Wondemeneh Bekele is currently finalizing his PhD in Development Studies at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences. Yeshtila has substantial experience in research activities working as senior security and counter-terrorism analyst at the Ministry of Ethiopian National Defense and working as faculty member in different capacities at both Bahir Dar and Hawassa Universities. He serves at the Center for Policy and Development Research, Hawasa University, as Governance and Policy Cluster leader and senior researcher. He is also coordinating NORHED-DEG project funded by NORAD.

Darley Jose Kjosavik is Associate Professor of International Development Studies at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences. She has a PhD in Development Studies from the same University. Her academic interests include political economy of development, decentralized governance, conflict and development, environment-development nexus, climate change adaptation and mitigation, gender and development and political economy of marginalization. Her latest book (co-authored with N. Shanmugaratnam) is titled *Political Economy of Development in India: Indigeneity in Transition in the State of Kerala* (Routledge London, 2015).

Article

Preference for Democracy in the Arab World

Mohammed Al-Ississ [1] and Ishac Diwan [2,3,]*

[1] School of Business, The American University in Cairo, Cairo, Egypt; E-Mail: alississ@aucegypt.edu
[2] Paris Sciences et Lettres, 75006 Paris, France; E-Mail: ishac_diwan@hks.harvard.edu
[3] Harvard Kennedy School, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 02138, USA

* Corresponding author

Abstract
We take a new look at the question of the Arab democratic exception by looking at the preference for democracy among individuals in the Arab world in a comparative context. We use the new sixth wave of the World Value Survey, which was collected between 2012 and 2013, and which included for the first time 12 Arab countries (up from only four in wave 5) and 68 non-Arab countries. We innovate empirically by measuring the preference for democracy over strong rule in a way that, we argue, is more adapted to an understanding of the Arab world than other measures used in past studies. Our statistical analysis reveals a democratic gap in the Arab region compared to global experience, which is especially marked among the more educated individuals, and to a lesser extent among the youth and the middle class. We conclude by discussing the reasons that may explain the Arab exceptionalism, and argue that it is unlikely to be related to culture alone.

1. Introduction

In this paper, we re-open the debate about a possible cultural bias against democracy in Arab countries. The interest in understanding the political culture of the Arab countries as a group has risen among policy makers and social activists because of the failure of the popular uprisings of 2011 to deliver political change, and the political chaos that has ensued. There are also more objective reasons to look at the Arab countries as one group because of the cultural, political, and economic similarities between them. On the cultural side, the region shares one language and has one dominant religion. The development of a regional Arab media, and the increased movement of migrants throughout the region have facilitated the movement of ideas. On the political front, "presidents for life" had entrenched autocratic

regimes in all countries, save Lebanon (Owen, 2014). Finally, the economies of Arab countries have been dominated by the logic of rents extraction and distribution—oil, geopolitical, and regulatory—which have fostered crony relations between state and business that have taxed growth and impeded global integration (Cammett, Diwan, Richards, & Waterbury, 2015; Chekir & Diwan, 2014; Henry & Springborg, 2010). These similarities have revealed themselves most starkly during 2011, when protests in Tunisia led quickly to protests across the Arab world, led by similar political demands for more freedoms, dignity, and economic opportunities.

Our goal is to assess whether citizens in Arab countries desire democracy as much as otherwise similar individuals in the rest of the world. We take advantage of new data released by the World Value Survey (WVS) as its 6th wave, which was collected during 2011/2013, and

which included 12 Arab countries, and 75 non-Arab countries.[1] This is in contrast the WVS's 4th and 5th waves, collected around 2000 and 2008, which only included 5 and 4 Arab countries respectively. The new dataset allows for the first time to compare values in a sizable share of the Arab world to values around the world.

The literature focusing on the individual support for democracy in the Arab world is thin. Most existing work concerns the relationship between support for democracy and Islam. While some researchers such as Fish (2002), have found that there is a Muslim democratic deficit, other researchers conclude that at the level of individual preferences, there is no particular democratic deficit connected to being Muslim, whether Muslims are compared to individuals of other religions in heterogeneous societies (Hofmann, 2004), whether individuals of various levels of piety are compared in Arab countries (Tessler, 2002a, 2002b), or whether one compares individuals in Muslim societies to individuals in other societies (Norris & Inglehart, 2002). Tessler (2002a) and Jamal and Tessler (2008) show, using Arab Barometer data (which is limited to Arab countries), that individuals in Arab countries have a strong desire for democracy, especially among the youth and the educated, but these studies do not compare the intensity of this demand with that emanating from individuals around the world. Indeed, the literature does not look at an Arab specificity in a comparative context largely because micro-data on values covering a large set of Arab countries and international comparators were, until recently, not available.[2]

Besides using a richer dataset, this paper innovates methodologically in several respects. First, it looks at the Arab values in comparison to global values. Second, it asks whether individual characteristics such as education, young age, middle class status, and low religiosity are as "emancipative" in terms of democratic preferences in the Arab world as in the rest of the world. Third, we use a new measure of the "preference for democracy" which we argue is more instructive for the Arab context compared to measures used by other researchers in comparative studies such as Inglehart and Welzel (2005, 2010).

Our empirical work reveals that individuals living in Arab countries do have a lower preference for democracy compared to otherwise similar individuals living in other countries at similar levels of development. We find that the deficit is especially large among the educated, followed by the youth, and the middle class, and it is only explained in small part by the higher extent of religiosity exhibited in the Arab region.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 discusses how to measure the preference for democracy. Section 3 evaluates empirically the existence of an Arab exception. Section 4 asks whether this exception is connected with different socio-economic groups. Section 5 looks at civic action. Section 6 conducts robustness tests, and section 7 concludes by discussing the reasons that may be driving these preferences.

2. Measuring the Preference for Democracy, and Comparing Arab Citizens with the Rest of the World

We first discuss how to measure individual preferences for democracy. Admittedly, democracy is a multidimensional concept than cannot be reduced to a single variable—there are many forms of it, and people may have different understandings if it.[3] In this paper however, we do not focus on the type of democracy people aspire to, but rather, on their ranking of democracy, as they understand it, with an alternative regime. When simply asked to rate their (unconstrained) preference for a democratic order, Arabs, like most people around the world, express a high demand for democracy, and especially so among the youth and the educated individuals (Tessler & Gao, 2005). To get a finer measure, one must measure not just individuals' "raw" support for democracy, but also their rejection of non-democratic alternatives—Inglehart and Welzel (2005, p. 253) suggest that some people may not be "solid democrats" if their support for democracy is offset by parallel support for authoritarian regimes.[4] Jamal and Tessler (2008) look at this issue more closely in the Arab world. Based on Arab Barometer data, they show that a significant number of individuals polled in the Arab region support both democracy and strong rule. Indeed, when the opinion poll questions become more qualified (for example, would respondents favor a quick or gradual shift to democracy, or whether in spite of problems, democracy is better than other political systems), responses become more ambiguous (Jamal & Tessler, 2008). They conclude that while many people in the Arab world support democracy in principle, they seem to want to see it implemented gradually, out of a fear that democracies are poor at maintaining order.

A measure of "net" support for democracy is provided by Inglehart and Welzel (2005, 2010), who, using WVS questions, subtract from a variable measuring democratic aspirations ("how important is it for you to live in a country that is democratically governed?"), a measure of individual preferences for autocracy ("as a

---

[1] These are: Jordan, Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Qatar, Yemen, Kuwait, and Libya. The WVS interviews 1000–3000 individual per country using polling methods that are meant to produce nationally representative samples.

[2] In particular, Gallup data does not include good measure of democratic aspirations, PEW does not have a detailed list of the respondents' characteristics, and the Arab Barometer, which has a deeper coverage of issues surrounding democracy and political Islam, does allow for comparisons with the rest of the world.

[3] And indeed, there is a literature that tries to characterize individual understandings of democracy using various questions related to whether it would be good for the economy, whether it should entail income redistribution, or whether it tends to favor political stability. See for example Cifti (2010) on these issues, for the Muslim countries covered by the WVS.

[4] Inglehart and Welzel (2005) also show this "net" measure behaves better than the "gross" measure of preferences for democracy in terms of its correlation globally with measures of effective democracy.

way of governing your country, what do you think of having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections").[5] Below, we refer to this measure as NetDemo.

We think however that this definition is too blunt in defining "solid democrats" in the Arab world. It may well be that many Arabs are looking for relatively managed elections as described by Jamal and Tessler (2008), but that this does not necessarily push them to support autocrats "who do not bother with elections".[6] We prefer to measure the (relative) preference for democracy with a variable that allows respondents to rank their preference for democracy relative to "strong rule", but not to such an extreme form of autocracy. Ideally, such a measure would also allow respondents to directly rank alternatives (rather than subtract two ordinal values), and it would rely on more than one question in order to reduce noise.

We have developed what we argue is a more adapted measure to the circumstances where both a full democracy and a repressive autocracy are likely to be viewed by many as undesirable. We compute our measure, which we call "preference for democracy" (PfD), by using 3 questions in the WVS that ask respondents to rank the values provided in 3 separate menus, where each menu includes at least one value connected with democratic ideals ("people have more say in how things are done", "giving people more say in important government decisions", "protecting freedom of speech, progress towards a less impersonal and more humane society") and one with authoritarian (but not openly tyrannical) preferences ("making sure the country has strong defense forces", "maintaining order in the nation", "the fight against crime").

Our measure is also ordered: we rate higher individuals who rank values connected with democracy above those associated with security more frequently.[7]

Table 1 shows the basic statistics for DemoNet, PfD, and their constituent variables: democratic aspirations, and support for strong rule. We also include a measure of democratic grievances (DemoGap), a variable used extensively by Norris (e.g. Norris, 2011), which measures the difference between the answers to a question about the strength of democratic aspirations ("how important is it for you to live in a country that is democratically governed?"), and an assessment of the current situation ("how democratically is your country being governed today?"). Demo gap measures an aspect of the demand for democracy different from DemoNet and PfD: the gap between the extent to which some people like the idea of democracy, and their assessment of how democratic their country actually is. People may have large democratic grievances (so DemoGap will be large), and yet, when asked to rank democracy and strong rule/autocracy, they may still prefer the latter (so PfD or DemoNet would be small).

The three variables DemoNet, DemoGap, and PfD measure different aspects of the demand for democracy. It turns out that while the PfD average is lower in the Arab sample relative to the rest of the world (3.0 versus 3.75 average score on a scale of 10), the average of DemoGap and DemoNet are larger in the Arab world.

In order to try and understand the character of this regularity, it is useful to examine how these 3 variables are distributed along various socio-economic groups in the Arab and global samples. To do so, we develop below

---

[5] Answers to each of these questions are a number that represent the respondent preference between two extreme possible answers, typically over a (1–10) range. This allows developing various measures of gap by subtracting two variables.

[6] Moreover, the measure treats two ordinal variables as cardinal by subtracting them and expecting the difference to be ordered. While the use of ordinal values cannot be avoided in statistical analysis of opinions, it should be minimized, especially for dependent variables.

[7] For a precise description of how the PfD variable, and other variables used in the paper, are constructed, see the appendix.

Table 1. Summary statistics (Global and Arab Datasets, Individual Level, waves 5 and 6).

	Arab countries			ROW			All	
	Obs.	mean	SD	Obs.	mean	SD	min	max
Preference for democracy (PfD)	23036	3.00	2.52	135591	3.75	2.58	1	10
Democratic deficit (DemoGap)	14027	3.27	3.37	125479	2.08	2.75	−9	9
Democratic gap (DemoNet)	18660	3.76	4.24	120884	3.51	3.96	−9	9
Strong Leader	21348	4.54	3.36	125641	4.90	3.05	1	10
Demo aspirations	21044	8.44	2.15	131341	8.40	2.03	1	10
Demo satisfaction	14177	5.14	2.75	126447	6.31	2.44	1	10
Protest	19725	2.89	3.13	122210	3.78	3.19	1	10
Civic engagement	23183	3.67	2.70	144948	3.60	2.64	1	10
Interest in politics	22467	5.13	2.67	161948	5.12	2.60	1	10
Age	24507	38.27	14.21	138431	42.30	16.84	15	99
Education	24471	2.63	1.03	137600	2.94	.78	1	4
Religiosity	24574	.76	.42	138759	.35	.48	0	1
Inc1	23684	.18	.38	129599	.18	.38	0	1
Inc2	23684	.23	.42	129599	.20	.40	0	1
Inc3	23684	.24	.43	129599	.28	.45	0	1

several sets of multi-level regressions that explain variations in democratic values PfD in relation to variations in individual characteristics, in both the global and Arab samples, following the form:

$$PfD = aA + bB + cC + error \qquad (1)$$

Where the matrix A describes individual characteristics, B is a set of country level variables (GDP per capita, time dummies); and C describes the population under study in various ways (dummies for all Arab countries, or for individual Arab countries). For ease of interpretation of the resulting estimated coefficients, we use simple Ordinary Least Square (OLS) techniques (while recognizing that logistical models would be more adapted to the task), and all variables have been standardized.[8]

Our individual controls include age (15–90), education (classified at four levels), religiosity, gender, and income. We measure income with dummies variables (relative to the richest group) to allow for non-linearities of the income effect—in particular, the middle class may be more democratic than both the richer and poorer part of the population, as found by Diwan (2013) in the case of Egypt. Religiosity is measured relative to the values people want to inculcate in their children, in order to avoid gender biases that would arise if we used instead the frequency of attending religious services (since women are not bound to participate in the five daily prayers in Islam). Precise definitions are in the annex.

It is usually believed that values reflect culture and change slowly. A key weakness of opinion polls is that they measure opinions at a particular moment in time, and that these measurements can be influenced by particular events, and end up as non-representative of the true underlying values. In order to both measure the recent state of values, but attempt to neutralize short-term fluctuations, we pool data from the 5th and 6th waves, which span the period 2000–2013. As a result, our data covers about 160,000 individuals in 80 countries, of which about 25,000 individuals in 12 Arab countries.[9] The WVS sample size in each country/wave tends to be reasonable and representative (1000 to 3000 respondents). Answers to questions are typically over a range (1–10), allowing us to measure the intensity of particular values. Most of the questions we use span the two last waves. Whenever we have constructed indexes that use the responses to several questions, factor analysis was conducted to ensure that all the variables entered in the index have one unique factor.

3. Arab Intercept Effect

We start by investigating the differences between DemoNet and PfD. In the base regression, A includes indi-

vidual characteristics (age, education, gender, income, religiosity), B includes only GDP per capita and a time dummy, and C includes an Arab region dummy and its interaction with time.[10]

The results (in Table 2, columns 1 to 3) of the estimation of A accord with the main findings of Inglehart and Welzel (2005), which follow the "modernisation" approach (Lipset, 1959) in finding that education, as a core emancipative value, drives the preference for democracy. Indeed, we find that both measures of democratic values rise with education. The effect of age and income are however different. DemoNet rises with age, while PfD is higher among the youth. This is an important difference, as the first result does not accord well with the well-established claim of the modernization school of thought according to which younger generations should be more emancipated (Ingleheart & Welzel, 2005). In addition, we find that DemoNet has no relation to income, while PfD is highest among the lower middle class, another desirable feature in light of the same literature on the role of the middle class in consolidating democracy. The PfD measure differs from DemoNet in two other ways—it decreases with religiosity, and it is higher among females, relative to males (but both effects are small). Finally, the effect of development, as measured by lnGDPc is positive and significant for PfD (again, as suggested by modernization theory) but not significant for DemoNet. Thus, our PfD variable behaves in more intuitively appealing ways than DemoNet on several important accounts. The variable DemoGap behaves in ways similar to DemoNet with respect to age and education.[11]

What of the Arab exception? The results in Table 2 show again important divergences among the two measures. DemoNet shows the Arab region as having a *premium* for (net) democracy of +10%, as suggested by the simple averages discussed above, while our variable PfD shows a *deficit* of 8%. DemoGap also shows a premium of 14%. Since we are using standardized forms for our variables, with a mean of 0 and an SD of 1, this should be interpreted as a gap of 8% below the global average (which is 3.75—see Table 1), expressed in terms of units of standard deviation of the global distribution of PfD (which is 2.58). Note that this estimated democratic deficit is smaller than that suggested by the raw averages in Table 1. This must be due to net composition effects, the Arab region being much more religious and a bit less educated than the global average, two factors that reduce PfD (but it is also younger, which creates an offsetting positive effect on PfD).

The Arab premium connected to DemoNet is explained by the fact that while Arab citizens have slightly higher democratic aspirations compared to individuals around the world (column 5), their demand for a hard au-

---

[8] Standard errors are clustered at the country level.

[9] We have left Bahrain out, as we have found its data to be overly biased towards educated citizens and thus not to be reliable.

[10] The time effect in the Arab region is given by the Arb1 dummy, which refers to the 4 countries with data in waves 5 and 6 (which are Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, and Iraq), multiplied by a wave 6 dummy variable. It thus shows the trend among these 4 countries between waves 5 and 6.

[11] Although this is less of a concern since there is no presumption that grievances should behave like core values with respect to modernization—see Norris (2011, p. 243) on this.

tocratic rule is way below that of the rest of the world (ROW)—see column 4. The special dislike for a hard autocratic rule among Arabs is probably related to the catastrophic history of dictators in the region. On the other hand, their DemoGap premium is due to the fact that they rate their regimes as less democratic than in the ROW (column 6). This again is understandable, since their countries are indeed much less democratic than other countries around the world (Freud & Jaud, 2013). In effect, these results indicate that more than in the ROW, Arabs aspire for both more democracy and less autocratic rule, as they have too little of the first and too much of the second.

But when asked to rank democracy and *strong rule* (and not hard autocracy), our result in Table 1 indicates that many Arabs tend to prefer the latter, even when they dislike hard dictators.[12] As a result, they end up below the global averages on PfD, even though they register a premium on the measure of unconstrained aspirations (DemoGap), and of hard autocracy (DemoNet), as if these end up choosing among the lesser of evils. For us, this tension between aspirations and a hard reality is at the heart of the Arab autocratic specificity.[13] In the rest of the analysis, we will focus on the PfD variable to measure the preference for democracy, as we believe that, based on the results above, this variable characterizes Arab preferences regarding the type of regime they aspire to in a finer and more useful way than the net measure DemoNet of Inglehart and Welzel (2005).[14]

It can be noted that while we have weak evidence for the movement of Arab opinions over time, since they

are restricted to four countries, PfD took a small hit after the 2011–2012 uprisings in the 4 countries in the sample, dropping by 3% on average (but not significant), but at a time when the global trend was also negative. If this trend was applied to the sample of 12 countries, in wave 5, just before the "Arab Uprisings", the gap must have been of a similar magnitude.[15]

4. The Effect of Individual Arab Characteristics on PfD

The country-wide level differences that we have observed above between the PfD of citizens of Arabs countries and the rest of the world may reflect differences among all citizens, or they may be due to differences among particular socio-economic groups. Identifying such group differences would help in characterizing better the Arab specificity. We thus extend the results of Tables 2 by looking more in depth at the Arab specific effects of individual characteristics on PfD by adding an Arab dummy variable interacted with individual characteristics in the regression model. These effects will measure possible deviations from the global norms. To recall, we had found that within the global sample, PfD is higher among the middle class (Inc2), the youth, and the educated. Is the structure of individual preferences for PfD different in Arab countries? It is clear from Table 3 that the answer is Yes, and that the main ways in which the Arab world is different are, in order of importance, the effects of education, and then of age and class, which are all less emancipative with respect to PfD than in the rest

---

[12] The correlation coefficient between PfD and Strong Leader is −0.15 in the Arab world, indicating that while these two values are not that closely connected.

[13] Jamal and Tessler (2008) relate this Arab specificity to a special concern about instability. See our interpretation in the concluding section.

[14] We are however not making the case that our measure is always superior to DemoNet. It may be the case that when focusing on other countries or regions, where political opinions are polarized between democrats and populists, the latter measure is more useful.

[15] This is consistent with the findings of Tessler and Robbins (2014) who shows, based on Arab barometer micro-data that cover eight Arab countries, that the uprisings of 2011 have not affected preferences for democracy in significant ways.

Table 2. Global determinants of preference for democracy (PfD), with Arab intercept effect.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
	PfD	DemoGap [5-6]	DemoNet [5-4]	Strong Leader	Demo. aspiration	Demo. satisfaction	Protest	Civic engagement	Interest in politics
age	−0.06***	0.05***	0.06***	−0.02	0.07***	0.00	0.09***	−0.02	−0.04**
education	0.06***	0.13***	0.08***	−0.04*	0.10***	−0.07***	0.13***	0.15***	0.13***
female	0.01	−0.01***	−0.00	−0.00	−0.01	0.01*	−0.10***	−0.08***	−0.08***
religiosity	−0.02	−0.00	−0.01	0.01	−0.00	0.01	−0.00	−0.03	−0.01
inc1	−0.00	0.08***	−0.00	−0.01	−0.01	−0.11***	−0.05***	−0.05***	−0.03**
inc2	0.02**	0.04***	−0.00	−0.01	−0.02**	−0.07***	−0.04***	−0.02	−0.01
inc3	0.01	0.03***	−0.01	−0.01	−0.02***	−0.06***	−0.02***	−0.02	−0.01
lngdpc	0.11***	−0.05	0.05	−0.05	0.02	0.09*	−0.06*	0.21***	0.08**
ARB	−0.08**	0.14***	0.10**	−0.11***	0.05*	−0.13**	0.05	−0.08	−0.03
wave6	−0.05*	−0.02	−0.12***	0.09**	−0.10***	−0.05	−0.03	−0.13***	−0.08**
w6*ARB1	−0.03	0.02	−0.07	0.09	0.01	−0.01	−0.02	−0.05***	−0.06**
N	141914	126530	126217	132087	137278	127428	146730	131104	127652
adj. R^2	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.04	0.04	0.12	0.05

Notes: OLS, uses WVS waves 5 and 6. Standardized beta coefficients. Variables are defined in the annex. ARB is a dummy for 12 Arab countries included in wave 6. ARB1 is a dummy for the four Arab countries included in wave 5. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.010$.

Table 3. Determinants of PfD in Arab countries, with Arab specific slope effects.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
	PfD	DemoGap [5-6]	DemoNet [5-4]	Strong Leader	Demo. aspiration	Demo. satisfaction	Protest	Civic engagement	Interest in politics
age	−0.06***	0.03***	0.05***	−0.02***	0.07***	0.03***	−0.01**	−0.01	0.09***
education	0.10***	0.10***	0.12***	−0.08***	0.11***	−0.02***	0.18***	0.17***	0.11***
female	0.00	−0.02***	−0.00	−0.00	−0.01***	0.01***	−0.06***	−0.06***	−0.10***
Religiosity	−0.02***	−0.01***	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.02***	−0.01***	−0.03	−0.01
inc1	0.01***	0.07***	−0.00	−0.01***	−0.02***	−0.10***	−0.01***	−0.04**	−0.06***
inc2	0.02***	0.05***	−0.00	−0.02***	−0.03***	−0.07***	−0.01**	−0.02	−0.05***
inc3	0.01***	0.03***	−0.01***	−0.01	−0.03***	−0.06***	−0.01*	−0.01	−0.03***
lnGDPc	−0.33***	0.44***	0.16***	−0.29***	0.02	−0.39***	0.48***	0.19***	−0.07**
ARB	0.11*	−0.20***	0.03	−0.03	−0.04	0.15***	−0.11	0.14	−0.15*
Age*ARB	0.03***	0.01	−0.03***	0.02***	−0.03***	−0.04***	−0.05***	−0.05**	0.01
Edu*ARB	−0.07***	0.01	−0.05***	0.05***	−0.03**	−0.03**	−0.12***	−0.13***	0.16**
Fem*ARB	0.01***	0.00	0.00	−0.00	0.01**	0.01**	−0.06***	−0.04**	−0.00
Relig*ARB	−0.00	0.02***	0.04***	−0.03***	0.03***	−0.01**	0.02**	−0.00	0.01
inc1*ARB	−0.01***	0.01**	0.01**	−0.01***	0.00	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.02	0.02
inc2*ARB	−0.02***	−0.00	0.00	0.01*	0.00	0.00	−0.01	−0.02	0.03**
inc3*ARB	0.00	−0.00	0.00	0.00	−0.00	−0.00	−0.01***	−0.02	0.01
N	141914	126530	126217	132087	137278	127428	127761	132019	145178
adj. R^2	0.10	0.13	0.18	0.17	0.08	0.19	0.15	0.12	0.04

Notes: See notes in Table 2. Also include time dummies (not shown). Standardized beta coefficients. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.010$.

of the world (as the variables have been normalized, the size of the effects can be directly compared in our regression results). As noted above, a fourth factor that stands out is religiosity, because of a large compositional effect, rather than because religiosity influences values in the Arab region differentially.

First, the effect of education on PfD is very much muted in the Arab region (+3% = +10% − 7%) relative to the rest of the world, (+10%). This means that as an individual moves from uneducated to being a university graduate, which is about 4 SDs on the education scale (see Table 1), her PfD rises by 40% globally, but only by 12% in the Arab world—a very large difference. It is noteworthy that there is a similar, albeit smaller effect for Gap 2, the measure on preference for democracy relative to a hard autocracy. Thus, as in the ROW, education emancipates, but it does so much less in the Arab world compared to the global experience, resulting in low national averages on PfD. The result that education emancipates politically in the Arab world is not new (Jamal, 2006; Tessler, 2002), but that it does so much less than elsewhere is.

Second, the effect of young age on PfD is smaller in the Arab region than in the rest of the world—the net Arab slope relative to age is -3% (−6% + 3%), compared to a global slope of −6%.[16] So for example when comparing a person in her 20s, with another in her 60s (about 3 SDs on the age scale), holding all other personal characteristics at their global means, the young would have an excess on PfD relative to the old of 18% in the ROW, and only of 9% in the Arab region. Here too, the new result is not that youth are more emancipated in the Arab region compared to the old, but that they are less so compared to global experience.

Third, the effect of religiosity is significant, negative, and similar in the Arab region and in the ROW, but this translates into a larger PfD gap in the region given that it is much more religious than the ROW (.76 versus .35 on a scale of 0–1, see Table 1). Here, the results are different from those in Hofmann (2004), Jamal (2006), Tessler (2002a), and Hassan (2008), who all find that the effect of religiosity on the PfD is small and insignificant in Muslim-majority countries. Here, we find this effect to be negative (and small), but in ways similar to the ROW—these differences are likely to be due to differences in the sample and/or in our measurement of PfD.

The income effect, which is evident in the global sample, is neutralized in the Arab region, which has only a small upper middle class effect. In particular, the lower middle class group (Inc2) has a 2% premium on PfD in the global sample, but a zero premium in the Arab region. Thus, while it may be that it was the middle classes that mainly supported democratic ideals during the regional uprisings of 2011 (Diwan, 2013), they still fell short of the intensity of middle class support for democracy observed in the ROW. Finally, women are found to be more pro-democracy in the PfD sense then men in the Arab region, but not in the ROW, with a small differential of 1%.

[16] In contrast, the relation between age and DemoNet, the measure on preference for democracy relative to a hard autocracy, goes the other way around, as if older individuals are more comfortable with hard autocracy.

What is the relative contribution then of age, education, class, and religiosity in explaining the Arab gap? Let us consider for simplicity that Arabs have the same distribution of age and education as in the ROW, but that religiosity is one SD above the global situation (which is close to reality—see Table 1). Let us then compare the attitudes to PfD of its main champion—a young, highly educated, lower middle class (LMC) individual, with average religious beliefs. Let us pick then a LMC youth of about 25 years old (with about one SD below the global average age, i.e., of age 43.3−16.8), that goes to university (this corresponds to a rating of 4 which is again close to an education level about one SD above the global average: 2.94+.78). The global educated youth is estimated to have a surplus on PfD, relative to an average global individual (i.e., with all variables are at the mean of their global distribution, the normalized PfD measure is 0) of 18 points (+6+10+0+2). The Arab educated youth, with a religiosity level set at the Arab average, would have an excess of PfD relative to an average global citizen of 4 points (3+3−2+0).[17] The PfD difference between the Arab and global educated LMC individuals is thus 14 points (18-4), which can be decomposed into the differential effect of education (7), age (3), religiosity (2), and LMC effect (2). Clearly, the education effect swamps each of the other three effects.

5. Civic Action and Protest

Are the lower levels of PfD in the Arab countries that we have uncovered above associated with lower level of political involvement? The question is worth asking given the seeming contradiction between our results on the existence of a democratic preference gap, and the scenes of demonstrations and protest witnesses in major Arab cities during 2011–2012 (a period that falls between the WVS waves 5 and 6). To try to elucidate this contrast, there are several questions related to political involvement in the WVS that can be looked at here. We focus on three variables—interest in politics, participation in demonstrations, and a broad index of civic action that we construct and that encompasses four questions related to the extend to which respondents have participated in a demonstration, signed a petition, voted, or joined a boycott.

It turns out that there are no *level* differences in the Arab world relative to the ROW—the level Arab dummy is not significantly from zero in Table 2 (columns 7 to 9).[18] But are there differences in the participation of particular groups in political activities? To answer this, we look at the slope effects associated with our 3 variables (Table 3, columns 7 to 9). The results indicate that there are important slope differences for education again, but not

for most of the other individual characteristics. Although educated Arabs are *more* interested in politics than their global comparators (by +16%), they are not as engaged politically (a gap of 13%), and they demonstrate less (a gap of 12%) relative to similarly educated individuals in the ROW. These large differentials run parallel to our results above on the PfD gap being especially large among the educated, and it strengthens the notion that education is not as emancipatory politically in the Arab world as in the rest of the world. On the other hand, the results in Table 3 also show that youth have participated more in demonstrations than in the rest of the world (relative to older individuals), which runs against their (small) relative gap on PfD, pointing towards the existence of other countervailing influences, and requiring further investigation.[19]

6. Robustness

We conclude by conducting robustness checks to see if a few outliers countries in the Arab region drive the main results found above, or whether these apply broadly in the Arab sub-sample. To evaluate the particular country effects, we rerun the PfD regression of Table 2, replacing the Arab dummy by country dummies for each of the 12 Arab countries covered by the WVS, in order to measure how far from the regression line each Arab country lies (see Table 4). We find that all the countries of the region are below the global "regression line" on PfD. The regressions yield effects with the same signs as those in Table 2,

Table 4. Country specific effects on values (waves 5 and 6).

	PfD	DemoGap	DemoNet
JOR	−0.03**	−0.03***	0.09***
MAR	0.00	0.10***	0.11***
EGY	−0.03**	0.08***	0.08***
LBN	−0.01***	0.01	−0.02***
PLN	−0.01***	0.03***	0.00
QAT	−0.04***	na	na
TUN	−0.05***	0.09***	0.00
LBY	−0.08***	0.08***	0.02***
YEM	−0.03***	0.05***	0.04***
IRQ	0.02	0.05***	0.08**
DZA	−0.02***	0.02***	0.04***
KWT	0.00	0.00	−0.02**
BHR	−0.03**	na	−0.03***
N	133108	126530	127166
R^2	0.04	0.05	0.05

Notes: Standardized beta coefficients. Also controls for all individual characteristics, GDPc, w6, w6*ARB1.

---

[17] The last term related to the compositional effect of religiosity is computed as follows for the educated young Arab: [0.76−0.35]/.48—see Table 1.

[18] Table 2 also reveals that the variables "protest" and "civic engagement" (but not "interest in politics") have fallen between waves 5 and 6 in the four countries for which data exists over the two waves. This suggests that political activism was slightly higher during the period covered by wave 5 (and was then higher than in the ROW).

[19] These results confirm Tessler and Robbins (2014) results, based on Arab Barometer data, on the dominance of youth and the educated in protests in Egypt, but they go beyond these by *comparing* their participation rates with those of similar groups in the ROW.

when they are significant. We have also run Table 2 regressions for waves 5 and 6 separately (results not shown). For PfD, there is no Arab effect in wave 5 (where the sample is much smaller), and a stronger Arab effect in wave 6. Thus the PfD regressions are broadly similar across countries and periods, and the democratic gap uncovered above applies to every Arab country in the sample, albeit with different intensities.

7. Conclusions

Our investigation found, using the WVS data, which covered 12 Arab countries and 68 non-Arab countries in its 5th and 6th wave, that the Arab region did experience a democratic demand deficit around 2008–2013. More specifically, when focusing on the Arab region in a comparative perspective, we found that the demand for democracy was stunted by a pro status quo bias which was especially strong among the educated, but which was also visible among the youth and the middle class.

What to make of these findings? The empirical literature concerned with democratization has largely compared democratic *performance* across countries. As a group, Arab countries have the lowest rating in the world on democracy indexes such as the Polity index (Freund & Jaud, 2013). While this political specificity puts the Arab world group quite apart from the rest of the world, the prevalence of autocratic regimes may be however totally unrelated to individual preferences. Indeed, most political scientists do not believe that individual preferences have a great effect on whether a country ends up democratic or not, and instead, democracy is believed to arise as an agreement among elites (Przeworski, 2010). Empirically, researchers have found many country-specific reasons, outside of individual preferences, why Arab countries have a democratic deficit (Diamond, 2010; Elbadawi & Makdissi, 2010; Noland, 2005; Stepan & Robertson, 2003). Some of the factors that stand out include the existence of oil rents, which favor patronage and strengthen autocracy (Ross, 2001), the effect of wars and the Israeli–Palestinian conflict which has led to oversized armies with an incentive to grab power (Elbadawi & Makdissi, 2010), and of external interventions in support of autocrats (Stepan & Robertson, 2003). It may also be the case that democratization is driven by changes in elite bargains, but that chances of reversals to autocracy are lower when a country's democratic culture is stronger (O'Donnel, Schmitter, & Whitehead, 1986).

We tend to believe that individual values matter for regime type over the long-term. But in this paper, we are more concerned about the formation of individual preferences, and about whether these values are related to local culture, and thus are impervious to change, or whether they are instead related to factors that are amenable to be affected by particular policies. There is

an active debate on whether this "democratic exception" is due to a cultural bias present in Arab and/or in Muslim countries. While we do not dispute that local culture can, to some extent, affect individual preferences for a democratic order, we will argue that the weight of the evidence we have uncovered points towards a larger role for political explanations, rather than towards essentialist claims.

The key question posed by our results is that of figuring out the deeper reasons shaping the low demand for democracy in Arab countries. Several possible logically coherent interpretations suggest themselves—the exception we have uncovered could conceptually be due to differences in culture, but also to differences in interests, circumstances, or active policies by autocratic governments to influence individual preferences. While the results in this paper cannot claim to disentangle these different reasons, they can at least help in making some informed speculations.

First, what do our results say about the possibility that Arab culture is inimical to democratic ideals? In our data, the neutralized effect of education on political emancipation predominate—in the example we have developed, it explains half of the democratic gap. The cultural factor is unlikely to explain the blunted impact of education in the Arab world, as local culture would be expected to affect the uneducated more than the educated, which are typically more connected to global than to local values (Norris, 2011). Moreover, if we think of Arab culture in terms of its surplus of religiosity, a possible characteristic of followers of Islam, it is apparent that in this sense also, the contribution of Arab culture to the Arab democratic gap, which we have found to exist, is small.

Which of the remaining hypotheses are more promising? It could be that individuals associate democracy with regime change, which they fear because of the probable chaos that such a transition would entail, especially in their environments where autocrats had worked hard at not facilitating such transitions.[20] If this was a predominant factor, it might possibly explain the democratic gap among the lower middle class individuals, which can be particularly vulnerable to economic shocks, but there seem to be no particular reason why it would particularly affect the educated and the youth.

A fear of income redistribution argument is also unconvincing. If it was the fear of democratic governments acting to the benefit of the poor and redistributing income away from the rich that led to a low demand for democracy, we would have expected larger differences among the upper middle class and the rich, which we do not observe in our data.

There are two remaining arguments that one finds in the democratization literature that are potentially more in sync with our observations. It could be the case that

---

[20] The extreme case being in Libya where Kaddafi had made sure that no single institution remained. Jamal and Tessler (2008) favor this interpretation. They argue that fear of instability is related to both the geo-strategic situation of the region (particularly in Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon, Algeria), and to actions by rulers to ensure that regime change would bring disorder and divisions, as a means to block the demands for political change.

the youth, the educated, or the middle class, have an interest in the preservation of the status quo if they expected a more democratic regime to deliver Islamist-dominated governments that would reduce their civic rights. This could be at the heart of the late version of the autocratic bargain that has managed to keep aging autocrats in power after the failure of their economic performance became clear in the 2000s. To check this hypothesis in more depth would require that the attitudes of these groups towards political Islam be looked at more carefully.

Finally, the existence of large democratic gaps among educated individuals could be either due to the fact that the educated have done particularly well in the last two decades, and/or to the ability of long-lived autocratic regimes to manipulate educational and cultural institutions in ways that bias individual values to favor their rule. These hypotheses, while attractive a priori, would be hard to check empirically in the Arab world, given the low level of variation in political regimes, and would require a broader global investigation into the relation between regime type and the extent of support by the educated for pro-autocracy values.

Trying to disentangle these hypotheses further is an important agenda for future research. But our results suggest already that rather than focus on immutable culture as the main constraint to changes in values, one needs instead to focus on what can be done on the policy front. In this respect, education emerges as an area where the focus of reforms should concentrate not just on its quality from an economic productivity perspective, but also, from the social and political qualities it embodies as well.

Acknowledgements

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

References

Cammett, M., Diwan, I., Richards, A., & Waterbury, J. (2015). *A political economy of the Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Chekir, H., & Diwan, I. (2014). Crony capitalism in Egypt. *Journal of Globalization and Development*, *5*(2), 177–211.

Ciftci, S. (2010). Modernization, Islam, or social capital: What explains attitudes toward democracy in the Muslim world? *Comparative Political Studies*, *43*(11), 1442–1470.

Diamond, L. (2010). Why are there no Arab democracies? *Journal of Democracy*, *21*(1), 93–112.

Diwan, I. (2013). Understanding revolution in the Middle East: The central role of the middle class. *Middle East Development Journal*, *5*(1).

Elbadawi, I., & Makdisi, S. (Eds.). (2010). *Democracy in the Arab world: Explaining the deficit*. London: Routledge.

Fish, M. S. (2002). Islam and authoritarianism. *World Politics*, *55*(1), 4–37.

Freund, C., & Jaud, M. (2013). On the determinants of democratic transitions. *Middle East Development Journal*, *5*(1).

Hassan, R. (2008). *Inside Muslim minds*. Carlton, VIC: Melbourne University Publishing.

Henry, C. M., & Springborg, R. (2010). *Globalization and the politics of development in the Middle East* (Vol. 1). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hofmann, S. R. (2004). Islam and democracy micro-level indications of compatibility. *Comparative Political Studies*, *37*(6), 652–676.

Inglehart, R., & Welzel, C. (2005). *Modernization, cultural change, and democracy: The human development sequence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Inglehart, R., & Welzel, C. (2010). Changing mass priorities: The link between modernization and democracy. *Perspectives on Politics*, *8*(2), 551–567.

Jamal, A. A. (2006). Reassessing support for Islam and democracy in the Arab world? Evidence from Egypt and Jordan. *World Affairs*, *169*(2), 51–63.

Jamal, A. A., & Tessler, M. A. (2008). Attitudes in the Arab world. *Journal of Democracy*, *19*(1), 97–110.

Lipset, S. M. (1959). Some social requisites of democracy: Economic development and political legitimacy. *American Political Science Review*, *53*(1), 69–105.

Noland, M. (2005). *Explaining Middle Eastern authoritarianism* (Institute for International Economics Working Paper [05-5]). Retrieved from https://piie.com/publications/wp/wp05-5.pdf

Norris, P. (2011). *Democratic deficit: Critical citizens revisited*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Norris, P., & Inglehart, R. (2002). Islamic culture and democracy: Testing the 'clash of civilizations' thesis. *Comparative Sociology*, *1*(3), 235–263.

O'Donnel, G., Schmitter, P., & Whitehead, L. (1986). *Transitions from authoritarian rule* (Vols. 1–4). Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press.

Owen, R. (2014). *The rise and fall of Arab presidents for life: With a new afterword*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Przeworski, A. (2010). *Democracy and the limits of self-government* (Vol. 9). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ross, M. L. (2001). Does oil hinder democracy? *World Politics*, *53*(3), 325–361.

Stepan, A. C., & Robertson, G. B. (2003). An "Arab" more

than a "Muslim" democracy gap. *Journal of Democracy*, *14*(3), 30–44.

Tessler, M. (2002a). Islam and democracy in the Middle East: The impact of religious orientations on attitudes toward democracy in four Arab countries. *Comparative Politics*, *43*(3–5), 337–354.

Tessler, M. (2002b). Do Islamic orientations influence attitudes toward democracy in the Arab world? Evidence from Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Algeria. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, *43*(3–5), 229–249.

Tessler, M. A., & Gao, E. (2005). Gauging Arab support for democracy. *Journal of Democracy*, *16*(3), 83–97.

Tessler, M., & Robbins, M. (2014). *The Arab uprisings explained: New contentious politics in the Middle East*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

About the Authors

Mohamad Al-Ississ holds a doctorate degree in Public Policy from Harvard University. He currently directs Economics and Social Development in the Office of King Abdullah II of Jordan. Prior to that, he served as the associate dean of the school of Global Affairs and Public Policy at the American University of Cairo, and was on the economics faculty there. He has published in top journals on issues relating to the political economy of the Arab World, social polarization, behavioral economics and finance, and the economics of political violence and religious experience.

Ishac Diwan currently holds the Chaire Economie du Monde Arabe at Paris Sciences et Lettres. He received his PhD in economics from the University of California at Berkeley. He directs the Economic and Political Transformation program of the Economic Research Forum and is a research fellow at Harvard University's Middle East Initiative. He is widely published in the areas of international trade and finance, and Middle East political economy.

Annex

Definition of Variables

Dependent Variables

Preference for democracy (PfD). This variable uses responses to the question: "People sometimes talk about what the aims of this country should be for the next ten years. In each of the 3 menus listed below, which option you consider the most important? And which would be the next most important?" PfD is defined as the number of times democratic principles (M1: 3; M2: 2; M3: 2 or 3) are listed ahead of security interests (M1: 2; M2: 1, M3: 4).

Menu 1
1. A high level of economic growth;
2. Making sure this country has strong defense forces;
3. Seeing that people have more say about how things;
4. Trying to make our cities and countryside more beautiful.

Menu 2
1. Maintaining order in the nation;
2. Giving people more say in important government decisions;
3. Fighting rising prices; 4. Protecting freedom of speech.

Menu 3
1. A stable economy;
2. Progress toward a less impersonal and more humane society;
3. Progress toward a society in which Ideas count more than money;
4. The fight against crime.

Democratic Aspirations: How important is it for you to live in a country that is governed democratically?
Democratic satisfaction: How democratically is this country being governed today?
Democratic Deficit (DemoGap): Constructed as the difference between democratic aspirations and democratic satisfaction.
Strong Leadership: Would having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections be a very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad way of governing this country?
Democratic Net preference (DemoNet): The difference between democratic aspirations and strong leadership
Interest in Politics: Average of 2 variables: (i) How important is Politics in your life? (ii) How interested are you in politics?
Civic Engagement: Average value of 4 variables: Have you ever: (i) Signed a petition"; (ii) Joined in boycotts"; (iii) Attended peaceful demonstrations; (iv) voted.
Participation in Demonstrations (protest): Have you ever: "Attended peaceful demonstrations"?

Independent Variables

Age: the scope of this variable is restricted to 15–99.
Education: A 1–4 scale where 1 stands for people who no education, 2 for individuals with at most have a primary school diploma, 3 for people who have more than primary school and less than university education and 4 for people who have at least started a university program.
Female: Takes a value of 1 for female and 0 for male.
Income: Inc1, Inc2, and Inc3 are dummy variables related to the 3 first quartiles of the income distribution respectively, relative to the group in the richest fourth quartile.
Religiosity: Whether religious faith is an important child quality.
Lngdpc: Logarithmic value of GDP per capita (PPP, constant 2005 international $), for the year in which the survey was done (World Bank Indicators).

Article

Civil Society Organizations' Participation in the EU and Its Challenges for Democratic Representation

Nicolle Zeegers

Faculty of Law, University of Groningen, 9712 CP Groningen, The Netherlands; E-Mail: n.e.h.m.zeegers@rug.nl

Abstract
Online consultations and the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) are tools that have been put into place by the European Union (EU) in order to increase the participation of citizens and Civil Society Organizations (CSO) in its politics and policy making. The current CSO representation at the system level of the EU is claimed to be biased in favor of the interests of economic producers and CSOs coming from old member states. The central question of this article is whether these tools help make participation more representative of the diversity of societal groups within the EU. The concept of 'actor representativeness' as well as 'discourse representativeness' will be applied in order to answer this question.

Keywords
actor representativeness; civil society organization; discourse representativeness; European Citizens' Initiative; European Union; online consultations; participatory democracy

1. Introduction

This article is concerned with Civil Society Organizations (CSO) and the role accorded to these organizations in contributing to citizens' representation within the European Union (EU).[1] At the turn of the century, much attention has been given to CSOs in the context of the EU's democratic deficit. The standard model of representative democracy privileges other forms of political participation, notably voting in or standing for elections for the European Parliament.[2] The idea to complement this standard model with CSO participation departs from the assumption that increasing opportunities for citizens to influence EU-level policy would foster engagement with the EU.[3]

With the above idea in mind, the drafters of the Lisbon Treaty have explicitly acknowledged existing channels as well as having created new channels for participation.[4] The principle of representative democracy has

---

[1] CSO refers to "a range of organisations which include: the labour-market players (i.e. trade unions and employers federations—the 'social partners'); organisations representing social and economic players, which are not social partners in the strict sense of the term (for instance, consumer organisations); non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which bring people together in a common cause, such as environmental organisations, human rights organisations, charitable organisations, educational and training organisations, etc.; community-based organisations (CBOs), i.e. organisations set up within society at grassroots level which pursue member-oriented objectives, e.g. youth organisations, family associations and all organisations through which citizens participate in local and municipal life" (European Commission, 2002).

[2] The standard model of democratic representation works through institutions staffed by elected officials. The elections are important for two reasons: Firstly, because by the 'one person one vote' rule, political equality has been translated institutionally in a manner that gives citizens not only the right to participate in the authorization of the political leaders that represent them but also in their possible dismissal in the next election. The second reason is that political parties in elections compete on the basis of a program that aggregates voters' preferences in such a way that it finds maximum appeal and through this program links voters to (coalitions of) politicians.

[3] In addition, non-institutionalized attempts for participation happen in the last years, such as massive protest against the EU–Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) by means of self-organized online petitions.

[4] Political participation by citizens refers to the activities of citizens and their associations directed at influencing the policy of governments or international organizations. With respect to the EU such activities can range from 'voting in elections for the European Parliament', 'contributing to a consultation organized by the European Commission' to 'campaign for an ECI'.

been declared to be foundational in article 10 of the Treaty of the European Union. In addition, in article 11 the principle of participatory democracy has been established and is conceptualized as a complement to the system of representative democracy.[5] The participatory mechanisms described in article 11 are meant to improve the democratic legitimacy of the EU by stimulating direct exchanges between citizens, organizations of the member states, and the EU institutions. Firstly, a constitutional foundation is given to the practice of involving societal groups in the development of EU policies. (Marxsen, 2015, p. 153). Such a practice has existed throughout the process of European integration but has predominantly taken place in the back rooms of Brussels. Only since the late 1990s, has this practice, in addition, taken the form of open consultations by the Commission. Secondly, the article describes mechanisms meant to involve citizens in transnational exchanges regarding the EU's course, especially by stimulating horizontal exchange between citizens and organizations; in other words the EU wants to create a European public and political sphere.

However, increasing CSOs role in the EU policymaking could increase citizens' participation but it may not necessarily help in making the participation of societal groups in the EU more representative. Since the 1980s, many scholars have criticized CSO representation at the system level of the EU for being biased and skewed in favor of economic producer interests.

The central question of this article is whether online consultations and the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) have been helpful in making CSO participation more balanced and representative.[6] In order to answer this question, different concepts of representation and representativeness need to be explained. Firstly, this article is concerned with *representativeness of CSOs at the system level* which must be distinguished from *organizational representativeness of CSOs*. Secondly, such *representativeness of CSOs at the system level* can be assessed by looking at *actor representativeness* or *discourse representativeness*. By elaborating on the latter concept, introduced by Dryzek and Niemeyer (2008), this article will explain how it differs from the more conventional criterion of representativeness that focuses on actors; *discourse representativeness* better fits with citizens' fragmented identities.

Section 2 will explain how both indicators of representativeness are relevant for assessing the effects of online consultations and the ECI on the *representativeness of CSOs at the system level*. In addition, I will explain what data and sources have been consulted and analyzed in order to make such an assessment.

Section 3 will explain how CSOs have been assigned a role in solving the EU's democratic deficit. Section 4 ad-

dresses the claim that CSO representation at the system level is biased in favor of economic producer interests.

In section 5 and 6, the effects of online consultations and ECIs on representativeness of CSOs at the system level are described. In the conclusion (section 7) the central question of this article will be answered.

2. Central Concepts and Methods

What would democratic representation of CSO at the EU level entail? Recent publications concerning this issue make two conceptual distinctions that are relevant here, firstly, between *organizational representativeness* and *representativeness of CSOs at the system level*. Organizational representativeness refers to the question whether 'the positions defended by individual organizations are a fair reflection of their constituents' views' (Rodekamp, 2014, p. 41). Rodekamp (2014) and Kröger (2016) have researched the extent to which CSOs meet such a criterion of organizational representativeness. This article will focus instead on the representativeness of CSOs at the EU system level. Representativeness of CSOs at the system level concerns the question of whether the various interests existing in society are equally represented at the level of government (or EU) relations with and consultations of CSOs (Rodekamp, 2014, p. 41).

The second conceptual distinction relevant to this research is between *actor representativeness* and *discourse representativeness*. Both concepts of representativeness assume that a certain kind and level of correspondence between interests present in EU–CSO relations and European society at large is required. With 'actor representativeness' the focus is on actors and the question whether the actors involved at the EU system level are in proportion to the number of such actors in society. This option, in which actors are central, is reminiscent of Hanna Pitkin's definition in which representation consists of 'making present of that which is absent' by a representative who resembles the represented, either in the geographic or the demographic sense (Kröger, 2016, p. 12; Pitkin, 1967; Stone, 2013, p. 360).[7] The explicit or implicit standard of this idea of representation is that the diversity and number of representatives, such as the number of women, minorities or people coming from a specific sub-region, should be proportional to the diversity and number of people living in the areas that they represent. However, as will be elaborated on below, this idea of resemblance between represented and representatives has been declared outdated in political theory.

The concept of *discourse representativeness* is based on the idea that all relevant discourses present in society should also be present in the deliberations at the EU

---

[5] According to the principle of representative democracy, citizens of the European Union shall be represented by the European Parliament as well as the governments of their states.

[6] Notwithstanding the possessive pronoun 'citizens' in the label, the ECI in practice is normally used by organizations and not by individual citizens.

[7] According to Stone (2013, p. 360), geographic representation prioritizes the link between a representative and the geographical area he or she comes from. Demographic or descriptive representation means that representatives should share important social and economic characteristics with their constituents, such as social class, gender or ethnicity.

system level.[8] Discourse refers to a way to conceptualize an issue and put it into the narrative framework of a broader perspective, such as the neoliberal discourse does by framing unemployment as an individual responsibility. The idea of representation by discourses is developed by Dryzek and Niemeyer (2008) who, embracing Harré and Gillett's (1994) idea of the self, acknowledge how current identities are complex and multifaceted. Because people's identities are complex, fragmented and fluid, Dryzek and Niemeyer (2008), as well as other scholars, have searched to develop a more dynamic concept of representation. Kröger (2016), for example, with regard to the (individual) organizational representativeness of CSOs, has put forward the *interactive* representative *relationship* between the represented and the representative.[9] However, here in this article we engage with CSO representativeness at the EU system level. Dryzek and Niemeyer's (2008) concept of discourse representativeness, in which all relevant discourses on an issue should be represented in the deliberations of the EU policy process concerning it, seems to fit best with the need to acknowledge the complexity, multitude and variability of identities at this system level.[10] These authors claim that people should be represented primarily by discourses, and only secondarily by actors speaking on behalf of such discourses. The authors provide three reasons for this. Firstly, the representation of all relevant discourses offers better guarantees of the rationality of policy. This is because the focus is on whether all discourses are present, and in turn whether all vantage points for criticizing policy are represented, as opposed to having a focus on the proportion to which people subscribe to a particular discourse. Secondly, because we are 'selves that inhabit different discourses', having actors proportionally represented instead of all relevant discourses would only do justice to some of each person's interests, identities, values and would leave others unaddressed. Instead, all discourses have to be represented in order for the individual to be represented in their entirety. A third reason links with the idea that some groups' discourses, such as discourses formulated from women's perspectives, have been historically excluded from the political agenda. Having such groups proportionally represented would lead to unitary framing and the marginalization of what could be relevant differences in interests, for instance between black and white women. Having all relevant discourses represented provides some room for maneuver and makes fluid positions possible instead of fixed roles.

This article will analyze Quittkat's (2013) and Marxsen's (2015) research on the participation of CSOs in online consultations by the EU. These scholars looked at the geographical origin of the actors participating in online consultations as well as the economic interests they represented. Section 4 will demonstrate how they apply the concept of actor representativeness in assessing representativeness.

Concerning the participation in and subjects addressed by ECIs, this article presents primary data. With regard to geographical origin, data have been gathered on whether the initiators of ECIs are from old or new member states of the EU. Here the concept of actor representativeness has been applied. With regard to economic interests, the concept of discourse representativeness has been applied. The subjects addressed, firstly, have been categorized in terms of policy fields. The policy fields; Consumers, Economy and Monetary Affairs, Employment and Social Affairs, Enterprise and Single Market all belong to the economic sphere (see section 6, table 1, indicated with 'x' in the last column). Secondly, by looking more closely at the nine ECIs belonging to this sphere, the presence of producer interests has been traced.

3. The Role of CSOs with Regard to EU's Democratic Deficit

CSOs have been accorded a role with regard to solving the EU's democratic deficit as compensators for the institutional and social deficiencies of EU politicians and political parties and the absence of an EU *demos*. The deficiencies of EU politicians and political parties in this respect have been highlighted in the view of the deficit as an institutional deficit, in which the deficit is mainly 'a mismatch between policies increasingly operating at the EU level while politics still mainly operates at the national level' (Kröger, 2016, p. 25). The mismatch is most clearly demonstrated by the fact that the elections of the European Parliament (EP) are second-order elections as voters' choices are predominantly determined by how they feel about the political parties in their national governments (Schmitt & Toygür, 2016). CSOs are thought to make up for such weak relations between MEPs and the represented, by not only contributing to effective and efficient problem solving, but also functioning as 'transmission belts' for bringing the values of citizens to the EU.

The view of the democratic deficit of the EU as social deficit regards its social deficiencies, more precisely the absence of a demos, as the main problem for EU's democracy. Demos refers to the people of a nation forming a political unit including a sense of recognizing each other as members of the same polity (Kröger, 2016, p. 175; Weiler, 1991). The development of a demos-equivalent

---

[8] Dryzek and Niemeyer understand a discourse as 'a set of categories and concepts embodying specific assumptions, judgements, contentions, dispositions, and capabilities. It enables the mind to process sensory inputs into coherent accounts, which can be shared in intersubjectively meaningful fashion' (2008, p. 481).

[9] The represented instead of putting his/her trust in resemblance with the representative, nowadays, conceives of the representative as different from himself or herself with respect to political interests, beliefs and goals.

[10] The issue of representativeness at the system level concerns the question whether the various interests existing in society are equally represented at the level of government relations with and consultations of CSOs. For a clear explanation of the distinction with representativeness at the organisational level, see Rodekamp (2014, p. 41).

at the EU level, so being outside the framework of a nation state, is difficult due to the diversity of languages and identities. A pre-requisite for such a development would be the creation of a public sphere for debate that could function as an authoritative channel of representation of viewpoints. CSOs, in addition to political parties and the media could play a role in this and could become a key player because they are expected to foster mutual trust between citizens and to construct common European interests.

The proponents of the thesis that CSOs can solve the EU's democratic deficit by compensating the deficiencies diagnosed above find empirical support for their expectations in existing representative democracies in nation states. Firstly, CSOs already act as alternative mediators of social interests. In European nation states citizens have disengaged from the standard model of representation as demonstrated by statistics concerning electoral turnout, political party membership, etc. (Heywood, 2013, pp. 444–447). Secondly, non-electoral forms of representation in policy making already exist alongside the electoral forms in such democracies, for example in the form of functional representation of organizations of employers and employees. Thirdly, as Kröger (2016, p. 11) contends, in addition to—and within the framework set by—representative institutions, non-electoral representation by CSO has unfolded in such national representative democracies by means of fora and informal political processes that are part and parcel of a functioning public sphere.

In short, CSOs are expected to compensate for the deficiencies mentioned above by two means: Firstly, by creating a public sphere in which CSOs together look for European wide solutions to economic and societal problems, and where they are willing to bargain and make deals resting on compromises for the sake of the public good; secondly, by making EU institutions responsive to the broad range of interests represented by these CSOs as well as the proposed solutions that result from their collective bargaining. However, acknowledging CSOs' function in contributing to EU policy in this manner would also require attention to the question of whether the totality of CSOs involved in such processes would be representative of the interests that are present in society.

The next section will explain how positive expectations with regard to CSOs role in democracies are connected to pluralist's assumptions concerning equal chances of access for interest groups to policy making. However, such assumptions have been criticized and many scholars have pointed at the bias that exists in CSO representation at the EU system level.

4. The Bias in CSO Representation at the EU System Level

Robert Dahl (1961) and Lindblom (1977) have already defended the positive role of groups in politics long ago. In their view, pluralist democracy is a form of democracy that operates through the capacity of organized groups and interests to articulate popular demands and ensure responsive governance (Heywood, 2013, p. 101). Pluralists, such as Dahl and Lindblom, believe democracy fares best in political systems in which a wide variety of interest groups exist.[11] Much like the adherents of the institutional deficit approach above, the pluralists do not want to have the input of interest groups to replace that of elected representatives; instead the former would have to complement the latter. Well-balanced political decision making would be served by interest groups operating alongside the standard model of democratic representation.[12]

The pluralists have formulated the following conditions for a healthy pluralist democracy that would produce well balanced decision making: firstly, the political power would have to be widely dispersed amongst the competing groups; secondly, the group leaders would have to expose a high degree of internal responsiveness towards their members; and, thirdly, the governmental machine would have to be neutral and sufficiently fragmented to offer these groups a number of points of access (Heywood, 2013, p. 101). In the case of CSOs' relation with the EU, the third condition seems to be more or less fulfilled, as the EU offers many access points for groups' efforts to influence (Héritier, 2003). The second condition refers to the organizational representativeness and not the representativeness of CSOs at the system level concerned in this article.

This article mainly engages with the first pluralist condition, the dispersal or equal distribution of power over interest groups or CSOs. The pluralists themselves believed that such equality would be possible. In fact their positive expectations regarding CSOs were based on a twofold assumption. Firstly, that all societal interests have an equal chance of being organized and, secondly, that interest groups or CSOs compete on an equal footing for access to policy makers. However with respect to the first assumption, Olson (1965) concluded that the larger the group of individuals that share an interest, the harder it is to mobilize the individuals involved into collective action because of the free-rider-principle.[13] In addition, Olson claimed that some interests will be forgotten and 'suffer in silence' because they would lack the resources to make themselves heard (Olson, 1965, pp. 165–167; Rodekamp, 2014, pp. 41–42).[14] Therefore, with regard to the second plu-

---

[11] Pluralists consider group politics as 'the very stuff of the democratic process' (Heywood, 2013, p. 248).

[12] Political resources should be more or less equally distributed over such groups. However, as Dahl acknowledged, political resources such as money, time, knowledge and control over jobs, each on its own, are unequally distributed. In his empirical study of the distribution of power in New Haven he concluded that the politically privileged and the economically powerful are more powerful than ordinary citizens but that there was no ruling elite, in the sense of a group that was able to dominate overall and permanently (Dahl, 1961).

[13] The individual will enjoy the benefit accruing from a collective effort without him or herself actually contributing to the effort.

[14] Kröger points at the historical example of how women longtime have been marginalized and how this has curtailed their possibilities of politically organizing themselves and formulating what would be in women's interests and putting the issues concerned on the political agenda (2016, p. 20).

ralist assumption, Olson predicted that the system which represents groups' interests, instead of being balanced, will be skewed in favor of interest groups who are able to mobilize easily and have a material advantage.

Olson's theoretical prediction has been empirically confirmed within the EU. Streeck and Schmitter (1991, p. 137) demonstrated that associations of business interests registered in Brussels 'vastly outnumber' those of labor and that individual firms and sectoral and sub sectoral trade associations at the EU level primarily defend *producer* interest, such as 'demanding protection and/or (de)regulation of product markets' rather than defend their interests as *employers* (1991, p. 141). Rodekamp concludes that 'various interests are not equally represented' and refers to Berkhout and Lowery (2010), Greenwood (2007), Kohler-Koch (2010) all 'citing a dominance of business over general interest organisations in the EU' (2014, pp. 4, pp. 70–74).

5. Online Consultations

Most of the online consultations are conducted by using the online consultation platform 'Your voice in Europe'.[15] The Commission announces the consultations on its' web portal as well as on the home pages of the Directorates-General (DG). Such posts convey information concerning the issue addressed and allow participants to either answer (semi) standardized questionnaires or to make comments regarding draft documents by e-mail or online. The Commission's purpose in undertaking these consultations is not only to make the EU more democratic by making it more inclusive, but also to make better policy by mobilizing external knowledge. Individual citizens do participate in the Commission's consultations but the greatest level of involvement comes from stakeholders, which are private companies, business associations, public authorities and NGOs.

Marxsen (2015) and Quittkat's (2013) have addressed the question whether online consultations contribute to systemic representativeness of CSO at the EU level. Similar to the scholars above they regard the state of CSO participation in the EU before the implementations of new tools, such as online consultations and the ECI, as *biased:* multinationals and trade organizations are the dominant actors in the semi-formal and informal processes of decision making of the EU.[16] In addition, Quittkat (2013, p. 106) mentions that the interests of CSOs of the core member states tend to be better served in the EU than those of the new member states, located in the periphery of the EU.

Taking into consideration this twofold bias, Kohler-Koch and Quittkat (2013) and Kröger (2016) agree that CSO participation can only be democratically legitimate if a broader, more inclusive, representation of interests at the EU level would evolve from new policy than currently exists. A more inclusive and better balanced deliberation at the input side of EU decision making, according to these authors, is one of the goals to be attained with the introduction of online consultations and the ECI.[17]

Therefore, Marxsen (2015) and Quittkat (2013) did research into the pattern of participation in the online consultations by looking at the actors that participated (actor representativeness). Marxsen found that in more than 70% of all consultations in 2011, business formed the largest group of participants (2015, p. 162).[18] This author contends that private companies and business interest groups establish a continuous presence in online consultations, that only a few trade unions and consumer protection organizations can match (Marxsen, 2015, p. 162).

According to Quittkat, in the policy fields of *public health* and in *social affairs*, a quarter and one thirds, respectively, of the participants are private companies, lobbyists and business interest associations. However, in the policy fields of *consumers* and *foods* half of the submissions where made by companies and trade organizations (2013, pp. 103–104).

In addition, Quitkatt detected a territorial bias in the online consultations: CSO and public organizations coming from the economically strong northern and western EU member states, such as Germany and Great Britain, are overrepresented at the expense of the representation of those from the southern and eastern member states (Marxsen, 2015; Quittkat, 2013, p. 106).[19]

The conclusion of Marxsen (2015) and Quittkat (2013) concerning the pattern of participation in the online consultations is, firstly, that the range of interests involved has not really widened and that 'the field of participants is strongly biased' in favor of economic producer interests (Marxsen, 2015, p. 162; Quittkat, 2013, p. 85).[20] Secondly, CSO and public organizations coming from the old member states are 'overrepresented'.

The application of actor representativeness makes sense in the latter case of 'overrepresentation' of CSOs coming from old member states, as here we can decide whether their part is proportional to the part of old member states in the EU. However, this is less clear with regard to producer interests that are claimed to be dominant. What would a 'normal' representation be? What extent of producer interests would be legitimate? Would it be possible to formulate a norm in terms of an accept-

---

[15] ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/consultations

[16] Also see Rodekamp (2014, p. 70) who bluntly states that the European Commission's consultation relations with civil society groups is controlled by a small number of key players and calls such consultations 'an elite project'.

[17] In addition, the authors point at the need for publicity of results and negotiations and accountability of the actors involved.

[18] The main reason for this most probably lies with the economic resources (finances, man power, organisations) that are needed to establish a continuous presence in consultations, social and cultural interests in contrast with economic producers lack such resources.

[19] The geographical bias, according to Marxsen (2015, p. 162), is to blame on the underdeveloped system of civil society organisation in the new member states.

[20] Quittkat's research is based on a large-N quantitative analysis, for more detail concerning the method (Quittkat, 2013, p. 87).

able proportion of economic producer organizations defending such interests? Such a norm is not referred to by the authors, neither would it be easy to formulate this, as the question is how to relate such proportion to the composition of the population: economic producers are not discernible from consumers; people are both producers and consumers at the same time.

Quittkat's and Marxsen's analyses and conclusions concerning the enduring dominance of economic producer interests in online consultations are important. The reason for their dominance is that they have the resources needed, such as money and personnel, to establish a continuous presence. Marxsen explicitly states that 'societal spheres' that represent 'social or cultural interests' are lacking such resources and therefore will lag behind (2015, p. 162). His concern here seems to be that certain policy fields, notably non-economic perspectives tend to become neglected or marginalized.

These authors applied the concept of actor representativeness in their assessment of online consultations whereas their criticism concerning the dominance of economic producer interest rather seems to refer to the absence and marginalization of discourses that are relevant for the issue at stake.

6. The ECI

The ECI is the other participatory mechanism that has been put into place to improve the democratic legitimacy of the EU. With the ECI, citizens can call on the European Commission (EC) to propose legislation on matters where the Commission has the competence to do so.[21] The initiative is a considerably different instrument to online consultations. The most relevant difference here is that it is up to citizens themselves to propose an issue instead of them having to react to a proposal of one of the EC's Directorates-General. With this instrument citizens have been given the opportunity to put an issue on the political agenda of the EU or at least bring different discourses in the public sphere of the EU.[22]

In order to submit an ECI to the EC, the initiators first have to register the proposed initiative.[23] Subsequently,

within a year they have to collect one million eligible signatories coming from at least seven Member States.[24] Once submitted the ECI becomes a formal demand to the Commission to propose legislation and the Commission is obliged, within three months, to communicate its legal and political conclusions.

The ECI has been much criticized for not really offering citizens a chance to put their issues of concern on the EU agenda. As the Commission is obliged to react to a submitted ECI but not to put it on the formal agenda, it has kept its monopoly of legislative initiative. In addition, many formal and practical hurdles have to be taken by the initiators even to gather enough signatures for an official submittal (European Parliamentary Research Service, 2015).[25]

Only three of the initiatives registered by March 2015 (table 1) have gathered enough signatures to be officially submitted to the EC, *Right 2 Water*, *One of Us and Stop Vivisection*.[26] However, through the act of registering an ECI regarding an issue and trying to gather sufficient signatures to submit it to the European Commission (EC), public attention is gained and public debate can be aroused. The strongest aspect of this instrument to improve the representativeness of CSO participation in the EU might be the fact that it has a 'bottom up' character: the issue and the angle from which it is addressed, in other words discourse in which to frame it, is decided by (groups of) citizens themselves.

Therefore in the following assessment of representativeness of the ECI, in addition to the concept of actor representativeness, the concept of discourse representativeness has been applied; the former with regard to the question whether the geographic bias observed in the participation of CSO in online consultations also exists with regard to the initiators of ECIs. The term initiators refers to the members of the citizens' committee, a committee of seven EU citizens, each coming from a different member state, which organizes the initiative and manages the procedure through the whole process from initiation to the receipt of a conclusion from the European Commission.[27] In the table below, the initiators of each initiative are categorized as coming from old or new member states, or a mix of both.[28] From this

---

[21] Article 1, Regulation (EU) No 211/2011. The Regulation, containing the rules and procedures governing the ECI, was adopted by the EP and the Council of the EU on 16 February 2011.The Citizen's Initiatives could be launched from 1 April 2012.

[22] For the different steps of the ECI procedure see figure A1 in the appendix.

[23] Art. 4(2) of Regulation 211/2011 sets out four conditions that must be satisfied before a campaign is officially registered and can be launched. Firstly, a citizens' committee must be in place; secondly, the proposed initiative should prove to not 'manifestly fall outside the framework of the Commission's powers to submit a proposal for a legal act of the Union for the purposes of implementing the Treaties'; thirdly, the proposed initiative must 'not be manifestly abusive, frivolous or vexatious'; and fourthly, the proposed initiative must 'not be manifestly contrary to the values of the Union', as set out in Article. The second requirement, Article 4.2 (b), has proven to be a real hurdle for all the proposed initiatives (European Citizen Action Service, 2014).

[24] In addition a minimum number of signatures has to come from each member state which equals the member states number of MEP's multiplied by 750.

[25] This report of the EPRS is essentially based on the findings and recommendations of five former reports on the implementation and functioning of the ECI: In addition to European Citizen Action Service (2014), these are Policy Department C of the European Parliament (2014). *European Citizens' Initiative—First Lessons of Implementation*; The European Ombudsman's own-initiative enquiry (OI/9/2013/TN) into the functioning of the European Citizens' Initiative (December 2013–November 2014), Organ's (2014), and Berg and Thomson (2014).

[26] For the list of initiatives that have been registered since the introduction of this instrument in April 2012 until March 2015, the subjects addressed, dates of rogistration and initiators, see table A1 in the appendix.

[27] These must be EU citizens who have a right to vote and who each live in a different country. The members of such committee must be *natural* persons Article 2(3) of the *Regulation (EU) No 211/201*.

[28] The entrance year 2004 has been set as boundary between old and new in this respect.

---

categorization it can be concluded that actors from new member states do participate in initiating ECIs (five out of twenty-seven initiatives), mostly in collaboration with actors from old member states. However, their participation is not proportional (yet) to the part of new member states in the total number of the EU member states (thirteen out of twenty eight states).

The concept of discourse representativeness is applied by looking at the list of the registered initiatives and by categorizing the subject of each of these initiatives in terms of the policy fields of the EU in the table below.[29]

To what extent have the issues addressed in ECIs been presented in discourses that are alternative to those focused on economic producer interests? Nine

---

[29] Based on the list of topics addressed and elaborated on at the official EU website http://europa.eu

Table 1. Registered ECIs chronologically ordered (date of first registration).

European Citizens' Initiatives	Initiating actors come from:	Field of policy:	Economy
1. Fraternité 2020	Old MS	Education, Training and Youth	
2. Dairy Cow Welfare	Old MS	Agriculture (Animal Welfare)	
3. Right 2 Water	Old MS	Human Rights	
4. Single Communication Tariff Act	Old MS	Consumers/Single Market	x
5. One of Us	Old MS	Human Rights	
6. Let me Vote	Old MS	EU Citizenship	
7. Stop vivisection	Old MS	Research and Innovation	
8. High Quality European Education for all	Old MS	Education, Training and Youth	
9. Responsible waste incineration	Old MS	Environment	
10. Suspension 2009 EU Climate and Energy Package	Poland and Czech Republic (+ Old MS)	Climate action/ Economic and Monetary Affair	x
11. Central Online Collection Platform for ECI	Old MS	Justice and Home Affairs	
12. End Ecocide	Old MS (cross border movers) + Estland	Environment	
13. European Initiative for Media Pluralism	Old MS	Audiovisual and Media	
14. 30 km/h-making the streets loveable	Old MS	Environment	
15. End EU–Switzerland Agreement on Free Movement of People	Old MS	Single Market	x
16. Unconditional Basic Income	Old MS	Employment and Social Affairs	x
17. ACT 4 Growth	Balkans (+ Old MS)	Enterprise	x
18. Teach for Youth- Upgrade Erasmus 2.0	Old MS	Education, Training and Youth	
19. Do not count education spending as part of the deficit	Greece, Bulgaria + Old MS	Education, Training and Youth	
20. Weed Like to Talk	Old MS	Health/ Justice and Home Affairs	
21. European Free Vaping initiative	Old MS +USA	Enterprise	x
22. Turn me off!	Old MS	Environment	
23. New Deal 4 Europe	Czech Republic + Old MS	Enterprise/Environment	x
24. MOVEUROPE	Old MS	Culture	
25. An end to front companies	Old MS	Economic and Monetary Affairs*	x
26. For a socially fair Europe!	Old MS	Employment and Social Affairs	x
27. On the Wire	Old MS	Justice and Home Affairs	

* This initiative believes front companies to lead to criminal money laundering and threatening the stability of the financial system and the internal market.

ECIs out of the twenty-seven in the table have been categorized as a policy field that concerns the economic sphere (numbers 4, 10, 15, 16, 17, 21, 23, 25, and 26). The other eighteen initiatives concern *Human Rights, including political rights and rights of defendants, Animal welfare, Education, Environment and Culture*. Of the nine ECIs concerning economic issues, only in one case, number 21 which proposed to take e-cigarettes out of regulation by de-classifying them as tobacco or medicines. (Tobacco Products Directive), the discourse was clearly based on producers' interests.[30] In addition, a closer look has been given to the *Suspension of the 2009 EU Climate and Energy Package* (number 10) initiative. By suspending the *Climate and Energy Package* the initiators wanted to prevent member states spending their money for action on these subjects and instead to make fuel and energy cheaper. Because of the latter, one could say producer interests are involved. However, taking into regard the motive expressed by the committee itself the national states' economics and finances seem to be the primary interests involved.

Six of the remaining seven ECIs concerning economic issues, are focused on consumer interests (*The Single Communication Tariff Act*), the prevention of instability on the financial and internal market by preventing criminal money from entering the formal financial system (*An end to front companies*) or the restructuring of the economy from a social justice and/or environmental point of view: *Unconditional Basis Income* wants to strengthen social security arrangements, *Act for Growth* asks for public support for female entrepreneurship, the *New Deal for Europe* asks for investments in the production and financing of European public goods that are sustainable and protective for the environment and cultural heritage, *For a socially fair Europe!* wants to fight social exclusion and poverty in the EU.[31] The seventh, *End EU–Switzerland Agreement on Free Movement of People*, is a rather peculiar initiative that mainly aims to punish Switzerland, a non EU country, for breaching the agreement concerning *Free Movement of People* with the EU.

Notably, none of the initiatives that concern the economic sphere was successful enough to be submitted to the Commission. In other words the successful initiatives; *Right to Water*, *One of Us*, and *Stop Vivisection* are noneconomic initiatives.

7. Conclusion

The answer to the question whether online consultations and the ECI have improved the representativeness of CSOs at the system level of the EU depends on whether the concept of actor representativeness or discourse representativeness is applied. With regard to online consultations, the former concept has been applied in research concluding the continued existence of a twofold bias, favoring CSOs coming from old member states and

defending economic production interests, respectively. However, regarding the latter, the concept of actor representativeness does not really fit, as to claim an over-representation of economic producers cannot be consistent without stating what presence of economic producers would be proportional and legitimate.

Therefore, in tracing the effects of the ECI on representativeness of CSOs at the system level, in addition to actor representativeness, discourse representativeness has been applied. The former has been applied by looking at what member states (old or new) the actors initiating ECIs came from, concluding that those coming from old member states are overrepresented, although actors from new member states are present. Applying discourse representativeness to the ECI leads to a positive conclusion about this tool's effect on representativeness of CSOs at the system level. This is, firstly, because many issues falling outside the economic sphere have been addressed and, secondly, of those falling within this sphere only one out of twenty-seven (e-cigarettes) was conceptualized in a discourse that made people look at the issue from the perspective of economic producer interests.

The ECI would need revision, because as it is, (potential) initiators are confronted with too many obstacles to make registering initiatives a popular option. However, with respect to discourse representativeness and a lively European public debate, the first three years have shown this instrument to be promising.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

References

Berg, C., & Thomson, J. (2014). *An ECI that works! Learning from the first two years of the Citizens Initiative*. Freiburg: The ECI Campaign.

Berkhout, J., & Lowery, D. (2010). The changing demography of the EU interest system since 1990. *European Union Politics*, *11*(3), 447–461.

Dahl, R. (1961). *Who governs? Democracy and power in an American city*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Dryzek, J., & Niemeyer, S. (2008). Discursive representation. *The American Political Science Review*, *102*(4), 481–493.

European Citizen Action Service. (2014). *The European Citizens' Initiative registration: Falling at the first hurdle?* Brussels: European Citizen Action Service.

---

[30] Some of the initiators were connected to an association of e-cigarette manufacturers.

[31] In addition a fund for creating jobs for young people is included in the proposal.

COGITATIO

European Commission. (2002). *Towards a reinforced culture of consultation and dialogue—General principles and minimum standards for consultation of interested parties by the Commission*. Retrieved from ec.europa.eu/governance/docs/comm_standards_en.pdf

European Commission. (2015). Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council (Report on the Application of Regulation [EU] No 211/2011 on the Citizens' Initiative). Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2015/EN/1-2015-145-EN-F1-1.PDF

European Parliamentary Research Service. (2015). *Implementation of the European Citizen's Initiative. The Experience of the first three years*. Brussels: European Parliamentary Research Service.

Greenwood, J. (2007). Review article: Organized civil society and democratic legitimacy in the European Union. *British Journal of Political Science*, *37*(2), 333–357.

Harré, R., & Gillett, G. (1994). *The discursive mind*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Héritier, A. (2003). Composite democracy in Europe: The role of transparency and access to information. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *10*(5), 814–833.

Heywood, A. (2013). *Politics* (4th ed.). Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave.

Kohler-Koch, B. (2010). Civil society and EU democracy: 'Astroturf' representation? *Journal of European Public Policy*, *7*(1),100–116.

Kohler-Koch, B., & Quittkat, C. (2013). *De-mystification of participatory democracy: EU governance and civil society*. Oxford: Oxford Scholarship Online.

Kröger, S. (2016). *Europeanised or European? Representation by civil society organisations in EU policy making*. Colchester: ECPR Press.

Lindblom, C. (1977). *Politics and markets: The world's political-economic systems*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Marxsen, C. (2015). Participatory democracy in Europe. In F. Fabbrini, E. Hirsch Ballin, & H. Somsen (Eds.), *What form of government for the European Union and the Eurozone?* (pp. 151–169). Oxford: Hart Publishing.

Olson, M. (1965). *The logic of collective action. Public goods and the theory of groups*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Organ, J. (2014). Decommissioning direct democracy? A critical analysis of Commission decision-making on the legal admissibility of European Citizens Initiative proposals. *European Constitutional Law Review*, *10*(3), 422–443.

Pitkin, H. F. (1967). *The concept of representation*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Quittkat, C. (2013). New instruments serving democracy. Do online consultations benefit civil society? In B. Kohler-Koch & C. Quittkat (Eds.), *De-mystification of participatory democracy: EU governance and civil society* (pp. 85–113). Oxford: Oxford Scholarship Online.

Rodekamp, M. (2014). *Their members' voice. Civil society organisations in the EU*. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien.

Schmitt, H., & Toygür, I. (2016). European Parliament elections of May 2014: Driven by national politics or EU policy making? *Politics and Governance*, *4*(1), 167–181.

Stone, D. (2012). *Policy paradox. The art of political decision making* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: W. W. Norton and Company.

Streeck, W., & Schmitter, P. (1991). From national corporatism to transnational pluralism. *Politics & Society*, *19*(2), 133–164.

Weiler, J. (1991). Problems of legitimacy in post 1992 Europe. *Aussenwirtschaft*, *46*(3–4), 411–437.

About the Author

Nicolle Zeegers is Assistant Professor in Political Science at the Department of Legal Theory, Faculty of Law, University of Groningen. An earlier publication on the ECI is "The European Citizens' Initiative's Role in Having the Grass Roots Associations Connect to the European Public Sphere", in S. Comtois and K. de Graaf (Ed.), *On Lawmaking and Public Trust* (Eleven International Publishing). Her other fields of interest are prostitution and artificial reproductive technology, both in a comparative law and politics perspective. Recent publications are "The Democratic Legitimacy of Interactive Legislation of the European Union Concerning Human Embryo Research", in B. van Klink, B. van Beers, and L. Poort (Ed.), *Symbolic Legislation Theory and Developments in Biolaw* (Springer); and, together with Martina Althoff, "Regulating Human Trafficking by Prostitution Policy?" in *European Journal of Comparative Law and Governance* (2015).
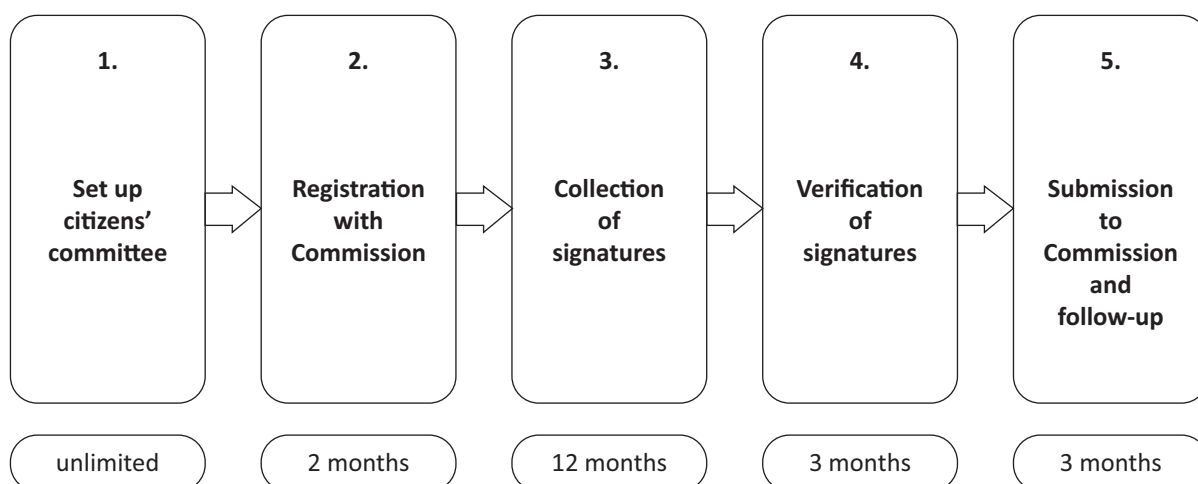
Appendix

Figure A1. The different steps of the ECI procedure. Source: European Parliamentary Research Service (2015, p. 7).

Table A1. Subjects addressed and registration date per registered ECI until March 2015.

European Citizens' Initiatives	Subject	Registration Date*	Initiating Committee
1. Fraternité 2020	Expand exchange programmes and improve the current ones (Erasmus and European Voluntary Service).	9 May 2012	Luca COPETTI, Simona PRONCKUTĖ, Irina Adela POPESCU, Markus GASTINGER, Alessandra MIRABILE, Agnes Nikoletta DARABOS, Miguel OTERO-IGLESIAS
2. Dairy Cow Welfare	A EU Directive that guarantees improved animal welfare for dairy cows.	10 May 2012	Annamaria PISAPIA, Julie MIDDELKOOP, Ilaria IDA, Romana ŠONKOVÁ, Roger PETERSSON, Olga KIKOU, Leopoldine DE BROSSES (NEE CHARBONNEAUX)
3. Right 2 Water	Campaign against water privatization.	10 May 2012	Anne-Marie PERRET, Jan Willem GOUDRIAAN, Frank BSIRSKE, Annelie NORDSTRÖM, Ivan KOKALOV, Rosa Maria PAVANELLI, Dave PRENTIS
4. Single Communication Tariff Act	End cross-border roaming charges.	10 May 2012 (Re-registered 3 December 2012)	Vincent CHAUVET, Martin WITTENBERG, Flora LE GOUGUEC, Adriano SHAHBAZ, Aleksandra HEFLICH, Stephanie ALIWELL, Pierre SHEPHERD
5. One of Us	Seeking an end to EU funding of activities involving destruction of human embryo.	11 May 2012	Patrick Gregor PUPPINCK, Filippo VARI, Josephine QUINTAVALLE, Jakub BALTROSZEWICZ, Manfred LIEBNER, Edith FRIVALDSZKY, Alicia LATORRE
6. Let me Vote	Extend voting rights of EU citizens living in other member states.	11 May 2012 (Re-registered 28 January 2013)	Philippe CAYLA, Alain BRUN, Monique VEAUTE, Jürgen VAHLBERG, Reinder RUSTENA, Lydia VAZQUEZ JIMENEZ, Nicolas DELABY

Table A1. Subjects addressed and registration date per registered ECI until March 2015 [cont.].

European Citizens' Initiatives	Subject	Registration Date*	Initiating Committee
7. Stop vivisection	Proposal to end animal experimentation and instead make compulsory the use—in biomedical and toxicological research—of data directly relevant for the human species.	22 June 2012	André MENACHE, Gianni TAMINO, Ingegerd ELVERS, Daniel FLIES, Claude REISS, Nuria QUEROL VIÑAS, Robert MOLENAAR
8. High Quality European Education for all	Establish a stakeholder platform to formulate a European policy on school education.	16 July 2012	Ana GOREY, Caroline HETTERSCHIJT, Christopher WILKINSON, Michèle RETTER, Monika MANGHI, Friedrich PHILIPPS, Johannes THEINER
9. Responsible waste incineration	Pointing at the environmental impact of waste incineration.	16 July 2012	Gaél DRILLION, José DRILLION, Daniel DRILLION, Sylvie DAUBRESSE, Nelly DAUBRESSE, Mariette DAUBRESSE
10. Suspension 2009 EU Climate and Energy Package	Change existing policy in the Climate and Energy area, make fuel and energy cheaper and allow member states to use their own natural energy resources in order.	8 August 2012	Ludwik DORN, Paul OAKDEN, Marin CONDESCU, Miroslav ROMANOVSKI, Robert Alexander STELZL, Alexander OIKONOMOY, Anders Primdahl VISTISEN
11. Central Online Collection Platform for ECI	Improving ICT infrastructure support for ECIs	27 August 2012	Joerg MITZLAFF, Marcin DZIERZAK, Matúš SÁMEL, Karli KUUSKARU, Jakob Frederik ANTHONISEN, Jean-Pierre SCHENGEN, Michael LAMBERT
12. End Ecocide	Adopt legislation to prohibit, prevent and pre-empt Ecocide, the extensive damage, destruction to or loss of ecosystems.	1 October 2012 (Re-registered 21 January 2013)	Prisca MERZ, Viktoria HELLER, Thomas EITZENBERGER, Valerie CABANES, Tania Lúcia ROQUE, Kadri KALLE, Ramón MARTINEZ
13. European Initiative for Media Pluralism	Protecting media pluralism through partial harmonisation of national rules on media ownership and transparency, conflicts of interest with political office and independence of media supervisory bodies	5 October 2012 (19 August 2013)	Ségolène PRUVOT, Cayetana DE ZULUETA, Ioana Adriana AVADANI, Granville WILLIAMS, Esther DURIN, Peter MOLNAR, Asen Petrov VELICHKOV
14. 30 km/h–making the streets liveable	Setting a default speed limit for urban area's	13 November 2012	Heike AGHTE, Martti TULENHEIMO, Janez BERTONCELJ, Jeannot Marie Martin MERSCH, Samuel MARTÍN-SOSA RODRÍGUEZ, Hanns Michael MOSHAMMER, Roderick Arthur Charles KING
15. End EU–Switzerland Agreement on Free Movement of People	Call to terminate the Agreement on freedom of movement (21 June 1999) between the Swiss Confederation, on the one hand, and the European Community and its Member States.	19 November 2012	Michael WANG, Boris STEFFEN, Sandra SEIDL, Andersson MARIA, Leevi VIRTANEN, Adam NOVAK, Martin JANSEN

Table A1. Subjects addressed and registration date per registered ECI until March 2015 [cont.].

European Citizens' Initiatives	Subject	Registration Date*	Initiating Committee
16. Unconditional Basic Income	Encourage EU member states to explore cooperation to improve social security	14 January 2013	Klaus SAMBOR, Ronald BLASCHKE, Sepp KUSSTATSCHER, Olympios RAPTIS, Anne MILLER, Stanislas JOURDAN, Branko GERLIC
17. ACT 4 Growth	Four concrete proposals for policy intervention to develop female entrepreneurship as a strategy for sustainable economic growth in Europe.	10 June 2013	Madi SHARMA, Marta TURK, Dennis Andrew USHER, Henrike VON PLATEN, Katharina CORTOLEZIS-SCHLAGER, Thaima SAMMAN, Piroska SZALAI
18. Teach for Youth–Upgrade Erasmus 2.0	Eliminating educational inequity within the EU by enrolling highly motivated and high-achieving recent EU college graduates and postgraduates to teach for one to two years in urban and rural low-income communities throughout the EU.	10 June 2013	Jean-Sébastien MARRE, Marie CRAMEZ, Moritz ABSENGER, Jack DADSWELL, Miriam TARDELL, Claartje VAN DAM, Delia TOJA DE LA MUELA
19. Do not count education spending as part of the deficit.	Exclude from the calculation of each country's public spending deficit, that part of Government spending for education that is lower than the last 5-year Eurozone average.	6 August 2013	ΠΑΝΑΓΙΩΤΗΣ ΠΑΠΑΔΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, LIGIA DECA, ΙΑΚΩΒΟΣ ΨΑΛΤΗΣ, Dessislava ANGELOVA DIMITROVA, Marie TRELLU-KANE, Paulo Alexandre DIAS DE VASCONCELOS AFONSO, Ragnar WEILANDT
20. Weed Like to Talk	Legalizing cannabis, making the EU adopt a common policy on the control and regulation of cannabis production, use and sale.	20 November 2013	Pierre BALAS, Bendix FESEFELDT, Delia TOJA DE LA MUELA, Pieter David VERDAM, Gaelle VAN BERWAER, Miriam TARDELL, Marta LORIMER
21. European Free Vaping initiative	Classification of electronic cigarettes and related products through legislation as general purpose recreational products, and not as medicinal, tobacco or similar products, regardless of nicotine content.	25 November 2013	Krisztián PIFKÓ, Markus KÄMMERER, Serge POPLEMON, Monika CALVETTI-FÜRST, Marcin DURAJ, Scott Andrew FITZSIMMONS, Ditta DITEWIG
22. Turn me off!	Prohibit empty offices and shops from leaving their lights switched on	3 February 2014	Katalin JAKUCS, Fabian LADDA, Valeria DRIGO, Magali-Louise LAFEBER, Manuela GALAN, Manuela Petruta GHEOLDUS, Aristidis-Alain THEOFILOU
23. New Deal 4 Europe	A public investment plan to help Europe get out of the crisis through the development of knowledge society and the creation of new jobs especially for youth.	7 March 2014	Fausto DURANTE, Philippe GROSJEAN, Elena RODRIGUEZ ESPINAR, Jean Francis BILLION, Ivo KAPLAN, Giovanni RASTRELLI, Nikos LAMPROPOULOS

Table A1. Subjects addressed and registration date per registered ECI until March 2015 [cont.].

European Citizens' Initiatives	Subject	Registration Date*	Initiating Committee
24. MOVEUROPE	Creation of MOVEUROPE CARD. A card reducing transport and accommodation costs on the weekend of May 9th in order to celebrate the European Union in a European city (on an annual rotating basis).	24 March 2014	Niccolo Ruben PAGANI, Camille ANDRIEU, Louise ANDRIEU, Giselle ANDRIEU, Timea SUTO, Leyre Luisa AZCONA SANZ DE GALEANO, Katalin JAKUCS, Florian Alexander SPATZ, Ana DASKALOVA BOYKOVA
25. An end to front companies	Introduction of a legal instrument in the company law area, of measures to ensure the transparency of legal persons and legal arrangements.	1 October 2014	Chantal Anne Marie CUTAJAR, Benoit Jean François MORISSET, Ana Maria RODRIGUEZ RIVAS, Philipp KASTNER, Kurt KOPROLIN, Chiara MAINARDI CANTONI, Mariapaola CHERCHI
26. For a socially fair Europe!	Encouraging a stronger cooperation between EU Member States to fight poverty in Europe"	19 December 2014	Maxime ORHON, Paula Sánchez DE LA BLANCA DÍAZ-MECO, Yoann DANION, Tanja GOLDBECHER, Karl-Oskar MOGENFELT, Giulia FRAPPORTI, Paul LYONS
27. On the Wire	Strengthening communication privacy between private individuals by law and namely wiretapping of lawyer-client communications. A pre-requisite for the rights of defense.	9 February 2015	Laurent PETTITI, Aldo BULGARELLI, Josep NADAL RUSCA, Hugh MERCER, Yves OSCHINSKY, Stefan VON RAUMER, François MOYSE

* In the first two years of the ECI's existence campaigners experienced many logistics problems caused by unforeseen delays concerning certification of the online collection system and finding appropriate and affordable host servers (European Commission, 2015, p. 9). Four of the ECIs registered in 2012, the first year, have chosen to withdraw and re-register their initiative in order to win back time, the re-registration date is indicated between brackets in this column of the table.

Islamism, Secularism and the Woman Question in the Aftermath of the Arab Spring: Evidence from the Arab Barometer

Ashley M. Fox [1,*], Sana Abdelkarim Alzwawi [1] and Dina Refki [2]

[1] Department of Public Administration and Policy, Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy, University at Albany, State University of New York, Albany, NY 12222, USA; E-Mails: afox3@albany.edu (A.M.F.), sabdelkarim@albany.edu (S.A.A.)
[2] Center for Women in Government and Civil Society, Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy, University at Albany, State University of New York, Albany, NY 12222, USA; E-Mail: drefki@albany.edu

* Corresponding author

Abstract
The uprisings that led to regime change during the early period of the Arab Spring were initially inclusive and pluralistic in nature, with men and women from every political and religious orientation engaging actively in political activities on the street and in virtual spaces. While there was an opening of political space for women and the inclusion of demands of marginalized groups in the activists' agenda, the struggle to reimagine national identities that balance Islamic roots and secular yearnings is still ongoing in many countries in the region. This paper seeks to deepen understanding of the extent to which the pluralistic sentiments and openness to accepting the rights women have persisted following the uprising. We aim to examine changes in attitudes towards women's equality in countries that underwent regime change through popular uprisings during revolutionary upheavals of the Arab Spring and in countries where regimes have remained unchanged. Using available data from consecutive rounds of the Arab Barometer survey, we examine changes in attitudes in nine countries with two rounds of Arab Barometer during and post Arab Spring (Egypt, Yemen, Tunisia, Algeria, Lebanon, Sudan, Jordan, Iraq, Palestine). We find that support for "Muslim feminism" (an interpretation of gender equality grounded in Islam) has increased over the period and particularly in Arab Spring countries, while support for "secular feminism" has declined. In most countries examined, relatively high degrees of support for gender equality co-exist with a preference for Islamic interpretations of personal status codes[1] pertaining to women. We discuss the implications of these findings for academics and activists concerned with women's rights in the Middle East North Africa (MENA).

1. Introduction

For many Western observers, Islamism, and more broadly governance based on Islamic principles (or any theocratic principles for that matter) is viewed as inherently antagonistic to democracy and women's rights. Theocracies are deemed antagonistic to democratic rule, since, rather than giving power to the people to govern themselves, power is granted to self-appointed surrogates of the divine who dictate their own interpretations. Based on this notion, the working assumption has been that to support women's rights, countries must be secular. Muslim-majority countries like Tunisia and Lebanon that have historically chosen the secular path

---

[1] Personal status codes are the legal codes that govern family matters including marriage, divorce and child custody.

are viewed as more supportive of women's rights, for instance, through more liberal interpretations of personal status codes regulating marriage and divorce. By contrast, Islamic interpretations of personal status codes (not unlike other monotheistic religions) is generally viewed as antagonistic to women's rights. This view is supported by the fact that countries living under an Islamic theocracy, e.g., Iran, Afghanistan under the Taliban, Algeria under the Islamic Salvation Front, have seen sharp curtailments in women's rights, including dictating the veiling of women and enforcing conservative interpretations of personal status codes.

Political scientists have also viewed the separation of church/mosque and state as necessary for democracy (Hashemi, 2009; Robinson, 1997). Realist foreign policy has backed Western friendly secular dictators under the premise that true democratic competition in predominately Muslim countries would undoubtedly culminate in "one-person, one-vote, one-time" (Blaydes & Lo, 2011; Hurd, 2008; Neep, 2004). In other words, true democratic competition would lead to the election of anti-democratic Islamist parties, unfriendly to the West that would also curtail political pluralism. Advocates for secularism in the region have pointed out that fostering peace, security and social justice and combating sectarian conflicts in religiously pluralistic communities demand secular governance.

An alternative view posits that Islam is not inherently antagonistic to women's rights or democracy, but rather that those Islamist movements that seek to counter a Western model of modernity and throw off colonial chains have advanced a return to 'purer' forms of Islamic observance. Veiling, sexual segregation and conservative interpretations of personal status codes governing marriage and divorce serve as key symbols of such a return. Moreover, theocracy, or religiously-based authoritarianism serves as an oppositional vision to Western liberal democracy. In this way, political Islam has been poised as a means of achieving a distinctly non-Western form of governance steeped in religious traditionalism. Women and men in the Muslim world have increasingly embraced a return to traditional conservative Islamic values and behaviors that had been thrown off by their parents and grandparents, and have seen it as a reclaiming of authentic identities (Hilsdon & Rozario, 2006). In this view, to embrace Western rhetoric about women's rights is to subjugate the mind to mental colonization, or to serve as agents of Western imperialism.

While initially secularism was viewed as the path to achieving gender equality, its association with the West and Western styles of government that generates a sharp division between Church/Mosque and state have become viewed as an imperialist notion and secularism identified with secular-authoritarian regimes. Three dominant schools of thought represent feminist dis-

course in the region. Islamist and Reformist feminists suggest that Islam and women's rights need not be viewed as oppositional. They both ground their interpretations of women's rights in Islam and advocate for changes in the current interpretation of women's position in Islam. The first school advanced by Islamist feminists looks at early Muslim societies that embraced an egalitarian form of Islam, and argues that a return to fundamentals will guarantee women's rights. The second school of thought advanced by Reformist Feminists calls for reforms to keep up with the pace of progress in women's position. They argue that the concept of "Ijtihad"—independent reasoning and the employment of one's mental faculty in solving legal questions—means that the position of women (among other issues) was not meant to be static but flexible and open to modification across societies and time. (e.g., Mir-Hosseini, 2011). Secular feminists on the other hand, have advocated for a separation of mosque/church and state and for interpretation of women's rights that are not grounded in any religious ideology, but are based on equal rights and obligations of women and men as citizens of the state (Mir-Hosseini, 2006; Moghadam, 2002).

The events culminating in the Arab Spring have continued to complicate the simple dichotomies between secularism and theocracy and women's rights and Westernization. In several post-transition countries, moderate Islamist parties consistent with democracy and presenting interpretation of women's rights consistent with Islam are emerging, raising questions about the simple opposition frequently asserted between women's rights and Islam and between Islam and democracy (Boduszynski, Fabbe, & Lamont, 2015; Kurzman & Turkoglu, 2015; Netterstrom, 2015). Moreover, the uprisings initially appeared secular and inclusive in nature, with women having engaged actively in political activities in physical and virtual spaces, alongside their male compatriots (Abu-Lughod & Ferguson, 2014; Retta, 2013; Satterfield, 2013).[2] During the uprising, protesters with diverse political leanings were united against authoritarianism, but without a clear or shared vision of what the post-revolutionary society would look like. There was an opening of political space for women and the inclusion of demands of all marginalized groups in the activists' agenda. Islamists, secularists and modernists for a brief moment came together and collectively accepted a unified vision of a transition to a society that is more democratic.

It is unclear what the impact of the uprisings has been on women's rights. Has the Arab Spring created an opportunity to break down false dichotomies and build democracies with pluralistic religious parties and women's rights grounded in a progressive interpretation of Islam? Or does the same Western/modern versus Islamist/traditionalist logic continue to govern attitudes on women's rights in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)?

---

[2] The creation of political spaces for women during political uprisings is not a new phenomenon. Contrary to popular belief, women of all social classes have for decades been active participants in political movements, in trade unions, political opposition parties, informal networks and human rights movements and organizations in the region. Women have been active bloggers and activists in virtual spaces for many years (Al-Ali, 2012).

To analyze these questions, we examine the degree to which citizens of countries that underwent recent regime change have altered their views on women's status compared with countries without regime change. We examine the degree to which lack of support of theocratic systems, a sense of political empowerment and having favorable views of Western societies predict more open attitudes toward women's rights. We additionally examine differences in attitudes between the sexes. Do women and men hold similar views regarding women's status adjusting for support for secularism and religiosity? Are women being held back by men or by their own making as has been suggested by some observers of women's embrace of Islamist ideologies[3] (Rozario, 2006)?

2. Women's Rights in the MENA

While some researchers suggest that the cultural fault line that separates the West and the Muslim world is about gender equality and sexual liberalization more so than democracy and that the apparent dearth of gender equality makes democracy unsustainable in predominately Muslim societies (Inglehart & Norris, 2003), others maintain that women's rights are caught in the cross-hairs of deeper political battles (Al-Ali, 2012; Cohen & Enloe, 2003). What constitutes "women's rights" and whose conception of women's rights should apply remains a contentious issue and battles over these definitions reveal how power is constructed in authoritarian regimes, how inequalities are produced and reproduced in public and private spaces, and how the State reconstructs to maintain control of its population.

In much of the MENA personal status codes, deriving from Shari'a (Islamic law), governs the institution of the family and certain aspects of women's social and legal status. Personal status codes embody the symbolic representation of the "woman question" in the Middle East, or the problematic position of women in the modern state (Charrad, 2001; Hatem, 1994). As Charrad (2001) explains, "in the Maghreb, as in other parts of the Islamic world, women's rights as defined in family law are the crux of the matter. They are experienced as fundamental, as is reflected in the use of the expression 'women's rights' in the Maghrib to refer to family law" (2001, p. 5). In this respect, personal status codes represent the archetypal women's rights issue in the MENA, and it is around these codes that the struggle over the fraught "woman question" is frequently fought in the region (Hatem, 1994).

The promulgation of personal status codes and the impact they have on women's position has been an area of great contention in Muslim-majority countries, particularly from the vantage point of Islamist movements (Hatem, 1994). The interpretation of the Shari'a and how women's status is operationalized in these documents

can have a profound impact on the status of women, either as a source of greater equality if "liberally" interpreted, or a source of restriction on women's full citizenship rights if "conservatively" interpreted (Ziai, 1997). Yet, studies of how instances of political liberalization in the MENA impact on women's status have received limited scholarly attention (e.g., Brand, 1997). What the public thinks of these codes has received even less attention. A recent Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life poll of Muslims in 39 countries found tremendous variation in attitudes on women's rights, which varied largely along regional lines (Pew Center on Religion in Public Life, 2013). The MENA region, according to the study, is the most conservative regarding gender equality compared with Muslim-majority countries in other parts of the world.

Apart from personal status codes, the issue of women's dress has taken on particular significance in the Muslim world. Initially embracing more modern dress post-colonialism and throwing off the veil, in the post-independence period, women in the MENA began increasingly adopting more modest forms of dress including the more restrictive *burqua*, which has diffused across the Muslim world and is being adopted in places where this practice is not traditional (Rozario, 2006). Full body covering and face covering was a traditional custom only in parts of the Middle East including Saudi Arabia, but not in North Africa. Head covering has also begun to be adopted in places where this was not previously the norm.

This raises questions about how to understand and interpret the diffusion of these "invented traditions" (Hobsbawn & Ranger, 1983). Should the choice to veil or gender segregate be seen as a form of empowerment, or as a repressive social norm? Does it represent women's internalization of their own subjugated status, or is it an expression of their independence as a modern, but non-Western authentic woman? Is it a political statement, and if so, what is the statement? Should laws banning veiling be seen as anti-democratic and contrary to religious liberty and freedom of expression just as laws requiring veiling are seen as repressive to women? Feminist scholarship has underscored the tension this creates for Muslim women who find themselves torn between their culture/religion on the one hand and their desire for more equality with men on the other hand (Winter, 2006). However, insofar as women's equality is painted as representative of Western individual rights, women are forced to choose between their group rights and their individual rights (Winter, 2006).

With these tensions in mind, we examine the degree to which recent attitudes in the MENA region reflect 1) the "secular-feminist" camp that views women's rights as achievable only through the separation of state and religion; 2) the "Islamist-reformist feminist" camp that views women's rights as consistent with and only achiev-

---

[3] We recognize the variations in Islamist construction of gender ideologies. For example, Al-Nahda in Tunisia, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, and the Salafis in Egypt represent a wide spectrum from embracing women's rights to a rigid and regressive conceptualization of women's position.

able by the favorable interpretation of religious texts. To what extent can we distinguish support for these different types of feminisms in popular public opinion in the region? How do support for these different interpretations of women's rights vary across countries and over the time period of the Arab Spring?

3. Methods

Data Source. With a dearth of systematic and rigorous empirical research on public opinion in the Arab world, far too little is known about the nature, distribution, and determinants of the political orientations of ordinary citizens in the MENA. This study uses data from Waves 2 and 3 of the Arab Barometer Surveys. Data for Waves 2 and 3 surveys was collected using face-to-face interviews, with households selected using a multi-stage area probability sampling approach. Male and female respondents eighteen years of age or older were selected from within households. In-country partners, for the most part based at universities, research centers, nongovernmental or private sector organizations, carried out the data collection process. We used data from all countries that had completed two rounds of Arab Barometer surveys (Waves 2 and 3). These included three Arab Spring countries (Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen), and six non-Arab Spring countries (Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Sudan).

Although ideally we would have liked to capture the change in attitudes before the political uprisings that led to regime change and after regime change, the timing of Wave 2 surveys only allowed for examination of the period *during* the political upheavals in Arab Spring and comparison countries and about 2 years subsequently. Wave 2 of the Arab Barometer was collected during 2010/2011 and Wave 3 during 2013, over the period directly following the Arab Spring uprisings. In fact, the political uprisings themselves was what permitted the conduct of surveys that in the past had been prohibited in Egypt and Tunisia. Table 1 (appendix) summarizes the sample sizes and dates of data collection in each country in the sample.

3.1. Dependent Variable(s)

The goal of this research was to determine how attitudes towards women's rights and the interpretation of religious codes relating to women's status have changed over the period of Arab awakening in countries that experienced and did not experience political uprisings. Did the uprisings lead to greater support for women's rights, or a more radicalized, strict religious interpretation of women's status? Did other countries in the region that did not experience political change experience changes in attitudes towards women's status? How do Muslim-majority countries vary in their attitudes towards women's rights and support for a secular versus religious interpretations of women's status?

We were particularly interested in what might be termed "Muslim feminism" or the simultaneous support for women's equality, but a rejection of a purely secular interpretation of gender roles and relations. In other words, Muslim feminists are men and women who reject the notion that the only means of supporting women's rights is through state sponsored secularism.

Support for Muslim Feminism.[4] Our primary dependent variable is, therefore, a composite measure of support for gender equality and support for a strict or reformed reading of Islamic law as it pertains to women's status. This measure represents the interaction of individuals consistently holding beliefs in gender equality, but also advocating for a legal system that is based on interpretation of religious texts as they pertain to women's status. Below we describe how support for gender equality and support for a strict or reformed interpretation of religious doctrines scales were derived.

Support for Secular Interpretation of Women's Rights (Secular Feminism). Four questions that appear in both Wave 2 and Wave 3 of the Arab Barometer Survey capture the degree to which respondents endorse a strict or reformed interpretation of Islamic law or advocate for secular legal codes related to women's status in terms of women's inheritance rights, the rules regulating marriage and divorce, gender segregation in education and rules regulating women's dress (i.e., enforcing the hijab).

---

[4] There were major limitations in the question wordings for gender-related questions that impede inferences that can be drawn about support for different visions of how to achieve women's rights and gender equality that are worth noting. A number of the questions were double-barreled or awkwardly worded and did not provide enough nuance to identify different categories of feminists or supporters of women's rights. For instance, the question about requiring women to wear the hijab was phrased as "women should wear modest clothes without needing to wear a hijab". Disagreeing with this statement is ambiguous as it might mean that the respondent believes that women should be required to wear a hijab or that the respondent disagrees that women should wear modest clothes. Moreover, the statement that "the government and parliament should enact inheritance laws in accordance with Islamic law" and "personal status laws (marriage, divorce) in accordance with Islamic law" provides too little nuance about what this would actually mean. For example, in some instances, a strict interpretation of Islamic law, which at least guarantees that women inherit half of their husband's assets, may be more generous to women than a law that says that women should get nothing. For most countries in the MENA, the question is not whether Islamic personal status laws should be applied, but how they should be interpreted—liberally to confer more rights and greater gender equality or conservatively, constraining women's rights sometimes even more than a "strict" reading of Sharia law would dictate. Applying Islamic as opposed to customary law may in some cases provide more protections to women's status. The differences across countries in how these status codes have historically been interpreted is wide (Charrad, 1997). Likewise, the questions regarding gender equitable attitudes were somewhat flawed. The question asking to what extent respondents agree that "women can work outside the home," could be interpreted as more of a factual statement about whether women in that country in fact do work outside the home rather than an opinion statement (i.e., "women should be allowed to work outside the home unimpeded"). These limitations in question wording meant that the measure of "Muslim feminism" generated in this analysis may be too blunt an indicator to distinguish between those that endorse the more moderate "modernist" interpretation of Islam and those that might support a more radicalized political interpretation of Islam, or Islamists.

The questions are asked as follows:

A. The government and parliament should enact inheritance laws in accordance with Islamic law;
B. The government and parliament should enact personal status laws (marriage, divorce) in accordance with Islamic law;
C. Gender-mixed education should be allowed in universities;
D. Women should wear modest clothes without needing to wear a hijab.

Individuals who indicated strong disagreement/disagreement with statements A and B and strong agreement/agreement with statements C and D were coded (2), and identified as Secular Feminists. Individuals who expressed strong agreement/agreement with statements A and B and strong disagreement/disagreement with statements C and D were coded (0) and identified as Islamist. Individuals who somewhat agreed or somewhat disagreed with the statements were coded (1) and identified as Reformists. To develop the Muslim feminist interaction, Individuals with consistently Islamist viewpoints on women's status on three out of four questions were coded as 1 to combine with gender equality measures described below.

Gender Equality Norms. Respondents were asked their degree of agreement/disagreement with the following statements on a 4 point scale:

A. Women can work outside the home;
B. Men are better political leaders than women;
C. University education is more important for men than women.

The three measures were dichotomized and summed to produce three categories of respondents—those with consistently gender equitable responses are those who strongly agreed/agreed with statement A and strongly disagreed/disagreed with B and C (these were coded [2]). Individuals with mixed responses did not consistently endorse the more gender equitable responses (these were coded [1]). Individuals with consistently gender inequitable responses are those who strong disagreed/disagreed with statement A and strongly agreed/agreed with statements B and C (these were coded [0]).

Muslim Feminism (Islamist and Reformist). Those with consistently gender equitable responses were interacted with individuals that consistently reported supporting an Islamic interpretation of women's status on three out of four questions to generate a measure of Muslim feminism. Those supporting Muslim feminism in the sample therefore represent individuals who both consistently endorse the application of Islamic law to women's status but also consistently endorse norms of gender equality. This measure is intended to capture individuals endorsing the Islamist and reformist schools of thought pertaining to women's rights in the region—

individuals that believe that women's rights can and should be justified and grounded in religious interpretations of the Quran.

Each of these dependent variables (support for secular feminism, gender equality and Muslim feminism) was analyzed separately adjusting for covariates described below.

3.2. Independent Variables

Citizens' views of women's status are likely affected by their overarching political orientations as well as demographic characteristics. We adjust for several variables affecting individual attitudes towards women's status.

Support for Political Secularism. We analyze individuals' support for a politically secular versus theocratic regime using three variables: 1) support for Theocracy "a system governed by Islamic law without elections or political parties" (% believe this is very appropriate/appropriate); 2) support for secular democracy "Support for a parliamentary system in which only non-religious parties compete in parliamentary elections" (% very appropriate/appropriate); 3) support for a pluralistic system "support for a parliamentary system where nationalist, left wing, right wing and Islamist parties compete in elections" (% very appropriate/appropriate). Each was treated as a separate dichotomous variable.

Support for Legal Secularism. We also included questions about support for a separation between legal codes and religious codes as this is likely to affect support for a secular interpretation of women's status. We used the following question to measure legal secularism: The government and parliament should enact laws in accordance with Islam (% disagree strongly/disagree). We hypothesized that those who were antagonistic towards secularism generally would be more hostile towards secularism in regards to women's rights.

Anti-Westernism. Individuals that have particularly negative views towards the United States or Western powers may reject women's rights or secular interpretations of women's status, which they view as representing Western enlightenment values. We include two measures of anti-Westernism: 1) % that agree/agree strongly with the statement "foreign interference is an obstacle to reform in your country"; and 2) % that agree/agree strongly with the statement "the United States' interference in the region justifies armed operations against the United States everywhere".

Religiosity and Religion. Individuals with a greater degree of religiosity should be less likely to hold secular viewpoints and may view gender equality as inimical to religious observance. We adjust for religiosity using three questions measuring individuals that report always praying daily, attending Friday (or Sunday) Prayer and always/most of the time reading the Quran. Though the majority of the individuals from each country are Muslim (94% of the total sample), we also adjust for the minority of respondents that are non-Muslim.

Gender. We anticipate women being more likely to support women's equality and a more progressive interpretation of religious scriptures on women's status. However, we also recognize that women often internalize inequitable gender attitudes and may also reject secularism as the basis for protecting and advancing women's rights. We therefore adjust for the gender of respondents. We also compute gender disaggregated point estimates for the each of the questions pertaining to women's rights and gender equality variables over the time period.

Age. As older individuals may have more "traditional" beliefs about gender roles and norms, or conversely, the younger generation may have less tolerance for secularism, we adjust for the age of respondents using three categories (18–34, 35–54, 55+).

Marital Status. Married individuals may have different views on personal status codes and gender norms than unmarried individuals. We code individuals as currently married or currently single (bachelor, divorced, widowed, engaged).

Treatment of Missing Variables. Overall rates of missing data were quite low. No single variable had more the 8% values missing or with individuals reporting don't know/refused. For values that were missing, we used multiple imputation to assign values.

3.3. Analysis

We first calculated the point estimates for each of the major dependent variables (attitudes towards women's equality, women's personal status) for each country at Wave 2 and 3 overall and disaggregated by gender. To calculate point estimates representative of the population, we applied sampling weights to the data and calculated confidence intervals. This allows for visual inspection of the overall change in attitudes across countries over the time period, disaggregated by question and gender.

Multivariate models were run as ordered logistic regression models for the measures of secular feminism and support for gender equality and logistic regression to examine predictors of Muslim feminism. The study employed a difference-in-difference approach comparing change in the dependent variables between Waves and between Arab Spring countries and non-Arab Spring countries adjusting for covariates. To examine the change between periods, in our models, we included survey Wave as an independent variable, and as an interaction term with Arab Spring and non-Arab Spring countries. If the interaction terms are significant, this shows that the change in outcomes in Arab Spring countries between the two time points is significantly different from the change in outcomes in non-Arab Spring countries. We also included country and Wave fixed effects to account for stable differences across countries between Waves.

All analysis was run using Stata version 13 using ordered logistic regression for secular feminism and gender

equity scales (xtologit command) and logistic regression for models with Islamic feminism as the outcome (xtlogit command). Results from the ordered logistic regressions are presented as odds ratios (exponentiated coefficients) with confidence intervals for greater interpretability.

Overall, our hypotheses are that:

1) Arab Spring countries will see a larger change in attitudes over time than non-Arab Spring countries due to their political upheavals;
2) Arab Spring countries will see declining support for secular interpretations of women's rights and increasing support for Muslim feminism;
3) Countries with a history of secularism pertaining to women's status will exhibit higher support for secularism.

4. Results

Weighted point estimates: Support for women's rights and gender equality disaggregated across countries, Waves and gender. Results from the weighted point estimates were summarized in tables 2 and 3. The results show wide variation across countries in support for various aspects of women's rights and gender equality.

Overarching trends. In most countries an overwhelming majority agreed that personal status laws covering marriage and divorce and inheritance laws should be in accordance with Islamic law (Table 2). The two exceptions to this trend were the historically most secular countries—Lebanon and Tunisia—where a minority and a lesser plurality respectively agreed that women's status codes should be interpreted in accordance with Islamic law. However, bucking this trend, a majority of Tunisians believed that inheritance laws should be interpreted in accordance with Islamic law. In addition to their higher support for secularism, Most countries were divided over whether women should be required to wear the hijab with Lebanon, Tunisia and Sudan most strongly opposing this requirement. Countries were also divided over whether university education should be co-ed with Lebanon and Tunisia showing the strongest support for mixed education over time.

Gender norms were also somewhat contradictory (Table 3). While large majorities in all countries disagreed with the idea that university education is more important for men than women and believed that women can work outside the home, in all countries except Lebanon a majority believed that men are better political leaders than women.

Disaggregated by gender. Female respondents in most countries held attitudes slightly more favorable towards women compared with their male compatriots, but not by much, and differences in attitudes were larger across countries than between the sexes within the same country. Overall, the disagreement between the sexes was much larger on matters of gender equality than the interpretation of women's status codes in relation to Is-

lamic laws. Men and women in the same countries were mainly in agreement (within 5% points of each other) on the issues of interpreting women's marriage/divorce, inheritance rights, whether they should be required to wear the hijab and whether university education should be co-ed. There was much more disagreement over questions of gender equality with women in each country having more gender egalitarian norms; i.e., being more likely than men to believe that women can work outside the home, less likely to believe that men make better political leaders, and less likely to believe that university education is more important for men.

Disaggregated by Wave. Changes in point estimates between Waves 2 and 3 (2011 and 2013) were most notable in Algeria and Egypt, but followed somewhat contradictory and not consistent logics across countries. Algeria saw an increase in support for Islamic interpretations of personal status and inheritance laws, but also saw a notable increase in gender equitable attitudes including more individuals reporting that hijabs should not be required and that gender mixed education should be allowed. By contrast, Egypt saw a decline in support for strict Islamic interpretations of personal status and inheritance laws affecting women as well as decline in support for mandating hijabs. Egypt also increased in all categories of gender equitable attitudes except for seeing declining support for gender mixed university education. Tunisia saw large changes in gender equitable attitudes with fewer people reporting that men are better political leaders and that university education is more important for women but only marginal changes in attitudes towards the interpretation of personal status codes pertaining to women.

Multivariate analysis. Table 4 (appendix) summarizes each dependent and independent variable included in the multivariate analysis across all countries. Table 5 (appendix) shows the results of the multivariate analysis with all countries pooled for the three dependent variables—support for secular feminism, support for gender equality and support for Muslim feminism.

Table 4 shows that approximately 15% of the pooled sample could be considered secular feminist (consistent support for a non-Islamic interpretation of laws/practices pertaining to women's status), 25% consistently supported gender equitable attitudes and 19% represented Muslim feminists (those who endorse consistently gender equitable beliefs, but also support Islamic interpretations of laws and practices pertaining to women).

Difference-in-Difference: Change in support for secular feminism, gender equality and Islamic feminism over time between Arab-Spring and non-Arab Spring countries. Examining the interaction between Wave and Arab Spring countries in table 6, Arab Spring countries were less supportive of secular feminism by Wave 3 compared with Wave 2 but more supportive of gender equality and Islamic feminism compared with non-Arab Spring countries. Specifically, opposite trends were observed in Arab

Spring and non-Arab Spring countries. Compared with the pre-Arab Spring time period, non-Arab Spring countries increased their support for secular feminism, but decreased their support for gender equality and Muslim feminism.

Predictors of Support for Secular Feminism. Model 1 of Table 5 summarize predictors of support for secular feminism (a preference for a secular interpretation of personal status laws for women). Respondents that consistently supported gender equality and had mixed views on the subject had higher odds of supporting secular feminism (OR = 1.35, 1.55 p < 0.01). Respondents that endorse theocracy in the political and legal spheres were less likely to support secular feminism (OR .75, P < 0.01; 0.21, p < 0.01 respectively) whereas those who endorse secularism in the political sphere were twice as likely to support secular feminism (OR = 2.02, p < 0.01). More religious individuals (individuals who reported praying daily and attending Friday prayer weekly) were less likely to endorse secular feminism (OR 0.85, 0.80 p < 0.01 respectively). Most demographic characteristics were not associated with support for secular feminism. Women were not more likely than men to endorse secular interpretations of women's status codes, nor were individuals living in urban areas, those with higher education or that were more economically secure. The one demographic characteristic that was strongly associated with support for secular feminism was being non-Muslim. Although only 6% of the sample reported that they were non-Muslim, non-Muslims were 9 times more likely to support secular interpretations of women's status (OR = 9.33). Support for secular feminism fell in Wave 3 compared with Wave 2.

Predictors of Support for Gender Equality. Support for equitable gender norms followed similar but also different patterns than support for secular feminism (Model 2, Table 5). Those who endorsed secular feminism also endorsed greater norms of gender equality. They were less likely to support theocracy but also less likely to support secular democracy (OR 0.75, 0.81 p < 0.01 respectively) and more likely to support a mixed political system that allows both religious and secular parties to freely compete. Those who regularly attend Friday prayer were less likely to endorse gender equality but those who regularly read the Koran were more likely to endorse gender equitable attitudes (OR 0.88, 1.18 p < 0.01). While women were not more likely to endorse secular interpretations of women's status, they were twice as likely to endorse gender equitable attitudes. More educated individuals but not those that were financially more secure were more likely to endorse gender equitable attitudes. Non-Muslims were more likely to endorse gender equitable norms but not to the same extent as supporting secular interpretations of women's status. Wave 3 respondents were more likely to endorse equitable gender norms compared with Wave 2.

Predictors of Support for Muslim Feminism. Model 3, Table 5 summarize characteristics of support for Mus-

lim feminism, or support for Islamic interpretations of women's status coupled with support for gender equity. Individuals supportive of mixed political systems and an Islamic interpretation of the law were more likely to support Muslim feminism (ORs = 1.22, 1.40 p < 0.01), but individuals supportive of theocracy and secular democracy were less likely to endorse Muslim feminism (ORs = 0.83 0.89, p < 0.01). Those who think that foreign interference is an obstacle to reform and those who always attend Friday prayer were less likely to endorse Muslim feminism (OR = 0.71, 0.85 p < 0.01). Women were twice as likely as men to support Muslim feminism and more educated individuals, whereas non-Muslims were substantially less likely to support Muslim feminism (OR = 0.21, p < 0.01). By Wave 3 there was higher overall support for Muslim feminism compared with Wave 2.

5. Discussion

Regional attitudes towards gender equality and secularism. A primary goal of this study was to examine regional attitudes in the MENA towards issues of gender equality and support for a secular interpretation of women's rights versus more reformist views that gender equality can be achieved through a religiously based interpretation of women's rights. Attitudes towards women's rights and gender inequality has been understudied across the MENA region and particularly popular support for what the feminist literature from the region has described as Muslim feminism. We identified different orientations towards women's rights across the MENA region and observed variations in attitudes across countries over a period of widespread social upheaval.

We observed relatively low support for a traditional secular vision of women's rights whereby women's status issues are adjudicated according to civil law rather than Islamic law with only 16% of respondents dependably endorsing views consistent with keeping religion out of civil life as it pertains to women. There was relatively strong agreement across most countries that marriage, divorce and inheritance rights for women should be adjudicated according to Islamic law with the sole exception of Lebanon, a religiously mixed country with strong secular legal traditions, and Tunisia, though to a lesser extent. There was more variation across countries in attitudes towards requiring the hijab and gender mixed education at universities.

While respondents largely rejected secular interpretations of women's rights, we observed relatively high gender equity norms. Nearly 25% of the sample consistently endorsed equitable gender norms. In particular, large majorities across all countries disagreed with the statement that university education is more important for men than women. Large majorities also felt that women could work outside the home, though it is unclear to what extent this reflected a value judgment (i.e., women should be allowed to work outside the home) versus an empirical reality, particularly for many low-income households where women must work outside the home.

We identified relatively prevalent support for what might be considered a Muslim feminist view of women's rights with nearly a fifth of the sample nearly consistently supporting gender equitable attitudes but grounded in an interpretation of Islamic law and custom. The largest block of the sample, however, fell into neither a purely secular feminist nor Muslim feminist camp. We did not explicitly examine the prevalence of what might be considered a "Muslim fundamentalist" position on women's rights, namely those who are not supportive of women's rights and that believe in a conservative interpretation of religious law that would impose constraints on women's freedoms. Presumably some individuals fell into this category and others had more mixed and inconsistent ideological views.

Change in Arab-Spring versus non-Arab Spring countries. We predicted that Arab Spring countries would experience declining support for secular interpretations of women's rights. We suspected that revolutionary sentiments that rejected the authoritarian regime would also reject the persistent support of the West of that regime at the expense of the "Arab Streets". We anticipated that such resentment would manifest itself in the rejection of Western symbols including secular interpretations of women's rights and that we would see growing support for a Muslim feminist model that grounds gender equality in an interpretation of Islam. We largely found support for this thesis, though examining the toplines, more of the change in attitudes seems to be driven by Egypt than either Tunisia or Yemen.

We observed overall increases in support for attitudes consistent with this Islamic feminism and declines in support for secular feminism, between the two Waves and in Arab Spring countries compared with non-Arab Spring countries. On average, non-Arab Spring countries increased their support for secular feminism and decreased their support for Islamic feminism and gender equality between the two Waves whereas support for gender equity and Islamic feminism was higher in Arab Spring countries in Wave 3. These findings indicate a potential growing acceptance of distinctly non-Western, religiously-grounded interpretations of women's rights in Arab Spring countries. However, with the exception of Egypt, the changes in point estimates of attitudes between the two Waves in the Arab Spring countries (Tunisia and Yemen) were relatively small. Egypt and Algeria saw the largest changes in attitudes over the period. Egypt saw a 10 percentage point decrease in support for Islamic interpretations of women's status codes regarding marriage and divorce and inheritance, but also a 10 percentage point increase in support for requiring the hijab and almost a 20 percentage point increase in support for gender segregated university education, while also seeing a growth in equitable gender norms.

Egypt's larger mood shift could be attributable to the exceptionally turbulent period between 2011 and

2013 when Egyptians became rapidly disenchanted with the newly elected Muslim brotherhood government. Women in Tahrir square in Cairo during the height of the uprisings reported that "they have never felt as safe and been treated as respectfully as during the time of these protests" (Al-Ali, 2012, p. 27). However, the movement that began as a deliberately peaceful "selmiya" was quickly coopted by a regime that was trying desperately to hold on to power and resorted to the use of women's bodies as tools of warfare. Women's equal participation in the uprisings quickly gave way to harassment and violation of women's protesters that were widely employed by the police and their agents. When they assumed the reigns of power in Egypt, for example, the Muslim Brotherhood used women's position to solidify its control. Its pre-occupation with women-centered policies such as lowering the age of legal marriage for women and elimination of parliamentary quotas signaled an attempt to increase its political legitimacy. The shifts in Egyptian attitudes toward a more secular interpretation were potentially facilitated after the fall of the Muslim Brotherhood by a militarized regime that used secularism as a weapon to combat the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood, while still maintaining a tight grip on the population and an authoritarian rule. Additionally, the predecessor of the Muslim Brotherhood, i.e. the Mubarak regime, while authoritarian and repressive, took great pains to bolster its image through passing a number of women-friendly laws including the law of "Kholh" that granted women the right to easily initiate and obtain divorce through the courts.[5] The rapid shift from support of the Muslim Brotherhood to its ousting over this period could account for the larger attitudinal shifts in this country.

Attitudes in Yemen and Tunisia remained relatively stable in spite of the continued political unrest. The low degree of change in attitudes in Tunisia is somewhat surprising given the growth in the Salafi movement in the country following the uprisings and the turn the new government quickly took towards Islamism. Although claiming to be part of a democratic and moderate movement, the Salafis advocated for polygamy, urf or temporary, pleasure marriages, lowering the age of marriage, and female circumcision (Arfaoui, 2014). Proposed reforms included separation of the sexes, drawing a rigid line between the public and private spheres and sending women back to the "kitchens". Restricting women's public participation and solidifying gender division of labor represented their solution against unemployment (Arfaoui, 2014). While ultimately the Ennahdha Movement Party formed a coalition government with the largest secular party following the implementation of a new constitution in January 2014, the period of time captured in this study (2011–2013) represents the height of the Salafist movement's reign when there was a growing support for subjecting women's status to a greater scrutiny of an Islamist lens. Yet, Tunisians attitudes towards the interpretation of personal status codes and gender equality changed little over the period perhaps because Tunisians were already accustomed to the concept of a moderate interpretation of religious codes without the need for pure secularism (Arfaoui, 2014; Netterstrom, 2015).

In Yemen as in other countries swept by the Arab awakening, women marshaled rallies, slept in protest camps, went on hunger strikes and covered the unrest as bloggers and photographers (Finn, 2015). Women were reported to be leading from the front lines. Yet, attitudes in Yemen changed little over the period except on the question of whether the hijab should be required. Support decreased by over 10% points from 51% to 41% reporting that the hijab should be required and an even greater reduction among men than women. At the same time, support for Islamist interpretations of status codes increased slightly. Although women's status in Yemen is widely regarded as among the worst in the region with nearly a quarter of all girls being married before the age of fifteen, high fertility rates, no penalties for domestic violence and nearly two-thirds of women being illiterate (Finn, 2015), their attitudes towards gender equality were not out of step with other countries in the region. As with Tunisia, this may represent the unfinished business of the revolution as women's movements have been put on hold due to the Houthis, a powerful Islamist rebel group based in northern Yemen, taking over the government.

Non-Arab Spring countries in the region held similar though also opposing views on issues pertaining to gender equality and women's status and views have changed in different direction over time. Given its unique power structure and political history, Lebanon stood out for its support of secularism and women's rights setting it distinctly apart from other countries in the region. This has changed little over the Arab Spring period. Palestine, Iraq, Jordan and Sudan experienced little substantial change in point estimates on attitudes towards women's status and gender equality, perhaps reflecting the fact that these countries did not experience Arab Spring uprisings, with the exception of Jordan where protests in 2011 quickly faded. Notably, in spite of a lack of political change in Algeria, there were substantial shifts in attitudes towards status laws and gender equality, including over a 10% point increase in support for a more Islamic interpretation of personal status codes, but also a large increase in the rejection of the hijab and support for gender mixed education. Some have speculated that Algeria was able to escape the Arab uprising because it already experienced such an uprising in the early 1990s when its personal status code underwent significant changes (Tlemcani, 2016). Although, Algeria did not experience regime change, the uprising did prompt discussions of reform and ultimately an amended constitution in 2016.

---

[5] Interestingly the law relied on Islamic interpretations of the rights of women and contended that the ability of women to initiate and be granted immediate divorce is embedded in Islamic scriptures and early Muslims' practices.

Demographic and other predictors of attitudes towards women's rights. Overall, a large majority of the sample preferred a legal system in which laws accord with Islam (73%) and endorsed a mixed political system in which religious parties compete openly with secular political parties (also 73%) over purely secular democracy or complete theocracy. A mixed vision of governance that accords with Islam while at the same time allowing democracy and women's participation in society appears to be a dominant motif in the region. In particular, women were more than twice as likely to endorse gender equitable norms and Islamic feminism, but not more likely to endorse secular feminism, suggesting that women in the MENA are largely rejecting the false dilemma between embracing either religion or women's rights.

The finding of gender differences in towards Islamic feminism accords with recent analyses that show that women's groups and female activists that participated in the Arab Spring uprisings have been largely disappointed in their lack of gains (and even possible loss of status) in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. Retta (2013) found, for example, that women have lost ground in their political representation in the post-revolutionary period in Egypt and Tunisia in spite of being heavily involved in the uprisings. For instance, the Supreme Military Council in Egypt revoked the quota of 64 women in parliament that had been put in place under Mubarak resulting in only 9 of the 508 members of the parliament being female (Retta, 2013). In Tunisia, the growth of Salafism has been blamed for a rise in sexual assaults post-revolution (Retta, 2013). These are similar dynamics as have occurred in previous revolutionary periods. For instance, in the revolution of 1919 in Egypt, the Egyptian feminist movement joined the nationalist movement for independence and marched in the streets calling for both the liberation of women and the liberation of the nation. The nationalist movement created a temporary space for women's demands, but soon closed that space and deemed that women's demands should not derail the task of nation building (Khattab, 2016).

Religiosity had mixed effects on attitudes towards women's rights. On the one hand, praying daily and attending Friday prayer were associated with lower support for secular feminism. Attending Friday prayer regularly was also associated with lower support for gender equity and Muslim Feminism, but reading the Quran regularly was associated with higher support for gender equality. If gender inequitable messages are reinforced in Friday prayer, this could undermine support for gender equality, whereas being knowledgeable about the Quran could provide a distinctly Islamic justification for women's equality. While overall trends seem to favor Islamic interpretations of women's status codes, non-Muslims stand out for their particularly strong embrace of secular feminism likely due to their minority status in the region. Non-Muslims also endorsed more gender equitable attitudes overall. This finding underscores an ongoing tension—even if Islam can be consistent with gender equality, how can religiously grounded political and legal systems accommodate people of different faiths if they eschew secularism?

More educated individuals were more likely to hold gender equitable attitudes and to endorse Islamic feminism, but not more likely to endorse secular feminism. Whereas higher education has been linked to greater radicalization (Krueger & Maleckova, 2003), greater education in this case is associated with a distinctly Islamic interpretation of women's status codes but that is still consistent with gender equality. Surprisingly though, individuals endorsing Islamic feminism were less likely to hold anti-Western views suggesting that anti-Western political consciousness is not at the root of support for Islamic authenticity in women's status. This finding highlights the distinction between an Islamic fundamentalist interpretation of women's rights, which may be more closely bound to anti-Westernism, versus the Muslim feminist interpretation that yearns to ground women's equality in religious texts rather than ideology.

A limitation of this analysis is the timing of Wave 2 and 3 directly following the uprisings in Arab Spring countries. Although this was the necessary context that enabled data collection in the first place, it is unclear how attitudes might have differed prior to the beginning of the political uprisings. The results are best interpreted as change during the period of the Arab Spring.

6. Conclusion

Individuals in the MENA, particularly women, are largely rejecting the false dichotomy between religion and women's rights, and feel that Islam is not necessarily antagonistic to women's rights. All else equal, support for uniquely Islamic interpretations of policies pertaining to women's rights increased over the Arab Spring period particularly in Arab Spring countries. Relatively high degrees of support for gender equality seem to co-exist with a preference for Islamic interpretations of personal status codes pertaining to women. With large majorities of individuals endorsing preferences for "mixed" political and legal systems that allow for a greater incorporation of religion into public life, gender equality is not being viewed as inimical to Islam. The region over this time period was characterized by relatively low support for secular interpretation of women's status.

Although the turn towards women's rights embedded in Islam breaks down false dichotomies often assumed between being religious or being feminist, women's status appears to remain a site of conflict in the region. Women and gender remain central to the construction of social, political and religious hierarchical structures and political control of communities, whether it is ethnic, political or religious (Al-Ali, 2012). Our study confirms that it is not religious doctrines, per se, that construct and reproduce gender regimes and ideologies, but the use of specific interpretations of these doctrines

to create and recreate controllable communities and citizenry by the state and its operatives. Women's bodies are still used as an effective site of social construction and control. Our study also confirms that attitudes about women's position are never static but are always fluid, and shaped by state institutions in authoritarian regimes. As has occurred far too many times in history, female activists in Arab Spring countries have faced a hurdle confronting all revolutionary politics: how to transform the egalitarian spirit of a brief uprising into a long-lasting revolution for women's equality.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

References

Abu-Lughod, L., & Ferguson, S. (2014). *Debating the "woman question" in the new Middle East: Women's rights, citizenship, and social justice* (Conference Report). Amman: Columbia Global Centers. Retrieved from http://socialdifference.columbia.edu/files/socialdiff/projects/AmmanConferenceReportfinal8.19.14.pdf

Al-Ali, N. (2012). Gendering the Arab Spring. *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication*, *5*(1), 26–31.

Arfaoui, K. (2014). Women's empowerment: The case of Tunisia in the Arab Spring. In M. Ennaji (Ed.), *Multiculturalism and democracy in North Africa: Aftermath of the Arab Spring* (pp. 159–176). New York, NY: Routledge.

Blaydes, L., & Lo., J. (2011). One man, one vote, one time? A model of democratization in the Middle East. *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, *24*(1) 110–146.

Boduszynski, M. P., Fabbe, K., & Lamont, C. (2015). Are secular parties the answer? *Journal of Democracy*, *26*(4), 125–139.

Brand, L. A. (1997). *Women, the State and political liberalization: Middle Eastern and North African experiences*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Charrad, M. M. (1997). *States and women's rights: The making of postcolonial Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Cohen, C., & Enloe, C. (2003). A conversation with Cynthia Enloe: Feminists look at masculinity and the men who wage war. *Signs*, *28*(4), 1187–1107.

Finn, T. (2015). After the revolution: The struggle for women's rights in Yemen. *Dissent*, *62*(1), 91–101.

Hashemi, N. (Ed.). (2009). *Islam, secularism and liberal democracy: Toward a democratic theory for Muslim societies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hatem M. F. (1994). Egyptian discourses on gender and political liberalization: Do secularist and Islamist views really differ? *The Middle East Journal*, *48*(4) 661–676.

Hilsdon, A.-M., & Rozario, S. (2006). Special issue on Islam, gender and human rights. *Women's Studies International Forum*, *29*, 331–338.

Hobsbawm, E., & Ranger, T. (1983). *The invention of tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hurd, I. (2008). *After anarchy: Legitimacy and power in the United Nations Security Council*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Inglehart, R., & Norris, P. (2003). *Rising tide: Gender equality and cultural change around the world*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Khattab, M. (2016). The struggle of Egyptian women for equal rights continues: Two steps forward, one step backward. In F. Sadiqi (Ed.), *Women's movements in post-Arab Spring North Africa* (pp. 127–142). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Krueger, A., & Malečková, J. (2003). Education, poverty and terrorism: Is there a causal connection? *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, *17*(4), 119–144.

Kurzman, C., & Turkoglu, D. (2015). Do Muslims vote Islamic now? *Journal of Democracy*, *26*(4), 100–109.

Mir-Hosseini, Z. (2006). Muslim women's quest for equality: Between Islamic law and feminism. *Critical Inquiry*, *32*, 629–645.

Mir-Hosseini, Z. (2011). Beyond 'Islam' vs 'Feminism'. *Institute of Development Studies Bulletin*, *42*(1), 67–77.

Moghadam, V. M. (2002). Islamic Feminism and its discontents: Toward a resolution of the debate. *Signs*, *27*(4), 1135–1171.

Neep, D. (2004). Dilemmas of democratization in the Middle East: The forward strategy of freedom. *Middle East Policy*, *11*(3), 73–84.

Netterstrom, K. L. (2015). The Islamists compromise in Tunisia. *Journal of Democracy*, *26*(4), 110–124.

Noueihed, L. (2012, March 16). Tunisian protesters demand Islamic state. *Daily Star*. Retrieved from http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Mar-16/166915–tunisian-protesters-demand-islamic-state.ashx

Pew Center on Religion in Public Life. (2013, April 30). The world's Muslims: Religion, politics and society. *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved from http://www.pewforum.org/Muslim/the-worlds-muslims-religion-politics-society.aspx

Retta, J. (2013). Consequences of the Arab Spring for women's political participation. *Journal of Women and Human Rights in the Middle East*, *1*, 3–19.

Robinson G. E. (1997). Can Islamists be democrats? The case of Jordan. *Middle East Journal*, *51*(3), 373–387.

Rozario, S. (2006). The new burqa in Bangladesh: Empowerment or violation of women's rights? *Women's Studies International Forum*, *29*, 368–380.

Satterfield, R. (2013). An unfulfilled promise? The role of women in the Arab awakening. *Journal of Women and Human Rights in the Middle East*, *1*, 20–30.

Tlemcani, R. (2016). The Algerian women issue: Struggles, Islamic violence, and co-optation. In F. Sadiqi (Ed.), *Women's movements in post-Arab Spring North Africa* (pp. 235–249). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Winter, B. (2006). Religion, culture and women's human

rights: Some general political and theoretical considerations. *Women's Studies International Forum*, *29*, 381–393.

Ziai, F. (1997). Personal status codes and women's rights in the Maghreb. In M. Afkhami & E. Freidl (Eds.), *Muslim women and the politics of participation: Implementing the Beijing platform* (pp. 72–82). New York, NY: Syracuse University Press.

About the Authors

Ashley M. Fox earned her BA and MA in Political Science from the University of Connecticut and a PhD in Sociomedical Sciences from Columbia University. Dr. Fox was a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Global Health and Population at Harvard between 2009–2010 and at Yale University in the Division of Health Policy and Administration between 2010–2011. Her research has focused on gender, sexuality and health in a global context. Her theoretical interests concern the role of public opinion, party ideology and descriptive representation in public policymaking.

Sana Abdelkarim Alzwawi is a fellow at Center for Women in Government and Civil Society (CWGCS) at the University at Albany; she is placed to work in NYS Department of Health, at the Office of Public Health Practice. Prior to her arrival to the United States Sana had been working with the International Medical Corps–Libya as a Gender Based Violence Program Trainer and Officer. In 2012 Sana had earned her Bachelor of Science degree program in Pharmaceutical Sciences from Benghazi Medical University.

Dina Refki researches the interplay of gender and institutional structures. She applies feminist theories in national, subnational and international contexts. Refki studies women's political leadership and has researched women's substantive and descriptive representation in elected and appointed governance in the United States and internationally. Dr. Refki is the author of several gender-focused research publications produced at CWGCS. She holds a doctorate in Humanistic Studies and a Master in Africana Studies from the University at Albany.

Appendix

Table 1. Country sample.

Country	Time	Sample size	Time period of data collection	
Algeria	**Wave 2**	1,216	April 15, 2011	May 11, 2011
	Wave 3	1,220	March 13, 2013	April 6, 2013
Iraq	**Wave 2**	1,234	February 2, 2011	March 12, 2011
	Wave 3	1,215	June 6 ,2013	June 29, 2013
Jordan	**Wave 2**	1,188	December 10, 2010	December 16, 2010
	Wave 3	1,795	December 27, 2012	Jan 6 ,2013
Lebanon	**Wave 2**	1,387	November 24, 2010	December 6, 2010
	Wave 3	1,200	July 3, 2013	July 26, 2013
Palestine	**Wave 2**	1,200	December 2, 2010	December 5, 2010
	Wave 3	1,200	December 20,2012	December 29, 2012
Sudan	**Wave 2**	1,538	December 12, 2010	December 30, 2010
	Wave 3	1,200	April 29 ,2013	May 29, 2013
Egypt	**Wave 2**	1,219	June 16, 2011	July 3, 2011
	Wave 3	1,196	March 31, 2013	April 7, 2013
Tunisia	**Wave 2**	1,196	September 30, 2011	October 11, 2011
	Wave 3	1,199	February 3, 2013	February 25, 2013
Yemen	**Wave 2**	1,200	February 1, 2011	February 15, 2011
	Wave 3	1,200	November 2, 2013	December 4, 2013

Table 2. Support for strict interpretation of Islamic law, point estimates with confidence intervals.

		The gov/parl should enact personal status laws (marriage, divorce) in accordance with Islamic law (% agree strongly/agree)			The gov/parl should enact inheritance laws in accordance with Islamic law (% agree strongly/agree)			Women should wear modest clothes without needing to wear a hijab. (% agree strongly/agree)			Gender-mixed education should be allowed in universities. (% agree strongly, agree)		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Algeria	Wave 2	77.5% [74.5–80.1]	78.4% [75.5–81.0]	77.9% [75.9–79.9]	78.1% [75.3–80.7]	78.8% [76.0–81.4]	78.5% [76.5–80.3]	48.5% [45.1–51.9]	50.4% [47.0–53.7]	49.4% [47.0–51.8]	61.0% [57.6–64.2]	61.3% [58.0–64.6]	61.2% [58.8–63.5]
	Wave 3	90.1% [87.3–92.4]	87.0% [83.9–89.5]	88.6% [86.5–90.3]	91.5% [88.9–93.6]	86.9% [83.8–89.4]	89.2% [87.2–90.9]	56.3% [52.2–60.4]	62.9% [58.9–66.8]	59.6% [56.7–62.5]	77.1% [73.4–80.4]	81.4% [78.0–84.4]	79.3% [76.8–81.5]
Iraq	Wave 2	90.0% [88.3–91.6]	89.5% [87.5–91.3]	89.8% [88.5–91.0]	90.6% [88.8–92.1]	90.2% [88.3–91.9]	90.4% [89.1–91.5]	40.8% [38.1–43.6]	40.2% [37.3–43.2]	40.5% [38.5–42.6]	78.4% [76.1–80.7]	75.4% [72.7–77.9]	76.9% [75.1–78.6]
	Wave 3	92.9% [90.5–94.8]	91.4% [88.6–93.6]	92.2% [90.4–93.7]	94.2% [92.0–95.8]	92.9% [90.3–94.9]	93.6% [92.0–94.9]	30.7% [26.9–34.8]	30.9% [27.0–35.0]	30.8% [28.1–33.7]	65.7% [61.5–69.7]	66.2% [61.9–70.2]	65.9% [63.0–68.8]
Jordan	Wave 2	91.0% [89.2–92.5]	86.4% [84.3–88.3]	88.8% [87.4–90.0]	91.19% [89.4–92.7]	86.9% [84.8–88.8]	89.1% [87.8–90.4]	53.2% [50.3–56.1]	57.0% [54.0–59.9]	55.0% [53.0–57.1]	51.0% [48.1–53.9]	60.4% [57.6–63.2]	55.5% [53.5–57.6]
	Wave 3	85.1% [81.5–88.1]	87.9% [84.7–90.5]	86.5% [84.1–88.5]	85.9% [82.5–88.7]	88.6% [85.4–91.1]	87.2% [84.9–89.2]	60.4% [55.7–64.8]	62.1% [58.0–66.1]	61.2% [58.1–64.3]	49.2% [44.7–53.7]	65.3% [61.1–69.2]	57.0% [53.9–60.1]
Lebanon	Wave 2	27.3% [25.1–29.6]	30.3% [27.3–33.4]	28.9% [27.0–30.8]	27.7% [25.5–30.1]	30.1% [27.2–33.2]	29.0% [27.1–30.9]	72.6% [70.1–74.9]	70.7% [67.5–73.7]	71.6% [69.6–73.5]	87.1% [85.2–88.8]	87.9% [85.4–90.0]	87.5% [86.0–88.9]
	Wave 3	35.8% [31.7–40.0]	34.1% [30.1–38.3]	34.9% [32.0–37.9]	34.6% [30.6–38.8]	34.8% [30.8–39.1]	34.7% [31.9–37.7]	76.8% [72.9–80.3]	78.4% [74.6–81.7]	77.6% [74.9–80.0]	94.0% [91.5–95.7]	93.9% [91.6–95.6]	93.9% [92.3–95.2]
Palestine	Wave 2	92.8% [91.0–94.3]	90.6% [88.7–92.2]	91.7% [90.4–92.8]	93.7% [92.0–95.1]	92.7% [91.0–94.1]	93.2% [92.1–94.2]	56.6% [53.6–59.5]	46.6% [43.7–49.6]	51.5% [49.4–53.6]	50.1% [47.2–53.1]	54.7% [51.8–57.7]	52.5% [50.4–54.6]
	Wave 3	90.2% [86.8–92.8]	90.5% [87.0–93.2]	90.4% [88.0–92.3]	92.1% [89.0–94.4]	92.1% [88.9–94.4]	92.1% [90.0–93.8]	49.8% [45.2–54.3]	44.5% [40.0–49.1]	47.2% [44.0–50.4]	52.2% [47.6–56.7]	58.5% [54.0–62.8]	55.3% [52.1–58.5]
Sudan	Wave 2	91.7% [90.0–93.1]	91.7% [90.2–93.0]	91.7% [90.6–92.7]	92.5% [90.9–93.9]	93.0% [91.6–94.2]	92.8% [91.7–93.7]	77.3% [75.1–79.3]	77.2% [74.6–79.6]	77.2% [75.6–78.8]	51.1% [48.5–53.8]	54.3% [51.3–57.4]	52.7% [50.7–54.7]
	Wave 3	87.6% [84.3–90.3]	90.9% [88.1–93.0]	89.2% [87.1–91.0]	87.8% [84.5–90.4]	88.0% [84.8–90.5]	87.9% [85.7–89.8]	79.5% [75.6–82.9]	78.7% [74.7–82.3]	79.1% [76.3–81.7]	48.2% [43.7–52.7]	54.9% [50.3–59.4]	51.5% [48.3–54.7]
Egypt	Wave 2	89.8% [88.0–91.4]	92.4% [90.8–93.8]	91.1% [89.9–92.2]	94.3% [92.9–95.4]	93.6% [92.1–94.9]	94.0% [93.0–94.8]	62.9% [60.1–65.7]	58.8% [56.0–61.6]	60.9% [58.9–62.9]	67.5% [64.7–70.2]	68.3% [65.6–70.9]	67.9% [65.9–69.8]
	Wave 3	87.0% [82.6–90.4]	78.1% [73.1–82.4]	82.5% [79.2–85.3]	87.1% [82.6–90.5]	81.6% [77.0–85.5]	84.3% [81.2–87.0]	52.5% [46.8–58.2]	47.2% [41.9–52.5]	49.8% [45.9–53.7]	51.6% [45.9–57.3]	45.4% [40.2–50.7]	48.5% [44.6–52.4]
Tunisia	Wave 2	60.1% [57.3–62.9]	51.6% [48.8–54.5]	55.8% [53.8–57.8]	83.9% [81.8–85.9]	77.6% [75.1–79.9]	80.7% [79.1–82.3]	81.1% [78.8–83.2]	78.2% [75.7–80.5]	79.6% [78.0–81.2]	85.1% [83.0–87.0]	81.1% [78.7–83.3]	83.1% [81.5–84.6]
	Wave 3	60.7% [56.1–65.1]	55.5% [51.0–60.0]	58.1% [54.8–61.2]	75.1% [70.7–79.1]	77.3% [73.3–80.9]	76.2% [73.3–78.9]	81.4% [77.3–84.9]	83.0% [79.3–86.1]	82.2% [79.5–84.6]	77.4% [73.2–81.1]	82.5% [78.8–85.6]	80.0% [77.2–82.4]
Yemen	Wave 2	89.8% [86.6–92.3]	82.8% [78.3–86.6]	86.2% [83.5–88.6]	88.4% [86.1–90.8]	86.5% [82.6–89.6]	87.4% [85.2–89.3]	53.6% [50.3–56.9]	48.0% [43.4–52.6]	50.7% [47.8–53.6]	50.4% [47.0–53.7]	56.2% [51.4–60.9]	53.4% [50.5–56.3]
	Wave 3	93.5% [90.3–95.7]	89.0% [85.5–91.8]	91.3% [89.1–93.2]	94.0% [90.9–96.0]	91.2% [88.0–93.6]	92.6% [90.5–94.3]	40.3% [35.4–45.5]	41.7% [37.1–46.5]	41.0% [37.6–44.5]	50.8% [45.6–56.0]	54.6% [49.8–59.9]	52.7% [49.1–56.9]

Table 3. Support for gender equality, point estimates with confidence intervals.

Variable		Women can work outside the home (% agree strongly/agree)			Men are better political leaders than women (% agree strongly/agree)			University education is more important for males than females (% agree strongly/agree)		
Country	Time	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Algeria	Wave 2	67.3% [64.0–70.4]	92.0% [90.0–93.6]	79.6% [77.5–81.4]	79.0% [76.2–81.6]	54.1% [50.8–57.5]	66.7% [64.4–68.9]	29.9% [26.9–33.2]	9.0% [7.3–11.1]	19.6% [17.7–21.5]
	Wave 3	81.1% [77.6–84.1]	93.2% [90.8–95.0]	87.1% [85.0–89.0]	75.9% [72.1–79.3]	50.0% [45.9–54.1]	63.0% [60.1–65.8]	6.3% [4.6–8.5]	2.5% [1.5–4.1]	4.4% [3.3–5.7]
Iraq	Wave 2	82.6% [80.3–84.6]	86.5% [84.4–88.4]	84.6% [83.1–86.0]	77.9% [75.5–80.1]	71.7% [68.9–74.3]	74.7% [72.9–76.5]	27.2% [24.8–29.8]	22.4% [20.0–25.0]	24.8% [23.1–26.6]
	Wave 3	75.5% [71.7–79.0]	82.7% [79.1–85.8]	79.0% [76.4–81.4]	83.0% [79.7–85.9]	59.7% [.554,.6392]	71.7% [68.9–74.4]	27.8% [24.1–31.9]	16.8% [13.8–20.2]	22.4% [20.0–25.1]
Jordan	Wave 2	73.4% [70.8–76.0]	90.7% [88.9–92.3]	81.8% [80.1–83.4]	79.3% [76.8–81.6]	70.9% [68.1–73.5]	75.2% [73.4–77.0]	39.9% [37.1–42.8]	26.4% [23.9–29.1]	33.4% [31.5–35.4]
	Wave 3	70.8% [66.4–74.8]	91.5% [88.6–93.7]	80.8% [78.1–83.3]	77.2% [73.0–80.9]	67.1% [63.0–71.0]	72.3% [69.4–75.1]	34.7% [30.5–39.3]	14.8% [12.1–17.9]	25.1% [22.4–28.0]
Lebanon	Wave 2	81.9% [79.7–83.9]	93.5% [91.9–94.8]	87.9% [86.6–89.1]	56.0% [53.4–58.6]	30.6% [27.6–33.7]	42.8% [40.7–44.9]	20.5% [18.3–22.8]	15.4% [12.9–18.1]	17.8% [16.2–19.6]
	Wave 3	85.3% [81.9–88.2]	93.4% [91.0–95.2]	89.5% [87.4–91.2]	48.5% [44.2–52.8]	29.7% [25.9–33.8]	38.9% [36.0–41.9]	13.1% [10.4–16.3]	11.2% [8.8–14.1]	12.1% [10.3–14.2]
Palestine	Wave 2	78.3% [75.7–80.7]	89.7% [87.7–91.4]	84.1% [82.4–85.6]	78.8% [76.2–81.2]	74.5% [71.9–77.0]	76.6% [74.8–78.4]	24.4% [22.0–27.0]	11.4% [9.7–13.3]	17.8% [16.3–19.4]
	Wave 3	77.1% [73.1–80.6]	92.3% [89.5–94.3]	84.6% [82.2–86.7]	76.7% [72.5–80.4]	66.0% [61.6–70.2]	71.4% [68.4–74.3]	25.6% [21.8–29.7]	15.8% [12.8–19.3]	20.7% [18.3–23.4]
Sudan	Wave 2	77.5% [75.2–79.6]	80.5% [77.8–82.9]	79.0% [77.3–80.6]	85.8% [83.9–87.5]	81.9% [79.4–84.1]	83.9% [82.3–85.3]	38.9% [36.3–41.5]	30.8% [28.0–33.7]	34.9% [33.0–36.9]
	Wave 3	75.7% [71.6–79.5]	87.4% [83.8–90.2]	81.5% [78.8–84.0]	79.0% [75.2–82.4]	68.5% [64.0–72.7]	73.8% [70.8–76.6]	36.6% [32.4–41.1]	21.2% [17.7–25.1]	29.0% [26.1–32.0]
Egypt	Wave 2	58.6% [55.7–61.4]	87.3% [85.3–89.1]	72.7% [70.8–74.5]	93.6% [92.1–94.9]	87.9% [85.9–89.7]	90.8% [89.6–91.9]	39.8% [37.0–42.7]	26.9% [24.5–29.5]	33.5% [31.6–35.4]
	Wave 3	77.2% [71.8–81.8]	85.3% [81.0–88.8]	81.3% [77.9–84.3]	70.7% [65.3–75.7]	63.3% [58.0–68.2]	66.9% [63.2–70.5]	21.3% [17.1–26.1]	22.8% [18.5–27.8]	22.1% [19.0–25.5]
Tunisia	Wave 2	83.3% [81.1–85.3]	92.0% [90.2–93.5]	87.7% [86.3–89.0]	81.2% [78.9–83.3]	62.1% [59.3–64.9]	71.6% [69.7–73.4]	29.5% [26.9–32.9]	22.0% [19.7–24.4]	25.7% [24.0–27.5]
	Wave 3	76.7% [72.4–80.5]	89.2% [86.2–91.6]	83.0% [80.4–85.4]	62.0% [57.4–66.4]	45.6% [41.2–50.1]	53.7% [50.5–56.9]	18.6% [15.3–22.3]	11.9% [9.4–15.0]	15.2% [13.1–17.6]
Yemen	Wave 2	70.2% [67.2–73.2]	83.8% [79.9–87.0]	77.1% [74.7–79.4]	78.3% [75.5–80.9]	72.7% [68.7–76.4]	75.5% [73.0–77.7]	39.5% [36.2–42.9]	36.1% [31.4–41.1]	37.8% [34.9–40.8]
	Wave 3	66.8% [61.7–71.5]	78.8% [74.6–82.5]	72.7% [69.4–75.7]	77.5% [72.8–81.6]	63.8% [59.0–68.3]	70.8% [67.5–73.9]	43.4% [38.3–48.6]	34.1% [29.8–38.7]	38.8% [35.4–42.3]

Table 4. Descriptive summary of variables included in multivariate analysis.

Variable		%
Secular Feminism	Strong support	15.62
	Moderate support	69.70
	Low support	14.68
Equal Gender Norms	Consistent support	24.62
	Mixed	45.53
	No/low support	29.85
Muslim Feminism	Low support for secular feminism#High support for gender equality	18.55
Support for Political Secularism	Support theocracy	39.61
	Support secular democracy	29.77
	Support mixed system	73.19
Support for Legal Secularism	Support laws that accord with Islam	72.99
Anti-Westernism	Agree: Foreign interference is an obstacle to reform in your country	71.6
	Agree US interfere interference in the region justifies armed operations against the United States everywhere	46.38
Religiosity	Pray Daily	74.27
	Always attending Friday (or Sun) Prayer	49.13
	Always/most of the time read the Quran	64.52
Gender	Female	49.84
Age	18–34	49.26
	35–54	35.46
	55+	15.28
Urban	Rural	35.08
	Urban	64.92
Education	Primary	46.43
	Secondary	34.39
	Bachelor+	19.18
Income	Difficulties meeting needs with monthly income	62.86
	Monthly income adequate for needs	37.14
Religion	No-Muslim	5.6
Married	Single	36.72

Table 5. Multivariate results (slope estimates reported as Odds Ratios).

Variables		(1) Support Secular Feminism	(2) Support for Gender Equality	(3) Muslim Feminism
Gender Norms	Consistently low support for gender equitable norms (ref)			
	Mixed views on gender equitable norms	1.36*** (1.239–1.490)		
	Consistent support for equitable gender norms	1.57*** (1.403–1.765)		
Secular Feminism	Consistent preference for enacting status codes in accordance with Islam (ref)			
	Mixed views on status codes		1.44*** (1.311–1.584)	
	Consistent opposition to enacting status codes in accordance with Islam		1.76*** (1.525–2.027)	
Support for Political Secularism	Support theocracy	0.75*** (0.683–0.818)	0.75*** (0.699–0.806)	0.84*** (0.756–0.925)
	Support secular democracy	2.02*** (1.838–2.211)	0.81*** (0.754–0.872)	0.90** (0.811–0.997)
	Support mixed system (religious and secular parties compete)	1.09* (0.990–1.192)	1.16*** (1.079–1.249)	1.20*** (1.080–1.336)
Legal Secularism	Support laws accordance Islam	0.21*** (0.188–0.234)	0.97 (0.892–1.055)	1.40*** (1.256–1.570)
Anti-Westernism	Agree foreign interference is an obstacle to reform	1.01 (0.920–1.117)	0.94* (0.866–1.010)	0.73*** (0.660–0.811)
	Agree that the US interferes too much in the region	1.03 (0.955–1.118)	1.04 (0.979–1.108)	1.04 (0.949–1.132)
Religiosity	Pray daily	0.85*** (0.770–0.942)	0.94 (0.872–1.022)	0.93 (0.829–1.034)
	Always attend Friday prayer	0.80*** (0.731–0.881)	0.87*** (0.812–0.940)	0.84*** (0.755–0.929)
	Read the Quran daily	1.01 (0.920–1.104)	1.17*** (1.092–1.260)	1.06 (0.956–1.172)
Demographics	Female	1.06 (0.973–1.148)	2.22*** (2.086–2.373)	2.14*** (1.953–2.346)
Age	18–34 (ref)			
	35–54	1.04 (0.943–1.136)	0.95 (0.880–1.019)	0.92* (0.827–1.016)
	55+	1.09 (0.960–1.248)	0.91* (0.821–1.008)	0.87* (0.747–1.013)
	Urban	0.94 (0.864–1.030)	1.05 (0.982–1.129)	0.94 (0.852–1.035)

Table 5. Multivariate results (slope estimates reported as Odds Ratios) [cont.].

Variables		(1) Support Secular Feminism	(2) Support for Gender Equality	(3) Muslim Feminism
Education	Primary or below			
	Secondary/technical	1.05 (0.957–1.149)	1.39*** (1.291–1.491)	1.26*** (1.136–1.395)
	University+	1.01 (0.907–1.135)	1.86*** (1.702–2.030)	1.56*** (1.377–1.760)
	Income adequate to meet needs	1.07* (0.989–1.168)	0.97 (0.910–1.036)	1.06 (0.971–1.165)
	Non-Muslim	9.33*** (7.634–11.40)	1.70*** (1.471–1.969)	0.16*** (0.120–0.224)
	Married	0.91* (0.832–1.000)	1.09** (1.015–1.171)	1.13** (1.021–1.251)
	Wave3	0.94 (0.865–1.028)	1.46*** (1.361–1.557)	1.44*** (1.311–1.585)
Wave#Arab Spring	non-Arab Spring Wave 2 (ref)	—	—	—
	Arab Spring Wave 2	0.94 (0.865–1.028)	1.46*** (1.361–1.557)	1.44*** (1.311–1.585)
	Non Arab Spring Wave 3	1.81*** (1.493–2.190)	0.36*** (0.311–0.425)	0.20*** (0.154–0.269)
	Arab Spring Wave 3	0.86*** (0.822–0.905)	1.29*** (1.236–1.336)	1.49*** (1.386–1.593)
Constant cut1		0.04*** (0.034–0.051)	0.66*** (0.560–0.787)	
Constant cut2		5.23*** (4.307–6.360)	6.68*** (5.614–7.937)	
Constant				0.16*** (0.132–0.197)
Observations		15,608	15,608	15,608

Note: Country fixed effects included but not shown.

COGITATIO