

Reassessing Support for Islam and Democracy in the Arab World?

Evidence from Egypt and Jordan

By AMANEY A. JAMAL

Across the Middle East, support for democracy is striking. Regional survey data throughout the Arab world indicates that levels of support for democracy enjoy considerable majority support.¹ However, the Arab world has yet to see its first full-fledged democratic state. Studies examining the potential for democracy in the region often analyze institutional reforms that correspond with liberal democratic principles. Yet, students of Middle Eastern politics understand that existing institutional reforms, such as parliamentary elections and greater freedoms within civil society, have done little to enhance democracy in the region. In fact, the liberalizing tendencies of the 1990s have further solidified authoritarian rule.² Although these reforms have allowed for greater civic and political participation, they have also been accompanied by further repression and the continued monopolization of regime power. Today, democracy in the Arab world is, at best, a remote possibility.

In this conundrum of democratization, where institutional liberalizing reforms have been linked to further authoritarian consolidation and a rise of political Islam, little is known about the immediate effects of the current political climate on regional political worldviews. Although support for democracy is extremely high, support for Islamism is also quite high. In many parts of the Arab world, in fact, citizens express simultaneous support for democracy and Islamism. The discourse on the compatibility of Islam and democracy is quite vibrant and nuanced. From mosque sermons to newspaper columns, college campus speeches to coffee shop discussions, citizens of the Arab world view the tenets of Islam as inherently democratic. There is no distance between Islam and democracy.

Yet, in most Western discourses, support for religious rule and democracy are often assumed to be diametrically opposed categories. Secularism, implying the separation of church and state, is a discourse that the Muslim world appears to have rejected. In countries such as Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Turkey, Muslim-oriented parties (not Islamist parties that demand *sharia*) have made significant gains in recent elections. According to Vali Nasr (2005), "the vital center of politics is likely to belong neither to secularist and leftist parties nor to Islamists." The center of politics will be located among those who support "Muslim values and moderate Islamic politics."³ This trend is also emerging in the context of the Arab Muslim world. In qualitative interviews with Jordanian citizens during the summer of 2005, the vast majority of citizens from all economic and educational backgrounds expressed support for democratic rule based on a worldview of Islamic laws and doctrines. These citizens do not see Islam and democracy as opposed to one another. In fact, in many instances, respondents offered very perceptive analysis on the ways in which Islam could further contribute to the democratization project. Thus, support for both democracy and Islam raises compelling points of inquiry. How does support for Islamism and democracy differ from support for Islamism or democracy? What cultural, demographic, and religious factors are linked to levels of support for democracy and Islamism in the specific contexts of Jordan and Egypt?

Drawing on modernization theory, which holds that higher education remains the most robust factor in explaining support for democracy in the Arab world, I argue that support for Islamism is more a function of poor socioeconomic conditions than of other prevailing

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explanations, namely politicocultural accounts. Yet, when we examine simultaneous support for Islamism and democracy, an interesting and complex story appears. We find that Islamist-democrats in the region are associated with the interaction between lower socioeconomic factors and politicocultural factors.

ISLAM, ISLAMISM, AND THE LACK OF DEMOCRACY IN THE ARAB WORLD

Two major paradigms explain the emergence of Islamism and the lack of support for democracy in the Arab world. The first paradigm relies on modernization theories outlining successes and failures of development in producing democrats and Islamists. The second depends on monolithic politicocultural explanations and focuses on the lack of democracy in the region. Theories explaining the growth of democratic support among Arab citizens have relied on models of successful modernization. According to these models, citizens gradually become "modern" beings, shed traditional baggage, and adopt an appreciation for democratic norms and institutions. The transition from traditional to modern and from religious to secular is facilitated by successful economic development projects. These economic development projects are normally instigated by—but not limited to—industrialization, and they result in urbanization accompanied by greater wealth and education. The democratic citizen, in other words, is a by-product of successful modernization processes.

The Islamist story, on the other hand, has been narrated as the outcome of failed modernization projects. According to these formulations, the Islamist is the creation of failed state-led economic projects. Promised prosperity in the 1960s and 1970s, citizens in many parts of the Arab world flocked to urban centers under the grandiose projects of Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI). Championed by populist rulers as Gamal Abdel-Nasser of Egypt, ISI mobilized projects for industrialization, which resulted in expanded educational opportunities, secularism, and economic growth. Yet, the economic and industrial gains of the 1960s and 1970s—perhaps fueled more by the oil boom of the 1970s than ISI—quickly dwindled by the 1980s. By the 1990s, policymakers were using terms like "unprecedented crisis" and "imminent failure" to describe the economic and political development trajectories of the Arab world. From

these crises, goes the story, emerged the Islamist.

The literature discussing the emergence of political Islam in the 1980s argues that Islamists are those individuals who would have benefited most from successful economic development. Saad Eddin Ibrahim (1996), for example, found that Egyptian Islamists tended to be individuals who flocked to urban settings looking for upward mobility but were thwarted in their expectations. On acquiring the prerequisites to advancement (namely a degree of higher education), they were confronted with few opportunities. These degree-carrying individuals often opted to take employment in overly bloated government bureaucracies, finding it necessary to supplement their incomes by moonlighting as taxi drivers or janitors. Islamist support then grew among those disenfranchised, impoverished sectors. Religion and political Islam became attractive alternatives to dire living conditions.

The Islamist, therefore, is the individual who, in contrast to her democratic counterpart, did not benefit from modernization (see table 1 below). The democrat with both a higher education and a larger income could "afford" to embrace democracy; she had "acquired the necessary education and resources," it was argued, to support democracy. But why? What causal mechanisms produce the Islamists and the democrats in the context of the Arab world?

The second paradigm focuses more on monolithic politicocultural constructions. This paradigm contends that Islam—however defined—prevents people from demanding democratic change.⁴ These studies tend to emphasize the existence of antidemocratic cultural variables as plausible explanations for the persistence of authoritarianism in the region. Simply put, Muslim culture and democracy are incompatible.⁵ Several dimen-

TABLE 1. Typology in Modernization Claims

Support for Democracy	Support for Islamism
High education	Low education
More equitable	Less equitable
gender attitudes	gender attitudes
Higher income	Lower income
Less religious	More religious

sions of this argument attempt to explain the democratic deficit in the region. First, some scholars posit that Muslims are more likely to accept the status quo, however disadvantageous it may be, as part of a doctrine of divine destiny (Keddourie 1992; Pipes 1983; Berger 1964). In other words, the citizens of the region attribute their political situations to "Allah's way." Such adherence to the status quo bars any contestation of the established order. Second, as Samuel Huntington has argued in his seminal work, *The Clash of Civilizations*, Islam and democracy are inherently incompatible because Islam recognizes no division between "church" and state, even as it emphasizes the community over the individual. Individualism, Huntington maintains, is a key asset to liberal democratic orders. Third, as scholars like Frances Fukuyama argue, Islam poses a grave threat to liberal democracy because its doctrinal emphasis lacks a liberal democratic orientation. Fourth, others argue that Islam does not advocate political freedoms and in fact mobilizes people against democratic values (Tibi 1991). And finally, new scholarship has begun to argue that an Islamic political culture has stifled gender empowerment in ways that have depressed support for democracy.

An underlying assumption guides all these hypotheses: "Islam" is a monolithic, hierarchical faith devoid of individualism, liberalism, and political freedoms. But more important, these explanations assume that Islamic culture, Islamic interpretations, and Islamic religiosity all similarly stifle the democratic process and do so the world over. But in reality, we know very little about the conditions under which Islam reinforces views that are supportive of either democracy or Islamism. Despite a wealth of opinion and supposition, scholars have gathered little empirical data about the many ways in which Islam structures individual- and community-level support for democracy as well as Islamism in the region.

REVISITING THE COMPATIBILITY OF ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY

A new body of scholarship has emerged to counter these assumptions, arguing that there are great possibilities for the coexistence of both Islam and democracy. Scholars are pursuing several fruitful lines of inquiry. The first examines Islamic philosophical models—*sharia*, *fiqh*, and new *ijtihad*—and their effect on the compatibility of Islam with democracy

(Khan forthcoming; About El Fadl 2004; Esposito and Voll 1996). A second line of reasoning finds much hope for democracy in the writings of "progressive Muslims" (Kubba 2003; Mas-moudi 2003; Safi 2003; El-Affendi 2003). A third, based on new public opinion data, shows that Islamic religiosity and support for democracy are indeed compatible (Tessler 2002; Bratton 2003; Hofmann 2004). And finally, scholarship based on the non-Muslim world finds that greater religious participation does not stifle support for democracy.

To date, few systematic studies have empirically documented and analyzed the relationship between Islamism and democracy in the Arab world. Given the overwhelming claims made about the incompatibility of Islam and democracy, this gap is both surprising and troubling. Based on existing work on religion and civic engagement in the non-Muslim world, we find that religion plays important roles in the daily lives of ordinary citizens. Scholars have long paid significant attention to the role of religious institutions in the political mobilization of citizens (Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 1995; Jones-Correa and Leal 2001; Wuthnow 1999). Studies capturing the dynamics of church involvement have highlighted the power of the institution for mobilizing congregants. Verba, Scholzman, and Brady find that churchgoers are more likely to be engaged in political activities. Churches also have the potential to increase individual levels of civic skills, political efficacy, and political knowledge. They write, "The acquisition of such civic skills is not a function of [socioeconomic status] but depends on the frequency of church attendance and [the] denomination of the church one attends."⁶

This overflow from the religious to the political sphere has been documented in several studies analyzing the role of churches in political life (Smidt 1999). Other studies posit that, instead of merely increasing levels of civic involvement, religious institutions can also serve as conduits for direct political mobilization. As Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) point out, "Involvement in organizations . . . promotes political participation by making people susceptible to mobilization. Politically, organizations stand between national and local political leaders and ordinary citizens."⁷ In fact, new studies have found that civic skills gained in churches do not influence levels of political participation indirectly. Rather, churches directly influence political participation by recruiting

congregants into political processes (Djupe and Grant 2001). Still, few studies have empirically examined how specifically Islamic observance and involvement in mosques and other Islamic institutions shape levels of support for democracy in the Arab world. One of the challenges is to examine the confluence of results in Western democracies with the results in the Arab world. And despite these new and apparently fruitful scholarly pursuits, the mechanisms by which Islamic predispositions mediate or stifle support for democracy remain unclear. We are left to wonder, then: when, and under what conditions, does Islam reinforce democracy or Islamism?

Using World Values Survey Data of the Fourth Wave collected in Egypt and Jordan, I will first subject the claims advanced by modernization theory and politicocultural arguments to an empirical test to gauge the factors that are linked to support for both democracy and Islamism in Egypt and Jordan. Second, I will demonstrate that, although empirical evidence supports the claims that modernization successes and failures are linked to support for democracy and Islamism in these two states, these factors alone do not explain simultaneous support for both democracy and Islamism. In the contexts of both Jordan and Egypt, Islamism and democracy do not clash; therefore, the dichotomizations predicted by modernization stipulations cannot be the sole explanatory factors shaping support for democracy and Islamism. Finally, I offer empirical evidence for and analysis of the determinants of simultaneous support for Islamism and democracy in these two states. I argue that the existence of both Islamist and democratic categories provides citizens who demand change with multiple frames to choose from. In the end, an interaction of socioeconomic factors and traditional cultural predispositions shape the simultaneous support for Islamism and democracy (democratic Islamists) in the two countries.

ISLAMISM AND DEMOCRACY IN THE ARAB WORLD

Modernization and politicocultural predications of support for democracy and Islamism in the Arab world, therefore, should subsequently produce differential democratic orientations at the societal level. Modernization models of development produce winners and losers depending on where citizens are located vis-à-vis developmental trajectories. If the

modernization formulations of support for democracy and Islamism are correct, Arab societies should be bifurcated along the lines of democrats and Islamists because modernization produces benefits for some and deprivation for others. Those who benefit should be more democratically inclined, while the deprived should be stronger advocates of Islamism. The politicocultural models, on the other hand, should structure societal responses more monolithically. That is, one should not see the type of dichotomization between Islamists and democrats as maintained by modernization theories of development. In fact, according to politicocultural models, one should not find much variation in support for democracy either within or across given political settings.

Examining Cultural and Modernization Models: Claims and Tests

Examining support for Islamism and democracy in the contexts of Egypt and Jordan will add to our understanding of the factors that shape support for democratic orientations and Islamism in the region. In Egypt, Islamic groups, like democratic movements, face more government repression and often are excluded from participation in mainstream political life. In Jordan, on the other hand, Islamic movements have been able to operate more freely in the kingdom and enjoy more government protections than their counterparts in Egypt (Lust-Okar 2005; Schwedler 2001, Lucas 2003, Clark 2004). In these two different contexts, therefore, one should expect support for Islamism in Egypt to differ qualitatively from support for Islamism in Jordan. In Egypt, support for Islamic movements can be seen as part of an overall strategy of support for democracy. Often, people assume that Islamists might "hijack" the democratic process for their own aims, but seldom do people argue that democrats will hijack the Islamist strategy for greater democratic objectives (Nasr 2005). In Egypt, therefore, one should expect to find support for Islamism and democracy among similar categories of individuals. Supporters of democracy should also be supporters of Islamism. Islamists see democracy as a viable route to greater political participation, whereas democrats see Islamist discourse as a means of gaining wider constituency support. Democrats and Islamists are united on the same side of the political landscape. In Jordan, one should expect to find support for Islamists based on

more ideological grounds, because Islamic groups like the IAF (Islamic Action Front) and the Muslim Brotherhood are already guaranteed a relatively equal degree of access to the political process and enjoy greater religious freedom. Therefore, support for Islamism and democracy in Jordan should be based on more diametrically opposed categories than in Egypt.

This article will further examine four hypotheses derived from modernization expectations and politicocultural arguments. My first hypothesis gauges the extent to which Islamic devoutness relates to levels of support for democracy and Islamism in Jordan and Egypt. Is greater Islamic observance linked to lower support for democracy and greater support for Islamism? The second hypothesis examines whether negative attitudes about gender equality depress support for democracy and increase support for Islamism. The third set of hypotheses explores the role of economic conditions in shaping levels of democratic and Islamist support. Are those that are more economically comfortable more likely to support democracy? The fourth set of hypotheses looks at the role of education, a key indicator of social economic status, in mediating support for democratic attitudes. Is support for democracy a function of higher levels of education? I expect to find significant variation between Egypt and Jordan. In Egypt, I expect to find greater similarity between supporters of democracy and supporters of Islamism than in Jordan.

Support for democracy is an index variable measured by two questions: (a) extent of support for and overall evaluation of democracy, and (b) whether democracy, despite its problems, is better than any other system of governance in the world (see appendix 1). Support for Islamism is also an index variable consisting of two questions: (a) whether government would benefit from stronger religious politicians, and (b) whether religious individuals should influence the way people vote.⁸

TESTS

Independent Variables

A. Religiosity and Islam (Political Culture)

A wealth of literature has blamed the absence of democracy in the region on Islamic culture and the fundamentalist traditions of the doctrine. Here, I employed one question gauging the effect of Islamic religiosity on support for democracy and Islamism. This

measure examined levels of attendance of religious services.

B. Evaluations about Gender Equality (Political Culture)

Recent scholarship has argued that a key factor explaining the democratic deficit in the Arab world is the status of women. Fish (2002), for instance, argues that it is not Islam per se but the plight of Muslim women in Muslim societies and the underpinnings of their subordination that explains the persistence of authoritarianism. "[T]he station of women," he writes, "more than other factors that predominate in Western thinking about religious systems and politics, links Islam and the democratic deficit."⁹ Inglehart and Norris (2003) advance a similar argument, reasoning that a glaring cultural gap between Western and Muslim societies is visible when it comes to attitudes on gender equality. Western societies are far more accommodating of women than Muslim cultures. This, they maintain, illustrates the lack of broader cultural phenomena pertinent to democracy, such as "tolerance, trust, political activism and emphasis on individual autonomy."

Muslim cultures, they contend, are deficient in these necessary dimensions of democratic political culture.

To gauge the effects of attitudes about gender equality on support for democracy and Islamism, I used four questions from the World Values Survey and constructed an index variable measuring gender attitudes. The first question asks whether men, women, or neither are entitled to jobs when jobs are scarce. The second question on gender equality asks respondents whether a university education is more important for a boy or a girl. Third, citizens in Egypt and Jordan were asked whether men made better political leaders than women. And finally, those surveyed were asked whether they felt women with jobs were able to forge the same bonds of closeness with their children as stay-at-home moms. Further, gender is also included as a pertinent control in the models below.

C. Income and Wealth (Modernization Theory)¹⁰

The correlation between economic development and democracy remains one of the most robust findings in comparative political studies. Several arguments link greater economic prosperity to democracy (Diamond 1993; Lipset 1994). Primarily, wealth allows for greater civic involvement and political participation (Verba,

Schlozman, and Brady 1995). As citizens become more prosperous, they become less dependent on existing, often oppressive, institutions. Wealth also allows citizens to exercise their voices in ways they would otherwise not. Does wealth continue to determine support for democracy in the Arab world? Does poverty then correlate to support for Islamism? I used four variables to assess economic standing. The first dimension of wealth employs income as straightforward measure. The second dimension looks at subjective measures of individual social class placement. The third measure captures personal assessments of financial situation. And the fourth dimension asks respondents whether they saved, broke even, or borrowed money in the previous year.

D. Education (Modernization Theory)

The role of education is vital for democratic citizenship because (a) it increases one's human

capital in ways that bode well for higher incomes, (b) the learning experience itself in institutions of higher education is conducive to democratic civic orientations and practices, and (c) university students are more likely to be exposed to democratic ideas and norms on campuses across the world. But what about the role of education in the Arab world? Do existing cultural barriers depress the role of education in support for democracy? I used a straightforward measure of educational attainment to gauge the effects of education on Islamism and support for democracy.

The Dichotomization of Society?

The findings in Jordan and Egypt illustrate that the two countries exhibit little variation with regard to the factors that explain support for democracy and Islamism. Therefore, it initially appears that the degree to which Islamic movements are institutionalized has

TABLE 2. Ordinary Least Squares Regression: Determinants of Support for Democracy and Islamism in Egypt and Jordan (with robust standard errors)

	Egypt		Jordan	
	Democratic support	Islamist support	Democratic support	Islamist support
<i>Socioeconomic variables</i>				
Income	.025** (.011)	-.045* (.024)	.026** (.013)	-.047** (.021)
Economic evaluation	.031** (.014)	.126*** (.133)	.020 (.018)	.067 (.028)
Social class (subjective evaluation)	-.039 (.032)	.131 (.080)	.028 (.055)	-.024 (.086)
Financial situation	-.055 (.051)	.011 (.119)	.002 (.044)	.062 (.072)
Education	.038*** (.011)	-.013 (.025)	.031* (.065)	-.096** (.031)
Urban (Amman and Cairo)	-.244*** (.076)	.130 (.164)	-.193** (.084)	.165 (.141)
<i>Cultural variables</i>				
Age	.025 (.011)	.091** (.031)	.004 (.054)	.001 (.006)
Gender	-.074 (.052)	.026 (.117)	-.215* (.131)	.371* (.220)
Gender attitudes (pro-women)	.018 (.013)	-.119*** (.031)	-.001 (.021)	-.066** (.034)
Mosque attendance (religiosity)	-.003 (.001)	-.003 (.024)	-.235 (.024)	-.021 (.040)
Constant	5.94*** (.263)	7.96*** (.626)	6.68*** (.376)	7.98*** (.640)
R ²	.057	.054	.043	.050
N	974	974	868	797

Note. *Significant at the .1 level **Significant at the .05 level ***Significant at the .001 level

little effect on microlevel attitudes among the publics of each country. In fact, modernization explanations are the most robust explanations for support of democracy and the greater role of Islamic leaders in government. The findings above illustrate that support for democracy is directly linked to levels of higher education in both Egypt and Jordan. Those who are more educated are more likely to be democratic supporters, whereas those that are less educated in Jordan tend to be stronger supporters of Islamism. Financial standing yielded similar results. In Jordan and Egypt, those with more income support democracy, whereas those with less income support Islamism. Furthermore, residents outside of Amman and Cairo (major urban centers) are more likely to support democracy. Urban concentration in these two key cities is not linked to more democratic support. Perhaps this is because residents of these two cities are more likely to be frustrated with slow democratic progress and may be more cynical about democracy as a result. The only difference between Jordan and Egypt is that supporters of both Islamism and democracy in Egypt tend to be satisfied with their overall economic situations.

In terms of politicocultural factors, attitudes about gender and their relationship to support for Islamism were consistent across both Jordan and Egypt. Lower support for gender equality correlates with greater support for Islamic leaders. In Jordan and Egypt, those who held less favorable attitudes toward women are more likely to be Islamist supporters. And finally, mosque attendance, a measure of Islamic observance, is not a significant explanatory variable in Jordan or Egypt.

The above findings yield some interesting results that support both modernization spec-

ulations and some politicocultural arguments. The most robust explanations appear to be education and income. Across the board, higher education is linked to democracy, and lower education to Islamism. Yet, if modernization expectations are indeed correct, one would expect a social polarization between democrats and Islamists. In reality, however, the picture is more complex. To what extent are the societies of Egypt and Jordan dichotomized along the lines of support for Islamists and democrats? Based on tabulations below, it does not appear that support for democracy and Islamism produce inverse relationships in these two countries. In Jordan, there is no statistically significant relationship—either inverse or direct—between support for Islamism and support for democracy (see table 3). In Egypt, strong supporters of Islamism are also strong supporters of democracy. The cross-tabulations below demonstrate what many students of Middle East studies have documented. Support for a greater role of Islam in government and support for democracy need not be in direct opposition to one another. In fact, in the case of Egypt, the overlap between high support for democracy and high support for Islamism is close to 70 percent. In Jordan, the overlap is close to 72 percent. What characteristics do the democratic Islamists take on in each of these two countries? Do politicocultural and modernization models continue to explain any of the observable trends?

Based on regression models (see appendix 1) that explain support for Islamism while controlling for levels of support for democracy, I find that in Egypt, democratic-Islamists (simultaneous supporters of democracy and Islam) tend to be older and hold more negative attitudes regarding gender equality when compared to

TABLE 3. Cross-Tabulation of Support for Islamism and Democracy: Egypt and Jordan

	Egypt		Jordan	
	Low Islamism	High Islamism	Low Islamism	High Islamism
Low democratic support	41.13% <i>N</i> = 190	58.87% <i>N</i> = 272	27.95% <i>N</i> = 90	72.05% <i>N</i> = 232
High democratic support	29.93% <i>N</i> = 161	70.07% <i>N</i> = 377	28.70% <i>N</i> = 128	71.30% <i>N</i> = 318
	Pearson $\chi^2(1) = 13.68$ Pr = 0.000		Pearson $\chi^2(1) = .0516$ Pr = .820	

TABLE 4. Democratic-Islamists in Egypt and Jordan (ordinary least squares regressions—significant variables only in table)

	Low Islamism	High Islamism
<i>Egypt</i>		
Low democratic support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financially dissatisfied • Lower social status • Higher income • Pro-women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financially satisfied • Higher social status • Lower income • Poor gender attitudes
High democratic support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Younger • Pro-women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older • Poor gender attitudes
<i>Jordan</i>		
Low democratic support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men • Higher education • Higher income • Pro-women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women • Lower education • Lower income • Not pro-women
High democratic support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not satisfied financially • Higher education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfied financially • Lower education

their democratically weaker Islamist counterparts (see table 4). Among weak supporters of democracy who are strong supporters of Islamism, one finds more financial and economic satisfaction—despite lower income levels—than their weak democratic and weak Islamist counterparts. Weak democratic and strong Islamist supporters in Egypt also exhibit lower levels of support for gender equality. Clearly, in Egypt there are differences among demographic groups when gauging simultaneous support for Islamism and democracy. Again, there is insufficient evidence to make the argument that the same category of individuals supports both Islamism and democracy. The younger generation and those who hold more positive attitudes about gender equality are more likely to be democracy-only supporters. Democratic Islamists, on the other hand, are more likely to be of an older generation and hold less positive gender views. Among both weak and strong democratic Islamist supporters, attitudes that do not favor gender equality play a systematic factor in explaining support for Islamism. And although lower levels of income are significant in explaining support for Islamism among weaker democrats, one also notes that this finding is accompanied by greater financial satisfaction. It appears that Islamists who are weaker democrats find strength and support from Islam.

In Jordan, one finds similar trends. Among strong Islamist and weak democratic support-

ers, support for women's equality is lower than among weak Islamist and weak democratic supporters. Further, strong supporters of Islamism who are either weak or strong supporters of democracy tend to have lower levels of education. Those who support Islam in Jordan are not among the most educated. Weak democratic and strong Islamist supporters, like their Egyptian counterparts, also have lower levels of income. Among this same category of weak democrats and strong Islamists, women are more likely to support Islamism than men. This may come as a surprise to many observers, but recent studies have begun to reveal that women are more likely than men to support Islamism as a means of preserving the traditional status quo. Although this status quo does not necessarily support them, these women argue that it keeps "their men checked" from pursuing the ways of the West (mistresses and affairs are often cited as negative Western externalities). Certainly, the 2002 elections in Bahrain demonstrated this phenomenon; there, women disproportionately supported traditional religious candidates in the election. Further, as Suad Joseph (1999) has found, women will opt to cling to traditional patriarchal models of family organization, because they have important roles to play within these structures. Outside of patriarchal arrangements, women have found upward mobility and similarly constructed mediums of self-worth difficult to access in the dismal economic sectors of the public

sphere. That even among democratic supporters in Egypt women are more likely to support Islamism reinforces these findings. Among nondemocratic supporters in Jordan, women are also more likely to be supporters of Islamism than their male counterparts. Islamism seems to be quite popular among women in the region.

Among weak democrats in these two countries, we find that the more disenfranchised—those with lower incomes in both Egypt and Jordan and those with lower levels of education in Jordan—are likely to be strong Islamists. Those who did not fare well under modernization, it appears, turned to Islamism as an alternative. And as we have seen, one of the most salient traditional cultural factors that also distinguishes Islamists from democratic-Islamists in Jordan and Egypt are attitudes about women. Those weaker democrats who privilege men over women are more likely to be supporters of Islamism. Often, however, we assume that it is men who fear social transformation in the Arab world. The data here—based on Jordan—illustrates that women tend to champion the status quo.

CONCLUSION

The implications of this article are significant for both theory and policy. Recent scholarly studies characterize cultural factors as hindrances to democratic support in the region. Islam and attitudes about gender equality are frequently cited as depressing the potential for Arab democracy. My study demonstrates that there is some empirical evidence to support these claims. However, dimensions of Islamic religiosity prove insignificant in the above analysis. On the other hand, attitudes about gender equality are a robust and systematic factor that shapes levels of support for a greater role of Islam in government. Those with more favorable gender attitudes are less likely to be strong Islamists and tend instead to be strong democrats. Even among strong democrats, those with negative attitudes about gender equality tend to exhibit more support for democratic-Islamist models of governance. Gender also plays a significant role, but not in a systematic fashion. In Jordan, women are more likely to support Islamists than their male counterparts. The most compelling and durable finding is the role of education in affecting support for democracy. Higher levels of education are systematically linked to higher levels of sup-

port for democracy, whereas more depressing economic conditions are linked to support for Islamism. Even among strong democrats, people will also support Islamism if they possess lower levels of education and lower financial status. These findings indicate that support for Islamism and democracy in the context of the Arab world is multidimensional and nuanced indeed. Rather than purely religious factors, sociocultural variables such as levels of education, income, and attitudes about gender equality are the most salient indicators explaining support for democracy, Islamism, and simultaneous support for the two.

The dichotomization of Islam and democracy is a false construct in the context of these two countries and, indeed, in many parts of the Muslim world. The vast majority of respondents in both Egypt and Jordan demonstrate simultaneous support for both Islam and democracy. Based on the current findings, and where mass attitudes are located, it is difficult to foresee the advancement of a democratic agenda at the expense of an Islamic agenda. The discourse on the compatibility of Islam and democracy is a sophisticated and highly intellectual discourse that appeals to people of all backgrounds. The challenge for external actors is to engage with this political discourse couched in Muslim values. As I have detailed above, this discourse is rich and progressive; however, there are some concerns, especially regarding attitudes about gender. The challenge for embedded elites and external actors interested in promoting democracy will be communicating with local peoples about the compatibility of Islam and gender equality.

This paper also demonstrates that although the states of Egypt and Jordan have different relationships with their Islamic opposition movements, these links (or lack thereof) have little to do with mass public opinion. The fact that there are systematic observable trends on support for democracy and Islamism across the two states supports the argument that modernization arguments and attitudes about gender are consistent explanations across cases.

These findings lend further support to the argument that human capital development is one of the key routes to promoting democracy in the region. Education and higher standards of living are directly linked to stronger support of democracy. In fact, those that are more educated also have more favorable attitudes about gender. Of concern, then, are the findings of the Arab Human Development Reports of 2002 and 2003. According to these reports, the

Arab world has been declining in terms of relative per capita gross domestic product and levels of education when compared to the rest of the developing world. The Arab world desperately needs both to address staggering unemployment rates—as high as 40 percent among the youth population in several areas—and build on existing institutions of higher education.

NOTES

1. See World Values Surveys, 2004.
2. According to Freedom House scores.
3. Vali Nasr, "The Rise of Muslim Democracy."
4. For an excellent discussion about why there are great possibilities for Islam and democracy see: Khaled Abou Fadl, *Islam and the Challenge of Democracy*; John Esposito and John Voll, *Islam and Democracy*; and Jose Casanova, "Civil Society and Religion: Retrospective Reflections on Catholicism and Prospective Reflections on Islam."

5. For an excellent discussion about formulations of political culture in the Arab world see *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World*.

6. Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, *Voice and Inequality*, 282.

7. Rosenstone and Hansen, 87.

8. Please note that this is based on a broad definition of Islamism. Basically, I attempt to capture the extent to which respondents believe that religious leaders should play a more active role in political life. Data does not exist on other pertinent indicators that can plausibly gauge support for Islamism in a more systematic fashion. Therefore, my findings here are based on the best data available from the World Values Survey.

9. Fish, 37.

10. Although modernization theory is more about a process measure (increasing levels of urbanization and socioeconomic attainment), absent data across time, objective indicators on education and income are used here from only one time period in the World Values Survey fourth-wave data.

Appendix 1. Ordinary Least Squares Regressions: Determinants of Support for Islamism Among Democrats and Non-Democrats in Egypt and Jordan

	Egypt		Jordan	
	Islamist support (among stronger Democrats)	Islamist support (among weaker Democrats)	Islamist support (among stronger Democrats)	Islamist support (among weaker Democrats)
<i>Economic situation</i>				
Income	-.011 (.036)	-.099*** (.034)	-.038 (.029)	-.065* (.039)
Economic evaluation	.047 (.045)	.179*** (.048)	-.083* (.044)	.032 (.047)
Social class (subjective evaluation)	-.014 (.117)	-.237*** (.107)	-.091 (.144)	-.027 (.136)
Financial situation	.058 (.164)	-.001 (.067)	.153 (.107)	-.054 (.118)
Education	-.017 (.065)	-.026 (.035)	-.086* (.045)	-.095* (.055)
Age	.124** (.058)	.039 (.055)	.001 (.075)	-.001 (.084)
Gender	-.015 (.165)	.106 (.164)	.332 (.311)	.672* (.362)
Gender attitudes (pro-women)	-.116*** (.044)	-.018*** (.043)	-.069 (.051)	-.089* (.052)
Mosque attendance (religiosity)	-.022 (.035)	.016 (.034)	-.048 (.061)	-.026 (.064)
Urban	.064 (.226)	.274 (.237)	.182 (.217)	.218 (.220)
Constant	8.27*** (.835)	7.86*** (.884)	7.91*** (.949)	8.20*** (.976)
R ²	.034	.115	.052	.067
N	528	446	391	292

Note. *Significant at the .1 level. **Significant at the .05 level. ***Significant at the .001 level.

Appendix 2: WVS Survey Questions

- (1) **Support for Democracy:** (Index variable consisting of two questions):
- (a) **Support for democracy:** Democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government.
1. Strongly agree
 2. Agree
 3. Disagree
 4. Strongly disagree
- (b) **Support for democratic system:** I am going to describe various types of political systems and ask what you think about each as a way of governing your country. For each one, would you say it is a very good, fairly good, fairly bad, or very bad way of governing this country?
1. Very good
 2. Fairly good
 3. Fairly bad
 4. Very bad
- (2) **Support for Islamism:** An index variable consisting of two questions:
- (a) Religious leaders should not influence how people vote in elections.
1. Strongly agree
 2. Agree
 3. Disagree
 4. Strongly disagree
- (b) It would be better for your country if more people with strong religious beliefs held public office.
1. Strongly agree
 2. Agree
 3. Disagree
 4. Strongly disagree
- (3) **Education:** What is the highest educational level that you have attained?
- CODING:
1. No formal education
 2. Incomplete primary school
 3. Koranic school
 4. Complete primary school
 5. Intermediate secondary school (*ecole moyenne*)
 6. Incomplete secondary (*sans bac*)
 7. Complete secondary (*avec bac*)
8. Some university-level education, without degree
9. University-level education, with degree
- (4) **Gender:** 1 Male; 2 Female.
- (5) **Income:**
- CODING: Ten point scale from low to high.
- (6) **Economic Situations Evaluations:** How satisfied are you with the financial situation of your household? If "1" means you are completely dissatisfied on this scale, and "10" means you are completely satisfied, where would you put your satisfaction with your household's financial situation?
- CODING: Ten-point scale from dissatisfied to satisfied.
- (7) **Financial Situation:** During the past year, did your family:
1. Save money
 2. Just get by
 3. Spent some savings
 4. Spent savings and borrowed money
 5. DK, NA
- (8) **Social Status Subjective:** People sometimes describe themselves as belonging to the working class, the middle class, the upper class, or the lower class. Would you describe yourself as belonging to the:
- CODING:
1. Upper class
 2. Upper middle class
 3. Lower middle class
 4. Working class
 5. Lower class
- (9) **Gender Attitudes about Equality Index:**
- (a) **Men more entitled to jobs:** When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women.
- CODING:
1. Agree
 2. Neither agree nor disagree
 3. Disagree
- (b) **Gender attitudes about equality: Working mother close to children:** A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as

a mother who does not work.

CODING:

1. Agree
2. Neither agree nor disagree
3. Disagree

- (c) Gender attitudes about equality: Men make better political leaders: On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do.

CODING:

1. Agree
2. Neither agree nor disagree
3. Disagree

- (d) Gender attitudes about equality: University education more important for a boy: A university education is more important for a boy than a girl.

CODING:

1. Agree
2. Neither agree nor disagree
3. Disagree

- (10) Religiosity and Islamic observance: Religious attendance: How often do you attend religious services these days?

CODING:

1. More than once a week
2. Once a week
3. Once a month
4. Only on special holy days
5. Once a year
6. Less often
7. Never, practically never

- (11) Urban: Do you live in an urban setting:

1. Yes
2. No

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