

Muslims and Democracy

An empirical critique of Fukuyama's culturalist approach

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Abstract

This paper intends to demonstrate three objectives: 1) Fukuyama's theory of the triumph of liberal democracy is cross culturally plausible at the attitudinal level. 2) Fukuyama's claim that Islam is resistant to modernity (characterised by liberal democracy and capitalism) does not hold up to empirical testing. That is, using Islam as explanatory variable of democracy/authoritarianism is largely uncorroborated. 3) Explore alternative explanations to the absence of democracy in most of Middle Eastern countries. The paper concludes by emphasising the importance of Human Development and Political Opportunity Structure to the explanation of democracy/authoritarianism. The main conclusion of the paper is that 'Islam' is largely irrelevant as an explanatory variable to authoritarianism/democracy.

Introduction

Since the nineteenth century the question of Islam and modernity has been at the heart of intellectual debates in both the 'Muslim' world and the 'West'. Throughout this time-span three distinct but somewhat analogous strands have emerged; one strand believes that the religion of Islam is incompatible with modern thinking and scientific rationality, the second posits the opposite view i.e. a compatibility thesis. A third view posits that there are some elements that can be incorporated, adapted, and adopted by the Islamic world but simultaneously rejects other elements of modernity or deem them as alien. These three views have advocates in and outside the 'Muslim' world. Their rationale to have taken a particular view may differ; a Muslim advocate of the incompatibility thesis would advance his view in the name of cultural 'authenticity', while a Western counterpart would advance his view in the name of, for example, ethnocentricity or secularism.

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Recently, Francis Fukuyama claimed that, in his view, Islam and modernity are incompatible. He argued that *'there does seem to be something about Islam, or at least the fundamentalist versions of Islam that have been dominant in recent years, that makes Muslim societies particularly resistant to modernity'*¹. For Fukuyama modernity is characterised by institutions like liberal democracy and capitalism. The prevalence of these two institutional systems in a given society qualifies that society to be 'modern' or according to Fukuyama having 'reached the end of history'. Fukuyama remains at the macro level of analysis. Accordingly his claim will be tested at the appropriate level. Due to limitations of space I will restrict the analysis to democracy.

Fukuyama uses Islam as a 'yardstick' that offers an easy cultural essentialist explanation to the absence of democracy from most of Muslim countries. In this he converges with other culturalists blaming Islam for whatever goes wrong in a Muslim country. This cultural essentialism, when empirically tested, does not seem to be offering much explanation. Thus, is there a better model that can explain the undemocratic nature of political systems in most Muslim countries especially in the Middle East? In order to find out we must test Fukuyama's theory in Muslim context.

The analysis will be carried out at the macro level and will focus on Democracy as one dimension of modernity. It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine other manifestations. Even democracy will be examined at the abstract level i.e. measuring support for democracy as an ideal form government as opposed to other forms of government. The data available from the World Values Survey (WVS) and European Values Survey EVS allow for comparative analysis covering 80% of the world population. At the macro level two statistical techniques are implemented, first a correlation analysis aimed at establishing the strength of the relationship between the dependent variables (support for democracy, years of uninterrupted democracy) and the independent variable (religiosity with a focus on Islam). Then, regression analysis will be implemented to evaluate the impact of religiosity (Fukuyama's single explanatory

¹ Francis Fukuyama (2001) 'The West has Won: Radical Islam can't Beat Democracy and Capitalism', *The Guardian*, October 11. This article was reprinted in the Guardian from Wall street Journal. Emphasis added.

variable is religion), Human Development and Political Opportunity Structures (POS) upon support for democracy. The latter is meant to measure the over-stretched state structure in the Muslim Middle East in particular and the heavy-handed authoritarian regimes make it less possible for democracy to be the norm of governance. These regimes are lagging behind popular expectations primarily at the political front, as we shall see throughout the analysis.

I argue that support for democratic ideals is universal, although the institutional state of democracy may not reach the ideal or falls far short of it in some societies particularly Muslim societies. Many prominent scholars (Fukuyama 2001, Huntington 1996) have attributed this state of affairs to cultural factors. It is the aim of this paper to evaluate these claims. The data set, which consists of representative samples of each population, covers Islamic countries as varied as Arab-Islamic societies such as Jordan, Egypt, and Morocco and None-Arab Islamic societies such as Iran, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Turkey. Additionally, it covers countries of Latin America, North America, South East Asia, South Asia, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Africa, and Australia. These societies represent different cultural traditions, religions, languages, and ethnicities. These data are the main source of empirical evidence used in this work.

Cultural essentialism

Reflecting on the debate that followed the tragic terrorist attacks on the United States 11th of September 2001, Fukuyama remains convinced that there is 'nothing else towards which we could expect to evolve' but liberal democracy and capitalism'. This seems to be a plausible assumption. However, Fukuyama's line of argument was diluted by rival claims and counter claims, especially after September 11th 2001, such as the 'Clash of Civilisations' thesis in which Huntington argues, 'rather than progressing toward a single global system, the world remained mired in a 'clash of civilisations' in which six or seven major cultural groups would co-exist without converging and constitute the new fracture lines of global conflict'². It seems that both theories are partly right. We anticipate that the empirical evidence will show universal and overwhelming support for democracy and at the same time show the persistence of diverse cultural heritages and traditions in Huntington's cultural zones. But does this mean that conflicts would be driven by cultural differences? Are some cultures in particular (Islamic!) resistant to democracy and its ideals, while other cultures are receptive of these ideals (Christian!)?

The danger of involvement in a conflict may come about as a result of the absence of democracy in a given society but quite certainly not of cultural differences³. The atrocities of September 11th 2001 committed by Muslim ultra-extremists promoted the idea of clash of civilisations and many have taken it for granted identifying the Islamic cultural zone in contrast with the West symbolised by the USA and what she stands for. Even Fukuyama himself who advocated a single model of evolution to 'modernity' has accepted a version of Muslim exceptionalism in which Islam or some versions of Islam

² Francis Fukuyama (2001) 'The west has won: Radical Islam can't beat democracy and capitalism', *The Guardian*, October 11.

³ See for example Fawaz A Gerges (1999) *America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, concludes by saying "the United States does not have a comprehensive, coherent policy regarding the role of Islam in the political process." He writes that there are "major inconsistencies" between what American officials say and what they do regarding the role of Islam in the political process. However, he also says that strategic and security considerations, rather than conflicts of culture, ideology or history, have the greater influence on US thinking and on the official US foreign policy discourse on the Islamist revival. Gerges says that Clinton's own pronouncements on Islam display "enlightened sensitivity, realism and tact," and thus stand in stark contrast to some of the material found in the US media.

are incompatible with modernity. By exempting Muslim societies, Fukuyama, undermines the universality of his own thesis. Because liberal democracy and capitalism have universal appeal, Muslim societies should be attracted to them as any other society in the world. It is understood that if religion in general constitutes a hindrance to democracy, it should hold true for all religions with no exceptions. Some religions may be less restrictive than others depending on whether they have been through a major reform in modern times (e.g. Protestantism).

But can we really reduce the whole issue to religion as the only factor? As the literature suggests, the answer is no (Rueschemeyer et al. 1992; Vanhanen 1997; Dahl 1998, Inglehart 1997). There are more factors to look at such as modernisation, industrialisation, urbanisation, literacy, colonial legacy, international trade, international political economy (weapons and oil), interpersonal trust, well-being, secularisation, social class, globalisation, openness of the market, distribution of economic and intellectual resources, regional and international conflicts, nationalism, state structure, elite orientation, and state legitimacy. All these factors play some role in determining the shape of the political system a society may have or prefer to have. The concern here is to test the impact of religiosity on support for democracy.

We can anticipate that high levels of support for democracy are to be found in societies where it has had functioned properly and successfully for well over a century: Western Europe and North America. In other underdeveloped societies, democracy may have even higher levels of support because it represents the hope of the people for development, since almost all societies that embraced these democratic institutions are well-to-do societies.

Fukuyama argues that 'modernity has a cultural basis. Liberal democracy and free markets do not work everywhere. They work best in societies with certain values whose origins may not be entirely rational. It is not an accident that modern liberal democracy emerged first in the Christian west, since the universalism of democratic rights can be seen as a secular form of Christian universalism.' Modernity may have cultural basis but

what are they? Is it religious cultural heritage that makes democracy attainable in one society and unattainable in another? Fukuyama seems to implicitly acquiesce that the religion of Islam cannot accommodate 'modernity'. Clearly, this cultural essentialism entails examination. Because cultural values are epiphenomena, a more comprehensive test is required. For example, high religiosity is more likely to be found in less developed societies, while more aesthetic values are more likely to be found in rich and developed societies⁴. Therefore, levels of development largely condition both sets of values. In addition to the impact of socio-economic modernisation, institutional structures of states have a contribution to the understanding as to why country 'A' with 90% of its population supporting the ideals of democracy is not a democracy?

Equating universalism of democratic rights to Christian universalism seems to be an oversimplification. For all democratic states today are more or less secular. Moreover, the introduction of Christianity to Africa did not bring about Liberal democracies and equally if it is Christian universalism, why Central and Eastern Europe, Russia and Latin America did not develop liberal democracies and capitalist free-market economy simultaneously with Western Europe? Instead they developed systems of opposite nature; political authoritarianism and economic communism as opposed to democracy and free markets. Fukuyama's cultural yardstick 'Christian universalism' does not account for Japan's (Confucian) democracy and free market, either. Catholic Christian societies are different to the protestant Christian societies. They have different patterns of development and have experienced similar circumstances to some Islamic, Buddhist, Orthodox Christian, and Confucian societies. The fortunes of democracy in many of these societies explicitly indicate that there is more to the story than religion and cultural tradition.

He posits that 'there have been pressures for greater democracy in various Middle Eastern countries like Egypt and Jordan, following the Eastern European revolutions of

⁴ Inglehart, Ronald. (1990) *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. Inglehart, Ronald (1997) *Modernisation and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies*, Princeton, N.J.; Chichester: Princeton University Press.

1989. But in this part of the world [the Middle East], *Islam has stood as a major barrier to democratisation*. As demonstrated by the Algerian municipal elections of 1990, or by Iran a decade earlier, greater democracy may not lead to greater liberalization because it brings to power Islamic fundamentalists hoping to establish some form of popular theocracy⁵.

Clearly, Fukuyama adopts and promotes a cultural essentialist argument. By emphasising Islam as *the* obstacle he underestimates -if not ignores- the dynamics of political processes within which ‘political Islam’⁶ functions. Also, the same process can explain support for liberal democracy. As Katerina Dalacoura forcefully argues that ‘if liberalism and Islamic Liberalism are bound together in Middle Eastern societies, the implication is that secularism is not an essential requirement for liberalism. The input of Islamic liberalism in political culture would not be authoritarian, although it would undoubtedly be conservative, as in the case of Christian Democratic parties in the European experience.’⁷ Using Islam as a yardstick, to justify (by rulers of the region) and explain (by theorists in the west) the absence of democratic political practice at the macro level in the Middle East, is undoubtedly not without misconception and serious oversimplification. Political actors whether individuals, political parties, elites, mass social movements or governments, constitute essential instruments in the understanding of why democracy has not yet fully-fledged in the Muslim Middle East.

Given the weakness of cultural explanations in general and Fukuyama’s in particular, I think there are two other theories that better explain the absence of democracy in the Muslim Middle East: the structures of political opportunities available to political actors within and without the ‘modern nation states’ and the levels of socio-economic development. In the following section, I expound some of the factors that contribute to the continuity of authoritarian regimes in the Arab Middle East and further explore the

⁵ Frances Fukuyama (1992) *The end of History and the Last Man*, London: Hamish Hamilton. P: 347. Emphasis added.

⁶ By political Islam I mean organised groups and parties presenting political agenda from an Islamic worldview.

⁷ Katerina Dalacoura (1998) *Islam, Liberalism and Human Rights*, I.B. Tauris: London. P: 192.

extent to which the religion of Islam has been employed to justify completely opposite political ends.

Strategic rent as an obstacle to democratisation

At the international level some political regimes in the Muslim Arab Middle East have greatly benefited from strategic rent seeking throughout the cold war period. After the end of the cold war democratisation swept the then undemocratic countries, and it was thought the stagnant authoritarian regimes of the Middle East would follow suit. Alas, stagnation continued to be the dominant feature of politics and oppression went on. The international political environment, which made the transitions of east European countries possible, stopped at the environs of the Muslim world. Not surprisingly, the capitalist liberal democracy USA while encouraging democracy in Eastern Europe, it supported and legitimated dictatorial regimes like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the Gulf states, Jordan and Iran under the Shah to secure its interests⁸. Such regimes have felt relatively secure and thus did not seem to have to change their political outlook. Therefore, these regimes have implemented severe political oppression over many decades resulting in the creation of two generations of frightened public that cannot even think about political participation without thinking about severe consequences such an action ultimately entails under authoritarian regimes. Measures like passport confiscation, job dismissal and imprisonment without trial (let alone a fair one) proved very effective to prevent citizens of political involvement.

Furthermore, in the name of Islam the Saudi political regime has been suppressing the political aspirations of its people⁹. The pretext of 'Islam' also played into the hands of

⁸ There are other factors pertaining to the political processes within these countries, which facilitated dictatorial governance. For example, the patron-client way in which these regimes distributed economic resources in exchange for political loyalties effectively meant a continuation of oppression. Politically, people's acceptance of these norms is a rational response to authoritarian rule.

⁹ In an interview with the Kuwaiti daily *Al-Siyasa* King Fahad of Saudi Arabia said "The democratic system prevalent in the world is not appropriate for us in this region ... our peoples in their makeup and characteristics differ from that ... world. The elections system has no place in the Islamic creed, which calls for a government of advice and consultation and for the shepherd's openness to his flock, and holds the

some of the American administrations advisors until today. In contrast to the Saudis, Iran under an 'Islamic' regime has experienced political participation and the Iranian transition to reform the system under president Khatami is paving the way to a more democratic Iran¹⁰. Time and again, in Egypt 'the [regime] has sought to promote itself as the guardian of true legitimacy, the correct alternative to excess Islamist zeal'¹¹. These regimes embraced the events of September the 11th as a new pretext for rent seeking and the continuation of authoritarianism. A year on, Condoleezza Rice speaking on behalf of the American administration made clear that USA is serious about democratising the regimes in the Muslim world¹². These events changed the American administration commitment to support authoritarian regimes in the Middle East. The Egyptian foreign minister Ahmad Maher responded to Rice's comments by saying 'the Arab and Islamic World knows its way ahead and we do not need lessons from anybody'¹³. Maher is not an elected official to speak on behalf of the 'Arab and Islamic World'. Such comments reflect the threats encountering these authoritarian regimes in the near future. Because of

ruler fully responsible before his people" *Mideast Mirror*, March 30, p.12. it was quoted in Timothy D. Sisk (1992) *Islam and Democracy: Religion, Politics, and power in the Middle East*, Washington: United States Institute of Peace. P 50.

¹⁰ In a conference convened with the help of Bill Clinton (one of the sponsors) at New York university, Houchang Chehabi, a professor of international relations at Boston University said that there are two norms of morality in the Islamic world -- one for the public life and one for the private life. "In the public realm, the norms of the Islamic morality must be maintained. Take the case of Iran, the country of which I am a citizen. There's no doubt in my mind that Iran currently enjoys more political freedom than it ever did under the Shah. And yet, since it has a state that tells half the population -- women -- how to dress, it is perceived as being less modern and more repressive than under the Shah." See a report by Nikola Krastev titled 'Misperceptions Between Muslims And Americans Not Likely To Improve' [Radio Free Europe – Radio Liberty \(RFE/RL\)](http://www.middleeastwire.com/islam/stories/20020129_meno.shtml) Posted Tuesday January 29, 2002 - 06:47:19 AM EST. The report is available at http://www.middleeastwire.com/islam/stories/20020129_meno.shtml

¹¹ Pascale Ghazaleh (2001) 'Sex, lies and censorship', *Al Ahram Weekly*, December 27.

¹² Speaking in an interview with the Financial Times 23/09/2002 Condoleezza Rice, US national security adviser said the US will be "completely devoted" to the reconstruction of Iraq as a unified, democratic state in the event of a military strike that topples Saddam Hussein. Reinforcing the Bush administration's message that the values of freedom, democracy and free enterprise do not "stop at the edge of Islam", Ms Rice underlined US interest in the "democratisation or the march of freedom in the Muslim world". She said of reform in places such as Bahrain, Qatar and - "to a certain extent" - Jordan: "There are a lot of reformist elements. We want to be supportive of those."

¹³ His views were published by Al- Ahram daily on 25th of September 2002 view at <http://www.ahram.org.eg/Arab/ahram/2002/9/25/FRON8.HTM>. Also see <http://www.aljazeera.net/news/arabic/2002/9/9-24-16.htm> visited on 25/09/2002 at 11:00 am UK time.

these threats they will defy all calls for democracy by invoking 'cultural particularity' and 'national sovereignty'¹⁴.

After the 11th of September, president Mubarak of Egypt said that we have warned you (the west) of the terrorist danger but you did not listen to us, while we were tracing and chasing them (Islamic extremists) you gave them asylum. Ironically, following the introduction of Military Courts in USA to trial terrorists, 'in an interview with the state-run daily *Al Gumhurriya*, President Hosni Mubarak referred to new anti-terror measures in Britain and America as proof that military trials and other emergency measures in place in Egypt for the past 20 years were always the "right" policy'¹⁵. Regimes like the Saudi and Egyptian are pointing to the alternative, if it is not 'us' it would be the worst alternative: Islamic extremists. Thus such regimes have found new way to seek political rent and increase their grip on power under the security justification. Similarly, the French/American backed Algerian army stepped in on January 12, 1992 disregarding the majority of voters to prevent the FIS from enjoying its electoral victory¹⁶ as result of

¹⁴ I expect that the near future, if the Americans press for democracy we will see a flow of literature talking about 'Islamic Values' with an aim to delay calls for democracy. Fred Halliday argues that the arguments of cultural particularity regarding human rights has been developed under pressure from the authoritarian regimes. These regimes, he argues, support some authors to enhance this argument. I agree with assessment. For more details see Fred Halliday (2000) *Nation and Religion in the Middle East*, London: Saqi Books.

¹⁵ Mubarak was reported to have told the paper "the introduction of military trials in America and a new law that allows detention without trial in Britain "proves that we were right from the beginning in using all means...[in response to] these great crimes that threaten the security of society." ... However, Mubarak denied that the military courts or the emergency laws that created them had been used against civilians. "We took some criticism because we used emergency law, but we did not use it except in confronting terrorism, and we did not and we will not use it against opinion or thought," he said. ... He added, "There is no doubt that the events of September 11 imposed a new concept of democracy that differs from the concept that Western states defended before these events, especially in regard to the freedom of the individual." ... Hafez Abu Seada, the secretary-general of the Egyptian Organization of Human Rights (EOHR), told the Middle East Times that the government had been using the courts to stamp out opposition and freedom of expression. For example, Saad Eddin Ibrahim, a lecturer at the American University of Cairo and a human rights activist, has been the most prominent non-violent campaigner to face the "special courts" in recent years. In May 2001, he was sentenced by a state security court to seven years in prison for "receiving funds from abroad without government permission, embezzling funds and spreading misinformation and rumors abroad." This interview was summarised by Amil Khan for Middle East Times and posted on Free Saad Eddin Ibrahim campaign on Tue Jan 1, 2002 1:29 pm see: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/free_saadeddin_ibrahim/message/143.

¹⁶ For a detailed account and a chronological order of the events in the Algerian case see John Esposito and John Voll (1996) *Islam and Democracy*, Oxford: Oxford University press. Pp: 150-172.

‘extreme measures’¹⁷ taken by the military a civil war erupted and claimed thousands of lives¹⁸ and democracy was swept away. Thus the political opportunities available to would-be political actors whether Islamists or otherwise were very minimal. Such closed political systems to opposition constitute a major barrier to democracy. In this process Islam is exploited to either legitimise a regime (Saudi Arabia) or justifies the existence of a regime as the guardian of the ‘modern state’ against the Islamists (Egypt and Algeria).

To illustrate this point further, as Fareed Zakaria puts it ‘it is always the same splendid setting – and the same sad story. A senior American diplomat enters one the grand presidential palaces ... from which president Hosni Mubarak rules over Egypt. ... Then the American gently raises the issue of human rights and suggests that Egypt’s government might ease up on political dissent, allow more press freedoms and stop jailing intellectuals. Mubarak tenses up and snaps, “If I were to do what you ask, the fundamentalists will take over Egypt. Is that what you want?” The diplomat demurs and the conversation moves back to the last twist in the peace process.’ Egypt is not the only country in the Middle East that uses such discourse. The Palestinian authority uses this discourse too. ‘When President Bill Clinton urged Yasir Arafat to sign on the Camp David peace plan¹⁹ in July 2001, Arafat is reported to have responded with words to the effect, “If I do what you want, Hamas will be in power tomorrow.” The Saudi monarchy’s most articulate spokesman, Prince Bandar bin Sultan, often reminds American officials that if they press his government too hard, the likely alternative to the regime is not Jeffersonian democracy but Islamic theocracy.’²⁰ In Tunisia too Bin Ali has

¹⁷ In a Lecture by Dr. Ahmed Kenioua on "Algeria on the Eve of the Elections", Center for Strategic Studies, University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan, 13 February 2002. Dr Kenioua emphasised this point. See an abstract at http://www.css-jordan.org/activities/lectures/01_02/2002/kenioua.htm

¹⁸ Gerges comments that "the Bush administration's response to the Algerian crisis was notable largely for its passivity, in contrast to its outspoken record in advocating political pluralism elsewhere." A commitment to democracy and to political pluralism would seem to entail support for the FIS. Yet the Bush administration gave no such support.

¹⁹ Palestinian officials deny that there was a genuine peace deal on offer at Camp David; the Palestinian minister Nabil Shaath said in an interview with the Time magazine ‘the Israelis did not offer Palestine on a silver platter. There was no sovereignty over the air, over the sea, over the borders. Nothing for the Palestinian refugees. It was a bum deal’. Time Magazine, April 15, 2002, p 63.

²⁰ Fareed Zakaria (2001) ‘How to save the Arab World’, Newsweek, Vol. CXXXVIII No. 26. December 24. pp 24-29.

exploited the 'Islamist threat' to justify his authoritarian rule²¹. In Jordan on the 15th of August 2002 the king postponed the elections until spring 2003 citing 'regional circumstances' as an obstacle²². Ironically, on the 20th of August (5 days later) the PM of Jordan said 'Difficult regional circumstances must not hamper Kingdom's reforms.'²³ Including political reform!²⁴.

Therefore, the deformed state structure in the Middle East, and current political regimes' fear of radical and moderate political Islam, makes the introduction of democratic politics a risky game for these regimes. In Egypt democratic parliamentary elections are, to a great extent manipulated by the regime²⁵. Moderate Islamic activists who wanted to be part of the political process and participate in decision-making were not allowed to freely

²¹ Larbi Sadiki (2002) 'Bin Ali's Tunisia: Democracy by Non-Democratic Means', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 1. PP57-78. Sadiki made this very clear on page 68.

²² Many observers of Jordanian politics (myself included) interpret the decision to postpone the election and leave the country without an elected parliament for the period between June 2001 and spring 2003 as attributed to the regime's fear of the opposition (Islamic, Pan-Arab, and Left parties) winning a majority because of the Palestinian and Iraqi crises. I think this fear is largely unfounded. The latest data available from Jordan strongly support this claim. Only 17% will vote to 'Islamic Trend' and only 6.7% reported that The Islamic Action Front Party represents their aspirations. The latter figure is down from 70.5% in 1996, 66% in 1997, 59.5% in 1998, 60.6% in 1999, 52.4% in 2000, 18.5% in 2001, and 7% in September 2002. Centre for Strategic Studies (CSS) (2002) *Democracy In Jordan Survey*, Amman: CSS. Pp 25-27.

²³ *Jordan Times* on the 20th of August 2002, front page. Given the fact that he was brought up and lived most of his life in the UK and USA, the king was perceived to be a democratic ruler but his endorsement of his government recommendation to postpone the elections twice, evaporated the hopes of most of those (myself included) who had hoped that he will enhance democracy in Jordan.

²⁴ Since the dissolution of parliament in June 2001, the government introduced more than 100 provisional legislations restricting public freedoms, increasing prices, doubling compulsory insurance on cars among host of other issues. No elected body proved these legislations.

²⁵ The elections of November 1995 were extensively denounced as fraudulent by many independent observers. See, for example, Egyptian Organisation of Human Rights (EOHR) (1995) *Democracy Jeopardised: Nobody 'Passed' the Elections: The EOHR Account of the Egyptian Parliamentary Elections*. Moreover, in a centered article titled 'Egypt Marks 15 years of Mubarak' in *Middle East Times* the writer says: "The great political liberalizations of the Mubarak regime occurred in the first half of his administration. They peaked around 1987, with the election of a parliament dominated one-third by the opposition. But the last few years, particularly 1995, saw the erosion of those democratic gains. The year-long press law campaign humiliated the opposition parties, and while it left them with their freedoms essentially intact, it showed them that those freedoms were a matter of presidential whim. The People's Assembly elections told the parties that, though their participation in elections was welcomed cosmetically, they could never expect a real share in power". Among the reasons for censorship MET lists 'Discuss modern, unorthodox interpretations of Islam.' It seems that the Egyptian political regime defends an interpretation of Islam that justifies the despotic nature of the regime. A challenge to the established religious authority "Al-Azhar" would mean a challenge to its guardian (the current political regime). <http://metimes.com/2K2/issue2002-5/methaus.htm>

run for seats in the last elections of 2000²⁶. The security forces detained many of them. The moderate Islamic parties in Jordan and Morocco have participated in elections and gained parliamentary seats. For example, the Islamic brotherhood movement in Jordan participated in the cabinet holding five ministerial offices in 1990-1991. They won 22 out of 80 seats in the 1989 parliamentary elections and 16 out of 80 in 1993 elections. In 1997 they boycotted the general elections because they thought the government was trying to undermine them by introducing a new electoral system, which was designed (according to the Islamic Action Front Party- IAFP) to reduce their chances of acquiring more seats in the parliament. In January 2002, the IAFP conference was held in an atmosphere where the moderate members' opinion prevailed by electing a moderate leadership that is expected to lead the party to participate in the upcoming general elections scheduled for spring of 2003.²⁷

The apparent pattern of regimes' behaviour in many Arab Middle Eastern countries is that they use a democratic discourse to justify undemocratic practices. For example, when they talk about Islamic radicalism as the likely alternative to them, one would understand that they have good sense of what their people want. If this is the case why do these regimes need to torture and imprison many of their political opponents? They do everything in their disposal to stay in power. 'These men fear a public that they barely know.'²⁸ As one commentator has put it. Regime's practices are the main reason why democratic aspirations in the peoples of the Middle East are not transformed to democratic institutions. One may ask the question why the peoples of the Middle East do not take action to force the regimes to democratise. There many important reasons, one of them is that the well spread fear of authorities. To be sure, 79% of the Jordanian population reported that they couldn't criticise the government verbally without fearing economic and/or security governmental punishment to affect them or their family

²⁶ During the election campaign the authorities arrested a large number of Islamists in an attempt to thwart them of standing for the elections.

²⁷ During the last week of January 2002 the IAFP internal polls for a new Shura Council – the policy making body of the party– reflected a landslide victory for the moderates. They won 80% of the 120 seats council, while the 'hawks' won 14 seats only. The moderates secured all but one seat in the executive committee. <http://www.jordantimes.com/sun/homenews/homenews3.htm>. Sunday the Third of January 2002.

²⁸ Fareed Zakaria (2001) 'How to save the Arab World', *Newsweek*, Vol. CXXXVIII, No. 26. December 24. p29.

members. Moreover, three quarters could not take part in peaceful political activities (i.e. authorised demonstrations) for the same reasons.²⁹ These evidences suggest that there is more to the story than just culture/religion. In order to evaluate the role of culture we will examine Fukuyama's argument in following analysis.

Testing Fukuyama's Theory

Methodology: variables and descriptive analysis

1. The dependent variables for comparative analysis

Indicator 1: preference for a democratic political system³⁰

I'm going to describe various types of political systems and ask what you think about each as a way of governing this country. For each one, would you say it is a very good, fairly good, fairly bad, or very bad way of governing this country? Having a democratic political system. For this variable I am using the percentage of people in each country that reported 'very good'.

Indicator 2: democracy is better than any other form of government

I'm going to read off some things that people sometimes say about a democratic political system. Could you please tell me if you agree strongly, agree, disagree or disagree strongly, after I read each of them? Democracy may have some problems but it's better than any other form of government. For this variable I am using the percentage of people in each country who agreed or strongly agreed.

The third indicator (below) spells out support for authoritarian political system characterised by support for undemocratic strong head of government.

Indicator 3: preference for a strong head of government who does not have to bother with parliament and elections

I'm going to describe various types of political systems and ask what you think about each as a way of governing this country. For each one, would you say it is a very good, fairly good, fairly bad, or very bad way of governing this country? Having a strong head of government who does not have to bother with parliament and elections. For this

²⁹ Centre for Strategic Studies (CSS) (2002) Democracy in Jordan Survey, Amman: CSS. Pp 15-16.

³⁰ The latest data available for each country from the WVS are used.

variable I am using the percentage of people in each country who reported very good or good.

2. The independent variable for comparative analysis

Religiosity

Independently of whether you go to religious services or not, would you say you are...

1. *A religious person*
2. *Not a religious person*
3. *A convinced atheist*

For this variable I am using the percentage of people in each country that described themselves as religious people.

Comparative analysis

Democracy has several cultural qualities that enable a democratic political system to work once it kicks off. Interpersonal trust is one of such qualities³¹. Fukuyama argues that a cultural heritage of low trust positions a society at a competitive disadvantage in global markets because it is less able to develop large and complex social institutions³². Have societies with low levels of interpersonal trust been less able to develop such institutions? Is there a religious/cultural context that determines low or high levels of interpersonal trust, which defines the ability of a given nation to build modern institutions? It is imperative to examine Fukuyama's claim in different religious contexts to determine whether Islam in particular is *the obstacle* to modernity and its institutions.

The empirical data available suggest that Islamic societies are *unexceptional* to other societies as far interpersonal trust is concerned. They do show relatively low levels of interpersonal trust. For example, on interpersonal trust Turkey scores 19%, Bangladesh 23.3%, Morocco 21.7%, Jordan 27%, Egypt 37.5%, and Iran 55.4%. Denmark, Sweden and Norway are the only countries (for which data are available) that have higher values on interpersonal trust than Iran. Yet, Turkey and Pakistan score higher than the Catholic

³¹ Mark E. Warren ed. (1999) *Democracy and Trust*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Specially the introduction and chapter 11 'democratic theory and trust'. Also, Francis Fukuyama (1995) *Trust, The Social Virtues and Creation of Prosperity*, New York: Free Press; Robert Putnam (1993) *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press.

³² Francis Fukuyama (1995) *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*, New York: Free Press.

Brazil, Argentina, Peru, Philippines, Zimbabwe, Poland, Colombia, Venezuela, Georgia and Romania. Moreover, Islamic Jordan scores almost as high as the predominantly Protestant UK 30% and higher than the Roman Catholic France, Poland, Hungary, Chile, Romania and Orthodox Russia. The point is that interpersonal trust as a necessary value for capitalist development and free market economy theoretically holds a similar value for democratic development, because democratic development is linked to capitalist development³³. Thus, the relationship between democracy, interpersonal trust and capitalist development is reciprocal³⁴. Nonetheless, interpersonal trust is contextual i.e. it is influenced by societal context and particularly by the level of socio-economic development in a given society³⁵. The aforementioned examples suggest that it is misleading to attribute capitalist and democratic development exclusively (what Fukuyama seems to be suggesting) to levels interpersonal trust.

However, support for democracy (democracy is better than any other form of government) is very high in Islamic societies; with Bangladesh 98%, Jordan 89%, Turkey 88% compared to the UK 78% USA 87%, and Canada 87%. Furthermore, it seems that only predominantly protestant societies (W. Germany, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Netherlands and Sweden), and Confucian societies (Japan) that score highest on trust and support for democracy. Predominantly Islamic, catholic, orthodox, and ex-communist societies show similar levels of interpersonal trust meanwhile are very supportive of democracy although not as high as protestant and Confucian societies. Thus, Fukuyama's essentialist cultural sweeping generalisation about Islamic societies as resistant to modernity is largely unfounded as far as support for democracy and interpersonal trust (a democratic quality) are concerned.

Approached from a different angle, support for authoritarian leadership correlates negatively and significantly with interpersonal trust ($r = -.331$). Support for 'a rule by

³³ Rueschemeyer et al. (1992) *Capitalist Development and Democracy*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

³⁴ Ronald Inglehart (1997) *Modernization and Postmodernisation: Cultural, Economic and Political Change in 43 Societies*, NJ: Princeton University Press. Especially chapter 6 'Economic Development, Political Culture, and Democracy: Brining the people Back In.' pp 160-215.

³⁵ Ronald Inglehart (1999) 'Trust, Well-being and Democracy', in Mark Warren ed. *Democracy and Trust*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp 88-120.

strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections' tends to correlate with low levels of interpersonal trust. Low levels of interpersonal trust tend to correlate with authoritarian orientations, while societies that demonstrate high levels of interpersonal trust tend to be significantly less supportive of authoritarian leadership. For example, Brazil has value of 3% on trust and 61% on authoritarianism, Macedonia 8% and 62%, Philippines 9% and 63%, Romania 19% and 67%, Pakistan 19% and 62%, India 39% and 59%, Turkey 19% and 72%, respectively. However, the fact that there is a huge gap between Islamic countries on authoritarianism: with Turkey topping the list with a value of 72%, Pakistan 62%, Jordan 41%, Iran 39%, Indonesia 19%, Morocco 18%, Bangladesh 12%. Egypt and Azerbaijan 7% each, signifies the meagre relevance of cultural tradition, interpersonal trust as a cultural trait included, as a single explanatory variable in attempting to understand authoritarian orientations. The evidences suggest that authoritarianism is an irreducibly complex phenomenon that cannot be explained by reference to a religio-cultural tradition. If religious tradition explains authoritarian orientations, the Islamic countries included in the sample would have scored identical values and this should hold true for other religious traditions as well. Since this is not the case, we can make a strong point against cultural explanations and equally suggest alternative ways of understanding authoritarianism. (For more examples see table 1 below).

The empirical data sketched above suggest that support for authoritarianism is not necessarily tied to a particular religion or culture whether Islamic, Christian or Confucian. Remarkably, all societies that score high on authoritarianism and low on trust are not ranked as highly developed societies according to the UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI) of the year 2000. Whereas, with the exception of Bangladesh (low HDI) and, Azerbaijan and Egypt, (Medium HDI), almost all societies with high values on trust and low on authoritarian orientations are developed societies nevertheless they *do not* share a similar historical cultural background. Looking at societies with above 50% value on interpersonal trust, we observe that they are (in descending order) predominantly Protestant Christian (Norway, Sweden Denmark), Islamic (Iran) and again Protestant Netherlands and then predominantly Confucian (China). Moreover, five

Islamic countries are among the highest 25 countries on authoritarianism and yet again five Islamic countries are among the lowest 25 countries on authoritarianism. Hence, is China more culturally fertile for democratisation than Islamic Iran or Egypt? Well, Egypt and India have similar values on trust, why India is a democracy while Egypt is not although both countries are ranked at a medium human development? The answer perhaps lies in examining the political process and regime strategies among host of other factors. However, table (1) shows that low values of support for authoritarianism are to be found across culturally with Islamic Azerbaijan and Egypt scoring the second lowest values after Tanzania. The evidence largely supports the conclusion that neither interpersonal trust nor authoritarianism is a culture-specific phenomenon. By and large, high levels of interpersonal trust seem to be associated with high levels human development, while authoritarianism is determined by other factors such as the political context whether nationally or internationally. So far, I have not examined the direct link, if any, between religion –Islam in particular- and support for democracy as such. To this we must now turn.

Table (1) Authoritarianism and interpersonal trust

Authoritarian Leadership is v. good or good %	Most people can be trusted %
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Vietnam	99	Jordan	41	Sweden	21	Norway	65
Turkey	72	Taiwan	41	New Zealand	20	Sweden	64
Romania	67	Belarus	41	Slovakia	20	Denmark	58
Philippines	63	Iran	39	Hungary	20	Iran	55
Pakistan	62	Peru	39	Serbia	19	Netherlands	54
Macedonia	62	S. Africa	37	Indonesia	19	China	53
Georgia	61	France	35	N. Ireland	19	New Zealand	49
Brazil	61	Puerto Rico	33	Spain	19	Finland	49
India	59	Belgium	32	Estonia	19	Ireland	47
El Salvador	59	Uganda	31	China	19	Indonesia	46
Ukraine	59	USA	30	Morocco	18	Iceland	44
Latvia	58	Switzerland	29	Czech Republic	17	N. Ireland	44
Moldova	57	S.Korea	28	Italy	16	W. Germany	42
Lithuania	54	Japan	28	Austria	16	Taiwan	42
Mexico	54	Dominican R.	28	Montenegro	15	Basque Country	41
Bosnia	53	Netherlands	27	Norway	14	Australia	40
Armenia	53	Ireland	27	Denmark	14	Japan	40
Colombia	53	Zimbabwe	27	W. Germany	13	India	39
Russia	49	UK	26	Bangladesh	12	Vietnam	39
Venezuela	48	Finland	25	Iceland	11	Egypt	38
Bulgaria	45	Australia	25	Croatia	11	Switzerland	37
Chile	43	Slovenia	24	Greece	9	Canada	37
Albania	43	Canada	24	Egypt	7	USA	36
Nigeria	43	E. Germany	23	Azerbaijan	7	Belgium	34
Argentina	42	Poland	22	Tanzania	3	Montenegro	33

Religiosity and support for democracy as an ideal form of government

1) Democratic political system (DPS) is a ‘very good’ way of governing this ‘country’ (figure 1)

This indicator differs from the next one and therefore has been independently analysed. It differs in the sense that only people who reported that a democratic political system is a *very good* way of governing their country were included. This gives us slightly polarised attitudes i.e. only people who *firmly* believe that DPS is a very good way of governing their country. For example Russia has a value of 8% on this indicator. If we add it up to the percent of Russians who reported *good* the percent will be 62%. Nigeria is an interesting case in this context; on the next indicator (democracy better than any other form of government) the sum of v. good and good was the lowest among all societies included, while on DPS indicator the percent of Nigerians that reported DPS is a *very good* way of governing Nigeria is among the highest. This suggests that for 45% of

Nigerians democracy is not the best form of government but nonetheless for 73% of them DPS is a *v. good* way of governing Nigeria³⁶.

The correlation between support for DPS as a *v. good* way of governance and religiosity is insignificant although slightly positive. Predominantly Islamic societies show very high levels of support for a DPS as a very good way of governing their countries, while simultaneously showing high levels of religiosity. Although Egypt is the most religious Islamic society (98% of Egyptians identify themselves as religious people), it scores 40% higher than the most religious predominantly catholic society (Poland) on support for DPS as a very good way of governance. None of the Islamic societies falls beneath 40%, (while the majority of societies under 40% are Christian: Catholic, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox but not protestant. Furthermore, the highest scoring country is Morocco 84%. Some Islamic countries score as high as USA, France and Netherlands. Among the 16 countries that have percentage scores between 49 and 52 falls Turkey 49% Jordan 51%, and Iran 52% sharing similar percentage values with Netherlands 49%, USA 51%, India 52%, Canada, Australia, and France at 52% each. Albania, a country with 65-70% of its population Muslims and 20 to 30 Christians Orthodox and Catholic³⁷ shows a very high value on this indicator. However, a cluster of four ex-communist countries (Russia, Estonia, Latvia, and Ukraine) can be spotted as the least scoring on support for a DPS as a *v. good* way of governance. Moreover, Muslim countries like Bangladesh, Egypt, and Morocco share similar value with Christian countries like Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. Thus, people in Islamic societies tend to have a propensity towards democracy but what makes it less possible for them to achieve democratic political governance is the nature of the over stated, over blown and over stretched³⁸ state structure and the heavy-handed authoritarian regimes (in most cases) in power at present. Therefore, current political regimes in most of the Muslim world are lagging behind popular expectation not only -as

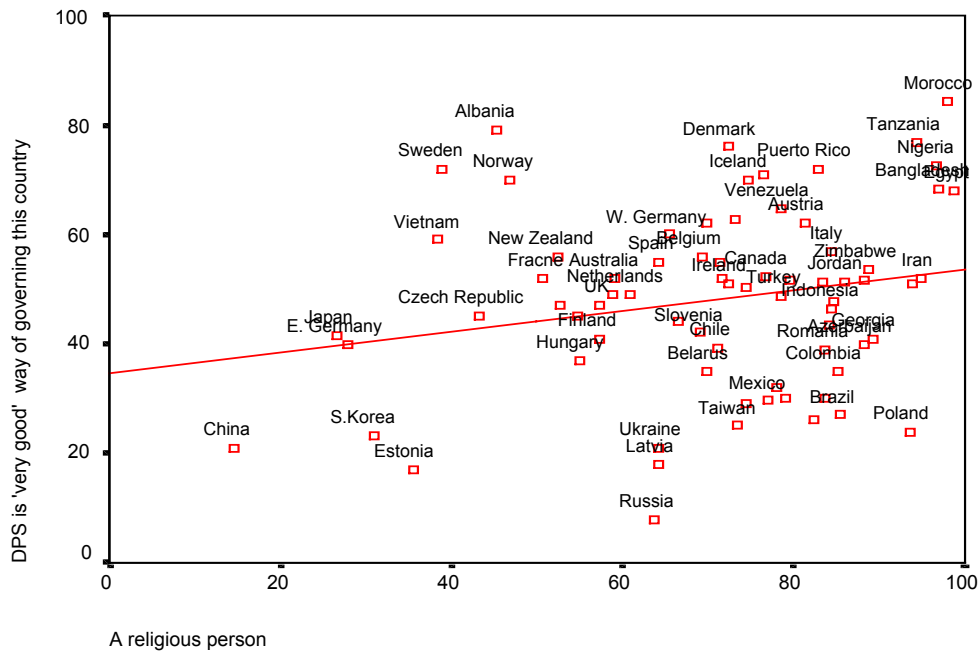
³⁶ This case requires a detailed analysis to uncover the uniquely deviant case of Nigeria. Some explanations may be found in the political process, development, religious divide and elite behaviour.

³⁷ 2001 Annual Report on International Religious Freedom: Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, October 26, 2001 United States Commission on International Religious Freedom view at: http://www.uscifr.gov/dos01Pages/irf_albania.php3

³⁸ Drawing on Nazih Ayubi (1995) *Over-stating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East*, London: I.B. Tauris, Katerina Dalacoura (1998) *Islam, Liberalism and Human Rights*, London, I.B. Tauris, has adequately illustrated how 'types' of states contributes to the rise of a particular rise of opposition and Ideology including Islamists, see pp: 196-8.

we have seen- on the political front but also on the economic front, yet again, Fukuyama's claim about Islam as resistant to democracy, to put it mildly, is seriously challenged.

Figure (1) correlation between support for democratic political system and religiosity.



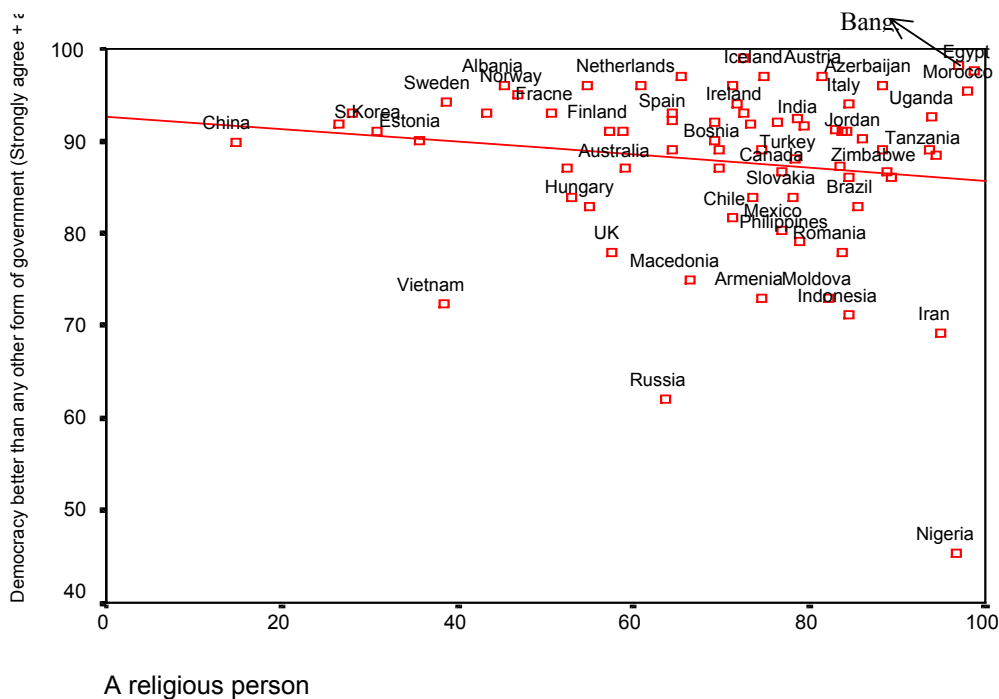
$r=.217$, sig. $.065$ (insignificant)

2) Democracy better than any other form of government (% agreed) (figure 2)

The overall trend in the relationship between religiosity and support for democracy is negative and insignificant. By and large, Islamic societies: Bangladesh, Turkey, Morocco, Egypt and Jordan are not unique in showing high levels of support for democracy simultaneously with high levels of religiosity. These Islamic societies share these attitudes with Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox societies like Poland, Venezuela, Italy, USA, Georgia, Lithuania, Hindu/Muslim India, and Confucian Japan. Societies like Japan, E. Germany, Sweden are the least religious and among the most supportive of democracy. However, support for democracy tends to marginally and insignificantly decrease simultaneously with increase in religiosity. This relationship does not apply to all countries, there are exceptional cases deviating from the norm due to a unique set of

factors pertinent to them. For example, USA has a value of 83% on religiosity and 87% on support for democracy, Nigeria 97% and 45% respectively. Generally, as we found that high support for democracy is a cross cultural phenomenon, lower levels of support for democracy are also cross cultural and were found in Orthodox and Catholic Christian societies like Russia, Moldova, Armenia, Macedonia and Romania and Islamic countries like Iran and Indonesia. Nonetheless, with exception of Nigeria none of the 74 countries in the sample analysed has recorded below 62% (Russia) on support for democracy. These evidences overwhelmingly endorse Fukuyama's thesis of universal support for democracy. However, his other claim was found to be unfounded. That is, had Fukuyama been right about Islam as a hindrance to democracy, the Islamic societies would have been grouped near the right corner at the bottom of figure (2) below indicating that because they are Islamic and have high religiosity, Islam hence is very unsupportive of democracy. A glance at the scatterplot leaves us with the observation that Islamic societies are roughly clustered at the top right corner (Egypt, Morocco, Bangladesh, Azerbaijan, Jordan Turkey) meaning they are very religious and simultaneously very supportive of democracy. Yet again the evidence do not support Fukuyama's claim.

Figure (2) correlation between support for democracy and religiosity



r = -.146 sig. .220 (insignificant)

3) Religiosity and support for authoritarianism; support a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections (very good + good) way of governing this 'country' (figure 3)

The previous two indicators directly address support for democracy. In order to validate these indicators and establish whether support for democracy is qualified by rejection of its alternatives, we need to examine the relationship between religiosity and authoritarianism. By and large, religiosity is positively correlated ($r = .040$) with authoritarianism though insignificantly. However, it has a lot to say about the relationship between Islam and authoritarianism. Two major Islamic countries (Egypt and Turkey) represent extreme cases; Turkey with a value of 72% is the second highest and Egypt along with Azerbaijan, with a value of 7% are the second lowest on authoritarianism. Moreover, other Islamic countries Morocco, Bangladesh and Indonesia show very low levels of support to authoritarianism along with Denmark, Norway, Tanzania, Austria, Iceland, Sweden and West Germany. The cases of Egypt and Turkey perhaps could be partly explained by the experiences that these two countries went through. The Turkish 'want another Kemal Atatürk' according to a Turkish political scientist³⁹. The Egyptian, perhaps, do not want another Naser, Sadat, or Mubarak. All of them were strong authoritarian leaders but the Egyptian leaders have failed to deliver the modernisation, though unpretentious, that Atatürk managed to deliver to Turkey. The predominantly Hindu India⁴⁰ the largest democracy in the world comes quite high in support for authoritarian leadership. Bangladesh⁴¹ and Azerbaijan⁴² are also very low on authoritarianism with a value of 12% and 7% respectively. The Jordanian case with a value of 42% on authoritarianism is not very surprising. The image of the late King

³⁹ This was the answer given to me by Prof. Yilmaz Esmer from the department of political science at Bogazici University in Istanbul during the World Values Survey Conference in Stellenbosch University - South Africa, 17-20 November 2001.

⁴⁰ In India 82.4 percent of the population Hindu, Muslims 12.7 percent, Christians 2.4 percent, Sikhs 2.0 percent, Buddhists 0.7 percent, Jains 0.4 percent, and others, including Parsis (Zoroastrians), Jews, and Baha'is, 0.4 percent see: http://www.uscirf.gov/dos01Pages/irf_india.php3

⁴¹ Sunni Muslims constitute 88 percent of the population. About 10 percent of the population are Hindu. 2001 Annual Report on International Religious Freedom: Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, October 26, 2001 United States Commission on International Religious Freedom view at http://www.uscirf.gov/dos01Pages/irf_banglade.php3

⁴² Azerbaijan population consists of 90 percent Muslim 3% Christian and approximately 1% Jewish. See 2001 Annual Report on International Religious Freedom: Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, October 26, 2001 United States Commission on International Religious Freedom view at: http://www.uscirf.gov/dos01Pages/irf_azerbaj.php3

Hussein (died 1999) as a strong leader who managed to survive all the political turbulences of the middle east for 47 years of rule, undoubtedly has a huge impact on two generations of the Jordanian public that were brought up under his rule. Islamic Iran with a value of 39% on authoritarianism is no exception to the Christian Catholic Peru (39%), Christian mixed S. Africa 37%, predominantly Roman Catholic France 35%, Orthodox/Catholic Belarus 41%, or Confucian Taiwan 41%. However, the dispersion of Islamic societies on authoritarianism indisputably defies the cultural essentialist proposition that Islam as belief system makes its followers prone to authoritarian values.

Taken as a whole, authoritarianism correlates positively though insignificantly with religiosity. These data suggests that with high levels or religiosity, it is more likely that we will find stronger support for authoritarian orientations. At the aggregate level Protestant and Confucian societies seem to have relatively low values on authoritarian orientations. But they are unexceptional; they share similar values with developed and developing countries from Catholic, Orthodox, and Islamic tradition. Table (2) below lists all societies that have reported more than 50% on support for authoritarian leadership; it shows that these societies differ sharply in their cultural heritage, political history, and socio-economic development.

Nevertheless, with the exception of Pakistan and Lithuania low and high human development respectively, all other societies fall in the category of medium human development. Only two Muslim societies appear on the list of societies with high and relatively high support for authoritarianism compared to thirteen Christian countries. This neither suggests that Christianity and Islam have a propensity towards authoritarianism nor does it endorse the claim that a particular religion is the reason to blame for the absence of democracy or presence of authoritarian rule in a given society. It does, however, suggest that there is more to explore than just a religious tradition to understand authoritarian orientations. One can safely conclude even by criteria of authoritarianism, there is enough empirical evidence to suggest that Fukuyama's claims about Islam as resistant to democracy and by implication it is prone to authoritarianism, are largely unfounded. Cultural generalisations, it is evident, unless seriously examined and

thoroughly operationalised, do not offer much to the understanding of socio-political phenomenon like democracy or authoritarianism. Fukuyama like many other orientalists has rightly used evidence from the Middle East today (no Islamic country can be counted as a democracy but Turkey) to support his sweeping generalisation about the culture of Islam as being anti-democratic. He, like many others, has failed to address the serious issues involved in such a state of affairs in the Islamic Middle East, mainly capitalist interests in oil and weapons trade. The evidences are conspicuous to those of minimum interest in world affairs as they are to the ‘experts’ on the Middle East. The USA unqualified support to oppressive regimes like Saudi Arabia and Egypt is an unambiguous substantiation.

Table (2)

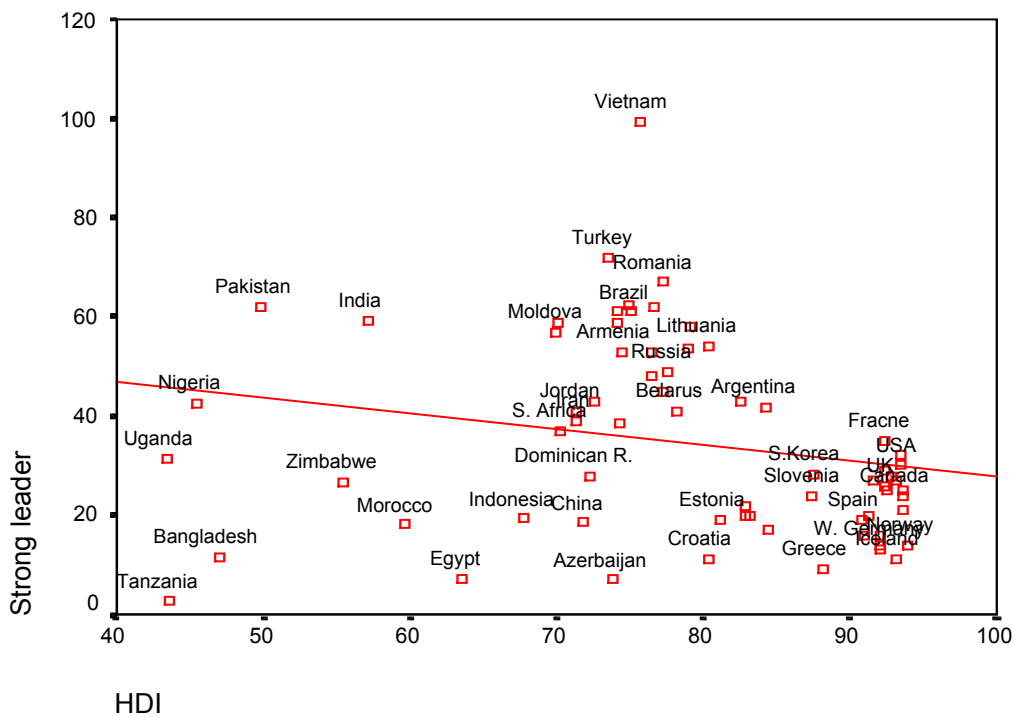
Country ⁴³	% of people who are pro authoritarian leadership	Human development index HDI ranking Out of 162 countries included*
Vietnam	99	101
Turkey	72	82
Romania	67	58
Philippines	63	70
Macedonia	62	60
Pakistan	62	127
Brazil	61	69
Georgia	61	76
India	59	115
El Salvador	59	95
Ukraine	59	74
Latvia	58	50
Moldova	57	98
Lithuania	54	47
Mexico	54	51
Armenia	53	72
Colombia	53	62

*High HDI = 1 - 48, Medium HDI = 49 - 126, Low HDI = 127 - 162.

⁴³ Turkey 99% Muslim, Philippines 85% Roman Catholic and other Christian denominations constitute about 8.7% and 4.6 are Muslims, India 82.4 Hindu and 12% Muslim, Romania 86.8 % Romanian Orthodox Church, Pakistan 95% Muslim, Macedonia Nominally, about 66 percent of the population are Macedonian Orthodox, about 30 percent are Muslim, about 1 percent are Roman Catholic, and about 3 percent are of other faiths (largely various Protestant denominations), Brazil 75 % Roman Catholic, roughly 20% Protestants, Georgia 75% Georgian Orthodox Church, 5% Muslim, 1% Jewish and the belong to other Christian Churches, Ukraine predominantly Christian 99% and small but insignificant Muslim and Jewish. El Salvador 90% Catholic, Latvia well above 90% Christian, Moldova over 90% Orthodox Christian, Mexico over 90% Catholic, Lithuania over 90% Christian, Armenia over 90 Christian, Colombia approximately 90% Catholic Christian, see http://www.uscirf.gov/dos01Pages/irf_colombia.php3.

words, none of the highly developed societies demonstrate medium or high support for authoritarianism. In a relative contrast to this, we found that societies with low (India and Pakistan) and medium human development (Turkey, Romania, Philippines, Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, Latvia and Macedonia) tend to possess a propensity towards authoritarianism. However, there are exceptions to this. Muslim societies like Egypt, Azerbaijan, and Bangladesh, are among the least supportive of authoritarianism. In sum, high levels of development plays far important role in determining the political values of a given society. Religiosity, although correlates positively and insignificantly with authoritarianism does not account for substantial amount of variation in authoritarianism.

Figure (4)



$r = 0.220$ sig. 0.072 (insignificant)

Multivariate analysis

In order to determine the impact of the independent variables on support for democracy, I will introduce two analytical regression models:

Model 1: The dependent variable is support for democracy (democracy better than any other form of government). The independent variables are: 1. Years of uninterrupted democracy. 2. Human development index (HDI) 3. Religiosity 4. Islamic countries (dummy).

Model 2: The dependent variable is years of uninterrupted democracy. The independent variables are: 1. Human development index 2. Religiosity 3. Islamic countries (dummy).

Model one aimed at explaining what is the most important factor that determines support for democracy as an ideal form of government among the explanatory variables utilized. Model two is aimed at explaining the continuity of democracy i.e. what is the most important factor is sustaining democracy amongst the variables employed in the model.

It is important to make clear that there are many other variables that should be used to explain the durability of democracy but what I am concerned with now is the impact of development, religion, and political opportunity structures.

Hypothesis 1: human development is more important than any other factor in explaining support for and durability democracy.

Hypothesis 2: if a country is Islamic, the likelihood of support for democracy among its citizens is very high, but the political system of that country does not allow this support to manifest in democratic political order. High public support and closed political system do live together because the political opportunities available within the political system are very minimal to the extent that they cannot be exploited to change the existing system or democratize it.

Before testing the hypotheses, I must introduce a correlation matrix to show the strength of the relationship between these variables. The correlation table (3) below reveals that the dependent variable (years of uninterrupted democracy) correlates best and highest with Human development index and correlates negatively with religiosity, in both the correlations are significant. Moreover, (years of uninterrupted democracy) correlates positively but weakly with Islamic countries. Support for democracy is more likely to be associated with increasing levels of human development. Democracy is more likely to be institutionalized as levels of development increase. Religiosity is likely to hinder democracy and a country being Muslim does not seem to hinder support for democracy but it surly correlates negatively and significantly with years of uninterrupted democracy. Obviously, given the fact that none of the Islamic countries have had a continuous democratic experience, we should expect a significantly negative correlation between the variables ‘Islamic countries’ and ‘years of uninterrupted/continuous democracy’. What is remarkable however is the strong negative correlation between religiosity and Human development. It reinforces one of the basic premises of modernization theory that is religiosity is basic to traditional societies.

Table (3) Pearson Correlation (pair wise exclusion of missing values)

	HDI	Democracy better than any other form of government	A religious person	Islamic countries	Years of continuous democracy 1920-2000	Strong leader (Authoritarianism)
HDI	1	.295*	-.519**	-.400**	.708**	-.220
	N= 81	67	68	81	74	68
Democracy better than any other form of government	.295*	1	-.146	.055	.302*	-.485**
	N= 67	74	72	74	68	73
A religious person	-.519**	-.146	1	.316**	-.269*	.040
	N= 68	72	81	81	69	72
Islamic countries	-.400**	.055	.316**	1	-.321**	-.121
	N= 81	74	81	97	79	75
Years of continuous democracy 1920-2000	.708**	.302*	-.269*	-.321**	1	-.376**
	N= .000	.012	.026	.004	.	.001
Strong leader (Authoritarianism)	-.220	-.485**	.040	-.121	-.376**	1
	N= 68	73	72	75	69	75

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Religiosity correlates positively and insignificantly with support for authoritarianism. If we look at the relationship between support for authoritarianism and all other variables in the correlation matrix above, we observe that support for authoritarianism does not coincide with support for democracy, it is the second strongest significant negative correlation in the matrix. This validates further the reliability of the variables used to measure support for democracy. Religiosity is more likely to hinder support for democracy although the correlation between authoritarianism and religiosity is weak, it still positive. However, we are quite sure that religiosity is very likely to coincide with human underdevelopment; the strongest negative and significant correlation in the matrix above is between HDI and religiosity. A plausible argument is to recite the classical modernization theory assumption that religiosity is more likely to be found in less developed societies. This is relevant because democracy constitutes part of human development / modernization.⁴⁴ Democratic tradition is more likely to be found in developed societies, developed and democratic societies are more likely to be less religious and largely less supportive of authoritarianism.

Testing the regression models

Model one R=46.4, R square=21.5

The regression analysis reveals that the most important variable in our model is HDI with a standardized coefficient Beta of .437 and t value 2.125, while religiosity came out to be an irrelevant variable in explaining support for democracy. The second important variable in explaining support for democracy is that if a country is predominantly Muslim with a standardized coefficient Beta of .371 and t value 2.583. However, what is noticeable in this model is the irrelevance of the impact of years of uninterrupted democracy on support for democracy. It was expected that democratic tradition should be important in that respect.

⁴⁴ Chris Welzel, Ronald Inglehart, and Hans-Dieter Klingemann (2001) 'Human Development as a Theory of Social Change: A cross Cultural Perspective', paper presented to the World Values Survey conference at University of Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch, South Africa from 17-21 November 2001.

Coefficients

Dependent Variable: Democracy better than any other form of government (Strongly agree + agree)

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	60.256	14.51 1		4.152	.000
	Islamic countries	9.585	3.711	.371	2.583	.012
	HDI	.341	.161	.437	2.125	.038
	% of religious persons	-3.198E-02	.068	-.064	-.469	.641
	Years of Continuous Democracy 1920-2000	3.129E-02	.052	.105	.606	.547

Although support for democracy is strong in Islamic societies, those countries have not experienced open political systems whereby opposition groups can take part in the political process. This analysis points to the weakness of the cultural essentialist argument, which mainly blames the culture of the religion of Islam for whatever goes wrong in the Middle East and attribute the unrealized fortunes of democracy in the Middle East to Islamic mentality, political culture, belief system, and teachings. These components of Islam as cultural variables may contribute a very tiny degree, if at all, in explaining the absence of democracy in the most Muslim countries but they do not constitute solid factors i.e. they do not offer a reliable explanation. They do however, offer a very superficial and ‘easy way out’ of the complexity of the problem democracy faces in the Middle East.

Model two: R=73.9, R Square= 54.7

In this model we replaced the dependent variable to be years of uninterrupted democracy. This model explains 54.7 of the variance in the dependent variable; most of it is attributed to HDI, which has a standardized coefficient Beta .777 and a t value of 6.182 The three other variables came out to be irrelevant including support for democracy. What does this mean? It is obvious that the cultural variable religion has no leverage as far as durability of democracy in concerned. Human development is the only variable that can effectively influence the development of democracy. As far as Muslim countries are concerned, the absence of democracy in these countries is not attributable to the religion of Islam or its cultural traits. Had the argument about Islam being the obstacle to democracy been

concrete, we would have seen less support for democracy in Muslim countries in comparison with others. As our model shows: Human development is the most important factor in facilitating and maintaining democracy. Religion whether Islam, Christianity or any other religion does *not* account for the presence or absence of democracy.

Coefficients

Dependent: Years of continuous democracy 1920-2000

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta		
2	(Constant)	-166.445	36.156		-4.603	.000
	Islamic countries	3.836	10.017	.044	.383	.703
	HDI	2.042	.330	.777	6.182	.000
	% of religious persons	.149	.174	.089	.859	.394
	Democracy better than any other form of government	.205	.338	.061	.606	.547

Conclusion

Although Fukuyama's argument regarding the prevalence of democracy holds up to empirical examination, his claim pertaining to 'Islam' as 'resistant to modernity' fails to be upheld when empirically tested. Unfortunately, his assertion belongs to an antiquated set of ideas elucidated by Said's Orientalism. The cultural essentialist argument as applied by Fukuyama is epistemologically dogmatic. It is dogmatic in the sense that it makes him envisage isolated examples as complete truths and *totally* explains a complex phenomena, although they are partial truths that can only *assist* in explaining socio-political phenomena. This point is made most clear through Fukuyama's own examples: He posits that 'Islam ... is the only cultural system that seems regularly to produce people ... who reject modernity lock, stock and barrel.'⁴⁵ Essentialising Islam as an independent variable, to explain very complex socio-political phenomena in the Middle East or elsewhere, does not seem to be a good strategy for analysis and research; other factors at play are also innately indispensable to a comprehensive understanding of Muslim societies. For example, the role of the postcolonial 'modern' state in the Middle East in distributing economic resources is vital to the understanding of the durability of authoritarian, patriarchal, and patrimonial political regimes in the region.

Generally, religiosity in general does not seem to be conducive to high support for democratic ideals. The indicators of democracy we have analysed in relation to religiosity have shown a negative correlation of various degrees. Surprisingly, religiosity does show a significant and relatively high negative correlation with interpersonal trust. Therefore, it is not at all unanticipated to find a negative correlation between support for democracy and religiosity. Because democracy requires the quality of interpersonal trust, which does not seem to be strongly linked to religiosity, let alone as a consequence of it. However, Protestant societies do slightly differ from the pattern outlined above. These societies are among the most supportive of democracy and show higher levels of interpersonal trust than Catholic, Orthodox and Muslim societies. Thus, historically Protestant societies

⁴⁵ Francis Fukuyama (2001) 'The west has won: Radical Islam can't beat democracy and capitalism', *The Guardian*, October 11.

seem to be the only societies that show a stable trend of support for democracy. While other societies, especially Catholic and Islamic, seem to fluctuate considerably from indicator to another. This can be clearly seen in levels of support for a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections (authoritarianism); some Islamic societies are on the extremes with Turkey as the second highest society (after Viet Nam) that support authoritarianism, Egypt and Azerbaijan the second lowest (after Tanzania) on authoritarianism. By and large, Protestant societies stand out as a group that shows low levels of support for authoritarianism. HDI

The fluctuation of societies of diverse religious heritages that we have seen throughout the aforementioned analysis does point to some general trends on the relationship between religiosity and democracy. Meanwhile, this fluctuation indicates that there are some other variables that we should take into account in order to better understand the factors underlying support for democracy and authoritarianism. The examination of the levels of human development in the societies we have looked at could give us a better understanding of support for democracy and its perceived alternatives. Concentrating on religion as the sole independent variable or a yardstick (as Fukuyama uses it) could be seriously misleading and spurious. Finally, since Islam neither explain democracy nor authoritarianism, one can confirm Nazih Ayubi's⁴⁶ theory that Islam is not a political religion.

⁴⁶ Nazih Ayubi (1991)[1998] *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World*, London: Routledge.

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