

**DO ISLAMIC ORIENTATIONS INFLUENCE ATTITUDES TOWARD DEMOCRACY
IN THE ARAB WORLD?
EVIDENCE FROM EGYPT, JORDAN, MOROCCO, AND ALGERIA**

By Mark Tessler

The Absence of Democracy in the Arab World

During the last two decades, democratic currents have swept across the developing and post-communist world. While democratic regimes were in the minority just a few years ago, electoral democracy is the predominant form of government among today's nation-states and guides the lives of more than half of the world's population (Karatnycky 2000). The Arab world, however, has been largely unaffected by this political revolution, which Huntington has called the "Third Wave" of democratization (Huntington 1991). According to Freedom House, not a single Arab country qualifies as an electoral democracy (Karatnycky 2000; also Sivan 2000, p. 70).

The 1980s and early 1990s did witness halting moves toward democratization in some Arab countries. Confronted with popular anger fueled by economic conditions, government mismanagement and corruption, and the violation of human rights, a number of Arab governments enacted programs of political liberalization. For the most part, however, these reforms were part of a containment strategy designed to increase regime legitimacy at a time when calls for political change were widespread. Accordingly, and not surprisingly given their strategic purpose, most of these democratic experiments were slowed or even abandoned during the 1990s. By the end of the decade, as Lisa Anderson wrote in 1999, the political landscape was littered with "the remnants of so many of the democratic experiments -- from the spectacular

crash and burn of Algeria's liberalization to Tunisia's more subtle but no less profound transformation into a police state, from Egypt's backsliding into electoral manipulation [and repression of Islamic movements] to the reluctance of Palestinian authorities to embrace human rights" (Anderson 1999, p. 6).

This situation is acknowledged and lamented by Arab intellectuals as well as Western scholars. A Lebanese political scientist writes, for example, that unchecked authoritarian rule is "paving the way to a deep crisis in the fabric of society" (Khashan 1998, pp. 43-44). Similarly, according to a Jordanian journalist, "one of the leading sources of instability and political-economic distortion in the Arab world is the unchecked use of state power, combined with the state's whimsical ability to use the rule of law for its own political ends" (Khouri 2000). Against this background, intellectuals from thirteen Arab countries attending a December 1999 conference in Amman, Jordan, issued a final communiqué emphasizing the need for "greater political freedoms and intellectual pluralism" (Al-Farawati 1999). Their concern, in the assessment of still another Arab scholar, is that "Arab countries do not allow freedom of thought... Where necessary, their surveillance spares neither the telephone nor the mail, neither the fax nor the Internet" (Talbi 2000, p. 62).

There are some partial exceptions to this depressing characterization. In Jordan, Morocco, Lebanon, Kuwait, and Qatar, for example, some would argue that there is continuing albeit uneven progress and that it is possible to have a meaningful debate about whether the glass is half full or half empty. In the Palestinian Authority, too, there have been accomplishments as well as setbacks in the struggle for democratic governance. Nevertheless, taken as a whole, the Arab world clearly stands apart from other world regions with respect to the authoritarian character of its governments and the limited influence of institutions and individuals working for

democracy. This point is emphasized by the recent Arab Human Development Report of the United Nation's Development Programme, published in 2002. The report observes that, as in the 1980s, political openings remain "heavily regulated and partial" and political systems "have not been opened up to all citizens." Thus, the report continues, "political participation is less advanced in the Arab world than in other developing regions" and, with understatement, "transfer of power through the ballot box is not a common phenomenon" (AHDR 2002, Chapter 7).

Support for Democracy and the Influence of Islam

There is disagreement about the reasons for the persistence of authoritarian rule in the Arab world, just as there is uncertainty about the prospects for Arab democratization in the years ahead. Research on democratic transitions and consolidation has emphasized the importance both of structural factors, such as institutional reform and economic development, and of political culture. Both have been discussed in relation to the Arab world. On the one hand, many scholars have emphasized the resistance of Arab leaders to power sharing and meaningful reform (Sivan 1997; Brumberg 1995; Korany 1994). A widespread popular perception in the region, according to the report of a Moroccan political scientist, is that the primary motivation of many Arab kings, sultans, and presidents "is to remain in power and protect their personal interests... [and as a result they often have] to defend themselves against their own people" (Bennani-Chraïbi 1994, p. 243). In the succinct assessment of a senior American analyst, much of the explanation for the political situation in the Arab world "lies in the fact that many Middle Eastern states have no greater enemy than their own governments" (Cordesman 1999).

Students of democratization also stress the importance of citizen attitudes and values, which is the focus of the present inquiry. Relevant orientations include both generalized support for democratic political forms and the embrace of specific democratic values, such as respect for political competition and tolerance of diverse political ideas (Rose, Mishler, and Haerpfer 1998, p. 98). Thus, as summarized by one prominent scholar, a democratic citizen is one who “believes in individual liberty and is politically tolerant, has a certain distrust of political authority but at the same time is trusting of fellow citizens, is obedient but nonetheless willing to assert rights against the state, and views the state as constrained by legality” (Gibson 1995, p. 55).

Some analysts suggest that these normative orientations may be a precondition for democratic transitions (Huntington 1993, p. 13). Much more common is the view that democratic values need not precede, but can rather follow, elite-led transitions involving the reform of political institutions and procedures (Rose 1997, p. 98; Schmitter and Karl 1993, p. 47). Indeed, according to this argument, attitudes and values conducive to democracy tend to emerge among the citizens of countries experiencing successful democratic transitions. At the very least, however, the presence of appropriate attitudes and values would seem to be necessary for democratic consolidation. As expressed by Inglehart, “Democracy is not attained simply by making institutional changes through elite-level maneuvering. Its survival depends also on the values and beliefs of ordinary citizens” (Inglehart 2000, p. 96).

Evidence in support of this assessment comes a number of empirical investigations. According to a recent study of Taiwan and Korea, for example, the consolidation of democracy requires that “all significant political actors, at both the elite and mass levels, believe that the democratic regime is the most right and appropriate for their society, better than any other

realistic alternative they can imagine” (Chu, Diamond, and Shin 2001, p. 123). A cross-national study in Latin America makes the same point: an important factor “that has contributed to the greater survivability of Latin American democracies revolves around changes in political attitudes, toward a greater valorization of democracy” (Mainwaring 1999, p. 45). Thus, as Harik has noted with respect to the Arab world, “a democratic government needs a democratic political culture, and vice versa” (Harik 1994, p. 56).

There are differing scholarly opinions about whether citizen orientations conducive to democracy can emerge and flourish in the Arab world. The influence of Islam is the focus of particular attention in this connection (Tessler 2002). This is due, in part, both to the nature of Islam and to the religion’s political resurgence during the last three decades. Islamic law includes numerous codes governing societal relations and organization. It guides that which is societal as well as personal, corporate as well as individual (Esposito 1992, pp. 3-5). As Voll explains, Islam is a total way of life; it represents a worldview (Voll 1994, p. 211). This is one of the reasons that popular support for Islamist movements and parties has grown significantly in recent years (Tessler 1997).

Amid these assumptions, there have long been debates about Islam’s proper role in political affairs, including, more recently, its compatibility with conceptions of governance based on democracy, pluralism, and popular sovereignty. Some observers, particularly some Western observers, assert that democracy and Islam are not compatible. Whereas democracy requires openness, competition, pluralism, and tolerance of diversity, Islam, they argue, encourages intellectual conformity and an uncritical acceptance of authority. According to the late Elie Kedourie, for example, the principles, institutions, and values of democracy are “profoundly alien to the Muslim political tradition” (Kedourie 1994, pp. 5-6; also Huntington 1984, p. 208).

Equally important, Islam is said to be anti-democratic because it vests sovereignty in God, who is the sole source of political authority and from whose divine law must come all regulations governing the community of believers. Thus, in the view of some observers, Islam “has to be ultimately embodied in a totalitarian state” (Choueiri 1996, pp. 21-22; also Lewis 1994, pp. 54-56). Comparable assertions are sometimes advanced in debates about “Asian values,” in which it is asked whether Confucianism’s emphasis on consensus, order, obedience, and hierarchy is compatible with such democratic values as individual freedom and identity, diversity, competition, and political accountability (Wei-Ming 2000, p. 266; Flanagan and Lee 2000, p. 653; Welsh 1996; Zakaria 1994).

But many knowledgeable analysts reject the suggestion that Islam is an enemy in the struggle to establish accountable government. They point out that Islam has many facets and tendencies, making unidimensional characterizations of the religion highly suspect (Halliday 1995, p. 116; Esposito and Piscatori 1991). They also report that there is considerable variation in the interpretations of religious law advanced by Muslim scholars and theologians, and that among these are expressions of support for democracy, including some by leading Islamist theorists (Abed 1995, pp. 127-128). Finally, they insist that openness, tolerance, and progressive innovation are well-represented among traditions associated with the religion, and are thus entirely compatible with Islam (Hamdi 1996; Mernissi 1992).

As the preceding suggests, one can find within Islamic doctrine and Muslim traditions both elements that are and elements that are not congenial to democracy; and this in turn means that the influence of the religion depends to a very considerable extent on how and by whom it is interpreted. There is no single or accepted interpretation on many issues, nor sometimes even a consensus on who speaks for Islam. As one study demonstrated with respect to Islamic strictures

about family planning and contraception, different religious authorities give different advice about what is permissible in Islam (Bowen 1993). In addition, serious doubts have been expressed about the motivation of some religious authorities, particularly in connection with pronouncements pertaining to governance. As one Arab scholar asks, “Can democracy occur if the *ulama* or jurists have sole charge of legal interpretation? May not the *ulama*’s ability to declare laws compatible or incompatible with the teaching of the *shariah* lead to abuse? There are numerous examples of *ulama* manipulating Islamic teachings to the advantage of [undemocratic] political leaders (Al-Suwaidi 1995, pp. 87-88).

Debates about the compatibility of democracy and Islam have for the most part focused on issues of theology, doctrine, and historical precedent. Much less has been said about whether and how Islamic conceptions and attachments influence the political attitudes and values of ordinary citizens. Further, when implications about the political orientations of ordinary citizens *are* proposed, it is almost always on the basis on deductive reasoning and analogy. Despite a few recent studies, empirical evidence about whether and how Islam helps to shape the political views of Muslim Arab men and women is extremely rare. Indeed, empirical research the political orientations of ordinary citizens in the Arab world, something that has generally been lacking (Anderson 1999, pp. 6-7; also Tessler 1999; Hudson 1995). The availability of World Values Survey data, recently collected in four Arab states, offers an important opportunity to begin filling this gap. The analysis of these data will shed light both on the degree of popular support for democracy and on the validity of competing positions in on-going debates about whether or not Islam fosters anti-democratic attitudes among ordinary men and women in the Arab world.

Data and Method

Questions about the impact of Islamic attachments on the attitudes toward democracy held by ordinary Arab men and women can usefully be investigated with data from the World Values Survey. The four Arab countries in which the WVS has thus far been conducted are Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, and Jordan. Surveys in each country were carried out during the fourth wave of the World Values Survey, and the data were therefore collected between 2000 and 2002. As elsewhere, each WVS project was designed and carried out in close collaboration with scholars from the participating country. The present author helped to direct the WVS in Algeria.

While no subset of states is completely representative of the Arab world, these four countries provide a strong foundation for insights that may be generalizable to much of the region. Egypt, Algeria, and Morocco are the most populous Arab countries; Egypt and Algeria are republics while Jordan and Morocco are monarchies; two of the countries have a legacy of French colonialism whereas in the other two Britain was the dominant imperial power prior to independence; and, finally, two were in the socialist camp and had a socialist orientation during much of the Cold War and two have always been allied politically and ideologically with the Western bloc. This subset of countries does not include any of the Gulf Arab states, countries with small populations and substantial wealth that to a considerable extent have a distinctive political and cultural orientation. Nevertheless, overall, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, and Jordan encompass between them the political, economic, and social environments in which the vast majority of the Arab world's citizens reside. Accordingly, if data from the four countries suggest similar conclusions, these are likely to shed light on the attitudes of Arab citizens elsewhere.

Alternatively, should there be differences among the four cases, it will be possible to offer insights about the conditionalities associated with particular patterns and relationships.

Five items from the WVS interview schedule have been used to measure attitudes toward democracy. These items are:

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?

V167. Having a democratic political system

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 one of them?

V169. In democracy, the economic system runs badly

V170. Democracies are indecisive and have too much quibbling

V171. Democracies aren't good at maintaining order

V172. Democracy may have problems but it's better than any other form of government

Factor analysis was used to select these items from a slightly larger battery of questions pertaining to democracy. Factor analysis identifies items that cluster together and hence measure the same underlying concept, thereby increasing confidence in reliability and validity (Marradi 1981). Confidence is further increased, as is cross-national conceptual equivalence, by the similar pattern of factor loadings observed in all four countries. Two distinct sets of attitudes toward democracy were identified by factor analysis. One, reflecting the strong intercorrelation of items V167 and V172, concerns the degree to which respondents have a favorable attitude toward democracy. The second, reflecting strong correlations among the other three items, concerns the degree to which respondents believe there are important problems associated with democracy, regardless of whether or not they believe these make an alternative political formulae more desirable.

The two sets of attitudes identified by factor analysis are the dependent variables in the analysis to follow. V167 and V172 have been combined to form an additive index measuring the first of these dimensions, support for democracy. V169, V170, and V171 have been combined to form an additive index measuring the second of these dimensions, significance of the perceived drawbacks associated with democracy. Table 1 shows the distribution of responses to each of the two indices and its constituent items for each of the four countries. The table shows, first, that in all four countries attitudes toward democracy are much more likely to be favorable than unfavorable. While the distributions are skewed in favor of democracy to a greater degree in Morocco and Egypt than in Jordan and Algeria, even in the latter two countries most citizens have a favorable, if not a very favorable, attitude toward democracy. Second, again in each case, there is considerable variation in views about whether there are important problems associated with democracy. On average, roughly one-third of the respondents agree or agree strongly that democracies are not good at managing the economy, maintaining order, and acting decisively. Other respondents disagree, or in many instances disagree strongly, that such problems are associated with democracy.

(Table 1 about here)

Factor analysis was also used to select items measuring attitudes and attachments pertaining to Islam and two distinct dimensions were again identified. One of these concerns personal piety and religious involvement and the other concerns the role in public affairs of religion and religious leaders. The measure of personal religiosity resulting from this analysis is an additive index composed of two items dealing with mosque attendance and participation in mosque activities. A question requesting a subjective assessment of personal religiosity and another asking about the importance of God had high loadings on the same factor. But while

these loadings increase confidence in the reliability and validity of all items, the latter two were not included in the personal piety index because their response distributions were highly skewed and contained little variance. For example, on a 10-point scale ranging from not at all important to very important, the proportion of respondents selecting a 10, meaning extremely important, in response to a question about God was 81.6 percent in Egypt, 94.8 percent in Algeria, 98.5 percent in Jordan, and 99.2 percent in Morocco. In the Egyptian case, another 14 percent chose an 8 or 9. This means that only with respect to mosque attendance and participation in mosque activities is there variance whose impact on political attitudes may be explored. With respect to religious conviction and personal piety, at least as measured by the World Values Survey, the virtual absence of variance obviates questions about explanatory power of these characteristics.

Two measures of attitudes toward the role of Islam in public affairs have been established on this basis of this analysis. One is an additive index composed of two intercorrelated items, and the second is a separate item that factor analysis indicates should not be combined with the others. The first two items, which load strongly on the same factor, ask respondents to agree or disagree with the following statements: “Politicians who do not believe in God are unfit for public office” and “It would be better for [this country] if more people with strong religious beliefs held public office.” The third item, which asks respondents to agree or disagree that “Religious leaders should not influence how people vote in elections,” loads strongly on a separate factor. Also loading on the second factor is an item that asks whether religious leaders should influence government decisions. There is a great deal of missing data on the latter question, however, and thus, while its correlation with the other item asking about the political influence of religious leaders offers evidence of reliability and validity, it has not been used to

construct an additive index in order to avoid excluding a large number of respondents from the analysis.

Table 2 presents the distribution of responses to the two sets of measures pertaining to Islam: personal religiosity, or mosque involvement, and also to both the two-item index and the remaining item pertaining to the role of Islam in public affairs for each of the four countries. Turning first to personal religiosity, the table shows a bimodal pattern of mosque attendance and involvement in all four countries. In each case, a significant proportion of men and women participate regularly and frequently and as many if not more participate rarely or “almost never.” Responses are particularly polarized in Egypt and Jordan, but the pattern is similar in Morocco and Algeria as well. There is considerable, albeit less, variation in all four countries with respect to attitudes about the role of Islam in public affairs. The distribution in Egypt is skewed in the direction of giving a greater role to Islam, and to a lesser extent this is the case in Jordan and Morocco as well. The greatest diversity of opinion regarding the political role of Islam is found in Algeria, where, for example, only one-third of the respondents agree or agree strongly that it would be better for the country if people with strong religious beliefs held public office.

(Table 2 about here)

Attitudes and attachments relating to Islam are the primary non-dependent variables in the present study, the goal being to determine whether and to what extent these orientations account for variance in the attitudes toward democracy held by ordinary citizens. In addition, however, a number of other non-dependent variables are included in the analysis for purposes of statistical control. These are age, education, sex, income, and residence, the latter referring to the size of the town in which the respondent lives. These variables have been selected both because they constitute important demographic characteristics and because research in other

world regions has found that they are sometimes related to attitudes toward democracy (Bratton and Mattes 2001; Mishler and Rose 1999; Waldron-Moore 1999; Ottemoeller 1998; Mattes and Thiel 1998; Shin, Chull and Shyu 1997; Duch 1995; Seligson and Booth 1993). Finally, a measure of regime evaluation has been developed for inclusion in the analysis, again because several studies have found this to be a determinant of attitudes toward democracy (Chu, Diamond, and Shin 2001; Rose, Mishler, and Haerpfer 1998). The measure is an additive index composed of two highly intercorrelated items. One asks respondents how much or how little confidence they have in their national government. The other asks respondents how satisfied they are with the way the people now in national office are handling the country's affairs.

Findings and Conclusions

Tables 3 through 6 present regression analyses for Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, and Jordan, respectively. In each case, both the index measuring the degree to which attitudes toward democracy are favorable or unfavorable and the index measuring the degree to which respondents believe there are important problems associated with democracy are treated as dependent variables. The three measures pertaining to Islam, the five demographic variables, and the measure of regime evaluation are the non-dependent variables in these regressions.

(Tables 3-6 about here)

Taken together, the findings presented in Tables 3-6 suggest that Islamic orientations and attachments have at most a very limited impact on views about democracy. With respect to personal religiosity, at least as measured by involvement in religious activities, there is not a single instance when this variable is related to attitudes toward democracy to a statistically significant degree. Further, there is only one instance when this variable is related to views

about whether there are problems associated with democracy. This is the case in Egypt, where individuals with higher levels of involvement in religious activities are more likely than others to agree that democracy has drawbacks. The relationship is significant at the .05 level.

As noted earlier, there is very little variance associated with personal piety, belief in God, and self-reported religiosity, and so these questions from the survey instrument have almost no explanatory power. All that can be said is that most people claim to be pious and most also have a favorable opinion of democracy, thus suggesting, in the aggregate, that there is no incompatibility between Islam and democracy. Support for democracy, in other words, is widespread in Arab societies where most citizens have strong Islamic attachments.

To the extent that the preceding statement shifts the level of analysis, it does not address the central question of the present analysis: do views about democracy vary among men and women in the Arab world as a function of the strength of their Islamic attachments. By contrast, the regressions presented in Tables 3-6 bear directly on this question. Further, again, they suggest that personal religiosity has little influence of attitudes toward democracy. There is substantial variation with respect to mosque attendance and participation in religious activities in all four countries, and it is notable that those with higher levels of mosque involvement and those with lower levels have similar, and to a substantial extent favorable, views about democracy. Thus, in the on-going debate about the compatibility of democracy and Islam, findings from the World Values Survey suggest, so far as the individual level of analysis is concerned, that strong Islamic attachments do not discourage or otherwise influence support for democracy to any significant degree.

The pattern is only slightly different with respect to attitudes about political Islam. Since there are two measures of attitudes about the role of religious officials in public affairs and two

indices measuring views about democracy, four relationships are observable in each of the four Arab countries for which World Values Survey data are available. Of these sixteen relationships, only four are statistically significant, one at the .05 level and three at the .01 level. One of these is in Egypt, none is in Jordan, two are in Morocco, and one is in Algeria. Thus, it is clear that in only a distinct minority of instances do attitudes about the political role of religion and religious leaders have an impact on attitudes toward democracy.

The conclusion that support for political Islam does not lead to unfavorable attitudes toward democracy among ordinary citizens becomes even more evident when the character of the statistically significant relationships is examined. First, only one of the four significant relationships, that in Egypt, involves views about whether persons holding public office should be religious. Moreover, the relationship involves judgments about democracy, not views about associated problems, and it is positive. In other words, those who deem it desirable that persons holding public office be religious have a *more* favorable attitude toward democracy than do others.

Second, although the remaining three significant relationships are in the opposite direction, they offer only limited support to those who would argue that Islam discourages pro-democracy attitudes and values. In these instances, those who disagree with the proposition that religious officials should not influence how people vote are less likely to have positive views about democracy. This pattern was observed in only three of the eight instances where relationships are reported, however, and in one of these the relationship is only significant at the .05 level. In addition, statistically significant relationships are found in only two of the four countries, Morocco and Algeria.

The nature of the dependent variables in these relationships is even more important. In two of the cases, the two that are significant at the .01 level, the dependent variable does not involve judgments about the desirability of democracy but rather about whether there are problems associated with democracy. Thus, these respondents do not necessarily have an unfavorable view of democracy or consider other forms of governance to be preferable. They are simply more likely than others to believe that democracy, whether or not desirable or preferable to alternatives, has certain potential drawbacks. In only one instance, then, that of the weak but nonetheless statistically significant relationship observed in Morocco, are persons *more* favorably disposed toward the influence of religion in political affairs *less* favorably disposed toward democratic governance.

Since these findings are much more similar than different across the four countries, it is worth recalling how much of the Arab world's diversity is encompassed by Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Algeria. The combined population of these countries is roughly 140 million, perhaps two-thirds of the population of all Arab states. Equally important, as noted earlier, the four countries for which data are available differ with respect to present-day political systems and, in addition, both pre- and post-independence political and ideological trajectories. Accordingly, cross-country comparisons approximate a "most different system" research design, which in turn increases confidence in generalizability when similar findings are observed. So far as the influence of religious orientations on attitudes toward democracy is concerned, this means that the very limited impact of Islamic attachments is a conclusion that in all probability applies to much of the Arab world.

Relationships involving the six control variables are not central to the present study, which is primarily concerned with assessing the degree to which religious orientations influence

attitudes toward democracy. Nevertheless, given that research on the initiation, maintenance and consolidation of democratic transitions seeks to identify the broader array of factors that either promote or hinder the emergence of democratic attitudes and values, some brief observations about the explanatory power of these non-dependent variables may be of interest.

Findings from empirical research in other world areas are somewhat mixed regarding the relationship between demographic characteristics and attitudes toward democracy. On balance, however, there is at least some evidence that support for democracy is positively related to levels of education and socioeconomic status and to male gender. Findings from the present study are for the most part similar. For example, education is positively and significantly related to a more favorable judgment of democracy in at least one instance in three of the Arab countries for which data are available, Algeria being the only exception. Similarly, both male gender and income are positively and significantly related to such attitudes in Egypt in Morocco, although income is inversely related to one of the dependent variables in Jordan and these variables otherwise do not have explanatory power in either Jordan or Algeria.

Findings about residence are interesting in that the direction of the relationship is different in the two countries where this variable has the greatest influence. Residence is related to both dependent variables to a statistically significant degree in Egypt and Algeria, but in the former country pro-democracy attitudes are associated with residence in *smaller* towns and in the latter country they are associated with residence in *larger* towns and cities. Residence in smaller towns is also positively related to pro-democracy attitudes in Jordan. Finally, the influence of evaluations of the government and its leaders should be noted. Statistically significant relationships involving the evaluation of political leaders are found in at least one instance in

every country except Morocco, and in each case a favorable assessment of government leaders is positively correlated with a positive judgment about democracy.

It is beyond the scope of the present inquiry to speculate about the causes and consequences of these cross-national differences. Suffice it to say that the explanatory power of the factors here treated as control variables is not the same in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Algeria, which suggests that future research should strive to shed light on the nature and determinants of cross-national variation in the process by which attitudes relating to democracy and governance are shaped in Arab and other Muslim-majority countries. Such research will be enriched to the extent that additional independent variables are incorporated into the analysis, and perhaps if additional dimensions of the dependent variable are considered as well. The purpose of the present study is more limited, however. It is to assess the role of religious orientations in shaping attitudes toward democracy, and the findings in this connection are clear and straightforward. Islamic attachments at most have only a very limited influence on attitudes toward democracy.

While these findings about Islamic attachments do not shed much light on how attitudes *are* formed, they address and offer important conclusions about an issue that is the focus of considerable debate among students of Arab and Muslim societies: do the religious orientations of ordinary citizens retard the emergence of a political culture supportive of democracy and thus help to explain the persistent authoritarianism of the countries in which these men and women live. The answer provided by World Values Survey data, which is consistent with findings based on several less comprehensive data sets (Tessler 2002), is that Islam is not incompatible with democracy and does not discourage the emergence of attitudes favorable to democracy.

In conclusion, there is little evidence, at least at the individual level of analysis, to support the claims of those who assert that Islam and democracy are incompatible. The reasons that democracy has not taken root in the Arab world must therefore lie elsewhere, perhaps in domestic economic structures, perhaps in relations with the international political and economic order, or perhaps in the determination of those in power to resist political change by whatever means are required. But while these and other possible explanations can be debated, what should be clear is that cultural explanations alleging that Islam discourages or even prevents the emergence of support for democracy are misguided, indeed misleading, and thus of little use in efforts to understand the factors shaping attitudes toward democracy in the Arab world.

Table 1. Attitudes Toward Democracy in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Algeria

	Egypt	Jordan	Morocco	Algeria
V167 Having a democratic Government in this country is:	%	%	%	%
Very good	67.9	51.2	81.5	60.4
Fairly good	30.6	43.5	14.5	32.3
Fairly bad or bad	1.5	5.3	4.0	7.3
V172 Despite its problems, democracy is better than any other form of government	%	%	%	%
Strongly agree	63.6	39.1	77.3	48.5
Agree	34.1	51.2	18.6	39.9
Disagree or strongly disagree	2.3	9.7	4.1	11.6
Attitude toward democracy index	%	%	%	%
Very favorable	52.1	28.6	71.6	41.4
Favorable	45.7	61.0	24.0	47.3
Somewhat favorable	1.6	7.9	2.7	5.6
Not favorable	.6	2.5	1.7	5.7

Table 1. Attitudes Toward Democracy (continued)

	Egypt	Jordan	Morocco	Algeria
V169 In democracy, the economic system runs badly	%	%	%	%
Strongly agree	3.1	7.4	15.1	9.2
Agree	15.0	25.1	20.7	22.0
Disagree	56.8	39.3	42.4	54.9
Strongly disagree	25.1	28.2	21.8	14.1
V170 Democracies are indecisive and have too much quibbling	%	%	%	%
Strongly agree	3.3	9.7	28.2	15.3
Agree	25.7	34.0	43.6	47.9
Disagree	53.4	35.4	20.5	29.7
Strongly disagree	17.6	20.8	7.7	7.1
V171 Democracies aren't good at maintaining order	%	%	%	%
Strongly agree	3.2	8.2	18.1	9.4
Agree	17.0	24.9	23.0	23.0
Disagree	55.6	37.3	40.1	51.8
Strongly disagree	24.3	29.6	18.8	15.8
Index of agreement that democracy brings problems	%	%	%	%
Strongly agree	2.6	7.6	17.9	11.7
Agree	16.5	27.0	28.6	28.0
Disagree	51.6	38.1	41.3	46.2
Strongly disagree	29.2	27.3	12.2	14.1

Table 2. Religious Orientations in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Algeria

	Egypt	Jordan	Morocco	Algeria
V30 How often do you spend time with people at your mosque	%	%	%	%
Weekly	37.9	39.1	23.5	29.3
Monthly	19.5	18.3	10.5	10.2
Less		29.2	9.3	14.4
None at all	42.6	38.3	56.7	46.1
V185 Apart from weddings, funerals and christenings, about how often do you attend religious services	%	%	%	%
More than once a week	22.4	28.9	32.4	25.2
Weekly	19.8	15.2	11.8	18.6
Less	32.8	13.3	19.1	37.5
Never, practically never	25.1	42.6	36.7	17.7
Index of mosque involvement	%	%	%	%
Very high	24.9	41.4	29.8	33.8
High	17.4	2.3	5.0	6.4
Low	45.4	12.5	21.3	22.5
Very low	12.3	43.8	43.9	37.3

Table 2. Religious Orientations (continued)

	Egypt	Jordan	Morocco	Algeria
V200 Politicians who do not believe in God are unfit for public office	%	%	%	%
Strongly agree	73.7	73.9	66.5	53.5
Agree	18.5	12.3	15.3	21.5
Neutral		4.2	8.1	7.8
Disagree	2.6	2.4	4.2	8.2
Strongly disagree	5.2	7.2	5.9	9.0
Religious leaders should not influence how people vote in elections	%	%	%	%
Strongly agree	34.2	38.5	41.3	11.8
Agree	26.8	33.5	23.6	21.0
Neutral	2.9	7.2	22.2	20.5
Disagree	12.8	8.8	6.8	21.5
Strongly disagree	23.2	11.9	6.1	25.2
V201 It would be better for [this country] if more people with strong religious beliefs held public office	%	%	%	%
Strongly agree	53.2	30.3	30.6	13.8
Agree	33.7	31.4	22.8	20.4
Neutral	.8	6.6	18.7	19.0
Disagree	8.6	14.0	17.0	26.2
Strongly disagree	3.8	17.7	10.9	20.6
Index of attitudes about whether persons holding public office should be religious	%	%	%	%
Strongly agree	73.4	51.0	40.7	25.2
Agree	14.9	16.7	30.3	28.1
Neutral	8.7	21.8	17.4	26.1
Disagree	2.6	7.9	7.5	13.8
Strongly disagree	.5	2.6	4.0	6.8

Table 3. Multiple Regression Showing the Influence of Islamic Orientations on Attitudes toward Democracy in Egypt

	<u>Favorable Attitudes Toward Democracy</u>	<u>Agreement that Democracy Brings Problems</u>
<u>Independent Variables</u>		
Greater Mosque involvement	.036 (1.533)	.050 (2.056)*
Persons holding public office should be religious	.069 (3.184)***	-.026 (-1.141)
Religious leaders should not influence how people vote	.031 (1.447)	.041 (1.865)
<u>Control Variables</u>		
Positive evaluation of government leaders	-.004 (-1.167)	-.107 (-4.768)***
Higher education	.107 (4.356)***	.034 (1.365)
Older age	.041 (1.776)	-.065 (-2.683)***
Male sex	.093 (3.905)***	-.052 (-2.106)*
Higher income	.072 (3.019)***	-.021 (-.870)
Resides in larger town	-.065 (-2.789)***	.107 (4.441)***

The table shows standardized coefficients (betas) and gives t statistics in parentheses.

* p < .05, **p < .02, ***p < .01

Table 4. Multiple Regression Showing the Influence of Islamic Orientations on Attitudes toward Democracy in Jordan

	<u>Favorable Attitudes Toward Democracy</u>	<u>Agreement that Democracy Brings Problems</u>
<u>Independent Variables</u>		
Greater Mosque involvement	.039 (.692)	-.084 (-1.477)
Persons holding public office should be religious	.062 (1.684)	-.046 (-1.265)
Religious leaders should not influence how people vote	.016 (.440)	-.045 (-1.242)
<u>Control Variables</u>		
Positive evaluation of government leaders	.102 (2.716)***	-.151 (-4.041)***
Higher education	.073 (1.800)	-.124 (-3.091)***
Older age	-.009 (-.227)	-.007 (-.172)
Male sex	.108 (1.923)	-.092 (-1.635)
Higher income	.057 (1.510)	.085 (2.244)*
Resides in larger town	-.078 (-2.106)*	.042 (1.157)

The table shows standardized coefficients (betas) and gives t statistics in parentheses.

* p < .05, **p < .02, ***p < .01

Table 5. Multiple Regression Showing the Influence of Islamic Orientations on Attitudes toward Democracy in Morocco

	<u>Favorable Attitudes Toward Democracy</u>	<u>Agreement that Democracy Brings Problems</u>
<u>Independent Variables</u>		
Greater Mosque involvement	.008 (.182)	.018 (.340)
Persons holding public office should be religious	-.042 (-1.017)	.081 (1.641)
Religious leaders should not influence how people vote	.081 (2.040)*	.129 (2.811)***
<u>Control Variables</u>		
Positive evaluation of government leaders	.022 (.541)	-.047 (-1.006)
Higher education	.102 (2.374)**	-.119 (-2.398)**
Older age	.069 (1.672)	-.009 (-.187)
Male sex	.051 (1.164)	-.145 (-2.838)***
Higher income	.027 (.685)	-.150 (-3.249)***
Resides in larger town	.016 (.395)	.080 (1.711)

The table shows standardized coefficients (betas) and gives t statistics in parentheses.

* p < .05, **p < .02, ***p < .01

Table 6. Multiple Regression Showing the Influence of Islamic Orientations on Attitudes toward Democracy in Algeria

	<u>Favorable Attitudes Toward Democracy</u>	<u>Agreement that Democracy Brings Problems</u>
<u>Independent Variables</u>		
Greater Mosque involvement	-.058 (-1.158)	.084 (1.647)
Persons holding public office should be religious	.063 (1.551)	.049 (1.182)
Religious leaders should not influence how people vote	.070 (1.794)	.190 (4.657)***
<u>Control Variables</u>		
Positive evaluation of government leaders	.137 (3.500)***	.037 (.900)
Higher education	.018 (.385)	.055 (1.112)
Older age	.039 (.817)	-.114 (-2.280)*
Male sex	-.003 (-.062)	-.034 (-.712)
Higher income	-.058 (-1.455)	-.004 (-.106)
Resides in larger town	.161 (4.085)***	-.093 (-2.242)*

The table shows standardized coefficients (betas) and gives t statistics in parentheses.

* p < .05, **p < .02, ***p < .01

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