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Opposition--Regime Dynamics on the Westphalian Periphery: “More
Exclusionary” Regimes and “Less Exclusionary” Regimes in the Middle
East/North Africa Region

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Don't the most provocative verities ("The bourgeois to the gallows!") become the most official verities once they attain power? Convention can turn into provocation and provocation into convention at the drop of a hat. What matters is the determination to go to extremes with every position.

Milan Kundera, *Identity*

Introduction

The well known notions of the core and periphery terms of systemic analysis in political economy (or World Systems analysis) can also be cast through a more politico-historical prism. Specifically, one may claim that “Westphalian Core,” and “Westphalian Periphery” divisions exist in the political world.¹ In general terms, such categories may be defined by how successfully a state has mustered together both the outwardly-visible institutions as well as the less evident social norms, emerging over time from the clouds of war and the friction of open debate. The Westphalian core has had both centuries of consistent state development and extended prosperity of a middle class, as well as industrialization processes, which have enabled it, directly and indirectly, not only to establish such norms of governance domestically, but also to export such values, ideas, and conceptions of governance into the Westphalian periphery. Behind these ideas lies material power; it cannot be said that history is made solely by the power of superior ideas, but rather by the optimal combination of ideas and material power.

Members of the Westphalian core, thus, naturally apply pressure to those of the Westphalian periphery through both institutions and interaction in the international system. Dissimilar politico-historical development in the post-colonial space has rendered the periphery vulnerable to these pressures from without. Institutions, hurriedly created in the aftermath of decolonialization, often awkwardly reflecting previous favoritism by colonial powers, may exist for intercourse with the Westphalian core. However, Westphalian social norms of acceptance of these governing structures, embedded in the values of the people, may not exist. The emergence

¹ The point here is not to devise a sturdy, novel framework of purely political analysis of states -- a Westphalian semi-periphery category is noticeably lacking-- but rather to highlight origins of systemic challenges that "Westphalian periphery" states face in domestic governance. Another problem, furthermore, is that World Systems theory reduces the role of the state much more than is done here. The state is admittedly a shaky form of analysis in the Middle East; hence, governance structures rather than a hardcore nation-state framework is considered; indeed the state is not necessarily a “coherent entity with a single interest working in the interest of society” (Owen 41).

of civil society is suppressed, and pressure may mount. The result of these countervailing forces is manifested by the authoritarian government that has become the regime type *par excellence* in many states of the Westphalian periphery.

These factors notwithstanding, opposition movements have developed and, at certain moments, shoved the previous government out of the driver's seat and grabbed the reins of power. The questions approached by this survey deal specifically with government-opposition relations, from a "macro" perspective. Do government-opposition dynamics at one point, say T-1, affect relations at point T and beyond into the T+N? If the "ideal strategy vis-à-vis organized groups" is "for an authoritarian regime is to destroy those that it cannot control, and to remake and reorder those that it can," then what happens in the less ideal situation that reality presents (Owen 2000; 32)? And if "decisions are usually taken behind close doors" and "on the outside, there are few spaces for independent political activity," then history shows that this isn't always sustainable (35). Kramer claims that violent political expression only becomes the modus operandi after non-violent methods were suppressed. Empirical evidence presented later is intended to explore such questions.

Another question is the following: classifying regimes into more or less exclusionary in nature, are early post-colonial "less exclusionary" regimes more stable in the long run? The hypothesis with this latter question is that if exclusionary system is established and equilibrium state-societal relations are perpetuated as such, then built-in tendencies towards societal strife can be claimed to exist. Conversely, less exclusionary regimes would be hypothesized to show reduced tendencies for social unrest.

A final feature of regime-opposition dynamics concerns a phenomenon that, under certain conditions relating to exclusionary features, there is often a period of opening with a regime change that is followed by a renewed period of heavier measures as the government consolidates

its hold on power, and hedges against opposition. This is considered a sort of corollary to the questions of stability and exclusion considered above.

A general problem with these hypotheses is admittedly that peaceful handling may imply more sturdy structural aspects from the beginning, with the government-opposition relations remaining an irrelevant factor. Institutional aspects are thus considered in the data, where possible. Another point is that, in general, the hypothesis may be thought of as formalizing intuitive claims. But if proved correct, then either resolving the problem requires changing political habit (implying that reasoning of the actors is leading to more insecurity than it should normatively) or discovering what step between the sound logic of the actors and the disaccord of the outcome is flawed.

The next sections of this paper are devoted to discussions on opposition in general, and the framework employed in an empirical investigation of opposition in selected states of the Westphalian periphery traditionally considered under both the geographic rubric of North Africa as well as the more political rubric of the Middle East (referred to collectively hereafter as the MENA region).

Opposition: Challenges to Studying Opposition

“Opposition,” writes Dahl, “that would be loyal if it were tolerated becomes disloyal because it is not tolerated (in Anderson B, 17). Indeed, studying opposition in the Westphalian periphery can be like trying to pen an analysis about the losing factions of a New York mafia family—only the fish realize the truth, and even half of it at that, and there aren't many fish in the Middle East. Several factors, it must be noted from the outset, complicate the study of opposition in the MENA, notably the changing nature of the state in the Westphalian Periphery. The beginning decades of the Middle Eastern states are fraught with examples of coups,

countercoups, and the like. But in the last twenty years the dust has settled somewhat, as regimes have maintained their grip on power. Opposition, then, has had to change tactics somewhat. But perhaps broad, common models to both periods can be drawn, as this paper attempts to do.

Another methodological challenge is that so little time has passed since the Westphalian flame has been entrusted to (or dropped on) the Westphalian periphery, and exploiting the data to get a good future picture is sort of like roping the moon. One must be conscious of this time problem, but little can be done to eliminate the methodologically problematic aspects of it. It can also be argued that looking broadly across both the region ignores context-specific details. This is the downside to choosing the wide-angle lens. Constitutive of this wide-angled view is the fact that opposition is considered in the abstract and in general, rather than looking at one specific movement within a country, or a single country, as the wide majority of papers presented in the seminar have done. Certainly, a "micro" study of a particular movement from a particular perspective (psycho-social or socioeconomic, etc.: pick your fashionable paradigm) would highlight important features guiding opposition. But opposition movements are often forced to morph or go underground, and this makes difficult a consistent analysis of one movement, even the Muslim Brotherhood. Although such a study is feasible, this paper chooses to pursue a more survey-like method.

The upside to a wider vantage point is that generalizable phenomena can be posited. Although this is not an exhaustive survey of the MENA, much less the Westphalian periphery, states are examined from both North Africa as well as the Middle East with the assumption that any sub-regional differences that might be important-- for ontological reasons-- are reasonably insignificant *in a broad perspective*-- for epistemological reasons. So despite these above-mentioned faults, it is interesting to explore questions relating to government-opposition dynamics with a survey of selected states in the post-colonial MENA. To do so, and respond to

"Orientalist" objections, it must be assumed that this collection of states has enough similarities to distinguish it from other regions, at least in terms of political, historical and cultural identity. This is an admittedly shaky claim, but it should not stand in the way of any benefits empirical analysis might yield.² Though Orientalists would not accept the fact alone that the discipline of Middle East Studies and courses like Conflict and Security in the Middle East are valid in backing this claim up, the fact that such formal academic disciplines and ensuing studies persist is offered as evidence upon which to base a region-wide methodology. This is, after all, a course on the Middle East, and if most papers have treated different states, then one paper treating several of these states at once should be equally acceptable. Cultural similarities, as well, including that of shared language (obviously excluding some, most notably Iran, and not splitting too many hairs over linguistic differences) might be argued as reasons bolstering the methodical choice of looking broadly at this region rather than one or two states, or other regions as well. Certainly, it would be quite interesting to compare differing opposition dynamics in different regions across time, but that is beyond the scope of this paper. The sample of countries was made with several considerations: first, it is necessary to get a variety of countries across the MENA region- the Maghreb as well as the Gulf countries, for example. It is not feasible to perform such an analysis in a paper this size if *all* countries are chosen, even with a wide-angle lens. Another less qualitative method would have to be developed. Another problem with choosing all countries in the MENA region is deciding what exact states constitute such a region. Many papers have dealt with Turkey, Iran, and Russia, for example, but how would one decide how peripheral or central such states are to the MENA region. Finally, countries were chosen where historical data across time could be reasonably evident with secondary historical sources.

² It is not uncommon to find studies of the MENA as a whole; examples include Ehteshami 1999; Brown, 1997; Gongora 1997, etc. Rogan (1997) notes the proliferations of scholarly associations bringing Middle Eastern analysts together in Europe, especially compared to the U.S. This evidence would further support my chosen method here.

Opposition: Ways to Study Opposition

There are numerous ways to focus on the concept of opposition, and they are briefly highlighted here to emphasize the specific aspect that is considered by this paper. Opposition can be considered from an *external* point of view as well. Aiding and abetting oppositions in other states may be one such way of considering intra-Arab relations.³ Iraq supported anti-Sa'ud liberation movements in the 1960s, for example. Egypt's meddling in Sunni countries is another example. Non-state entities, like groups of jihad warriors in Afghanistan and elsewhere are another such example. Studying the role of technology as a facilitator in bringing external and internal opposition groups together would be yet another entry point for opposition.

An entry point to study opposition may also be of *internal* nature. An example is looking for structural causes of opposition generation.⁴ A state, for example, may be of rentier nature, subject to fluctuations in the value of its rents. A severe enough change in the manner of distribution may spark cause unrest that may or may not culminate in an organized form. Such financial crises, though have been more apt to cause regimes to make top-down changes. Perhaps one might show how oppositions fail to form when the black gold is flowing strong. One may also study the way that oppositions are able to established clientelistic networks in opposing a government that has consolidated distributive societal institutions. Devising an Islamist framework can be done both internally as well as externally, notably with the Muslim Brotherhood.

Along internal lines, but differing from these other entry points, this paper questions whether regime treatment opposition within the country may fit some sort of pattern pertaining to

³ Roy explores some of this (1115-125).

⁴ Piscatori and Anderson choose this entry point.

stability in a country. Opposition, it is of paramount importance to note, is considered in a wide sense. Any group that feels displaced from power, be it formal organizations of civil society, as well as ethnic groups excluded from and opposed by the government, is considered to be of the "opposition." Ethnicity often turns out to be the focus here, but overall, it is too narrow of a concept, albeit an important societal ordering device in times of uncertainty and change. Opposition in the form of military groups and coups is not considered here. This is because the military has been such a central part to the meaningful consolidation of power in the Middle Eastern state, and, although not necessarily a puppet of the regime, is never in the opposition for too long, if ever. Purges of different sorts are primarily response for this aspect. With many nationalist traditions in the MENA, notably seen through the Ba'ath or Nasser, Islam is also often a focal point for opposition. It is not the sole focus either in this paper, for reasons expressed immediately below.

Islam Unprivileged

In general, one reason why it is problematic to focus solely on the element of Islam in studying most aspects of opposition in the Muslim world is that other factors of political economy, as seen in the Gulf States, are observed (to be explained in the Saudi Arabia section.) Indeed, opposition groups often collect around such a landmark, but secular democracy and national bourgeoisie have also been identified as rallying points for opposition. And not all wish to implicate themselves in state-building/state-consolidating projects: Neofundamentalists want to "Re-Islamize society on a grassroots level and no longer through state power," in effect working outside the state but not necessarily against it (Roy 79). But what seems to have happened in practice is that the vulnerable state, if it does not co-opt such forces in some ways, finds itself at violent loggerheads with the Islamic elements

Referring to the material aspects evoked in the discussion on Saudi Arabia, rational choice (in a positivist light) plays a role in inspiring opposition to status quo powers. "Some observers equate Islam with unquestioning opposition...that the grievances of the protest movements might have been comprehensible as rational choices rarely figured in the literature" (Anderson 1990; 64). A political economy approach to studying opposition isn't so far away, but space constrains such explorations.

Opposition: More Excluded/Less Excluded

Regimes are understood to be either *more* exclusionary or *less* exclusionary. The advantage of this terminology is that it avoids teleological assumptions of democratization schools of thought that can be succumbed to when speaking of opposition and liberalization in the Westphalian periphery. "Political liberalization in the Arab Middle East is not a process initiated by pressures from below nor is it invariably leading to systemic transformation in a democratic direction(118)." Neither are many regimes in the Westphalian periphery easily classified as inclusionary, hence the decision to stay with "exclusionary" as a designation. Finally, many regimes are not purely and statically more or less exclusionary, but changing over time. This is noted in the data, but to avoid overcomplicating the model by increasing the analytical elements of the binary "more" or "less" exclusionary typology, the classification is based on what the regime is characterized as in the beginning of a given time period. Positivist assumptions are built-in to the analyses, as different time periods in different countries are examined.

An alternative conception to this opposition framework is that regimes liberalize to survive: thinking of reform in terms of a kind of capital, they sacrifice, or relinquish the least "reform capital" necessary to keep the simmering opposition pot from blowing its top. The criteria developed for this paper for distinguishing between more and less exclusionary regimes is

that less exclusionary regimes are roughly characterized by the following: opposition is not only permitted to exist, but also incorporated into the government in some way, by elections or otherwise; power is not concentrated in a single tribe or group of elites otherwise impenetrable by civil society groups (if one assumes that the civil society is not represented purely by tribal/clan-based groups); force is not used to keep opposition groups out.

Empirical Analysis: More Exclusionary Regimes

Iraq

Exploring Iraq's more exclusionary nature, it is important to refer back to the days of the Ottoman Empire. Constantinople's pull on the territory that now known as Iraq was witnessed to a somewhat greater extent than certain other nations such as those of the Persian Gulf. It was indeed somewhat of a buffer in the imperial Ottoman expanse. In the early 20th century during the expiring moments of the Ottoman Empire, the inhabitants of this territory began to clamor for independence, especially those in Basra, near the more independent Gulf monarchies (Tripp). Perhaps during these nascent national moments did the Iraqis begin to galvanize the sanctity of the "national" project, as significant duress marked the conditions under which it was won.

Under these conditions the British were at best apprehensively accepted by the Iraqi "people," as liberators, most likely because they were seen as "less bad" than the Turks. Iraqis were wary of tossing the Ottoman yolk alone. Under the British mandate, Iraqis had greater autonomy, but it was not without unrest and revolts (Evans: 1932). The British and the international community, however, were hesitant to fully support independence until certain

reforms vis-à-vis Kurdish and religious minorities were carried out, despite revolts that begin to mount. Cleavages were thus tenuously held together from the very beginning, and such norms remained weak by the artificiality of the external nature of the imposition. Indeed, there were Sunni, Shi'a and Kurdish divisions from the end of the Mandate in the 1930s, which continued through the 1940s, 1950s and into today (Tripp; Galvani 1972), especially as special funding for Shi'a during the mandate dropped off in later years (Batatut 1982), and later yearnings for the creation of an Arab identity categorically excluded the Kurds (Tripp). Unloyal tribal elements have been suppressed. From the very beginning Sunni minorities were favored in military and civil spheres, reflected most egregiously in the choice of King Faisal to lead from Baghdad, rather than other cities, arguably equally deserving to serve as capital of the nascent state. Such a state of affairs, with one group so resolutely consolidating power and limiting the opportunity for dissent (as manifested by constant demonstrations) would place Iraq rather squarely in the more exclusionary category.

Indeed such elitist exclusion by ruling and merchant classes of Sunni origin is pointed to as a reason that provoked the ire of the military officers and the educated, who were seeking power through alternate means (Galvani 1972). Continual coups occurred until Ba'athist elements consolidated power in the late 1960s. Such change, between the end of the mandate and the Ba'athist consolidation where violent. Many leaders after King Faisal, until Al-Baker, were killed, with the notable exception of Abdel Aref, who was deposed by a coup (ibid.). And once the Ba'ath party consolidated its power, it lead a great many internal purges to curb opposition, which continued through the second Gulf War (Al-Khafaji: 1992).

Later in Iraq's post-independence history, the Iran-Iraq war certainly did not end either political and security purges or calumnies perpetuated by Saddam Hussein on his own people. But how much of a coincidence is it that the use of chemical weapons on the Kurds came as the

war had drawn to an end? But perhaps there was a sort of refocusing of domestic policy outward, as threats from an enemy beyond superceded domestic discontent with the Iraqi power structure. One might even hazard a "rally-round-the-flag" explanation of the situation, whereby external distractions calmed internal unrest. So perhaps the internal strife, from a broad perspective, at the end of the first Gulf War can be seen as a sort of return to the equilibrium situation of tension within the country that had persisted throughout time. Not much after, the Shi'a, too, were up in arms as the coalition of Desert Storm was sending shockwaves through the Hussein regime and Iraq. Revolts were brutally punished as the Allied forces left the Shi'a hanging in the rift during and after the conflict.

The hypothesis for regime-opposition relations, when looked at broadly across time, seems to hold strong in the case of Iraq. Early on, relations were rough between the various groups, which seemed to become quickly ordered in terms of ethnicity. This seemed to weigh heavy on future regime-opposition relations. Treatment by the governing structures was wholly unsympathetic, and the government, on the whole, did not reform: Sunnis remained dominate, while the others remained excluded, despite any autonomy the Kurds have recently been handed. Relations were marked by instability in the beginning, and seemed to reverberate through time as original societal fractures remained and were at times aggravated.

However, this all does little to explain the final period of Hussein's Iraq. Why was there so little apparent movement to uproot Saddam and his Tikriti cronies, as some had speculated (Hashim). Two main points can be highlighted here: first, the country as a whole was suffering materially, and the potential for consolidating distributive institutions (necessary for keeping power) was slim; second, Baram reports that after the second Gulf War, despite continued coercion of dissent, Saddam also strategically undertook a sort program of "tribalization." Baram is of course skeptical of such "benevolence," and of course no meaningful elections were allowed

as the regime continued to keep a "more exclusionary" grip on power. But, as was witnessed in the last Gulf War, coalition strategy placed many chips on the bet that there would be uprisings of the traditionally suppressed groups. The Kurds, of course, followed this path to a certain extent, but most of the Shi'a majority did not. Perhaps this is due, in large part, to the co-opting nature of regime-opposition relations in this interim period, and not a wholesale refutation of the hypothesis.

Syria

Syria is marked by a less continuous political dominance by an elite than Iraq, but the manner in which regime change occurred, and the character of regime-opposition relations, have also left a heavy imprint on stability in Syrian governance. The first period of Syrian statehood was marked by control of Sunni and urban elites, although pressure by the landed elite and subsequent discord led to upheaval by the end of the 1950s (Heydemann). The 1960s was a period of transition and sectarian polarization when the power was transferred to rural and often poorer minorities like the Alawite and Druze (Van Dam 1996). This occurred in both civil as well as military spheres, while Sunnis were systematically purged. Coups eventually led to a period of stability with the rise of Assad in 1970, which was considered a turning point (Heydemann). Periods of economic opening were soon followed by "unprecedented repression" (Lobmeyer, 93), which persists to this day. Chronically weak institutions seem to create and perpetuate a sense of vulnerability in the regime, with causes it to strengthen its approach. Repressions, combined with economic difficulty and the 1976 intervention in Lebanon began a bloodier chapter of Syrian history. A rare attempt at inclusion was to bring some Damascenes into the government, which was obviously not satisfactory to opposition, as shown by later violence.

The unrest more or less initiated with a string of killings that were later attributed to Sunni extremists, including many deep within the army (Lobmeyer 91). The government in fact blamed the Muslim Brotherhood and led what was widely viewed as a brutish campaign against them. This works to the detriment of the government, which continues to crush other opposition, including opposition of secular nature (ibid). As the opposition draws some support, disturbances continued into the early 1980s, led by Sunni extremists, while Egypt denounced the elitist nature of the Alawites. Eventually, government party members become armed and a bloody showdown in 1982 crippled and muffled the opposition. The Muslim Brotherhood was in fact outlawed, and opposition groups connected to it remained weak, as does the leftist opposition. Internal splits plague what remained of the opposition after 1982.

Clearly, early relations of a "more exclusive" elite, which was followed by another "more exclusive" elite to the opposition were marked by tensions early on, which seemed to snowball furiously until 1982. After that point though, the opposition was too weak and split to continue soldiering on in their cause, which suggests that decimating the opposition is perhaps among the tactics that can be used to break the cycle of violent relations between opposition and a government, at least as a temporary measure. The opposition's critiques of an "un-Islamic" regime were met by the president slipping in religious phrases and Koranic verses to his speeches (Why do Saddam and Bush come to mind?).

Other characteristics of the opposition have allowed the exclusionary regime to persist and have underlined its inability to collect on an issue. The traditional opposition movements have been silent economic openings with non-Arab countries (*infitahs*), a subject that might otherwise be contentious (Lobmeyer). The middle class has benefited from such overtures of the government, so this has further undermined any class-cutting alliances that may form. The business community is furthermore reported somewhat weak to have any bargaining power

(Perthes in Kienle). Talks failed between exiled opposition and government in the 1990s. All this suggests how the Ba'ath party, although weakening and playing less a role (as in the Parliament, for example), still maintains dominance and exclusivity, although this evidence might also be interpreted as pointed to future potential for more inclusivity with opposition. Indeed, the issue of democracy might be the leverage point for more opposition solidarity and success (Lobmeyer).

To conclude, as the Syrian political pendulum swung vigorously between elites for the first decades of Westphalian existence. However, as the current family of ruler's consolidated power in the 1970s and institutionalized exclusion, and allowed an escalation in violence, it can be posited that the hypothesis that more exclusionary regimes are more likely to lead to unstable opposition-regime relations holds true. Only with a decimation of the opposition, and minimal co-optation with economic openings (not always quickly followed by political changes), was the elite able to keep a handle on things, although one may be optimistic about the future since the opposition is regrouping and changing tactics at the same time the composition of governance structures are changing.

Egypt

Opposition in Egypt has been mostly been projected by Muslim groups, as the left and the communists have been chronically small, especially as the government became slightly more pro-West-leaning in later years. This exclusion has been harsh from the beginning. Perhaps the rough nature of this exclusion is a result of the circumstances under which Egypt attained independence, i.e. from a well-resented, high-handed Britain. The manner of the British imperialists served to strengthen the Egyptian's "resolve" for independence and might explain how nationalist (and pan-Arab) projects trumped religious ones. This, quite understandably, strained relations between state and Muslims throughout post-colonial Egypt. Furthermore, both the lack of overarching

ideology within the Free Officers group, and the fact that Nasser et al dealt with problems on a more or less ad hoc basis, probably contributed to the inability of the army and other groups to cooperate constructively. Such a process of decision-making could appear arbitrary and directionless, two qualities that are anathema to the modern state-building project in the Westphalian periphery. The resulting vulnerability felt by government leaders could have easily increased their sense of vulnerability and thus worsened prospects for any emerging opposition. Fortunately, the coup was supported by many societal strata (McDermott), and the Free Officers had legitimacy and material capability to eventually consolidate power.

Of all Egyptian rulers, Nasser has been characterized as the least sympathetic towards opposition groups and political parties, the latter of which were soon banned. The Muslim Brothers, the communists and others, like journalists, were treated harshly, a "consistent theme of his rule" (McDermott 1998: 19; Hopwood 1991). The force of the oppression made it "hard for any nationwide political institution to emerge," which points to a problematic structural result of responding to regime challenges with tactics of repression. Such Islamic groups as the Muslim Brotherhood and the *Ikhwan* responded with attempts at political assassination. After a failed attempt on Nasser, the opposition was crushed and Nasser appeared even stronger (Hopwood 1991). Like other governments facing the Islamist menace, the Free Officers began to adopt some Islamic images and discourse in order to earn further legitimacy.

The hypothesis would hold that relations would continue to be rocky between the main Islamic opposition and the government. Indeed, for a time, as shown by the *tentatives*, it was. But the Islamists were so harshly persecuted that they apparently changed their unswaying confronting tactics over the years, much like Mubarek in the 1980s (Kramer 212). A reasonably more intense integration was to be witnessed, throughout Sadat's and Mubarek's early years, at least until the "deliberalized" 1990s. Although opposition never threatened too critically the

political status quo, elections began to be broadened after Nasser and with military defeats (Brownlee). Sadat was comparatively less repressive of the opposition than Nasser, although he reverted to authoritarian tactics later on in his rule. Both have been described as "soft" authoritarian rulers (at least relative to Syria), which suggests that rapprochement between the regime and opposition was never categorically rejected.

Writing at the end of the 1980s, one analyst claims that Mubarak was going to "extra lengths to "create a formal political climate in which opinions can be heard," adding that Mubarak has made genuine attempts to involve opposition parties in consultation" (McDermott 1988; 76-77). This contrasts with the Sadat regime and even more so with the Nasser years. However, with the Islamist threat always haunting the Egyptian government, and the vulnerability of the government resulting from such aspects as being squeezed between the U.S. and the Arab world, the Mubarak regime has slipped into a deliberalization of sorts. In one sense, then, earlier relations can be thought of as affecting the state of affairs between the regime and opposition, although more evidence is needed to back up this claim, such as a discourse excerpt from Mubarak linking historical problems with Muslim opposition to the situation today.⁵

Mubarak, while at times keeping the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood from elections, has used Islam politically, and integrated Muslim leaders into the government. He has also put an Islamic newspaper in circulation. The Mubarak regime, showing a flair for the inconsistent, has also allowed the Muslim Brotherhood to stand in certain elections, at least as independent candidates, in order to hand defeat to more radical groups (Anderson B, Kramer). The problem remains, though, that there is a lack of separate political institutions for the opposition to use to

⁵ Mubarak does hint at this during a speech in 2002, saying that "rejection of extremism and adoption of moderation" in regards to religious groups are necessary for development on all spheres. "President Mubarak speech at the inauguration of the National Democratic Party's (NDP) 8th General congress September, 15,2002" (http://www.presidency.gov.eg/html/15-September2002_speech.html). He did the same a short time thereafter in a speech to the People's Assembly and Shura Council (<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2002/613/eg1.htm>).

its advantage, and the government too often simply co-opts key opponents. Not surprisingly, then, covert and often violent opposition is widespread, and protest marches have been witnessed by the world-at-large.

To conclude, for a time early in its statehood, rough relations indeed existed between the regime and the opposition, connected with Nasser's distaste for opposition and the need to consolidate state structures to concretize the state. But a gradual lessening of pressure by successive regimes, as well as military losses, made clear the necessity to liberalize (and explains the apparent exception), even if the liberalization was the least required for the government to stay afloat. Sadat became more autocratic towards the conclusion of his reign, and faced mortal consequences. More recent closures, as Mubarak has reigned longer (and perhaps had time to create more enemies and thus feel more vulnerable), have resulted in a greater displays of discontent among traditional opposition groups, especially those wishing to see a more complete integration of Islam into governance structures. Depending on the manner of Mubarak's succession, and what role the military might play, if previous patterns are followed, then one can only worry about prospects for stability and smooth relations between society and state—especially as many of the Islamist opposition reject the basis of the nation-state in general (Piscatori).

Less Exclusionary Regimes

Jordan and Morocco: Centralized Arbitration

Jordan, with a legalized multiparty system and somewhat regular elections, has been said to have attained the "most far-reaching liberalization of any Arab country." Jordan has nonetheless received mixed reviews as to future improvements working towards the genesis of a civil a society where room for opposition movements exists (Mufti 100). Palestinians, even those with Jordanian citizenship, are denigrated by the system as well as many Jordanians in general. To be more certain of the future, the results of not only upcoming elections but also elections subsequent to that must be analyzed. Mufti also notes that Jordan is better to suited to change because the King has traditionally acted as the political arbiter in a somewhat "artificial" state. This recalls the situation in Morocco, where the opposition, "difficult to contain," arbitrates between opposing political forces, even if he often waits until a crisis hits and protests break out to make changes. Admittedly, he is "adept at keeping them all in play," while reigning and ruling. In Jordan, opposition (often along the lines of lines) is forced to compete amongst itself for votes, especially with the revamped election system the King has put in place (revamped between the 1989 elections and the 1993 elections)(Mufti; Robinson). But liberalization, according to some, has been occurring here, too, for some time (Owen 2000; 56). Parliamentary elections in late 1970s incorporated opposition. Coercion, though, as in many vulnerable states in the Westphalian core, has been widely noted, and the opposition does lack vigor. However, the King has devolved more power to regional institutions, which brings Morocco back towards less exclusionary status. Women's groups have done well at this level (Brand 1998) Rights for the anti-FIS Berber people have also been attended to, although most likely as a balance to the Islamists in Algeria next door. The constant give-and-take of opposition-regime dynamics, as crises arose, have sculpted tenuous relations, but relations are at least characterized by a more or less continuous dialogue between groups of civil society and the state.

In Jordan, where political opening is more recent, one may even consider a pre-1989 somewhat more exclusionary period and a post-1989 less exclusionary period. Political parties had been outlawed and an elite ran the country-- "Jordanians outside this small elite had little or no opportunity to influence policy at the state level" (Owen 200; 53). The elite, though, was not a monolithic entity. The political elite was first familiarly drawn, and later other merchant class families were incorporated; the merchant class was in turn dependent upon the politico-military elite (Ayubi; Owen 2000). Christian and Circassian minorities, though, were included (as they are explicitly included today in one of the King's cabinets, one of which is constantly rotating members), and minus elections, these details could lead one away from a purely exclusionary analysis of early Jordan. Indeed, strikes were infrequent (which might also explain the slow change before the April riots in the late 1980s), and some technocrats were elected at the municipal level in the 1970s (Owen 2000). The Muslim Brotherhood, too, established good relations with the ruling powers early on, even while mass organizations were not permitted, and has been tolerated as a "loyal" opposition for decades, doing reasonably well in the 1989 elections (Roy; Piscatori; Kramer). The regime has played by the rules in dealing with them, albeit by hardball rules, and the MB has generally responded in like manners (Mufti).

To conclude, Jordan and Morocco are not one and the same simply because of similar aspects of centralized arbitration. Historically, the pace of liberalization in each is quite different. But the fact that the respective kings, in their range of tactics in dealing with opposition, are less exclusionary (in allowing opposition groups to stand in elections, not categorically and overtly using force to maintain power, etc.), they have been able to maintain power while allowing the political and economic development within the country; Morocco has been cited as a good example in the past of a working structural adjustment program (Brand 1998). In Jordan, this

development came later, as economic difficulties in the 1980s pushed people to riot, which in turn pushed the government to adopt less exclusionary measures.

Tunisia: Tenously "Less Exclusionary" Drifiting towards "More Exclusionary"

Tunisia was less exclusionary early on, but principally on the merits of the political designs of Bourguiba and the Neo-Destour movement in the 1950s which pre-empted the rise of any opposition group that might have proved worrying to those holding power. Co-opting such potential rivals, along with a relative lack of institutions made this possible; what little institutions there were to be seen were characterized by a "careful management...to preempt opposition from below." (Anderson, B; Brand 1998). Additionally, there was a "tradition of reform and openness" where many groups where permitted to stand (and created by the government in its particular strategy to pre-empt and co-opt) (Anderson 1990; 34). Although political parties did not exist, the civil-society-like groups had names that recall the sort of issue areas around which people converge and parties are formed: examples include the *Union Générale de Travailleurs Tunisiens*, *Union Nationale d'Agricoles Tunisiens*, and a *Union* for women as well: *Union Nationale des Femmes de Tunisie* (Bellin 1994). Opposition lying outside such organizational lines, however were forced away. Early on, Bourguiba desired modernist Islam qualities, and which often resulted in undercutting the influence of religion (Brand 1998). Unsurprisingly, the tenor of much opposition began to ring Islamist. Bourguiba has responded by restricting activities of Muslim opposition, and the opposition remained more or less on the outside, not really presenting itself as an alternative to the regime (Anderson 1990).

More recently, Prime Minister Mohammed Mzali incorporated Islamic opposition in the governance structures. The result was a moderation of Muslim elements, but this actually reverted after the Prime Minister's death (Anderson 1990). More concretely, the primary

manifestation of Tunisian Islamist elements has been the *Mouvement de la tendance Islamique* (MTI), which at its inception in the early 1980s was fairly moderate in its beliefs concerning convergence of religious/social spheres. Arrests and repression, though, led to the formation of a more radical group in 1984. This worsening of relations led to clashes with the government, and subsequently contributed to the governmental changes in 1987, as Ben Ali rose to power, during which some reforms were undertaken (to be discussed in more depth below), but a reversion to heavy-handed methods and authoritarianism was to be witnessed two years later during a disillusioning round of elections, where opposition was permitted to stand, but the MTI and others were banned; so the regime is thus becoming more exclusionist, despite Ben Ali's use of Islamist rhetoric in his speeches, much like Mubarak, Sadat, and others have done (Halliday 1990).

Increasing protests caused increasing repression, while Ben Ali created alliances based much on fear (and the draconian proximity of security forces) than was the case with his predecessor, Bourguiba, who created alliances between the elite and popular politics (Anderson 2000): the growing Islamist tendencies "represent a revolt against the intrusive secular state, the product of a growing antagonism between state and society which reflects the loss of mobilizing power and legitimacy of the modernizing project. (Halliday 1990; 27). Furthermore, moderates were marginalized and the legal opposition held a "pitifully small number of seats" by 1992 (Alexander 1997; 35), less and less characterized as a secular socialist left, and more cast in Islamist features. Ben Ali, a secularist, has been unyielding in his attitude towards the opposition, despite breakdowns in relations (Halliday 1990). Such attitudes, according to the hypothesis stating relations to exclusivity and stability of a country, augur a dark future on the horizon. Indeed, the last ten years has seen unprecedented exclusion by President Ali, who continues to rule with a laughable 99+% mandate.

To conclude: Tunisia was somewhat less exclusionary in the beginning of its history, but notably excluded Islamist opposition, concerning which Bourguiba was largely exclusive. Other elites were included by co-optation, and in general it is the Islamist opposition, with the MTI as the standard bearer, who presents the most worries to the traditionally secular state with a hardened secular leader. Incorporation of Islamists by a Prime Minister in the 1980s lessened tension, but this détente was at best temporary. The hypothesis that more exclusion leads to greater tension holds tight in this example. As to the question about early post-colonial regime characteristics and exclusion, this early less exclusionary regime leaning to the "more exclusionary" typology must be largely explained by the Islamist hole in Bourguiba's inclusionary/co-opting bucket.

Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States

There are, of course, both noticeable differences and similarities in political practices in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States. Similarities can be said to arise from the general wealth of the region (even in non-rentier states like Bahrain), which has given the royal families freedom "to establish links with all sections of their own societies...but on their own terms" (Owen 2000; 58). In general, then, institutions have been inconsistently established. Kuwait's parliament, for example, has gone through a sort of disappearing and reappearing act in recent years. The wealth capture by royal elites has perpetuated their hold on power, but has also provoked the ire and sometimes radicalization of citizens after years of inflexibility capped by the current period of rapid population growth and economic difficulty (Byman). Dissidents, though, are not often physically roughed up. Change is often instituted from above, in both Saudi Arabia and the rest of the Gulf, not necessarily solely as a result of opposition pressure (Ehteshami 1999). Opposition, on the whole, is effectively co-opted in economic ways, and, especially in the case of

Saudi Arabia, by facilitating close relations with Wahabbi clerics. Mosques are among the few social institutions widely permitted in Saudi Arabia, which is both a source of strength and weakness. A strength, in the sense that Islamists have always been close to the Saudi leadership (Kechichian 1986; Doumato 1992), and a weakness in the sense that Shi'a can also come together to express discontent. The Gulf States, on the other hand, have been quicker in allowing electoral freedoms to women, notably in Oman and Bahrain, and in encouraging a reasonably vibrant civil society, as in Kuwait. Little dissent in the form of open protest and general societal unrest has been expressed in these states.

The general rentier nature of these states and of Saudi Arabia, and closeness to Islamic groups (unlike Egypt and Algeria) make opposition much less visible, and somewhat less interesting to study in terms of this paper's questions. Maldistribution is often a reason for societal malaise, and since this region has been mostly unexposed to such volatility, it is more difficult for an opposition to achieve and maintain the necessary momentum to sway the government. In Saudi Arabia, the Sa'ud monarchy incorporated tribes and dominant families early on, distributed key positions and making key alliances. Technocrats were also absorbed (Yisraeli 1997; Owen 2000). In a sense this was less exclusive but once such practices became institutionalized opposition "confined to a few tiny opposition groups, and the practice of politics at the national level was almost entirely a Royal monopoly" (Owen 2000). Two things probably kept opposition from getting out of hand: oil rents and legitimization provided by clerics. Opposition, then, tended to remain the western-educated elite, other foreigners, and Nasser, all elements without significant social bases to build upon, but providing some ideological counterbalance to the royal family (Yisraeli 1997). On the whole, little violence and unrest as in other Arab countries has been noted (Al-Rasheed 1998), though recent events give pause to such past observations.

Exceptions in Saudi Arabia have been observed in Shi'a led demonstrations, beginning with the taking of the Mecca Grand Mosque in 1979, and lasting throughout the 1980s. But Shi'a opposition, often as the darlings of Iran, have been "ignored, mislabeled, or crushed with the active support of the population and under the supervision and guidance of the ulama" (Kechichian 1986: 57). They have also been given money, or alternatively, exiled (Byman). In the 1990s, Shi'ia have preferred to show opposition, consequently, by concentrating on re-writing their history, and thus constructing an imagined community or identity so long repressed (Al-Rasheed 1998). The state has at times responded by allowing some exiled leaders to return.

The violent incidents that have occurred in the 1990s in the Gulf area as a whole have often been against Western targets, and in opposition to Western symbols, like U.S. military installations (in 1996) or the living compounds bombed in May 2003. Politically, the opposition remains fragmented (the chronically leaderless CDLR, a principal opposition group, comes to mind). Analysts, then tend to think regime will hold on, especially as there has been put into place a Saudi Consultative Council, which is at least "a gesture toward the modernization of government processes" (Champion A, B).

The element in Saudi society that has been consistently excluded is the Shi'a Muslim. But blanket redistributions of wealth, societal co-opting, and more hated targets than the government have seemingly reduced any Shi'a propensity to take violent measures to express malaise. Other gulf nations, specifically less oil rich ones like Bahrain, have begun to add institutions keep the tide of anger against the exclusive monarchies at from rising too steep. Such features, and the rentier aspect of the region have rendered these states difficult to consider in light of the hypothesis; indeed these states are somewhat singular worldwide, as well in terms of their redistributive economy, an aspect which further complicates consideration of hypotheses regarding regime-opposition dynamics. Opposition can't always be bought out, but

societal underpinnings of support for opposition are probably reduced if farmers are driving BMWs, courtesy of the state. Until the state no longer has "sufficient resources to satisfy those expecting a minimal gratification...the state becomes the target of manifold discontent" (Leca 70 (in Salamé 1994).

A Corrolary: Regime Changes, Openings, and Closures

After this brief survey of states on the Westphalian periphery, specifically in the MENA, it has been shown that in most circumstances regime-opposition relations follow a certain dynamic over time, based on how exclusionary the regime demonstrates itself to be. Regimes that were originally of a more exclusionary nature tend to be more punctuated by instability, even if all MENA states on the Westphalian frontier dwell in similar post-colonial vulnerability. But even a cursory glance at MENA history shows that regimes were not immutable in terms of the exclusionary designations given at earlier points in time. So a further question, to be briefly explored here and perhaps elaborated upon in a later work, is the following: what generally happens in terms of liberalization following regime changes? The pattern noticed was that, under certain conditions, a regime change frequently first resulted in purges. Then, a glasnost-like period of opening followed. Finally, at some later point, this increase in liberties was often marked by a return to more authoritarian, exclusionary practices. A few examples among the states investigated above are explored here, along with some speculation on why this pattern is repeated so often.

These examples hail from all points in the post-colonial timeline. Jordan's first of three periods of political opening, from 1954-1957, came soon after Hussein assumed power, as the young monarch wished to "set his own course" (Brand 1998). In Iraq, Al-Suwaidi, who came to power in 1946, allowed some liberalization, such as lifting censorship and allowing some

opposition to stand (Tripp). After economic decline, he was dismissed, and a stronger authoritarian ruler was sought in the person of Nuri Al-Sa'id. In the 1960s, the early years of Qaasim in 1960s were marked by more liberal-leaning practices as well. Even as the Ba'ath party ascended to power, one witnessed decrees in favor of Kurdish rights that "far exceeded anything that had been conceded before," although the Shi'a continued to be treated poorly, which culminated in a war in 1978 (Tripp 200). The Kurds, too, found themselves fighting in 1974. Early policy, then, was by no means in harmony with later practices.

Also in the 1970s, a decade when much of the dust from the earlier flurry of coups began to settle, examples of such an regime change—opening—closure schematic could be witnessed in Syria. With the rise of Assad in 1970, one assisted in the first of two periods of economic *infatih* (economic openings) which were soon followed by (limited) regime changes (Perthes in Kienle). A sort of societal stalemate followed, but the true consequence of these openings was to set the stage for "unprecedented repression" (Lobmeyer 93). As Assad's son came to power, more reforms "than could have been imagined by his father" were carried out (Makovsky), including the genesis of opposition newspapers (albeit an opposition in coalition with the ruling Ba'ath party). Indeed, his son even married a Sunni, apparently anathema for an Alawite: "even a political analyst cannot dismiss that it was purely love" (Makovsky 2001).

In Egypt, Sadat carried out early purges, but was less heavy handed in the early hours of his rule. More press freedoms and a freer market were established early on, and political platforms were even allowed (McDermott 1988). He allowed nominally pluralist elections, although Egypt remained effectively single-party (Hopwood 1991). However, Sadat became more autocratic towards the end of his life/rule, especially towards Islamists, and opposition became to him "constructive only when to his mind it held no hint of damaging criticism" (McDermott 1988: 53). As mentioned before, each Egyptian ruler in the post-colonial period has

been more open than the previous. Mubarak, after understandably purging and jailing many rowdy souls after the successful attempt on Sadat's life, relaxed his reform, leading many analysts by the end of the 1980s to be somewhat optimistic. However, one now speaks of the "deliberalized" 1990s, though an imminent regime change, if it is to follow this pattern of change and opening gives at least some hope for the near future.

Tunisia, having seen only two post-independence rulers, has more or less followed a similar pattern. After Bourguiba was ousted from power in 1987, Ben Ali

took a number of steps immediately following the November 7 removal of Bourguiba which seemed to promise a new beginning for politics in Tunisia and which bought him time with both the Islamist and secular opposition. He abolished the presidency for life and limited the president's tenure to three, five-year terms. Political prisoners began to be released and some exiled politicians began to return home. The state allowed several opposition newspapers to resume publication and the official media began to report opposition party activities. The government also initiated contacts with the opposition parties regarding a new political parties law. (Brand)

From 1989 forth, though, it is clear that such reforms were quite the good ol' days.

After the dust from the coups settled, there weren't so many different regimes to be observed in the MENA area. Three total in Egypt, Two in Syria, one in Libya (in the past thirty years), Jordan and Iraq (in the past thirty years—although already two different Americans have manned the ship), and the list goes on and on. There are therefore not many meaningful regime changes to study, although two exceptions to the above-mentioned pattern exist: Nasser and Saddam Hussein. Personality may play a role in this fact, that is, each of the leaders had extraordinary ambitions, most notably seen in drives for regional hegemony. It must also be noted that each was ousted from power by events surpassing domestic origins—death and interstate war. They were both tough on opposition throughout their reign, although there is some evidence that Hussein was more inclusive of other tribes in the 1990s. In general, the fact

that they did not proceed with much liberalization does not necessarily signify that their approach was not successful. However they are in the minority.

If regime changes are considered as the beginning of power consolidation, and since these two states were existing in the Westphalian state system (as members of the Westphalian Periphery subgroup), then at least a modicum of sovereignty was necessary to these leaders. In order to attain this sort of sovereignty in the Westphalian system, one necessary ingredient was acceptance on the part of Western leaders. Both leaders were hailing from unmistakably secular bases of power. Since external legitimacy is indeed important to these leaders, almost as much so as internal legitimacy, then Westphalian core leaders were probably more apt to accept such leaders at face value—i.e. a non-Islamic face value, without deeper assurances in the guise of democratic-like reforms. Another speculation concerning the differences of these two non-liberalizing mavericks is that they simply replaced domestic legitimacy gained by reforms with complete repression early on. This is perhaps an outgrowth of the “personality”-based explanation mentioned above. Finally, each was coming out of reasonably popular movements, though neither had any desire to relinquish any power, precisely because each state was at a particular tenuous moment in the state-building project; with Iraq, such a moment seems more constant than most, with the repressed Shi’a and Kurdish often up in arms, since the beginning as shown earlier; Egypt, for its part, was fresh from the British flight.

The exceptions aside, the dominant strategy of liberalizing for a short period of time, then returning to a more repressive state, seems to have been a good strategy for consolidating power. Economy crises are often invoked to be underlying reasons for change. This is not completely accurate. While crises may bring about an opportunity for change, liberalization was in fact a choice faced by leaders, as shown by the exceptions. Liberalization in general was a "strategy

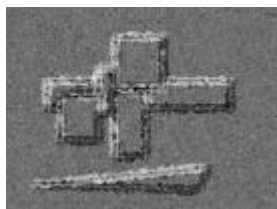
advocated by certain key political actors intended to reinforce their power and ensure their political future within the existing constellation of forces" (Brand 1998).

Conclusion

The original questions underlying this paper broadly focused on how regime-opposition dynamics evolved throughout time. Regimes themselves evolved and switched throughout time, which complicates such a study, but it seems that more exclusionary regimes seem to run into more trouble when the model incorporates time. The lack of institutions seems to be connected to this propensity for instability in more exclusionary regimes. The problem, of course, is that a greater sense of vulnerability in the early periods perhaps influenced how tightly the government hold would be on opposition; perhaps the alternative, less control in a more "vulnerable" state would have been manifested with more state-society conflict, but vulnerability would be difficult to measure and outside the scope of this paper. What remains is that less exclusionary regimes showed less strife in regime-opposition relations. However, as the "corollary" section demonstrated, less exclusionary regimes, often in the dawning hours of a new regime, later became more authoritarian as they consolidate institutions, establish clientelistic networks, and consequently their hold on power.

The true object of study here, hinted at throughout, is the nature of state-society relations, looked at through a wide-angled lens, and applied to the particular MENA region on the Westphalian periphery. The evidence produced seems to support the notion that, even if detrimental to an elite group's grip on power, that being more open to an opposition is better in general for society at large. Institutional strength, though, probably needs to be strong enough to handle such a stress created by opposition groups and cross-cutting cleavages in general. Algeria was excluded from the study here, mainly for reasons of space, but it can be reasonably

summarized that many feared what would happen to the political infrastructure of a secular state if a popular religious group came to power. Of course, not all are convinced (Samuelson), but this shows clearly that this institutional concern, even if unfounded is nonetheless holding back some potential reforms. This is a good question to be explored for the future, if one wishes to have a keener insight on liberalization in the MENA and Westphalian periphery, whether “democratization” is the exact prescription or not.



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