



GAZİANTEP UNIVERSITY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Journal homepage: <http://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/jss>



Araştırma Makalesi • Research Article

“Waves” of the Western Literature on “Democratization in the Arab World”: Genuine Analyses or Political Exigencies?

“Arap Dünyasında Demokratikleşme” Üzerine Batı Yazınının “Dalgaları”: Gerçek Analizler mi, Siyasi Gereklilikler mi?

Coşkun SOYSAL^{a*}

^a Arş. Gör. Dr., Gaziantep Üniversitesi, İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi, Gaziantep / TÜRKİYE
ORCID: 0000-0001-8389-502X

MAKALE BİLGİSİ

Makale Geçmişi:

Başvuru tarihi: 8 Şubat 2021

Kabul tarihi: 15 Mart 2021

Anahtar Kelimeler:

Demokratikleşme dalgaları,

Demokratikleşme,

Demokratikleşme yazını,

Arap dünyası,

ABD liderliği,

Modernizasyon okulu,

Politik gelişme

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received February 8, 2021

Accepted March 15, 2021

Keywords:

Waves of democratization,

The democratization literature,

The Arab world,

The Modernization school,

Political development,

The West,

The U.S. leadership

ÖZ

Samuel Huntington'ın 1991'de yayımlanan ve büyük etki uyandıran kitabı *The Third Wave*'den bu yana, sözde “demokratikleşme” süreçlerini “dalgalar” açısından ele almak Batılı bilim insanları arasında sıradan hale geldi. “Arap dünyasında demokratikleşme” üzerine Batı yazını bu duruma bir istisna değildir ve bazı Batılı bilim insanları, 2010'un sonlarında başlayan Arap isyanlarını “dördüncü demokratikleşme dalgası” olarak nitelendiregelmişlerdir. Bu makalenin ana araştırma sorusu, 1990'lı yıllardan bu yana genişlemekte olan bu yazının Arap dünyasındaki siyasi değişimin gerçek bilimsel analizlerinden mi oluştuğu yoksa Batı'nın siyasi gerekliliklerini mi yansıttığıdır. Bu makale, ikinci konuma yakın durmakta ve sözde “demokratikleşme dalgalarından” ziyade, aslında “Arap dünyasında demokratikleşme” üzerine Batı yazınının dalgaları olduğunu iddia etmektedir. Makale, bu yazının, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nde (ABD) Soğuk Savaş yıllarının başlarında ortaya çıkan Modernizasyon adlı anti-komünist politik gelişme okuluyla ilişkisini tartışarak, en azından başından itibaren söz konusu yazın ile ABD liderliğinin politik gereklilikleri arasında bir korelasyon bulunduğunu savunmaktadır. Makale, aynı zamanda, on yıllardır var olmasına rağmen bu yazında, kapsadığı temalar açısından çarpıcı bir süreklilik olduğunu da göstermektedir.

ABSTRACT

It has become commonplace among Western scholars to treat supposed processes of “democratization” in terms of “waves” since Samuel Huntington's seminal book published in 1991—*The Third Wave*. The Western literature on “democratization in the Arab world” is no exception, and some Western scholars have labeled the Arab uprisings that began in late 2010 the “fourth wave of democratization”. The main research question of this article is whether this literature, which has been accumulating from the 1990s onwards, consists of genuine scholarly analyses of political change in the Arab world or whether it is instead reflective of political exigencies of the West. This article falls closer to the latter position, and asserts that there are indeed waves of the Western literature on “democratization in the Arab world” rather than the so-called “waves of democratization”. The article argues that there is at least some sort of correlation between the political exigencies of the U.S. leadership and this literature from the very beginning by discussing its relationship to the anti-Communist Modernization school of political development that emerged in the United States in the early Cold War years. The article also demonstrates that there is a striking continuity within that literature in terms of the themes it has covered despite its decades-long existence.

* Sorumlu yazar/Corresponding author.
e-posta: csoysal@gantep.edu.tr

Introduction

There is a vast Western literature on “democratization in the Arab world”. This literature first emerged as a direct offshoot of the Modernization school of political development, which was itself reflective of the political exigencies of the U.S. leadership in the aftermath of the Second World War. The Modernization scholars, in line with the U.S. policy prescriptions towards the newly independent postcolonial countries of the Third World in the postwar period, argued that Third World countries should seek political development through institutionalizing democratic regimes along Western lines rather than autonomous economic development along Soviet lines. These scholars feared such countries, in an enthusiastic search of their economic independence inasmuch as they hardly won their political independence, would easily fall into the orbit of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) for the sake of rapid economic development in the face of brilliant Soviet economic accomplishments through planned industrialization. Much of the scholarly literature on political change in the Third World in general and in the Arab world in particular produced in the West throughout the Cold War was an offshoot of the Modernization school of political development that had such political considerations. The course of developments that ultimately culminated in the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the subsequent transitions from command economies to market economies in Central and Eastern Europe and later in all ex-Soviet republics resulted in a shift of emphasis within that literature from “development” to “democratization”. It was under such circumstances that Samuel Huntington, a renowned American political scientist, adviser and academic, published his seminal book on democratization—*The Third Wave* (1991b)—first to be introduced in an article (1991a) that laid down its key premises and arguments. It has since then been commonplace to conceptualize supposed processes of “democratization” in terms of “waves” within the Western democratization literature. The literature on Arab politics, which had already been under the heavy influence of the Modernization school, was also quick to follow suit. The Western scholars waited all ready for the prospective “democratization in the Arab world” throughout the 1990s and 2000s with a pang of envy at the post-communist transitions in Central and Eastern Europe that took place in the early 1990s followed by a deeper disillusionment in the 2000s with the failure of the so-called “democracy promotion” towards the Middle East through military invasions aimed at “regime change” in the region. Thus, when the Arab uprisings broke out in late 2010 first in Tunisia and later spread into such Arab countries as Egypt, Syria, Bahrain and Yemen in 2011, they caught the Western scholars by surprise. Yet these uprisings were hailed as the “Arab Spring” in the West, and the Western literature was impatient to dub this cascade of uprisings “democracy’s fourth wave” albeit to be followed by grievances on the part of this literature as that so-called “spring” supposedly descended into an “Islamist winter” following the “hijacking” of that wave of revolts by Islamists. Notwithstanding that lack of genuine processes of democratization in the Arab world, a Western literature eclipsed by its anticipation of “democratization in the Arab world” has hitherto accumulated over decades, though full of such phrases as “authoritarian resilience” or “authoritarian stability”. This state of the literature casts doubts over its explanatory power and necessitates an inquiry into its *raison d’être*.

This article, therefore, examines whether this literature, which has been accumulating from the 1990s onwards, could be considered consisting merely of genuine scholarly analyses of political change in the Arab world or whether it is instead reflective of political exigencies of the West in general and the U.S. leadership in particular. This article falls close to the latter position with a focus on the correlation between changing political exigencies of the U.S. leadership and the evolution of the Western literature on political change in the Arab world throughout the Cold War and post-Cold War periods. From such a viewpoint, what is at stake

is waves of the Western literature on “democratization in the Arab world” rather than the so-called “waves of democratization”—each wave evolving in correlation with the political exigencies of its time. The article argues that such a correlation is discernible from the very initial stages of this literature since the Western literature on democratization was born as a direct offshoot of the Modernization school, which provided an anti-Communist approach to development in complete accordance with the political exigencies of the Western capitalist bloc under the U.S. leadership in the early Cold War years. The Western literature on political change in the Arab world thereafter evolved in harmony with changing international political priorities of the Western bloc—first by shifting its focus from “development” to “democratization” in the early 1990s in accordance with the Western promotion of post-communist transitions to multi-party democracies and free-market economies in Central and Eastern Europe, later by intensively embedding the concept of “authoritarianism” next to its focus on “democratization” especially after the 9/11 attacks against the United States in 2001 in accordance with the U.S. led campaign of the “global war on terror” and attempts at regime change in the Arab world, and finally by treading on the heels of the U.S. leadership in supporting the so-called “Arab Spring” beginning from late 2010 though a partial reverse trend is also discernible from about 2013 onwards with a focus on a supposedly “Islamist winter” throughout the region. From such a point of view, it could be argued that the first genuine “wave” of this literature came to the forefront from the early 1990s until roughly the early 2000s, and a partial “reverse wave” with a focus over the supposed “authoritarianism” throughout the Arab world with the attacks of September 11, 2001, became influential from the early 2000s until the end of 2010, whereas a second “wave” was at stake, following the cascade of uprisings throughout the region, which was hailed as the “Arab Spring”, from 2011 to approximately 2013, and after that, a new “reverse wave” with the theme of the “Islamist Winter” became more or less discernible. Notwithstanding these changing labels, the substance of that literature has remained much the same. The article demonstrates that there is a striking continuity within that literature in terms of the themes it has covered despite its decades-long existence vindicating the argument advanced here that this literature has evolved in correlation with particular political ends in each period by providing conceptual frameworks that have been favorable to Western policies towards the Arab world. The article advances its argument in two sections, of which the first one provides a rereading of the history of the literature in question by drawing parallels with changing Western policies towards the Arab world, whereas the second one aims at demonstrating the continuity in its substance by analyzing the general themes covered in this literature regarding political change in the Arab world.

Waves of the Literature: A History

The process of decolonization had already speeded up, and the problem of economic development along with a possibility that the newly independent post-colonial countries of the Third World would fall into the orbit of communism for the sake of rapid economic development was deeply worrying policy makers of the core capitalist countries in the West in the wake of the Second World War (Hite, Roberts, & Chorev, 2015, p. 9; Gilman, 2003, p. 43). “Political development” and more specifically “modernization” have been part of the literature on “comparative politics” from that time onwards (Gendzier, 1985, pp. 80-154; Gilman, 2003, pp. 113-202). There were also debates over a supposed need for a revision in the “democratic theory” in the West, since many European countries had fallen into various forms of totalitarianism such as Nazism and fascism, and these countries were also trying to accomplish transitions to democracy (Gendzier, 1985, pp. 109-113; Gilman, 2003, pp. 47-56). However, the failure of post-colonial peripheral countries in coming to terms with “modernity” at the political, economic and cultural levels, and the establishment of authoritarian regimes one after

another in the Third World countries in general and throughout the Middle East in particular, and more specifically in the Arab world, made the literature drop its “democratization” ideals for a particular period of time, leaving it sufficing by focusing on the capacity to create political order and maintain stability as well as the foreign policy orientations of these authoritarian regimes with a particular attention as to whether they fall outside the Western capitalist bloc or not during the Cold War (Gilman, 2003, pp. 225-234).

The ostensibly persistent character of authoritarianism in the Arab world made scholars of comparative politics either simply neglect the region or consider it to be an “exceptional” case. Although the Middle Eastern politics was never static, there seemed to have been neither transitions to democratic forms of government nor significant transformations in the authoritarian nature of the Arab political regimes in the region. On the other hand, in some semi-peripheral countries, even in the European mainland, military regimes, which had been established in the face of mounting class struggles as a result of varying levels of urbanization and industrialization that went hand in hand in most cases, were leaving their place to multi-party politics once again. Almost in a decade, these were followed by regime changes in the communist countries with astonishing developments such as the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the ultimate breakdown and dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1991. By the same year, an influential political scientist of the U.S. academic establishment, Samuel Huntington claimed that all these transitions indeed constitute “the third wave of democratization in the history of the modern world” (1991a, p. 12) regarding the previous two “waves of democratization”. Though he warned against possible “reverse waves” (Huntington, 1991a, pp. 17-20), he was also not excluding the possibility that a “snowballing effect” might also have some impact on the Middle East as a result of the so-called “democratization wave” at that time (pp. 16-17).

As democratization winds were blowing amidst Huntington’s so-called “third wave” of democratization in the closing decade of the twentieth century, scholars of Middle Eastern studies began to inquire into prospects of democratization in the Middle East more and more from the early 1990s onwards, and by the mid-1990s, a great variety of eminent scholars such as Michael Hudson (1991), Ghassan Salamé (1994), Augustus Richard Norton (1995a; 1995b) and Rex Brynen, Bahgat Korany and Paul Noble (Brynen, Korany, & Noble, *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World*, 1995; Korany, Brynen, & Noble, 1998) had already given notable works over the issue. These writers laid out different aspects of possible democratic transitions in the region and sought to grasp fundamental factors that hitherto hindered or impeded such transitions. Some political overtures, although limited in scale, that took place throughout the region during the 1990s made this literature more enthusiastic. However, by the end of the 1990s, “the failure of limited political reform to deliver much more than a reconfiguration of authoritarian power was generating ever-growing levels of analytical cynicism” (Brynen, Moore, Salloukh, & Zahar, 2013, p. 6). Emphases on “prospects for democratization” began to leave their places to analyses of “persistence” or “resilience of authoritarianism” in the region. This period of the literature that began in the early 1990s and lasted until roughly the early 2000s constituted the first genuine “wave” of the Western literature on “democratization in the Arab world”.

A new, to put it adapting Huntington’s terms, “wave” of the literature on Arab democratization would emerge in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks in the United States in 2001. Themes of “democracy promotion” in the region for the “world peace” were being declared by top state officials of the leading Western powers in order to curb the Islamist threat emanating from the region. However, “the global war on terror” led by the George Walker Bush administration of the time made it almost impossible for the rulers of the regimes in the region

to collaborate even in such an “innocent” framework as its by-meaning was to seem collaborating with “invaders” in the eyes of common people of the region. Indeed, apart from a handful of public remarks and several unserious initiatives, neither the Bush nor the Barack Hussein Obama administrations minded the characters of the regimes in the region as long as they could cooperate with or benefit from. Having already experienced dramatically the brutality of Islamist terrorism, “the global war on terror” and the subsequent occupations and invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq did only exacerbate the situation by planting new seeds of anger and hatred. Just like the previous wave of “demo-crazy” 1990s (Valbjørn & Bank, 2010), this new wave of the 2000s evolved into a “reverse wave” to some extent that contained a narrative of “persistence” or “resilience” of authoritarianism and of “regime stability” in the region, and it tried to grasp various aspects and roots of that “persistence”, “resilience” and “stability” in the region. Works elaborating on prospects for democratization in the region did not come to a halt at all, even significant works did also appear, but many of them had to cover “democratization” only with “authoritarianism” besides it (Brownlee, 2007; Pratt, 2007; Khalili, 2009; Hinnebusch, 2006).

Following the devastating effects of the Bush administration’s policy towards the Middle East such as the great humanitarian disaster the invasion of Iraq left behind as well as the further alienation of the peoples of the region *vis-à-vis* the Western powers, the Obama administration decided to withdraw the American troops from Iraq and to further the already ongoing policy of decreasing military existence in Afghanistan, and chose to rely more upon soft power such as trying to overcome or at least to manage problems by negotiating even with countries like Iran, which had long demonized the United States and which itself had also been dubbed “rogue state” and seen as part of “the axis of evil” by the Bush administration. This was mostly because the neoconservative hardliner position of the Bush administration, though aimed at establishing a U.S. domination in the oil-rich region, put indeed the U.S. hegemony in jeopardy in the region. Dating back to the second term of the Bush administration, during which the aforementioned grave effects and dramatic consequences of the U.S. foreign policy and interventions toward the Middle East had already begun to be felt, studies on “democratization” and especially ones that focus on “democracy promotion” turned out to thrive once more. As such, the sudden outbreak of political protests against the authoritarian regimes, beginning from late 2010 in Tunisia and Egypt first and later going through Syria, Bahrain and Libya, and the subsequent overthrow of Zine el Abidine ben Ali and Hosni Mubarak regimes in Tunisia and Egypt respectively seemed to have breathed new life into debates over “democratization” and much more so for the experts, who had, to put it in Anderson’s (2006) terms, long been “searching where the light shines”. Enchanted by what would soon be enthusiastically hailed as the “Arab Spring”¹, they felt vindicated at last and proud of this new and rapid political unfolding throughout the region. Thus, this period from the early 2010s to roughly about 2013, during which, most remarkably, the Muslim Brotherhood government was ousted by a *coup d’état* in Egypt and Islamists in general began to lose their initial momentum throughout the region, arguably constitutes the second genuine “wave” of the literature. Nevertheless, this new “wave” was also going to face, to put it again in Huntington’s terms, a “reverse wave” (1991a, pp. 17-20) from roughly about 2013 onwards, as it began to get clear that it was no one but

¹ The term “Arab Spring”, though much contested (for instance, see Khouri, 2011), will be used for the aforementioned political developments beginning from late 2010 in the region throughout this article for descriptive purposes, though not without quotation marks, keeping reservations over the concept. See also Moss, 2013 for a definition of the term “Arab Spring”.

Islamists to take over power in the countries where former rulers stepped down as a result of the uprisings. Reminiscent of earlier controversies as to whether Islam and democracy are compatible with each other or not, this new reverse wave of the literature on the “Arab Spring” questioned whether Islamists could bring democracy or not at all or whether it is possible or not to push them through democratic rules within frameworks such as “pacted transitions”.²

Themes of the Literature

Having laid out an overview of the international political context of what one can call successive waves of the literature on “democratization in the Arab world”, it is now easier to grasp the main themes running through each wave of the literature. While discussing these themes covered by successive waves of the literature in question, the framework drawn by Brynen, Korany and Noble (1995) will be used. Having stated this, it would also be appropriate to begin with what might be considered as the preliminary stage of the Western literature on “democratization in the Arab world”—i.e. the literature produced by the proponents of the Modernization theory—in line with the historical development course of the literature. Apt to consider a preliminary step before its successor waves, this very first modernist preliminary stage of the literature contains limited themes regarding prospects for any political change. Its main focus and theme visibly fall under the title “political economy” in Brynen, Korany and Noble’s (1995) framework:

Why do some countries remain poor and “backward” despite exposure to capitalism and other aspects of modern life? What can be done to make capitalism develop further in these countries? These were the questions addressed by a group of theorists whose ideas heavily influenced U.S. efforts to foster capitalist development in poorer nations, then called the “Third World.” ... Politicians, development experts, academicians, and the public were afraid of people in Latin America and Africa deciding that Communism was a surer path to development than capitalism. In response, theories about development that were generated in the 1950s and 1960s in the United States provided an explicitly non-Communist solution to poverty and underdevelopment (Hite, Roberts, & Chorev, 2015, pp. 8-9).

Apparent from the above quotation the representatives of this preliminary stage of the literature focused more on internal factors as key ones that drive development (Roberts & Hite, 2007, p. 4). The most prominent theorists of modernization were Walt Whitman Rostow, Gabriel Almond, and Lucian Pye (Gilman, 2003, p. 21). The summary of their argument is that there are some preconditions for democracy to function well—the process of fulfilling these conditions is what they call “modernization”. This “modernization” process would drive countries from “traditional societies” to the more complex but modern “age of high mass consumption” (Rostow, 2015; Rostow, 1990 [1960]; Gendzier, 1985, pp. 84-87, 139-141; Gilman, 2003, pp. 100-103, 149-202). The “first major application” (Stein, 2012, p. 890) of modernization theory is accepted to be Daniel Lerner (1964 [1958]), who also emphasized the importance of transition from traditional societies to modern societies. However, though little in its size, an earlier first study within this wave was of Dankwart Rustow (1956), who foresaw a “Westernization” process for the “Near East”. Moreover, a voluminous compilation edited by Walter Laqueur (1958) seeking prospects for “social and political change” through the spectacles of the modernization theory was published in 1958, the same year when the inaugural work of Lerner was also published. Among other scholars, Charles Issawi, for instance,

² The term “pacted transitions” was indeed borrowed from the literature on transitions to multi-party democracies in post-communist Eastern European and post-military Latin American countries. For an attempt to “[bridge] the gap between the political culture approaches to Arab politics and the pacted transitions literature which is widely used to explain regime change in the ‘third wave’ countries of Eastern Europe and Latin America”, see Blaydes & Lo, 2012, p. 115.

contributed to that compilation, with his chapter titled “Economic and Social Foundations of Democracy in the Middle East” (1958) implicating some economic and social preconditions for democratization—indeed, applying the more general approach that is almost identical with its contemporary proponent, Seymour Martin Lipset (1960). Lipset argues that “high levels of literacy and urbanization, and substantial middle-income strata yield an informed middle class with a stake in how politics are conducted, a heightened sense of citizenship, and an insistence that public officials be held accountable” (Waterbury, 1994, p. 25). Apparently uni-thematic, however, more recent studies (e.g. Hunter & Malik, 2005) of the same tradition widened the scope of modernist accounts on the region, for instance, including themes such as political culture in general, religion in particular, the impact of regional politics and distinctive features of the Middle Eastern states such as the important role of military.

The first genuine wave of the literature of “democratization in the Arab world”, which accompanied the end of the Cold War, opened for the first time almost all themes that would be covered by subsequent waves of the literature in question. Following again Brynen, Korany and Noble’s (1995) framework, this wave covered themes like “political culture”, “civil society”, “political economy” and “regional and international context”, leaving little space for new overtures by subsequent waves of the literature. In addition to its multi-thematic character, it also brought forwards a plurality of approaches to the discipline of “comparative politics” in general, and to the literature on “democratization” in particular.

If to follow the thematic array outlined above and begin with the theme on “political culture”, Brynen, Korany and Noble discern “three essential positions” (1995, pp. 6-7). The first position is in general about the incompatibility or being at odds in the relationship between Arab and/or Islamic values, on the one hand, and principles of democracy on the other. Authors such as Daniel Pipes, Amos Perlmutter, Elie Kedourie and David Pryce-Jones advocate this line of argument (Brynen, Korany, & Noble, 1995, p. 22, endnotes 11 and 12). Though with different patterns and new ingredients, this position is also present in the partially reverse wave of the literature of “democratization in the Arab world”, which could be considered to have begun following the 9/11 attacks in 2001. Studies on democratization belonging to this partially reverse wave (e.g. Grugel, 2002; Ciprut, 2009) even do not need to mention the region, indeed implying that they simply consider the region as an exceptional case. M. Steven Fisch (2002) thinks that the incompatibility seems relevant at first glance, but not when looked in detail. However, he argues that the argument is as true as Islam contains more or less a gender inequality in itself. Majid Tehranian (2003), on the other hand, approves the argument by emphasizing the need for secularization of politics regarding influence of Islam in democratization efforts. Dan Tschirgi (2007) makes a similar point when he argues that Islam poses a great threat to international security, whereas Ann Elizabeth Mayer (2008) tries to resolve the conundrum produced as a result of the uneasy relationship between human rights and Islam. Jillian Schwedler (2011) also rejects the argument that Islamists would be moderated through pacted transitions, whereas Rex Brynen et al. focus on “debates over the relationship between culture and politics” and on “the particular role that Islamist movements might play in political liberalization and democratization” with other main areas (2013, p. 10). Bassam Tibi (2013) also points that not Islam but Islamism is incompatible with democratic principles.

The second position within the theme of “political culture” is that it “has considerable utility as an explanatory variable, but only if it is dealt with in a nuanced way, sensitive to effects of history, social structure, and context” (Brynen, Korany, & Noble, *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World*, 1995, p. 7). Besides scholars like Michael Hudson, John Esposito, Leonard Binder and Gudrun Krämer; Nazih Ayubi (2005), John Waterbury (1994) and Bassam Tibi (2013) could also be considered to have a similar

position, though the latter ones are more preoccupied with political Islam rather than Islam *per se*. Adeed Dawisha (2005) also defends a similar line of argument regarding his accounts on Arab nationalism. More recently Michaëlle Browers (2009), Fred Gregory Gause, III (2011), Andreas Teti and Gennaro Gervasio (2011, pp. 324-325) and Alfred Stepan and Juan Linz (2013) utilize this position. The third position is also similar to this line with a slight difference: its emphasis on mutual influences resulting from the interactions between the political context and political culture (Brynen, Korany, & Noble, 1995, p. 7). Scholars like Michael Collins Dunn and Augustus Richard Norton, Daniel Brumberg (2002a), and Ayubi (1993) regarding the case of political Islam as a modern phenomenon, the use of Islam by autocrats and now the subordination of politics to religion by political Islamists, Michael Barnett (1995; 1998) regarding pan-Arabism that challenged sovereignty claims of the states are often included to this position. Mohammed Abed Al-Jabri (2011), claiming that it is politics that shape the Arab reason (pp. 430-431) and that it is the Arab reason that made the Arabs fall behind other civilisations (p. 432); and David Sarquis (2012), arguing with reference to the situation in Egypt that skepticism towards democracy is deep-rooted in the region are the more recent examples of this line of argument.

The second theme presented by Brynen et al. (1995) is “civil society” (pp. 10-14). Norton (1995; 1995) is the foremost scholar elaborating this theme. Norton’s project, Brynen et al. (2013) argue, highlighted the interplay between both forces of social organization and the state’s efforts to control, capture, and co-opt these (endnote 30). Francesco Cavatorta and Vincent Durac (2011) are the more recent representatives of this line. One can also add Mehran Kamrava (2007) into this line of studies.

The third theme that Brynen et al. (1995) draw is “political economy” (pp. 14-18). This is such an all-embracing theme that it is possible to start it from even ancient Greek philosophers such as Aristotle, who links wealth and democracy (Brynen et al., 1995, p. 14). As it has earlier been stated, the modernization theory also does not fall outside with its emphasis on economic and social preconditions for democratization. There are some recent works that support the classical modernist argument such as the ones of Randall Kuhn and of Michael Miller. Kuhn (2012) argues that human development improvement had impacts in uprisings of the “Arab Spring”. Miller (2012) argues that economic development does not automatically lead to democratization, but when it comes under a democracy, they reinforce each other, and that economic development may harm autocracies only if these regimes become fragile. Otherwise, it may even help such regimes to get stronger. Kamrava (2007) also makes similar points. This theme, however, has many sub-themes like oil revenues and rent, taxation, the impact of neoliberalism, distinctive features of the latecomer Middle Eastern states, the lack of a strong bourgeoisie in the region and pacted transitions. The most popular sub-theme is the one that focuses on oil rents and distinctive features of a particular kind of state—i.e. the “rentier state”. Hazem Beblawi (Beblawi, 1987) and Giacomo Luciani (1994; 1987) are among seminal authors of this line, whereas there are many others such as Allan Findlay (2003), Ibrahim Elbadawi, Samir Makdisi and Gary Milante (2011) among more contemporary scholars.

The most popular sub-theme under “political economy”, however, is nothing but the distinctive features of the latecomer Middle Eastern states. Lisa Anderson for instance, argues that modernizing monarchies utilize traditional motives in changes through new extraction models so that they have advantages in comparison to nationalist or socialist republics (1991, p. 4). Larry Diamond (2002) brings forward the concept of “hybrid regimes” and discusses the nature of such regimes, whereas Daniel Brumberg (2002b) argues that “liberalized autocracies” may not turn into democracies. Jan Engberg and Svante Ersson (2001) also warn about “illiberal democracies” in the Third World. Raymond Hinnebusch (2006; 2010) is of course among

strong holders of this position too with his emphasis on state formation processes in the Middle East. The works that contain this position in one way or another in a sense boosted in number by the early 2010s. To cite some: Teti and Gervasio (2011, pp. 321-322) argue that authoritarianism is often fragile, and Sadiki (2010) warns about the end of democratization by dynastic republicanism toward a new form of family rules, whereas in a previous study he also tackles with the questions of elections without democracy and mere electoral democracies in the Arab world (2009). Eric Chaney (2012) argues that there are deep historical roots of the democracy deficit such as Islamic imperial control institutions, whereas Haynes (2010) claims that globalization has less influence on the Middle East and North Africa than it has on any other region in the world due to the region's strong historical domestic characteristics. Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder (2012) warn about dangerous democratization due to lack of strong institutional framework. Stepan and Linz (2013) acknowledge hybrid regimes following Diamond (2002). Volpi (2013) also argues that some authoritarian regimes avert the crises with controlled reforms, however, he differs in the sense that he keeps an open door for miscalculations on the part of the authoritarian elites. Brynen et al. also mention "particular dynamics of Middle Eastern monarchies" (2013, p. 10).

It is interesting to see that the once popular discussions on the nature of "taxation" (Waterbury, 1994, pp. 29-30) and the relation between this and authoritarian persistence in the region seem to have remained in the past. However, it seems that a new position emerged during the last few years, especially after the "Arab Spring", during which people also stood up for economic and social demands: the position that emphasizes the impacts of neoliberal economic policies. Teti and Gervasio (2011, pp. 322-324), Abdel-Fattah Mady (2013), Onn Winckler (2013), Brynen et al. (2013) are among some of the representatives of this new position. Of the same position, Andrea Teti and Mura (2013) calls for attention to the increasing convergence of post-authoritarian and post-democratic countries due to their similar economic development models and the similar problems posed by neoliberal economics. Nadine Mourad Sika (2013) also warns that tensions will continue as long as the same neoliberal development model persists in the region.

Yet, the real boost is in theme of external factors, in other words, theme of "regional and international context" (Brynen et al., 1995, pp. 18-20). Indeed, this is not that much surprising regarding the everyday developments and innovations in the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in line with dizzying influences of globalization. Many writers, foremost among them Muzammil Hussain and Philip Howard (Hussain & Howard, 2013; Howard & Hussain, 2013), call our attention to these developments in the ICTs in order to understand the region, and many of these writers pay a special attention to satellite TVs, the new Arab media like *Al Jazeera* (Brynen et al., 2013, p. 10) and "social media" platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, and the impact of these platforms on the "youth bulge". Imperialist policies towards the region, campaigns for "democracy promotion", and the subsequent resistance and reactions to these are also among the rising sub-themes of the new wave of literature on "democratization in the Arab world". Volpi (2013), for instance, is among the authors, who claim that international actors made wrong calculations. Ruth Hanau Santini and Oz Hassan (2012), on the other hand, argue that the West chose the wrong side since the neoliberal democratic model will cause even greater crises for the West. Fred Gregory Gause, III and Ian Lustick, from another point of view, inform that probable transitions toward more inclusive regimes may impact the whole region-wide politics and the U.S. policy toward the region (2012, pp. 8-9); Teti and Gervasio also make a similar point (2011, pp. 325-326). Again focusing on external factors, some writers such as Hamid Dabashi (Dabashi, 2012) consider the recent political unfolding in the region as the "end of post-colonialism", reading it through the

colonial past and post-colonial authoritarian frameworks that had given false promises to the peoples of the region. On the other hand, scholars, such as Cavatorta and Durac (2011), and Elbadawi and Makdisi (2011), pay attention also to the region-wide and inter-state conflicts among the Arab states.

By Way of Conclusion

This article sought to examine whether the Western literature on “democratization in the Arab world”, which has been accumulating from the 1990s onwards, could be considered consisting merely of genuine scholarly analyses of political change in the Arab world or whether it rather reflects political exigencies of the West in general and the U.S. leadership in particular. The article advanced an argument close to the latter position advocating that there is at least a correlation between changing political exigencies of the U.S. leadership and the evolution of the Western literature on political change in the Arab world throughout the Cold War and post-Cold War periods. From such a viewpoint, it is argued, it is more plausible to talk about successive waves of the Western literature on “democratization in the Arab world” rather than the so-called “waves of democratization”—each wave evolving in correlation with the political exigencies of its time. Such a correlation is discernible from the very beginning, because at its birth, the literature in question came to the fore and developed as a direct offshoot of the Modernization school, which had an anti-Communist approach to development in line with the political exigencies of the Western capitalist bloc under the U.S. leadership in the early Cold War years. The literature in question thereafter evolved in harmony with changing international political priorities of the Western bloc—first by shifting its focus from “development” to “democratization” in the early 1990s in accordance with the Western promotion of post-communist transitions to multi-party democracies and free-market economies in Central and Eastern Europe, later by intensively embedding the concept of “authoritarianism” next to its focus on “democratization” especially after the 9/11 attacks against the United States in 2001 in accordance with the U.S. led campaign of the “global war on terror” and attempts at regime change in the Arab world, and finally by treading on the heels of the U.S. leadership in supporting the so-called “Arab Spring” beginning from late 2010 though a partial reverse trend is also discernible from about 2013 onwards with a focus on a supposedly “Islamist Winter” throughout the region. Within this framework, it could be argued that the first genuine “wave” of this literature came to the forefront from the early 1990s until roughly the early 2000s, and a partial “reverse wave” with a focus over the supposed “authoritarianism” throughout the Arab world with the 9/11 attacks became influential from the early 2000s until the end of 2010, whereas a second “wave” was at stake, following the cascade of uprisings throughout the region, which was hailed as the “Arab Spring”, from 2011 to approximately 2013, and after that, a new “reverse wave” with the theme of the “Islamist Winter” became more or less discernible. Despite these changing labels, the substance of that literature has remained much the same, and there is a striking continuity within that literature in terms of the themes it has covered despite its decades-long existence vindicating the argument advanced here that this literature has evolved in correlation with particular political ends in each period by providing conceptual frameworks that have been favorable to Western policies towards the Arab world. Nevertheless, it could also be easily recognized that there are also some changes in themes and sub-themes and positions towards these themes regarding the democratization *vs.* authoritarianism debates over the region as a result of genuine scholarly efforts to understand the more substantial underlying dynamics of political change in the Arab world. Thus, it is also worth noting that the main argument developed there does not exclude the reality that the literature has in itself genuine scholarly analyses aimed at understanding political change in the region but rather argues that it has also another aspect. Themes like the

impact of harsh neoliberal programs over the common people of the region and the increasing importance of the changes in regional and international contexts such as the impacts of globalization and rapid developments in the ICTs are unsurprisingly intensified. Nonetheless, it requires further elaboration and labor, and also the testimony of time, whether all these changes in the literature are just, to put it in James Bill's words, "new wine in old bottles" or not (Valbjørn, 2012, p. 33, footnote 25).

References

- Agarwal, R. (2012, Ekim 26). Arab Spring: Aspirations Met or Dreams Unfulfilled? New Delhi: The Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses. Retrieved Mart 4, 2021, from https://idsa.in/issuebrief/ArabSpringAspirationsMetOrDreamsUnfulfilled_RajeevAgarwal_261012
- Al-Jabri, M. A. (2011). *The Formation of Arab Reason: Text, Tradition and the Construction of Modernity in the Arab World*. New York, NY: I.B. Tauris.
- Anderson, L. (1991). Absolutism and the Resilience of Monarchy in the Middle East. *Political Science Quarterly*, 106(1), 1-15. doi:10.2307/2152171
- Anderson, L. (2006). Searching Where the Light Shines: Studying Democratization in the Middle East. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 9, 189-214. doi:10.1146/annurev.polisci.9.072004.095345
- Ayubi, N. (2005). *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World*. London: Routledge.
- Ayubi, N. N. (1993). *Political Islam: Religion and Political Islam in the Arab World*. London: Routledge.
- Barnett, M. N. (1995). Sovereignty, Nationalism, and Regional Order in the Arab States System. *International Organization*, 49(3), 479-510. doi:10.1017/S002081830003335X
- Barnett, M. N. (1998). *Dialogues in Arab Politics: Negotiations in Regional Order*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Beblawi, H. (1987). The Rentier State in the Arab World. In H. Beblawi, & G. Luciani (Eds.), *The Rentier State* (pp. 49-62). Beckenham: Croom Helm.
- Blaydes, L., & Lo, J. (2012). One Man, One Vote, One Time?: A Model of Democratization in the Middle East. *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 24(1), 110-146. doi:10.1177/0951629811423121
- Browsers, M. L. (2009). *Political Ideology in the Arab World: Accommodation and Transformation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brownlee, J. (2007). *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brumberg, D. (2002a). Islamists and Politics of Consensus. *Journal of Democracy*, 13(3), 109-115. doi:10.1353/jod.2002.0064
- Brumberg, D. (2002b). The Trap of Liberalized Autocracy. *Journal of Democracy*, 13(4), 56-68. doi:10.1353/jod.2002.0064
- Brynen, R., Korany, B., & Noble, P. (Eds.). (1995). *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World* (Vol. 1). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Brynen, R., Moore, P. W., Salloukh, B. F., & Zahar, M.-J. (2013). *Beyond the Arab Spring: Authoritarianism and Democratization in the Arab World*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Cavatorta, F., & Durac, V. (2011). *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: The Dynamics of Activism*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Chaney, E. (2012). Democratic Change in the Arab World: Past and Present. *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, pp. 363-414. doi:10.1353/eca.2012.0002

-
- Ciprut, J. V. (Ed.). (2009). *Democratizations: Comparisons, Confrontations, and Contrasts*. Cambridge, MA.
- Dabashi, H. (2012). *The Arab Spring: The End of Post-Colonialism*. London: Zed Books.
- Dawisha, A. (2005). *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Diamond, L. J. (2002). Thinking about Hybrid Regimes. *Journal of Democracy*, 13(2), 21-35. doi:10.1353/jod.2002.0025
- Elbadawi, I., Makdisi, S., & Milante, G. (2011). Explaining the Arab Democracy Deficit: The Role of Oil and Conflicts. In I. Elbadawi, & S. Makdisi (Eds.), *Democracy in the Arab World: Explaining the Deficit* (pp. 41-82). Abingdon: Routledge.
- Engberg, J., & Ersson, S. (2001). Illiberal democracy in the 'Third World': An Empirical Enquiry. In J. Haynes (Ed.), *Democracy and Political Change in the 'Third World'* (pp. 36-56). London: Routledge.
- Findlay, A. M. (2003). *The Arab World*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Fisch, M. S. (2002). Islam and Authoritarianism. *World Politics*, 55(1), 4-37. doi:10.1353/wp.2003.0004
- Gause III, F. G. (2011). Why Middle East Studies Missed the Arab Spring: The Myth of Authoritarian Stability. *Foreign Affairs*, 90(4), 81-90.
- Gause, III, F. G., & Lustick, I. S. (2012). America and the Regional Powers in a Transforming Middle East. *Middle East Policy*, 19(2), 1-9.
- Gendzier, I. L. (1985). *Managing Political Change: Social Scientists and the Third World*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Gilman, N. (2003). *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America*. Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press.
- Grugel, J. (2002). *Democratization: A Critical Introduction*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Haynes, J. (2010). Democratisation in the Middle East and North Africa: What is the Effect of Globalisation? *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 11(2), 133-149. doi:10.1080/14690764.2010.511463
- Hinnebusch, R. (2006). Authoritarian Persistence, Democratization Theory and the Middle East: An Overview and Critique. *Democratization*, 13(3), 373-395. doi:10.1080/13510340600579243
- Hinnebusch, R. (2010). Toward a Historical Sociology of State Formation in the Middle East. *Middle East Critique*, 19(3), 201-216. doi:10.1080/19436149.2010.514470
- Hite, A. B., Roberts, J. T., & Chorev, N. (2015). Globalization and Development: Recurring Themes. In J. T. Roberts, A. B. Hite, & N. Chorev (Eds.), *The Globalization and Development Reader: Perspectives on Development and Global Change* (pp. 1-28). Chichester, UK: Wiley Blackwell.
- Howard, P. N., & Hussain, M. M. (2013). *Democracy's Fourth Wave?: Digital Media and the Arab Spring*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hudson, M. (1991). After the Gulf War: Prospects for Democratization in the Arab World. *Middle East Journal*, 45(3), 407-426.
- Hunter, S. T., & Malik, H. (Eds.). (2005). *Modernization, Democracy, and Islam*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Huntington, S. P. (1991a). Democracy's Third Wave. *Journal of Democracy*, 2(2), 12-34. doi:10.1353/jod.1991.0016
- Huntington, S. P. (1991b). *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Norman, OK: Oklahoma University Press.
-

-
- Hussain, M. M., & Howard, P. N. (2013). What Best Explains Successful Protest Cascades? ICTs and the Fuzzy Causes of the Arab Spring. *International Studies Review*, 15(1), 48-66. doi:10.1111/misr.12020
- Issawi, C. (1958). Economic and Social Foundations of Democracy in the Middle East. In W. Z. Laqueur (Ed.), *The Middle East in Transition: Studies in Contemporary History* (pp. 33-51). New York, NY: Frederick A. Praeger.
- Kamrava, M. (2007). The Middle East's Democracy Deficit in Comparative Perspective. In M. P. Amineh (Ed.), *The Greater Middle East in Global Politics: Social Science Perspectives on the Changing Geography of the World Politics* (pp. 177-202). Leiden: Brill.
- Khalili, L. (Ed.). (2009). *Politics of the Modern Arab World: Critical Issues in Modern Politics* (Vol. 1). Abingdon: Routledge.
- Khoury, R. (2011, August 17). Spring or Revolution. Retrieved March 4, 2021, from <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/spring-or-revolution>
- Korany, B., Brynen, R., & Noble, P. (Eds.). (1998). *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World* (Vol. 2). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Kuhn, R. (2012). On the Role of Human Development in the Arab Spring. *Population and Development Review*, 38(4), 649-683. doi:10.1111/j.1728-4457.2012.00531.x
- Laqueur, W. Z. (Ed.). (1958). *The Middle East in Transition: Studies in Contemporary History*. New York, NY: Frederick A. Praeger.
- Lerner, D. (1964 [1958]). *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East*. London: The Free Press.
- Lipset, S. M. (1960). *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*. New York, NY: Doubleday.
- Luciani, G. (1987). Allocation vs. Production States: A Theoretical Framework. In H. Beblawi, & G. Luciani (Eds.), *The Rentier State* (pp. 63-82). Beckenham: Croom Helm.
- Luciani, G. (1994). The Oil Rent, the Fiscal Crisis of the State and Democratization. In G. Salamé (Ed.), *Democracy without Democrats?: Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World* (pp. 84-111). London: I.B. Tauris.
- Mady, A.-F. (2013). Popular Discontent, Revolution, and Democratization in Egypt in a Globalizing World. *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*, 20(1), 313-337.
- Mansfield, E. D., & Snyder, J. (2012). Democratization and the Arab Spring. *International Interactions: Empirical and Theoretical Research in International Relations*, 38(5), 722-733. doi:10.1080/03050629.2012.726188
- Mayer, A. E. (2008). The Respective Roles of Human Rights and Islam: An Unresolved Conundrum for Middle Eastern Constitutions. In S. A. Arjomand (Ed.), *Constitutional Politics in the Middle East* (pp. 77-97). Oxford: Hart Publishing.
- Miller, M. K. (2012). Economic Development, Violent Leader Removal, and Democratization. *American Journal of Political Science*, 56(4), 1002-1020. doi:10.1111/j.1540-5907.2012.00595.x
- Moss, D. M. (2013). Arab Spring. In D. A. Snow, D. Della Porta, B. Klandermans, & D. McAdam (Eds.), *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements* (pp. 1-7). doi:10.1002/9780470674871.wbespm456
- Norton, A. R. (Ed.). (1995a). *Civil Society in the Middle East* (Vol. 1). Leiden: Brill.
- Norton, A. R. (Ed.). (1995b). *Civil Society in the Middle East* (Vol. 2). Leiden: Brill.
- Pratt, N. C. (2007). *Democracy and Authoritarianism in the Arab World*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Rostow, W. W. (1990 [1960]). *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (3. ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rostow, W. W. (2015). The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto (1960). In J. T. Roberts, A. B. Hite, & N. Chorev (Eds.), *The Globalization and Development*
-

- Reader: Perspectives on Development and Global Change* (pp. 52-61). Chichester: Wiley Blackwell.
- Rustow, D. A. (1956). *Politics and Westernization in the Near East*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Sadiki, L. (2009). *Rethinking Arab Democratization: Elections without Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sadiki, L. (2010). Wither Arab 'Republicanism'? The Rise of Family Rule and the 'End of Democratization' in Egypt, Libya and Yemen. *Mediterranean Politics*, 15(1), 99-107. doi:10.1080/13629391003644827
- Salamé, G. (Ed.). (1994). *Democracy without Democrats?: The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Santini, R. H., & Hassan, O. (2012). Transatlantic Democracy Promotion and the Arab Spring. *The International Spectator: Italian Journal of International Affairs*, 47(3), 65-82. doi:10.1080/03932729.2012.700021
- Sarquis, D. J. (2012). Democratization after the Arab Spring: The Case of Egypt's Political Transition. *Politics and Policy*, 40(5), 871-903. doi:10.1111/j.1747-1346.2012.00381.x
- Schwedler, J. (2011). Can Islamists Become Moderates?: Rethinking the Inclusion-Moderation Hypothesis. *World Politics*, 63(2), 347-376. doi:10.1017/S0043887111000050
- Sika, N. M. (2013). Dynamics of Development and Uprisings in the Arab World. 24(4), 43-67. doi:10.1215/10474552-2380533
- Stein, E. (2012). Beyond Arabism vs. Sovereignty: Relocating Ideas in the International Relations of the Middle East. *Review of International Studies*, 38(4), 881-905. doi:10.1017/S0260210511000465
- Stepan, A., & Linz, J. J. (2013). Democratization Theory and the "Arab Spring". *Journal of Democracy*, 24(2), 15-30. doi:10.1353/jod.2013.0032
- Tehrani, M. (2003). Disenchanted Worlds: Secularization and Democratization in the Middle East. In A. Saikal, & A. Schnabel (Eds.), *Democratization in the Middle East: Experiences, Struggles, Challenges* (pp. 79-102). Tokyo: United Nations University Press.
- Teti, A., & Gervasio, G. (2011). The Unbearable Lightness of Authoritarianism: Lessons from the Arab Uprisings. *Mediterranean Politics*, 16(2), 321-327. doi:10.1080/13629395.2011.583758
- Teti, A., & Mura, A. (2013). Convergent (Il)liberalism in the Mediterranean?: Some Notes on Egyptian (Post-)Authoritarianism and Italian (Post-)Democracy. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 20(1), 120-127. doi:10.1177/0969776412460535
- Tibi, B. (2013). *The Shari'a State: Arab Spring and Democratization*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Tschirgi, D. (2007). *Turning Point: The Arab World's Marginalization and International Security after 9/11*. Westport, CT: Praeger Security International.
- Valbjørn, M. (2012). Upgrading Post-Democratization Studies: Examining a Re-Politicized Arab World in a Transition to Somewhere. *Middle East Critique*, 21(1), 25-35. doi:10.1080/19436149.2012.658496
- Valbjørn, M., & Bank, A. (2010). Examining the 'Post' in Post-Democratization: The Future of Middle Eastern Political Rule through Lenses of the Past. *Middle East Critique*, 183-200. doi:10.1080/19436149.2010.514469
- Volpi, F. (2013). Explaining (and Re-Explaining) Political Change in the Middle East during the Arab Spring: Trajectories of Democratization and of Authoritarianism in the Maghreb. *Democratization*, 20(6), 969-990. doi:10.1080/13510347.2012.668438

- Waterbury, J. (1994). Democracy without Democrats?: The Potential for Political Liberalization in the Middle East. In G. Salamé (Ed.), *Democracy without Democrats?: The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World* (pp. 23-47). London: I.B. Tauris.
- Winckler, O. (2013). The “Arab Spring”: Socioeconomic Aspects. *Middle East Policy*, 20(4), 68-87.
-