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Engendering Democracy: The Role of Gender in the Democratization of the Middle East

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

ECONOMICS, BACHELOR OF SCIENCE

by

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Engendering Democracy: The Role of Gender in the Democratization of the Middle East

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Abstract

The 21st century has been tumultuous for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region; this is an area well known for its close ties to its religious and political past. The current political and economic institutions interlocked under an Islamic framework create a gendered social structure that is biologically essentialist; the marginalization and rejection of women within the public sphere is a huge hindrance to potential democratic growth. 2011 was a milestone for the Middle East. Termed “Arab Spring,” revolutionary waves of demonstrations and revolts occurred all over the region, most notably in Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia. This paper explores the relationship between gender and democratic potential within the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Multiple regression analysis is performed to determine the extent to which gender is correlated to the democratization process. Preliminary findings are presented, showing increases in gender equality are positively correlated with democratic potential and accountability. Potential policies that incorporate gender are suggested.
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I. Introduction: The Arab Spring

On December 17, 2010, Mohamed Bouazizi was in despair. A local fruit and vegetable seller in Tunisia, he was no stranger to the corruption and poverty that ran rampant in his home country. His family of eight barely survived on less than $150 per month. That day several government officials pulled him aside to ‘inspect’ his goods, and refused to let him sell his products until he produced a sufficient bribe. When he refused, the officers seized him and his goods and beat him. He walked to the governor’s office to retrieve his goods; he was refused. In desperation, Bouazizi doused himself with a can of gasoline and set himself on fire (Gardner 2011). Little would he know the repercussions of his action. His death invited hundreds of rioters into the streets - citizens who empathized with his situation. They, too, felt as helpless as he had.

Bouazizi’s sacrifice shook the foundations of the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region. He sparked a region-wide revolution that spread from Tunisia to Egypt, Libya, Jordan, Morocco, Bahrain, and then Syria. Scholars and journalists commonly refer to these waves of revolutions as the “Arab Spring” or “Arab Awakening” (Pollack 2011b). And indeed an awakening it was. Technological innovation and social media coverage allowed the entire Western World to watch in fascination as the Middle East experienced an explosion of popular unrest. They saw thousands of Tunisians rally to force their dictator Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali to flee the country. In Egypt, Hosni Mubarak was surprised to discover that his military had developed its own separate identity apart from his rule, and was pushed out as crowds of Egyptians gathered in Tahrir Square to protest their poor living conditions. Four days later, Libya attempted to emulate Egypt’s protests, but the resulting outcome was not as hoped for. While Egypt and Tunisia’s regimes fell rapidly, Libya proved that the quest for democracy was
not as easy as it seemed, as the country had been under consolidated totalitarian rule for more than four decades (Pollack 2011b). It took six months for Qadhafi to step down. Libya faced a daunting new challenge - could it build credible institutions while adequately reforming its economic and civil structure to instill a lasting, democratic structure? Furthermore, there was question of whether these revolutions could lead by example. Would the entire region follow suit, using social media and technology to foster communication and encourage optimism that democratization was possible for an area that had been notorious for its anti-democratic sentiments? Would democratic values remain sustainable given the harsh religious ideology of the region?

The Arab Spring shattered several myths about the MENA region. The first was that Arab populations were apathetic to their hardships. In general, these regimes reacted toward bourgeois unhappiness with repression and reprisals. But as seen in the case of Bouazizi, citizen distress can only be controlled for so long. The second myth was that the Arab populations did not want or understand democracy or democratic values (Pollack 2011). These citizens proved this myth wrong and took to the streets, demanding democracy in both name and in practice.

While there are numerous facets of the Arab Awakening to be analyzed, this study will focus specifically on gender and the process of democratization within the MENA region. International media coverage showed proud Egyptian women taking part in the revolution. For a brief moment, they broke out of their prescribed gender roles and experienced collegial leadership and political participation (Abou-Habib 2011a). It presents the question: will the Arab quest for democracy include women, a region which is notorious for its overarching and repressive patriarchy? What has been the relationship between gender and democracy within the MENA region during the past, and will Arab Spring incorporate future policies that will promote
the equality of women, in both the private and public sphere?

My study emphasizes the importance of democratic and political trends in relation to human and gender rights. I aim to inform the reader of the necessary background knowledge that is crucial in understanding the underlying causes of the Arab Spring and the general democratization process, as well as theoretical and economic perspectives of gender-relations with society. Women account for a significant share of any population; yet in the MENA region they have no say in their own political, economic, or social standing. This creates massive economic inefficiencies, which in turn negatively affects the entire country. By preventing women from participating in the public sector and labor force, the Arab region is essentially utilizing only half of their potential labor force. This study uses past data from the MENA region. Using several economic explanatory variables coupled with a gender-indicator, it analyzes the extent to which gender is correlated to democratic potential.

The scope of this study is from 1995 to present, the time period associated with a rise in traditional Islamist values. These values are conservative and frequently viewed by scholars as incompatible with democratic values (Grand 2011). First the causes of the Arab Spring will be analyzed, followed by a democratic history of the region and theories and trends associated with the democratization process. A gender analysis of the region will follow, focusing on potential barriers that currently exist and may prevent gender equality if democratization were to be successful. Finally various social, political, economic and gender-sensitive variables positively associated with democratization will be gathered and analyzed via time series analysis through the use of ordinary least squares (OLS) multiple regression analysis. Emphasis is placed on the gender-sensitive variables and their contribution to the region’s potential or current democratization capabilities.
Causes of the Arab Spring

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region consists of predominantly Islamic cultures and is known for its diverse economies, ranging from the oil-rich countries on the Gulf to the resource-scarce economies of the North Africa region. The MENA plays a huge role in international commerce due to its unrivaled dominance in the oil industry and its vast labor market. The World Bank definition of the region includes: Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen. It does not include the high-income Gulf countries Israel and Turkey, nor Sudan and Mauritania. The World Bank also neglects to include Turkey in the region despite its geographic and cultural similarities to other countries within the region. While these countries have similar political-cultural atmospheres, there is a wide disparity of variables associated with each country’s political/class structure and socioeconomic development. The region is a democratic desert and exhibits huge deficiencies in gender and social equality (Ibrahim 1995). Prior to 2011, only three areas within the region (Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine) could lay claim to the term, “democracy.” But these regimes were unremarkable and autocratic, defined by widespread corruption and dubious legal systems.

The causes of the Arab Spring can be attributed to a mélange of social, political, economic, judicial, and diplomatic errors. According to the United Nations Development Program, the region typically comes in last when compared to the rest of the developing world. The 2002 Arab Human Rights Development (AHRD) Report warned of the repercussions of these deficiencies, particularly of education, stating, “Knowledge dispersion has withered and education attainments have stagnated” (United Nations Development Program 2002). The result is low human capital.
As a result of these economic deficiencies, the entire region is distinguished with stagnant economies. There is underemployment of the rare few that are able to receive a college education, underemployment in general, dependence on the public sector for employment, and heavy outflows of human and financial capital. A majority of the country’s wealth is in the hands of government officials and poverty (Harrigan, Wang & El-Said, 2005). The 1973 oil boom facilitated massive investment in the physical and social infrastructure of the region yet this innovation decreased as the region’s fundamental problems (i.e. corruption, inadequate education systems, etc) became more evident to outside investors. Its deteriorating infrastructure could prove detrimental to continued economic growth. During the 1990s, the Arab economies grew less than 1% on a per capita basis. The only real growth industry in the region is population. Two-thirds of the region is under the age of 30, a demographic phenomenon known as the “youth bulge” (Maloney 2011). Maloney comments that while hard data is limited on the demographic make-up of the protestors, media coverage suggests the majority are young. A study done by al-‘Affifi in 2002 found a positive correlation between the youth population and enthusiasm regarding democratic change (Fattah 2006). While the study predates 2011, it implies the youth bulge is a potential indicator of democratization.

There are other socio-economic indicators that appear to be problematic. Social disparity is widespread and encompasses the health, education, and public and social sectors. Poverty is rampant and there are highly skewed income distributions across the region. There are distorted patterns of urbanization and this results in low feelings of citizenship (the relationship that exists between the individual citizen and the state) (Moghadam 2003). As explained in a later chapter, this relationship is one of the crucial requisites of democratization.

II. Literature Review: Democratization Theory
In 1991 political scientist Samuel Huntington identified three waves of democratization that has swept the modern world. The first was the US political suffrage movement in the 1820s, in which African American men were given the right to vote followed by women one hundred years later in 1920. The second was the European decolonization following WWII until 1962. The “third wave” is characterized by the revolutions that occurred on the Iberian Peninsula in 1974. This ceased in the 1990s. Following the Gulf War in 1991, many scholars anticipated the Middle East to follow suit.

To understand democratization theory in the context of the Middle East, one must comprehend there is not one set definition for the democratization, nor is there an overall consensus to the conditions necessary for a successful transition to occur. Constitutions, electoral systems, independent judiciaries and legislature, and civil-society organizations typically define democracies. A general rule is that a successful democracy is signified by a two-turnover rule, requiring two peaceful turnovers of power.

Democratization has two dimensions - political pluralism and democratic incorporation of the masses. It requires the mechanisms and methods of governance to be streamlined and ensure a system of checks and balances is implemented to prevent corruption. The process is slow and requires a positive vision of what could be rather than what is. As democratization expert Albrecht Schnabel puts it, “Genuine democratization, if successful and sustained, can produce accountable, transparent, participatory, inclusive governance, instead of exclusive and repressive rule” (2003, p.7).

Democratization specialist Phillipe Schmitter argues, “across time and space - not to mention culture or class - opinions have differed concerning what institutions and rules which have been established in different ‘democratic’ countries are to be considered democratic
…[while] the concrete institutions and rules which have been established in different ‘democratic’ countries have similarly differed” (1998, p.32). In this definition, Schmitter notes the importance of class and culture upon the country’s individual definition of democracy. This is crucial when applying this definition to the Middle East, as their unique religious background is typically seen as incompatible with democratic values. Other definitions of democracy include: the movement of a government to become more accountable and less corrupt; the requirement of universal suffrage and free elections; the protection of life, liberty, happiness and equal rights; universal education, free markets, etc. Gerald Steinberg specializes in religious democratization, in which leaders recognize the supremacy of religious doctrine. This is probably the form of democratization that the Middle East will follow, given their staunch adherence to Shari’a law. Steinberg notes that the key to religious democratic success is proper interpretation. Religious authority must be reconciled with secular democracy (Steinberg 2003). The effect of Political Islam upon democratization will be discussed in a later chapter.

Modernization theory contends that social mobilization (urbanization, non-reliance on the agricultural sector, education) requires the requisites of a democracy (ex. identification with the state, increased living standards such as literacy, non-exclusive participation within the legal system, etc). While factors such as literacy has risen over the decades within the Middle East, the region still lacks the structural and political consciousness necessary for a democratization to take place. Much of this is due to corruption and authoritarian regimes. One of the most enduring claims regarding the requisites of democratization is that a formation of a middle class must occur. The ruling elite, whose political aims are to prevent power and wealth dispersion, prevents this formation. Barrington Moore, an American sociologist and political scientist, argued “people revolt in response to deeply embedded feelings of injustice, usually emerging in
response to concrete grievances experienced in everyday life” (Hamid 2011b, p.32). This lived bodily experience is the necessary catalyst for change to occur, and the example of Bouazizi is a perfect example of how despair can turn into revolution.

The question arises: how to authoritarian regimes transition in lieu of the Middle East’s inability to modernize appropriately? What are the current trends in the Middle East’s attempt to democratize?

Trends and Obstacles to Democratization

There are several trends associated with the process of democratization. Democratization tends to occur in geographic clusters who share a similar culture and language; this is a result of what Huntington calls “the demonstration and diffusion” effect. The speed of the democratization process is facilitated through improvements in communication and social media. Democratic breakthroughs are driven from the bottom up, and seldom at the volition of the ruling elite. The Arab Awakening fits all of these requirements, especially given the population’s use of social networking to mobilize protests. However merely revolting does not necessarily mean the country will begin to democratize. Democratization requires time and a set of political ideas that incorporate citizen trust and engagement.

Researcher Moatz A. Fattah attempted to analyze female Muslim democratic values by facilitating a series of workshops and open forums in early 2006. This data, collected before the Arab Spring, notes trends in democratic beliefs held by both male and female panel participants. Fattah’s analysis indicated that literate Muslim women in all countries were more supportive of democratic normative values than men. This correlation is important as it comments that education is an indicator of potential democratic potential. The World Bank’s population statistics pegged literacy to be roughly 55% in the Muslim world. This high illiteracy rate
indicates that increasing female literacy could have a positive impact on democratic ideals. An additional interesting result of her study was a significant positive correlation that women support their own political rights more than men do, indicating women are aware of their oppression by men. Despite this awareness, Fattah commented that women believed their oppression to be the result of men, but not by political Islam (Fattah 2006).

The Middle East faces many obstacles to democratization. Expelling an authoritarian regime can result in civil war. Political parties can emerge but may be too weak by themselves to effectively govern. One of the more problematic issues is the potential for the emergence of a ‘psuedodemocracy’, or ‘competitive authoritarianism.’ This is when the state governing party is too strong, and essentially tramples on its citizen’s rights. A further obstacle to the democratization process is corruption. To prevent this, the new governing party must instill horizontal and vertical mechanisms of accountability. An example of horizontal accountability is a system of checks and balances, and a vertical example is the ability of the public to have rights in the political process to prevent government wrongdoing (Grand 2011). Within the context of MENA, perhaps the most prominent barrier is Islamic fundamentalism, and smaller obstacles include in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a long history of civil war between various countries, as well as clashes between Western and Islamic political and social normative values.

**Democratization: Political Islam**

One of the primary obstacles to the ability of the Middle East to democratize is the prevalence of the Political Islamist movement. Debate exists over whether or not the Shari’a is compatible with democracy. The Arab Awakening has escalated this debate. While the initial Arab revolutions seemed secular, Islamist grassroot groups are emerging as the single-most powerful political force in virtually all the Arab states. The region is known for its adherence to
the Shari’a and belief that Islamic law should play a large role in the development of political
and public policy. Examples of this are the Muslim Brotherhood (aka Ikhwan).

For Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood, the revolution fostered an opportunity for them to rise
to the forefront of the revolution. In 2010 Mubarak had prevented the Brotherhood from
attaining any seats within parliament. But the Brotherhood was careful about how their
campaign appeared to the outside world. As one member noted, “If it’s ever perceived that this
revolution is an Islamic one, the US and others will be able to justify a crackdown” (Hamid
2011b, p.34). And this is true - there has been a long-standing contention between Western and
Islamic idealism, especially in regard to human rights.

The influence of the Islamist movement on the Arab Spring is inevitable - the movement
has an expansive and developed grassroots basis, the result of the movement existing for close to
100 years. The party believes in the application of Islamic law to religious parties, known as al-
Shari’a. While they seek the promotion of Islamic values throughout society, it should be noted
that some of the groups recognize the importance of democracy and the effects of its
implementation on the lives of everyday citizens. A prominent Islamist movement was first seen
in the mid 1980s, but at this time their platform was focused primarily upon single issues.
Examples were the segregation of the sexes as stated in Shari’a and banning alcohol. While the
Brotherhood revamped their platforms in the 1990s to advocate for greater political pluralism,
these beliefs are still the same. In regards to the pro-democracy initiatives by President Bush
upon Egypt in 2008, Brotherhood activist Abdel-Moneim Abul-Futuh commented, “everyone
knows it…we benefitted, everyone benefitted, and the Egyptians benefitted” (Hamid 2011a).

It should be noted that the strength and extent to which the Islamist movement has the
ability to mobilize and their relationship with their authoritarian regime varies from country to
country. High levels of regime repression cause the movements to become stronger. In Egypt, the Brotherhood signed an unlikely compact with the International Atomic Energy Agency and secular Nobel laureate Mohamed El-Baradei to gain more signatures for the reform petition. But once Mubarak fell, such unlikely alliances fell by the wayside as these organizations lacked a mutual enemy. In the wake of Arab Spring, it has become clear the Political Islam’s influence has only become stronger. Even if they do not seize control during elections, they are gaining political space and influence.

This is problematic when discussing the potential of the region to democratize. Ellie Kedourie comments that, “The idea of democracy is quite alien to the mind-set of Islam” because “there is nothing in the political traditions of the Arab world - which are the political tradition of Islam - which make familiar, or indeed intelligible, the organizing ideas of a constitution and representative government” (1994, p.103).

Middle Eastern Studies professor David Bukay from the University of Haifa also comments on the relationship between Islam and democracy.

“The Islamic world is not ready to absorb the basic values of modernism and democracy. Leadership remains the prerogative of the ruling elite. Arab and Islamic leadership are patrimonial, coercive, and authoritarian. Such basic principles as sovereignty, legitimacy, political participation and pluralism, and those individual rights and freedoms inherent in democracy do not exist in a system where Islam is the ultimate source of law (2007, p.73).”

This essentialist argument further exemplifies the idea that democratic potential and Islamic rule are incompatible, and the result is a hierarchal economic and political structure that does not allow freedom or basic equal rights for its citizens. One of the biggest challenges for infantile democracies is the ‘tyranny of the majority.’ To prevent this, it is crucial to protect the rights of minority citizens. This is especially troublesome when analyzing gender roles and relations in the future Muslim world.
III. Gender: Description and Quantification of Gender Inequality

The Western premise of a democracy is based upon the notion of individual citizenship. Comparing the concept of citizenship between the Western and Arab world indicates that the Western point of view adheres to and promotes individual citizenship. Citizenship within the Arab world is far more structural, in which society imposes upon its citizens a specific identity. The identity of an Arab citizen is based upon the extended family. This results in the creation of a citizen whose identity is determined by kinship ties that are authoritative and dominant in nature (Bhandar 2010).

Analyzing the Arab identity from a hierarchal perspective shows that identity is located on a vertical spectrum where the patriarch upholds family honor. Family members are expected to uphold traditional values. Author Hisham Sharabi comments that this unique economic, social, and political makeup of the Middle Eastern region has resulted in the formation of a neopatriarchy. A neopatriarchy derives its meaning from two core-concepts: modernity and patriarchy. It is a unique social transformation that allows a society to go beyond the traditional hierarchal norm of a patriarchal (that is, male-dominated and male-centered system) and the result is a dependent, nonmodern socioeconomic structure within an underdeveloped society (Sharabi 1992). Its most ubiquitous characteristic is its seeming insurmountableness - that is, the inability to create an integrated social and political system. The society is centered on the dominance of the father (in this case, Muslim interpretation of the Qur’an that men dominate women) and he regulates civil and political existence.

The political and legal status of women within Muslim countries is worse than anywhere else in the world (Moghadam 2003). Shari’a law prescribes women to be different, and within this context, different becomes inferior. Women are perceived as only wives or mothers. Gender
segregation is customary. Their reproductive functions are used as an excuse to justify their segregation in public, and their restriction to the home. Potential female influence is negated by cultural traditions since it is the norm for men to dominate women. The result is a perpetual fear that a woman will disgrace her family, and this allegiance to her family has taken over her sense of identity and shaped her outward behavior in both the public and private spheres (Moghadam 2003).

*Attempts to Quantify Gender Inequality*

The United Nations Development Program began their Arab Human Development Report in 2002, commenting on the necessary changes and deficits that prevent the Arab World from attaining the same levels of development as the rest of the world. The first report is most famously known for its identification of three deficits in knowledge, freedom, and the empowerment of women (Fergany 2005). On a whole, the Arab region has neglected to offer their citizens two crucial entitlements: freedom and human development. This lack of freedom exists on not only an individual level, but a societal and national level also. Freedom has numerous facets, from civil and political liberties, to appropriate political and economic factors as well. As a consequence, Arab citizens lack numerous basic human rights. The disparity between men and women, furthermore, comments that women are doubly affected by this lack of freedoms.

The first efforts to create a framework of universal declarations and humans rights were offered by the United Nations in 1948. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights vied for the equality of both men and women. Gender inequality was further addressed in the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), ratified in 1981. By April 2000, all by twenty-six countries had acceded to it. In the 1995, the
Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action met for the Fourth World Conference for Women and declared, “The advancement of women and the achievement of equality between men and women are matters of human rights and conditions for social justice and should not be seen in isolation as women’s issues. They are the only way to build a sustainable, just, and developed society. Empowerment of women and gender equality are prerequisite for achieving political, social, economic, cultural, and environmental security among all peoples” (Shlash 2005). He comments that gender empowerment is a necessary requisite for human rights and future democratization.

Despite the political and economic differences that are unique to various countries within the MENA region, the cultural and social systems that dominate over women are very much the same. Women are marginalized and excluded from both the public and private spheres. A telling indicator this was when the Arab states were asked to ratify CEDAW into their constitutions. Government reservations focused on the most important sections of the document, citing the Shari’a as explanation as to why they could not adhere to much of the convention. In effect, their religious values voided any international attempt to institute equality within their current social structure.

Little work was done to collect data on gender inequality previous to 1995, which was the first year the United Nations assessed gender as a development indicator. They released the Human Development Report, and their attempt to quantify gender inequality had two resulting measures: the GDI (gender development index) and GEM (gender empowerment measure) (Fergany 2005). Unfortunately GDI had conceptual and methodological limitations. It was merely the HDI (Human Development Index) adjusted for gender disparity in specific components. This caused bias in the measurement and the statistical gender differences were
under-rated. Income was a large proponent of the measure and this became problematic, as low income-level countries were unable to achieve a high GDI score due to the lack of distribution of earnings. It should be noted that critical literature does not consider GDI or GEM to be adequate measures of gender inequality, as they do not take into account absolute levels of achievement and punishment inequality (Dijkstra & Hanmer, 2000). Other critics commented that the measure was based upon a poor choice of variables.

An attempt to remodel the measure was introduced in 2010 as part of the 20th anniversary edition of the Human Development Report. This new measure, GII (gender inequality index), combines elements of GEM and GDI in order to more appropriately quantify gender disparities. An additional improvement of the measure is that it does not allow for high achievement in one area to compensate for low achievement in another. The index is a set of statistics that range between 0 and 1, where 0 is complete equality and 1 is complete inequality. Numerous empirical and theoretical studies have found that gender inequality primarily takes place in the health, education, and labor market. The GII is a measurement of five variables that are based within reproductive health, empowerment, and labor categories. The variables used to create the index are maternal mortality, adolescent fertility, parliamentary representation, education attainment (secondary education and onward), and labor force participation. The index shows a loss in human development due to male and female inequality within these factors, and can be calculated as a percentage loss of potential human development. The world average GII is .492, indicated that there is a 42.9% loss of equality. The region with the highest inequality average is the MENA region, which ranges from 56.3% to 61%. Yemen is the highest with a 77% loss of equality. Reproductive health is the largest contributing factor to inequality within this region. Like the GDI and GEM, the GII is still a measure that will only continue to become better-
defined and more accurate as availability of data increases. It is not without limitations. It should be noted that national parliamentary representation excludes participation at local and government level and public life (Bardhan & Klasen, 1999). The labor market data lacks information on income, employment, and most crucially, unpaid work. It also does not take into account cultural normative values that are inherently gender-biased, including gender-based violence.

The second gender-sensitive variable chosen to explain gender inequality is the percentage of women employed within the agricultural sector. A high percentage of women employed within the non-agricultural sector is significant as women are usually secluded to the private sphere rather than the public, and it is rare for women to have enough legal autonomy to be employed. Furthermore, the agricultural sector dominates the labor industry in the MENA region, and the employment of women outside of this sector suggests modernity as well as a higher rate of personal citizen freedoms.

IV. Methodology

To determine the extent to which gender plays a role in democratization, I performed linear regression analysis. A series of economic indicators were compiled in panel data format, which is a multidimensional compendium of times series and cross sectional data. After careful evaluation of data availability, I have chosen the following countries for my analysis: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. My data spans from 1995 to 2010.

The Political Risk Services (PRS) group performs studies and collects data focused on political risk analysis. The institutional dependent variables I have chosen to represent
democratization potential are: bureaucratic quality, democratic accountability, corruption, and law and order. A description of these variables is included below. The two gender-sensitive variables I have chosen to focus on are the GII as well as the total percentage of women employed in the non-agricultural sector. These gender-sensitive variables will be placed alongside economic development indicators to determine the extent to which gender is indicative of democratization potential. These variables are: GDP per capita, population growth rate, total unemployment, percent employment of the youth population between the ages of 15 and 24, and military expenditures as a percent of GDP. These additional variables are collected from the United Nations Development Indicators and the World Bank. I will attempt to account for the ‘youth bulge’ by accounting for the percent of the population employed between 15 and 24 years old as well as the population growth rate. My null hypothesis is that the GII and the share of women employed in the non-agricultural sector, respectively, will not be correlated to a country’s democratic potential and bureaucratic quality. My alternative hypothesis is that gender-sensitive measures will be positively correlated to democratic potential and bureaucratic quality. Any additional significant conclusions will also be mentioned in my results.

V. **Analysis of Results**

The variable ‘governance’ was created through the averaging of the variables ‘law and order,’ ‘bureaucratic quality,’ and ‘corruption.’ It should be noted that the natural log of GDP per capita was used in order to ensure a more appropriate fit. The following regressions account for time effects between 1995 and 2010. Issues with data collection are quite common within developing countries due to lack of available census data, thus I was unable to account for both fixed country effects and time effects due to the large amount of missing variables. Issues with data collection are quite common within developing countries due to lack of available census
data.

Variable descriptions

Bureaucratic quality – Measured on a scale of 0 to 4, the PRS Institute uses this variable to measure the quality of a bureaucracy when government policy changes – it is meant to act as a shock absorber. High points are given when ruling parties are able to institute change without drastically affecting the governing institution. Within low-risk countries, a strong bureaucracy will receive higher points because they are well established and are well cushioned from political pressure.

Corruption – This indicator assesses the amount of corruption present within the country’s current governing system. It is measured on a scale of 0 through 6, considering the threat of nepotism and party favors and their impact on political instability. The PRS Institute believes that corruption, over time, will result citizen discontent and eventual government failure and overthrow.

Democratic Accountability – Measured on a scale of 0 to 6, the PRS Institute uses this measurement to determine how effectively the government responds to its citizen’s needs. The theory behind the measurement is that a less responsive government is more likely to fall. Points are award based upon the individual country’s current governing system. This includes: alternating democracies, dominated democracies, de facto democracies, de jure one-state party democracies, and autarchies. The highest amount of points is award to alternating democracies, and the lowest is awarded to autarchies.

Law and Order – Assessed on a scale of 0 to 3, the PRS Institute considers the strength and impartiality of the judiciary system and the implementation and adherence to the law.

Regression Analysis
My regression results proved my hypothesis to be correct. Data summary statistics are presented in Table 1 and regression analysis results are indicated within Tables 2-5. Four time-series regressions were run, using democratic accountability as the dependent variable against five economic indicators alongside one of two gender-sensitive variables. Summary statistics of all variables are displayed in Table 1. It should be noted that the adjusted R-squared is used to accommodate for the addition of variables and ensure the final model is not skewed.

The first two regressions performed used ‘democratic accountability’ and ‘governance’ as the dependent variables and used the ‘Gender Inequality Index’ coefficient as the gender-sensitive indicator. With ‘democratic accountability’ as the dependent variable, the final model was not statistically significant as the independent variables only accounted for 30.13% of variation. See Table 2. This indicates that the five variables used to calculate the GII are not correlated to the regime’s ability to respond to its citizens’ needs.

The second model used ‘governance’ as the dependent variable, but the independent variable used to measure gender was the ‘share of women employed within the non-agricultural sector.’ See Table 3. The final model produced is significant on a global level with an R-squared accounting for 51.38% of variation present within governance. The GII variable is robust within each regression and is significant at a 5% level and exhibits negative t-values. This indicates that an increased GII score can indicate that the governing entity is more likely to experience corruption, is less observant of enforcing the law, and its bureaucracy is unable to absorb shocks if political change occurs. Thus increased gender inequality can contribute to the fall of a governing regime. Another significant explanatory variable is total unemployment, significant within this model at a 10% level. The years 2000, 2005, and 2008 are significant on a 5%, 5%, and 10% level respectively. However, I suspect that these may be significant due to limited
amount of data available, as the analysis software dropped several years due to issues with multicolinierity.

Table 4 indicates the influence of the ‘share of women employed within the non agricultural sector’ against ‘democratic accountability.’ The final model is significant on a global level, with an R-squared value of .8522. The gender variable is robust through the entire model and highly significant at a 1% level. The positive t-value indicates an increase in the amount of women employed in the non-agricultural sector results in the governing regime to be better able to respond to its citizens needs. Other significant variables are total unemployment, percentage of military expenditures as a portion of GDP, employment of the youth population between the ages of 15 and 24, and the GDP per capita.

Table 5 reflects the influence of women employed in the non-agricultural sector with ‘governance.’ Again, the model is significant on a global scale with R-squared of .8983. The gender variable is also highly significant at a 1% level. This indicates a positive relationship between the stability of the governing regime and the ability women to become employed in the non-agricultural sector. Additional significant variables include total unemployment (10%), military expenditure as a ratio of GDP (1%), and the log of GDP per capita (1%).

The high R-squares and robust gender variables presented in Tables 3-5 indicate there is a strong correlation using the gender indicators and governance and democratic accountability. The gender indicators are robust and significant at a 5% and 1% level, even more than the other chosen economic indicators.

As with any data analysis, there are always obstacles and limitations to the extent of the study. Developing countries typically lack the resources and ability to capture demographic and census data, and the summary statistics from table 1 exhibit this fact. It was difficult to work
with unbalanced panel data, as many of the variables were only available for specific years. The large amount of missing variables prevented me from performing a country-by-country analysis. Thus I was unable to compare the democratic accountability of a country currently involved in the Arab Awakening to a country that is not currently involved. This is a large hindrance to my thesis but inevitable due to lack of data. There were additional problems with the explanatory variables. The GII coefficient was only available for 4 years, and it was difficult to measure the impact over a longer time-span as the coefficient was first introduced in 1995. Furthermore, there was a large amount of missing data within the ‘share of women employed within the non-agricultural sector’ as well as GDP per capita and total unemployment statistics.

Another obstacle to measuring gender inequality is that much of the discrimination women encounter is unable to be appropriately quantified. Women are oppressed via cultural and social normative values, and while these norms manifest themselves in government policies, there are still methods of oppression that do not take into account the overarching gender power hierarchy. Women continue to be subjected to female genital mutilation. They cannot vote, cannot drive, and many cannot leave the country without permission from their husbands or fathers. Stoning is still common punishment if women are perceived to humiliate or dishonor their family in any way. These are cultural factors that are not included when looking at the amount of women represented within parliament, or the labor force. Data that captures gender discrimination is still a new field, and it has a long way to go before it is able to explain cultural oppression.

VI. Conclusion and Outlook for the MENA Region

The regression analysis offers insight about the region and the impact of gender on the potential of a country to democratize or exhibit democratic tendencies. Perhaps the most
interesting result was the very strong correlation between the number of women employed within the non-agricultural sector and the democratic accountability and governance of the regime. The correlation is logical by nature – Shari’a law implies women are confined to household labor and reproduction only. Thus it is rare for women to have a presence outside of the informal sector, where they are rendered invisible and remain dependent on family connections to gain any sort of economic or social privilege. Democracy requisites include civil liberties and equal representation – in order for a democratic transition to occur, all citizens must have equal access and opportunities to socioeconomic growth.

Arab Spring offers a chance for these transitioning governments to incorporate new policies into their legislative and economic structure. One method is to incorporate gender-responsive budgeting into government policies. The purpose of gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) is to identify and address gender gaps that exist with the current political framework. It proposes a lens through which policy makers can view their economy and it increases the allocation of resources to women. GRB as a tool is currently used in more than 60 countries, incorporated within regimes that recognize the importance of gender equality and the necessity to help strengthen female participation and advancement (United Nations Women).

It is unknown how these potential transitions will change the infrastructure of these economies. If political Islam is indeed to take power and replace these current authoritarian regimes, it is more than likely that these new policies will not vary much from those previously imposed. It is not typical for political Islam groups to advocate for political freedom and individual civil rights for minority populations. These results suggest that these new governments implement policies that will foster the advancement of gender equality and allow women to have equal civil and political rights. But the political and social terrain of the Middle
East is not smooth. Oppression comes from multiple facets within each society, all linked together in an overarching cage to prevent social progression. Women are no more protected by the state than they are by their families, and if true gender equality is to occur, it must change at both the macro and the micro levels.
REFERENCES


## APPENDIX

### Table 1: Summary Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
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<td>1.440 (.045)</td>
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<td>2.110 (.128)**</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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Standard errors in parentheses. * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%
### Table 3 • Panel Data Regression: Dependent Variable (Governance)

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<th>Dependent Variable:</th>
<th>(1) Governance</th>
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<th>(5) Governance</th>
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<td>-4.270*** (0.688)</td>
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<td>Year 1995</td>
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<td>59</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>33</td>
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Standard errors in parentheses. * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%
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<th>(3) Democratic Accountability</th>
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<td>3.260 (.096)***</td>
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Standard errors in parentheses.  
* significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%
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<td>(0.002)***</td>
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<td>(.009)*</td>
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Standard errors in parentheses. * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%