

Religion, Religiosity and the Place of Islam in Political Life: Insights from the Arab Barometer Surveys*

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Abstract

This paper explores the nature and determinants of attitudes toward the political role of Islam held by ordinary citizens in the Arab world. Based on results from nationally representative surveys carried out in seven Arab states during 2006–2007, it engages the pervasive debate about Islam and democracy—showing that the significant divide is *not* between those who favor democracy and those who favor Islam, but between those who favor secular democracy and those who favor a political system that is both democratic and Islamic in some meaningful way. Furthermore, this analysis finds that the civic values and predispositions of individuals who favor a political role for Islam are overwhelmingly similar to those of individuals who favor a separation of religion and politics. The paper also finds little consistency in the factors that incline individuals towards support for political Islam in the different countries surveyed. Most importantly, this analysis concludes that there is little or no incompatibility between Islam and democracy in the public mind and that a proper understanding of the reasons and ways that Muslim Arab publics think about governance and the political role of Islam is possible only if attention is paid to the particular political and societal contexts within which attitudes are formed.

Keywords

Islam; democracy; secularism; political Islam; Arab world; Arab Barometer Project

This paper explores the nature and determinants of attitudes toward the political role of Islam held by ordinary citizens in the Arab world. It uses survey data collected in 2006–2007 as part of the seven-country Arab Barometer Project. The study first reports a clear division of opinion among Muslim Arab publics about whether Islam should play a role in political affairs, after which it investigates the following questions:

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- Are men and women who favor a political role for Islam either more likely or less likely than those who favor a separation of religion and politics to support democracy?
- Are the civic values and predispositions of individuals who favor a political role for Islam different than or similar to those of individuals who favor a separation of religion and politics?
- What factors shape attitudes toward the political role of Islam and help to explain why different people come to different conclusions about this important issue pertaining to governance in the Arab world?

Popular Attitudes toward Governance and the Political Role of Islam

Democratic currents have swept across much of the developing and post-communist world during the last quarter century. The Arab world has been largely unaffected by this revolution, however. The first *Arab Human Development Report*, published by the United Nations Development Programme in 2002, described a “deficit of freedom” and lamented that political systems “have not been opened up to all citizens” and that “political participation is less advanced in the Arab world than in other developing regions.”¹ The 2003 report reiterated this assessment, stating that the Arab world’s freedom deficit “remains critically pertinent and may have become even graver” since the 2002 report was issued.² A series of articles in the January 2004 issue of *Comparative Politics* described the “resilient and enduring authoritarianism” in the Arab world, and later that same year Thomas Carothers and Marina Ottaway concluded that in most Arab countries “real progress toward democracy is minimal.”³

The situation has not improved in the last few years. As the most recent Arab Human Development Report observes, “Viewed from the perspective of freedom and good governance, it is difficult to describe subsequent events in the Arab arena as the kind of widespread, thorough-going reform for

¹) United Nations Development Programme, *Arab Human Development Report* (New York, 2002), Chapter 7, www.undp.org/rbas/ahdr/bychapter.html.

²) United Nations Development Programme, *Arab Human Development Report* (New York, 2003), Introduction, www.undp.org/rbas/ahdr/english2003.html.

³) Marina Ottaway and Thomas Carothers, “Middle East Democracy,” *Foreign Policy* (2004): 22–28. See Marcia Posusney and Michelle Angrist, eds., *Authoritarianism in the Middle East* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2005).

which [earlier] reports called ... despite the growing winds of protest against governments and the intensifying demands for radical reform around the Arab world.”⁴ Confirming this judgment are the most recent Freedom House indicators, which report that not one of the twenty-one Arab countries is fully free and only six are even partly free.

Large numbers of ordinary citizens in the Arab world are discontent with this situation and are asking how their societies should be governed. Public opinion research indicates that vast majorities want their countries to be governed by a political system that is democratic. Indeed, recent studies report that eighty percent or more of the men and women interviewed in nationally representative surveys believe that democracy would be the best form of government for their country and that, despite its limitations, democracy is better than any other political system.⁵ Moreover, research in other world regions indicates that support for democracy, though substantial in these instances as well, is neither as high overall nor as consistently high in all countries as is the case in the Arab world.⁶ The disproportionately high support for democracy among Arab publics is undoubtedly, at least in part, a response to the persistence of authoritarianism.

This is not the whole story, however. While there is broad support for democracy, there is also a deep division of opinion about the extent to which, and the way in which, Islam should play a role in political affairs. The relationship between Islam and politics is arguably the most important and hotly-debated issue pertaining to governance in the present-day Arab world. This division is reflected in Table 1, which presents findings from representative national surveys carried out during 2006–2007 in six of the seven countries included in the Arab Barometer project.⁷ The seventh country,

⁴ United Nations Development Programme, *Arab Human Development Report* (New York, 2005), 29, <http://204.200.211.31/contents/file/ArabHumanDevelopRep2005En.pdf>.

⁵ Amaney Jamal and Mark Tessler, “Dimensions of Democratic Support in the Arab World,” *Journal of Democracy* 19 (January 2008): 97–110; reprinted as “The Arab Aspiration for Democracy,” in *How People View Democracy*, Larry Diamond and Marc Platner, eds. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008).

⁶ Fares Braizat, “Muslims and Democracy: An Empirical Critique of Fukuyama’s Culturalist Approach,” in *Islam, Gender, Culture and Democracy*, Ronald Inglehart, ed. (Willowdale, Ontario: de Sitter Publications, 2003). See Diamond and Platner, *How People View Democracy*.

⁷ Multi-stage area probability sampling was used to select respondents, with quota sampling employed in the final stage in several countries. Face-to-face interviewing was used throughout and only men and women aged eighteen or over were interviewed. See Arab Barometer Project, <http://www.arabbarometer.org/>.

Table 1. Attitudes toward the political role of Islam.

How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?		
	% Strongly agree/Agree	% Disagree/Strongly disagree
It would be better for (country name) if more people with strong religious beliefs held public office	54	46
Men of religion should have influence over the decisions of government	56	44
Religious practice is a private matter and should be separated from social and economic life	48	52

Lebanon, is treated separately, as explained below. The table presents the aggregated responses of 6922 men and women to three questions on the Arab Barometer interview schedule that ask about the involvement of religion in political affairs.

The countries in which Arab Barometer surveys were conducted include Morocco, Algeria, Lebanon, Palestine (West Bank and Gaza), Jordan, Kuwait and Yemen. This is by no means all of the countries in the Arab world. It excludes some particularly important countries, most notably Egypt, where a planned survey had to be abandoned because authorization to carry out the research could not be obtained. It also includes only one country in the Arab Gulf, although data from a survey in an additional Gulf Arab country, Bahrain, will be available in the near future, and a survey in another, Qatar, will be conducted in 2010. Nevertheless, the seven countries in which Arab Barometer surveys have been carried out to date are at least broadly representative of the region. They include monarchies and republics, larger and smaller states, richer and poorer countries, countries in every part of the Arab world, and states that differ in the extent and character of internal societal and demographic divisions. In addition, although each contains political movements and parties that organize and recruit under the banner of Islam, they vary considerably with respect to the character and political status of these organizations.

Comparison across these dissimilar states and societies involve what is sometimes termed a “most different systems” research design, and one important implication of this design is that similar findings across dissimilar countries increase confidence that the observed patterns are generalizable. Having been found in diverse political, economic and social settings, it is unlikely that the

observed patterns apply only under particular conditions, and correspondingly, it is likely that they apply at least somewhat more broadly. This being the case, it is significant that the pattern shown in Table 1, based on aggregated survey data, is for the most part similar to that observed in each of the Arab Barometer countries. This is shown in Table 2, which presents country-specific response distributions for the three items included in Table 1. The one striking exception to this generalization is Lebanon. In Lebanon, which is not included in Table 1, a large part of the population is Christian. Even among Lebanese Muslims, however, the response distribution is heavily skewed in the direction of separating religion and politics. This view was expressed by eighty-one percent, seventy-seven percent and seventy-eight percent of the Lebanese Muslims interviewed in response, respectively, to the three questions included in Table 1. Apart from the special case of Lebanon, however, it is clear from

Table 2. Attitudes toward the political role of Islam in seven countries.

How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?			
		% Strongly agree/Agree	% Disagree/Strongly disagree
It would be better for (country name) if more people with strong religious beliefs held public office	Jordan	50	50
	Palestine	60	40
	Algeria	58	42
	Morocco	69	31
	Kuwait	32	68
	Lebanon	12	88
	Yemen	41	59
Men of religion should have influence over the decisions of government	Jordan	52	48
	Palestine	56	44
	Algeria	61	39
	Morocco	63	37
	Kuwait	41	59
	Lebanon	83	17
	Yemen	58	42
Religious practice is a private matter and should be separated from social and economic life	Jordan	58	42
	Palestine	48	52
	Algeria	36	64
	Morocco	51	49
	Kuwait	54	46
	Lebanon	83	17
	Yemen	45	55

Table 2 that in six dissimilar Arab countries there is a significant division of opinion between those who favor separating religion and politics and those who believe Islam should play a meaningful role in political affairs. Of the eighteen distributions presented in Table 2, exclusive of Lebanon, there are only five in which the majority position is held by more than sixty percent of those surveyed; there is only one in which it is held by more than sixty-five percent of the respondents; and there is no country in which the magnitude of the division is greater than 60/40 on all three items. Thus, despite some cross-country variation, the clear conclusion to be drawn from Tables 1 and 2 is that Arab publics are not of one mind when it comes to questions about the political role of Islam.

Support for Political Islam and Support for Democracy

It must also be noted that those who favor an important political role for Islam are not necessarily expressing opposition to democracy. On the contrary, a clear division of opinion about the place of Islam in political affairs is present among respondents who support democracy, as it is among all respondents. This is not surprising given that the vast majority of those surveyed believe democracy to be the best political system, but it does make clear that the most salient division relating to governance is not between those who favor democracy and those who favor political Islam but, rather, between those who favor secular democracy and those who favor a political system that is both democratic and Islamic in some meaningful way.⁸

⁸) The fact that there is no relationship between support for political Islam and support for democracy, meaning that support for democracy as often as not does not mean support for *secular* democracy, is reflected not only in data from the Arab Barometer Project but also in data from more than a dozen other representative national surveys carried out in the Arab world in recent years. For details, see Mark Tessler, "Assessing the Influence of Religious Predispositions on Citizen Orientations Related To Governance and Democracy: Findings from Survey Research in Three Dissimilar Arab Societies," *Taiwan Journal of Democracy* 1 (January 2006): 1-12; Mark Tessler, "Do Islamic Orientations Influence Attitudes Toward Democracy in the Arab World: Evidence from Survey Research in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Algeria," *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 2 (Spring 2003): 229-249; Mark Tessler, "Islam and Democracy in the Arab World: Evidence from Opinion Research in the Maghrib" in *Democracy and Peace in the Middle East*, Amin Saikal and Albrecht Schnabel, eds. (Tokyo: United Nations University, 2003); Mark Tessler and Audra Grant, "Palestinian Attitudes toward Democracy and Its Compatibility with Islam: Evidence from Public Opinion Research in the West Bank and Gaza," *Arab Studies*

This is illustrated by the patterns shown in Table 3, which again presents aggregated data from the Arab Barometer surveys, with Lebanon excluded for the reasons discussed above. The table divides respondents into four categories indicating political system preference, based on the juxtaposition of attitudes toward democracy and attitudes toward political Islam. It shows, as suggested above, that most men and women favor democracy and among these individuals, as among those who do not favor democracy, there is a nearly equal division of opinion about the political role of Islam. The four categories identified in this manner are: (1) secular democracy; (2) democracy with a political role for Islam; (3) secular non-democracy; and (4) a non-democratic system with a political role for Islam. In constructing the table, attitudes toward democracy were assessed by combining items that asked respondents whether they agreed or disagreed that democracy, despite its problems, is better than any other form of government, and whether they considered a democratic political system to be a good or bad way of governing their country.⁹ Seventy-eight percent of the respondents expressed a positive judgment about democracy in both instances, and these individuals are classified as supportive of democracy in Table 3 and subsequent analyses. Table 3 shows that there is a clear division of opinion about the place of Islam in political affairs among men and women who support democracy. Among those with a positive attitude toward democracy, the proportion of support for secular democracy ranges from forty-six percent to fifty percent, depending on the item, and the proportion favoring a political role for Islam correspondingly ranges from fifty percent to fifty-four percent. Thus, although a very slight majority of the Arab citizens who support democracy respond to two of the three questions in a manner indicating approval of a political role for Islam, the proportion preferring secular democracy is never lower than forty-six percent, making the prominent division of political opinion the most important take-away from Table 3.¹⁰ The table also shows the distribution across the four political system

Quarterly (Fall 2002): 1–20; Mark Tessler, “Islam and Democracy in the Middle East: The Impact of Religious Orientations on Attitudes Toward Democracy in Four Arab Countries,” *Comparative Politics* 34 (April 2002): 337–354.

⁹ The wording of these questions is as follows. (1) “To what extent do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the following four statements: 4. Democracy may have its problems but is better than any other form of government” and (2) “I’m going to describe various types of political systems and ask whether you think each is a very good, good, bad or very bad way of governing (country name): 1. A democratic political system.”

¹⁰ Just as Table 2 shows that the response distributions presented in Table 1 are indicative of the pattern found in each individual country included in the Arab Barometer, except for Lebanon,

Table 3. Political system preferences based on attitudes toward democracy and the political role of Islam.

		Positive Judgment of Democracy (78%)	Negative Judgment of Democracy (22%)
It would be better for (country name) if more people with strong religious beliefs held public office	Favors Political Role for Islam	<i>Democracy with Islam</i> Column % 53 Total % 41	<i>Non-Democracy with Islam</i> Column % 53 Total % 12
	Not Favor Political Role for Islam	<i>Secular Democracy</i> Column % 47 Total % 37	<i>Secular Non-Democracy</i> Column % 47 Total % 10
Men of religion should have influence over the decisions of government	Favors Political Role for Islam	<i>Democracy with Islam</i> Column % 54 Total % 42	<i>Non-Democracy with Islam</i> Column % 59 Total % 13
	Not Favor Political Role for Islam	<i>Secular Democracy</i> Column % 46 Total % 35	<i>Secular Non-Democracy</i> Column % 41 Total % 9
Religious practice is a private matter and should be separated from social and economic life	Favors Political Role for Islam	<i>Democracy with Islam</i> Column % 50 Total % 39	<i>Non-Democracy with Islam</i> Column % 56 Total % 12
	Not Favor Political Role for Islam	<i>Secular Democracy</i> Column % 50 Total % 39	<i>Secular Non-Democracy</i> Column % 44 Total % 10

preference categories based on responses to each of the questions. The proportion of the total favoring a political system that is both democratic and Islamic ranges from thirty-nine percent to forty-two percent; and the proportion of the total favoring secular democracy ranges from thirty-five percent to thirty-nine percent. Thus, while a plurality favors democracy with Islam by a very small margin, the distribution of political system preferences again makes

the relationship between support for democracy and attitudes toward political Islam shown in Table 3 is also found in the individual countries. These findings have been published elsewhere, along with a fuller discussion of the way that respondents understand “democracy”. See Jamal and Tessler (see note 5).

clear that there is division rather than consensus so far as Islam's political role is concerned.

The division of opinion about the relationship between Islam and politics raises three important sets of questions. First, what political values, predispositions and conceptions are held by citizens who favor secular democracy and by citizens who favor a political formula that is not only democratic but is also Islamic in some meaningful way? In other words, what kind of "political culture orientation" characterizes the men and women in each category, and in what respects, if any, are their normative political orientations similar or different? Second, what factors explain why different individuals come to different conclusions about the way their country should be governed, and in particular why do some Arab citizens favor secular democracy while others favor democracy with Islam? Of particular interest is the degree to which explanatory power resides in either personal religious orientations or judgments about political and economic circumstances. Third, to what extent, and with what analytical implications, are the answers to the first two questions similar or different across the countries in which the Arab Barometer surveys were carried out?

Political Culture and its Relevance for Democracy

Studies of democracy and democratic transitions place emphasis on the attitudes, values, and behavior patterns of ordinary citizens. More specifically, this research argues that successful democratization requires not only support for democracy among a significant proportion of a country's population but also that its citizens possess norms and behavior patterns conducive to democracy—in other words that they possess a "democratic" political orientation. Some analysts suggest that this is a precondition for a democratic transition.¹¹ More common is the view that democratic norms and behavior need not precede, but can rather follow, an elite-led transition involving the reform of political institutions and procedures.¹² Indeed, according to this argument, citizen orientations conducive to democracy may emerge in response to

¹¹ Samuel Huntington, "Democracy's Third Wave" in *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner, eds. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993) 13.

¹² See Richard Rose, "Where Are Postcommunist Countries Going?" *Journal of Democracy* 8 (July 1997), 98; Philippe Schmitter and Terri Karl, "What Democracy Is...and Is Not" in *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner, eds. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 47.

the experience of a democratic transition. Debates about timing and sequence notwithstanding, however, there is general agreement that sustainable democracy ultimately depends not only on the commitments and actions of political elites but also on the normative and behavioral predispositions of ordinary citizens.

These insights are derived primarily from the study of new democracies. Less commonly examined are the politically relevant attitudes, values, and behavior patterns of citizens in non-democracies, especially those in the Arab world.¹³ Even less well understood is the degree to which the political values and conceptions held by Arab men and women differ as a function of views about the political role of Islam. Thus, given the division of opinion related to political Islam noted above, it is important to investigate and compare the political culture orientations both of citizens who favor secular democracy and of those who favor a political formula that is not only democratic but also Islamic in some meaningful way.

Almond and Verba's work on *The Civic Culture* is the first major attempt at understanding the relationship between citizen orientations and governance, including democratic governance.¹⁴ Among the particular orientations they explore are obligation to participate, sense of efficacy, and level of interpersonal trust. Although Almond and Verba's study was later criticized for a number of limitations, such as a failure to examine subcultures, it was the first large-scale comparative survey of its kind and established the importance of studying the attitudes, values, and behavior patterns of ordinary men and women. Since that time, and especially during the last decade and a half, there have been many empirical investigations of citizen orientations and their relationship to democratization. The general conclusion, as summarized by Inglehart, is that "culture plays a crucial role in democracy ... its survival depends on the values and beliefs of ordinary citizens."¹⁵

¹³ Preliminary findings and insights addressed to this topic are presented in Mark Tessler and Eleanor Gao, "Democracy and the Political Culture Orientations of Ordinary Citizens: A Typology for the ArabWorld and Beyond," *International Social Science Journal* 192 (June 2007): 199-209. The discussion of political culture in the present study draws heavily upon this publication.

¹⁴ Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, S., *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Company, 1963); and Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture Revisited* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Company, 1980).

¹⁵ Ronald Inglehart, "Culture and Democracy," in *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress*, Lawrence E. Harrison and Samuel Huntington, eds. (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 96.

These studies have examined a broad array of attitudes, values, and behavior patterns. Almond and Verba focused on political cognition, feelings toward government and politics, levels of partisanship, sense of civic obligation, and political efficacy. Using World Values Survey data from 1990 and 1995, Inglehart investigated the relationship between democratic achievement and adherence to self-expression values, including trust, tolerance, and political activism. In yet another empirical study, based on data from Eastern Europe, the authors examined support for freedom of expression, political tolerance, respect for competing ideas and preferences, political interest, and a willingness to participate in the political process.¹⁶ Dimensions of political culture that have received attention in still other studies include political interest, political tolerance, valuation of liberty, rights consciousness, support for civil disobedience, support for media independence, and political participation.¹⁷

Among the various attitudes, values and behavior patterns on which different authors have placed emphasis are six that may be examined with data from the Arab Barometer: (1) support for gender equality; (2) tolerance; (3) interpersonal trust; (4) civic participation; (5) political interest; and (6) political knowledge. The importance and relevance of each of these are briefly described below.

The 2006 Arab Human Development Report discusses the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment both in general and with respect to the Arab world in particular. Democracy is meaningless if half of a country's citizens do not have equal rights and equal access to political influence and power. But granting these rights is not sufficient to promote the involvement and inclusion of women in public life; rights can be granted without removing the social barriers that prevent women from becoming full citizens. For a polity to be truly democratic, there also needs to be broad public support for the

¹⁶ Richard Rose, William Mishler and Christian Haerpfer, *Democracy and its Alternatives: Understanding Post-communist Societies* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), 98.

¹⁷ See J. Gibson, R. Duch and K. Tedin, "Democratic Values and the Transformation of the Soviet Union," *The Journal of Politics* 54 (1992): 329-371; A. Nathan and T. Shi, "Cultural Requisites for Democracy in China: Findings from a Survey," *Daedalus* 122 (1993): 95-123; T. Rice and J. Feldman, "Civic Culture and Democracy from Europe to America," *The Journal of Politics* 39 (1997): 1143-72; J. Booth and P. Richard, "Civil Society, Political Capital, and Democratization in Central America," *The Journal of Politics* 60 (1998): 780-800; R. Dalton, "Citizen Attitudes and Political Behavior," *Comparative Political Studies* 33 (2000): 912-940; C. Garcia-Rivero, H. Kotze and P. du Toit, "Political Culture and Democracy: the South African Case," *Politikon* 29 (2002): 163-181; R. Inglehart and C. Welzel, "Political Culture and Democracy: Analyzing Cross-Level Linkages," *Comparative Politics* 36 (2003): 61-79.

principle and practice of gender equality—there needs to be an appreciation by ordinary citizens that gender equality is both desirable for ethical reasons and also in the public interest. It is in this connection that a recent study by Inglehart and Norris documents the difference between Western and Muslim societies in public attitudes toward women's rights and opportunities and suggests that a lower level of support for gender equality is among the reasons that democracy lags in Muslim countries.¹⁸ Similar findings are presented by Fish.¹⁹

Not only should all citizens be accorded equal rights, their diverse ideas and preferences should be respected as well. Tolerance and respect for diversity are necessary in order for democracy to function effectively. At the most basic level, a tolerant citizenry can prevent civil strife, since the abridgement of minority rights by a dominant majority can lead to violence and conflict.²⁰ Beyond this, however, tolerance is an indispensable feature of democracy for two interrelated reasons. On the one hand, democracy requires the equality of all citizens before the state and under the law, and for this to be accepted as legitimate it is necessary that the right to hold and express views with which one disagrees be accepted as well. On the other, tolerance for diverse and opposing viewpoints is necessary for the political contestation and open exchange of ideas that are essential for democracy.²¹ Without respect for the right to advocate, argue, dissent, and debate, citizens would be unable to hold their leaders accountable and government by the consent of the governed would not be possible.

Along with tolerance, citizens must trust one another in a functioning democracy; they must believe that most men and women are fair-minded and reasonable and, accordingly, that citizens like themselves are the best judges of

¹⁸ Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris, "The True Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs*, 135 (March–April 2003): 63–70.

¹⁹ Steven Fish, "Islam and Authoritarianism," *World Politics* 55 (October 2002): 4–37. For an analysis that challenges the assertion that gender inequality contributes authoritarianism in Arab and Muslim countries, see Daniela Donno and Bruce Russett, "Islam, Authoritarianism, and Female Empowerment: What Are the Linkages?" *World Politics* 56 (2004) 582–607.

²⁰ James Gibson, "The Resilience of Mass Support for Democratic Institutions and Processes in the Nascent Russian and Ukrainian Democracies," in *Political Culture and Civil Society in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, V. Tismaneanu, ed. (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1995); James Gibson, "The Paradoxes of Political Tolerance in Processes of Democratization," *Politikon* 23 (1996): 5–21; James Gibson, "A Sober Second Thought: An Experiment in Persuading Russians to Tolerate," *American Journal of Political Science* 42 (1998): 819–50.

²¹ Garcia-Rivero, Kotze and du Toit (see note 17).

how a country should be governed. Otherwise, they are unlikely to distinguish respect for the rule of law from uncritical deference to those in authority.²² In addition, interpersonal trust is necessary for citizens to coalesce and engage in collective political action, which is also essential for democracy to function effectively. Putnam is among those who make this point, arguing that trust is a requirement for strong civic organizations, which in turn improve the quality of governance in two important ways.²³ On the demand side, citizens in communities with high levels of trust can insist upon better government. They can engage in collective action if the government is unresponsive to their needs. On the supply side, representative government benefits from a reserve of citizens as potential lawmakers. Trustful citizens understand the necessity of cooperation and compromise in a democratic regime.

Civic participation is another important component of a democratic political culture orientation. First, a vibrant civil society is an important check on the power of the government. Interest groups and other civic associations allow citizens to monitor government actions, articulate and aggregate interests, and exert political influence. This is especially important in new democracies as norms of governance have not been well established and power can be easily abused.²⁴ Second, civic participation fosters the development of some of the skills that are useful for democratic citizens. Those who have learned how to organize activities, direct meetings, and prioritize goals are more likely to be effective in organizing a demonstration, circulating a petition, or preparing a ballot initiative. Civic engagement can also increase feelings of efficacy, which itself, in turn, promotes political involvement.²⁵

On a cognitive level, political interest and political knowledge are also very important for effective democracy. Individuals who are interested in politics are more likely to follow political affairs and to participate in civic activities.²⁶ Engaged citizens are also likely to make effective monitors of public policy and government action. Political knowledge, which is associated with political interest, is important for the same reasons. Citizens are more likely to learn

²²) Rose, Mishler and Haerpfer (see note 16).

²³) Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992).

²⁴) Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

²⁵) S. Verba, K. Schlozman and H. Brady, "Beyond SES: A Resources Model of Political Participation," *American Political Science Review* 89 (1995): 271–294.

²⁶) *Ibid.*

about politics and make informed assessments when an issue is important to them and if they possess relevant political knowledge.²⁷ Political interest and political knowledge can thus improve the quality as well as the quantity of participation by allowing citizens to make enlightened choices and helping them to resist elite manipulation.²⁸

Political Islam and Political Culture

Table 4 examines the relationship between support for political Islam and each of the six elements of political culture described above. The data, again, are from the Arab Barometer surveys in Morocco, Algeria, Palestine, Jordan, Kuwait and Yemen; and only the seventy-eight percent of respondents who support democracy are included in the analysis. Although it would also be instructive to examine these relationships for political Islam among respondents who do not favor democracy, this is beyond the scope of the present investigation and will be left for another occasion.

Several different strategies were considered for classifying individuals with respect to their views about political Islam. One was to create a unidimensional factor based on the three items included in Tables 1–3. Although the items are dichotomized in Tables 1–3, there are actually four response categories, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, in each instance. Only one factor emerged from the factor analysis, indicating unidimensionality, and factor scores were then generated to produce a continuous measure of this dimension. A second approach was to create an additive index based on responses to the three items. Since there were four possible responses to each item, the index is a ten-point scale ranging from three to twelve. A final approach was to use the one item that seemed to have the highest level of face validity. The item asking whether men of religion should have influence over the decisions of government seemed most appropriate—even though the unidimensionality demonstrated by factor analysis offers evidence that the three items measure the same concept and this, in turn, increases confidence that each is valid.

²⁷ M. Delli Carpini, “In Search of the Informed Citizen: What Americans Know about Politics and Why It Matters,” *The Communication Review* 41 (2000): 129–164.

²⁸ M. Delli Carpini and S. Keeter, *What Americans Know about Politics and Why It Matters* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

As expected, the measures resulting from these three strategies are highly correlated. The lowest of the three bivariate correlations is .616. Thus, it is very unlikely that findings based on one measure would differ significantly from findings based on a different measure. This being the case, the item asking whether men of religion should have influence over the decisions of government is used for reasons of parsimony and clarity in Table 4. This also has the important advantage of providing a natural cutting point between those who do and those who do not support political Islam. The question asks respondents whether they agree strongly, agree, disagree or disagree strongly that “men of religion should have influence over the decisions of government.” The table compares the political culture orientations of those who strongly agree or agree, and thus are supportive of political Islam, to the political culture orientations of those who disagree or strongly disagree, and thus are not supportive of political Islam. As shown in Table 1, the proportion of respondents in the two categories is nearly equal.

As discussed, the six elements of political culture that may be examined with data from the Arab Barometer are: (1) support for gender equality; (2) tolerance; (3) interpersonal trust; (4) civic participation; (5) political interest; and (6) political knowledge. In most instances, there are two or more items in the interview schedule that pertain to each orientation, and this raises the possibility of alternative measurement strategies similar to those discussed above with respect to political Islam. Again, however, although unidimensionality has been assessed and factor scores and indices have been generated to produce continuous measures, individual items and dichotomized responses are used in the tables to maximize parsimony and clarity in the presentation of findings. Table 4 contains many specific findings and does not lead itself to easy summary. The most important point, however, is that the political culture orientations of individuals who support democracy and favor political Islam do not differ very much from the political culture orientations of individuals who support democracy and do not favor political Islam. In most instances, the latter are more likely to express a view or report a behavior that is consistent with democracy. This is not always the case, however, and the difference in any event is rarely more than a few percentage points.

As discussed earlier, the six elements of political culture examined in the table are among the citizen orientations that contribute to stable and sustainable democracy. It is thus important to know whether they are either more likely or less likely to be present among individuals who support political Islam—whether, in other words, the previously described important divide between citizens who do and do not favor a separation of religion and politics is associated with the presence or absence of a more democratic political

Table 4. Political culture orientations among Arabs who support democracy and also support political Islam and Arabs who support democracy and do not support political Islam.

		Men of religion should have influence over the decisions of government	
		Strongly Agree/Agree	Disagree/Strongly Disagree
<i>GENDER EQUALITY</i>			
A married woman can work outside the home if she wishes	%Strongly Agree / Agree	80	86
On the whole, men make better political leaders than women	%Disagree / Strongly Disagree	78	72
Men and women should receive equal wages and salaries	%Strongly Agree / Agree	84	86
<i>TOLERANCE</i>			
Factors that make a person qualified for national leadership: Openness to diverse political ideas	%Very Important (Important)	59 (37)	63 (32)
Islam requires that in a Muslim country the political rights of non-Muslims be inferior to those of Muslims	%Disagree / Strongly Disagree	61	71
Which of the following groups you do wish to have as neighbors: People of different race or color	%Do Not Mind	82	84
<i>INTERPERSONAL TRUST</i>			
Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted	%Yes	32	27

Table 4 (cont.)

		Men of religion should have influence over the decisions of government	
		Strongly Agree/Agree	Disagree/Strongly Disagree
<i>INTERPERSONAL TRUST</i>			
Are you a member of any organizations or formal groups	%Yes	20	23
Did you vote in the last national election	%Yes	61	59
Did you attend a campaign meeting or rally during the last national election	%Yes	32	33
Have you ever joined with others to draw attention to an issue or sign a petition	%Once / more than once	30	35
<i>POLITICAL INTEREST</i>			
Generally speaking, how interested would you say you are in politics	%Very Interested / Interested	38	44
How often do you follow news about politics and government	%Very Often / Often	60	64
<i>POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE</i>			
Can name the foreign minister	%Correct Answer	46	52
Can name the speaker of parliament	%Correct Answer	50	55

culture. The table makes clear that this is not the case. The degree to which citizens possess an orientation conducive to democracy varies across the six conceptual dimensions and, to a lesser extent, across the specific items used to measure each dimension. But to the degree that attitudes, values and behavior patterns that contribute to democracy are present, or not present, this is the case to a nearly equal extent among Muslim Arabs who favor secular democracy and those who favor a political system that is Islamic as well as democratic.

Beyond demonstrating the absence of differences associated with judgments about political Islam, the table offers some general insights about the degree to which a democratic political culture is present in the Arab world. First, there is substantial support for gender equality, although this does not extend to the acceptance of women as political leaders. Second, levels of tolerance are relatively high. For example, most respondents consider openness to diverse political ideas to be an important qualification for national leadership, and two-thirds reject the proposition that the political rights of non-Muslims should be inferior to those of Muslims. Third, by contrast, levels of interpersonal trust are low; and fourth, so too are levels of civic participation. While sixty percent of those interviewed report voting in the last election, only one-fifth belong to an organization or formal group and only one-third say they have attended a campaign rally or signed a petition. Fifth, there is a moderate level of political interest, with some variation across the items in the table; and sixth, there is also a moderate level of political knowledge. On average, about half the respondents were able to correctly identify their country's foreign minister and speaker of parliament.

Political Islam and Political Culture in Specific Countries

While Table 4 shows general trends, the pattern observed in individual countries is not always completely identical. Nevertheless, more often than not, the pattern in each country is very similar to that shown in the table. The table includes fifteen items pertaining to political culture; and since the table was constructed from surveys in six countries, it incorporates a total of ninety responses. There was a difference greater than four percent in only twenty-six of these ninety instances, and in eleven of these the difference was only five, six, or seven percentage points. In addition, nine of the twenty-six instances of a difference greater than four percent involved Kuwait. Thus, although these instances of difference deserve further discussion, it is important to emphasize that for the most part the finding of little or no difference shown in Table 4 characterizes the individual countries as well. Further, notwithstanding some caution based on the findings from Kuwait, the logic of a most different research design, discussed earlier, suggests that the pattern observed in Table 4 probably applies in Arab countries beyond those included in the Arab Barometer.

To illustrate this conclusion and shed additional light on similarities and differences in the political culture orientations of persons who favor secular

democracy and those who advocate democracy with Islam, findings from the six countries included in Table 4 may be very briefly summarized.

In Jordan, there are only three instances, out of a possible fifteen, where the difference between those who favor secular democracy and those who favor democracy with Islam is large enough to be notable. The largest of these, nine percent, involves more frequent support among persons who favor a political role for Islam for an interpretation of the religion that accords equal rights to Muslim and non-Muslim citizens. The two other differences, six percent in each instance, include more frequent attendance at campaign rallies among individuals who support democracy with Islam and signing a petition more frequently among those who favor secular democracy. Few in number, small in magnitude, and inconsistent in direction, these findings do little to call into question the applicability to Jordan of the principal conclusion suggested by the aggregated data—that there are not important differences with respect to political culture orientation between citizens who favor secular democracy and those who prefer a political system that is democratic and also incorporates Islamic elements.

There are also three differences greater than four percent in Palestine. All are only five percent, however. A belief in the high importance of openness to diverse political ideas among national leaders is less common among persons who favor democracy with Islam, although support is widespread in both respondent categories and the difference disappears if, as in Tables 3 and 4, high importance and very high importance are combined. Both of the other differences involve political knowledge; five percent more of the citizens who favor secular democracy are able to identify correctly the foreign minister and speaker of parliament. Again, these differences are not numerous enough or large enough to challenge the conclusion that the political culture orientations of Palestinians who support secular democracy and Palestinians who favor democracy with Islam are very similar.

The pattern is only slightly different in Algeria. By a margin of six percent, Algerians who support secular democracy are more likely than those who support democracy with Islam to consider it acceptable for a married woman to work outside the home, although fully eighty percent of those in the latter category also consider it acceptable. A second difference is that seven percent more of the men and women who support secular democracy report voting in the last national election. The two remaining differences involve political knowledge. By margins of seven percent and twelve percent, respectively, more of the citizens who favor democracy with Islam than those who favor secular democracy are able to identify the prime minister and speaker of parliament.

Again, these difference are neither numerous, large, nor consistent in direction, suggesting that similarities are much more important than differences in the political culture orientations of citizens with dissimilar views about the relationship between democracy and Islam.

There are only three differences greater than four percent in Morocco. In one, by a margin of six percent, fewer citizens who favor democracy with Islam support an interpretation of the religion that accords equal rights to Muslim and non-Muslim citizens. In another, nine percent fewer are high in political trust. In a third, eight percent fewer respond in a positive fashion to one of the two items asking about political interest. These findings suggest that citizens who favor a political formula that is both democratic and Islamic are at least somewhat less likely than those who support secular democracy to possess political culture orientations conducive to democracy. At the same time, once again, these differences are few in number and limited in magnitude. In addition, they occur with respect to only one item in any single dimension of political culture and are thus balanced, at least in part, by a similar pattern of responses to other items that ask about tolerance and political interest. Accordingly, overall, the data show that the attitudes, values and behavior patterns of Moroccans in the two categories being compared are much more similar than they are different.

In Yemen, there are four instances of a difference greater than four percent. By a margin of ten percent, citizens who favor secular democracy are more likely to believe that men make better political leaders than women; and by the same margin, ten percent, they are more likely to respond positively to one of the items that asks about an interest in politics. But there are no differences associated with the other two items pertaining to gender equality or with a second item that asks about political interest. The remaining two differences pertain to tolerance. They are not in the same direction, however. Those who favor secular democracy are *more* likely, by a margin of eight percent, to reject an interpretation of Islam that assigns inferior political rights to non-Muslim citizens; but they are *less* likely, by a margin of five percent, to consider openness to diverse political ideas to be a very important qualification for national leadership. Thus, overall, without ignoring the differences that have been observed, it is not possible to conclude that Yemenis who favor democracy with Islam are less likely, or more likely, than Yemenis who prefer secular democracy to possess a political culture orientation characterized by norms conducive to democracy.

The final case, that of Kuwait, to some degree stands out from the pattern observed elsewhere. There are nine instances of a difference greater than four

percent in the frequency with which particular political culture orientations are embraced by citizens who, respectively, support democracy with and without an Islamic dimension. These instances pertain to five of the six dimensions of political culture under consideration, and in most cases they are of a magnitude larger than that found in other countries. Men and women who prefer democracy with Islam are less likely than those who favor secular democracy to support gender equality by a margin of seven percent when asked about women as political leaders and by a margin of nine percent when asked about equality in jobs and wages. With respect to tolerance, they are less likely, by a margin of nineteen percent, to agree that Islam accords equal rights to Muslim and non-Muslim citizens. They are also less likely to be engaged in political and civic life; seven percent fewer voted in the last national election and twenty-seven percent fewer report having signed a petition. The same is true of political interest. In response to the two relevant survey items, fewer individuals who favor democracy with Islam report an interest in politics, by margins of twenty-nine percent and twenty-four percent, respectively, than do advocates of secular democracy. Finally, and surprisingly given the other findings, by margins of sixteen percent and eighteen percent, respectively, citizens who support democracy with Islam are able to identify the foreign minister and the speaker of parliament more frequently than are citizens who prefer secular democracy.

Further analysis of the Kuwaiti case, either about the nature of the country's political culture, or possibly political cultures, or about the reasons that Kuwait differs from the countries discussed above, is beyond the scope of the present inquiry. Rather, when data from Bahrain and Qatar are available in the near future, it will be instructive to place Kuwait within an analysis that compares Gulf countries characterized by small populations and relative affluence to those representative of other parts of the Arab world. For the present, it may simply be reported that the most distinguishing features, both within Kuwait and between Kuwait and other countries, concern political interest and political knowledge. Political interest in Kuwait is more common among those who support secular democracy and less common among those who favor democracy with Islam. Political knowledge is more widespread than in the other Arab Barometer countries among citizens in both political system preference categories, but the difference is much greater among those who favor a political formula that is Islamic as well as democratic. Whether these patterns characterize other small Gulf countries, and should that be found, why and with what analytical implications, are among the questions the present study raises. These questions will be addressed in future research.

Hypotheses about Support for Political Islam

With the exception of Lebanon, there is a clear division among citizens who support democracy between those who favor secular democracy and those who favor a political system that is not only democratic but also Islamic. It is significant, as shown above, that men and women in the two political system preference categories do not differ very much in the degree to which they possess democratic political values. Nevertheless, as discussed earlier, this disagreement about the political role of Islam is one of the most important and hotly-debated issue pertaining to governance in the present-day Arab world.

The hypotheses below offer informed speculation about some of the reasons for this important and widespread division of opinion. There is no presumption that these propositions account for all of the variance that has been observed. Rather, they are intended to make a meaningful start at thinking systematically about the dynamics shaping attitudes toward political Islam in the Arab world. Further, since the hypotheses will be tested using regression analysis, which suggests but does not demonstrate causality, any findings involving statistically significant relationships should be understood only as reducing uncertainty and giving direction to ongoing research aimed at understanding why men and women who support democracy hold different views about whether Islam should also play a role in political affairs. With these cautions and limitations in mind, and with a view toward stimulating further reflection as well as laying a foundation for the data analysis to follow, three categories of hypotheses are offered. These pertain, respectively, to personal attributes and experiences, to political and economic assessments, and to religious and cultural predispositions.

Personal Attributes and Circumstances

One set of hypotheses considers the influence of individual-level attributes and circumstances. The main assumption informing these propositions is that persons who are more disadvantaged or vulnerable will be more inclined to support political Islam, presumably because Islam emphasizes justice and protection of the weak and, more generally, because political Islam, as much as democracy, represents a distinct and consequential alternative to the status quo. In some cases, however, there is an imperfect alignment between personal attributes and disadvantaged circumstances, and in these instances competing hypotheses may be offered. In addition, the logic informing some hypotheses may not be limited to expectations about the

explanatory power of disadvantaged circumstances or conditions of vulnerability.

- H1. Less affluent individuals are more likely to support political Islam than more affluent individuals. This is because they are disadvantaged by the status quo to a greater degree and thus more inclined to favor political change of greater consequence.
- H2. Younger individuals are more likely to support political Islam than older individuals. This is because they are less established and secure in their personal and professional lives and thus more inclined to favor political change of greater consequence.
- H3a. Less well educated individuals are more likely to support political Islam than better educated individuals. This is because they are disadvantaged by the status quo and less secure in their professional lives and thus more inclined to favor political change of greater consequence.
- H3b. Better educated individuals are more likely to support political Islam than less well educated individuals. This is because unemployment and underemployment are often highest, or at least foster greater discontent due to unrealized expectations, among better educated men and women, thus making them more inclined to favor political change of greater consequence. Better educated individuals may also have higher levels of political consciousness, and for this reason too, may be more inclined to favor significant political change.
- H4a. Women are more likely to support political Islam than men. This is because they are more vulnerable and less secure in their personal and professional lives and thus more inclined to favor political change of greater consequence. With primary responsibility for the children and family, women may also be inclined to favor political Islam because of the religion's emphasis on social welfare and protection of the weak.
- H4b. Women are less likely to support political Islam than men. This is because political Islam is often perceived, whether accurately or inaccurately, as committed to a political agenda and platform that does not give women social and political rights equal to those of men.

Political and Economic Assessments

A second set of hypotheses again places emphasis on discontent with the status quo. In this case, however, the focus is not on individual-level circumstances but rather on judgments about the country as a whole. It may be the case, for instance, that some men and women who personally benefit from the prevailing order nonetheless believe that the country needs a very different political system, possibly one that is not only democratic but is also guided by Islam; and these individuals may support this political formula out of concern for the welfare of the nation, quite apart from whether or not it has implications for their personal situation. Alternatively, some men and women who are personally disadvantaged may judge the situation in the country as a whole to be satisfactory, or improving, and thus, despite their unsatisfactory personal circumstances at the present time, be disinclined to look for more far-reaching political change. These possibilities have in common a dynamic that is socio-tropic, with political system preferences shaped by judgments about the perceived circumstance and trajectory of the country as a whole, rather than by an individual's personal well-being. Political, administrative and economic assessments are all potentially relevant in this connection, and the following hypotheses suggest some of the ways and reasons that each may help to explain why citizens who support democracy hold divergent views about the inclusion of Islam in the political process.

- H5. Individuals who are more dissatisfied with government performance and administrative responsiveness are more likely to support political Islam than those with higher levels of satisfaction. This is because dissatisfaction with government performance and administrative effectiveness fosters discontent with the existing political system and increases the likelihood of support for political change of greater consequence.
- H6. Individuals who consider government corruption to be a serious problem are more likely to support political Islam than those who are less concerned about corruption. This is because concern about corruption fosters discontent with the existing political system and increases the likelihood of support for political change of greater consequence.
- H7. Individuals who judge the economic situation of the country to be poor or getting worse are more likely to support political Islam

than those with a more favorable assessment of the country's economic situation. This is because unfavorable judgments about the country's economic situation foster discontent with the status quo and increase the likelihood of support for political change of greater consequence.

Religious Predispositions

In contrast to the preceding hypotheses, which for the most part emphasize considerations of personal or national material well-being, it is also possible that views about political Islam are influenced by religious and cultural predispositions. In particular, although this logic remains to be tested, those with a stronger personal attachment to the religion or to traditional values and interpretations of Islam may be more inclined to favor a political formula that assigns a place to Islam. The assumption here is that explanatory power is to be found in normative rather than, or as well as, material considerations—in the spiritual attachments, cultural values and/or ideological orientations that people hold. This assumption about the influence of normative factors on political system preference is reflected in the following hypotheses.

- H8. Individuals who are more personally pious and religiously observant are more likely to support political Islam than those who are less religious. This is because a strong personal attachment to Islam makes a person more likely to believe that the country should be guided by religious principles and led, at least in part, by persons of religious learning.
- H9. Individuals who endorse a more strict or conservative interpretation of Islamic law are more likely to support political Islam than persons who endorse a more liberal or contextualized interpretation of Islamic law. This is because these individuals believe, correctly or not, that a government that incorporates Islamic influences is likely to promote legislation and policies consistent with the kind of interpretation they favor.

Testing Hypotheses about Support for Political Islam

Table 5 presents the results of the regression analysis with which these propositions have been tested. Only those who support democracy are included in the

analysis, and findings are presented for Jordan, Palestine, Algeria, Morocco, Kuwait and Yemen. Binary logistic regression has been employed since the dependent variable is dichotomous. The survey item used to measure the dependent variable, as discussed earlier, asks respondents whether they agree or disagree that “men of religion should have influence over the decisions of government.”²⁹

The following items and indices have been used to measure the independent variables that do not involve personal attributes:

- *Administration Responsiveness.* “Based on your experience, how easy or difficult is it to obtain the following administrative or social services from the government: very easy, easy, never requested, difficult, very difficult?” The measure in Table 5 is an index constructed by adding responses about obtaining an identity document (such as birth certificate, driver’s license, or passport), registering a child in primary school in the public system, medical treatment at a nearby clinic, help from the police when you need it.”
- *Assessment of Corruption.* “Here are some statements that describe how widespread corruption and bribe taking are in all sectors in (country name). Which of the following statements reflects your own opinion the best? Hardly anyone is involved in corruption and bribery, not a lot of officials are corrupt, most officials are corrupt, almost everyone is corrupt.”
- *National Economic Situation.* “How would you rate the current overall economic condition of (country name) today? Very Good, Good, Bad, Very Bad.”
- *Personal Religiosity.* The measure in Table 5 is an index constructed by adding adjusted responses to the following two items: “When you consider what would be a suitable spouse for your son or daughter, would you say that each of the following is very important, somewhat important,

²⁹) Response options given in the original item are strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree, and OLS regressions have also been run using the item in its original form. Although the two analyses give highly similar results in all but a few instances, there are a small number of minor differences with respect to statistical significance. What is relevant to the present study, however, are not the factors that help to explain the difference between strongly agree and agree or between disagree and strongly disagree, and for this reason Table 5 presents only the results of the binary logistic regression. It should also be noted that since the original measure of the dependent variable is ordinal rather than interval, logistic regression is preferable for statistical as well as conceptual reasons.

or not important? S/he prays” and “How often do you read the Quran? Everyday or almost everyday, Several times a week, Sometimes, Rarely, I don’t read it.”

- *Islamic Interpretation.* “Today as in the past, Muslim scholars and jurists sometimes disagree about the proper interpretation of Islam in response to present-day issues. For each of the statements listed below, please indicate whether you agree strongly, agree, disagree, or disagree strongly with the interpretation of Islam that is presented.” The measure in table 5 uses responses about “banks in Muslim countries must be forbidden from charging even modest interest on loans because this is forbidden by Islam.”

Table 5 shows a consistent finding across the six countries with respect to only one of the nine hypotheses set forth above. This is the hypothesis pertaining to personal religiosity. Personal religiosity is positively related to support for political Islam beyond the .01 level of statistical significance in four countries; and in the remaining two countries, Algeria and Kuwait, the relationship is significant at about the .02 level. While further research is needed to probe in-depth the logic and pathway linking religiosity and support for a governance formula that is Islamic as well as democratic, it is clear that the stronger an individual’s personal attachment to Islam, the more likely it is that he or she will favor a political system that assigns an important role to the religion.

It is notable that the other hypothesis involving religious predispositions is related to support for political Islam to a statistically significant degree in only one country, Algeria, and that the relationship approaches statistical significance in only one other country, Jordan. This suggests that, while a strong attachment to their religion tends to push Muslim Arabs toward support for political Islam, as noted, this religiosity in most instances does not also involve the endorsement of a strict or conservative interpretation of Islamic law. The reasons that the pattern is different in Algeria, and perhaps also in Jordan, and whether it is different as well in some countries that were not part of the Arab Barometer, are subjects to be explored in future research. For the present, however, what maybe concluded is that religious conservatism, unlike personal religiosity, in most instances does not increase the likelihood that an individual who favors democracy will want to be governed by a political system that is also Islamic in meaningful ways.

Political and economic assessments have some explanatory power, but much less than personal religiosity. In Palestine, Algeria and Morocco, none of the three hypotheses in this category finds support. In all three of the remaining

Table 5. Binary logistic regression analysis with support for political Islam as the dependent variable.

	Jordan	Palestine	Algeria	Morocco	Kuwait	Yemen
Female Sex	.320 (.062)	.113 (.491)	-.180 (.487)	-.148 (.324)	.388 (.206)	.002 (.995)
Higher Education	-.036 (.603)	-.167 (.013)	.111 (.225)	.015 (.771)	-.061 (.566)	-.293 (.007)
Older Age	-.122 (.073)	-.123 (.055)	-.107 (.330)	.060 (.284)	.015 (.882)	.224 (.110)
Higher Family Income	-.006 (.861)	-.056 (.061)	-.107 (.694)	-.076 (.012)	.016 (.761)	.069 (.124)
Low Administrative Responsiveness	-.022 (.471)	.020 (.516)	.029 (.486)	.017 (.504)	.202 (.000)	.061 (.148)
Believes Corruption Is Widespread	.230 (.025)	.149 (.203)	.164 (.349)	-.027 (.779)	-.503 (.046)	.359 (.052)
Poor National Economic Situation	.103 (.334)	-.160 (.164)	-.217 (.267)	.002 (.980)	.409 (.054)	-.333 (.039)
High Personal Religiosity	.125 (.006)	.308 (.000)	.182 (.022)	.097 (.003)	.255 (.024)	.241 (.006)
Agrees Islam Forbids Any Bank Interest	.214 (.054)	.011 (.915)	.593 (.001)	.026 (.763)	.194 (.303)	.230 (.129)

Dependent variable is coded 0=low support for political Islam: disagree that men of religion should have influence over the decisions of government; 1=higher support for political Islam: agree that “men of religion should have influence over the decisions of government.” The table presents logit coefficients (β) with probability values in parentheses. Relationships that are statistically significant at the .05 level or lower are in bold.

countries, Jordan, Kuwait and Yemen, preferences related to political Islam are related to assessments of corruption to a statistically significant degree, but in one of these, Kuwait, the relationship is in the opposite of the direction predicted. In Jordan and Yemen, those who believe corruption is widespread are more likely to favor a political system that is Islamic as well as democratic. In Kuwait, by contrast, those who believe corruption is widespread are less likely to favor a political system that is Islamic as well as democratic. However, the

other measures of political and economic dissatisfaction do push toward support for political Islam in Kuwait. Kuwaitis with an unfavorable judgment of government performance and administrative responsiveness are more likely to a statistically significant degree to prefer democracy with Islam to secular democracy, as are Kuwaitis who consider the country's overall economic situation to be unfavorable. Finally, in Yemen, judgments about the national economy are related to political system preferences to a statistically significant degree but not in the hypothesized direction. Yemenis who consider the country's economic situation to be unfavorable are less likely, not more likely, to prefer democracy with Islam to secular democracy. Although the measures of political and economic dissatisfaction with explanatory power differ from country to country, and while there are two instances in which the relationship between dissatisfaction and support for political Islam is not in the hypothesized direction, Table 5 nonetheless shows that there is at least one instance in Jordan, Kuwait and Yemen in which men and women with higher levels of political and economic discontent are more likely than those with lower levels of political and economic discontent to prefer democracy with Islam to secular democracy. The present analysis raises several questions to be addressed in future research: the reasons that particular dimensions of discontent push toward support for political Islam in particular countries; the reasons that political and/or economic discontent, whatever the dimension, pushes toward support for political Islam in some Arab countries but not others, and; whether any or all of the finding reported in Table 5 will be found when additional measures and data from additional countries become available.

Somewhat surprisingly, personal attributes and circumstances do not in most instances have significant explanatory power. In none of the countries is there a statistically significant relationship involving sex. Although the hypotheses offered earlier propose reasons, both why women might be more likely than men to favor political Islam and why women might be less likely than men to do so, the data do not support either proposition. The contribution of the analysis is thus to rule out, or at least call seriously into question, the idea that there are sex-linked differences in political system preference.

The findings presented in Table 5 provide support for the other hypotheses pertaining to personal attributes and circumstances in only one or two instances. A preference for democracy with Islam over secular democracy is disproportionately likely, to a statistically significant degree, among less-educated individuals in Palestine and Yemen, among younger individuals in Palestine and among those whose families are poorer in Morocco. In no other instance is there a statistically significant relationship involving education, age

or family income. Accordingly, it must be concluded, again, that the logic offered earlier in support of hypotheses involving these personal attributes does not describe a social dynamic that actually plays an important role in shaping political attitudes in most Arab countries.

On the other hand, the four statistically significant relationships noted above suggest that, in some settings, certain personal attributes do influence political system preferences. The logic associated with the hypotheses offered earlier proposed that disadvantageous personal circumstances incline an individual toward support for political Islam, and this does appear to be the case in selected instances. Palestine is the most notable case. The finding that younger and less-educated Palestinians are disproportionately likely to favor a model of government that is Islamic as well as democratic suggests that, in Palestine at least, being less well-established and less secure in one's professional life and future does increase the likelihood that he or she will favor a political system that assigns an important role to Islam. Something similar appears to be the case in Morocco and Yemen since support for political Islam is disproportionately likely among individuals from poor families in the former country and among individuals who are less-educated in the latter country. Additional discussion of these findings and their implications is beyond the scope of the present analysis; but, as with some of the findings pertaining to political and economic assessments, the observed relationships suggest that it will be productive in future research to probe more deeply the different within-country dynamics that shape the political preferences of ordinary citizens and, thereafter, to investigate the country-level historical and contextual factors that help to account for cross-national variance in these dynamics.

Conclusion

Public opinion in the Arab world is marked by a clear and sharp division of opinion about whether Islam should play a role in public affairs. Many ordinary men and women favor a separation of religion and politics. This may reflect a desire to insulate the political process from religious influences and authorities. Alternatively, it may, to at least some extent, reflect a belief that the religion would be corrupted by politics and pressured, perhaps, to make compromises that are insufficiently respectful of Islamic codes and traditions. But whatever the reason, Arab publics are divided on this issue; and to the extent that these publics acquire a greater say in the way their countries are

governed, the place of Islam in political life is certain to be one of the most hotly-contested questions.

Calls for political reform and democratization are widespread in the Arab world. Significantly, however, the division of opinion on the question of political Islam does not have as many implications for democratization as might be expected. On one hand, an overwhelming majority of the citizens who favor a political role for Islam, like the vast majority of those who favor a separation of religion and politics, believe that democracy, whatever its flaws and limitations, is the best form of government and the one they would most like to see established in their own country. In other words, there is broad support for democracy throughout the Arab world and this is the case among those who do not, but also and equally among those who do, believe that Islam should play a role in political affairs. Thus, as stated earlier, the critical division relating to governance is not between those who favor political Islam and those who favor secular democracy but between those who favor secular democracy and those who believe the political system should be both democratic and Islamic.

On the other hand, there are very few differences in the political culture orientation of Arabs who prefer democracy with Islam and those who prefer secular democracy. The importance of political culture in developing countries derives in large part from its relevance for democratization. Although a popular desire for democratic governance may not be sufficient to initiate a transition to democracy, sustaining and consolidating a democratic transition and increasing the chance that democracy will survive when a crisis occurs are all made much more likely by a citizenry that possess a political culture orientation marked by tolerance, civic engagement, political interest and knowledge, and other attitudes, values and behavior patterns conducive of democracy. It would thus be significant if citizens who support political Islam did not, despite their support for democracy itself, possess these normative and behavioral orientations, or were much less likely to possess them than those who support secular democracy. In fact, however, this is not the case. With only a few exceptions, most notably in Kuwait, there is little difference between the political culture orientations of citizens who prefer democracy with Islam and those who prefer a democratic system that does not assign an important role to Islam.

Even though neither support for democracy nor political culture orientation varies as a function of attitudes toward political Islam, it is important to understand the factors that incline ordinary men and women toward one position or the other on the question of how their country should be governed. Personal religiosity is clearly the most consistently important of these factors.

Among the large proportion of Muslim Arabs who support democracy, those with stronger attachments to their religion, as measured by frequency of reading the Quran and importance attached to having one's child marry someone who is religiously observant, are disproportionately likely to favor a political system that is also Islamic in meaningful ways.

Beyond this, however, there is little consistency in the factors that incline an individual toward support for political Islam or in the countries where particular factors play a role in shaping political system preferences. Interpretations of Islamic law, political and economic assessments, and personal attributes and experiences all have explanatory power in some instances. Further, with only a few exceptions, relationships involving these factors are in the direction indicated in the hypotheses offered earlier. This suggests that the assumptions about attitude formation that informed these hypotheses apply under at least some conditions. Accordingly, rather than concluding that variance can be accounted for solely by personal religiosity, findings from the present study suggest that one-size-fits-all explanations should be avoided and that it is impossible to address the question of why some Muslim Arabs favor democracy with religion while others favor secular democracy without constructing explanatory models that incorporate country-level circumstances and experiences.

All of this lays a foundation for continuing research directed at a fuller understanding of the ways that attitudes toward Islam intersect with attitudes toward politics among Muslim Arab publics. But while much remains to be learned, it is possible in conclusion to offer two broad observations that follow from the findings presented above. Both challenge popular stereotypes and may have implications for the way that policy-makers and others in the West think about political Islam. One conclusion is that there is little or no incompatibility between Islam and democracy in the public mind. Support for democracy and democratic values are no less present among citizens with a positive attitude toward political Islam than among others. Thus, allegations to the contrary notwithstanding, a political system that responds to those among its citizens who support political Islam is not responding to citizens who reject democracy or democratic values. The other conclusion is that there is no unidimensional determinism at work in the Arab world. Rather than assuming that individuals hold certain views *because* they are Muslims, a proper understanding of the reasons and ways that Muslim Arab publics think about governance is possible only if attention is paid to the political and societal context within which attitudes are formed and to the pathways that link particular contexts to particular factors that push toward one view or another about the most appropriate relationship between democracy and Islam.