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Self-expression values, loyalty generation, and support for authoritarianism: evidence from the Arab world

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the micro foundations of political support in Arab polities. Most Arab states rank highly in aggregate human development or economic wealth, but they lag behind in democracy defying the predictions of modernization theory. Modernization and human development perspective implies that increased resources and self-expression values will induce critical political outlooks toward the regime. This study questions the applicability of this theory to the Arab region and proposes that colonial state formation history, international patron–client relations, and the domestic patronage networks have more leverage in explaining regime support in the Arab region. A series of multilevel and fixed effects regression estimations utilizing the Arab Democracy Barometer reveal that modernization perspective has some relevance. However, world system theory inspired patron–client perspective and loyalty generation through domestic distributive mechanisms play a greater role in shaping political attitudes. The results provide important insights about micro foundations of Arab authoritarianism and the differential utility of emancipative values formed in the context of hierarchical world order.


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Introduction

A vast body of scholarship has examined the causes of Arab authoritarianism.¹ Comparative institutional scholarship has focused on the power of coercive apparatus,² the ruling party strength,³ managed electoral participation and distributive mechanisms,⁴ oil wealth, and hereditary rule.⁵ In a different vein, dependency and world systems theories explain Middle Eastern authoritarianism as a symptom of hierarchical world-order built on a specific division of labour in economic production that subjugates these regimes within a patron–client framework.⁶ Furthermore, scholars increasingly appreciate the importance of public opinion in survival of these regimes.⁷ Although political support is an important reference point in the vast scholarship on Arab authoritarianism, the paucity of empirical studies investigating why citizens support these regimes is quite surprising. Quantitative Arab public opinion research

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has mainly concentrated on the individual determinants of support for democracy, focusing on religiosity and Islamic values,⁸ evaluations of government performance,⁹ modernization,¹⁰ and social capital.¹¹ This study investigates the micro foundations of political support towards Arab authoritarianism and first asks the following question: What explains citizen support for the authoritarian Arab regimes?

Scholars argue that Arab uprisings represent a new phase of political development marking a shift towards a strong desire for democratic legitimacy.¹² With few exceptions, however, most authoritarian regimes remained resilient and have survived the waves of popular protests.¹³ Such authoritarian stability has historical roots going back to the colonial intervention and early state-formation experiences that established the influence of Western powers in the region.¹⁴ The current juncture, where Western influence and significant regime discontent exist alongside mass political support provides a fertile ground for examining political attitudes, especially in the context of weak states,¹⁵ dependent periphery regimes,¹⁶ foreign intervention and conflict,¹⁷ and, against all odds, improved human development.¹⁸ This background leads to this study's second research question: How do these contextual factors affect the micro foundations of regime support?

This study starts to build an explanation about regime support in the Arab world by discussing the implications of modernization and human development theory.¹⁹ Modernization and human development is expected to increase resources and generate self-expression values that induce sceptical views about the political status quo. This study questions the unconditional applicability of this logic to the Arab region by utilizing insights from the world systems theory and the scholarship on domestic patronage networks.²⁰ Critical political attitudes may emanate from lack of legitimacy in those states ruled by elites serving as clients of hegemon(s) at the expense of their citizens' interests.²¹ It is proposed that a political system's capacity in generating winners who are wealthier, satisfied with their life conditions, and are beneficiaries of domestic patronage networks should increase the favourability of the regime among these individuals.

These hypotheses are tested using a series of multilevel and fixed effects regression models utilizing the third wave of the Arab Democracy Barometer (ADB). The results lend some support to the modernization perspective by revealing that only certain self-expression values decrease political support in non-democratic Arab regimes. At the same time, increased resources and self-expression values like trust, individual wealth, and citizen satisfaction with life serve as loyalty generating mechanisms and increase regime favourability. Presumably, such loyalty generating mechanisms are shaped by contextual factors like international and domestic patron-client networks. Split sample estimations lend further credence to the importance of context where government quality, system, performance, and especially hierarchical world order jointly inform Arab political attitudes towards the regime. Consequently, this study makes an important empirical contribution to distinct research literatures on Arab authoritarianism and Middle Eastern public opinion research by accounting for the international determinants of political attitudes in conjunction with the domestic and individual factors.

System output, international order, and authoritarian regime support

Easton's²² conceptual framework provides a good foundation for the study of regime support. He differentiates between general evaluations representing the long-term

attachments to political objects (that is, diffuse support) and short-term evaluations related to the system output (that is, specific support).²³ Within this framework, “regime support” is defined as a set of favourable attitudes about the immediate performance of the government institutions.

We can start to think about authoritarian regime support by first looking at the effects of government capacity (system input) and performance (system output). Research in established democracies corroborates the implications of Easton’s model linking improved government capacity and performance to political support.²⁴ These studies use quality of government (QoG) and human development index (HDI) as indicators of capacity and performance respectively. The World Bank’s government effectiveness index is widely used as a reliable indicator of QoG, capturing quality of public services, efficient policy implementation, and credibility of state institutions.²⁵ HDI, a proxy for measuring government performance, combines national statistics about health (life expectancy), knowledge (education), and standard of living (average national income).²⁶

Most Arab states rank highly in HDI, but some fare better than the others in QoG. While important, assuming a linear relationship between these macro factors and regime support may be problematic in the Arab region. Located at the bottom of QoG and HDI, Sudan, Yemen, and Iraq are major scenes of foreign intervention and conflict. At the higher end, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, and Tunisia, are the largest recipients of the international aid and economically globalized nations.²⁷

The proposed link between government performance and regime support is also complicated by colonial/modern state formation history. Middle Eastern states are not “Westphalian” states that came into existence by independent social forces.²⁸ These states were carved out of the Ottoman territory with artificial borders and by imposition of minority rule over majorities.²⁹ It is reasonable to expect that this history will have significant implications for both government performance and its effect on regime support in the Arab region.

For example, the role of the Arab states in international order may be one factor explaining the variation in QoG and HDI in these polities. According to the world systems theory,³⁰ the world is divided into three regions including core, periphery, and semi-periphery. Within this order, the capitalist logic necessitates a division of labour and dependency on a global scale resulting in a hierarchical order in international relations. The elites in the *periphery* act as clients of the *centre* and serve the world hegemon’s economic interests, risking antagonistic relations with their own citizens.³¹ From the beginning, such patron-client relation has dominated the Middle Eastern state system. Once military domination was established, colonial powers implemented certain modes of production, transforming the Middle Eastern states into providers of raw materials, surplus labour, or as transmission belts ensuring the flight of capital from the *periphery* to the *centre*.³² This system has created a highly fragmented regional order with weak states that are accountable to the hegemon (that is, patron), ensuring Western economic and political dominance in the region until today.³³ Since the 1950s, the new hegemon of the world order, the US, has continued the same patron-client structures to guarantee hydrocarbon security and extraction of resources from the Middle East.

The patron-client relation is feasible to the extent that the *centre* supports the ruling elites in the *periphery*³⁴ to help them control and “demobilise” the society.³⁵ Since the ruling elites serve the interests of the hegemon at the expense of their own citizens, this

creates contention and presumably a legitimacy deficit. Problems exacerbated with the policies of the latest neoliberal turn (for example, inequality, poverty, and so on), while deepening dependency, continue to breed resistance in these societies as seen in the Arab uprisings.³⁶ The states that became the sites of resistance like Iran and Libya have been punished by the hegemon through economic and military intervention, whereas the client states enjoyed international rents and the hegemon's support to contain the domestic opposition.

This discussion provides important insights about the contextual determinants of regime support in the Arab region. Whether a regime is a client of the hegemon receiving international or military aid, or a "rogue" state that is punished or forced into obedience by the hegemon may affect its capacity (QoG), and performance (HDI). These factors, in turn, may inform attitudes towards political system in the Arab world.

Table 1 reveals a positive correlation between macro indicators of government performance (QoG and HDI) and client status. Tunisia, Jordan, Kuwait and Lebanon consistently rank high in measures of government performance, international aid, and their integration in the global economic order. The sites of continual conflict, Yemen, Sudan, and Iraq, along with Egypt and Libya are ranked low in QoG. Iraq is particularly an interesting case given the likely negative effects of continuing occupation on government performance despite the large amounts of international aid it receives. Furthermore, the relatively safe and prospering zone of the Kurdish region is set to create sub-national differences in government performance.³⁷ Sudan and Libya, classified as sites of rebellion against the hierarchical world order, rank consistently lower in both QoG and HDI. It should be noted that these countries, along with Iraq and Yemen, have long-lasting conflict situations and are subjected to foreign intervention. Finally, significant variation exists in the presence of United States (US) troops, taken as an indicator of the world hegemon's influence, with a large number of troops in Iraq

Table 1. The distribution of Arab regimes according to system output and patron-client relations.

	Government Effectiveness Index	Human Development Index	US Aid	EU Aid	Economic Globalization	US Troops
Top Scores						
MOST	Tunisia	Tunisia	Iraq	Palestine	Lebanon	Iraq
	Jordan	Kuwait	Egypt	Morocco	Jordan	Kuwait
	Kuwait	Libya	Jordan	Egypt	Kuwait	Egypt
	Morocco	Lebanon	Palestine	Tunisia	Tunisia	Jordan
LEAST	Lebanon	Jordan	Lebanon	Sudan		Tunisia
		Algeria	Morocco	Jordan		Morocco
Bottom Scores						
MOST	Egypt	Palestine	Yemen	Lebanon	Yemen	Yemen
	Algeria	Egypt	Libya	Algeria	Libya	Algeria
	Yemen	Iraq	Sudan	Iraq	Morocco	Lebanon
	Libya	Morocco	Tunisia	Yemen	Egypt	Sudan
	Sudan	Yemen	Algeria	Libya	Algeria	Palestine ^a
LEAST	Iraq	Sudan	Kuwait	Kuwait	Sudan	Libya ^a

^aNo US troop presence.

Note: Government effectiveness index (−2.5 to 2.5) is available through Worldwide Governance Indicators (Kaufmann, Kraay, and Mastruzzi, *Governance Matters*), website at <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#home>. Human Development Index (HDI) data are obtained from the UNDP and are available at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi>. US Aid is the ten-year average of the total amount of US aid in constant dollars and is obtained from USAid.gov. EU Aid is the five-year average of total net EU aid in dollars and is obtained from OECD aid data. Economic globalization is the nine-year average of the KOF index of economic globalization. US Troops is the five-year average of the number of troops as reported in Allen, Flynn, and VanDusky-Allen (2017).

and Kuwait and zero troops in Palestine and Libya.³⁸ It is argued that this rich contextual variation will inform attitudes towards non-democratic Arab regimes. The next section elaborates on explanatory mechanisms and generates testable hypotheses.

Hypotheses

Classic modernization theory proposes that a linear process of economic growth, industrialization, and urbanization should eventually culminate in increased wealth and rising levels of education.³⁹ Later incarnations of modernization theory have incorporated various aspects of human growth and cultural change into this linear process. *Human development sequence* starts from increased resources, continues with human empowerment, and eventually ends with mass value change and citizen emancipation.⁴⁰ In this process, traditional-survival values like respect for authority, obedience, and religiosity are replaced with self-expression values including liberty aspirations, critical political orientations, trust, propensity to protest, tolerance, and less religiousness.⁴¹

According to the proponents of this perspective, one natural outcome of modernization will be citizens' rising expectations. When governments fail to meet these expectations, citizens will grow dissatisfied with the political system.⁴² Especially, individuals with increased socioeconomic resources who hold self-expression values will demonstrate a greater propensity to voice their criticism of the government. "Arab uprisings" is an interesting test case for these propositions. Although the lion's share of explanatory power can be attributed to the revolutionary factors including inequality, middle-class politics, and poverty,⁴³ this emancipative process is employed to explain the large-scale protests in Arab societies.⁴⁴

Pippa Norris⁴⁵ advances the notion of critical citizens to explain the emancipative mechanism in democratic societies. Critical citizens are individuals "who adhere strongly to democratic values but who find the existing structures of representative government, invented in the 18th and 19th centuries, to be wanting as we approach the end of the millennium." A linear application of modernization theory to Arab societies would foresee the emergence of a group of citizens who are akin to "critical citizens" of democratic settings in their political orientations. As succinctly put, "if growing individual resources give rise to emancipative orientations within an autocracy, people will consider authoritarian rule as an unlegitimized restriction of their rights."⁴⁶ An observable implication of modernization theory is that individuals with increased resources (education and income) will be less supportive of authoritarian regimes. A second implication is that individuals holding self-expression values like tolerance of others, social trust, inclination to civic protest, liberty aspirations, and weak religiousness⁴⁷ should have a greater propensity to hold critical views about the existing regime.

Hypothesis 1: Individuals with increased resources (income and education) should be less supportive of political regimes than individuals with fewer resources.

Hypothesis 2: Individuals holding self-expression values (tolerance of others, social trust, inclination to civic protest, liberty aspirations) will be less supportive of political regimes than those with traditional values.

Can we explain regime support in resilient Arab autocracies with the insights derived from modernization and the human development perspective? Classic modernization theory has been criticized due to its ethnocentric and teleological character that neglects "multiple modernities" in non-Western societies,⁴⁸ and for its lack of attention to

human capabilities and choice.⁴⁹ The history of the Middle Eastern state system and international patron-client relations further complicates the modernization process and hence is likely to have implications for the micro foundations of political support in these societies.

Once established, a client state becomes dependent on the rent it receives from the hegemon to survive. This arrangement also has implications for system performance, legitimacy, and political support. Since most Middle Eastern states were artificially created with little regard to social dynamics and native ideologies and hence lack legitimacy, this external support is crucial for *clientelizing* the society and containing the opposition.⁵⁰ The domestic patronage networks throughout the Arab state system are crucial in this scenario and they help these regimes to earn political support from certain citizens.⁵¹ In this context, some individuals disproportionally benefit from domestic patronage networks and opportunities like university education and public sector employment, and consequently become the winners of the system. For example, university education continues to be the most efficient route to upward mobility in the Middle East and North Africa.⁵² An observable implication of this discussion is that increased resources (education and wealth) will engender regime support in these societies.

However, increased resources may be instruments for creating a loyal base rather than leading to emancipation. In oil rich monarchies, regimes can buy citizen loyalty by implementing generous welfare packages,⁵³ whereas in resource poor societies (for example, Jordan), an international patron may provide the necessary rent to enable patronage networks. Comparative institutional research finds that such loyalty generation becomes possible through manipulation of elections and selective distribution of resources.⁵⁴ Thus, increased resources may be more conducive to authoritarian regime support in Arab polities.

Hypothesis 3: Individuals with increased material resources will be more supportive of political regime than individuals with fewer resources.

The proposed link between self-expression values and pro-democratic critical political orientations is also not straightforward. Some indicators of self-expression (satisfaction with life conditions, social trust, and religiosity) may work differently in non-democratic countries. For example, life satisfaction and positive outlooks about economic conditions may be indicative of citizen satisfaction with government's economic performance. In authoritarian regimes of the Arab world, these citizens are likely to be beneficiaries of domestic patronage networks. Research suggests that citizens holding positive orientations about their economic conditions are more likely to turn out to show their support for the regime.⁵⁵ It is also known that positive views about government performance will generate sceptical views of democracy and increase regime support.⁵⁶

Hypotheses 4: Individuals with higher life satisfaction will be more supportive of the regime than those who are not.

The human development perspective defines religiousness as a typical survival value that negatively correlates with self-expression values. One implication of this approach is that religious individuals will have a greater propensity to respect authority and favour non-democracy.⁵⁷ Arab public opinion research, however, has shown that support for democracy is compatible with Muslim religiosity.⁵⁸ Two competing hypotheses follow this discussion:

Hypothesis 5a: Religious individuals will be more likely to support the regime than non-religious.

Hypothesis 5b: Religious individuals will be less likely to support the regime than non-religious.

As a self-expression value, social trust should generate support for democratic principles with a healthy dose of regime criticism in democracies.⁵⁹ Jamal⁶⁰ challenges this view and argues that in authoritarian Arab polities, social trust is more conducive to regime support. In regimes with centralized state clientelism, individuals will tend to engage in state-sponsored associations that hold an advantage in accessing government benefits. In authoritarian and less-democratic regimes of the Middle East, most individuals will be less trusting of others. Those who are involved in state-controlled civic associations with access to resources will be inclined to trust others, but this will engender support for the existing regime since these same individuals also benefit from these arrangements.⁶¹

Hypothesis 6: Higher levels of social trust will increase regime support.

This study also tests the relationship between perceptions of patronage networks, especially *wasta*, and regime support. *Wasta* is an Arabic word that can be translated as “connections.” It originates from *waseet* which refers to “a person (or person’s action) who intercedes using influence to garner favour, often unmerited, for another person”.⁶² The prevalence of *wasta* in Arab societies may be a sign of state weakness since it is indicative of state failure to efficiently deliver services to its citizens.⁶³ Prevalence of *wasta* may also be facilitated by the international patron-client order that necessitates that periphery elites become domestic patrons and oversee large clientelist machines to control social forces and contain opposition. Most Arab citizens will utilize *wasta* simply because no credible institutional structure exists to obtain material benefits. In a recent study, Buehler⁶⁴ finds that belief in prevalence of informal influence (that is, *wasta*) lowers trust in the authoritarian regime’s courts as well as political institutions in Morocco. An observable implication of this argument is that belief in prevalence of *wasta* may be less conducive to regime support. This discussion leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 7: Individuals who believe in the prevalence of *wasta* will be less supportive of regime than those who do not.

Data and measurement

The third wave of the ADB was fielded in 2012–2014 and includes many questions suitable for testing the hypotheses of this study.⁶⁵ The dependent variable, *regime support*, is an index of survey questions capturing citizens’ evaluation of performance of certain branches of government. The following nine questions were standardized into a 0–1 scale and the mean score of these items is calculated to obtain an index of regime support for each individual.⁶⁶

Q203. Generally speaking, how would you evaluate the performance of ... in carrying out its tasks and duties? (1 = very bad to 5 = very good):

The government

Parliament

Table 2. Independent variables and measurement strategies.

Variable	Tested mechanism	Description
Income	Modernization, patron-client perspective & authoritarian loyalty generation	Q1016: Self-reported household income (1 = income does not cover expenses, 4 = income covers expense)
Education	Modernization	Harmonized measure of educational attainment (1 = no education, 7 = graduate degree)
Critical political outlook	Self-expression values	Q216: Citizens must support the government's decisions even if they disagree with them (1 = strongly agree, 4 = strongly disagree)
Liberty aspiration	Self-expression values	Q523: Lack of respect for human rights is justified in order to maintain security in your country? (1 = justified to a great extent, 4 = not justified at all)
Tolerance of rel. minorities	Self-expression values	Q6072: In a Muslim country, non-Muslims should enjoy less political rights than Muslims (1 = strongly agree, 4 = strongly disagree,)
Protest participation	Self-expression values & patron-client perspective	Q502.2: Protest participation (1 = never, 2 = once, 3 = more than once)
Less religiousness	Self-expression values & Islam and democracy	Index of daily prayer frequency (Q6101) and frequency of Qur'an readership (Q6106) (2 = most religious, 10 = least religious)
Life satisfaction	Self-expression values, patron-client perspective & authoritarian loyalty generation	Q102a: Generally speaking, how would you compare your living conditions with the rest of your fellow citizens? (1 = much worse, 5 = much better)
Social trust	Self-expression values & authoritarian loyalty generation	Q103: Generally speaking, do you think most people are trustworthy or not? (1 = No, 2 = Yes (28%))
Perceptions of wasta	Authoritarian loyalty generation & patron-client perspective	Q213: Impossible to obtain a job without connections (1 = No relevant experience, 4 = extremely widespread)
Political interest	Control	In general, to what extent are you interested in politics? (1 = Not interested, 4 = very interested)
Age	Control	Self-reported age
Sex	Control	Gender of the respondent (1 = female)
HDI	Government performance	UNDP index (health, education, life conditions), ten-year average
QoG	Government capacity	World Bank Government Effectiveness Index, ten-year average
US Aid	Patron-client perspective	Total amount of US aid in dollars, USaid.gov, ten-year average
EU Aid	Patron-client perspective	Total net EU aid in dollars, OECD aid data, five-year average
Economic globalization	Patron-client perspective	Economic globalization, KOF index of globalization, nine-year average
US troops	Patron-client perspective	Number of US troops, five-year average, Flynn (2017)

Judiciary

The police (public security)

Q204. I am going to ask a number of questions related to the current government's performance. How would you evaluate the current government's performance on ... ? (1 = very bad, 4 = very good)).

Creating employment opportunities.

Narrowing the gap between rich and poor.

Improving basic health services.

Managing the democratic transition process.

Q513. Suppose that there was a scale from 0–10 to measure the extent of your satisfaction with the government, in which 1 means that you were absolutely unsatisfied with its performance and 10 means that you were very satisfied. To what extent are you satisfied with the government’s performance?

Independent variables: Self-reported household income (four-point scale) and educational attainment are used to measure socioeconomic resources. Unfortunately, ADB does not include the same indicators of self-expression index used by Welzel et al.⁶⁷ The factor analysis of eight available survey questions (trust, critical political outlooks, satisfaction with life conditions, less religiousness, tolerance of religious minorities, liberty aspiration, and protest participation) ends with very low factor loadings (alpha coefficient = 0.22). Therefore, these items were used separately in the statistical estimations. Some of these indicators are used to also test the individual-level implications of world systems theory and loyalty generation framework perspective as reported below. A question asking about the influence of *wasta* in gaining employment is used to test the effect of belief in clientelist networks on regime support. Additional control variables are self-reported political interest, respondents’ age, sex (1 = female), macro indicators of government performance, international aid, US troop presence, and economic globalization. Table 2 introduces these variables and corresponding theoretical mechanisms. Detailed descriptive statistics can be found in the supplemental file.

Multivariate analysis

A combination of multilevel and fixed effects regression models are used for statistical estimation. In full sample estimation, multilevel regression is preferred, because it takes the nested structure of the data into account and controls for country-level variance.⁶⁸ For split sample analysis, fixed effects estimations are preferred due to the small number of cases at the country level.⁶⁹ Table 3 reports the multilevel regression estimations for the pooled sample analysis.

The results lend only partial support to the implications of modernization/human development theory while providing strong evidence for the individual-level implications of both the international patron-client perspective and authoritarian loyalty generation framework. Contrary to the predictions of the modernization perspective, individual wealth is positively related to regime support and educational attainment has no statistically significant effect. Thus, the expectation that increased resources that come with modernization will lead to less support for the political status quo simply does not hold (Hypothesis 1). Of self-expression values, the coefficients for critical political outlooks, liberty aspirations, tolerance of others, and less religiousness, are consistently negative and statistically significant in all models, supporting the second hypothesis (H2 proposes a negative association between self-expression values and regime support).⁷⁰ This effect, however, does not hold for all self-expression values as predicted by Inglehart and Welzel’s theory. For example, “propensity to protest” is negative and statistically significant in Models 1–3 and 5, but it has no effect on regime support when controls are added for economic globalization, European Union (EU) aid, and US troop presence. The lack of evidence for the emancipative

Table 3. Determinants of regime support in Arab polities (multilevel regression, pooled sample).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Education	−0.0012 (0.00)	−0.0012 (0.00)	−0.0012 (0.00)	−0.0014 (0.00)	−0.0012 (0.00)	−0.0026 (0.00)	−0.00073 (0.00)
Income	0.017** (0.00)	0.017** (0.00)	0.017** (0.00)	0.020** (0.00)	0.017** (0.00)	0.016** (0.00)	0.018** (0.00)
Critical outlook	−0.053** (0.00)	−0.053** (0.00)	−0.053** (0.00)	−0.052** (0.00)	−0.053** (0.00)	−0.053** (0.00)	−0.053** (0.00)
Liberty aspiration	−0.015** (0.00)	−0.015** (0.00)	−0.015** (0.00)	−0.013** (0.00)	−0.015** (0.00)	−0.016** (0.00)	−0.015** (0.00)
Tolerance of others	−0.0078** (0.00)	−0.0078** (0.00)	−0.0078** (0.00)	−0.0091** (0.00)	−0.0078** (0.00)	−0.010** (0.00)	−0.0095** (0.00)
Protest participation	−0.0064* (0.00)	−0.0064* (0.00)	−0.0064* (0.00)	−0.0047 (0.00)	−0.0064* (0.00)	0.0012 (0.00)	−0.0052 (0.00)
Less religious	−0.0059** (0.00)	−0.0059** (0.00)	−0.0059** (0.00)	−0.0069** (0.00)	−0.0059** (0.00)	−0.0054** (0.00)	−0.0072** (0.00)
Trust	0.051** (0.00)	0.051** (0.00)	0.051** (0.00)	0.053** (0.00)	0.051** (0.00)	0.052** (0.00)	0.057** (0.00)
Personal expectations	0.017** (0.00)	0.017** (0.00)	0.017** (0.00)	0.017** (0.00)	0.017** (0.00)	0.016** (0.00)	0.021** (0.00)
Wasta	−0.043** (0.00)	−0.043** (0.00)	−0.043** (0.00)	−0.045** (0.00)	−0.043** (0.00)	−0.043** (0.00)	−0.046** (0.00)
Political interest	0.0013 (0.00)	0.0013 (0.00)	0.0013 (0.00)	−0.00026 (0.00)	0.0013 (0.00)	0.00038 (0.00)	0.0015 (0.00)
Female	0.013** (0.00)	0.013** (0.00)	0.013** (0.00)	0.0097* (0.00)	0.013** (0.00)	0.015** (0.00)	0.011** (0.00)
Age	−0.00027 (0.00)	−0.00027 (0.00)	−0.00027 (0.00)	−0.00026 (0.00)	−0.00027 (0.00)	−0.00028 (0.00)	−0.00016 (0.00)

Human Development Index		0.13					
		(0.24)					
Government Effectiveness			0.030				
			(0.04)				
Economic globalization (Log)				0.11			
				(0.16)			
US Aid (Log)					-0.013		
					(0.01)		
EU Aid (Log)						0.0098	
						(0.02)	
US troops (Log)							0.0081
							(0.01)
Constant	0.67**	0.59**	0.69**	0.24	0.90**	0.63**	0.65**
	(0.03)	(0.17)	(0.04)	(0.63)	(0.18)	(0.11)	(0.04)
<i>Variance components</i>							
Constant	-2.45**	-2.46**	-2.47**	-2.41**	-2.51**	-2.61**	-2.50**
	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.22)	(0.20)	(0.21)	(0.22)
Insig_e	-1.89**	-1.89**	-1.89**	-1.90**	-1.89**	-1.88**	-1.90**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Intra-Class Correlation	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.27	0.22	0.19	0.23
Observations	11403	11403	11403	9381	11403	10507	9388

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.001$.

values-critical political outlook nexus in client states, thus, is an important finding, showing the limitations of modernization theory and the relevance of the patron-client perspective for explaining regime support in the Arab region. Furthermore, increased life satisfaction and social trust are more conducive to regime support, a finding that supports hypotheses 4 and 6 regarding the positive effect of life satisfaction and social trust on regime support, respectively. Overall, the results in Table 1 imply that regimes' loyalty generation capacity, presumably enhanced by the international rents and domestic patronage networks, have more leverage in explaining regime support than certain emancipative values.⁷¹

The negative and statistically significant coefficient for "perceptions about the role of *wasta*" lends additional support to this conclusion. As individuals' belief about the prevalence of *wasta* in gaining employment increases, citizens may perceive the need to use the middleman to obtain government services as a state weakness. Consequently, they may grow critical of the system, lose trust in political institutions, and become less supportive of the regime.⁷² Finally, there appears to be a gender gap in regime support. Such gender differences are hardly unique to the Arab region. Scholars have documented a gender gap in political orientations and political participation on a global scale.⁷³ More specifically, evidence from regional barometers conducted in Latin America⁷⁴ and Africa⁷⁵ confirms a gender gap, with women being less supportive of democracy than men. The results add to this literature by showing an inverse gender gap where women are more conducive to authoritarian regime support in Arab societies.⁷⁶

This study also attempts to explain the effects of context (government performance and client status of the state) on political attitudes. To that end, four split-sample fixed effects ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models were estimated. The first sample includes countries with high scores on QoG and HDI that also happen to be the most globalized nations with a prominent international patron (Kuwait, Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia). The second sample includes low-QoG and low-HDI countries that are sites of enduring conflict and foreign intervention (Iraq, Sudan, Yemen).⁷⁷ Two other samples were formed based on the status of countries according to the international aid they receive and the number/presence of US troops. Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Palestine are the largest recipients of US and EU aid, whereas, on the low end of international aid are Algeria, Libya, and Yemen. Iraq and Kuwait have the largest number of US troops whereas Palestine has no US troop presence despite holding sizeable numbers of UN peacekeepers. Interestingly, at the same time, both Iraq and Palestine are among the largest recipients of foreign aid. These samples, therefore, classify countries with different criteria related to their place in the international order and provide unique opportunities for testing the contextual effect of patron-client relations on political attitudes. Figure 1 shows the marginal effects from selected split-sample estimations and reports the average rate of change in regime support created by a one unit increase in each variable.⁷⁸

Figure 1 displays interesting nuances about the attitude formation effects of context on political attitudes. Confirming the predictions of loyalty generation mechanisms and the patron-client framework, increased wealth consistently informs favourable views of the regime across all sub-samples. This effect is largest in countries with low government capacity and performance and is smallest in non-client states. The impact of education varies by context as it decreases regime support in client states and also in low QoG-low HDI countries. These results show that contextual factors defining the

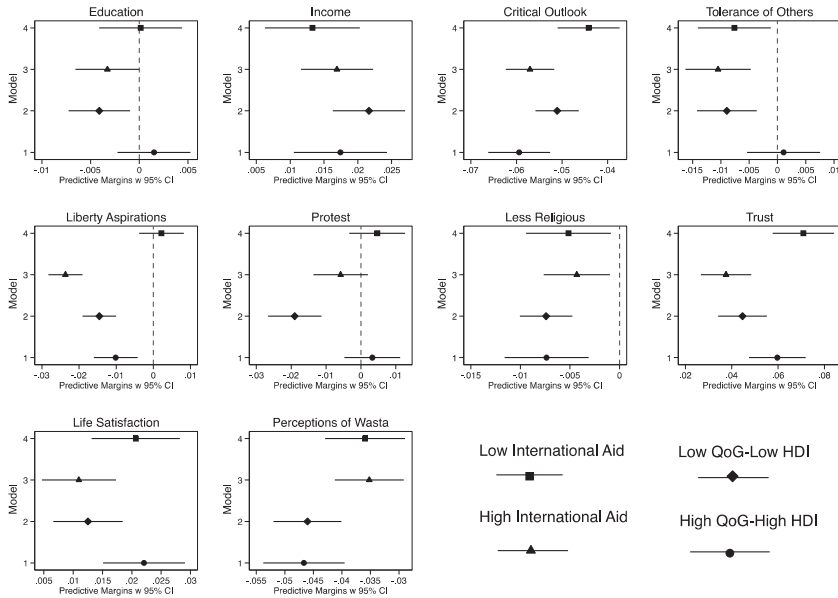


Figure 1. Contextual and attitudinal foundations of regime support (marginal effects, split-sample estimations). Note: Marginal effects represent the rate of change in regime support generated by one unit increase in each independent variable. The horizontal lines represent the 95% confidence interval.

Arab region may inform political attitudes in a way that limits the unconditional applicability of modernization theory.

Modernization-induced self-expression values, however, still have some relevance. Hypothesis 2 proposes a negative association between self-expression values and political support. Figure 1 confirms this expectation, irrespective of government performance and client status, for “critical government outlooks, liberty aspirations, tolerance, and less religiousness”. Interesting nuances, however, can be observed with respect to the magnitude of proposed relationships. For example, “critical political outlook” has the largest effect in high QoG-high HDI countries (Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, and Tunisia) and the smallest effect in non-client states (Algeria, Libya, and Yemen). “Liberty aspirations” decrease regime support *the most* in client states (Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Palestine) and *the least* in high QoG-high HDI nations that also happen to rank high in foreign assistance. For this variable, there is no effect discernable from zero in non-client states. This finding implies that while client status matters in generating authoritarian loyalty, it is not a sufficient condition. Regime support is likely to emerge when client status is accompanied by high performance in government quality and aggregate human development.

Across different contexts, a second group of self-expression indicators lend support to loyalty generation mechanisms and indirectly to patron-client perspectives. The results confirm a positive association between life satisfaction (Hypothesis 4) and trust (Hypothesis 6) and regime support.⁷⁹ These effects are larger in diametrically opposed cases of non-client states and high QoG-high HDI countries and smaller in states receiving large amounts of foreign aid as well as in low QoG-low HDI nations (also major scenes of conflict). An important implication of this finding is that the value of loyalty generation mechanisms is more pronounced when either a regime

does not rely on an external patron or when a client state performs highly in government capacity and performance. The finding that trust and life satisfaction have a lesser impact in engendering regime support in client states shows how international involvement in Arab regimes may suppress the emancipative potential of human development. More interestingly, “propensity to protest” decreases regime support only in low QoG-low HDI countries and it has no statistically significant effect in client states. This finding somehow corroborates the arguments explaining Arab uprisings with factors like inefficient governance and increased corruption.⁸⁰ What lessons can we learn from these findings? The conclusion discusses the scholarly and policy implications of the statistical analysis.

Discussion and conclusion

This study examined the micro foundations and contextual determinants of political support for Arab authoritarianism. The theoretical framework builds on a critical assessment of modernization and the human development perspective to explore the attitudinal effects of an international patron-client framework on regime support. The statistical analysis tests the individual determinants of regime support under diverse contextual factors including government performance, patron-client status of Middle Eastern states within the hierarchical world order, and domestic distributive mechanisms.

Confirming the predictions of the modernization perspective, the results show that Arab citizens holding critical political outlooks and liberty aspirations, and those who are less religious and more tolerant towards religious minorities are less likely to support the regime.⁸¹ At the same time, the results also reveal the limited applicability of this perspective in the Arab world. Due to the colonial underpinnings of the Middle Eastern state system and the international client (or rebellious) status of the states in the region, increased resources and certain self-expression values may engender favourable views of the political status quo (that is, support for authoritarian regime). This article argues that this result is best explained by loyalty generating mechanisms that work through domestic patronage networks supported by the *centre* elites of the world system. Such loyalty generation may be possible to the extent that these regimes can create winners who are wealthier and highly satisfied with their life conditions.⁸² Keeping authoritarian support is costly and is possible either through hydrocarbon rents or the international rents/support provided by a global hegemon.⁸³

Consequently, this study makes an important contribution to distinct research literatures on Arab authoritarianism, public opinion, and the international patron-client perspective. The analysis reveals that colonial state formation experiences and the client status of the Arab regimes are quite important in engendering regime support. Since most Middle Eastern states are dependent states according to the world systems theory,⁸⁴ the *centre* elites provide support to the authoritarian elites to help them demobilize the society and contain opposition. The hegemon’s support gives the *periphery* elites the necessary resources (military and financial) to maintain a domestic clientelistic network that generates loyal citizens who are presumably the beneficiaries of such arrangements. Therefore, in addition to the domestic roots of Arab authoritarianism, the hierarchical world order helps the resiliency of these regimes by sustaining mechanisms that generate a supportive citizenry.

The modernization perspective, nonetheless, remains relevant. Education and some self-expression values (liberty aspirations, critical political outlook, and tolerance) decrease political support regardless of the contextual factors. At the same time, increased resources and emancipation may have pronounced effects on political attitudes by decreasing regime support in client states with high government performance and in some non-client states. Therefore, while support from a world hegemon may help maintain loyalty generating distributive mechanisms, improved government capacity and performance or exclusion of rebellious states from international patron-client networks may inadvertently create a critical citizenry in authoritarian regimes of the Arab region.

Public opinion research rarely tests the individual-level implications of world systems theory with respect to attitude formation dynamics linking state capacity to political support in non-democratic regimes. Future studies are needed in this important research area. The ADB survey is a valuable tool for testing the implications of the modernization perspective as they relate to regime support. However, like most other surveys, it has limitations and does not include questions evaluating citizens' perceptions about international patron-client relations. Recently, Jamal attempted to provide an empirical test of this perspective in order to explain anti-Americanism and democratic orientations in the Arab world.⁸⁵ With collection of additional survey data, public opinion scholars could follow suit and gain leverage in explaining a variety of political attitudes formed in the context of the hierarchical world order.

Notes

1. Gause, "Why Middle East Studies Missed the Arab Spring."
2. Bellin, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism."
3. Brownlee, *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*.
4. Lust-Okar, "Competitive Clientelism"; Blaydes, *Elections and Distributive Politics*.
5. Anderson, "The State in the Middle East"; Herb, "No Representation without Taxation?"; Heydemann, *Networks of Privilege*; Yom and Gause, "Resilient Royals"; and Brownlee, Masoud, and Reynolds, *The Arab Spring*.
6. Wallerstein, "The Capitalist World Economy"; Hinnebusch, "The Middle East in the World Hierarchy."
7. Telhami, "Arab Public Opinion"; Tessler et al., "New Findings on Arabs."
8. Tessler, "Do Islamic Orientations Influence"; Ciftci, "Secular-Islamist Cleavage."
9. Benstead, "Why Do Some Arab Citizens?"
10. Jamal, "Reassessing Support for Islam"; Ciftci, "Modernization, Islam, or Social Capital."
11. Jamal, *The Other Side*.
12. Jamal and Robbins, "Social Justice"; Filali-Ansary, "The Languages of the Arab Revolutions"; Korany, "Redefining Development."
13. Brownlee, Masoud, and Reynolds, *The Arab Spring*.
14. Anderson, "The State in the Middle East"; Fromkin, "A Peace to End All Peace."
15. Migdal, "Strong Societies."
16. Hinnebusch, "The Middle East in the World Hierarchy"; Tagma, Kalaycioglu, and Akcali, "'Taming' Arab Social Movements."
17. Lustick, "The Absence of Middle Eastern Great Powers."
18. UNDP, *Arab Human Development Report*.
19. Inglehart and Norris, *Rising Tide*; Inglehart and Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change*.
20. Wallerstein, "The Capitalist World Economy"; Hinnebusch, "The Middle East in the World Hierarchy"; Gause, "Why Middle East Studies Missed the Arab Spring."
21. Eisenstadt, "Multiple Modernities"; Cox and Sinclair, "Approaches to World Order"; Hinnebusch, "The Middle East in the World Hierarchy"; Tagma, Kalaycioglu, and Akcali, "Taming Arab Social Movements."

22. Easton, "A Re-assessment of the Concept."
23. Ibid.
24. Norris, *Making Democratic Governance*; Dahlberg and Holmberg, "Democracy and Bureaucracy"; for an exception see, Shin "Cultural Hybridization."
25. Various dimensions of quality of government as reported by the World Bank's worldwide governance indicators data can be accessed at <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#home>
26. See <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi> for a detailed account of measurement of HDI. In statistical estimation, ten-year average of HDI is used.
27. Henry and Springborg, *Globalization and the Politics of Development*.
28. The author thanks one of the reviewers for suggesting this very important discussion.
29. Anderson, "The State in the Middle East"; Fromkin, "A Peace to End All Peace."
30. Wallerstein, "The Capitalist World Economy."
31. Ibid.; Hinnebusch, "The Middle East in the World Hierarchy."
32. Hinnebusch, "The Middle East in the World Hierarchy."
33. Halliday, *The Middle East*.
34. Hinnebusch, "The Middle East in the World Hierarchy."
35. In the latest incarnations of this hegemonic relation, the implementation of global neoliberal policies requires reproduction of patron-client arrangements targeting social movements and neoliberal governmentality (Tagma et al., "Taming Arab Social Movements"; Plehwe, Walpen, and Neunhöffer, *Neoliberal Hegemony*).
36. Hinnebusch, "The Middle East in the World Hierarchy"; Tagma et al., "Taming Arab Social Movements."
37. The author thanks one of the reviewers for this important insight.
38. It should be noted that foreign troops and some peacekeepers exist in these countries and several other nations in the sample. The analysis is focused on the US troops to gain leverage in the contextual effects associated with the world hegemon's involvement in the periphery.
39. Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society*; Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy."
40. Inglehart, *Modernization and Postmodernization*; Inglehart and Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change, Inkeles, Exploring Individual Modernity*; Welzel, Inglehart, and Klingemann, "Human Development as a Theory."
41. Welzel, Inglehart, and Klingemann, "Human Development as a Theory"; Welzel, *Freedom Rising*.
42. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*.
43. Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*.
44. Campante and Chor, "Why Was the Arab World Poised for Revolution?"; Jamal and Robbins, "Social Justice"; Harris, "Did Inequality Breed the Arab Uprisings?"; Kuhn, "On the Role of Human Development."
45. Norris, *Critical Citizens*.
46. Welzel, Inglehart, and Klingemann, "Human Development as a Theory."
47. Inglehart and Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy*.
48. Eisenstadt, "Multiple Modernities."
49. Sen, "Capability and Well-Being."
50. Hinnebusch, "The Middle East in the World Hierarchy"; Halliday, *The Middle East*.
51. Sometimes, the centre elites may choose to target certain civil society sectors to improve neoliberal governmentality as proposed by Tagma et al., "Taming Arab Social Movements."
52. Harris, "Did Inequality Breed the Arab Uprisings?"
53. Beblawi, "The Rentier State in the Arab World"; Yom and Gause, "Resilient Royals."
54. Lust, "Competitive Clientelism in the Middle East"; Blaydes, *Elections and Distributive Politics*; De Miguel, Jamal, and Tessler, "Elections in the Arab World"; Corstange, *The Price of a Vote*.
55. De Miguel, Jamal, and Tessler, "Elections in the Arab World."
56. Benstead, "Why Do Some Arab Citizens?"
57. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations"; Kedourie, *Democracy and Arab Political Culture*.
58. Tessler, "Do Islamic Orientations Influence"; Jamal and Tessler, "Attitudes in the Arab World"; Tessler et al., "New Findings on Arabs"; Ciftci, "Secular-Islamist Cleavage."
59. Inglehart and Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy*.
60. Jamal, *The Other Side*.

61. Ibid., 77; Ciftci and Bernick, "Utilitarian and Modern."
62. Gold and Naufal, "Wasta: The Other Invisible."
63. Anderson, "The State in the Middle East."
64. Buehler, "Do You Have 'Connections' at the Courthouse?"
65. ADB is an award-winning dataset that meets scientific standards in survey data collection in non-democratic settings. On its website, the main objective of the ADB is described as being "to produce scientifically reliable data on the politically-relevant attitudes of ordinary citizens."
66. These questions are selected based on factor analysis. The results of the multivariate analysis (presented below) remain robust when alternative indices of regime support are used. These alternative indices measure institutional and policy performance and political trust. These results are available from the author upon request.
67. Welzel, Inglehart, and Klingemann, "The Theory of Human Development."
68. Gelman and Hill, *Data Analysis Using Regression*; Rabe-Hesketh, Skrondal, and Pickles, "Maximum Likelihood Estimation."
69. Intra-class correlation is <0.20 in most models indicating that there is substantial variation to be explained at the country level. The results remain unchanged in fixed and random effects regressions. Hausman test results confirm that fixed effects are preferable to random effects estimations. These results are available upon request.
70. Welzel, Inglehart, and Klingemann, "The Theory of Human Development"; Inglehart and Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change*; Welzel, *Freedom Rising*.
71. Lust-Okar, "Legislative Elections in Hegemonic Authoritarian Regimes"; Jamal, *The Other Side*; Blaydes, *Elections and Distributive Politics*; De Miguel, Jamal, and Tessler, "Elections in the Arab World"; Corstange, *The Price of a Vote*; Jamal, *The Other Side*; Inglehart and Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change*; Welzel, *Freedom Rising*.
72. Buehler, "Do You Have 'Connections' at the Courthouse?"
73. Inglehart and Norris, "The True Clash of."
74. Walker and Kehoe, "Regime Transition and Attitude."
75. Logan and Bratton, "The Political Gender Gap."
76. Tessler, "Islam and Democracy"; Ciftci and Bernick, "Utilitarian and Modern"; Ross, "Oil, Islam, and Women."
77. It should be noted that Iraq is also among the top recipients of foreign aid. In addition, Kurdish regions are relatively safe zones and presumably are ranked higher in government performance. Given this disparity, pooled analysis and a split-sample model for low QoG-low HDI is estimated by (i) dropping observations from the Kurdish provinces and (ii) excluding all observations from Iraq. The results remain very similar with only very small differences. These additional estimations are available upon request.
78. Full results of these models are presented in Appendix A. Additional split-sample analysis based on the distribution of countries in Table 1 is available upon request.
79. Jamal, *The Other Side*.
80. Korany, "Redefining Development"; Jamal and Robbins, "Social Justice."
81. Inglehart and Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy*; Welzel, *Freedom Rising*.
82. Lust-Okar, "Legislative Elections in Hegemonic Authoritarian Regimes"; Jamal, *The Other Side*; Jamal, *Of Empires and Citizens*; Blaydes, *Elections and Distributive Politics*; Ciftci and Bernick, "Utilitarian and Modern"; De Miguel, Jamal, and Tessler, "Elections in the Arab World"; Brownlee, Masoud, and Reynolds, *The Arab Spring*.
83. Hinnebusch, "The Middle East in the World Hierarchy"; Tagma et al., "Taming Arab Social Movements."
84. Wallerstein, "The Capitalist World Economy"; Hinnebusch, "The Middle East in the World Hierarchy."
85. Jamal, "Of Empires and Citizens."

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Appendix A. Determinants of regime support (fixed effects, split sample estimations).

	Model 1 Low QoG-Low HDI	Model 2 High QoG-High HDI	Model 3 High International Aid	Model 4 Low International Aid
Education	0.0015 (0.00)	−0.0041 (0.00)	−0.0033 (0.00)	0.00014 (0.00)
Income	0.017** (0.00)	0.022** (0.00)	0.017** (0.00)	0.013** (0.00)
Critical outlook	−0.059** (0.00)	−0.051** (0.00)	−0.057** (0.00)	−0.044** (0.00)
Tolerance of others	0.0011 (0.00)	−0.0089** (0.00)	−0.011** (0.00)	−0.0076 (0.00)
Liberty aspiration	−0.010** (0.00)	−0.015** (0.00)	−0.024** (0.00)	0.0022 (0.00)
Protest participation	0.0033 (0.00)	−0.019** (0.00)	−0.0058 (0.00)	0.0047 (0.00)
Less religious	−0.0074** (0.00)	−0.0074** (0.00)	−0.0043 (0.00)	−0.0051 (0.00)
Trust	0.060** (0.01)	0.045** (0.01)	0.038** (0.01)	0.071** (0.01)
Personal expectations	0.022** (0.00)	0.013** (0.00)	0.011** (0.00)	0.021** (0.00)
Wasta (connections)	−0.047** (0.00)	−0.046** (0.00)	−0.035** (0.00)	−0.036** (0.00)
Political interest	0.0094* (0.00)	−0.0018 (0.00)	−0.0025 (0.00)	0.0057 (0.00)
Female	0.016* (0.01)	0.015* (0.00)	0.021** (0.00)	0.0051 (0.01)
Age	0.00046 (0.00)	−0.00068** (0.00)	−0.00060* (0.00)	0.00022 (0.00)
Constant	0.58** (0.03)	0.77** (0.02)	0.76** (0.02)	0.49** (0.03)
Observations	2743	4438	4232	2422

Note: * $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.001$. Source: Arab Democracy Barometer, Wave III.