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One man, one vote, one time? A model of democratization in the Middle East

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Abstract

The protests associated with the 2011 Arab Spring represent a serious and sustained challenge to autocratic rule in the Middle East. Under what conditions will Arab protest movements translate into a full-fledged 'fourth wave' of democratization? We argue that questions about the commitment of Islamic political opposition to democracy beyond a country's first free election may hinder Middle Eastern democratization. We extend Przeworski's canonical model of political liberalization as described in *Democracy and the Market* (1991) and find that transition to democracy is only possible under two conditions. First, uncertainty regarding the preferences of key elite actors is a necessary condition for democratic transition. Second, the repressive capacity of the state must lie above a minimum threshold. Given these conditions, democracy can occur when two types of political actors meet – regime liberalizers who prefer democracy to a narrowed dictatorship, and civil society elite who honor democratic principles. While a series of influential studies have argued that authoritarian elites block democratic transition because of their fear of the economic redistributive preferences of the median voter, this study suggests that regime liberalizers in the Middle East suspect political openings could become a vehicle for Islamists to seize power through free elections only to deny the median voter another chance to express their will.

Keywords

Arab springs; democratization; game theory; Middle East; pacted transitions

1. Introduction

The wave of anti-authoritarian, popular protest that began in late 2010 and spread across the Arab world represents the most serious and sustained challenge to autocratic rule

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yet witnessed in the contemporary Middle East. By all accounts, the protests were both unexpected in their scope and unprecedented in their intensity. Enfeebled authoritarian leaders, like former Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, have been deposed. Popular protest has weakened other Arab leaders, forcing incumbents to ramp up strategies of coercion and cooptation. The question of whether the Arab protest movements will translate into a fully fledged 'fourth wave' of democratization remains unanswered, however. Elite actors associated with the *ancien régime* in Egypt, for example, remain firmly in control of the state apparatus six months after protests began.

Political scientists specializing in the Middle East have long been puzzled by the failure of countries in the region to make the transition from authoritarian to democratic government. Modernization theory suggests that democracy is a natural outgrowth of economic development and that once socio-economic requisites reach certain levels, democracy follows (Barro, 1999; Lipset, 1959). The failure of modernization theory to explain the lack of democratization in wealthy Gulf States, not to speak of the vibrancy of democratic life in impoverished countries like India and Bangladesh, has led scholars to develop alternative theories for the region's failure to adopt democratic practices. While some pointed to the democracy-hindering byproducts of oil wealth (Luciani, 1987; Ross, 2001; Smith, 2004), others focused on the effects of Islam and Arab culture generally (Hudson, 1995; Kramer, 1993; Tessler, 2002), and the subordination of women in Islamic society more specifically (Fish, 2002).

Rather than arguing that democratization has cultural or structural bases, scholars in the pacted transitions tradition have argued that democracy has to be a self-enforcing equilibrium of the strategic interactions between a country's key political players (Przeworski, 1991). In other words, democracy is only sustainable if it is the stable solution to a strategic game. In such models, three important assumptions are generally made from the start. First, the transition process is assumed to be elite-led. The two elite actors of interest are liberalizers within an authoritarian regime who seek to gain leverage over their hardline counterparts and civil society elite. Second, it is assumed that these elite actors behave strategically. Regional specialists, particularly those focusing on Latin America and Eastern Europe, have argued that the first sign of possible transition is when authoritarian incumbents open up the political system to greater rights for individuals and groups (O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986; Przeworski, 1991). The goal of the regime is not democratization, but rather to broaden its base of public support. Finally, these models implicitly assume that the elite group representing civil society supports democracy in principle.

The popular protests associated with the Arab Spring have demonstrated the critical role played by ordinary citizens in spurring political change. Indeed, protester demand for more representative governance has forced sitting autocrats to reevaluate the very foundations of the relationship between regime and society. Popular protest, however, has not been confirmed a sufficient condition for democratization. Elite actors, particularly those associated with Arab militaries, often retain the prerogative regarding critical steps in the political process. The evaluations and expectations of key elite actors influence whether widespread popular protest has the capacity to translate into more than decapitation of an authoritarian leadership.

In this paper, we extend a canonical model of political transition developed by Adam Przeworski in *Democracy and the Market* (Przeworski, 1991) to include the possibility of two types of uncertainty – one of which, we argue, is particularly relevant in the Middle Eastern context. The first – discussed in the original Przeworski conceptualization – is uncertainty on the part of civil society regarding the willingness of regime liberalizers to repress; the second involves the uncertainty of regime liberalizers regarding civil society's commitment to democracy. We argue that this uncertainty on the part of the liberalizer regarding the type of civil society that it faces is an important part of the political landscape in the contemporary Middle East where Islamic religious associations are the best-organized and most important civil society groups. The model solution suggests a number of key findings. The first is that the existence of uncertainty is key to the possibility for democratic transition. Second, transition to democracy is only possible when the repressive capacity of a regime exceeds a certain threshold. Given these conditions, democracy occurs when regime liberalizers who prefer democracy to a narrowed dictatorship interact with a civil society that will honor democratic principles. These results are applied to the study of political change and stasis in qualitative historical cases in four countries – Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Algeria, and Turkey. We also offer some early reflections on the Arab Spring in light of the model results.

The findings presented here complement an important stream in the existing literature. A series of influential studies argue that the suppression of democracy comes about due to resource holders' fear of what those who win democratic elections will do. This fear is at the heart of the Meltzer and Richards (1981) model and related studies which focus on the impact of democracy on forms of economic redistribution (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006; Boix, 2003; Ziblatt, 2008). These works share an assumption that democracy would yield the ideal point of the median voter, which would involve economic redistribution unacceptable to those in power. The process of democratization, then, boils down to a battle over economic resources and autocracy is sustained by an elite that seeks to maintain its position of economic power over the underprivileged masses. While existing studies focus on the economic consequences of democratization, this paper does not argue that Middle Eastern autocrats fear redistribution; rather, we argue that the political forces supported by the median voter instead support an *ideological* perspective that is potentially unfavorable towards or unacceptable to existing power holders. This represents a theoretically and substantively significant sub-category of the more general finding that democracy – through the realized preferences of the median voter – threatens authoritarian power holders in ways that make democratic transition less likely.[1]

The findings of this project have applicability beyond the Middle Eastern cases explicitly discussed. The extended model need not apply exclusively to Islamist religious organizations but instead might be applied more broadly to the interaction between regime liberalizers and other types of potentially illiberal civil society groups including nationalist, ethnic, and tribal organizations as well as the mafia-like or militia organizations that often emerge in developing countries with weak states.[2]

2. Middle Eastern exceptionalism: Existing explanations

There have been a number of attempts to explain Middle East exceptionalism in the face of the 'third wave' of democratization (Salame, 1994). We summarize the main themes

in this literature below. Our objective here is not to invalidate explanations in the existing literature, but to demonstrate that these theories *alone* cannot explain the patterns of regime change and stasis that have been observed.

2.1. Structural economic explanations

The theory of the rentier state suggests that countries that derive the majority of government funds from non-tax sources of revenue, such as oil exports, are fundamentally different from countries without such a resource base (Beblawi and Luciani, 1987). External rents allow regimes to avoid taxing their own citizenries, thereby breaking the vital, often adversarial, link between governments and the people they tax (Richards and Waterbury, 1986). The theory of the rentier state has been cited by researchers who use economic development to explain democratization but are hard pressed to explain why relatively wealthy Arab Gulf states, like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and others, failed to democratize despite their high levels of per capita income. Large-*N* statistical studies aimed at explaining the factors most conducive to democratization suggest that income is a key determinant of democracy, except where oil is the dominant export. Ross (2001) finds that oil and natural resource exports have an undemocratic effect and cites the rentier state hypothesis as one of three possible causal mechanisms for why oil and natural resource exports might have this effect. Smith (2004) finds that oil dependence is associated with increased regime stability and with lower likelihoods of civil war and anti-state protest.

While rentier state theory may be useful for explaining why large oil producers, like the Gulf states, are undemocratic, it does not explain the persistence of authoritarian government in the majority of Middle Eastern countries where per capita oil exports are small, either because of a country's large population – like Iraq, Iran, and Algeria – or because of the country's negligible oil exports – like Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Yemen, Jordan, and Lebanon. While some of the rents from the oil-rich states may be enjoyed by citizens in other countries in the region as a result of remittances passed on by migrant workers, these remittances accrue directly to individuals rather than their home country governments. Most theories relating oil rents to authoritarianism rely on the assumption that the state controls these resources, not individuals. A theoretical linkage between oil rents and authoritarianism also implies that declining oil revenue would diminish an autocrat's ability to maintain control. Yet even when smoothed out over periods of multiple years, oil prices and revenue have fluctuated tremendously over the last 30 years and the persistence of Middle Eastern autocracy remains.

2.2. External factors

Some researchers have argued that the external environment has been the dominant roadblock to democratization. High levels of regional conflict and the existence of external threats encourage the development of coercive apparatuses that are used to justify (and, in some cases, carry out) domestic repression (Brynen, 2004). The Middle East's historic colonial legacy has also been described as a factor in its failure to democratize. Strong anti-westernization/anti-globalization activists argue that efforts to democratize the region are linked to a new era of Western imperialism and that democracy is an

'imported' concept. Middle Eastern rulers tend to describe the state's objectives in terms of a 'sacred mission,' usually against this imperialist threat (Waterbury, 1994). In addition, the role of the United States in propping up existing authoritarian regimes cannot be ignored. For example, Mitchell (2002) has argued that the United States is responsible for maintaining religious authoritarian regimes like Saudi Arabia. Aid, arms, and military support all help to support regimes that are diplomatically and economically critical to American foreign policy yet are not democratic in their own practices.

The Middle East's external environment is not entirely unique, however. A number of third world countries maintain democratic institutions despite the existence of an external threat and high levels of militarization (India most notably). The South African colonial experience has been at least as traumatic as that experienced by most Middle Eastern countries yet South Africa has emerged democratic. Finally, it is unclear if American military and economic support necessarily stabilizes regimes. Brynen (2004) argues that given the unpopularity of American foreign policies and US support for Israel, close ties to the United States can be seen as more of a liability than a benefit.

Brownlee (2005) has argued that what distinguishes the Middle East from other parts of the world is the fact that repressive crackdowns can take place in a context of independence from foreign pressure to respect human rights. However, it is not clear that foreign intervention is the critical factor in securing a democratic transition. In South Korea during the 1980s student and labor union demonstrations were brutally suppressed by the authoritarian regime. It was local outrage over the repression that paved the way for democratic change, however, rather than US condemnation of its strategically important authoritarian ally. In addition western powers, like the United States, were impotent in the face of human rights abuses committed in Eastern bloc countries. This suggests that western intervention on behalf of challengers to the regime is at least not a necessary condition for successful democratization.[3]

2.3. *Political culture and civil society*

The effect of Arab and Islamic political culture on liberalization prospects has been a subject of considerable debate. Anderson (1995) writes that much of the social science literature treats the Arab world as if it is 'congenitally defective' with regard to democratic potential, in response to neo-primordialists who have argued that Arab society lacks tolerance and the underpinnings of democratic government (Kramer, 1993, 2003) or suffers from a more generalized inhospitality to democracy (Kedourie, 1994). Hudson (1995) has argued for a revival of the political culture approach to studying Arab democratization, although in a more nuanced manner, and Fish (2002) discusses the role of women in Islam as an explanation for failure to democratize. Researchers analyzing survey data have tried to link certain religious and cultural beliefs with support for or opposition to democracy (Tessler, 2002). Cultural explanations – particularly ones that focus on the effects of Islamic culture – tend to overpredict authoritarianism, however, ignoring democratic transitions which have occurred in Turkey, Indonesia, and other Muslim-majority countries. Bellin (2005) argues other world cultures, including Catholicism and Confucianism, have at different times been accused of incompatibility with democracy yet many countries in Latin America and East Asia have successfully transitioned.

This paper seeks to explain a key challenge to democratization facing Middle Eastern countries, independent of structural economic and external factors. To make our argument, we develop a game theoretic model that characterizes the strategic interaction between two key actors. Rather than arguing that Middle East exceptionalism is a result of some immutable attribute of Arab or Islamic culture, we argue that transition has been hindered by concern on the part of regime liberalizers regarding the preferences of an emerging civil society and that these preferences are often conflated with culture. This is a subtle yet important point. While the popularity and potential electability of candidates associated with Islamic political movements are *currently* defining features of Middle Eastern states this has not always been the case, historically, and is unlikely to be the case in all future periods.[4] Nor are Middle Eastern countries the only cases where civil society has the potential to mobilize in illiberal ways. In that sense, this paper bridges the gap between the political culture approaches to Arab politics and the pacted transitions literature which is widely used to explain regime change in the 'third wave' countries of Eastern Europe and Latin America. The explanation that we provide is not intended to supplant existing theories, but rather to provide an additional, perhaps partial, explanation for the lag in democratic transitions in the region.

We build on an existing literature which considers the compatibility of radical or religious civil society organization and the concomitant prospects for democracy. Berman (1997), responding to Putnam's contention that a vigorous civil society is good for democracy (Putnam, 1993), finds that civic organizations in Weimar Germany were easily infiltrated by Nazis and had a negative effect on Germany's prospects for democracy. Berman's argument suggests that the form that civil society takes matters at least as much as its willingness to organize. Kalyvas (1998) questions the assumption that democracy and religious politics are incompatible and demonstrates, through a discussion of religious political organization in Belgium, that under certain conditions, successful religious mobilization in politics is compatible with democratic development. Kalyvas argues that religious parties have an incentive to signal that they are moderate but incumbents will likely distrust such signals; as a result, 'for democratization to proceed it is a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for religious challengers to solve their commitment problem' (Kalyvas, 2000: 380).[5] This project explicitly considers the impact of the democratic preferences of civic organizations by extending an existing model of transition politics to include an appropriate information structure for such a possibility.[6]

3. Models of transition and the Middle East

A canonical model of democratic transition is developed by Adam Przeworski in *Democracy and the Market* (Przeworski, 1991). Przeworski models the strategic interaction between proto-liberalizers within an authoritarian government and mobilizers within civil society, just at the moment that an authoritarian regime considers opening up, politically. In Przeworski's model, liberalizers hope to broaden the social base of the regime by allowing limited autonomous organization of civil society.[7] Ultimately, liberalizers hope that these civil society elites might serve as future allies against regime hardliners (Przeworski, 1991). In this sense, the 'liberalizers' in our model need not truly be committed to the principle of liberalization; they are simply required to prefer a broadened dictatorship in which they are able to mobilize popular support to consolidate their rule

over a status quo dictatorship. In the language of John Waterbury (1994), regime transitions under this preference structure can produce 'democracy without democrats.' Civil society's decision to organize depends on its belief about whether or not the softliners are actually committed to reform as well as its belief about the regime's ability to successfully repress political organization in the event the softliners are not committed.

In applying the Przeworski model to the study of political transitions in the Middle East, we extend the model in two ways. First, we observe that Przeworski's discussion of the model implies uncertainty: civil society does not know whether it faces a liberalizer that is 'soft' and prefers transition to democracy over the use of repressive force, or the type that is 'tough' and is willing to use force to put down civil society's autonomous organization. Second, we argue that Przerworski's assumption that civil society's commitment to democracy is known may not apply in the Middle East. In particular, if an opposition party wins in a country's first democratic election, there is no guarantee that this party will agree to electoral competition in the future. In fact, these countries may display a pattern characterized by some as 'one man, one vote, one time.' In the Middle Eastern context Islamist parties are the strongest political opposition to existing regimes. When one considers the autocratic tendencies of Islamists who have held political power, for example in Afghanistan, Iran, and Sudan, this concern becomes particularly relevant. The question is, can democracy still emerge under these seemingly unfavorable circumstances and what can we say about the likelihood of its occurrence?

In the section to follow, we seek to address the issues raised here. First, we discuss Przeworski's model of political liberalization with complete information. Following that, we extend Przeworski's model to include uncertainty over liberalizer type and the possibility of a civil society that prefers theocratic government to democracy and consider its implications for our understanding of democratic transition.[8] Like Przeworski's original conceptualization, the model that we describe represents a partial equilibrium and captures just a snapshot of the strategic interaction between two key actors when a rift emerges in the authoritarian elite. While neither the Przeworski model nor the model extension here incorporate underlying political economy factors that may lead up to the modeled transition moment,[9] there is an explicit focus on the internal transition dynamic particularly as it relates to the possibility of dictatorial capture by a potentially illiberal civil society.[10]

4. Extending Przeworski's liberalization model

4.1. Model setup

Przeworski models the interaction between two key actors – liberalizers within the government and mobilizers within civil society. Przeworski (1991: 57) describes the goals of the liberalizers in the following way: 'The project of the Liberalizers is to relax social tension and to strengthen their position in the power bloc by broadening the social base of the regime: to allow some autonomous organization of the civil society and to incorporate the new groups into the authoritarian institutions.'[11] Liberalizers seek the inclusion of outside groups in the regime that will constitute natural allies for them against regime hardliners (Przeworski, 1991: 62).
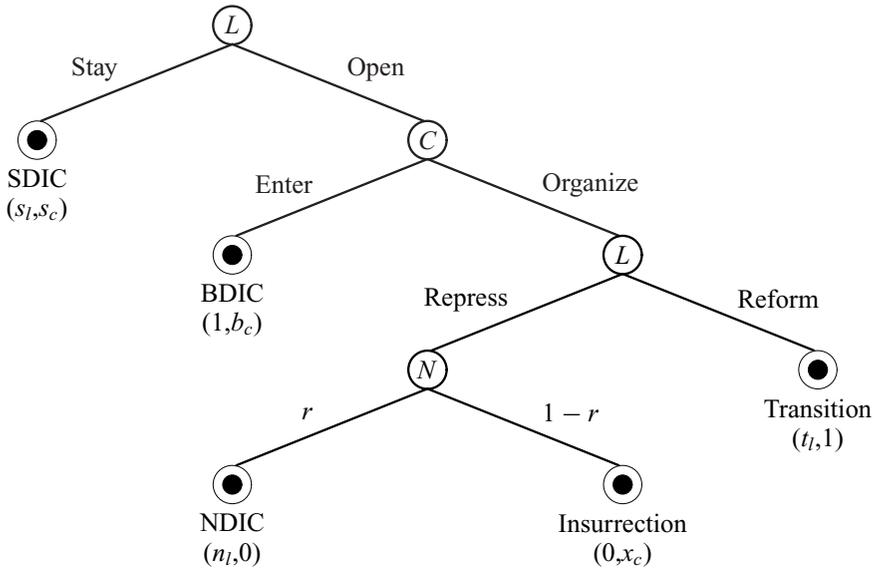
Figure 1. Przeworski's model of democratic transition.

Liberalizers make the first move in the game, deciding whether or not to create an opening in the system for the organized political activity of civil society. If liberalizers decide to take no action, in Przeworski's language to 'stay with Hardliners,' then the outcome of the game is status quo dictatorship (*SDIC*).[12] If the liberalizers choose to open, then civil society must decide between entering into a compact with the state or organizing politically.[13]

If civil society enters a compact with the regime (for example, enters into a National Unity Front), then the result is broadened dictatorship (*BDIC*).[14] If civil society decides to meaningfully organize, however, liberalizers must decide whether they want to pursue further reforms (i.e., to continue on to democratic transition) or to repress the organized political activity. If liberalizers allow political reform, the result is transition. If the liberalizers decide to rejoin the hardline contingent within the authoritarian government, then they choose to repress civil society. The outcome of repression is determined probabilistically; with probability r the outcome is a narrowed dictatorship (*NDIC*) and with probability $1 - r$ the outcome of the game is insurrection. r therefore represents the liberalizer's repressive capacity relative to the strength of civil society, after the liberalizer has opened up the political system.[15] Przeworski's game is depicted in Figure 1.[16]

This game can be treated as one of complete information; although there is a move by Nature, it is at the very end of the game and only determines the result of the repression 'lottery.' While neither side knows the value of r – the likelihood that repression will be successful – they both have some belief about the value of r.

4.1.1. Solving the complete information game. The equilibria of this game can be found using backwards induction. A number of preference orderings are possible, but certain restrictions make sense. For any possible liberalizer, we assume that $BDIC > SDIC >$

NDIC, and *SDIC* > *Transition*. It also makes sense to assume that *Insurrection* is the liberalizer's worst possible outcome. These orderings reflect the fact that the liberalizer wants to broaden the dictatorship, but is not a proto-democrat because it prefers the status quo to transition. Left unspecified is the relative ordering of *Transition* and *NDIC*. For civil society, we assume *Transition* > *BDIC* > *Insurrection* > *SDIC* > *NDIC*. For convenience, we will normalize the payoffs so that 1 corresponds to an actor's most-preferred outcome and zero corresponds to its least-preferred outcome.

If the liberalizer has preferences *BDIC* > *SDIC* > *Transition* > *NDIC* > *Insurrection*, liberalizers will choose reform in the final node since *Transition* is a better outcome for the liberalizer then either *NDIC* or *Insurrection*. Civil society knows this and opts to organize in the preceding node. Then in the liberalizers' first node, they play *Stay* instead of *open* for an outcome of *SDIC* since this outcome is preferred to *Transition*. Call this type of liberalizer 'soft.'

Consider, however, what happens if the preference ordering for the liberalizer is *BDIC* > *SDIC* > *NDIC* > *Transition* > *Insurrection*. This type of liberalizer prefers a narrowed dictatorship to transition. Call this type of liberalizer 'tough.' In this case, the value of r determines if the expected utility of repressing is greater than or less than the expected utility of turning into reformers. The expected utilities for repression and transition, respectively, are

$$U_l(repression) = (r)n_l,$$

$$U_l(transition) = t_l.$$

Using these two expected utility calculations, it is possible to determine the value of r needed for liberalizers to be indifferent between reform and repression. This is found by setting the two utility calculations equal to each other so that, $U_l(repression) = U_l(transition)$ and solving for $r \equiv r^*$:

$$(r)n_l = t_l.$$

Solving for r we find

$$r = \frac{t_l}{n_l} \equiv r^*.$$

Therefore, for values of $r < r^*$, liberalizers choose transition over repression in the final choice node of the game. If this is the case, civil society organizes and liberalizers, knowing this, play stay. The result is status quo dictatorship. If $r > r^*$, however, liberalizers choose repression over transition in the final node. Civil society realizes this and chooses to play enter over organize. Anticipating this choice, liberalizers choose to open, thus resulting in a broadened dictatorship as the outcome of the game.[17]

4.2. Potential civil society types

The model we have discussed thus far assumes that the outcome in the event that civil society organizes and the regime reforms is democracy. Is this always the case, however? In the standard theoretical literature, civil society is defined as 'an intermediate associational realm between state and family populated by organizations which are separate from the state, enjoy autonomy in relation to the state and are formed voluntarily by members of society to protect or extend their interests or values' (White, 2004: 10).[18] In the
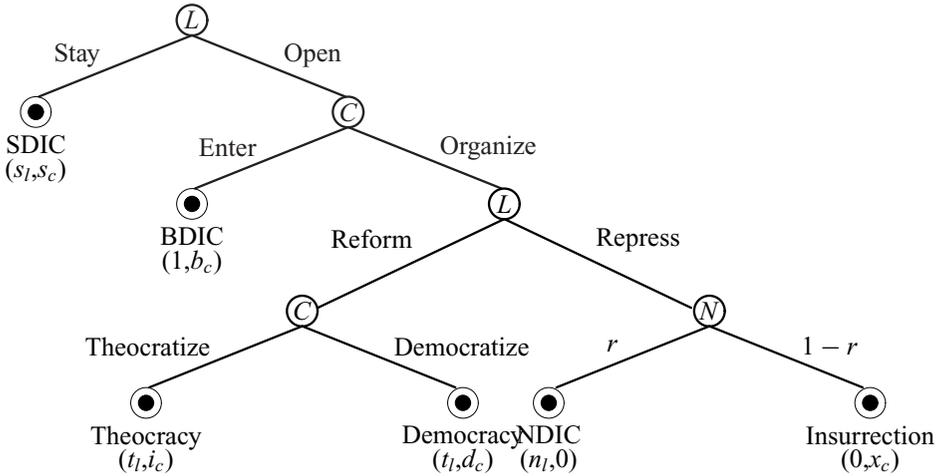
Figure 2. Przeworski model with additional move by civil society.

Middle Eastern context, Islamist organizations are the most active aspect of civil society (Cavatorta, 2008; Yom, 2005).[19] There remains considerable debate, however, regarding how Islamist civil society impacts on opportunities for transition to democracy.[20] For example, Volpi (2004) contends that conventional assumptions about the liberal nature of civil society should not be taken for granted in most of the Muslim world. He argues that what distinguishes the Muslim world from other socio-historical and geopolitical regions is that the main social and political forces promote 'positive' notions of freedom and citizenship instead of the 'negative' liberal understanding of political rights and civil liberties (Volpi, 2004). While negative liberties are usually attributed to individual agents in a classical liberal sense, positive liberties are often attributed to collectivities, or to individuals considered primarily as members of given collectivities, and are associated with an Islamist interpretation of rights.

So what would happen in the context of the Przeworski framework if regime liberalizers chose to reform and then civil society decided to institute an Islamic state after winning the country's first free election? This scenario suggests that civil society comes in at least two flavors: 'moderate' and 'radical.' Moderate civil society prefers democratic transition over an Islamic state in the final node of the game, while a radical civil society chooses to institute *sharī'a* (i.e., Islamic) law and an Islamic state. One way to capture this within the existing Przeworski framework would be to add an additional choice node at the end of the game.

Consider a model extension beginning with the same Przeworski model described in the previous section. To this, we add a second move by civil society to the end of the game (see Figure 2). If the liberalizers reform, then civil society has the opportunity to make a final move where it decides whether it prefers democratic transition, *Democracy*, or an Islamic state, *Theocracy*.

4.3. Two-sided incomplete information game

We now proceed to extend the original Przeworski model by incorporating two forms of incomplete information. First, civil society is uncertain whether it is facing a liberalizer of the tough or soft type. Secondly, the liberalizer is uncertain whether it is facing civil society of the moderate or radical type. This game is a two-sided information variant of the game shown in Figure 2. We have chosen perfect Bayesian Nash equilibrium as the solution concept for this game because the asymmetric information structure suggests that beliefs may play an important role in determining equilibria.

In this game, we model incomplete information using the Harsanyi transformation. Let p be the prior probability that the liberalizer is soft, and q the prior probability that civil society is moderate. The game begins with two moves of nature that determine the state of the world. Four states of the world are, therefore, possible: soft liberalizers with moderate civil society, soft liberalizers with radical civil society, tough liberalizers with moderate civil society, and tough liberalizers with radical civil society.

Soft and tough liberalizers begin by choosing to play *Stay* or *Open*, with both moderate and radical civil society choosing between playing *Enter* and *Organize* if the liberalizer chooses to open. The liberalizers then act again if civil society organizes, with the soft and tough liberalizers choosing to *Reform* or *Repress* civil society. Civil society then concludes the game, choosing between *Democracy* and *Theocracy* depending on whether it is moderate or radical.

To differentiate the payoffs for moderate and radical civil society from democracy, we set the payoff for moderate civil society from democracy as d_{cm}, and the payoff for radical civil society from democracy as d_{cr}. Similarly, the payoff for radical civil society from theocracy is denoted i_{cr} and the payoff for moderate civil society from theocracy is denoted i_{cm}. The payoffs are then ordered such that $d_{cm} > i_{cm}$, making *Democracy* a dominant action in the final node for moderate civil society. Similarly, $i_{cr} > d_{cr}$ is assumed to make *Theocracy* a dominant choice in the final node for radical civil society. No relationship between i_{cr} and d_{cm} is assumed.

Similarly, we differentiate the payoffs for soft and tough liberalizers from narrowed dictatorships. More specifically, let n_{ls} represent the payoff to the soft liberalizer under *NDIC* and n_{lt} represent the payoff to the tough liberalizer under *NDIC*. The payoffs are ordered such that $n_{lt} > t_l > n_{ls}$, where t_l is the liberalizer's utility from losing power in a regime transition. Soft liberalizers, therefore, prefer regime transition to narrowed dictatorship, but tough liberalizers prefer narrowed dictatorships instead.

Summarizing the payoff orderings, for the liberalizer $1 > s_l > n_{lt} > t_l > n_{ls} > 0$. For civil society, $d_{cm} > i_c > d_{cr} > b_c > x_c > s_c > 0$. The equilibria that we identify can be summarized in the following propositions, with detailed derivations included in the Appendix. It is also worth noting that the range of p and q values that sustain the equilibria in Proposition 2 overlap with those in Propositions 3 and 4. Stated differently, this means that status quo dictatorships can be sustained given any value of p and q, even for those values that permit broadened dictatorships or democratic transitions to occur. However, the p and q values that sustain Propositions 3 and 4 are mutually exclusive, and the r values that sustain Proposition 1 make it mutually exclusive from Propositions 2, 3, and 4.

Proposition 1   When $r < \frac{t_l}{n_{lt}}$, the unique equilibrium results in status quo dictatorship.

Under this condition, soft and hard liberalizers both play *Stay*, and both types play *Reform* when challenged. Both moderate and radical civil society play *Organize*, while moderates choose *Democracy* and radicals choose *Theocracy*. This condition is examined in case 1 of the Appendix.

In this equilibrium, the liberalizer has limited repressive capability, so civil society will organize against a liberalizer that provides a political opening. Knowing this to be true, the liberalizer will not open the political system under any circumstance, and no regime transition takes place. This equilibrium is the basis of the Saudi Arabia case study presented in the next section.

Proposition 2   There are three qualitatively similar equilibria in which the realized path of play is for liberalizers to play *Stay* and status quo dictatorship is maintained. One of these equilibria exists if one of the following sets of criteria hold:

(i) If $r > \frac{t_l}{n_{lt}}$ and $q < \frac{s_l - (r)n_{lt}}{1 - (r)n_{lt}}$, an equilibrium where soft liberalizers play *Stay* and *Reform*, tough liberalizers play *Stay* and *Repress*, moderate civil society plays *Enter* and *Democracy*, and radical civil society plays *Organize* and *Theocracy* can be sustained. This condition is examined as case 2 in the Appendix.

(ii) If $r > \frac{t_l}{n_{lt}}$ and $\frac{1 - s_l}{1 - t_l} < q < \frac{1 - s_l}{1 - (p)t_l - (1 - p)(r)n_{lt}}$, an equilibrium where soft liberalizers play *Stay* and *Reform*, tough liberalizers play *Stay* and *Repress*, moderate civil society plays *Organize* and *Democracy*, and radical civil society plays *Enter* and *Theocracy* can be sustained. This condition is examined as case 3 in the Appendix.

(iii) If $r > \frac{t_l}{n_{lt}}$, an equilibrium where soft liberalizers play *Stay* and *Reform*, tough liberalizers play *Stay* and *Repress*, moderate civil society plays *Organize* and *Democracy*, and radical civil society plays *Organize* and *Theocracy* can be sustained. This condition is examined as case 4 in the Appendix.

These are all pooling equilibria in which the tough liberalizer 'hides behind' the soft liberalizer, leading civil society to challenge the regime at least some of the time. In these equilibria, both liberalizer types choose status quo dictatorship.

Proposition 3   Broadened dictatorship will emerge in equilibrium with certainty only if $r > \frac{t_l}{n_{lt}}$ and $p < \frac{b_c - (1 - r)x_c}{\max(d_{cm}, i_{cr}) - (1 - r)x_c}$.

Under these conditions an equilibrium where soft liberalizers play *Open* and *Reform*, tough liberalizers play *Open* and *Repress*, moderate civil society plays *Enter* and *Democracy*, and radical civil society plays *Enter* and *Theocracy* can be sustained. This condition is examined as case 13 in the Appendix.

This is a additional pooling equilibrium in which the soft liberalizer 'hides behind' the tough liberalizer, leading both civil society types to capitulate. This equilibrium is the basis of the Egyptian case study presented in the next section.

Proposition 4   There exist equilibria in which democracy or theocracy occurs with positive probability if $r > \frac{t_l}{n_{lt}}$ and conditions on p and q are met. However, when these

conditions are met, narrowed dictatorships, insurrection, and broadened dictatorships are also possible outcomes.

If $r > \frac{t_l}{n_{lt}}$, $\frac{s_l - (p)t_l - (1-p)(r)n_{lt}}{1 - (p)t_l - (1-p)(r)n_{lt}} < q < \frac{p(i_{cr}) - b_c + (1-p)(1-r)x_c}{p(d_{cm} + i_{cr}) - (2)b_c + 2(1-p)(1-r)x_c}$, and $\frac{b_c - (1-r)x_c}{i_{cr} - (1-r)x_c} < p < \frac{b_c - (1-r)x_c}{d_{cm} - (1-r)x_c}$, an equilibrium where soft liberalizers play *Open* and *Reform*, tough liberalizers play *Open* and *Repress*, moderate civil society plays *Enter* and *Democracy*, and radical civil society plays *Organize* and *Theocracy* can be sustained. The constraint on p is only possible if $i_{cr} > d_{cm}$ (i.e., radicals value theocracy more than moderates value democracy). For radical civil society interacting with soft liberalizers, the result is theocracy. For moderate civil society, the result is a broadened dictatorship. For radical civil society interacting with tough liberalizers, the result is either insurrection or a narrowed dictatorship. This condition is examined as case 14 in the Appendix. If $r > \frac{t_l}{n_{lt}}$, $\frac{p(i_{cr}) - b_c + (1-p)(1-r)x_c}{p(d_{cm} + i_{cr}) - (2)b_c + 2(1-p)(1-r)x_c} < q < \frac{1 - s_l}{1 - t_l}$ and $\frac{b_c - (1-r)x_c}{d_{cm} - (1-r)x_c} < p < \frac{b_c - (1-r)x_c}{i_{cr} - (1-r)x_c}$, an equilibrium where soft liberalizers play *Open* and *Reform*, tough liberalizers play *Open* and *Repress*, moderate civil society plays *Organize* and *Democracy*, and radical civil society plays *Enter* and *Theocracy* can be sustained. The constraint on p is only possible if $d_{cm} > i_{cr}$ (i.e., moderates value democracy more than radicals value theocracy). For moderate civil society interacting with tough liberalizers, the result is either insurrection or a narrowed dictatorship. For radical civil society, the result is a broadened dictatorship. For moderate civil society interacting with soft liberalizers, the result is democracy. This condition is examined as case 15 in the Appendix.

These equilibria form the bases of the Algerian and Turkish case studies presented in the next section.

4.4. Regime transition under the two-sided model

A number of interesting results arise from the solution to this model. First, it should be noted from Proposition 1 that when repressive capacity is low, no other variables impact the possible equilibria. Civil society knows that the liberalizer will not repress under these conditions, allowing them to organize with impunity. Recognizing that their threat of repression is non-credible, liberalizers do not allow civil society to organize, and remain in a status quo dictatorship. Under what circumstances might such an equilibrium emerge? This equilibrium forms the basis of the Saudi Arabian case study we develop. We argue that after the emergence of a significant split in Saudi Arabia's ruling elite in the late 1970s, Saudi liberalizers – recognizing that their ability to repress would be constrained based on the close and interlocking ties between the royals and society – chose to stay with the hardliners rather than provide an opening to civil society.

Secondly, broadened dictatorships result primarily from the pooling equilibrium in Proposition 3 where the liberalizer plays *Open* regardless of type, and civil society plays *Enter* regardless of type. This equilibrium requires high r and low p. Substantively, this means that in cases where repressive capacity is high and civil society believes the probability the liberalizer they are facing is of the tough type is high, broadened dictatorships will occur. The liberalizer chooses to open the system and exploits its capacity and reputation for repression against pro-transition civil society elites, forcing them to enter

into a broadened dictatorship with a credible threat of repression if they do not comply. This equilibrium forms the basis of the Egyptian case study that we develop in the following section. Following the emergence of a split between Egyptian President Sadat and the supporters of previous President Nasser, Sadat cultivated a reputation for toughness. Sadat then used this reputation to coerce civil society into accepting a broadened dictatorship.

Our most significant result is highlighted in Proposition 4, which produces equilibria that allow for a number of possible outcomes including democracy, theocracy, narrowed dictatorships, and insurrection. It is worth noting that these outcomes could not come about in the original complete information Przeworski model. Two substantive conclusions can be drawn. First, Proposition 4 suggests that democratic transition cannot occur when repressive capacity is too low.[21] While this result may seem counterintuitive, it holds true in this model because a liberalizer known to have low repressive capacity will always choose status quo dictatorship in the beginning of the game and foreclose the possibility of regime transition on poor terms. Secondly, the fact that p and q have bounded constraints substantively suggests that uncertainty is a *necessary* ingredient for democracy to occur. Democratic transitions, therefore, require uncertainty thus highlighting the critical role that beliefs play in shaping the range of regime transitions that are possible.

This set of strategies and beliefs form the basis for two additional case studies. One discusses political developments in Algeria. A split between the orthodox and reformist wings of the Front Liberation National (FLN) in Algeria in the late 1980s led liberalizers to provide a political opening. Regime liberalizers allowed civil society to organize in municipal elections and a first stage of parliamentary elections. When it became clear that civil society favored Islamist parties over other types of political organization, the regime repressed what it believed to be radical civil society which led to the emergence of a narrowed dictatorship.[22]

The results presented in this proposition also form the basis of the case study of Turkey in the post-World War II era. When Turkey's hegemonic party split between hardline Kemalists and softline liberals, the latter group sought to introduce a token opposition to both increase its power vis-à-vis the hardliners as well as to enhance the legitimacy of the authoritarian regime. An opposition party emerged that held secular values consistent with the hegemonic party's core beliefs. Regime liberalizers – although capable of repressing this organization of civil society at any time – chose to allow the opposition party to challenge the hegemonic party and win rather than crackdown to hold onto power. In presenting a case study of Turkey's transition to democracy, we highlight the importance of uncertainty and beliefs within a real-life context.

5. Case studies from the Middle East

While the voluminous literature on the role of strategic interaction in democratic transitions has largely ignored cases from the Middle East, the equally extensive literature on liberalization and democratization developed by Middle East area specialists has largely ignored formal models of strategic interaction.[23] In this section, we examine the formal interaction between key elite actors in a series of historical narratives drawn from the Middle East. The analysis presented here is similar to what Bates et al. (1998) describe as an analytic narrative, which combines the analytic tools associated with game theory

with the narrative form, or what George and Bennett (2005: 210–211) define as an 'ana-lytic causal explanation,' which focuses on parts of a historical narrative that are related to an explicit theoretical explanation.

Why narratives? There are a number of strengths to the narrative form, such as the inclusion of detail regarding causal processes (Buthe, 2002) and the possibility of tracing the links between causes and observed outcomes (George and Bennett, 2005). Pierson (2004) suggests that narratives are particularly effective when linked to extensive form games as both take into consideration the sequence of political events. In this project, the theoretical model structures and disciplines the narratives presented, offering clear boundaries for the units of analysis (Buthe, 2002). Each of the units, or case studies, were chosen because they begin with a split within the ruling elite of an authoritarian regime of the Middle East.[24] This remains our most important criterion for case selection and an important domain condition for the project. End points for the cases correspond to critical dates in the political history of each case or the point at which the split within the ruling elite was no longer politically relevant.[25] Our discussion of the cases closely follows the format of the game and we use the results derived from the two-sided incomplete information model to examine political outcomes based on a number of criteria, including (1) the likelihood of successful repression (r), (2) civil society's prior belief about the type of liberalizer it faces (p), and (3) liberalizer beliefs about the type of civil society that it confronts (q). In line with Buthe (2002) and George and Bennett (2005), information extraneous to the model is minimized.

While narratives are often presented exclusively as demonstrations of a formal model (Bennett and Braumoeller, 2008), we believe that the cases developed here have value beyond their illustrative purpose. In particular, the four cases exhibit variation in terms of the model's key independent variables, r, p, and q, and produce unique results on the dependent variable. More specifically, we observe a status quo dictatorship (Saudi Arabia), a broadened dictatorship (Egypt), a narrowed dictatorship (Algeria), and a democratic transition (Turkey). These correspond in turn to the results in Propositions 1, 3, and two of the possible outcomes in Proposition 4.[26] Table 1 summarizes these val-ues as well as the 'realized' liberalizer and civil society types. This variation is observed while holding constant the existence of an initial split in the authoritarian elite and the fact that each country examined has a Muslim majority, and hence the possibility of a civil society with a preference for Islamic theocracy.

5.1. Low repressive capacity, soft liberalizer: Saudi Arabia 1975–1991

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia beginning in the mid-1970s saw the emergence of an intense split within the ruling elite that came to dominate internal Saudi politics (Herb, 1999). The assassination of King Faisal in 1975 marked the start of an era characterized by a multiplying of decision-making centers (Salameh and Steir, 1980). In particular, competing factions within the House of Saud clashed over the pace of modernization and westernization that should take place within the Kingdom. An alliance of full brothers – known as the Sudeiri seven, or the seven sons of Abdel Aziz al-Saud, Saudi Ara-bia's founding father, with his wife Hassa al-Sudeiri – worked to undermine the existing political priorities and seniority system (Aburish, 1996). According to Mackey, the more westernized, progressive faction was led by then Crown Prince Fahd (one of the Sudeiri

Table 1. Case studies from the Middle East with associated outcomes and parameter values for *p* (the prior probability that civil society is facing a soft liberalizer), *q* (the prior probability that the liberalizer is facing moderate civil society), and *r* (the liberalizer's repressive capacity). Additional columns show the 'realized' liberalizer and civil society types.

Case	*p*	*q*	*r*	Realized liberalizer type	Realized civil society type	Outcome
Saudi Arabia, 1975–1991	high		low			*SDIC*
Egypt, 1970–1976	low		high			*BDIC*
Algeria, 1988–1991	middling	middling	high	tough		*NDIC*
Turkey, 1946–1950	middling	middling	high	soft	moderate	*Transition*

seven), while the traditionalist faction was led by Prince (and current-day King) Abdallah (1990).[27] Mackey writes that Fahd and the progressives were the major power bloc within the family, while Abdallah – as commander of the National Guard and second deputy premier at the time – represented conservative tribal interests. Access to large sums of money also served as a major source of competition between factions of the royal family, in addition to their ideological differences (Mackey, 1990). While the factions within the royal family were very clearly demarcated (Abukhalil, 2004) and the rivalry intense, both factions behaved as if the survival of the kingdom was 'more important than factional interests' (Bligh, 1984: 91).

The key question in this case is why did Fahd not undertake controlled political liberalization in order to gain leverage over the more conservative elements of the royal family? We argue that the answer to this question lies in the nature of Saudi society and Fahd's knowledge of civil society's belief about his repressive capacity. Essentially, because of the high level of interconnectedness between the Saudi state and society, civil society elite likely believed that Fahd would be unable to undertake mass violent suppression of civic organization. Looking down the game tree with this knowledge, Fahd decided against political liberalization knowing that, in a showdown with a nascent civil society, he would be hard pressed to repress tribal elite, regardless of their commitment to democracy. Some background on the organization of Saudi government and society reinforces this view.

The Saudi government consists of the royal family, the bureaucracy, and the *'ulamā'*, or religious elite. The royal family is the largest and most cohesive group in the Kingdom with at least 5,000 members who are related to almost all of the important tribes of Saudi Arabia through marriage. Abdel Aziz al-Saud, Saudi Arabia's founding father, had expanded his powerbase through numerous matrimonial arrangements with traditional rulers and important tribal shaykhs, who – at least through the 1980s – continued to serve as a critical support base for the regime (Abir, 1987). 'The marriage connection is central to rule, since familialism as an ideology is an important part of governance...The relatives of the Sauds inside Saudi Arabia are part of a web of social relations that could include most of the tribes. In this domain of civil society, the royal family is important at the domestic level' (Fandy, 1999: 34). During this period, even the newly urbanized maintained close ties to their tribes and traditional leadership; the relationship between

the royal family and the tribes has been described as 'personal' (Abir, 1987). This has led one expert on the kingdom to argue that a 'delicate interweaving' of civil society and the state is characteristic of Saudi Arabia and that the dividing line between civil society and the state is less clearly defined in the Kingdom than in other countries (Niblock, 2006).

Fandy – one of the few authors who has explicitly researched the issue of dissent within the Kingdom – writes that the royal family exists within both civil society and the state simultaneously; to suppress civil society would almost necessarily be the violent repression of one's own (Fandy, 1999). Fandy goes on to argue that the Saudi government could not 'get away' with mass arrests or repression. The royal family, then, is aware of its limitations, even when it is under extreme pressure:

> After the Riyadh and Khobar bombings, for instance, there were no mass arrests or executions of Islamists, as might be the case in Iraq, or the demolition of whole villages, as happened to the Syrian town of Hama. The Saudis executed one person and arrested a dozen or so. Had there been an Iraqi- or Syrian-style punishment, the royal family would have lost its constituency. It is that awareness of limitations that allows the family to survive. (Fandy, 1999: 242)[28]

The regime's ability to use reform as a strategy for survival, therefore, is highly circumscribed. During this period, 'almost every Saudi had a patron prince through family and tribal connections,' making it difficult, if not impossible, to undertake mass repression (Mackey, 1990: 208). Eilts concurs, arguing that the Saudi regime could not engage in the type of repression that was common in neighboring regimes, like Iran under the Shah (Eilts, 1988). This is not to say that the Saudis were unable to suppress the political and human rights of citizens on an individual basis; clearly they were capable of this type of repression.[29] However, the history of repression in the Kingdom is not one of violence against large elements of the citizenry, nor is it a history of suppressive violence against the royal family's core constituency, the tribes.

Fahd and other proto-liberalizers within the regime, therefore, chose not to open the system politically. The result of this inaction was status quo dictatorship, as evidenced by the continued level of authoritarianism in the Kingdom during the 1980s. Writing of the 1980s, Eilts argues 'Whatever Fahd's own preferences may [have been], [it was] hardly propitious for him to be boldly innovative and to attempt to liberalize the nation's sociopolitical structure. Some contend that doing so would, in fact, redound to his domestic political benefit, but taking that risk [was] simply too dangerous' (Eilts, 1988: 80). Thus while many other countries in the Middle East undertook controlled, top-down liberalization programs during this period, the Saudi liberalizers – unable to repress widespread civic organization – were not able to use civil society elite as allies in the struggle for control of the House of Saud.[30]

5.2. Tough liberalizer, high repressive capacity: Egypt 1970–1976

Egypt in the 1970s was also characterized by splits in the ruling elite. Anwar Sadat – one of the original leaders of the 1952 Free Officers' Coup – had came to power upon the death of President Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1970 and although Sadat had been part of the ruling junta for almost two decades, his attitudes and beliefs were not well known. One scholar writes that 'Sadat had only a hazy public image when he assumed power' (Baker,

1990: 58). Despite statements of support for Nasserite ideology, Sadat quickly began to clash with top figures in the regime held over from the previous era (Ibrahim, 1995). In order to consolidate power, it was clear that Sadat needed to discredit the Nasserite left. At this point, Sadat had a clear incentive to seek an alliance with elements of bourgeois Egyptian society in his struggle against Nasserite opposition within the regime.

Sadat's desire to strengthen his position vis-à-vis the Nasserite hardliners would suggest an opening of the political system through a controlled, top-down program of political and economic liberalization. Whether he could pursue this strategy or not depended, however, on civil society's beliefs about whether or not he was the soft or tough type; while he clearly preferred the status quo to a full democratic transition, a broadened dictatorship where he could ally himself with upper-middle class Egyptian entrepreneurs and bureaucrats would be a boon to his bargaining position within the ruling elite. Whether civil society would enter into a broadened dictatorship with the regime depended to a large extent, however, on whether civil society viewed Sadat as the type of liberalizer that would use repression to avoid democratic transition. Two key pieces of information would inform civil society's beliefs about Sadat's type.

First, these beliefs were affected by the legacy of repression under Nasser, particularly since Sadat had no political record himself. Nasser's legacy had been quite brutal. In 1954, following a failed assassination attempt on his life, Nasser launched a series of violent purges in an attempt to suppress the Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt's most venerable Islamist organization, which had been implicated in the attempt (Abdo, 2000). Six Muslim Brothers were hanged, including Sayyid Qutb, a leader credited with being one of the founding fathers of the modern radical Islamic movement. Thousands more were imprisoned and tortured. Nasser also effectively repressed professional associations. In one incident, Nasser banned the Bar Association from having general assembly meetings for four years when it called for a multiparty system (Baker, 1990).

Second, and perhaps more convincing, was the rigor with which Sadat was seen to eliminate competitors within the ruling elite. By May 1971 Sadat had had his first showdown with Nasserite figures who were still heads of key ministries like Defense and Information as well as Speaker of the Parliament and head of the Arab Socialist Union, Egypt's single political party (Ibrahim, 1995). Each of these figure was arrested and brought to trial on charges of conspiracy. Junior officers tried to engineer coup attempts in 1972 and 1974 and were suppressed (Waterbury, 1983). Sadat had moved swiftly and successfully against a coalition that opposed him from within the regime (Baker, 1990); the way in which this was accomplished clearly signaled to the elite in civil society that he was willing to use repression against those that opposed him.

Sadat's decision may have also been influenced by his beliefs about the type of civil society that he faced. While his goal was to achieve a broadened dictatorship, the move to open the political system was potentially more dangerous if he faced a radical civil society. As a result, Sadat encouraged a period of intense information gathering in the run-up to the political opening. Cooper writes that nearly two years of debate ensued where strong feelings and sharp conflict over ideology were revealed (Cooper, 1982). Nearly all major elite actors made his or her views known (Waterbury, 1978). In this way, 'Sadat has thus learned how a broad range of hitherto silent groups feel about the future, all the while reserving to himself the right to decide how fast and in what direction to reorient the polity' (Waterbury, 1978: 251). When he solicited political platforms for

parties in the new multiparty system, he found that only one of the first 10 platforms considered included a religious referent (Cooper, 1982: 184). This information probably allayed his fears that even in the worst-case scenario of a civil society that refused to enter into a broadened dictatorship with the regime, an Islamic theocracy was unlikely at that point in time.

Believing that civil society elite would not press for extensive reform, Sadat introduced his Open-Door Economic Policy (*infitāḥ*) which replaced Arab socialism with greater economic liberalization. At the same time, Sadat began to liberalize the political sphere as well. A permanent constitution was ratified, calling for basic civil and human rights. A multiparty system replaced the previous one-party system in 1976. The government declared an end to arbitrary arrest and illegal detention without due process. Three small opposition parties were permitted to operate and these parties were allowed to publish their own newspapers (Ibrahim, 1981). Sadat released thousands of political detainees from Egypt's most notorious political prison and political exiles were invited to return to Egypt (Ibrahim, 1995). While control over the regime was never open to contestation, Waterbury nonetheless calls the liberalization measures undertaken during this era as 'real' (Waterbury, 1983: 373).

Essentially, Sadat sought to exploit splits within the regime between old-guard Nasserites and controlled liberalizers like himself. Ibrahim writes that sustained support for liberalization was found amongst the upper and upper-middle classes, the landed bourgeoisie, professionals, and senior or retired managers of the public sector. A new class of entrepreneurs who benefited from open-market economic opportunities become an important constituency for Sadat as well (Ibrahim, 1994). Believing that Sadat and other liberalizers within the regime were of the tough type, civil society entered into a broadened dictatorship with the regime. Sadat's ability to ally with this class of Egyptians allowed him to pursue his ideological differences with the hardliners as reflected in the major policy shifts he introduced, such as political and economic liberalization but also a shift away from the USSR and toward the West, and ultimately recognition of the state of Israel. Sadat's ability to massively repress civil society groups in 1981 suggests that the liberalizers had both the capacity and the willingness to repress when forced to do so.

5.3. Tough liberalizer, (potentially) radical civil society: Algeria 1988–1991

Algeria's political changes in the late 1980s and early 1990s provide an important example of a Przeworski-style dynamic in the Middle East. A split between two critical factions within the authoritarian regime encouraged then-President Chadli Bin Jadid to undertake controlled liberalization. When civil society organized in the form of Islamist-inspired political parties with considerable electoral appeal, the government stepped in to shut down the liberal experiment. Some background regarding the struggle for power within the regime is necessary to understand the circumstances that brought about transition and, ultimately, repression.

From independence until the late 1980s, Algeria's revolutionary party, the National Liberation Front (FLN), and government were largely considered one and the same, with the head of state also serving as the FLN's secretary general (Korany and Amrani, 1998). Oil windfalls in the 1970s and early 1980s allowed the government to undertake ambitious infrastructure and public development projects. As oil revenues began to

dry up, however, the 'monolithic, authoritarian, clientelist system' began to crumble and a reformist wing developed within the FLN which sought a strategy of economic and political liberalization (Korany and Amrani, 1998: 19).

Frustration with the failure of the government to improve economic conditions resulted in country-wide violent demonstrations in 1988 (Martinez, 2000). The alliance between the military and bureaucratic wings of the FLN – which had been the critical alliance in the regime – crumbled as the two factions turned against each other (Binder, 1998). The bureaucratic wing tried to gain leverage over its opponents by opening the regime, politically and economically.

> The orthodox, or Boumedienne, camp opposed any pluralism in the name of protecting national unity and avoiding political fragmentation and increasing conflict. The reformist camp, around President Bin Jadid, was ready to encourage a certain degree of political opening to other previously excluded forces and even to accept pluralism, but under FLN control. (Korany and Amrani, 1998: 23)

The main distinguishing characteristic of the phase which was to follow was the implementation of an increasingly liberal system of rule via a new constitution which guaranteed, among other things, a multiparty democracy including basic freedoms of association, expression, and organization. Civil society emerged with incredible vigor and a multitude of associational groups were formed to give expression to the long-suppressed populist demands of feminists, Berberists, union workers, students, journalists, farmers, and most prominently, Islamists (Martinez, 2000). In just a couple of months, thousands of new civic associations were created; in fact, analysts estimated that 7,350 associations emerged in this period (Korany and Amrani, 1998).

The regime permitted the first ever free and fair multiparty municipal elections to take place in June 1990 which saw the overwhelming victory of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) over the party of the regime, the FLN. Opponents of the regime had successfully used Islam as a rallying point for further reform. Algeria's petite bourgeoisie as well as the large and growing class of jobless youths – the *hittistes* – voted for the FIS, which was relatively well organized compared to its other anti-regime competitors. When the FIS appeared to be on the verge of winning an absolute majority of parliamentary seats, however, the regime closed down the democratic experiment (Binder, 1998). The army quickly established a High State Council to rule Algeria and, by March of 1992, the FIS was banned and its leadership repressed. The years to follow would bring almost a complete devolution of power as Algeria fell into a period of violence.[31]

Clearly, incomplete information played an important role in the calculations (and miscalculations) of key actors. Bin Jadid's motivation for reform stemmed from a desire to strengthen his position within the regime vis-à-vis the old guard. A political opening was created and as Stone notes 'Although the reforms were ground-breaking, they did not represent a genuine commitment to democracy. Rather, the regime resorted to political pluralism in order to outflank its opponents' (Stone, 1997: 70).[32] Civil society – uncertain of Bin Jadid's type – believed that the regime was unlikely to violently repress the populace; until the riots of 1988, the 'popular' army had never fired on unarmed civilians (Quandt, 1998). Organizations sprang up and free and fair elections were held. For a brief moment Algeria was the most pluralistic country in the Arab world.

What factors led to Algeria's brief period of liberalization and ultimate narrowed dictatorship? First, civil elite probably believed that Bin Jadid was unwilling to repress otherwise they would not have chosen to organize in the way that they did. In the end, however, Bin Jadid stood aside as the military stepped in and shut down the political opening. A second issue involves the commitment of civil society to democratic government. The FIS was fairly vague about its platform in the run-up to the election, leading some to be concerned that a FIS supermajority would alter the constitution, instituting an Islamic state. Kalyvas (2000) has argued that moderates within the FIS failed to silence the radicals, creating uncertainty about the group's plans in the future, a fact that likely precipitated the move to repress and create a narrowed dictatorship. Ultimately uncertainty about type on the part of both civil society and regime liberalizers played a role in the narrow dictatorship outcome.

5.4. Soft liberalizer, moderate civil society: Turkey 1946–1950

Multiparty democratic government emerged in post-World War II Turkey as a result of a key split in the party elite, a strategic opening of the political system, and civil society elites' decision to press for reform. When a narrow opening was created by liberal elements within the regime, pro-democracy leaders of civil society organized their interests and established a rival party that was eventually allowed to take power. A discussion of the events leading up to the shift from one-party rule clarify the argument.

Turkey emerged from World War II controlled by the Republican People's Party (RPP) which was founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1923. As in many Middle Eastern states, the ruling party and government in Turkey were one and the same (Ahmad, 1977). Turkish historians have argued that the RPP was composed of two distinct groups within the larger party (Ahmad, 1977; Karpat, 1959). The first group of hardline Kemalists supported continued authoritarianism; a second group consisting of more liberal republicans favored multipartyism and controlled liberalization (Karpat, 1959). Further, erosion of a key alliance between military elite, landlords, and the bourgeoisie exacerbated the split in the regime by introducing an economic dimension; hardline statists argued to tighten the control of the government while private-sector-oriented RPP members pressed for greater liberalization (Ahmad, 1993). Tension within the party had led to the expulsion or resignation of a number of prominent party members including Celâl Bayar, a banker and economist who had served as prime minister from 1937 to 1939, Professor Fuad Köprülü, a scholar and historian, Adnan Menderes, a lawyer and cotton planter, and Refik Koraltan, a judge and provincial governor (Lewis, 2002).

Turkish President Ismet Inönü supported the dismantling of the single-party system but did not desire a true democracy. Rather, he sought to introduce a 'token opposition which would keep the government on its toes without actually challenging its legitimacy' (Ahmad, 1993: 104–105). In a presidential address in late 1945, Inönü encouraged the formation of an opposition party within Turkey intending a limited democracy that would not challenge the RPP's hold on power (Karpat, 1959). The four prominent RPP members who had either been expelled or resigned the previous year took this opportunity to propose a number of liberalizing reforms and by January 1946 a second party – named the Democratic Party (DP) – was formally established (Lewis, 2002).

Why did the RPP agree to tolerate the DP? While previous political organizations had advocated education through religious schools and bans on the consumption of alcohol (Angrist, 2006) – both of which challenged the RPP's core belief of secularism – RPP elite were more confident than they had ever been that they would face a challenger that did not seek to undermine the RPP's most important values (Angrist, 2006). In fact, the political program of the DP closely paralleled that of the RPP. The tenants of Kemalism were preserved in the DP's agenda (Ahmad, 1977) and scholars have argued that the RPP and the DP shared basic interests and values (Hinnebusch, 2006). Angrist writes, 'had the DP not been led by elites with credible secular credentials who assured the RPP that the agenda would be secure in the event of a DP victory, the transition very well might not have gone forward' (Angrist, 2005: 133). While there was not complete certainty regarding the secularist credentials of the DP given the RPP's experience with previous challengers, the RPP leadership deemed the signals sent by the new party as credible and allowed the DP to organize and compete in elections.

Despite their similar platforms historians have argued that the two parties were genuine rivals and that the leaders of the DP were committed to challenging the RPP for power (Ahmad, 1977). DP leaders openly criticized the deficiencies of the RPP's rule and forced a public discussion of political issues (Karpat, 1959). The DP had begun to organize in a meaningful way, pressing for real reform of the political system. Historians have identified the period to follow as key for the establishment of a competitive multiparty system in Turkey (Karpat, 1959). Ahmad characterizes this time as 'a period of struggle between the moderates and extremists in the RPP, the former pressing for competitive politics and the latter demanding the continuation of a monoparty system' (Ahmad, 1977: 19). Inönü came to play a critical role when he 'threw his weight behind the moderates in his party and dealt the death blow to the statist faction' (Ahmad, 1993: 107). The opposition was allowed to operate unencumbered and a number of new freedoms were introduced, including the freedoms of association and press (Karpat, 1959).

Ahmad argues that at any point in the process, Inönü had the power and authority to shut down the democratic experiment. 'It was widely acknowledged that in those days Inönü could have had the new party closed down by simply sending a few gendarmes to the DP headquarters' (Ahmad, 1977: 17). While some historians have acknowledged that Inönü was conflicted about how to respond to the genuine challenge put forth by the DP, Pope and Pope write that 'rising to the occasion, Inönü showed himself the statesman and announced publicly that as president he was non-partisan and above party politics' (Pope and Pope, 1997: 86). Liberalization continued to gain momentum, culminating in the parliamentary elections of May 1950 (Ahmad, 1993).

With a 90 percent turnout rate, the DP won an overwhelming victory and Inönü conceded defeat, stepping down from the presidency (Pope and Pope, 1997: 88). At this point, the opportunity to repress the democratic movement emerged again:

> The army felt unsure of what action to take. 'It was rumored that the army chiefs went to the then president Inönü to offer to intervene, and that he refused,' recalls General Kenan Evren...Nuri Yarmut [the new chief of staff]...collected all of the officers in a garden behind the General Staff headquarters and told them that the country had gone over to a democratic system; they were to carry on with their jobs and not to interfere in politics. (Pope and Pope, 1997: 88)

The strategic interaction between Turkish liberalizers, like Inönü, and former RPP members led to a democratic transition in Turkey. While Inönü was never considered a committed democratic, his actions suggest that he preferred democratic transition to violent repression. This is particularly evident since he had the opportunity to suppress the DP at a number of points in the liberalization process. Seeking leverage over hardline Kemalists, Inönü sought a broadened dictatorship with limited political liberalization. When civil society elites organized a second political party and publicly challenged the regime in competitive elections, however, Inönü was faced with whether or not to repress the democratic movement. Revealing himself to be the soft type of liberalizer that preferred reform over repression, Inönü allowed the peaceful transition of power following electoral defeat in 1950.

6. Early Reflections on the Arab Spring

Historical cases of change and stasis in the Middle East provide an important comparative context for considering the long-term effects of the massive protests that spread across the Arab world in 2011. The events associated with the Arab Spring have demonstrated the power of popular mobilization to challenge the legitimacy of sitting autocrats and their elite coalitions. Moreover, public willingness to demonstrate in the face of tremendous repressive capacity suggests that scholars and Arab publics, alike, underestimated the potential for collective political mobilization in the Middle Eastern context. Although the protests have transformed both public political consciousness and the nature of state–society relations across the region, the long-term impact of the protest movement on more concrete forms of political power has yet to be determined. Indeed, scholars of the Arab protests have pointed out that, six months after the uprisings began, incumbent regimes have not made fundamental political changes, let alone transition to democracy as a form of governance (Schwedler et al., 2011).

An important narrative to have emerged following the protests involves the significance of political *negotiation*, where elites continue to play a vital role in determining the future of Arab polities. Such an understanding suggests that the pacted transitions literature – where elite-led negotiations are consequential – remains highly relevant. The Przeworski liberalizaton model – which draws its inspiration from the transitions to democracy in Eastern Europe – provides a baseline for contextualizing processes of political change in a theoretical framework; meaningful parallels have been drawn between the anti-authoritarian uprisings in the Arab world and the 1989 protest movements in Eastern Europe (Patel et al., 2011).

The case of Egypt following Mubarak's abdication is highly illustrative of the continued importance of authoritarian elites in the transition process. In Egypt, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) assumed political power on 11 February 2011. SCAF leadership initially communicated that policy-making authority would be transferred to an elected legislature and civilian president in six months. The SCAF also pledged new respect for human rights, liberties, and rule of law (Said, 2011). Since then, the Egyptian military has tightened its grip on authority. Over 7,000 Egyptian civilians – including protestors, journalists and artists – have been subjected to military trials that were a hallmark of the Mubarak regime.[33] Female protesters have been subjected to 'virginity' tests by military police, leading to public protest and condemnation of military

leadership.[34] Newspaper reports suggest that the SCAF has considered a postponement of presidential elections[35] but continues to try to reassure the public that it is determined to eventually hand over power to an elected civilian government.[36]

Although the Egyptian public retains the ability and determination to politically pressure the SCAF, the military elite associated with former President Mubarak has maintained important forms of political control. Day-to-day authority remains in the hands of Mubarak-era elite and decisions made in the fall of 2011 will provide an important, though noisy, signal about the junta's intentions regarding democratic transition.

Military elite in Egypt sit at a choice node that resembles the Przeworski model in a number of ways. Elements of the SCAF leadership may have a preference for a broadened dictatorship where some of the public's demands for rights and representation might be met. More hardline components of the military junta may prefer to try to hang on to the status quo for as long as possible.[37] If the political system is opened with meaningfully free and fair parliamentary and presidential elections, civil society has the opportunity to respond vigorously or more half-heartedly (perhaps accepting limited forms of political representation channeled through existing clientelist structures). If civil society organizes meaningfully, perhaps electing a president or parliamentary majority with preferences that diverge from those of the SCAF, the military leadership will then have to decide whether to repress that form of political organization or allow the types of reforms that would lead to democratization. Repression might take the form of military abrogation of electoral results (à la Algeria, 1991); reform could mean genuine transition to democracy or, alternatively, the election of a theocratic leadership with authoritarian tendencies. Analysis of the Egyptian case suggests that popular mobilization has forced the authoritarian political elite to the starting point of the Przeworski framework.

Expectations and imperfect evaluations about the preferences of both the authoritarian leadership and civil society will impact Egypt's trajectory moving forward. Uncertainty about both the intentions and capabilities of Islamist political organizations, for instance, may lead potential liberalizers within Egypt's authoritarian elite to stand by regime hardliners. Civil society activists, like those associated with the Muslim Brotherhood, may fear electoral success will lead the military junta to 'circle the wagons,' curtailing any political opening. If uncertainty is, indeed, a critical component of aspect to the democratic transition process, this criterion appears to have been met.

7. Conclusions

What can the historical experiences of countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Algeria, and Turkey tell us about the prospects for Middle Eastern democratization in the wake of the Arab Spring? In this paper, we go beyond both culturally deterministic and economics-driven explanations for the relative lack of democratization in the Middle East. Instead, we consider political change as a function of the strategic interaction between regime and civil society elite. Our goal is not to supplant existing theories for Middle East exceptionalism but rather to provide an additional possible explanation for the failure of countries in the region to democratize. An influential game theoretic model of the relationship between these key actors that was developed by Adam Przeworski is extended to include an incomplete information structure. This extension allows for the existence of equilibrium solutions not possible under the original complete information version of the game, including democratic transition.

For democratic transition to be achieved, we argue that two conditions must hold true. First, the repressive capacity of the state must lie above a certain threshold. Second, liberalizers must have uncertainty over civil society's commitment to democratic principles while civil society must have uncertainty over the liberalizer's commitment to preventing regime transition through the use of repression. Under these conditions, democracy occurs as an outcome when regime liberalizers who prefer democracy to a narrowed dictatorship meet a civil society elite who honor democratic principles. This suggests that democracy is not impossible to achieve; it just requires the right combination of factors which have rarely been exhibited in the Middle East. The modal outcome of the liberalizer–hardliner rivalry in the region appears to be a status quo dictatorship when the repressive capacity of the regime is low and a broadened dictatorship when the repressive capacity of the regime is high. In those rare circumstances when repressive capacity exceeds a minimum threshold, liberalizers are soft, and civil society prefers democracy to theocracy – as occurred in post-World War II Turkey – the prospects for democracy are greatest.

Appendix. Perfect Bayesian equilibrium solutions

Define p as the prior probability that civil society is facing a soft liberalizer and q as the prior probability that the liberalizer is facing moderate civil society in this game. Soft and tough liberalizers choose between playing (*Open*) and (*Stay*). Similarly, moderate and radical civil society chooses between playing (*Organize*) and (*Enter*). Radical civil society always chooses (*Theocracy*), while moderate civil society always chooses (*Democracy*) in the last node of the game.

First, consider the case where repressive capacity $r < \frac{t_l}{n_{lt}}$. For the tough liberalizer, $U(Reform) > U(Repress)$ because $t_l > (r)n_{lt}$ in this situation. Also note that because $t_l > n_{ls}$ by definition, $U(Reform) > U(Repress)$ always holds true for the soft liberalizer. Therefore, under these values of r, liberalizers always play reform regardless of type. Knowing this, civil society always organizes regardless of type, leading the liberalizer to always play stay. $r < \frac{t_l}{n_{lt}}$ thus leads the liberalizer to play *Soft* : (*Stay*, *Reform*), *Tough* : (*Stay*, *Reform*) and civil society to play *Moderate* : (*Organize*, *Democracy*), *Radical* : (*Organize*, *Theocracy*) in equilibrium.

Now consider the cases where $r > \frac{t_l}{n_{lt}}$. $t_l > n_{ls}$ by definition, so $U(Reform) > U(Repress)$ is still always true for the soft liberalizer. However, now $U(Reform) < U(Repress)$ for the tough liberalizer because $t_l < (r)n_{lt}$. Under these circumstances, 16 different possible combinations of staying/opening and entering/organizing are possible. We consider each combination below to determine if it can be sustained as an equilibrium (i.e. no player has incentive to unilaterally defect).

Case 1: Liberalizer plays {Soft:(Stay,Reform), Tough:(Stay,Repress)}, civil society plays {Moderate:(Enter, Democracy), Radical:(Enter, Theocracy)}. The posterior $Pr(Soft|Open)$ is arbitrary in this strategy profile because it lies off the equilibrium path (i.e. civil society should never encounter a situation where the liberalizer plays *Open*). However, no out-of-equilibrium beliefs can support this equilibrium because $U(Open) > U(Stay)$ for all liberalizers (i.e., $1 > s_l$).

Case 2: Liberalizer plays {Soft:(Stay,Reform), Tough:(Stay,Repress)}, civil society plays {Moderate:(Enter, Democracy), Radical:(Organize, Theocracy)}. The posterior $Pr(Soft|Open)$ is arbitrary in this strategy profile because it lies off the equilibrium path. For soft liberalizers, $U(Stay) = s_l$ and $U(Open) = q + (1-q)t_l$, so $U(Stay) > U(Open)$ can be sustained if $q < \frac{s_l - t_l}{1 - t_l}$. Similarly, for tough liberalizers $U(Stay) = s_l$ and $U(Open) = q + (1-q)(r)n_{lt}$, so $U(Stay) > U(Open)$ can be sustained if $q < \frac{s_l - (r)n_{lt}}{1 - (r)n_{lt}}$. Since $(r)n_{lt} > t_l$, $q < \frac{s_l - (r)n_{lt}}{1 - (r)n_{lt}}$ satisfies both of these conditions. $U(Enter) > U(Organize)$ for moderate civil society if it has the off-equilibrium belief that $Pr(Soft|Open) < \frac{b_c - (1-r)x_c}{d_{cm} - (1-r)x_c}$, and $U(Organize) > U(Enter)$ for radical civil society if it has the off-equilibrium belief that $Pr(Soft|Open) > \frac{b_c - (1-r)x_c}{i_{cr} - (1-r)x_c}$.

Now consider the two cases where the players flip both of their actions simultaneously. Civil society cannot improve by playing *Moderate:(Organize, Democracy), Radical:(Enter, Theocracy)* while both liberalizer types play *(Stay)*. For the liberalizer, the utility from both types playing stay is greater than the utility from both types playing open if $s_l > q + (p)(1-q)t_l + (1-p)(1-q)(r)n_{lt}$. Solving for q, this implies that $q < \frac{s_l - (p)t_l - (1-p)(r)n_{lt}}{1 - (p)t_l - (1-p)(r)n_{lt}}$. Since $t_l < (r)n_{lt}$, $(p)t_l + (1-p)(r)n_{lt} < (r)n_{lt}$. This implies if the earlier condition $q < \frac{s_l - (r)n_{lt}}{1 - (r)n_{lt}}$ is met, the condition $q < \frac{s_l - (p)t_l - (1-p)(r)n_{lt}}{1 - (p)t_l - (1-p)(r)n_{lt}}$ is also met. Therefore, an equilibrium where the liberalizer plays $\{Soft : (Stay, Reform), Tough : (Stay, Repress)\}$ and civil society plays $\{Moderate : (Enter, Democracy), Radical : (Organize, Theocracy)\}$ can be sustained if $q < \frac{s_l - (r)n_{lt}}{1 - (r)n_{lt}}$.

Case 3: Liberalizer plays {Soft:(Stay,Reform), Tough:(Stay,Repress)}, civil society plays {Moderate:(Organize, Democracy), Radical:(Enter, Theocracy)}. The posterior $Pr(Soft|Open)$ is arbitrary in this strategy profile because it lies off the equilibrium path. For the soft liberalizer, $U(Stay) = s_l$ and $U(Open) = (q)t_l + (1-q)$, so $U(Stay) > U(Open)$ can be sustained if $q > \frac{1 - s_l}{1 - t_l}$. Similarly, for the tough liberalizer $U(Stay) = s_l$ and $U(Open) = (q)(r)n_{lt} + (1-q)$, so $U(Stay) > U(Open)$ can be sustained if $q > \frac{1 - s_l}{1 - (r)n_{lt}}$. Since $(r)n_{lt} > t_l$, $q > \frac{1 - s_l}{1 - t_l}$ satisfies both of these conditions. $U(Organize) > U(Enter)$ for moderate civil society if it has the off-equilibrium belief that $Pr(Soft|Open) > \frac{b_c - (1-r)x_c}{d_{cm} - (1-r)x_c}$, and $U(Enter) > U(Organize)$ for radical civil society if it has the off-equilibrium belief that $Pr(Soft|Open) < \frac{b_c - (1-r)x_c}{i_{cr} - (1-r)x_c}$.

Now consider the two cases where the players flip both of their actions simultaneously. Civil society cannot improve by playing $\{Moderate : (Enter, Democracy), Radical : (Organize, Theocracy)\}$ while both liberalizer types play *(Stay)*. For the liberalizer, the utility from both types playing stay is greater than the utility from both types playing open if $s_l > (p)(q)(t_l) + (1-q) + (1-p)(q)(r)n_{lt}$. Solving for q, this implies the condition $q < \frac{1 - s_l}{1 - (p)t_l - (1-p)(r)n_{lt}}$. Therefore, an equilibrium where the liberalizer plays $\{Soft : (Stay, Reform), Tough : (Stay, Repress)\}$ and civil society plays $\{Moderate :$

(*Organize, Democracy*), *Radical* : (*Enter, Theocracy*)} can be sustained if $\frac{1-s_l}{1-t_l} < q <$ $\frac{1-s_l}{1-(p)t_l-(1-p)(r)n_{lt}}$.

Case 4: Liberalizer plays {*Soft:(Stay,Reform), Tough:(Stay,Repress)*}, *and civil society plays* {*Moderate:(Organize, Democracy), Radical:(Organize, Theocracy)*}. The posterior $Pr(Soft|Open)$ is arbitrary in this strategy profile because it lies off the equilibrium path. $U(Stay) = s_l$ for both liberalizer types, while $U(Open) = t_l$ for soft liberalizers and $U(Open) = (r)n_{lt}$ for tough liberalizers. Since $s_l > (r)n_{lt} > t_l$, $U(Stay) > U(Open)$ holds true for both liberalizers. When both liberalizers play (*Open*) they get utility $(p)t_l + (1-p)(r)n_{lt}$, while they get utility s_l if they both play (*Stay*). Both liberalizers playing stay is therefore dominant because $s_l > n_{lt}$ and $s_l > t_l$. For moderate civil society, $U(Organize) > U(Enter)$ if it has the off-equilibrium belief that $Pr(Soft|Open) > \frac{b_c-(1-r)x_c}{d_{cm}-(1-r)x_c}$, and $U(Organize) > U(Enter)$ for radical civil society if it has the off-equilibrium belief that $Pr(Soft|Open) > \frac{b_c-(1-r)x_c}{i_{cr}-(1-r)x_c}$. Therefore, an equilibrium where the liberalizer plays {*Soft* : (*Stay, Reform*), *Tough* : (*Stay, Repress*)} and civil society plays {*Moderate* : (*Organize, Democracy*), *Radical* : (*Organize, Theocracy*)} can always be sustained with no restrictions beyond what was listed earlier for r.

Case 5: Liberalizer plays {*Soft:(Stay,Reform), Tough:(Open,Repress)*}, *civil society plays* {*Moderate:(Enter, Democracy), Radical:(Enter, Theocracy)*}. After observing the liberalizer play *Open*, the posterior $Pr(Soft|Open) = 0$ in this strategy profile. However, this equilibrium cannot be sustained because for soft liberalizers $U(Open) > U(Stay)$ (i.e., $1 > s_l$).

Case 6: Liberalizer plays {*Soft:(Stay,Reform), Tough:(Open,Repress)*}, *civil society plays* {*Moderate:(Enter, Democracy), Radical:(Organize, Theocracy)*}. After observing the liberalizer play *Open*, the posterior $Pr(Soft|Open) = 0$ in this strategy profile. However, this equilibrium cannot be sustained. When confronting the soft liberalizer who plays (*Stay*), civil society has the same payoff regardless of its action. When facing the tough liberalizer who plays (*Open*), however, $U(Enter) = b_c$, and $U(Organize) = (1-r)x_c$ for both types of civil society. For this equilibrium to be sustainable, $U(Enter) > U(Organize)$ must be true for moderate civil society and $U(Organize) > U(Enter)$ must be true for radical civil society. Since both conditions cannot hold simultaneously, this equilibrium is not sustainable.

Case 7: Liberalizer plays {*Soft:(Stay,Reform), Tough:(Open,Repress)*}, *civil society plays* {*Moderate:(Organize, Democracy), Radical:(Enter, Theocracy)*}. After observing the liberalizer play *Open*, the posterior $Pr(Soft|Open) = 0$ in this strategy profile. However, this equilibrium cannot be sustained and is almost identical to case 6 above. When confronting the tough liberalizer who plays (*Open*), $U(Enter) = b_c$ and $U(Organize) = (1-r)x_c$ for both types of civil society. For this equilibrium to be sustainable, $U(Enter) < U(Organize)$ must be true for moderate civil society and

$U(Organize) < U(Enter)$ must be true for radical civil society. Since both conditions cannot hold simultaneously, this equilibrium is not sustainable.

Case 8: Liberalizer plays {Soft:(Stay,Reform), Tough:(Open,Repress)}, civil society plays {Moderate:(Organize, Democracy), Radical:(Organize, Theocracy)}. After observing the liberalizer play *Open*, the posterior $Pr(Soft|Open) = 0$ in this strategy profile. However, this equilibrium cannot be sustained. For tough liberalizers, $U(Stay) = s_l$, while $U(Open) = q(r)n_{lt} + (1 - q)(r)n_{lt} = (r)n_{lt}$. Since $s_l > n_{lt}$, $U(Open) > U(Stay)$ cannot hold true as required.

Case 9: Liberalizer plays {Soft:(Open,Reform), Tough:(Stay,Repress)}, civil society plays {Moderate:(Enter, Democracy), Radical:(Enter, Theocracy)}. After observing the liberalizer play *Open*, the posterior $Pr(Soft|Open) = 1$ in this strategy profile. However, this equilibrium cannot be sustained because for soft liberalizers $U(Open) > U(Stay)$ (i.e., $1 > s_l$).

Case 10: Liberalizer plays {Soft:(Open,Reform), Tough:(Stay,Repress)}, civil society plays {Moderate:(Enter, Democracy), Radical:(Organize, Theocracy)}. After observing the liberalizer play *Open*, the posterior $Pr(Soft|Open) = 1$ in this strategy profile. However, this equilibrium cannot be sustained. When confronting the tough liberalizer who plays (*Stay*), civil society has the same payoff regardless of its action. When facing the soft liberalizer who plays (*Open*), however, for moderate civil society $U(Enter) = b_c$, and $U(Organize) = d_{cm}$. Since $d_{cm} > b_c$, $U(Enter) > U(Organize)$ cannot hold true as required.

Case 11: Liberalizer plays {Soft:(Open,Reform), Tough:(Stay,Repress)}, civil society plays {Moderate:(Organize, Democracy), Radical:(Enter, Theocracy)}. After observing the liberalizer play *Open*, the posterior $Pr(Soft|Open) = 1$ in this strategy profile. However, this equilibrium cannot be sustained and is almost identical to case 10 above. When facing the soft liberalizer who plays (*Open*), for radical civil society $U(Enter) = b_c$, and $U(Organize) = i_{cr}$. Since $i_{cr} > b_c$, $U(Enter) > U(Organize)$ cannot hold true as required.

Case 12: Liberalizer plays {Soft:(Open,Reform), Tough:(Stay,Repress)}, civil society plays {Moderate:(Organize, Democracy), Radical:(Organize, Theocracy)}. After observing the liberalizer play *Open*, the posterior $Pr(Soft|Open) = 1$ in this strategy profile. However, this equilibrium cannot be sustained. For soft liberalizers $U(Open) = t_l$, while $U(Stay) = s_l$. Since $s_l > t_l$, $U(Open) > U(Stay)$ cannot hold true as required.

Case 13: Liberalizer plays {Soft:(Open,Reform), Tough:(Open,Repress)}, civil society plays {Moderate:(Enter, Democracy), Radical:(Enter, Theocracy)}. When both liberalizer types play *Open*, the posterior $Pr(Soft|Open) = p$. $U(Open) = 1$ and $U(Stay) = s_l$, so $U(Open) > U(Stay)$ for all liberalizers.

$U(Enter) = b_c$, while $U(Organize) = (p)d_{cm} + (1 - p)(1 - r)x_c$ for moderate civil society and $U(Organize) = (p)i_c + (1 - p)(1 - r)x_c$ for radical civil society. Then $U(Enter) > U(Organize)$ implies $p < \frac{b_c - (1-r)x_c}{d_{cm} - (1-r)x_c}$ for moderate civil society, and

$U(Enter) > U(Organize)$ implies $p < \frac{b_c-(1-r)x_c}{i_{cr}-(1-r)x_c}$ for radical civil society. Since $d_{cm} > i_c$, $p < \frac{b_c-(1-r)x_c}{\max(i_{cr},d_{cm})-(1-r)x_c}$ fulfils both of these conditions.

Now consider the two cases where the players flip both of their actions simultaneously. For the liberalizer the utility from both types playing $(Open)$ is always greater than the utility from both types playing $(Stay)$ because $1 > s_l$. For $(Enter)$ to dominate $(Organize)$ for both types of civil society, $b_c > (p)(q)d_{cm}+(p)(1-q)i_{cr}+(1-p)(1-r)x_c$ must hold. Solving for p, this implies that $p < \frac{b_c-(1-r)x_c}{(q)d_{cm}+(1-q)i_{cr}-(1-r)x_c}$. Since $\max(i_{cr}, d_{cm}) > (q)d_{cm} + (1-q)i_{cr}$ is true however, the original condition already fulfils this requirement. Therefore, an equilibrium where the liberalizer plays $\{Soft : (Open, Reform), Tough : (Open, Repress)\}$ and civil society plays $\{Moderate : (Enter, Democracy), Radical : (Enter, Theocracy)\}$ can be sustained if $p < \frac{b_c-(1-r)x_c}{\max(i_{cr},d_{cm})-(1-r)x_c}$.

Case 14: Liberalizer plays {Soft:(Open,Reform), Tough:(Open,Repress)}, civil society plays {Moderate:(Enter, Democracy), Radical:(Organize, Theocracy)}. When both liberalizer types play *Open*, the posterior $Pr(Soft|Open) = p$. For the soft liberalizer $U(Open) > U(Stay)$ implies $q > \frac{s_l-t_l}{1-t_l}$, while for the tough liberalizer $U(Open) > U(Stay)$ implies $q > \frac{s_l-(r)n_{lt}}{1-(r)n_{lt}}$. Since $(r)n_{lt} > t_l$, both conditions are fulfilled if $q > \frac{s_l-t_l}{1-t_l}$. For civil society, $U(Enter) = b_c$, while $U(Organize) = (p)d_{cm}+(1-p)(1-r)x_c$ for moderate civil society and $U(Organize) = (p)i_c + (1 - p)(1 - r)x_c$ for radical civil society. Then $U(Enter) > U(Organize)$ for moderates and $U(Enter) > U(Organize)$ for radicals implies $p < \frac{b_c-(1-r)x_c}{d_{cm}-(1-r)x_c}$ and $p > \frac{b_c-(1-r)x_c}{i_{cr}-(1-r)x_c}$ respectively.

Now consider the two cases where the players flip both of their actions simultaneously. For the liberalizer, the utility from both types playing $(Open)$ is greater than the utility from both types playing $(Stay)$ if $q + p(1 - q)t_l + (1 - p)(1 - q)(r)n_{lt} > s_l$. This implies that $q > \frac{s_l-(p)t_l-(1-p)(r)n_{lt}}{1-(p)t_l-(1-p)(r)n_{lt}}$. Since $(r)n_{lt} > (p)t_l - (1 - p)(r)n_{lt}$, this new constraint on q also fulfils the earlier requirement that $q > \frac{s_l-t_l}{1-t_l}$. Similarly, the requirement for moderates entering and radicals organizing to be preferred over radicals entering and moderates organizing requires that $(p)(q)d_{cm} + (1 - q)b_c + (1 - p)(q)(1 - r)x_c < (q)b_c + p(1 - q)i_{cr} + (1 - p)(1 - q)(1 - r)x_c$. Solving for q, this implies $q < \frac{p(i_{cr})-b_c+(1-p)(1-r)x_c}{p(d_{cm}+i_{cr})-(2)b_c+2(1-p)(1-r)x_c}$. Therefore, an equilibrium where the liberalizer plays $(\{Soft:(Open,Reform), Tough:(Open,Repress)\}$ and civil society plays $\{Moderate : (Enter, Democracy), Radical : (Organize, Theocracy)\}$ can be sustained if $\frac{s_l-(p)t_l-(1-p)(r)n_{lt}}{1-(p)t_l-(1-p)(r)n_{lt}} < q < \frac{p(i_{cr})-b_c+(1-p)(1-r)x_c}{p(d_{cm}+i_{cr})-(2)b_c+2(1-p)(1-r)x_c}$ and $\frac{b_c-(1-r)x_c}{i_{cr}-(1-r)x_c} < p < \frac{b_c-(1-r)x_c}{d_{cm}-(1-r)x_c}$. Note that the constraint on p assumes that $i_{cr} > d_{cm}$, which means this equilibrium cannot coexist with Case 15.

Case 15: Liberalizer plays {Soft:(Open,Reform), Tough:(Open,Repress)}, civil society plays {Moderate:(Organize, Democracy), Radical:(Enter, Theocracy)}.

When both liberalizer types play *Open*, the posterior $Pr(Soft|Open) = p$. For the soft liberalizer, $U(Open) > U(Stay)$ implies $q < \frac{1-s_l}{1-t_l}$, and for the tough liberalizer $U(Open) > U(Stay)$ implies $q < \frac{1-s_l}{1-(r)n_{lt}}$. Since $(r)n_{lt} > t_l$, both conditions are fulfilled if $q > \frac{1-s_l}{1-t_l}$. For civil society, $U(Enter) = b_c$, while $U(Organize) = (p)d_{cm}+(1-p)(1-r)x_c$ for moderate civil society and $U(Organize) = (p)i_c + (1 - p)(1 - r)x_c$ for radical civil

society. Then $U(Organize) > U(Enter)$ for moderates and $U(Enter) > U(Organize)$ for radicals implies $p > \frac{b_c-(1-r)x_c}{d_{cm}-(1-r)x_c}$ and $p < \frac{b_c-(1-r)x_c}{i_{cr}-(1-r)x_c}$ respectively.

Now consider the two cases where the players flip both of their actions simultaneously. For the liberalizer, the utility from both types playing (*Open*) is greater than the utility from both types playing (*Stay*) if $(p)(q)(t_l) + (1-q) + (1-p)(q)(r)n_{lt} > s_l$. This implies that $q < \frac{1-s_l}{1-(p)t_l+(1-p)(r)n_{lt}}$; however, since $(p)t_l + (1-p)(r)n_{lt} > t_l$, $q < \frac{1-s_l}{1-t_l}$ already fulfils this requirement. Similarly, the requirement for moderates organizing and radicals entering to be preferred over moderates entering and radicals organizing requires that $(p)(q)d_{cm}+(1-q)b_c+(1-p)(q)(1-r)x_c > (q)b_c+p(1-q)i_{cr}+(1-p)(1-q)(1-r)x_c$. Solving for q, this implies $q > \frac{p(i_{cr})-b_c+(1-p)(1-r)x_c}{p(d_{cm}+i_{cr})-(2)b_c+2(1-p)(1-r)x_c}$.

Therefore, an equilibrium where the liberalizer plays $\{Soft : (Open, Reform), Tough :$ $(Open, Repress)\}$ and civil society plays $\{Moderate : (Organize, Democracy), Radical :$ $(Enter, Theocracy)\}$ can be sustained if $\frac{p(i_{cr})-b_c+(1-p)(1-r)x_c}{p(d_{cm}+i_{cr})-(2)b_c+2(1-p)(1-r)x_c} < q < \frac{1-s_l}{1-t_l}$ and $\frac{b_c-(1-r)x_c}{d_{cm}-(1-r)x_c} < p < \frac{b_c-(1-r)x_c}{i_{cr}-(1-r)x_c}$. Note that the constraint on p assumes that $d_{cm} > i_{cr}$, which means this equilibrium cannot coexist with Case 14.

Case 16: Liberalizer plays $\{Soft:(Open,Reform), Tough:(Open,Repress)\}$*, civil society plays* $\{Moderate: (Organize, Democracy), Radical: (Organize, Theocracy)\}$*.* When both liberalizer types play *Open*, the posterior $Pr(Soft|Open) = p$. However, this strategy profile cannot be sustained as an equilibrium because for soft liberalizers $U(Stay) > U(Open)$ (i.e., $s_l > t_l$).

Notes

1. This research also relates to existing works which argue that political actors under autocracy also fear transitional justice, that is, accountability for human rights violations committed during the authoritarian period. See Nalepa (2010) for a description of this process in Eastern European transitions and Bassiouni (2010) for a discussion of transitional justice in the Middle East.
2. Examples of the latter might include clan factions led by warlords in Somalia, drug cartels in Latin America, or the Phalangist militias of Lebanon. Operating somewhere between state

and society, these groups have the potential to mobilize an ideological or patronage-based constituency to political action.

3. A third, and important, stream of literature demonstrates that democratic transitions cluster spatially and temporally, providing some evidence that such transitions have diffusive effects on nearby states (Gleditsch and Ward, 2006; Pevehouse, 2005; Starr, 1991). Gleditsch and Ward (2006) argue that diffusion can encourage or discourage democratization by changing the distribution of power between reformers and the dominant regime, or by changing the perceived preferences for regime type. Diffusion certainly played a critical role in the spread of protest across the Arab world in 2011.

4. The question of why rightist forces have the upper hand in Middle Eastern countries versus leftist ones is an interesting one but beyond the scope of this paper. Alexander (2002) summarizes an existing literature which argues that the anti-democratic right became less powerful in the 20th century with the growth of working-class organizations – a theory which may have some applicability here.

5. Schwedler (2006), however, questions the utility of comparing religious political organization in Europe to similar movements in the Middle East given the fact that such developments in the Middle East take place in an authoritarian, rather than democratic, context.

6. Alexander (2002) makes the case for explicitly considering the regime preferences of citizens in the study of democratic transition.

7. One way to interpret this broadening of the regime's base might be as an expansion of the selectorate. See Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003). It frequently also includes convening semi-free elections and a parliament which exists within the authoritarian political context. See Gandhi (2008) and Gandhi and Lust-Okar (2009) for a summary of the literature on political institutions in an authoritarian context.

8. Gates and Humes (1997) and Crescenzi (1999) each offer important extensions to Przeworski's model which allow for incomplete information. Neither considers the possibility of various types of civil society as posited here, however. Gates and Humes (1997) solve the model for two types of liberalizers. While they do use the incomplete information structure that we employ in this paper, they choose to solve their model for numeric outcome values. This simplifies the solution procedure considerably and finds just two cases of pure strategy equilibria and no mixed strategy equilibria. Their equilibrium solution to the model also predicts only two possible outcomes, status quo dictatorship and transition to democracy. Cases of broadened dictatorship, narrowed dictatorship, or insurrection – all of which are observed in actual transition politics – are not supported by their equilibrium solution. Crescenzi (1999) also extends Przeworski's model to allow for incomplete information. Crescenzi, however, assumes that the regime's decision to liberalize is costly. Further, his model offers the possibility of civil society mobilization in the absence of regime liberalization. Crescenzi's model, therefore, departs considerably from Przeworski's original conceptualization.

9. See accounts by Boix (2003), Acemoglu and Robinson (2006), and Bueno de Mesquita and Smith (2009) for theories regarding underlying political economy factors in democratic transitions.

10. Other factors – such as resource capture and external influence – are omitted from the discussion.

11. This paper does not seek to explain where liberalizers come from or how they became a crucial part of the elite.

12. We use Przeworski's terminology to describe the game.

13. Civil society 'organizing' can take a number of different forms but at its core represents an attempt by societal groups to pursue their political interests including assembling opposition with the potential to topple an existing authoritarian order.

14. More generally, this might be thought of as the liberalizers extending the size of their base or elite coalition for any number of reasons.

15. A key assumption of the Przeworski model is that civil society organizes only after regime liberalizers have created a political opening; this conceptualization is consistent with the transition experiences of many Eastern European and Latin American countries. It is important to note that this assumption has two substantive implications. The first is that the state already has a certain minimum level of repressive capacity to maintain order against an 'unorganized' civil society. Second, the model implies that civil society cannot overthrow the regime in the absence of some attempt by the liberalizer to broaden their base.

16. We have added generic payoffs to the game where payoffs with subscript l are for liberalizer and payoffs with subscript c are for civil society.

17. Przeworski considers other preference orderings for this game, including where the liberalizers are in fact proto-democratizers. This seems fairly unrealistic since if liberalizers held these preferences, they would likely be rooted out by hardliners within the regime.

18. In this paper, we conceptualize civil society in a non-normative way. See Whitehead (2004) and Kasfir (2004) for a debate on this issue.

19. The 2011 protests in Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, Bahrain, Syria, and elsewhere demonstrated both the vibrancy and diversity of Arab civil society. Religious, secular, leftist, nationalist, as well as non-ideological activists of different ethnic, sectarian, and socioeconomic backgrounds came together to protest against sitting autocrats in a manner that defied expectations about the possibility for cross-group cooperation.

20. In particular, see Cavatorta (2008) and Volpi (2004).

21. Bellin (2005) argues that the exceptionalism of Middle Eastern authoritarianism rests on the strength and will to repress of the Middle Eastern state. Our argument would suggest that the repressive capacity of the Middle Eastern state has allowed many of these regimes to achieve a broadened dictatorship as civil society elites look down the game tree and choose to enter into a broadened dictatorship than risk repression. The results of the model also suggest that on some level of repressive capacity may, counterintuitively, be a necessary condition for democratic transition if the transition dynamic occurs internally within the regime.

22. Whether civil society was actually of the radical type is less important for determining this outcome than the perception on the part of regime liberalizers that civil society was of the radical type. The outcome of narrowed dictatorship could also occur as part of this equilibrium with a moderate civil society. As there is no way to know if the Algerian Islamists during this period were actually committed democrats or not, instead we focus on the role of uncertainty and beliefs in determining political outcomes. This is consistent with arguments by scholars like El-Ghobashy, for example, who points out that it is largely useless speculate about the democratic commitment of Islamist organizations (El-Ghobashy, 2005).

23. Notable exceptions include Waterbury (1994) and Binder (1998) who both examine how democratic transition in the Middle East could come about as a result of a rational compromise although without the development of a formal model.

24. George and Bennett (2005: 18) define a case study as a 'well-defined aspect of a historical episode that the investigator selects for analysis, rather than a historical event itself.'

25. For example, the case study of Saudi Arabia begins with the death of King Faisal in 1975 and ends with the First Gulf War, when controversy surrounding the presence of US troops on Saudi soil led to a new era in state–society relations within the Kingdom. The case of Egypt begins with Sadat's accession to power and ends following the introduction of multi party political competition and an elimination of the Nasserists as a dominant force within the ruling elite. The discussion of Algeria begins with the emergence of the elite split following domestic economic crisis and ends with the shutting down of elections and the start of the Algerian Civil

War. The Turkish case begins with the elite split that emerged just after World War II and ends with the hegemonic party's electoral defeat and transfer of power.

26. Proposition 2 is omitted from the case studies because it leads to the same result – a status quo dictatorship – as Proposition 1.

27. See Al-Rasheed (2002) for more details on the internal power struggle between these two factions.

28. While this quotation refers to political events of the 1990s, we believe that Fandy's impression regarding the limitations of the Saudi royal family applies to an even greater extent to the 1970s and 1980s when the connection between government and civil society was more pronounced than in later years. Even after the Gulf War, when indigenous political dissension was at a peak, the number of people arrested for political crimes remained relatively low and most of those arrested were released after a short prison stay (Aburish, 1996).

29. Religious minorities and foreign workers have been particularly susceptible to the Kingdom's repression, although neither constitutes a core civil society group.

30. With its rapidly growing population and the increasing organizational capacity of militant Islamist groups since the 1990s, it is not clear if the types of state–society relations that we have described here carry into more recent periods. The types of internal elite splits, which are a key assumption of Przeworski's framework, also do not appear to exist to the same extent as during the 1970s and 1980s.

31. It is also possible to interpret the longer-term outcome of civil war which was to follow an example of failed repression with an outcome of insurrection.

32. In fact, Quandt has argued that during this period, regime liberalizers showed no indication of commitment to democracy in principle (Quandt, 1998).

33. Said and Human Rights Watch, 'Egypt: Military Trials Usurp Justice System,' 29 April 2011.

34. See BBC News, 'Egypt women protesters forced to take "virginity" tests,' 24 March 2011 and Omar Zein, 'Egyptian activists protest "virginity tests" on female protesters,' *Al-Masry Al-Youm*, 2 June 2011.

35. 'Ruling military council may postpone presidential elections to June 2012,' *Al-Masry Al-Youm*, 27 March 2011.

36. 'Military: We will hand over power to civilian authority following elections,' *Al-Masry Al-Youm*, 29 May 2011.

37. At this point, there is little concrete evidence to assess the extent to which the SCAF is politically divided.

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