

**Democracy Promotion in the Arab States of the
Mediterranean Region: Role of the European Union**

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled “**Democracy Promotion in the Arab States of the Mediterranean Region: Role of the European Union**” submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy (M. Phil)** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The Dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University.

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CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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TO
MY PARENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the Cold War and collapse of the monolithic Soviet Empire, there has emerged a veritable flood of literature, scholarly or otherwise, on democratisation, political liberalisation and economic reforms. However, trends in academic writing on democracy and democratisation in West Asia & North Africa show that until 1990s this region received no attention. No wonder, S. Huntington in his book *Third Wave of Democracy* has discussed the waves of democratisation in different parts of the world since the late 1970s but does not mention about the WANA region.¹ In the aftermath of the September 11 terror attacks on the United States,, considerable scholarly attention has been focused on the issues related to democracy deficit in the Arab World, but no coherent, serious study is available on the role of the external actor in facilitating democratisation in an area long known for resistance to such change.

Democratisation and Political Liberalisation

Before explaining the role the external actors or agencies in facilitating the democratic transition, it would be analytically useful to highlight the distinction between political liberalisation and democratisation, While the former encompasses the more modest goal of loosening restrictions and increasing civil liberties within an authoritarian regime, the democratisation goes beyond such “controlled opening of political space”² The latter “entails an expansion of political participation in such a way as to provide

¹ S. P. Huntington (1991), *The Third Wave: Democratisation in the Late Twentieth Century*, Norman Okla.: Oklahoma University Press.

² Adam Przeworski (1991), *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, P. 57.

citizens with a degree of real and meaningful collective control over public policy.”³ Democratization is a complex historical process consisting of several stages, and liberalisation marks the first stage of transition during which a state moves away from the authoritarian rule towards democracy. Democratic transition takes place either through a “reform” of or “rupture” with the old authoritarian system.⁴ Most studies on the “Third wave” of democratization hold that the former is likely to be more stable and less violent because the outgoing regime retains high degree of control over the transition process.⁵ By contrast, the collapse of the old regime in the latter type may lead to an unrestrained competition among democratic actors, making the transition less consensual and more violent.

A democratic transition is complete, when institutional structure has been established, when sufficient agreement has been reached about political procedures to produce an elected government, and when a government comes to power through a free and popular vote. What follows next is democratic consolidation, a slow but purposeful process during which behavioural, attitudinal and institutional dimensions indicate that democracy is accepted by all forces in society as the “only game in town.”⁶

³ Rex Brynen, Bahgat Korany and Paul Noble (1995), “Introduction: Theoretical Perspectives on Arab Liberalisation and Democratization” in Rex Brynen, Bahgat Korany and Paul Noble (eds.), *Political Liberalisation and Democratization in the Arab World*, Vol. 1, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, p. 3..

⁴ 10 Juan J. Linz and Alfred C. Stepan (1996), *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America and Post-Communist Europe*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, pp. 9-11.

⁵ The phrase was first used by Samuel Huntington in reference to post-1970s global democratic trend. Started in Southern Europe, Latin America and Asia (especially the Philippines), the Third Wave spread to Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union and sub-Saharan Africa in the early 1990s.

⁶ Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition*. p. 5; also see Andreas Schedler (2001), “Taking Uncertainty Seriously: The Blurred Boundaries of Democratic Transition and Consolidation”, *Democratization*, Vol. 8 No. 4, Winter, pp. 1-22.

However, not all those undergoing transition reach the stage of becoming a consolidated democracy. While some relapse into authoritarianism, others enter the “political gray zone” in which regimes are neither dictatorial nor clearly headed toward democracy.⁷ In the absence of suitable appellation, such regimes are designated as “liberalised autocracies.” Arguably, some Arab regimes will fit within this category, whereas others remain fully autocratic with zero tolerance for free debate or competitive politics (Syria, Saddam’s Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Libya).⁸ By contrast, liberalised autocracies promote competitiveness without inclusiveness, which in other words means free elections without meaningful participation in decision-making.⁹ Although the “liberalised autocracy has proved far more durable than once imagined”, it is “a type of political system whose institutions, rules, and logic defy any linear model of democratisation.”¹⁰

Democracy becomes embedded or consolidated only when “the institutional infrastructure of democracy” is present, which refers to the strong and active civil society, relatively independent political parties, a strong state based on rights and an efficient economy. Civil society is a kind of intermediary space located between citizens’ private sphere and the state in which various individuals act publicly, usually in collective

⁷ Thomas Carothers (2002), “The End of Transition Paradigm”, *Journal of Democracy*; Vol. 13, No. 1, p. 9.

⁸ Daniel Brumberg (2003), “Liberalisation Versus Democracy: Understanding Arab Political Reforms”, *Democracy and Rule of Law Project: Middle East Series* (Washington, D. C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, May, p.4.

⁹ For a discussion of the two distinguishable dimensions of democratization, competition and inclusiveness, See Georg Sorensen (1998), *Democracy and Democratisation: Processes and Prospects in a Changing World* (Boulder: CO, Westview, pp. 15-22.

¹⁰ Daniel Brumberg, “Democratisation in the Arab World?: The Trap of Liberalized Autocracy”, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (2002), p. 56.

form, to express and advance their interests, make demands of the state, and oversee the work of the government.¹¹ The latter mainly includes the political parties and an active civil society, which, together with the absence of executive accountability, raise serious doubts about the efficacy of the reform process. In the absence of a combination of vertical and horizontal dimensions of democracy (institutional and procedural), elections tend to become meaningless, both as a qualitative yardstick and apolitical tool for instigating and encouraging reform.

Domestic Factors and External Actors

Much of the transition literature holds that the democratic transition is the outcome of a domestic political process in which the international influences and pressures are marginal in their impact. It is attributed either to schism between the hard-liners and soft-liners within the regime or mass pressure caused by internal structural problems, such as state failure, popular pressures, financial crisis and the globalisation-induced economic reforms.¹² In other words, democratisation is seen first and foremost as an endogenous process involving social dynamics and the success of the process is linked to a specific set of structural pre-conditions. This argument has been advanced by such eminent scholars as Seymour Martin Lipset, Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, Robert Dahl and Barrington Moore. Seymour Lipset and Daniel Lerner are the two

¹¹ See Mehran Kamrava and Frank O Mara (1998), "Civil Society and Democratisation in Comparative Perspective: Latin America and the Middle East", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 5, pp. 893-916.

¹² See Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter (1986), *Transition from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*, Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press; Gerardo L. Munck (1994) "Democratic Transition in Comparative Perspective", *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 26, No. 3, April, pp. 355 -375.

leading proponents of the correlation argument of the modernisation theories between levels of socio-economic development and the propensity to democratic rule.¹³

Interestingly, Turkey's experience in the advance of political democracy contradicts the correlation thesis. For, the origins of Turkish democracy lay in a period when the country was largely agrarian and rural accompanied by a high rate of illiteracy and low level of economic development. Likewise, the connection between the economic crisis and political liberalisation is not inevitable. Historically, economic crisis has in several instances led to Fascism or to authoritarianism, not to democratic opening.¹⁴ Even in the case of Oman, the Sultan has opened up the outlets for free expression of opinion, limit the arbitrary exercise of power and encourage political participation without great public demand for political reforms, akin to that appeared in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrain.¹⁵ The recent scholarship has thus tended to focus on the role of those political leaders or strategic elites can play. In other words, Huntington has attempted to make a bridge between the historical and structural "causes" and "causers" of democracy, which correspond to the actors and agential factors.¹⁶ In short, "democracy is no longer treated as a particularly rare and delicate plant that cannot be transplanted in alien soil; it is

¹³ Seymour Martin Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy" 91959), *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 53, No. 1, March, pp.69-105; Daniel Lerner (1958), *The Passing of Traditional Society*, New York: Free Press. For a critique of this pre-requisite approach to democracy, Robert A. Dahl (1998), *On Democracy*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press, pp. 145-179.

¹⁴ Nazih N. Ayubi (1995), *Over-stating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East*, London: I. B. Tauris,, p. 402.

¹⁵ See Aswini K. Mohapatra (2007), "Oman: A Liberalising Autocracy", *Journal of Indian Ocean Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 13-24.

¹⁶ Huntington (1991), *Third Wave*

treated as a product that can be manufactured wherever there is democratic craftsmanship and the proper zeitgeist.”¹⁷

Equally significant is the counter-argument put forward by the international scholars who have highlighted the variety of ways in which external forces shape the incentives and opportunities for the adoption of democratic forms of governance. In the case of Africa, for example, the significance of changes in international environment for the process of democratisation is difficult to ignore. Reconsidering the importance of the impact of international context upon regime change, Philippe Schmitter has provided four types of international sources of domestic transition: control, contagion, conditionality and consent. The four categories can be differentiated by reference to coercive or voluntary nature of the action. While control and conditionality are of coercive nature backed by external actors, contagion and consent are supported by private agencies.¹⁸ Whereas the former includes control or forced change of regime, the latter focuses on linkage between economic assistance of multilateral agencies and membership of international or multilateral organizations. Membership has the multiple effects of structuring state interactions, conditioning or constraining state behaviour as well as instilling the norms, standards accepted by others.¹⁹

¹⁷ Doh C. Shin (1994), “On the Third Wave of Democratisation: A Synthesis and Evaluation of Recent Theory and Research”, *World Politics*, Vol. 47, October, p. 141.

¹⁸ For the role of external actors and impact of international organisations on the democratic transition, see Philippe C. Schmitter, “The Influence of the International Context upon the Choice of National Institutions and Policies in Neo-Democracies” in Laurence Whitehead (ed.), *The International Dimensions of Democratisation: Europe and the Americas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 27-32.

¹⁹ For an analysis of relationship between multilateral organisations like the WTO and domestic transition, see John C. Pevehouse (2002), “Democracy from the Outside-In?: International Organisations and Democratisation”, *International Organisation*, Vol. 56, No. 3, Summer, , pp. 515-549.

In the initiation of political reforms in the early 1990s, for instance, the significance of post-Cold War global changes, notably the ideological hegemony of the West and the political fall-out of the Kuwaiti crisis is difficult to ignore. It may be noted that several Arab states during this period attempted what Ayubi calls the “cosmetic democracy” because democratisation meant some form of identification with the West.²⁰ Likewise, the ‘neighbourhood effects’ of the democratic experiment in Kuwait and the united Yemen on Oman’s pace of reforms particularly during the latter half of the 1990s cannot be discounted. After all, democracy has a tendency to be contagious and to spread by diffusion.²¹ Many Arab states, particularly those in the Gulf states, have in fact embarked on the so-called democratization process in the recent years largely due to the pro-democracy campaign of the US in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Their dependence on the US as the key security guarantor of the region and the free flow of oil to international markets have exposed the regime to external pressures unleashed by the latter’s new democratising mission in the region. To sum it up, political transition in many Arab states, albeit cosmetic or superficial, is the result of the rulers’ conscious actions in response to the emerging realities in the external arena, not to the challenges emanating from within. Thus, a closer scrutiny of some recent case studies reveals the international sources of domestic transition.

²⁰ Ayubi, *Over-stating*, p. 411. Also, see Gudrun Kramer (1992), “Liberalisation and Democracy in the Arab World”, *Middle East Report*, No. 174, January-February, pp. 22-25; Michael C. Hudson (1991), “After the Gulf War: Prospects for Democratisation in the Arab World”, *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 45, No. 3, Summer, pp. 407-426.

²¹ See Harvey Starr (1991), “Democratic Dominoes: Diffusion Approaches to the Spread of Democracy in the International System”, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 35, No. 2, June, pp. 356-381.

In this context, it would be analytically useful to draw the fundamental difference between the U. S and the EU in their approach towards the issue of democracy promotion. Unlike its American counterpart, the EU avoids top-down democracy promotion which involves pressures at the governmental level and instead pursues the bottom-up approach that aims at developing the precursors to democratisation with the consent of the regime. EU's strategy is to foster 'socialisation' around democratic norms rather than resorting to coercive measures like suspension of aid or heavy-handed imposition of Western political forms. Thus, in contrast to the U. S. policy defined in terms of power politics or *Machtpolitik* (i.e.military intervention and occupation),²² the EU approach to democracy promotion in the Arab world focuses on disseminating normative value of political pluralism through an institutionalised process of cooperation.

Many scholars have maintained that West Asia is somehow intrinsically resistant to democratic imperatives, most often citing the incompatible nature of Islam and democracy. This is typically known as "West Asian exceptionalism". As Ghassan Salame has remarked, "democracy can still be sought as an instrument of civil peace and hopefully, gradually, inadvertently, produce its own defenders."²³ The obstacles to the process of democratisation have been examined by various scholars and reached the conclusion that the persistence of authoritarianism in the Arab world cannot be explained either by external or internal structural factors, but the interplay of the two. The present study represents an attempt to examine the role played by the European Union in promoting democracy in the Arab states of the southern Mediterranean region. Although

²² Thomas Carothers (*Critical Mission: Essays on Democracy Promotion*

²³ in his edited volume *Democracy without Democrats – The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World*

literature on the EU's engagement in the Arab world is scanty, the study relies on the EU sources and other secondary sources to analyse its policies, practices and interests. The study ends with a critical evaluation of its entire gamut of policies flowing largely from the 1995 Barcelona process.

CHAPTER - 1

Authoritarianism in the Arab world: An Overview

The Arab world has remained resistant to democratisation so far. While the number of electoral democracies has nearly doubled since 1972, the number in this region has registered an absolute decline. Today, only two out of twenty-one countries of the West Asian and North African (WANA) region qualify as electoral democracies, down from three observed in 1972.¹ Stagnation is also evident in the guarantee of political rights and civil liberties. While the number of countries designated free by Freedom House has doubled in Latin America and in the Asia-Pacific region, increased tenfold in Africa and risen exponentially in Central and East Europe over the past thirty-five years, there has been no overall improvement in the WANA region.² While a few countries, notably Morocco, Jordan, Kuwait, Bahrain and Yemen of the WANA region, have registered noteworthy progress towards political liberalisation in the past decade, overall the vast majority of countries has failed to catch the wave of democratisation that has swept nearly every other part of the world.

Historically, the emergence of democracy is associated with a breakdown of traditional class structures, an increase in the power of working classes, relative to that of other classes, a relatively more nationally embedded capitalism, development of purchasing power among the domestic citizen workforce, and the extension and

¹ West Asia and North Africa include twenty-one countries. Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, the Palestinian Authority, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Sudan, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Emirates and Yemen. Israel and Turkey today meet the standards of electoral democracy, defined as a regime that chooses its government through regular free, competitive elections. However, in Lebanon the electoral democracy has served to reinforce the confessional identity at the cost of an over-arching Lebanese identity, "Freedom in the World 2002" (2002), *Freedom House* at www.freedomhouse.org On electoral versus liberal democracy, see Larry Diamond (1996), "Is the Third Wave Over?," *Journal of Democracy*, #7, July, pp. 20-37 and on Lebanon, see Deirdre Collings (ed.), (1994), *Peace for Lebanon? From War to Reconstruction*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

² See Anoushirvan Ehteshami (2004), "Islam, Muslim Politics and Democracy", *Democratization*, Vol.11, No.4, August, pp.90-110. Freedom House has placed Turkey in Europe and the Palestinian Authority in a separate category called disputed territories.

integration of domestic markets. Ironically, much of the Arab World lacks the prerequisites of democratization, which includes, among others, a market driven economy, adequate income and literacy levels, democratic neighbours and democratic culture. The stubborn persistence of authoritarianism has, on the contrary, shielded the traditional class structures, restricted the power of working classes, encouraged the rise of ultra right wing, anti-democratic groups and thus prevented the development of the very conditions that in Europe and elsewhere are associated with democracy.³

However, the Arab World is in no way unique in their poor endowment with the prerequisites of democracy. Other regions similarly deprived have nonetheless managed to make the transition. Civil society is notoriously weak in sub-Saharan Africa, yet twenty-three out of forty-two countries carried out some measure of democratic transition between 1988 and 1994.⁴ The commanding heights of the economy were entirely under state control in eastern Europe prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall, yet the vast majority of countries in this region successfully carried through a transition during the 1990.⁵ Poverty and inequality not to mention geographic remoteness from the democratic epicenter have characterized India, Mauritius and Botswana, yet these countries have successfully embraced democracy.⁶

³ Sandra Halperin (2005), "The Post-Cold War Political Topography of the Middle East prospects for democracy", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No.7, pp.1135-115.

⁴ Michael Bratton and Nicholas Van de Walle (1977), *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, New York: Cambridge, pp.1-13, 72; Michael Bratton (1989), "Beyond the state: Civil Society and Associational Life in Africa", *World Politics*, 41, pp. 407-30; Jeffrey Herbst (2001), "Political Liberalization in Africa after Ten years." *Comparative Politics*, Vol 33, April, pp. 357-75

⁵ Ivo Banac (1992), ed., *Eastern Europe in Revolution*. Ithaca : Cornell University Press.

⁶ Atul Kohli (2001), ed. *The Success of India's Democracy*, New York : Cambridge University Press.

The puzzle posed by the region is not why democracy has failed to consolidate here but rather why the vast majority of the states have failed to initiate transition at all. Before identifying the factors that account for the exceptionalism of the region, it would be analytically useful to examine the nature of the authoritarianism prevalent in the Arab World.

Nature and Typology of Authoritarianism in the Arab World

Broadly, there are two types of regimes in the Arab World: republican or monarchical authoritarianism.⁷ In other words, Arab states are either ruled by members of one family (hereditary rule or monarchical rule) or power is concentrated in the hands of a bureaucratic and military elite that came to power in nationalist 'revolutions' and coups.⁸ Their nature is, however, the same. Both are authoritarian in nature as they rule through a sustained pattern of force and fear. Political violence in both the categories is central to the longevity of these regimes.⁹ These authoritarian regimes resort to repression because they cannot exact compliance through old institutions and cannot create effective new

⁷ Regime refers to not only to a type of government but also to ideology, rules of the game and the structuring of the polity in a given nation. Alan Richards and John Waterbury (1990), *The Political Economy of the Middle East: State, Class, and Economic Development*, Westview Press, p. 300.

⁸ Republican authoritarianism is of two types: bureaucratic authoritarianism in states like Syria, Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt, and populist authoritarianism, which is associated with a charismatic leader as Qadhafi's Libya. Michael C. Hudson (1988), "State, Society, and Legitimacy: An Essay on Arab Political Prospects in the 1990s" in Hisham Sharabi (ed.), *The Next Arab Decade: Alternative Future*, Westview Press, pp. 22-37. Korany has identified two different types of Arab political systems: the Bedouin-based and the peasant-based. See Bahgat Korany (1990), "Arab Political Systems" in Anton Bebler and Jim Seroke (eds.), *Contemporary Political Systems: Classifications and Typologies*, London: Lynne Rienner, pp. 303-329.

⁹ For a comprehensive analysis, see Jill Crystal (1994), "Authoritarianism and Its Adversaries in the Arab World", *World Politics*, Vol 46, January, pp. 262-289.

ones.¹⁰ The enormous amount of revenue that these countries receive from outside through sale of oil or in the form of aid and government borrowing frees them from the demands for democratic participation that accompany the provision of taxes. Taxation, especially modern direct taxation of the individual citizens is not simply reflective of the extractive capacity of the state; it involves public demand for accountability from - and representation in - their government.¹¹ Accordingly, little taxation in the Arab world accounts for the little representation.¹²

As noted, the concentration of political, military and economic power in the hands of a few elite members is a basic characteristic of these authoritarian regimes. They have used either their economic strength to co-opt various social groups or military strength to repress the other dissenting social groups. Rulers even invoke tradition selectively; using whatever construction suits their political needs. Each state celebrates a few Islamic traditions, particularly those emphasising political acquiescence rather than rebellion. Of the many possible interpretations of rights consistent with Islamic teaching, rulers privilege those that grant the state the most unrestricted authority.

Thus, the solution to the puzzle of the Arab World's exceptionalism lies both in the absence of the prerequisites of democratisation and in the present conditions that

¹⁰ Russel E. Lucas (2004), "Monarchical Authoritarianism: Survival and Political Liberalisation in a Middle Eastern Regime Type", *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 36, pp. 103-119.

¹¹ See Giacomo. Luciani (1990), "Allocation vs. Production states: A Theoretical Framework" in H. Beblawi and G. Luciani (eds.), *The Arab State*, London: Routledge, pp. 65-84.

¹² Lisa Anderson (1987), "The State in the Middle East and North Africa", *Comparative Politics*, October, p. 9. This peculiar nature of the Arab Gulf states has led Korany to label them "the *backshish* states." B. Korany (1997), "Arab Democratisation: A Poor Cousin?", *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 27, No. 3, September, p. 511.

foster robust authoritarianism, specifically a robust coercive apparatus in these states. The will and capacity of the state's coercive apparatus to suppress democratic initiative have extinguished the possibility of transition. In fact, several Arab countries experienced parliamentary elections and multiparty competition since the end of the Cold War, which an analyst optimistically described as the "Third wave of democratisation in the Arab world."¹³ However, developments in these countries only a year after the liberation of Kuwait revealed the superficial nature of participation and contestation pointing to only "cosmetic democracy" or "façade democracy."¹⁴ The political reforms were carried out either with the intention of warding off domestic pressures such as the bread riots triggered by financial crisis of the state that had undermined its ability to perform the distributive functions, or in response to the so-called "Washington Consensus" of the post-Col War years.¹⁵

In brief, the so-called reform process served as mechanism for system maintenance or regime survival rather than collective empowerment. As argued by Raymond Hinnebusch, "authoritarian regimes can adapt to new conditions and specifically that their political liberalisation or pluralisation is, for structural reasons, more likely to be a substitute for democratisation than a stage on the way to it."¹⁶ For

¹³ Mustapha K. El Sayyid (1994), "The Third Wave of Democratization in the Arab world" in Dan Tschirgi, *The Arab World Today*, Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, pp. 179-189.

¹⁴ See Frederic Volpi, (2004), "Pseudo-Democracy in the Muslim World", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 6, pp. 1061-1078.

¹⁵ . Nazih N. Ayubi (1995), *Over-stating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East* London: I. B. Tauris,, pp. 386-387

¹⁶ Raymond Hinnebusch (2006), "Authoritarian Persistence, Democratisation Theory and the Middle East: An Overview", *Democratisation*, Vol. 13, No.3, June, p. 374

analytical convenience, one can divide the autocratic Arab regimes into two main categories: liberalising autocracies and full autocracies. In the former authoritarianism is tempered with pluralism or some measure of openness and tolerance of press (Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia); the latter category includes such regimes that have zero tolerance for free debate or competitive politics (Syria, Saudi Arabia, Libya and Algeria). Both are nevertheless autocratic because their rulers retain the upper hand, control the security establishment, dominate the media and dole out economic goodies to their favourite clients.¹⁷

Explaining Authoritarianism in the Arab World

Many analysts in attempting to explain the persistence of authoritarianism in the Arab world have either attributed it to deeply rooted authoritarian political culture or to the dominant religion of the region, Islam. Because, the Islamic world is dominated by a set of relatively enduring and unchanging processes and meaning to be understood through the texts of Islam and language it generates.¹⁸ According to Myron Weiner,

What is striking about Islamic resurgence is its rejection of much of what is generally regarded as modern in the 19th century: secularism, democracy and even nationalism. In this respect, Islam has come to play quite a different role from that of the religions of modernisation –Christianity, Judaism, Confucianism, Shintoism, even Buddhism and Hinduism. Each of these religions, in its own way, has been interpreted or reinterpreted so as to induce people to modernization, or to

¹⁷ Daniel Brumberg (2002), “Democratisation in the Arab World?: The Trap of Liberalized Autocracy”, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 13, No. 4, p. 56

¹⁸ Laith_Kubba (1996), “Recognizing Pluralism”, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 7, No. 2, p. 87. Also, see

Fred Halliday (1997), ‘Review Article: The Politics of Islam- A Second Look’, *British Journal of Political Sciences*, Vol. 25, No. 3, pp. 400-401.

function alongside of, without impeding, modern behaviour, yet to provide personal comfort, a sense of continuity with one's past, and group identity.¹⁹

Culturalist Perspective

Islam's inability to adapt to the modern age has left Muslim societies ill prepared and ill equipped to meet the challenges of democratisation on their own. They suffer from a profound inferiority complex, a sense of being behind, which makes them even more vulnerable.²⁰ Similarly, Martin Kramer argues that Islam fosters an essentially illiberal political culture either because of its more uncompromising dogmatic normative presence or because it prevents the emergence of fully functional civil society.²¹ Central to the culturalist approach, however, is the argument that in comparison with other major religions of the world, Islam is a political religion *per excellence*. From the very beginning, it has united and governed the community of believers as a political religion. Unlike the founder of Christianity, who was crucified and whose followers saw their religion made the official faith of the Roman Empire only after centuries as a persecuted minority, Prophet Mohammed founded a state during his lifetime, and as ruler, he collected taxes, dispensed justice, promulgated laws, commanded armies, and made war and peace. In fact, Muhammad was as much of a political leader as a Prophet, and his new "religious association had long been conceived of as a community organised on

¹⁹ Myron Weiner (1987), "Political Change: Asia, Africa, and the Middle East" in M. Weiner and Samuel P. Huntington (eds.), *Understanding Political Development*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company, p. 60.

²⁰ Bernard Lewis (2002), *What Went Wrong? Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response* London: Phoenix, pp. 32-37.

²¹ See Martin Kramer (1993), "Islam vs Democracy", *Commentary*, Vol. 95, January, pp. 35-42.

political lines, not as a church within a secular state.”²² Tracing the roots of the contemporary wave of politicized Islam, Charles Butterworth has noted:

Whether we look back to the community founded by the Prophet Muhammad while he was in Medina (622-30) or the way it was continued during the two years after he returned to Mecca, whether we think about the tradition of the four guided Caliphs (632-61) – the first successors to Muhammad- or about the Caliphs who guided the Umayyad 9661-750), Abbasid (750-1258), and Spanish Umayyad (756-1031) empires, or whether we consider the princes and commanders who ruled the Arab and Berber dynasties in Spain and North Africa (1031-1492) and the Sultans who ruled the Ottoman empire (1453-1918), we see political rule linked with religion.²³

In his study on religion and political development, Donald Smith argues that the relationship between the religion and the political institutions in a society is not only determined by the specific configuration of historical circumstances but is also dependent on the extent to which the theology and organisation of particular religion encourages its involvement in political activity. Accordingly, Smith has classified major religions of the world into two distinct categories based on both structural as well as theological differences: church and organic religions; historical and ahistorical religions.²⁴ Islam fits into the category of “organic religions”, in part because of the absence of an autonomous religious organization. More importantly, religious and political functions - what is God’ and what is Caesar’s - are not differentiated in the organic religions. “God and Caesar, church and state, spiritual and temporal authority have been a prevailing dualism in

²² H. A. R. Gibb (1962), *Mohammedanism*, London: Oxford University Press, p. 27.

²³ Charles E. Butterworth (1992), “Political Islam: The Origins”, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 524, November, p. 29.

²⁴ Donald Smith (1970), *Religion and Political Development*, Boston: Little, Brown, pp. 7-8.

Western culture.” By contrast, “In Islam God is Caesar.”²⁵ It is this fusion of religious and secular authorities that has turned Islam not merely a political religion, but also produces a political culture that can neither accommodate pluralism nor tolerate dissent. No wonder, Islamists view the democratisation as a ploy to weaken Islam, just as the intrusion of Western materialism together with the modern nationalism and secularism has caused the degeneration of Islam today.

Interestingly, even those Islamists who have been able to take advantage of pluralistic structures in various Muslim countries to gain access to levers of power are averse to diversity of political opinion. Their devotion to democratic principles can be expressed by the aphorism: "One man, one vote, one time."²⁶ This has led some analysts to argue that if democracy deficit in the Muslim societies accounts for the exponential growth of religious fundamentalism, it has its roots in Islam's fusion of divine revelation and state power.²⁷ Furthermore, the prevalence of autocracies in the Muslim world is the product of the dominant political tradition of command and obedience. According to Bernard Lewis, one of the most prominent proponents of the culturalist approach, "the political experience of the Middle East under the caliphs and sultans was one of almost unrelieved autocracy, in which obedience to the sovereign was a religious as well as a political obligation and disobedience a sin as well as a crime."²⁸ Because of this political

²⁵ Samuel P. Huntington (1996), *The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of the Modern World* (New York: Simon & Schuster,, p. 70.

²⁶ Emmanuel_Sivan (2000), "Arabs and Democracy: Illusions of Change", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 11, No. 3, P. 77.

²⁷ See M. Steven Fish, "Islam and Authoritarianism" (2002), *World Politics*, Vo. 55, October, pp. 4-35

²⁸ Bernard Lewis (1964), *The Middle East and the West*, New York: Harper Torchbooks, p.48.

tradition, quietism is said to have become more or less an article of faith in Islam. Sociologist Morroe Berger writes, "the [Arab] villager's apparent happiness stems from his sense of resignation regarding the way things are . . . his acquiescence in what has been ordained by God."²⁹ "The Muslim", according to G. E. von Grunebaum, "deeply feels man's insignificance . . . and the omnipotence of the uncontrollable power above him," and is therefore "more readily prepared than the Westerner to accept the accomplished fact."³⁰

Critique of Culturalist Approach

Such cultural reductionist explanations are intellectually constrained by the old orientalist arguments that freeze cultures into unchanging essences; they also disconnect Muslims from their larger Third World global contexts. After all, religion requires interpretation to give it meaning in specific context. In other words, it is the context and to an extent the interests of particular groups (the Islamists and nationalists, for instance) who interpret the religion or local culture that determines its character and function, not the other way round.³¹ For example, Islam has been used both as a regime-challenging instrument (Algeria, Egypt and Iran during the 1979 revolution) and regime-legitimising ideology in the authoritarian states (i.e., Saudi Arabia) as well. What is more, the successful electoral democracy in Turkey with 95 percent Muslim population has

²⁹ Morroe Berger (1964), *The Arab World Today*, New York: Doubleday, pp. 156-157.

³⁰ G.E. von Grunebaum (1961), *Islam: Essays in the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition* (New York: Barnes & Noble, p. 70.

³¹ For the contextualists' arguments, See S. Zubaida (1988), *Islam, the People and the State*, London: Routledge; Fred Halliday (1997), "Review Article: The Politics of Islam-A Second Look", *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 25, No. 3, pp. 400-401.

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debunked the myth that Islam is incompatible with democracy.³² In Turkey today the ruling Justice and Development Party, known as AKP by its Turkish acronym, with an Islamist background has adopted a platform of staunch support for its integration into the global economy, membership in the EU, and overall alignment with the West. Commenting on the second successive victory of the AKP in the July 2007 general elections, a Turkish analyst writes, “The result is a clear vindication of the AK Party's performance. It is a ‘yes’ to democratic reforms, a ‘yes’ to a market economy and open society; it is a ‘yes’ to the EU membership process and opening up to the world.”³³ One could even argue plausibly that Islamic tradition is in certain respects more conducive to democracy than Confucianism: Islam preaches the rule of law, and the concept of *shura* might perhaps lend itself to the work of justifying elections

Although the concept of democracy has been rejected by many Muslim activists as a western import designed to destroy Islam and the Sharia, Islamic tradition is in certain respects more conducive to democracy than Confucianism. Islam preaches the rule of law, and the concept of *shura* might perhaps lend itself to the work of justifying elections.³⁴ Thus, Elckelman and Piscatori argue that tradition can be an effective force for evolutionary and revolutionary change. They agree with the contention that Islam has become the primary language of politics, but emphasise the multiplicity of interpretations within shifting contexts and evolving meanings and usages of symbols, values and

³² See Ilter Turan (2007), “Unstable Stability: Turkish Politics at the Crossroads?”, *International Affairs*, Vol. 83, No. 2, pp. 319-338.

³³ Ihsan Dagi (2007), “The Democratic Reflex”, *Today's Zaman* at <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/yazarDetay.do?haberno=117388>

³⁴ Emmanuel Sivan (1997), “Constraints and Opportunities in the Arab World”, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 8, No.2, p. 110.

traditions. This is due both to the diversity of interpreters (i.e. the traditional Ulema and the new religious intellectuals) and diverse political and cultural contexts.³⁵ Moreover, other world cultures, notably Catholicism and Confucianism, have at different times been accused of incompatibility with democracy, yet these cultural endowments have not prevented countries in Latin America, Southern Europe, and East Asia from democratising. In fact, Huntington, who had earlier believed that Islamic and Confucian culture posed insuperable obstacles to democratic development, has admitted, “even if the cultures of a country at one point an obstacle to democracy, cultures historically re dynamic, not passive. The dominant beliefs and attitude in society change.”³⁶

On the whole, the persistence of authoritarianism in the Arab world has little to do with the local culture or the dominant religion of the area. Nor can it be attributed to a “cluster of absences”, namely the absence of resource base, institutional networks, civil societal institutions, the absence autonomous entrepreneurial class and other socio-economic pre-conditions. Instead, these absences need to be explained in a broader context of dependent state formation in the Arab region, the international constraints and the kinds of resources available to the state.³⁷ In brief, a structural approach rather than a culturalist perspective would help us explain adequately why the region is suffering from democracy deficit for far too long.

³⁵ Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori (1996), *Muslim Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

³⁶ Samuel P. Huntington (1991), “Religion and Third Wave”, *National Interest*, Vol. 24, Summer, p. 42.

³⁷ See Simon Bromley (1996), “Middle East Exceptionalism – Myth or Reality” in David Potter, D. Goldblatt, Margaret Kiloh and Paul Lewis (des.), *Democratisation*, London: Polity Press, pp. 321-344

Process of State Formation

The colonial background was, for instance, particularly important in shaping the Arab state system in a variety of ways, from imposition of Western state forms and artificial state boundaries (Iraq, Syria and Jordan) to appointing rulers (Jordan and Iraq) and recognising “royal families” of the Gulf Sheikdoms as “ruling families” with dynastic rights.³⁸ The former includes mainly the elaboration of bureaucratic administrative structure and creation of a trained and well-equipped army. Regardless of some basic differences in their approach, colonialism of both French and British types encouraged the formation of a kind of “local oligarchy” that they could rely on in ‘ordering’ the societies they ruled.³⁹ While the French variety created the urban-based “native associates” in North Africa and a “sect class” in the Arab East (i.e. minority Alwaites in Syria), British colonialism promoted and strengthened the agrarian and latifundist sections of bourgeoisie in Iraq and Egypt. As a result, a powerful upper landed class made up of old aristocracy, tribal chieftains and urban-based notables controlled these Arab states both socially and politically after their formal independence. The Arab notables in fact played a dominant role in the elections and assemblies established by Britain and France during the mandate period. According to Haim Gerber, it is the

³⁸ Lisa Anderson (1991), “Absolutism and the Resilience of Monarchy in the Middle East”, *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 106, No. 1, p. 9.

³⁹ Nazih N. Ayubi (1995), *Over-stating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East*, London: I. B. Tauris, p. 91. Also, see Timothy Mitchell (1988), *Colonising Egypt*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, chap. 2.

presence of a significant landed class in Egypt, Iraq and Syria at the time of formation of modern, independent state that accounts for the authoritarian rule in these countries.⁴⁰

The persistence of imperialist control even after formal independence and the presence of the upper landed class dominating surplus appropriation provided the context, which defined the nature of structural upheavals in the Arab world.⁴¹ Because, the failure to mobilise the rural peasantry and expand the organised political activity led to an erosion of the notable power base with the weakening of European imperial power and the rise of nationalist forces largely drawn from the “intermediary classes” comprising the professional petty bourgeoisie and merchants and small landowners.⁴² The Arab revolutions conducted by military-led nationalist forces in Egypt, Iraq and Syria were more than simply anti-imperialist. They, unlike the Kemalist movement in the Republican Turkey, involved the removal of the existing dominant economic class and its replacement by the state. Apart from undertaking agrarian transformation and state-led industrialisation, the nationalist leaders destroyed the notable power through programmes of land reforms and the replacement of parliamentary politics by a mixture of populist mobilisation and imposition from above of bureaucratic forms of control organised by the party-military apparatus.⁴³

⁴⁰ Haim Gerber (1987), *The Social Origins of the Modern Middle East*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, pp. 164-166.

⁴¹ Roger Owen (1992), *State, Power and Politics in the Making of Modern Middle East*, London: Routledge, pp. 20-24.

⁴² On the role of the intermediary classes in the peripheral state formation, see Aijaz Ahmad (1996), *Lineages of the Present: Political Essays*, New Delhi: Tulika, pp. 44-57.

⁴³ Bromley, “Middle East Exceptionalism”, pp. 325-326.

Consequently, what emerged was the authoritarian state structure in the consolidation of which at least three factors played a significant part: conflict with the Israel, entanglement of the region in the super-power rivalry during the Cold War and the Arab oil economy of the 1970s.⁴⁴ While the Palestinian issue and ideological proximity to the Soviet Union during the Cold War served the regime-legitimising function for some Arab rulers, the Israeli threat, together with the regional involvement of the superpowers, contributed to the militarisation of Arab politics. This, in turn, had the effect of both reinforcing the primacy of military in the institutions of state and strengthening state control of the society in the Arab world. Over and above, the Soviet Union encouraged its allies to adopt the single-party command economy model, while the US was opposed to popular reformist movements for fear of disturbing the status quo favourable to its policy of containment and stability of oil supplies. Lastly, the scale of resources devoted to the imposition of state authority was accounted for by the rentier income derived from two different endowments: huge oil reserves and geo-strategic utility. The latter represents the source of foreign economic and military aid, known as strategic rents, which many Arab states received during the Cold War from the global powers competing for influence in the region. The former created a region-wide oil economy in the 1970s incorporating both oil-producing and non-oil producing countries through flows of labour, capital and to a lesser extent goods and services.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Roger Owen (1983), "The Arab oil Economy: Present Structure and Future Prospects" in Samih K. Farsoun (ed.), *Arab Society*, London: Croom Helm, pp. 16-33.

⁴⁵ Beblawi calls it "the oil era" of the Arab history. Hazem Beblawi (1990), "The Rentier State in the Arab World" in H. Beblawi and G. Luciani (eds.), *The Arab State*, London: Routledge, p. 98. For the impact of oil on Arab economy, see Samih K. Farsoun (1988), "Oil, State, and Social Structure in the Middle East", *Arab Studies Quarterly (ASQ)*, Vol. 10, No. 2, Spring, pp. 155-75.

Together they contributed to the expansion of security and repressive apparatuses as well as the bureaucracy, which provided the rulers with a stability platform, a control device and a space for extending patronage.⁴⁶ The bureaucratic expansion refers to the increase in the numbers of administrative units, personnel and rise in public expenditures, particularly wages and salaries. Much of the administrative structures of the oil-producing Arab Gulf States, however, grew originally from the imperative to expend, rather than extract, wealth. Due to the “rentier” nature of the national economy, they do not depend on taxing a domestic productive base for revenues. Instead, the primary economic function of the state is concerned with allocation and distribution of the revenues accruing from oil exports (rents). As a result, the ruling stratum enjoys a fair amount of freedom in choosing its allies and changing their political allegiance through a policy of cooptation, which operates principally along kinship, tribal and ethnic lines.⁴⁷ It is through this practice of “inclusionary corporatism” that the Gulf rulers have managed to buy off potential opponents and neutralise popular discontent.⁴⁸

Collectively, the rentier character of the economy, the Arab-Israel conflict, and the regional involvement of the global powers contributed in varying degrees to the

⁴⁶ Ayubi, *Over-stating the Arab State*, p. 308.

⁴⁷ The concept of ‘rentier state’ was first suggested in relation to Iran by Hossein Mahdavi. It considers the oil revenue as external proceeds as ‘rent’ derived from leasing lands to oil companies. Hazem Beblawi later refined the term to mean a state in which large amounts of rent accrue directly to the government from ‘foreign actors’ and creation of wealth is centered on a small fraction of the society since the rest is only engaged in distribution and utilisation of this wealth. Hossein Mahdavi (1970), “The Pattern and Problems of Economic Development in Rentier States: The case of Iran”, in Michael Cook (ed.), *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East*. London: Oxford University Press, pp. 428-467; Beblawi, “The Rentier State”, p. 51.

⁴⁸ This refers to a method of ensuring the domination of the state over society and economy by controlling corporate social forces such as the tribal corps (the Shaikhs), the merchant families, leaders of religious sects (i.e. *Ibadites*, *Shias* or *Zaidis*) and religious movements.

emergence of what critics have variously described as “fierce state”, “police state” or the “*mukhabarat* (national security) state”. Theoretically these states appear strong in terms of its hard-power resources but with limited “infrastructural power”, which refers to the state capacity to penetrate, not dominate, the society thorough such mechanism as taxation.⁴⁹ Since domestic appropriation is but a negligible part of government revenues, Arab states, mainly those oil-rich in the Gulf do not need to exercise what extractive capacity they may have. At the same time, the state plays a central role in the economy by assuming responsibility for resource allocation, production and distribution. Whether it is in the conservative oil-rich Gulf States, or in the so-called ‘socialist’ Arab states, there is no significant degree of separation between the political system and the control of economic resources. Consequently, the local bourgeoisie in the Arab world is either underdeveloped or highly dependent on the state for financing, contracts, employment, and protection.⁵⁰

In short, it is the deep imbrications of the state in surplus appropriation that precisely explains the stubborn persistence of authoritarianism in the Arab world notwithstanding the political reforms initiated in the late 1980s and the 1990s. Not only has it blocked the development of independent organisations outside the state and space for political and ideological mobilisation, but also give rise to an entrenched state bourgeoisie (the bureaucratic and military elites) that has a direct material stake in resisting the reform programme. Put it differently, without “uncoupling the material basis

⁴⁹ Ayubi, *Over-stating the Arab State*, p.3.

⁵⁰ For details, see John Waterbury (1994), “Democracy without Democrats?: The Potential for Political Modernization in the Middle East”, in Ghassan Salame (ed.), *Democracy without Democrats?: The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World*, London: I. B. Tauris Publishers, p.28.

of power of the ruling class from the formal exercise of state-political power,” liberalisation, economic or political, is not likely to make real progress in the Arab states.⁵¹ The superficial nature of participation and contestation suggests that the reforms were meant only to serve as regime survival mechanism in the face of economic crisis that had set off widespread rioting.⁵² So did the civil society organisations, which, rather than being conduit for political freedom or collective empowerment, became an extension of the state itself. Unlike Latin America and Eastern Europe, the growth of civil society in the region “did not precede or lead to political change; it followed regime-sponsored reforms.”⁵³

Robustness of the Arab Authoritarian Regimes

While the process of dependent state formation has conduced to the rise of authoritarianism in the Arab world, conditions that sustain such regimes and their robust coercive apparatus are exceptional to the region. Eva Belin in a recent study has argued that some conditions that foster robust authoritarianism and especially a robust and politically tenacious coercive apparatus are unique to the region and others are not.⁵⁴ The prevalence of patrimonialism is, for instance, by no means exceptional to this region.

⁵¹ Simon Bromley (1994), *Rethinking Middle East Politics: State Formation and Development*, Oxford: Polity Press., p.165.

⁵² See Larbi Sadiki, “Popular Uprising and Arab Democratization”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 32 (2000), pp. 71-95.

⁵³ Quintan Wiktorowicz, “Civil Society as Social Control: State Power on Jordan”, *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (October 2000), p. 45; also see Sean L. Yom, “Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World”, *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (December 2005), pp. 14-33.

⁵⁴ Eva Bellin (2004), “The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective” *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 36, No. 2 January, pp. 139-157.

Similar logic governs regimes in Africa, Asia and beyond.⁵⁵ But the low level of institutionalisation in the region's coercive apparatuses constitutes an important factor explaining the resistance of authoritarian regimes to political reform. For, an institutionalised coercive apparatus, according to Max Weber, is rule-governed, predictable and meritocratic.⁵⁶ It has established paths of career advancement and recruitment; promotion is based on performance, not politics. There is a clear delineation between the public and private that forbids predatory behaviors vis-a-vis society; and discipline is maintained through the inculcation of a service ethic and strict enforcement of a merit based hierarchy. In contrast, in a coercive apparatus organised along patrimonial lines staffing decisions are ruled by cronyism; the distinction between public and private mission is blurred, leading to widespread corruption and abuse of power; and discipline is maintained through the exploitation of primordial cleavage, often relying on balanced rivalry between different ethnic /sectarian groups.⁵⁷

Patrimonialism confers a number of distinct advantages on authoritarian regimes that can contribute to their longevity.⁵⁸ They include demobilizing the opposition and building a loyal base through selective favoritism and discretionary patronage. In the coercive apparatus, patrimonial organization will be less receptive to political opening.

⁵⁵ It may be noted that the military in Egypt and Tunisia are highly institutionalized, whereas Syria, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Morocco have coercive establishments shot in varying degrees through with patrimonialism.. In Jordan and Morocco the king regularly appoints his male relatives to key military posts to guarantee against military rebellion.⁵⁵ In Saudi Arabia and Syria, entire branches of the military and security forces are family affairs.⁵⁵ Political reliability supersedes merit in promotions.

⁵⁶ Bellin, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism", p. 145

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 145

⁵⁸ Jason Brownlee (2002), " And Yet They Persist: Explaining survival and transition in Neo-Patrimonial Regimes," *Studies in comparative International Development*, Vol. 37, No.3 September, pp. 35-63.

By contrast, institutionalization will have more tolerance for reform. First, where the coercive apparatus is institutionalized, the security elite have a sense of corporate identity separate from the state. It has a distinct mission, identity and career path. Second, where the coercive apparatus is institutionalized rather than patrimonial, it is distinguished by a commitment to some broader national mission that serves the public good, such as national defense and economic development, rather than to personal aggrandizement and enrichment alone. Where the elite have successfully delivered on this mission, it again has good reason to be persuaded that it will not be ruined by reform. To the contrary, where it has successfully delivered on public goals like national defense and economic development it might be confident of its ability to ride democratic transition successfully and maintain a hold on power, this time by popular election.⁵⁹

Likewise, the low level of popular mobilisation for political reform is not unique to the Arab world, as it has much to do with poverty and low levels of literacy. However, there are additional factors that reduce popular enthusiasm for democratic reform in the Arab World.. First of all, experiments in political liberalisation are historically identified with colonial domination. Earlier half-hearted attempts carried out under British and French mandates are more window dressing for foreign domination than substantive experiments in self-rule. Furthermore, the notable dominance of the political scene, electoral mal-practices and exclusion of the rural peasantry discredited the democratic

⁵⁹ Nancy Bermeo (1997), "Myths and of Modration: Confrontation and Conflict during Democratic Transition", *Comparative Politics*, Vo. 29, No. 3, April, p. 315..

politics.⁶⁰ Second, there is no prolonged prior experience with democracy that might have created the institutional foundations for popular mobilisation, such as mass-based parties and labor unions. Third, there is no counter-paradigm offering an ideologically rich and inspiring alternative to liberal democracy. Although Islamist ideologies have posed as an alternative to liberal democratic world-views, they often develop in this way out of political expedience. Fourth, the presence of this non-democratic Islamist threat demobilises much of the traditional constituency for democratic activism, the secular and educated elements of the middle class. So much so that the middle classes (entrepreneurs and educated professionals) in many Arab states prefer to tolerate the reigning autocrats than any rapid transition to democracy that ironically raises the possibility of bringing to power the Islamist parties.⁶¹

No matter what the explanation is, low levels of popular mobilisation for democratic reform are a reality in the Arab states. Barring some instances of street politics such as bread riots in Algeria, Egypt and Jordan in the late 1980s and pro-Palestinian protests, the Arab states have not experienced organised popular mobilisation by the cross-class coalition for political reform. Consequently, in most countries of this region the costs of repression are relatively low. Even where mobilization has been higher, as when Islamists mobilized impressive numbers for political reform in Syria in the 1980s and Algeria in the 1990s, the state lessened the costs of repression, that is, the

⁶⁰ See Robert Owen (1993), "The Practice of Electoral Democracy in the Arab East and North Africa: Some Lessons from a Nearly Century's Experience" in E. Golddberg et al(ed.s.), *Rules and Rights in the Middle East*, Seattle, University of Washington Press.

⁶¹ E. Sivan, (2000) "Arabs and Democracy: Illusions of Change", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 11, No. 3, pp. 77-78.

potential loss of domestic legitimacy or international support, by playing on the special threat posed by Islamist forces. The mobilisation has been cast as a threat to order and security for both domestic and international constituencies. In the aftermath of September 11, for instance, the global menace of Islamist terror has been used by these regimes as a pretext to restrict participatory politics and control collective activities outside the state-delineated space.

Exceptional Conditions in the Arab world

Among the conditions that are exceptional to the Arab World, the most decisive is the relatively strong financial foundation of the security establishment. Despite economic difficulties, Arab states have been rather successful, unlike the Sub-Saharan African counterpart, in sustaining the robust expenditure on their security apparatuses. In fact, these expenditures are among the highest in the world. The region's states are world leaders in the proportion of GNP spent on security. On average, they spent 6.7 percent of their GNP or defense expenditures in the year 2000, compared to a global average of 3.8 per cent, 2.2 percent in NATO countries, and 3.3 percent in East Asia and Australasia, 4 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa and 1.6 percent in the Caribbean and in Central and Latin America.⁶²

As discussed earlier, it is the rentier income of the Arab states, which accounts for the stable fiscal health of the security establishment. Their rent derives from different

⁶² "The Military Balance 2001-2002" (2001), *International Institute of Strategic Studies*, London, Oxford, p. 304. It is worth noting that democratic transition in Sub-Saharan Africa was less the work of strong societies and more the consequence of weak states. Prolonged fiscal crisis "hollowed out" the coercive apparatus of many African countries. See Jeffrey Herbst (2001), "Political Liberalization in Africa after ten years," *Comparative Politics*, Vol.33, April, pp. 371-372.

endowments - petroleum resources, gas resources, geo strategic utility, and control of critical transit facilities. From the more than \$30 billion that the Saudi state earns each year in oil revenue to the \$2 billion that Egypt receives annually from the United States in foreign aid, many WANA states are richly supplied with rental income.⁶³ It has given them access to substantial discretionary resources so that, even if the country is overall in poor economic health, the state is still able to give first priority to paying the military and security forces. Thus, while government spending on education and welfare may remain flat and economic crisis may cut into infrastructural investment, expenditure on the security apparatus remains very high.

Apart from their poor performance in comparison to other parts of the world, majority of the Arab states lack the necessary capacity to cope with the mounting unemployment due to an unusually high rate of population growth. According to the *UNDP Arab Human Development Report 2002*, the population of the Arab region is likely to increase by 25 per cent between 2000 and 2010 and 50 to 60 per cent by 2020. Similarly, an IDRC report concludes that “the proportion of people living in poverty appears to be rising in most of the region’s middle and lower income countries.”⁶⁴ Over and above, no Arab country has achieved high human welfare as defined by the *Arab*

⁶³ See Clement Henry and Robert Springborg (2001), *Globalization and the Politics of Development in the Middle East*, New York, Cambridge University Press, pp. 30-44. Although they detect a declining trend in rents earned by the Arab states in recent years, this income is still substantial. For example, oil income alone accounted for more than fifty percent of government revenues in about half of these countries in the late 1990s.

⁶⁴ Max Rodenbeck (2000), "An Emerging Agenda for Development in the Middle East and North Africa," *Ottawa International Development Research Centre (IDRC)* at www.idrc.ca/books/focus/930/12rodenb.html

Human Development Report 2002 in terms of the freedom enjoyed by citizens.⁶⁵ In short, notwithstanding the economic downturn and poor performance in social sectors, exceptional access to rents has nurtured a robust coercive apparatus in many states across the region. While access to abundant rent helps the Arab regimes their overdeveloped coercive apparatuses, the expansionist Jewish state of Israel provides the rationale for the diversion of national resources for the security establishment.

Given the centrality of the of the Arab-Israeli conflict to the politics of the region, some analysts link the robustness of the region's authoritarianism to the existential threat posed by Israel to its Arab neighbors and to the subsequent construction of large militaries by many Arab states. No doubt the prevalence of interstate conflicts in the region has played an important role in reinforcing authoritarianism in the region.⁶⁶ But this explanation must account for the fact that the robustness of coercive apparatuses in Arab states correlates neither geographically nor temporally with the threat posed by Israel. "Geographically, the arc of authoritarianism in the region far exceeds the fly-zone of the Israeli air force; that is countries far removed from the epicenter of the conflict (for example, Saudi Arabia, Morocco) still share the region's propensity for robust coercive apparatuses."⁶⁷

⁶⁵ See Sami E. Baroudi (2004), "The 2002 Arab Human Development Report: Implications for Democracy", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 11, No. 1, Spring,, pp. 132-133.

⁶⁶ See Gregory Gause (1995), "Regional Influences on Experiments in Political Liberalization in the Arab world," in Rex Brynen, Bahgat Korany and Paul Noble (eds.), *Political Liberalisation and Democratisation in the Arab World*, Vol. 1, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, pp. 283-306.

⁶⁷ Bellin, "The Robustness", p. 151.

Last but not the least, the robustness of the coercive apparatus in the Arab World is shaped by successful maintenance of international support networks owing to its unique position as a the leading provider of strategic resource of the world, oil. As in other regions, authoritarian states in the WANA region profited from the cold war, reaping patronage from the rival great powers in return for the promise of reliable alliance in the fight for or against Communism, Unlike other regions, the authoritarian Arab states did not, however, see their sources of international patronage evaporate with the end of the cold war or with America's subsequent democratization campaign because of the multiple Western security concerns that survived the cold war. The geo-strategic imperatives, such as a reliable oil supply, the necessity to find new markets, the protection of the Jewish state and the containment of political Islam, have all played decisive role in exempting the Arab world from Western pressures to democratise. It is indeed important to remember that the West Asian peace process of the 1990s was part of a calculated U. S. policy to prevent popular upheaval and overthrow of regimes, as in Eastern Europe. "It is a strategy of change", a leading American analyst once commented, "to preserve the leaders' rule and to reinforce it as the barrier to extremism and internecine warfare."⁶⁸ Similar concerns especially after the 9/11 appear to have overridden all proclamations of commitment to democratisation in the region, whether by the United States or the European Union (EU).⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Stephen P. Cohen (1994), "Why Hafez Assad and Yasser Arafat Have to be Taken Seriously", *The New York Times*, August 26.

⁶⁹ For an evaluation of the EU and US strategy, see Marina Ottaway (2003), *Promoting Democracy in the Middle East: The Problem of US Credibility*, Working Paper No.35, Washington, D. C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; Jon B. Alterman (2004), "The False Promise of Arab Liberals," *Policy Review*, June/July; R. Gillespie and R. Youngs (2002), *The European Union and Democracy Promotion: The Case of North Africa*, London: Frank Cass..

Despite the recent pro-democracy campaign in the Arab world, Western policy makers persist in providing patronage to many authoritarian states in the region in the belief that these regimes would be most likely to deliver on western security concerns by assuring regular oil and gas supplies to the West and containing the Islamist threat. To sum up, the region is exceptional in that the cold war's end has not signaled great power retreat from patronage of authoritarianism as in Latin America, Africa and elsewhere. Playing on the Western security concerns has allowed authoritarian regimes in the region to retain international support. What now seems quizzical is whether the U.S. could afford to antagonise the very regimes whose cooperation it seeks not just for secure supply of oil, also in its war on terrorism.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ See Marina Ottaway, Thomas Carothers, Amy Hawthorne and Daniel Bruberg (2002), "Democratic Mirage in the Middle East", *Policy Brief*, Washington, D. C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, #20, October.

CHAPTER - 2

E.U's Engagement in the South Mediterranean Region



EUROPE

ASIA

AFRICA

Countries that border the Mediterranean Sea

300 mi
300 km

Comparatively a small area covering only 969,100 sq. mile body of water from the straits of Gibraltar to the Syrian coast, the Mediterranean is the junction point of several critical areas: Western Europe, the Balkans, West Asia and North Africa. It encompasses countries that differ significantly in size, level of political and economic development, military potential and geopolitical interests as well as cultural, social and religious traditions. Out of some 20 independent Mediterranean states, nine have direct West Asian connections, of which seven are Arab and eight are Muslim. Besides, some such northern Mediterranean states as Albania and Bosnia also have strong ties to the West Asian region (see the Map). The Arab states of the southern Mediterranean region include Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Syria. In the past years, even Jordan and Palestine have officially considered themselves as part of the area by seeking membership in pan-Mediterranean forum.¹

The Mediterranean has played a crucial role in human history, being a springboard for the dissemination of cultures and civilizations, as well as for military campaigns, conquests, and discoveries. It is the West's gateway to the Black Sea and a traditional Russian expansion route since Catherine the Great. But for the Russians, Mediterranean is the historic Western attack route, as demonstrated during the 19th century Crimean War. During the Cold War, not only was it part of NATO's southeastern flank, the region was also a barometer of the international political climate and crucible

¹ See Martin Ortega (2003), "Some Comments on the European Union's Mediterranean Policy", *Perceptions* (Ankara), Vol. 8, June-August, pp. 94-95.

for competing ideologies.² In Soviet eyes, it was one of the main staging areas of Western military power against the former communist super power.

With the end of bipolar rivalry, the Mediterranean has emerged as a new conflict zone torn by old hostilities and ethno-territorial strife. In fact, world's major conflicts are located here. Apart from the Arab-Israeli conflict, which dominates the politics of the eastern Mediterranean, the Turkish-Greek rivalry, the *de facto* division of the island-state of Cyprus, the uncertainty surrounding the Balkans since Yugoslavia's bloody demise in 1991 and the upsurge of Islamist militancy threaten to undermine the security of the entire Mediterranean region.³ As aptly described by some analysts;

The Mediterranean is a space of shared histories and shared presents of intense mingling and intense conflict. For some, it is a beautiful idea, for others a very bad headache. Politically and institutionally it simply does not exist. Since its inception, the European Union has sought to define its relations with this ill-defined space, the former colonial terrain of its most powerful member states.⁴

Europe and the Arab World: Historical Background

Much of the southern Mediterranean region had been historically the part and parcel of the Ottoman Empire, a world empire that lasted for some 400 years. Although, its main strength derived from its provinces in Europe, it controlled extensive territories in the Arab lands of the eastern end of the Mediterranean including what are now known

² See Andrew Borowiec (1983), *The Mediterranean Feud*, New York: Praeger, pp. 27-29

³ Aswini K. Mohapatra (2008), "Introducing the Region and its Linkage with WANA", paper presented in International Seminar on *India and the Mediterranean Region*, JNU, New Delhi, 19-20 March.

⁴ Kalypso Nicolaïdis and Dimitri Nicolaïdis (2004), "The EuroMed beyond Civilizational Paradigms" in Emanuel Adler and Beverly Crawford (eds.), *The Convergence of Civilizations? Constructing A Mediterranean Region*, London: Palgrave-Macmillan, p.337

as Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, North Yemen and Israel. Furthermore, it maintained a foothold in North Africa around Tripoli and Benghazi in Libya though it had lost control of the rest of its possessions along the African coast either to the British (Egypt) or the French (Algeria & Tunisia). Only the lands on the very frontiers of the region, Persia and the Central Arabian Peninsula in the East and Morocco in the West had managed to resist the exercise of direct Ottoman power.⁵

Nevertheless, for all its size and importance, the rulers of the Empire had spent the last hundred years trying to confront the growing power of a Europe driven on by the influence of the two great revolutions that it had experienced at the end of the 18th century: the French Revolution of 1789 and the industrial revolution in Britain. One result was the nibbling away of the frontiers of the Empire in Africa and West Asia, marked by the establishment of European colonies and spheres of influence. Another was the repeated attempts to reform and to revive the Ottoman imperial structure as a way of defending itself against foreign domination. By the beginning of the 20th century, these reforms had brought about the transformation of the legal and administrative practices throughout the Empire but at the cost of increasing European penetration and of stirring up incipient nationalist movements among many of its subject peoples.⁶

The Ottoman military defeat by the British and French during the First World War produced a radical change throughout the region. As a result of treaties negotiated during the War itself, the Arab provinces of the Empire were carved up into a number of

⁵ Lois A. Aroian and Richard P. Michell (1984), eds, *The Modern Middle East and North Africa*, New York, MacMillan Publishing Company, pp. 11-13.

⁶ Hans Kohn (1982), *Nationalism in the Middle East*, Washington: Middle East Institute, pp. 61-69.

successor states, each of them under the control of one or other of the victorious powers. A new instrument of political control, the mandate, was used to legitimise British and French government of their WANA possession. Thus, in spite of all local resistance, there is no doubt that by the mid-1920 the British and the French were the masters of the WANA region. It was they who drew almost all the new boundaries and decided who should rule and what form of government should be established. It was they, in association with Americans, who had major say in how the access to the region's natural resources should be allocated, particularly the oil fields that were just beginning to be discovered. Such was Britain's and France's strength that even the rulers of nominally independent countries like Turkey, Egypt and Persia (renamed Iran in 1925) were forced to recognise the new boundaries and the new regional order.⁷

Empire to State System

As discussed in the preceding chapter, it was the dominant colonial power that first created the essential features of a state by giving it a capital, a legal system, a flag and internationally recognized boundaries. In some cases this was done on the basis of some pre-existing administration entity, as in Algeria, in others it involved either detaching some part of a former Ottoman province or, more usually, adding several provinces together. This gave many of the new states a somewhat artificial appearance, with their new names, their new capitals, their lack of social homogeneity and their dead-straight boundaries that were so obviously the work of a British or French colonial official using a ruler. Once a specific territorial state was established, other things quickly followed. One was the attempt to enumerate, control and define the people who lived

⁷ See M. Yaap (1987), *The Making of the Modern Near East*, London: Longman, Chap. II

there. This involved, among other things, the organization of a census and the passage of a law laying down the principles upon which the nationality of citizens was usually to be based.

A second consequence was the need to control and police the new borders in order to prevent incursions, smuggling and illegal migration. Thirdly, the conclusion of treaties with neighboring states involved rights of passage and the extradition of persons wanted for certain kinds of illegal activity. The new states were also given new bureaucracies and a new emphasis on homogeneity and equality. There was now to be one centre of authority, issuing standard rules and regulations which were supposed to be applied equally to all those who lived within its boundaries as citizens.⁸ However, as in many other aspects of state building, this ideal took many years to establish, the more so as the colonial regimes and their successors had their own security to think of, as well as a number of obvious constraints such as the existence of white settlers with entrenched privileges, the commitment given to the League of Nations to protect religious minorities and so on. A last important feature of the administrative systems established in the colonial period was their particular emphasis on police and security. No doubt this is a feature of all new states. But in the case of the colonial powers it was, for obvious reasons, considered to be the key to continued political control. Less importance was attached to a local army, partly for financial reasons, partly because the colonial power itself accepted the major responsibility for external defence. Nevertheless, small military

⁸ Timothy Mitchell has termed this as "enframing" of the societies by the colonial powers and subjecting them to a kind of order and discipline that made managing the natives and understanding them possible. T. Mitchell (1988), *Colonising Egypt*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Chap.2.

formations of a few thousand men on so were organised in all colonial states; they were given few heavy weapons and were used mainly for internal security.

If there were certain principles underlying the creation of the colonial state, there were also a number of typical colonial practices. France, for instance, pursued its culturalist theory of *assimilation* most vigorously in Algeria and Tunisia with the intent of turning Muslims into French citizens. In Morocco and Syria, the new theory of *association* was applied whereby the colonial policy, at least in theory, to be developed mainly along native, rather than European lines. This system created hand-picked elite cops of French native affairs officers with knowledge of Arabic and Islam and local culture, which enabled them to exploit social and ethnic cleavages, as in Morocco between Arab-Berber and Sunni-Alawite in Syria. Likewise, the British colonial policy of indirect rule was based on the strategy of “divide and rule”, which created gross social distortions and sharpened the religio-sectarian divisions. Topping them all, the colonial powers forged a powerful alliance with the large landowners and, in some cases, the tribal *shaikhs* who controlled much of the rural areas. Such men were soon identified as a conservative social force which could be won over to support the colonial position.⁹

Western Economic and Cultural Penetration

Last, but by no means least, was the particular pattern of colonial economic management. Even if colonies did not pay, they had to depend on the internally generated resources without support from the centre except very special circumstances. This

⁹ For a critical analysis of the colonial policies and practices in the Arab provinces, see Nazih N. Ayubi (1995), *Over-stating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East* (London: I. B. Tauris, pp. 91-98).

constraint, together with the emphasis placed on security, left little money for development other than the small amounts spent on public works projects like roads, railways, ports and improved irrigation.¹⁰ Colonies were also subject to a particular type of fiscal and monetary regime, with their currency tied to that of the colonial power and managed by a currency board in the metropolis. To make matters more difficult, they were not allowed a central bank which could have regulated the money supply or moved the rate of interest in such a way as to expand or dampen local demand. Meanwhile, throughout most of WANA region, the new states remained subject to 19th century commercial treaties, which until they ran out round about 1930, prevented them from setting their own tariffs. The result was the creation of a more or less open economy, subject to influences stemming from the metropolis and the world at large, over which the states had little or no control.¹¹ Criticism of what was seen as this unsatisfactory state of affairs formed an essential component of the anti-colonial, nationalist argument, the more so as the colonial powers themselves often attempted to legitimise their rule by an appeal to the many economic benefits that it was supposed to have introduced.

Another essential component of the colonial state was the way in which it acted as a conduit for powerful forces from outside. This was most obvious in the political field, where British and French policies were made in London and Paris and were usually the direct reflection of the balance between the various metropolitan parties and pressure groups there. As far as the colony, or dominated country, itself was concerned, it meant

¹⁰ Roger Owen (1992), *State, Power and Politics in the Making of Modern Middle East*, London, Routledge, p. 17.

¹¹ See Simon Bromley (1994), *Rethinking Middle East Politics: State Formation and Development* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1994), pp. 102-109.

that its own political life was greatly affected by events like changes of government in Britain and France, or even defeats in wars, over which it had no control. It also meant that it was subject to variety of often quite contradictory influence, which includes, for instance, the analogous lessons learnt from the practice of pluralism and democracy at the centre combined with the day to day experience of dictatorial and arbitrary government in the colony itself. The role of the colonial state in mediating between the colony and the international economy was just as important. By and large, the British and French attempted to manage affairs in such a way that they monopolized these relations, awarding contracts and concessions to their own nationals, looking after the interests of their own merchants and, in general attempting to keep the colony as their own economic preserve.¹²

Historically, no doubt, the relations between Europe and the Arab states of the southern Mediterranean region was that of a coloniser and a colonized, but both influenced each other in several ways. There was migration to both sides because of geographical proximity, which helped in furthering cultural closeness. White settlers from the colonial countries also played a prominent role in this regard. The Arab world and Europe also have common Hellenistic ancestry from which originated Christianity and Islam. For reasons of both geographical and cultural proximity, France continues to enjoy a special, if conflictual, relationship with the Maghreb with the French language

¹² Owen, *State, Power and Politics*, p. 19.

being the regional legacy from colonial period and France its main point of access to Europe.¹³

All the same, the colonised country always tends to lose much more than it gains. The colonial power subordinated the interests of the colonized countries to its own interests. As seen, they exploited the natural resources of the subjugated countries for their own benefit and welfare. The indigenous industries were ruined and the foreign merchants and industries prospered at their cost. As a result, economically these countries became satellites of the colonial power whereas the colonial powers through its various social policies strengthened their own position. Thus, socially, economically and politically these colonised countries of the region suffered in the hands of these powers with their great ability to exercise more control by using both coercive power as well as through the legitimization process.

In the changed world scenario, European powers have come together and formed the European Union, while the countries of WANA region have gained independence and are sovereign entities. The two continue to engage with each other but not as colonial masters and subject countries but as equal partners. The relationship is not characterised by domination and subjugation anymore. Doubtless, the EU still has its interests while engaging with the region but the partner countries are equally free to think of their own national interests and enter into agreements which would be beneficial to them. Thus, there is continuity in the European policy of engaging with the Arab states of the neighbouring WANA region, but the approach has changed. It does not consider force

¹³ Claire Spencer (1993), 'The Maghreb in the 1990s', *Adelphi Paper*, # 274, London, Brassey, February, pp. 12-17.

but positive engagement as being mutually beneficial and offering long term stability to the Mediterranean region as a whole.¹⁴

Geo-Strategic Interests of the EU

The events of the past few years have catapulted West Asia into the centre stage of international politics and forced western governments to focus their attention on what is widely perceived as a threat of conflicts emanating from the region. The whole of West Asia and North Africa form part of Europe's neighborhood and some of the world's most intractable conflicts are on Europe's periphery including the Israel-Palestinian conflict. The aftermath of the war in Iraq, the tension that rack Lebanon and Iran's nuclear ambitions. These conflicts, also affect Europe and the E.U's Mediterranean neighbors.

Predictably, the E.U. is concerned about the precarious political, social and economic system in the WANA region that constitutes a potential security threat. The region is characterised by authoritarian regimes, rentier economic activity and consequential societal ill effects including the deteriorating economic conditions of the masses and the rise of political Islam. Therefore, the policy makers feel that political liberalization, combined with deep economic interaction and social co-operation, would enhance well being, stability and Europe's own security.

Economic and Financial Interests

A large part of global energy supplies are concentrated within Europe's wider neighborhood. The limited presence of European companies in the various economic

¹⁴ Samir Amin and Ali El Kenz (2005), *Europe and the Arab World: Patterns and Prospects for the new Relationship* London, Zed Books, p. 9.

sectors including the energy sector arguably indicates a greater degree of untapped potential than in other emerging markets. Pressure from the private sector is influential in encouraging policy makers to look beyond the traditional range of trade liberalisation measures and incorporate into its policy aims relating to the transparency of custom procedures, the functioning of dispute settlement mechanisms, public certification procedures and the establishment of a rules based process of standards harmonization. Furthermore, government's reluctance to allow for the freer provision of information was undermining the quality of the kind of market and statistical information necessary for investment plans. The overwhelming majority of investors cite such shortcomings in good governance as one of the primary obstacles to further commercial engagement. All this appeared to fit closely with the view of western government and increasingly even of the World Bank- that robust democratic processes could play an important role in underpinning investor related good governance reforms. Some companies did express outright skepticism towards democratisation fearing this would, in the particular circumstances of the Mediterranean, be profoundly destabilizing. But, most of them claimed to be positively keen on political liberalisation as the best means of securing faster and more sustainable growth rates.¹⁵

Political and Security Interests

Last, but not the least, Europe is the first destination for migrants, legal and illegal who form a sizeable diaspora in E.U. member states. At the present moment in the EU there are nearly 18 million 'non-nationals' out of 370 million inhabitants making up 5

¹⁵ Abdel Aziz Testas (2005), "The Economic Costs of Transition in the Maghrib; Quantitative Results for Algeria and Tunisia", *The Journal of North African Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1. March, pp. 44-45.

percent of the total population. Two thirds are concentrated in three countries: France, Germany and the United Kingdom. Most of them are long term residents (living there for over ten years). The immigrants come mainly from Turkey (especially in Germany) and from the Maghreb-Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia (especially in France and Spain). These immigrants are 'workers', they are between twenty five and sixty years of age (60 per cent) and most of them are engaged in 'CDE' (demanding, dangerous and dirty activities), for which, in terms of work, salaries and availability, employers do not want nationals who claim too much and are protected by Unions and who often refuse such jobs.

The tradition of immigrant labour goes back to the period of European reconstruction and of the 'Thirty Glorious Years'. It is now recognised that the service that this labour has rendered Europe has been incalculable, making up for its post war demographic deficit by filling the least well paid jobs in construction, public works, steelworks and as skilled labour in mechanical construction factories. As from the 1980s, however, Europe gradually closed its borders to this type of immigration. The E.U. is interested in influx of educated and trained workers from these countries, most members are reluctant to receive unskilled job seekers. Some countries who need unskilled labour force for their primary sectors, face the problem of cultural and political opposition. In brief, Europe needs labour, but it does not want uncontrolled immigration that risks becoming permanent.

Since the September 11 terror attacks, this contradiction has become still more acute. Clandestine immigration having already been criminalized, the new anti-terrorist laws, adopted or in the process of being adopted, dramatize the situation. The Southern

Mediterranean countries, the chief source of this labour, which is overwhelmingly Muslim, give the impression of being, paradoxically, the source of renewing the European labour force, at the same time as being “zones of endemic terrorism.”¹⁶

E.U. Policies towards the South Mediterranean Region during the Cold War

The end of the Second World War was also the beginning of the cold war. The dominance of two superpowers, the United States of America and the Soviet Union was central to the Cold War. They were keen on expanding their spheres of influence in different parts of the world. In a world sharply divided between the two alliance system, a state was supposed to remain tied to its protective superpower to limit the influence of the other superpower and its allies. The alliance system, therefore, threatened to divide the entire world into two camps. This division happened first in Europe. Most countries of Western Europe sided with the US and those of Eastern Europe joined the Soviet Camp. That is why these were also called the ‘western’ and the ‘eastern’ alliance. The western alliance was formalized into an organization, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which came into existence in April 1949. It was an association of twelve states which declared that armed attack on any one of them in Europe or North America would be regarded as an attack on all of them. Each of these states would be obliged to help the other. The eastern alliance, known as the Warsaw Pact, was led by the Soviet Union. It was created in 1955 and its principal function was to counter NATO’s forces in Europe.

Thus, in such a scenario, until 1945, the different European powers had then own policies in the Mediterranean and they were often in conflict with each other. After the

¹⁶ Amin and Kenz, *Europe*, p. 13.

Second World War the western European states hardly had any policies at all vis-à-vis the Mediterranean and Arab States, neither as individual states nor in common apart from the policy of alignment with the USA. Even so, Great Britain and France, which had colonial interests in the region, fought behind the scenes to maintain their respective advantages. From 1954, Great Britain began to withdraw from Egypt and Sudan and in 1956, after the failure of the tripartite Suez adventure, made an agonizing about-turn in its policy regarding its special influence on the countries bordering the Gulf, abandoning the area at the end of 1960. France, which had already been expelled from Syria in 1945, finally accepted the independence of Algeria in 1962, but it has maintained a sort of nostalgia for its influence in the Maghreb and Lebanon, encouraged by the local governing classes, at least in Morocco, Tunisia and Lebanon.

Europe, during the assembly of EC, did not develop a common policy in this area after the retreat of the colonial powers. When oil prices were readjusted, following the Israeli-Arab war of 1973, the European community awoke from its slumbers and realized that it did indeed have 'interests' in the region. But this awakening led to no important initiatives, for example, on the Palestinian problem. Europe remained, in this field as in many others, hesitant and, in the end, inconsistent. There had been, however, some progress during the 1970s, towards a greater autonomy vis-à-vis the United States, culminating with the 1980 summit in Venice. But this progress was not consolidated, and during the 1980s was virtually eroded. It disappeared completely with the European alignment with Washington during the Gulf Crisis.

During the first decade of the post war period, successive French governments tried to preserve the country's colonial position by extravagant claims to be pro-Atlantic,

anti communist and anti Soviet. However, they never really gained the support of Washington. The Mediterranean and Arab policy of France was then, inevitably, retrogressive.¹⁷

Post Cold War Structural Changes

The Berlin Wall, which had been built at the height of the Cold War and was its greatest symbol, was toppled by the people in 1989. This dramatic event was followed by an equally dramatic and historic chain of events that led to the collapse of the 'second world' and the end of the cold war. Germany divided after the Second World War, was unified. One after another, the eight east European countries that were part of the Soviet Bloc replaced their communist governments in response to mass demonstrations. The Soviet Union stood by as the Cold War began to end, not by military means but as a result of mass actions by ordinary men and women. Eventually the Soviet Union itself disintegrated. Thus, the end of the cold war left the US without any serious rival in the world. However, alternative centres of political and economic power could limit America's dominance. Thus, in Europe the E.U. and in Asia, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) have emerged as forces to reckon with. While evolving regional solutions to their historical enmities and weaknesses, these regional associations have developed alternative institutions and conventions that build a more peaceful and cooperative regional order and have transformed the countries in the region into prosperous economies.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 21-22

Formation of European Union

As the Second World War came to an end, many of Europe's leaders started grappling with the 'Question of Europe'. Should Europe be allowed to revert to its old rivalries or be reconstructed on principles and institutions that would contribute to a positive conception of international relations? The Second World War had shattered many of the assumptions and structures on which the European states had based their relations. In 1945 the European states confronted the ruin of their economies and the destruction of the assumptions and structures on which Europe had been founded. America extended massive financial help for reviving Europe's economy under what was called the 'Marshall Plan'. Under it, the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) was established in 1948 to channel aid to the west European states. It became a forum where the Western European states began to cooperate on trade and economic issues. The Council of Europe, established in 1949 was another step forward in political cooperation. The process of economic integration of European capitalist countries proceeded step by step leading to the formation of the European Economic Community in 1957. This process acquired a political dimension with the creation of the European Parliament. The collapse of the Soviet Bloc put Europe on a fast track and resulted in the establishment of the European Union in 1992. The foundation was thus laid for a common foreign and security policy, cooperation on justice and home affairs and the creation of a single currency.

The European Union has evolved over time from an economic union to an increasingly political one. The EU has started to act more as a nation state. While the attempts to have a constitution for the EU have failed, it has its own flag, anthem,

founding date and currency. It also has some form of a common foreign and security policy in its dealing with other nations. The European Union has tried to expand areas of cooperation while acquiring new members, especially from the erstwhile Soviet bloc. The process have not proved easy, for people in many countries are not very enthusiastic in giving the EU powers that were exercised by the government of their country. There are also reservations about including some new countries within the EU.

The EU has economic, political and diplomatic, and military influence. The EU is the world's biggest economy with a GDP more than \$12 trillion in 2005, slightly larger than that of the U.S. Its currency, the Euro, can pose a threat to the dominance of the US Dollar. Its share of world trade is three times larger than that of the United States allowing it to be more assertive in trade disputes with the US and China. Its economic power gives it influence over its closest neighbors as well as in Asia and Africa. It also functions as an important bloc in international economic organizations such as the World Trade Organizations.

The EU also has political and diplomatic influence. Two members of the EU, Britain and France, hold permanent seats on the UN Security Council. The EU includes several non-permanent members of the UNSC. This has enabled the EU to influence some US policies such as the current US position on Iran's nuclear programme. Its use of diplomacy, economic investments and negotiations rather than coercion and military force has been effective as in the case of its dialogue with China on human rights and environmental degradation. Militarily, the EU's combined armed forces are the second largest in the world. Its total spending on defence is second after the US. Two EU member states, Britain and France, also have nuclear arsenals of approximately 550

nuclear warheads. It is also the world's second most important source of space and communication technology.

As a supranational organization, the EU is able to intervene in economic, political and social areas. But in many areas its member states have their own foreign relations and defence policies that are often at odds with each other. Thus, Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair was America's partner in the Iraq invasion, and many of the EU's newer members made up the US led 'coalition of the willing' whereas Germany and France opposed American policy. There is also a deep seated 'Euro skepticism' in some parts of Europe about the EU's integrationist agenda. Thus, for example, Britain's former Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, kept the UK out of the European Market. Denmark and Sweden have resisted the Maastricht Treaty and the adoption of the Euro, the common European currency. This limits the ability of the EU to act in matters of foreign relations and defence.

E.U's Policy in the Post Cold War Period

During the first phase, it was the bilateral relationship of the southern Mediterranean countries, particularly those in the Maghreb with France, that was the most important and it was only gradually that the 'multilateral' became the rule, although it was not exclusive. From the 1980 onwards, the public policies of the southern Mediterranean countries that had followed the 'Keynesian' or 'Socialist' model ran out of steam and the first Structural Adjustment Programmes, with Morocco and Tunisia, were put into operation. But it was above all in 1992, just after the Gulf War, that the European Union with its Renewed Mediterranean Policy, declared 'its wish to develop its relationships with the Maghreb in a community framework and to integrate them into a

broader space, The Mediterranean'. In the economic sphere, the EU sought through increased liberalization, to harmonize its trade in the framework of a globalized economy and the new trends towards regionalization. A few years later in 1995, just after the Oslo agreement, the EU organized a Euro-Mediterranean conference in Barcelona, which started the Barcelona process.

The Barcelona Process

Formally launched in a major ministerial conference in Barcelona in November, 1995, the EMP covers all aspects of social, economic and political relations between the EU and the 12 Southern Mediterranean countries of which 8 are Arabs namely, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. The 'Barcelona Process' is much more than a mere intergovernmental process of political co-operation. It is about using the community approach i.e. it involves an all inclusive strategy encouraging reform in the south. The Barcelona peace process aims at creating deep sense of partnership with the Mediterranean partners and to promote the development process of democratization. Through, this multilateral framework the EU introduced the concept of partnership and attempted to make relations more dynamic by using assistance to encourage economic and structural reforms. The agreement allows the EU and the countries of the south Mediterranean to renew their dialogue. All partners are aware of a shared responsibility to overcome disparities and unbalances that threaten the stability of the region. The EU decided to compete collectively and massively in order to settle problems of development of the region.

It also aims at creating an atmosphere of democratic awareness. This comprehensive approach was to be pursued with the new theory which was considered

more conducive to peaceful international relations and this policy was considered proper to address the social and economic roots of radical Islam and ultimately to provide means of securing a Euro-Med area of prosperity and stability. This gradualist approach generated big hopes in the north, as in the south of the Mediterranean. The Barcelona process provides an appropriate framework to organize relations within the region as a whole by virtue of its three basic characteristics. The partnership makes it possible to deal with regional questions collectively. The Union has, therefore, contributed to the definition of a neighbouring region and by the same taken promoted regional awareness in Europe and the Mediterranean.

Diverse Relationships

Having both bilateral and multilateral dimensions the partnership allows for a special relationship with the countries bordering the Union collectively but also permits a nuanced relationship with them individually through Association Agreements. The partnership is all embracing, covering as it does all possible areas of dialogue between states, including political, security (even military), economic and social and cultural¹⁸. At the heart of the E.U's gradualist approach was the overwhelmingly preeminent emphasis on economic reforms. It was believed that the regions resistance to democratization was integrally related to its limited insertion into the world economy.

Thus, as per the Barcelona agreement, 3 final set of objections were spelled out-

- (i) Engendering political stability in the countries containing political tensions arising from immigration.
- (ii) Encouraging balanced and sustainable growth with an eye to

¹⁸ Ortega, "Some Comments", 107.

reducing the income and social disparities between the European Union and the South Mediterranean region countries. (iii) Dealing with a number of challenges that require common European Union-Southern Mediterranean Region co-operation such as the protection of environment¹⁹. In essence, the Barcelona process predicated on the expectation that economic liberalization, political reform, cultural understanding and strategic stability would be mutually reinforcing.

The European Neighbourhood Policy

The ENP is a strategy that the EU has framed to share, the benefits of enlargement with the neighbouring countries and to jointly handle the challenges resulting from the post-enlargement content. Although the ENP has been modelled on the EU's existing policies towards outsiders, including enlargement, it signifies the Union's new approach and engagement towards the wide neighborhood. It is a new policy in the sense that it aims at combining the traditional EU approaches of stabilization and integration towards neighborhood. On the one hand, it is a policy for encouraging stability, security and prosperity beyond the borders of the EU by means of regional cooperation. On the other hand, it offers a privileged partnership for the neighbours, old and new, in exchange for their commitment to shared values. Seeing the neighbors as a ring of friends rather than third countries, the ENP seeks to enhance the strategic presence of the enlarged Union in wider Europe and beyond. Thus, as the EU's newest foreign policy tool, the ENP remains a test case for the implementation of an effective and coherent foreign and security policy

¹⁹ See Abdulkader Lahlou (2003), "The Integration of the Moroccan Economy into the New Euro-Mediterranean strategy and space. The Partnership Agreement Between Morocco and the European Union", *Perception: A Journal of International Affairs*, Ankara, June-August, pp 55-88.

towards changing neighborhood and will have significant implication for the international actorness of the Union.²⁰

The ENP as a single framework for relations with three Eastern neighbours (Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus) and ten southern neighbours (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria and Tunisia) was officially launched in 2003. Yet, the origins of a new neighbourhood policy could be traced to the Agenda 2000 Document. In its paper, the Commission stressed the importance for the enlarged Union of its new neighbours and the need to ensure stability through co-operation in wider Europe. The Strategy Papers of 2001 and 2002 emphasized a more substantive “proximity policy” which would include the creation of a wider free trade area, progressive alignment with the internal market and co-operation on JHA21. Since then, the commission has increasingly moved on from managing enlargement to promoting a neighborhood policy. Following a joint paper of Chris Patten and Javier Solana as well as President Prodi’s speech on a Policy of Proximity, The Copenhagen European Council of December 2002 launched the new neighborhood policy. In June 2003 the Thessaloniki European Council endorsed the Commission’s “Conclusions on Wider Europe-New Neighbourhood”.

²⁰ See Sevilay Kahraman (2005), ‘The European Neighbourhood Policy: The European Union’s New Engagement Towards Wider Europe’, *Perceptions: A Journal of International Affairs*, Volume X No. 4, Winter, pp 1 to 28

²¹ *European Commission* (2001), “Making a Success of Enlargement”, Strategy Paper and Report of the European Commission on the Progress Towards Accession by Each of the Candidate Countries, 19 November; *European Commission* (2002), ‘Towards the Enlarged Union’, Strategy Paper and Report of the European Commission on the Progress Towards Accession by Each of the Candidate Countries, 9 October.

Although the policy focused originally on Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus, the Commission in Wider Europe Communication of March 2003 broadened the geographical scope of the policy to include the Barcelona partners. This decision was a response to the concerns of the southern member states that 2004 enlargement would shift the balance towards Eastern neighbours at the expense of the southern partners when a more intensive cooperation was deemed all the more necessary in the post September 11 environment. Following the official inclusion of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan in June 2004, the ENP is turned into an attempt to fuse together neighbourhood policies hitherto separately treated and thus creating what the EP has called, “a complex geopolitical area stretching from Russia to Morocco, which may be defined as a ‘Pan-European and Mediterranean region’”²².

Parallel to the geographical expansion of the ENP was a gradual shift in the emphasis from development to stability and security. The underlying concern of the Wider Europe Communication was no longer merely to assure the neighbours that enlargement would benefit them economically but that enlargement would not act as a divisive and destabilizing factor. The security dimension of the ENP was explicitly recognized in the European Security Strategy (ESS). Solana’s paper and the ENP together were to frame the new EU foreign policy. The Thessaloniki European Council focused more on the challenge of preventing and combating common security threats and securing co-operation in the field of JHA²³.

²² Dov Lynch (2003), “The New Eastern Dimension of the Enlarged EU”, in July Batt et al., *Partners and Neighbours: A CFSP for a Wider Europe*, Chaillot Paper, #.63, September, EU-Institute for Security Studies, p.50.

²³ Kahraman, ‘The European Neighbourhood Policy’, p. 27.

Objectives of the ENP

The ENP was mainly thought as a strategy to cope with the effects of the ‘big bang’ enlargement, and notably: The changed geopolitical landscapes or the EU’s eastern borders which pose new security challenges; The need to stabilize the EU’s new neighbourhood-while enlargement proved the most successful instrument for stabilizing the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs), the EU could not enlarge forever. Continuing to view neighbourhood from an enlargement perspective is no longer sustainable because any further expansion of this strategy beyond the existing candidates might jeopardize the accomplishments of the EU and the need for the consolidation of the ongoing enlargement process. The key task for the EU was to construct a new form of engagement with neighbouring states, and to offer them a new relationship which is less than full membership but more than associate partnership. The new policy could anchor the neighbouring countries to a comprehensive framework of relations through which to pursue both development and stabilization²⁴.

The need to achieve convergence between the internal and external agenda of the enlarged Union-while new members add to the complexities of EU system of governance, they will bring new visions to the external relations of the Union. It is particularly important for the enlarged Union to set out clear and uniform policies in relations with its neighbours, old and new, eastern and southern. The logic of stabilization central to the ENP reflects the member states’ interest in the security challenges of the neighbours, the Union is faced with many soft security challenges ranging from illegal

²⁴ Rosa Balfour and Alessandro Rotta (2005), “Beyond Enlargement: The European Neighbourhood and Its Tools”, *The International Spectator*, Vol.1, No.2, P.7.

trafficking of various kinds, organized crime, terrorism, nuclear proliferation to environmental degradation, hence the need for managing its external boundaries²⁵. Realizing that it would not be possible to seal off instability behind ever tighter borders, EU leaders had to make a choice: whether to export stability and security to its near neighbors, or risk importing instability from them²⁶. The condition of security interdependence with the neighbours and the task of extending the zone of security, stability and prosperity across Europe were explicitly acknowledged by the High Representative Javier Solana in his recent paper on the European Security Strategy (ESS).

Rationale, Incentives and Instruments of the ENP

Through the ENP, the Union, seeks to tackle the governance of the wider Europe. Arguably, the enlarged EU is experiencing a shift from the “politics of exclusion” in wider Europe²⁷. In this sense, the ENP can be seen as part of an external agenda of the enlarged EU for managing its new interdependence across Europe²⁸. The Union is expanding its governance beyond the member states to the immediate neighbourhood. For this reason, the ENP should not be taken as just EU foreign policy tool it is the deepening of European integration process outward by means other than accession. As

²⁵ Roberto Aliboni (2005), “The Geopolitical Implications of the European Neighbourhood Policy”, *European Foreign Affairs Review*, Vol.1, No.16, p.1.

²⁶ Marise Gemona (2004), “The European Neighbourhood Policy: Legal and International Issues”, *CDDRL Working papers*, #.25, November 2, p.3.

²⁷ Michael Smit (1996), “The European Union and a Changing Europe: Establishing the Boundaries of Order”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol.34, No.1, pp 5-28.

²⁸ Sandra Lovenex (2004), “EU External Governance in Wider Europe”, *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol.II, No.4, pp. 680-700.

will be seen below the objections, methodology, instruments as well as the implementation and the monitoring of the ENP clearly reflect this line of reasoning.

One of the key objectives of the ENP is to improve security at the borders of the enlarged EU and to promote stability and prosperity beyond. To this end, the Union offers partner countries a kind of bargain. If they accept commitments which can be monitored in the area of shared values and core foreign policy objectives, the EU will open up some of its policies and programmes to their participation. Thus, a balance is sought between this extent of a partner's progress on the basis of common values and the openness of the Union. The contents of the bargain will vary from one country to another reflecting domestic conditions and existing relationships with the EU. The core of these commitments and offers is the Action Plans with agreed reform targets, timetables, benchmarks and an element of conditionality²⁹. Action plans serve as a point of reference for providing EU assistance and ensuring a degree of formal institutionalization with the partners. Progress in implementation will be monitored via the country reports during the initial three years, which may lead to the negotiation of European Neighborhood agreements.

Effective implementation of the policy is closely related to EU's adequate funding. For the budgetary period (2007-2013), the commission proposed a gradual increase in funding to double the present level by 2013, amounting to 14.93 billion. From 2007 onwards, as part of the reform of the external assistance instruments, financial support for the ENP will be provided through a new European Neighbourhood and

²⁹ Action Plans agreed in 2004 cover a number of key areas from political dialogue and reform to trade and measures for improved market access, JHA, energy, transport, information society, environment, research innovation, social policy and people to people actions.

Partnership Instrument (ENPI)³⁰. The ENPI will support the implementation of the Action Plans and will target sustainable development and approximation to EU's policies: The Commission adopted a two step approach to create this instrument: increasing coordination between EU structural funds and external funds with a special emphasis on cross-border facility, and a single regulation for EU external assistance, including the ENPI, for the next period³¹.

The ENPI is innovative not only in its proposal for a single new regulation but also in bringing together regions of the member states and of the partners sharing a common border under joint programmes. In that way, the new borders will no longer be seen as a barrier but as an opportunity for cross-border cooperation.³²

Apart from financial and technical assistance, the incentives offered by the EU include increased market access in return for political and economic reform, together with functional cooperation in a wide range of areas. The ultimate possibility is the gradual extension of the internal market and regulatory structures to the new partners. The Wider Europe Communication was more explicit in the notion of an ENP partnership based on offers and incentives. The Communication laid down further integration and

³⁰ The ENPI will replace CARDS and MEDA and will provide a single financial framework for neighbor, albeit with different regional priorities. In the east drawing on the experience of the Northern Dimension, cross-border regional cooperation will be promoted. In the Mediterranean where land borders are less significant, maritime borders and cooperation will be prioritised.

³¹ *European Commission* (2003), "Communication from the Commission Paving the Way for a new Neighbourhood Instrument", COM 393, Brussels, July 1; *European Commission* (2004), "Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the Instruments of External Assistance under the Future Financial Perspectives 2007-2013", COM 626 final Brussels, 29 September 29.

³² Balfour and Rotta, "Beyond Enlargement", p. 19. The authors also draw attention to the EU's support for strengthening local democratic governance via partnerships between national, regional and local authorities on a cross-border basis.

liberalization to promote the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital as the main incentive and added that “if a country has reached this level, it has come as close to the Union as it can without being a member.”³³ Subsequent Council Presidency Conclusions transformed this stronger incentive into a long-term and imprecise perspective for participation in the internal market and regulatory structures. Furthermore, the council identified some new possible incentives in line with the renewed emphasis on security building and regional cooperation.³⁴ The change in the priorities and incentives of the ENP might indicate the EU leaders’ shared interest in and a stronger commitment to the goal of a secure and stable neighbourhood instead of supporting transition as a goal of its own right.

This security-driven EU rhetoric, as distinct from the original discourse on “increasing the neighbours’ prosperity, stability and security” necessitated a parallel shift in the methodology of the ENP. The new EU rhetoric has emphasized the principles of partnership and shared values than the principle of conditionality and strong incentives.³⁵ In its 2004 Strategy Paper, the commission maintained the commitment to common values between the EU and its neighbours as the normative basis of partnership and co-operation. Yet, the Commission also made it clear that “The EU does not seek to

³³ Apart from the extension of the internal market and regulatory structures, the Commission lists the following incentives preferential trading relations and market opening support for integration into the global trading system, new instruments for investment promotion, integration into transport, energy and telecommunications networks and the European research area, enhanced assistance, perspectives for lawful migration and movement of persons, intensified cooperation to prevent and combat common security threats, greater EU political involvement in conflict prevention and crisis management greater efforts to promote human rights cultural cooperation and enhanced mutual understanding.

³⁴ For a brief comparison of the commission’s and Council’s priorities, see Balfour and Rotta, ‘Beyond Enlargement’, pp 12-15

³⁵ Nathalie Tocci (2005), “Does the ENP respond to the EU’s Post-Enlargement Challenges? International spectator, Vol.1, No.2, pp. 25-27.

impose priorities or conditions on its partners, these will be defined by common consent and will vary from country to country.³⁶ The Strategy Paper further noted that: “the ambition and the pace of the development of the Union’s relationship with each partner country will depend on its degree of commitment to common values, as well as its will and capacity to implement agreed priorities”. Hence, differentiation between partner countries lays at the basis of the ENP partnership; the more a country conforms to EU values the closer it can co-operate with the EU.³⁷

The key elements of the ENP approach are differentiation, graduation and benchmarks. Although the Commission wished to develop a coherent policy, its recognized the special circumstances of the neighbours, the need for different speeds and timetables, or differentiation in progress and the conditionality applied.³⁸ Differentiation is to be accompanied by the logic of graduation tied to partners’ own willingness to proceed with reform. Political and economic benchmarks will be used to evaluate progress in agreed areas. Marise Cremona has identified benchmarks as being concrete and objectively testable, hence offering greater predictability and certainty than “traditional conditionality.”³⁹

³⁶ European Commission (2004), “Communication from the Commission to the Council, European Neighbourhood Policy Strategy Paper”, COM 373 final, Brussels, 12 May 12, p.8.

³⁷ Judith Kelley (2005), “New Wines in Old Wineskins: Policy Adaption in the European Neighbourhood Policy”, Paper prepared for EUSA 9th *Biannual International Conference*, Austin, 31 March-2 April, p.10.

³⁸ Kahraman, “The European Union’s New Engagement”, p.10..

³⁹ Marise Genona, “Enlargement: A Successful Instrument of Foreign Policy?”, in Jakis Tridimas and Poolisa Nebbla (eds), ‘European Union Law for the 21st century, Rethinking the New Legal Order, Vol.I, London Hart Publishing 2004, p.410

Differentiation complements the bilateral dimensions: while common rules are to guide the Union's relations with all neighbours, much will depend on the neighbour's will and capability to move forward⁴⁰. This has allowed Morocco to move towards an advanced status within the EMP-ENP and this will give it access to specific European programmes and policies.

EU's Initiatives and Cooperative Projects

Keeping in view the above aim and objectives the partnership resulted in a number of initiatives and co-operative projects. In practice, this partnership has been organized into three baskets covering: Political and security partnership, Economic and financial partnership, and Partnership in social, cultural and human affairs. So, in fact, the model for Euro-Med Community of the democratic states involves an all inclusive strategy encouraging reform in the south.

The EU encourages its southern partner countries to adopt new border control agreements and provides funds for policing the borders, Restricting terrorist networks and reinforcing border controls has become a priority especially in the wake of 9/11 attacks. There has been an increased coordination with the Justice and Home Affairs activity. The list of terrorist organizations with the EU has been expanded establishing anti-terrorist experts, Europol and Eurojust have been beefed up and a new common arrest warrant has been agreed. New programmes of co-operation with south Mediterranean countries counter forces have been developed and new anti terrorist clauses have been included in the EU third country agreements. The concept of wider Europe framework has been

⁴⁰ Jocci, "Does the ENP respond to the E.U.'s' Post Enlargement Challenges?" p.24.

designed by the European Commission in 2003 to facilitate the movement of goods and persons between the member states of the E.U. and non member countries of the E.U. The view of the E.C. is that the E.U. is busy to find ways to facilitate the crossing of external borders only to bonafide third country nationals who have genuine grounds for crossing borders regularly as they live in the areas which are close to the borders and not security threat. Thus, controls have been tightened at external borders of Europe and most of the member states have tightened the immigration controls. Provisions have been introduced enabling action against states not cooperating in illegal immigration and strengthening border controls. A cooperation has been developed with the West Mediterranean '5 Plus 5 Dialogue' incorporating France, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Malta plus Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Mauritania under this south Mediterranean states like Morocco have received new large aid.

The EU in the economic and financial sphere aims at: supporting the structural adjustment programmes elaborated by IMF and the World Bank with social counter effects. promoting the creation and development of small and medium enterprises. to help societal actors such as universities, the media and municipalities to contribute efficiently to the development and modernization of small and medium enterprises by setting up programmes of decentralized co-operation. So, the content of the partnership addresses the development problem of the Mediterranean region. All member states set an objective for creation of an economic space for Euro-Mediterranean free trade area by 2010. It is considered to be twice the size of NAFTA (North America Free Trade Agreement). Further, inter enterprise co-operations in the countries of the Mediterranean region is meant to reinforce the competitiveness of enterprises. Several EU instrument have been

launched in order to facilitate their stake at the economic level. Small and medium size enterprises fully recognized by the European councils are at the heart of the Euro-Med partnership and a key element in the development of the private sector. In order to provide assistance to the small and medium sized enterprises of the Mediterranean partners during the phase of economic transition, business centers have been set by the European Community in several countries. Mediterranean countries are receiving huge financial assistance in the sectors of economic infrastructure, support to the private sector and training and rural development. This programme could also help in supporting economic transition and better social equilibrium.

Besides the above, the architects of the E.U. Mediterranean policy asserting their belief in the dynamics of socialization have taken initiatives in socio-cultural and human affairs sphere too. They have tried to use confidence building measures which are seen as indirect means of instilling democratic norms. There are several cooperative projects associated with Israeli-Palestinian and Arab-Israeli relations, for e.g. regional infrastructure improvement programme, tourism, electricity distribution network etc. Further, there are programmes as the Euro-Med information society, The Euro-Med programme for youth action, the Euro Med Energy Forum, education projects etc to encourage social development. It also aims at implementing fundamental social rights especially those of women and children and core labour standards. More efforts and co-operative projects under EMP-ENP in the realm of promoting democracy and rule of law would be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER - 3

E.U's Democracy Promotion in the Arab States

Democracy promotion in the Arab World is much in news these days. The broader U.S. and European commitment to supporting a democratic transformation of West Asia is rooted in the hope that positive political change in the region can be antidote to radical Islamist terrorism. Democracy promotion has in a short time become fused with “high policy” on the world stage, with the result that it is drawing an unprecedented level of public attention as well as substantial resources.¹ It has emerged as a central component of the western thinking in the reassessment of its security perceptions in the post 9/11 environment and is likely to remain a central factor for some time to come.

In the literature of transition to democracy, the concept of democracy is far from being the ‘essential contested concept’ than it is in political philosophy. The definition that is generally upheld is the one associated with procedural democracy, as defined for instance by Huntington or by Schmitter and Karl.² It follows that a process of democratisation taking place in any given country refers to a “very specific path” that the country is obliged to walk and refers to a very specific point of arrival that should be reached, western liberal democracy. Thus, a democratic transition is complete, when institutional structure has been established, when sufficient agreement has been reached about political procedures to produce an elected government, and when a government comes to power through a free and popular vote.

The scholarly appeal for democracy in the Muslims World is based on the following justification. On the one hand, a more democratic system will produce

¹ Jessica T. Mathews (2004), “Critical Mission” Essays on Democracy Promotion’, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, No.49, September.

² Philippe Schmitter and Jerry Lynn Karl (1991), “What Democracy Is - - - and Is Not”, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 2, pp. 75-88.

governments that are fairer and legitimate than the current ones. Democracy will also benefit Muslim countries in other ways. It will promote the rule of law, open society, freedoms of choice and stable politics. This will work to discourage corruption and rent seeking, which will lead to increase economic activity. Furthermore, when these countries become full-fledged democracies, they will be more efficient in managing conflicts because democracy promotes civil peace.

As discussed in the introduction, the world of scholars and intellectuals seems to be divided on the approach to be adopted for democratic transition. Some hold that democratic transition is the outcome of the domestic political process. They see it as an endogenous process involving social dynamics and the success of the process is linked to a specific set of structural preconditions. It was one of the main conclusions of the study on the transitions by Schmitter and O'Donnell³. Equally significant is the counter argument provided by the international scholars who have highlighted the variety of ways in which external forces shape the incentives and opportunities for the adoption of democratic forms of governance. Geoffrey Pridham, a leading scholar in the field, has admitted that the international context was 'the forgotten dimension' of the transition studies and that this research area should be explored further⁴. Many if not most of the democracy breakthrough around the world have occurred precisely because of the combination of pressure for change from within, coupled with support from the outside. So, it cannot be denied that the external actors can play a critical supporting role as a

³ For details, see Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter, *Transition from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore:John Hopkins University Press 1986).

⁴ Geoffrey Pridham (1995), *Democratic Transition and the International Environment*, Aldershot: Dartmouth, p.445.

catalyst for change from the outside. In the case of Africa, for example, the significance of changes in international environment for the process of democratization is difficult to ignore.⁵ So is the case with Turkey, which owes its current transition to a liberal democracy to EU's acceptance of Turkey's application for membership in 1999.⁶

Political and Security interests of the External Actors

With the abrupt realization that the main threat to America's security was no longer rogue states but sub state actors engaged in terrorist activity, the linkage between security and democracy was radically reformulated. Policy planners came to believe that it was no coincidence that the perpetrators of 9/11 and numerous subsequent incidents originated in countries which brooked little, if any, participation in the political affairs of the nation. Had these individuals had the political space to blow off the steam at home, they would not have felt the need to blow up buildings in the West. Democracy, so the argument went, would provide an escape valve for some of the mounting and explosive political pressures building up in the Middle East before they reached a critical mass⁷. Thus, it is now being argued, that the west must abandon the chimera of stability offered by an autocratic status quo and instead put the weight of Western influence on the side of the positive democratic change.

⁵ Ronald D. Asmus, Larry Diamond, Mark Leonard and Michael Mc. Taul (2005), "A Transatlantic strategy to promote democratic Development in the Broader Middle East", *The Washington Quarterly*, Spring, pp.7-21.

⁶ See Aswini K. Mohapatra (2008), "Democratisation in the Arab World: Turkish Model", *International Studies*, Forthcoming, .

⁷ Daniel Neep (2004), 'Dilemmas of Democratization in the Middle East, 'The Forward Strategy to Freedom', *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XI, No.3, Fall, pp. 32-44.

Further, it has been argued that the terrorist threat facing the West today is an explosive size of humiliation, hatred, intolerance and intense anti U.S. and anti western sentiments that is crystallizing into a set of extremist ideologies that twists and mobilizes religion and uses religion to pursue its goals. It is brewing in the context of political oppression, economic stagnation, population booms and pervasive inequality and injustice. The United States and Europe will not be safe from terrorism, political instability, illegal migration or organized crime this region is spawning unless each shifts its policies to get the root of these evils. This endeavour will simultaneously require both political freedom and human development – the kind that generates broad, sustainable improvements in the people’s livelihoods, skills, dignity and opportunities. Other issues of concern for external actors are: access to oil, co-operation in the assistance on counter terrorism, fostering peace between Israel and its neighbours, stemming the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and preventing Islamist radicals from seizing powers. In all, it will be in the interest of the external actors, be it U.S. or E.U., to see peace, rule of law and democracy prevailing in the region.

Engagement of External Actors

Since the September 11 attacks, a number of U.S. and European Strategists have stepped forward to call for a fundamental paradigm shift in how the United States and Europe engage the broader West Asia– that wide swath of the globe, predominantly Muslims and overwhelmingly authoritarian, stretching from Morocco to Afghanistan⁸. In the past Washington was willing to sacrifice its promotion of democracy in exchange for

⁸ Amus et al, “Transatlantic Strategy”, p. 9.

the security promised by regimes that would maintain secure supply of oil, provide a buffer against the expansion of Soviet influence and, after 1979, prevent the emergence of more states hostile to U.S. interests like revolutionary Iran. Unsurprisingly, it was in the WANA region, perhaps more than everywhere else that this inconsistency stoked the fires of public frustration and led the overwhelming anti American sentiment that has been sweeping over the region since the mid 1990s⁹. Now the pendulum has swung. The US officials no longer see these regimes as bulwark against Islamic extremists, but consider them responsible for the popular discontent that fuels terrorism.

Further, all too often in the past, western and Arab leaders had posited a false dichotomy between the pursuit of external security and democracy in the region's suggesting that, in the interest of maintaining security, it was necessary to set aside democratic aspirations. Part of the paradigm shift in the West has been to recognise that democratic development and external security are complementary goals rather than alternatives.

It would certainly be wrong for the west to accept the argument that the key regional conflicts in West Asia must be solved before movement towards democracy can occur even though it is certainly easier to build and consolidate democracy during times of peace and in a secure regional environment than to attempt to do so during times of conflict and external threat. Insecurity is the breeding ground for antidemocratic forces, whereas democracy and regional security are mutually reinforcing. Moreover, in West Asia, many geopolitical problems are often directly intertwined with the nature of these

⁹ Daniel Neep (2004), "Dilemmas of Democratisation in the Middle East: The "Forward Strategy to Freedom", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XI, No.3, Fall.

regimes. This approach is by no means a new or radical departure for the West. The need to consolidate newly developing democracies was also a key factor leading NATO and the E.U. to extend a security umbrella to and Central and Eastern Europe after the cold war come to an end.

Consequently, if the West wants to pursue a long term strategy to help promote democratic change in the “Broader Middle East”, it must step up its efforts to resolve the regions core geopolitical conflicts and support the creation of a more peaceful security environment.¹⁰ Although democracy promotion was incorporated as a major foreign policy component during President Clinton’s tenure, the spread of Islamist terrorism to Europe in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks gave this new push on democracy promotion a special intensity. The Bush administration, therefore, launched strenuous efforts for its so-called ‘democratization mission’. It was believed that the mantra of democratization would be in answer to the many problems it faces in the region.

Similarly, in the wake of September 11 attacks, the E.U. has also become more active and serious in developing the precursors to democratization in the region. They redoubled their efforts during this period from 2001 member states individually attempted to play a role aimed at reducing the violence and renewing dialogue. In the past i.e. prior to 1990s European concern with democracy and human rights in the south Mediterranean was subordinated to the strategic logic of the cold war.

Approach of the External Actors towards Democracy Promotion

While commitment to the promotion of democracy is common to both E.U. and

¹⁰ Asmus et al, “A Transatlantic Strategy”, p. 11.

the US in terms of their comprehensive approach towards security in practice their strategy to implement the democratisation agenda differs significantly. This difference originates because of their different conceptions of world order and mechanism. The U.S. is still of the view that 'power politic' is the sole means and safe way to think for their sake and also for the global community. It believes that the relationship between the western democracies and non western politics especially Muslim politics are defined by civilizational opposition i.e. the clash between Islamism and western liberalism. On the other hand, the notion of power for Europe is said to be based on 'perpetual peace' ideal of the superiority of laws and rejection of force. Unlike the United States, the European Union policy makers do not believe in change of region but stand for the spread of liberal values. The European analysis has been that democracy does not come from precision missiles. The rationale behind the EMP rejects visions based on the innate hostility between civilizational blocs. Instead and more importantly, it seeks wide ranging 'inclusions in diversity' based on shared values.

Robert Kagan recently suggested that the United States and the European Union were conducting their foreign policies in very different ways because, at heart they possessed two very different conceptions of world order and of the mechanisms that needed to be put in place to create and/or secure this order,¹¹ According to Kagan, the US continues to think in terms of power politics (Machtpolitik) because, as the sole remaining superpower and global headman, they can meaningfully think about world politics in such terms, but also because it may be the case that they must think in those terms for their own sake and the sake of the global community. Europeans notion of

¹¹ R. Kagan (2003), "Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Orders", London: Atlantic Books, Chap. I.

power is based on the pseudo-Kantian 'perpetual peace', which refers to the ideal of the primacy of laws and, implicitly and a rejection of force in the international system. In the European case, Kagan argues that this situation was principally the result of policy choices that the states had to make after the disasters of the Second World War, but also as a consequence of the fact that they could choose such an option safely within the confines of Western Europe, thanks to U.S. protection¹².

From within the Bush Administration and on the editorial pages of America's major newspapers, a growing chorus of voices expounded in extraordinarily expansive, optimistic view of a new democratizing mission for America in West Asia. The rhetoric reached extraordinary heights when the US undertook pre-emptive strike against Iraq to topple Saddam Hussein. It was argued that a forced regime change in Baghdad would lead to the rapid democratization of Iraq and by so doing would unleash "democratic tsunami" across the Muslim world. Ironically the U. S. action had more negative than positive effects on the near term potential for democracy. The invasion has in fact intensified the Anti-Americanism already surging around the region, strengthening the hands of hard line political forces¹³. Thus, the U.S. follows the top down approach of democracy promotion which involves pressures at the governmental level.

By contrast, the E.U. is wary of the instability as a result of the sudden rupture within the authoritarian system. The collapse of the old regime may lead to an unrestrained competition among democratic actors, which would not only benefit the

¹² See Frederic Volpi (2004), "Regional Community Building and the Transformation of International Relations: The case of the Euro Mediterranean partnership", Vol.9, No.2, Summer, pp. 145-164.

¹³ For details, see Marina Ottaway, Thomas Brothers, Amy Howthorne, Daniel Brumberg (2002), "Democratic Mirage in the Middle East", *Carnegie Endowment for the International Peace*, October.

Islamists, but also encourage greater migration from the Arab States. Thus, the E.U. policy makers have opted for a kind of political change that could be facilitated over the longer term by widening of the space of civil society to generate democratic awareness, reforming the 'rentier' economic activity improving basic economic and political rights and encouraging the Islamists' engagement in the political process. The E.U., thus, pursues the bottom-up approach that aims at developing the precursors to democratization with the consent of the regime. Second, the E.U. policy makers link the success of their promotion initiative in the Arab World to sustained progress in the West Asian peace process. In their view, the much lauded "democratic peace" idea does not apply to the WANA region simply because the internal political change is held hostage to the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Lastly, E.U.'s strategy is to foster 'socialization' around democratic norms within region like features of the EMP rather than resorting to coercive measures like suspension of aid or heavy handed imposition of western political forms.

As compared to the U.S. policy defined in terms of power politics or *Machtpolitik* (military intervention and occupation are the two illustrative examples), the E.U. approach to democracy promotion in the Arab World focuses on disseminating normative values of political pluralism through an institutionalized process of co-operation. In the recent years, the E.U. has established promising foundations upon which more effective support for political reform in the south Mediterranean region could be built. As already discussed, it has launched the EMP in 1995 and ENP in 2003, which reflects its bottom-up approach.

E.U.'s Initiative towards Democracy Promotion

In the realm of Democracy and the “Rule of Law the Action Plan” envisages the consolidation of administrative bodies responsible for reinforcing respect for democracy and rule of law and the access to justice and co-operation in tackling corruption. Large judicial reform projects have been introduced in the Mediterranean region. This could be linked with broader political reform. Similarly, largest pools of European funding are oriented towards technocratic co-operations. Budgets have been issued for improvement of good governance with a view to create harmony between the technical and regulatory function which fall in line with European single market rules. It focuses on transparency of procurement procedures, designing fiscal system to make over the revenue losses due to abolition of tariff and credit projects aiming to strengthen the local level decision making capabilities. Thus, E.U. aims at modifying the existing institutions through its governance projects, elite training programmes constitutional support, police reforms and judicial reforms.¹⁴

For example, the E.U.-Morocco Action Plan (Commission, 2004) refers to a relatively large number of democratisation and human rights issues, thus reflecting the relatively advanced status of Morocco’s reform process. As in the other Action Plans, three sections specifically address political reforms, namely, ‘Democracy and the Rule of Law’, ‘Human Rights and Fundamental Freedom’, and ‘Fundamental Social Rights and Core Labour Standards’. In the realm of ‘Democracy and the Rule of Law’, the action plan defines three priorities, namely, the consolidation of ‘administrative bodies

¹⁴ Raffaella A. Del Sarto, T. Schmacher, E. Lannon and Ahmed Driss (2007), *Benachmarking Democratic Development in the Euro-Mediterranean Area: Conceptualising Ends, Means and Strategies*, *EuroMesco Annual Report* 2006, May

responsible for reinforcing respect for democracy and the 'Rule of Law', the access to justice and cooperation in tackling corruption. Under the heading of 'Human Rights and Fundamental Freedom', the Action Plan addresses the issues of human rights protection according to international standards, freedom of association and expression, and the rights of women and children. Finally, the Action Plan refers to the aim of implementing fundamental social rights and core labour standards', which, unoriginally, is listed under the heading of 'Fundamental Social Rights and Labour Standards'.

In the ENP Action Plan concluded with Tunisia by the Commission in 2004, the section on 'Democracy and the Rule of Law' contains two specific 'targets', which address the strengthening of institutions and the judiciary. The section on 'Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms' comprise three objectives, namely international human rights conventions, freedom of expression and association, and the rights of women and children. The third heading on the list concerns 'Fundamental Social Rights and Core Labour Standards', the formulation of which is similar to the respective section of the EU-Morocco Action Plan¹⁵.

Strengthening Civil Society

Reduced to its elemental meaning "civil society" refers to the zone of voluntary associated life beyond family and large affiliation but separate from the state and the market. Under the right conditions, civil society can contribute to the democratization of authoritarian regimes and can help to sustain a democratic system once it is established. Through involvement in civil society, citizens learn about fundamental democratic values

¹⁵ Ibid, pp. 12-14.

of participation and collective action, and they disseminate these values with their communities. Civil society movements that represent citizen interests can shape both government policy and social attitudes. By constituting a sphere of citizen activity beyond the direct control of government, civil society can form a counter weight to state power.

More than a decade ago, scholars in the west who study WANA region began to devote a great deal of attention to civil society's role as the source of Arab democratization. Enthusiasm for civil society then spread to the mainstream of policy makers, donors, democracy aid-providers and journalists. These civil society enthusiasts interpret the proliferation of civil society organizations across the region as a harbinger of democratisation "from below".

The reason why the idea of civil society evoked so much interest during the 1990s was its close association with "people power" movements to push out dictators and with the success of western democracy. As a result, programs to "strengthen" civil society have become a standard part of the European democracy promotion tool kit around the world. Civil society seems particularly appealing as the solution to the challenge of promoting democracy in the Arab World. Arab non-governmental organisations (NGO's) have grown in number and prominence in recent years. This proliferation is often interpreted as a sign of burgeoning independent civic activity and perhaps as the source of peaceful democratic change, akin to the prodemocracy movements that emerged in Eastern Europe in the 1980s. The fact that Egypt now has roughly 14000 registered NGO is, for example, sometimes cited as a sign of the empowerment of that country's citizens.

Civil Society is envisaged as playing a democratising role in a variety of ways. To some, the very proliferation of civil society organizations - no matter what their type, agenda or influence – contributes to the building of the infrastructure of democracy. Moreover, it promotes and fosters an active associational life, which is seen by many as a precursor of democracy. Others view specific sectors of civil society as forces of democratization. Not surprisingly, pro-democracy NGO's are thought to have the greatest potential to push governments towards democratisation. Interestingly, many in the Muslim societies try to locate the seeds of democratic change in the Islamic sector. In their view, the opposition and informal organizations in this sector represent a challenge to the moral and political authority of incumbent authoritarian regions, their grassroots support gives them a popular appeal and “vibrancy” that other sectors of civil society lack. Thus they must constitute a prodemocracy movement.

Still other civil society advocates see great potential in the service NGO sector, where involvement in community development is thought to build skills and foster democratic values and attitudes in individuals that will eventually spread to the broader society. “Service NGOs have an impact that goes well beyond service delivery”, contended a paper used by contractor of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

The service-NGO sector has proliferated since the 1980s. Many Arab Governments have come to accept the value of private initiative playing an expanded role in development. Many are also concerned about Islamic opposition movements' use of charitable organizations to gain grassroots support and therefore are eager for service NGOs to become an alternative source of services. Besides, Western donors are also

eager to aid private initiative because it reflects their broader policy of supporting market-based economic reforms in the region. Donors often view service (NGOs) as more efficient recipients of their funds than Arab government bureaucracies.¹⁶

There is an assumption that the zone of civil society is safely political – that it is separate from the political sphere dominated by anti-western sentiment and divisive struggles. Perhaps by aiding civil society, the E.U. can build bridges to the “silent majority” of Arab publics, convincing them that the E.U. is on their side. Finally, focusing on NGO’s seems like a good way to support a gradual citizen generated transformation of politics in the region.

The E.U. focuses its attention on funding the NGOs, grass roots advocacy networks, awareness building and civil education in order to promote the dynamics of civility at the level of local communities in particular for marginalized and vulnerable groups. It is generally believed that a lot of potential exists for the basic values of democratic accountability at the local community level. A regional approach has often been favoured here for e.g., promoting co-operation between Arab NGOs from different states. The ultimate aim of this is to build service for effective independent parliamentary consideration to secure citizen’s access to state level policy making.

Promoting ‘Cultural and Civilizational Dialogue

The most difficult issue affecting the Arab world has been the Islamist dimension of its civil society and nature of trends in political Islam. Therefore, ‘Civilizational dialogue’ forums under the EMP programme have stressed for improving understanding

¹⁶ Amy Howthorne (2004), ‘Middle Eastern Democracy: Is Civil Society the Answer?’, *Carnegie papers*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, No. 44, March, pp. 8-11. .

between the Christians and Muslims world. It is hoped that this could eventually provide a step towards establishing mutual trust between European donors and Islamists and could act as an instrument to rebut the charge that Europe was interested only in suppressing Islam. The cultural dimensions of EU-West Asian relations have become prominent in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. The dialogue on cultures and civilizations, established as part of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership has become one of the most dynamic strands of EU policy.

Most importantly, this transnational cultural approach to “community building” is the most promising response to the Europe/Muslim-Arab world dichotomist frame. First of all, it exhibits the value of multiple but overlapping cultures, transnational groups, and transient peoples. Second, it helps bring people together by means of the empowerment of disadvantaged groups or individuals rather than on the basis of their national identity, and finally, it acts as a counterpoint to the North/South reality of structural inequality. Thus, the newly created foundation of the dialogue of cultures is well placed to support practices promoting this kind of collective learning processes. As the first and only institutions to have been created as part of the EMP process, it is poised to serve as a regional catalyst for a movement of multi-faceted recognition of overlapping identities in the region both through the empowerment of civil society actors and through state channels. Indeed the principle of mutuality or mutual recognition, which interprets and gives concrete expression to the search for compatibility among our differences, is crucial to the legitimacy of the entire learning process.¹⁷

¹⁷ Kalypso Nicolaidis and Dimitri Nicolaidis (2004), “The EuroMed beyond Civilizational Paradigms” in Emanuel Adler and Beverly Crawford (eds.), *The Convergence of Civilizations? Constructing A Mediterranean Region*, London: Palgrave-Macmillan, p.342..

Several other initiatives have also aimed at improving the depth and range of cultural cooperation between European Union and Arab states, including the February, 2002 meeting between European and OIC (Organization of Islamic Conference) ministers in Istanbul and the “Groupe des sages” set up by Commission president Romani Prodi, which recently recommended new avenues for enhancing cultural understanding.¹⁸ Most significant and high profile has been the commitment to establish a Euro Mediterranean foundation. It is the first properly Euro-Med institution, created not to manage economic aid or security cooperation, but at the softest end of the spectrum: culture. Its avowed goal is “to promote a culture of peace and to achieve mutual understanding, bring peoples closer, remove the threats to peace and strengthen exchange among civilizations.” The *Euro Med report # 59*, of May 2003 can be taken as a sign of heightened awareness on the EU’s behalf of the necessity to bring some ‘identity content’ to the Euro-Med project, by facilitating contacts at the civil society level. It serves to reflect and amplify the various presuppositions of the partners involved and the undercurrents shared among intellectuals and activists co-opted in its operations.¹⁹ Indeed, even if the “guiding principles for the dialogue between cultures and civilizations” recall the stereotyped “common history”, it rather puts the emphasis on the objective to better understand ‘the other’ so that, instead of changing it, we learn peacefully to co-exist with it, in a world where our differences are better recognized and, therefore, respected.²⁰ Its basic aim had been stipulated as improving the ‘understanding of other models of society’ and respect

¹⁸ Richard Youngs (2004), *European Policies for Middle East Reform: A Ten Point Action Plan*, London: Foreign Policy Centre, pp. 11-14.

¹⁹ “EU-Med Report”, (2003), # 50 *European Commission*, May

²⁰ Nicolaidis and Nicolaidis, ‘The Euro Med’,

for 'cultural specificities'. The Foundation's mandate urges Europe and the South Mediterranean countries to cooperate without 'trying to change the other.'

The main focus of the foundation is on intellectual, artistic and cultural exchanges. It is perceived by many that cultural co-operation may improve the images of European and Arab states without pressing for any political change. It is argued that through these initiatives mainstream Islamists could also gradually support the stability oriented processes of reform avoiding confrontation with their respective governments. It may help in building better respect for each other's religious ideas which could later on enhance the democracy promotion measures in this part of the world. Such a strategy, it is hoped, would make democracy a more attractive proposition to these neighbouring countries of Europe.

Barcelona Process

While some scholars and intellectuals see the E.U.'s approach as a legitimate, appropriately 'consensual' strategy, others have criticised it on several grounds. They contend that E.U.s gradualist approach reflects pure unwillingness to adopt only 'real' democracy promotional policies. The EMP was notable for providing the EU with a formal remit to fund democracy assistance projects in the Mediterranean, in particular through a separate Commission-managed programme, MEDA Democracy. Between 1996 and 1999, the Commission allocated Euro 27million to democracy assistance to the Mediterranean partners.²¹ The approach pursued through the Commission's programme

²¹ See *Commission of the European Communities* (2000), "Report on the implementation of measures intended to promote the observance of human rights and democratic principles 1996-99, Brussels: European Commission; *Commission Delegation to Morocco: The MEDA Democracy initiative* (1999), Rabat: European Commission; *Euronet consulting: Evaluation of the MEDA Democracy Programme* (1999), Brussels: Euronet.

was avoidably and strongly 'bottom-up' focusing on support for NGOs, grass root advocacy networks, awareness building and civic education in particular for marginalized and vulnerable groups. In addition, increased amounts were allocated within economic reform programme for judicial and administrative reform. Bilateral donors and in particular France have advanced significant new packages to assist reform. The Maghreb was one of the few areas of the world where the EU assumed clear primacy over the US in democracy assistance. For example, the United States Agency for International Development first initiated democracy promotion in the region in Morocco only in 1999 with a modest \$1.3m to be spent over two years.

The scale of democracy assistance funding by the EU was modest in the latter half of the 1990s, which amounted to less than 0.5 per cent of all aid to the region. Over 200 times more money was given under the main MEDA budgeted for assisting the process of economic restructuring. Moreover, there was a decrease in funding in 2001 and MEDA Democracy was disbanded as a separate programme and merged into horizontal democracy budgets.²² Further, the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) has restricted to only for WANA states included in its list of target countries- Tunisia, Algeria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and Turkey²³. In addition, the range of work undertaken was relatively narrow. While 290 NGO projects were undertaken, only 16 provided funds directly for the reform of state institutions. The EU provided no support for the range of groups widely identified as elements of a potential Arab form of democracy-professional association, syndicates, mosques, teaching circles, or craft

²² Richard Youngs (2002), "The European Union and Democracy Promotion in the Mediterranean. A new or Disingenuous strategy?", *Democratization*, Vol. 12, March, pp. 50-52.

²³ Youngs, *European Policies for Middle East Reform*, p. 31..

groups. European civil society assistance has actually decreased in many important Arab Countries.²⁴

Lack of Programme-Specific Conditionality

Sanctions have not been imposed against West Asian states on democratic grounds. The democracy clauses of the Euro-Mediterranean association agreements have not been invoked. Democratic backsliding has rarely elicited concrete punitive responses from European donors. Since September 11, 2001, rather more effort has been invested in agreeing new anti-terrorist cooperation clauses with Arab states than in making effective the democracy clauses that already exist.

Political conditionality does not need to be used in a dramatic fashion, completely breaking off relations if immediate and far reaching political change is not implemented. But, the EMP must surely now be firmly enough embedded for the EU to start incrementally ratcheting up the degree of pressure it seeks to exert without the whole partnership unraveling. Thus far, the EU has been over optimistic in thinking its economic, social and civil society approaches can be left to gestate into a smooth glide path to political transformation. Positive and punitive approaches should be seen not as two mutually exclusive options. The lesson of Euro-Mediterranean relations during the last few years is that robust pressure is often necessary to unlock the obstacles through which autocratic regimes have prevented the logic of positive engagement from taking hold.

²⁴ See Youngs (2002), "The European Union and Democracy Promotion", pp. 54-57.

The specific aim should be to secure a change in institutional process to allow for greater autonomy and access in the area of work covered by each individual EU aid project. Funds for infrastructure projects, for example, should come with conditions relating to improvements in citizens' ability, to monitor and control local administrations' funding and budgetary process. The large amounts of aid for economic restructuring at present go almost entirely through ministries, requirements could be imposed that in return these ministers allow private sector organizations more autonomy in managing such initiatives.²⁵

Poor Capacity-Building: Islamist Dimension

Approaches to the Islamist dimension of west Asian civil societies need revisiting. This is of course the most difficult of issues effecting the region. There is long running debate among west Asian specialists themselves over the nature of trends in political Islam. While Islamaphobia threatens to become one of the most destabilizing of contemporary ills, many experts have pointed out that the challenge is more complicated than simply proclaiming a need to 'embrace Islam'. Perspectives on Islam have been unduly simplistic and uni-dimensional in both directions. On the other hand, it has constantly been asserted that 'Islam itself is not the problem' and that 'there is no incompatibility between Islam and democracy', on the one hand, when it comes to practical cooperation on the ground, Islamists have been rather sweepingly excluded as partners for European initiatives. A more probing and effective debate on this issue is called for within the EU.

²⁵ Richard Gilesie and Laurence Whitehead (2002), "European Democracy Promotion in North Africa: Limits and Prospects", *Democratisation*, Vol. 9, No. 1 January, pp. 195-196.

There has been little systematic engagement with moderate Islamists since September 11. Many 'dialogue between civilisation' initiatives have been introduced in the past few years. But, these have not generated a notably more politicized approach. By far the largest share goes to western style activist NGOs rather than locally specific organizational forum based around the mosque, neighbourhood groups or the professional syndicates. In Jordan and Morocco, mainstream Islamists have supported very gradual, stability oriented process of reform and have sought cohabitation rather than outright confrontation with their respective governments. In contrast, other groups still adhere to violent means and continue to question the compatibility of popular majority rule with Islam's grounding in revealed and immutable truth. Many would argue that there has been little cooperation or compromise between secular liberals and moderate Islamists. There should, thus, be concerted commitments on the part of European donors to support grass roots Islamist welfare organisations. It would provide a first tentative step towards establishing mutual trust between European donors and Islamists, so that relations could then move onto more political issues.²⁶

Asymmetrical Economic Relationship

Both prior to the Barcelona Conference and during the early years of the EMP's existence, it was the perception of the EU's heavy-handed imposition of unduly harsh economic liberalisation on the Mediterranean partners that attracted most criticism from commentators. Even if most acknowledged the potentially positive impact of the region's deeper economic integration with Western Europe, the EU was almost universally

²⁶ Yougs, *European Policies for Middle East Reform: A Ten Point Action Plan*, p. 19.

berated for its insistence on a process of trade liberalization strongly skewed to its own advantage. The friction that emerged in relation to the EU's lack of generosity in opening up its agricultural and textile markets is well documented. The magnitude of the MEDA fund, aimed specifically at assisting structural reform, was seen by most as negligible relative to the transformation contemplated.

Moreover, the EMP contained no initiative on debt relief, the most important of issues for the Mediterranean partners following outside EU competences. The nature of the economic commitments was held to impact prejudicially upon the democracy promotion agenda in two ways. First, economic instability and tension was held to be inimical to generating just and sustainable democracy. Theorists contended that if Islamist groups' anti-western and anti-democratic discourse was indeed a product of the adverse effects of perceived western hegemony, it was reasonable to fear that the asymmetric economic impact of the Barcelona Process might simply aggravate such radicalism. Second in a more direct sense, the rigorous requirements of the timetable towards a Free Trade Area (FTA) would encourage elites actually to gather additional power and discretion so as to be able to move efficiently to implement reforms. Many analysts see this latter concern increasingly coming to fruition as governments sought to micro-manage preparations for the association agreements and the FTA, co-opting selected companies in a way that reinforces their own networks of patronage and quashed any spillover to the political domain. This was particularly notable in Tunisia, Egypt and Syria, while Morocco was a partial exception.²⁷

²⁷ Youngs, "The European Union and Democracy Promotion", p. 58.

Lack of Overall Co-ordination

Last, European efforts have been handicapped by a lack of overall coordination and a resulting lower profile than their substance often merits. The overall impact of European policies remains less than the sum of their individual parts. Poor linkages exist between different member states; between different departments within the same member state or within Brussels and between the different partnerships that frame EU relations with different areas of West Asia. This complicates 'best practice' bearing and the coherent use of different policy instruments.

Further, decision-making in the field of human rights and democracy promotion has been extremely dispersed and ad hoc. A plethora of different departments, initiatives, forums and budgets are involved with little or no overarching guidance. No framework exists around which relevant initiatives can be elaborated with common purpose.²⁸ There are also many other factors other than EU policy that help account for the lack of fundamental political change in the Arab World:-

Authoritarian Regions are Relatively Well Entrenched

In this region or at least they have demonstrated considerable powers of endurance. So, this part of the world today lacks the domestic conditions that set the stage for democratic change elsewhere. Even Egypt, which in the early part of the twentieth century had a national bourgeoisie committed to the values of liberal democracy, opted for autocracy fifty years ago. Quite a few countries in the region-Algeria, Egypt, Jordan and Morocco among them are liberalized autocracies whose leaders have skillfully used a

²⁸ Yougs, *European Policies for Middle East Reform*, pp. 26-27..

measure of state-monitored political openness to promote reforms that appear pluralistic but function to pressure autocracy. Through controlled elections, divide and rule tactics, state interference in civil society organisations, and the obstruction of meaningful political party system, these regimes have created deeply entrenched ruling system that are surprisingly effective at resisting democratic change.

The issue is not whether Islam and democracy are incompatible in an absolute sense. Like Christianity and Judaism, Islam is far too complex a religion, with too many schools of thought for the question even to make sense. Rather, the issue is the existence in all Arab states, of both legal and clandestine political movements that use illiberal interpretations of Islam to mobilize their followers. Since these “Islamist movements enjoy considerable grassroots support and local authenticity, they are most likely to benefit from democratic openings. Truly fair and free elections in any country of West Asian World likely assure Islamist parties a substantial share of the vote, or possibly even a majority, as would have happened in Algeria in 1992 had the elections not been cancelled. Democratization ironically raises the possibility of bringing to power political parties that might well abrogate democracy itself. This is a different version of the old Cold War era fears: communist parties in Western Europe and elsewhere would come to power through elections only to impose radical change.

However, continuing to exclude or marginalize Islamist political participation would doom democracy by silencing a voice that resonates with an important segment of the public. Doing so would only provide governments with a justification for maintaining excessive controls over the entire political sphere, thereby stunting the development of other popular forces. Contrary to the western fear of an Islamic threat, Francis Fukiyama

has described the Islamic Resurgence as a passing phase, which would lose the popularity when liberal democracy strikes roots in the Muslim societies.²⁹ Introduction of democratic traditions would broaden the popular participation, which would satisfy the political aspiration of the Islamists. Secondly, in the democratic elections if the Islamists come to power it would be difficult for them to provide an alternative Socio-economic model to redress the popular grievances. Many governments, such as these in Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco have indeed tried to skirt this dilemma by giving Islamists a chance to participate in politics while at the same time preventing them from actually assuming political power, but this solution also argues poorly for democracy.

Conflict with Israel

Resentment against the state of Israel, particularly against the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, creates a measure of solidarity between Arab leaders and their citizens that is exploited regularly by autocrats to deflect attention from their own shortcomings. Until there is a two state solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that gives security and dignity to both parties, resentment will infuse all aspects of Arab politics and obscure the question of democracy.³⁰ However, these realities do not mean that Arab States will never democratise or that the E.U. has no role to play. For all its shortcomings, Barcelona Process is a worthwhile exercise. But, it is clear that the path to democratization will be long, hard and slow and that E U's expectations and plans should be calibrated accordingly.

²⁹ F. Fukuyama (1992), *The end of History and the Last Man* (New York: Harmitos, pp. 19-21.

³⁰ Ottaway et al, (2002), "Democratic Mirage in the Middle East", p. 9.

New Initiatives

Given the inherent contradictions and structural limitations of the region, the EU policy towards democracy promotion has proved to be less efficacious as compared to the United States or for that matter other multilateral agencies. In the recent years, however, several fresh suggestions have been put forward by the Europe-based think-tanks such as the EU-funded International Security Studies (ISS) located in Paris. In its assessment report, the ISS has put forth the following proposals, some of which have already been carried out.³¹

Regular Summits of Heads of States or Governments (G-Med)

One suggestion has been to create a kind of 'G-Med' arrangement with regular meetings of heads of state or government for the states involved. There is certainly room for regular Euro-Mediterranean summits of heads of state or of government. According to the ISS, a precondition for this should be an honest examination of the reasons for which most heads of state and government of the Mediterranean Partners boycotted the 2005 Barcelona Summit.

The Rotating Dual Presidency

The proposed biannual rotating dual presidency involving one representative from the South of the Mediterranean and one from the North is designed to reflect the idea of co-ownership on the basis of equality between states. Within the Barcelona framework it is the Council presidency which plays that role for the member states. Arab countries

³¹ "Barcelona Plus: Towards a Euro-Mediterranean Community of Democratic States" (2005), *EuroMeSCo Report*, April at http://www.euromesco.net/media/barcelonaplus_en_fin.pdf

have tried to speak with one voice from time to time but have not been able to institutionalize this to date. Furthermore, two non-Arab countries (Israel and Turkey) are also full members of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and would have to be included among those states that might provide a candidate for the southern co-presidency. Whether Arab countries would accept to be represented by Israel remains doubtful since most of them do not have diplomatic relations with it. In short, the idea can only work if formal peace has previously been achieved between Israel and Arab States. Otherwise the natural rotation of the co-presidency among South Mediterranean states would imply Arab recognition of Israel before peace had been achieved whenever Israel held the Southern co-chairs and there is no doubt that some Arab states would not agree to this. Indeed, Algeria has already said as much. There is a serious need to reinforce the sense of ownership of the Barcelona Process among all the partner states, so any proposal aimed at reinforcing this sense of ownership is certainly most welcome.

A Permanent Secretarial Committees or Common Working Groups

It is worth noting that today there is no Barcelona Secretariat as such to manage the EMP, as the European Commission actually manages the process. It remains to be seen how this could be achieved in practice, especially as the Union for the Mediterranean proposal contains provisions for an administrative component, equally accessible to the Mediterranean states involved. The Idea that the partners should be integrated into the day to day management of the Barcelona Process is certainly an interesting one. However, the risk of paralysis within the management of the Barcelona Process because of antagonisms between partners should not be underestimated.

According to ISS report, it would be more realistic to create different Common Working Groups or Committees where civil servants from both sides of the Mediterranean should prepare the programmes and actions of the Union for the Mediterranean could prepare the programmes and action of the Union for the Mediterranean on the basis of the principles of co-ownership and co-responsibility. This could even evolve into a 'Mediterranean Secretariat', staffed equally by civil servants from the North and the South to support the work of the different working groups and to monitor the implementation of their conclusions.

Creating New Programmes and Instruments

Another issue involves the kind of actions or programmes that would be promoted within the framework of the new initiative, and the extent to which they would complement ongoing projects.

The requirement that projects should be self-generated by Mediterranean littoral countries themselves, thus corresponding to objectives that they would seek to prioritise, is clearly appropriated. Since the projects would be adopted on a case-by-case basis and depend on targeted funding, this would obviate much of the bureaucratic problems associated with current funding mechanism through MEDA-related process and the European Investment Bank soft loan schemes.

The Union for the Mediterranean does not offer a way in which the objectives of Euro-Mediterranean Policy can be revived. The key to this lies not in the structures that it proposes to create but in the project agenda it seeks to promote. Another key to success will, therefore, be to create mechanisms so that project proposals also originate from the

southern shores of the Mediterranean basin and not only in Brussels as in the Member-states.

Enhanced Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation

It is clear that the Union for the Mediterranean should go beyond simply expanding the Barcelona Process. It should be an opportunity to innovate and to create new instruments such as enhanced Euro-Mediterranean cooperation. This could provide a new driving force for the Barcelona Process in the sense that several partners could take the lead on certain issues of particular importance, provided that such enhanced cooperation to be based on strict conditions such as:

- (i) Involving a *minimum* number of partners from both the South and the North.
- (ii) Preserving and reinforcing the Barcelona acquires; and
- (iii) Being open to all partners to participate at any time:

Thus, according to the ISS Report there are no easy solution to the problem of building a Euro-Mediterranean community, for hard choices must be made by the E.U. and its Southern partners alike. The details of the proposal of a Euro-Mediterranean Community of Democratic States were laid out in a report prepared by the EuroMesco network for the 2005 Barcelona Summit, at the request of the ministries of foreign affairs of states within the EMP.³²

³² Roberts Aliboni, George Foffe, Erwan Lannon, Azzam Mahjoub, Abdallah Saaf and Alvaro de Vasconceles (2008), *Union for the Mediterranean.: Building on the Barcelona Acquis* Paris: E.U. Institute for Security Studies, #.01, 13 May 13, pp, 3-6.

Despite the tension it raised in the E.U., French President Sarkozy's proposal for a Union for the Mediterranean certainly touched a sympathetic chord in the South Mediterranean region and even among some Southern European states as well. The main reason for this is that it promises Mediterranean partners the possibility of ownership of a shared policy, something which has not really hitherto been evident within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.³³

³³ Ibid., P. 11.

CONCLUSION

The Arab states of the Southern Mediterranean region have been suffering democracy deficit for far too long. Obstacles to democracy in these states go well beyond the autocratic nature of present regimes to span a host of factors, from the underdeveloped bourgeoisie, the prevalence of patrimonialism in state structures and the fear of Islamists capturing state power to the multiple Western security concerns that guarantee external support to the region's authoritarian rule. All this has led to a situation where politics in most Arab countries is a family business and the democratic initiatives are suppressed by the robust security apparatus of the state. As aptly described by the noted Egyptian scholar, "If *raison de la nation* has retreated in the face of *raison d'e'tat*, now this latter is retreating in the face of *raison de la famille*."¹

These realities do not mean that the region cannot democratize or that the external actors have no role to play. But, there should be a change in the domestic political process combined with European reformist zeal. In other words, democratisation is both an endogenous process involving social dynamics and the creation of a specific set of structural pre-conditions combined with external help by the international actors who can act as a catalyst in the entire process of democratic transition. Most importantly, the external actors will have to work hard to build its credibility as an advocate of positive change in Arab world. In fact, liberal Arabs often attribute the absence of democracy in this part of the world primarily to the weakness of external forces that have driven democratisation elsewhere.² Reflective of this, the editor of the London-based Arabic

¹ Bahgat Korany, "The Old/New Middle East" in Laura Guazzone (ed.), *The Middle East in Global Change: The Politics and Economics of Interdependence versus Fragmentation* (London: Macmillan, 1997), p. 147.

² Gary C. Gambill (2003), "Explaining the Arab Democracy Deficit, Part II: American Policy", *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin*, Vol. 5 No. 8-9, August-September ; Tim Niblock (1998), "Democratization: A

daily *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, Abdelbari Atwan wrote, "the winds of democratic change have swept all parts of the world except our region, because (American Secretary of State) Madeleine Albright wants us to have dictators and monarchical presidents to ensure that we remain weak and vanquished."³

In a recent study, Eva Bellin has likewise pointed out that one of the factors that accounts for the persistence of authoritarianism in the region is the perpetual support of the international actors because of the multiple western security concerns. In contrast to other regions, the authoritarian regimes in this part of the world did not see their sources of international patronage evaporate with the end of the cold war.⁴ Two key international concerns are a reliable oil supply and the Islamist threat. Both these concerns have provided a compelling rationale to Western policy makers to persist in providing patronage to the authoritarian regimes in the area.

The security threat posed by the recent surge of Islamic fundamentalism, according to Graham Fuller "is historically inevitable, but politically tenable." In elaborating on this, he optimistically holds the view that opening up of the political system would prove to be more effective than suppressing the Islamists. For suppression, he argues "generally serves to strengthen the radicalism of Islamist and to increase

Theoretical and Practical Debate", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 2, November, pp. 221-233.

³ *Al-Quds al-Arabi* (London), October 14, 1999 quoted in Gary C. Gambill (2003), "Explaining the Arab Democracy Deficit, Part II: American Policy", *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin*, Vol. 5, No. 8-9, August – September.

⁴ Eva Bellin (2004), "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East", *Comparative Politics*, (January, pp.139-157

their appeal to oppressed citizenry.”⁵ Fuller adds, over the long run the Islamic fundamentalism even represents ultimate political progress towards greater democracy and popular government. To counter the Islamic threat, the existing political regime should concentrate on democratising society. After all elections are symbols of democracy and the real democracy to take root there has to be a cordial relation between the state and civil society. The maturation of civil society would provide strength to democracy by resisting the states attempt to encroach on issue of human rights, oppression of dissidents and freedom of expression. Civil society would encourage the tolerance and respect for diversity or what is called the pluralism.

True, democracy will open the political process providing the Islamists with a new avenue through which they would pursue their political agenda. As secularism is viewed as a pre-requisite for a viable democracy, the rise in fortunes of Islamists is viewed with alarm. Policy-makers and academicians have either ignored the popular aspirations or tacitly approved the state crack-downs and even military coups as in Algeria. However, democracy may prove to be far more resilient than the challenge the Islamists pose to the state. Democracy instead could be the best means of contending with the Islamist challenge. Participation in political process can do more to tame the Islamist threat than the state repression. Exclusion is likely to radicalise it, reproducing the experience of the Iranian revolution, whereas participation is likely to constrict the growth of the Islamist forces in Muslim societies. Perception of a global Islamic threat can contribute to support for repressive governments in the Muslim world, and thus to the

⁵ Graham. E. Fuller, *Islamic fundamentalism in Northern Tier Countries: An Integrative View* (Rand research study, 1991), pp. 41,42.

creation of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Thwarting participatory politics by canceling elections or repressing populist Islamic movements would foster radicalisation.

Ironically, the danger posed by Islamic fundamentalism has been used as the excuse for increasing authoritarianism and violations of human rights, whereas the lack of enthusiasm for political liberalisation in the region has been rationalised by the assertion that Arab culture and Islam are antidemocratic. As explained in the Chapter 1, its colonial background, persistence of imperialist control together with the presence of upper landed class, the rentier nature of economy and entanglement of the region in superpower military rivalry during the Cold War have not created conditions conducive to the development of democratic traditions and institutions. European colonial rule and post-independence governments headed by military officers, ex-military men, and monarchs have contributed to a legacy in which political participation and the building of strong democratic institutions are of little concern. National unity and stability as well as the political legitimacy of governments have been undermined by the artificial nature of modern states whose national boundaries were often determined by colonial powers and whose rulers were either put in place by Europe or simply seized power. Weak economies, illiteracy, and high unemployment, especially among the younger generation, aggravate the situation, undermining confidence in governments and increasing the appeal of "Islamic fundamentalism."

At the same time, low level of popular mobilisation together with patrimonialism has contributed to the endurance of authoritarianism in the region. Where patrimonial institutions are wedded to coercive capacity, authoritarianism is likely to endure. Countries with a history of patrimonial rule are greatly disadvantaged in institutional

endowment. They do not have the effective and impartial bureaucracies, police and other state institutions that are necessary for a vibrant-democracy. To anchor democracy in such conditions, what is required is a focus on building effective, impartial state institutions, nurturing associations that reach across ethnic lines and unite people around common economic and cultural interests. This challenge is huge but is little different from the one facing many other countries.

Capping them all is the access to abundant rent that helps in sustaining the overdeveloped coercive apparatuses, which, in turn, reinforces authoritarianism. Many of these states are major recipients of rentier income. Their rent derives from different endowments-petroleum resources, gas resources, geo strategic utility and control of critical transit facilities. It gives them access to substantial discretionary resources so that, even if the country is overall in poor economic health, expenditure on security apparatus remains very high. This legacy of rent fueled opportunities undermines the capacity to build autonomous, countervailing power to the state in society, thus, fostering authoritarianism further, the enormous amount of rent received from outside frees them from the demands of domestic revenue source which in turn frees them from the demands for democratic participation that accompany the provision of taxes. The result is a movement away from democracy: no taxation hence no representation.⁶

In the aftermath of September 11 terror strikes on the U.S., global interest has focused intensely on the urgent need for promotion of democracy in the Arab world. For the persistence of authoritarianism – both Monarchical and Republican – is generally considered as responsible for popular discontent that fuels the Islamist terrorism. It would

⁶ Beillin, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism". P. 144.

be tempting to argue that removal of the coercive apparatus, perhaps by decisive external intervention could end authoritarianism and open the way to democracy in this region. The United States had a somewhat similar perception when it argued that forceful regime change in Iraq could allow it to rapidly democratize it and by so doing unleash a democratic wave across the Islamic world. The U.S., doubtless, ousted Saddam Hussein and installed a regime less repressive domestically and less hostile to U.S. interests. But, democracy is not forthcoming.⁷ For, while the removal of democracy suppressing coercive apparatus or removal of authoritarian regime is a necessary condition for democratic transition and consolidation, it is not sufficient. A host of conditions including a minimal level of elite commitment, a minimal level of national solidarity and the creation of impartial and effective state institute must be present. In the absence of these preconditions, removing an oppressive regime will lead, not to democracy, last rather to chaos.

Unlike the United States, the European policy makers do not believe in change of reign but stand for the spread of liberal values. The European analysis has been that democracy does not come from precision missiles.⁸ Thus, the E.U. policy-makers have opted for a kind of political change that would be facilitated over the longer terms by widening of the space of civil society to generate democratic awareness or “capacity”, reforming the “rentier” economic activity, improving basic economic and political rights and encouraging the Islamists’ engagement in the political process.

⁷ Ottaway, Marina, Thomas Carothers, Amy Hawthorne and Daniel Brinberg (2002), *Democratic Mirage in the Middle East*, Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

⁸ Chris Pattern (2003), “Democracy doesn’t come from precision missiles”, *International Herald Tribune*, September 16

In brief, the European Union, unlike its American counterpart avoids top-down democracy promotion which involves pressures at the governmental level. It instead pursues the bottom-up approach that aims at developing the precursors to democratization with the consent of the regime. Second, the E.U. policy-makers link the success of their democracy promotion initiative in the Arab world to the sustained progress in the West Asian peace process. In their view, the much-lauded “democratic peace” idea does not apply to the WANA region simply because the internal political change is held hostage to the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Lastly, E.U.’s strategy is to foster ‘socialisation’ around democratic norms within regime-like features of the EMP rather than resorting to coercive measures like suspension of aid or heavy-handed imposition of Western political forms. Thus, in contrast to the U.S. policy defined in terms of power politics or ‘Machopolitik’ (military intervention and occupation are the two illustrative examples), the EU approach to democracy promotion in the Arab world focuses on disseminating normative value of political pluralism through institutionalized process of cooperation.

It is, rather, in the interest of E.U. to see peace prevailing on its southern boundaries.⁹ The whole of West Asia and North Africa – (WANA) forms part of Europe’s neighbourhood and some of the world’s most intractable conflicts are on Europe’s periphery, including the Israel-Palestinian conflict, the aftermath of the war in Iraq, the tensions that rack Lebanon; and Iran’s nuclear ambitions. These conflicts, therefore, affect Europe and the E.U.’s Mediterranean neighbours. Further, a large part of global energy supplies are concentrated within Europe’s wider neighbourhood. Further, a

⁹ Abdelkader Lahlou (2003), “The Integration of the Moroccan Economy into the New Euro-Mediterranean Strategy and Space.”

large part of global energy supplies are concentrated within Europe's wider neighbourhood. Predictably, the E.U. is concerned about the precarious political, social and economic systems in the WANA region that constitute a potential security threat. Last but not the least, Europe is the first destination for migrants, legal and illegal, who form a sizeable diasporas (almost 10 million people altogether, mostly from the Maghreb), in France, Netherlands, Belgium and other EU member states. Many Europeans fear that the flood of illegal immigrants into Europe will keep growing and profoundly perturb the European labour market and society. All these factors in varying degree account for the E.U.'s engagement in support for democratic reforms and the defense of human rights in the Arab world through a multilateral framework known as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP). Formally launched in a major ministerial conference in Barcelona in November 1995, the EMP covers all aspects of the social, economic and political relations between the E.U. and the 12 southern Mediterranean countries of which 8 are Arab (Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia). The EMP has introduced the concept of partnership and attempted to make relations more dynamic by using assistance to encourage economic and structural reforms. It is believed that political reform combined with economic liberalization and social cooperation would enhance Europe's own security by easing migratory pressures and neutralizing the threat posed by political Islam. The latter had grown in strength largely due to the failure of the pro-Western autocratic regimes to improve the economic conditions of the people in the Arab world. The basic principles and objectives of the EMP were incorporated into European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) launched in 2003. The central element of the ENP is the bilateral Action. Plans

between the E.U. and the individual partner for a deeper political relationship and economic integration to be built on mutual commitment to such common values as democracy and human rights, rule of law, good governance and market economy principles.

Although many West Asian experts have appreciated the E.U.'s gradualist approach, critics find it inadequate and idealistic, reflective of European reluctances to play a pro-active role risking its economic advantages, commercial and security interests in the region. Except for some cosmetic political changes, the EMP has in the past decade largely served to expand trade relations and economic exchanges. The logic of "socialization dynamic" has, for instance, yielded precious little partly because of lack of mutual trust on both sides and partly, the exclusion of the Islamist opposition forces from the dialogue process. Furthermore, most of the Arab satiates with the notable exception of Tunisia and Morocco are not simply prepared to engage in debate with EU partners on issues related to democracy and human rights through the Euro Mediterranean Committee. Nor have they shown a commitment to democratization as understood within the European context. Consequently, several initiatives seen as key to giving effect to the socialization approach, a Euro-Islam Dialogue Forum, for instance, have been either abandoned or considerable diluted in response to Arab objections.

Similarly, the "bottom up" strategy of the E.U. has failed to generate the grass roots level pressures for political liberalization through the NGO network and civic education due to the modest democracy assistance funding, and limited number of projects related to democracy promotion, absence of material for the Arab professional associations and syndicates, and the exclusion of the groups inspired by religious faith.

Majority of the E.U.'s local partners engaged in awareness-building projects and other developmental activities at the civil societal level have turned out to be elitist associations close to the government or are controlled by the transnational NGOs. Even though the EU set up a fund specifically to support civil society- the MEDA Democracy Programme which was incorporated into the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights in 2000, the main thrust is still very much on economics and the link with political reform remains unclear. In any case, the E.U.s aid policy in Morocco and Tunisia has given rise to a form of hybrid state, in which of the economic environment and in certain respects political governance is akin to a liberal free-market state, last where this coexists with old patronage systems and authoritarian political structures. In other words, some Arab states like Morocco and Tunisia can be at best described as “liberalized autocracies”, while others remain fully autocratic more than a decade after the E.U.’s incorporation of the democratic promotion agenda into its Mediterranean policy as the part and parcel of a comprehensive security.

In the aftermath of September 11, the global menace of Islamist terror has been used by the authoritarian regimes as a pretext to restrict participatory politics and control collective activities outside the state-delineated space. Even the middle classes (entrepreneurs and educated professionals) in many Arab states prefer to tolerate the reigning autocrats than any rapid transition to democracy that ironically raises the prospects of bringing to power the Islamist parties. In the backdrop of the limited efficacy of E.U.’s policy initiatives, the critics now underline the urgency of a through revision of its “softy, softy” approach to democracy promotion. While some have suggested a ‘big bang’ approach aimed at using pressures – both military and economic – to secure

democratization in the near future, others have emphasized the need for striking a better balance between top-down and bottom-up approaches. A combination of punitive conditionality such as punishing those for failure in providing democratic opening and rewarding those who make progress in political liberalization with the micro-level pressure through the expansion of grass roots organisational capacity would prove to be more effective in facilitating relatively less chaotic-democratic transition.

The E.U. already wants a lot from Arab states. It wants help in the war on terrorism and to control illegal migration. It wants their oil. It wants cooperation in finding a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. So, the E.U. will be forced to work with existing regimes towards gradual reform and this is a good thing. If a tidal wave of political change actually came to pass, the external actors would not be even remotely prepared to cope with the resulting instability and need for large scale building of new political systems. But, the E.U. should push the liberalized autocracies of the region, such as in Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon, beyond the superficial political reforms they use to sustain themselves. This will require pressuring such states to undertake true political restructuring, allow the development of political parties and open up more space for political contestation. The EU should be clear about the goal in each country: regime change, slow liberalization and democratization are not the same thing. Policies to achieve one goal are not necessarily appropriate for the others. Thus, the E.U. should review carefully everything that it has done so far in the region to promote democracy. Understanding the weaknesses of the prior efforts and making suitable changes in the policy approach is urgently required.

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