

Right to vote

[Politics](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Instructions Part 2: Order 1164440 This is an additional following assignment related to the same forum. You need to create a response for each student posting below separately.

Use same reading materials attached in this order.

For each student posting 1 & 2 you need to create a response to student posting. Each reply must directed to student saying what you support in his posting or not.

Each response to student posting should be 150 words a minimum.

Responses should include what you agree or disagree with and why. Use citations in your responses. In your response do not be negative as these student's responses already have a positive feedback from professor.

Make each reply separate from each other Reply#1, Reply #2 ,

Note: this is an online class discussion forum and created response should address this student posting. . i. e “ I agree with you ...”

DO NOT COPY!!!

----- Student Posting -----

PART1-----

The democracy deficit found in the Middle East does not stem from one single factor, but has grown from issues that are found in the culture and history of the region. Developing a free democratic society from an autocratic reign is a difficult task, and one that will take much smarter individuals than I to instill. “ Today, only two out of twenty-one countries in the Middle East qualify as electoral democracies, down from three observed in 1972” (Bellin 2004, P. 139). Some of the factors that have been brought forward as reasons for the persistence of autocratic societies in the Middle East are religion, rents received from oil, control of the military, and using <https://assignbuster.com/right-to-vote/>

violence as a tool for oppression. Along with the previously stated issues, “one factor that does help explain the democratic deficit is the subordination of women” (Fish 2002, P. 5). The Middle East is an area of the world that is well known for its lack of freedoms and oppression of women, preventing much of the population the right to voice any opinion on matters that directly affect them.

One of the few countries in the Middle East that has allowed women the right to not only vote but also run for political office is Lebanon, showing a willingness to change with the times. “Lebanese women won the right to vote and to participate in national elections in 1952, 19 years before women in Switzerland” (Khalife, 2009). Although women in Lebanon are allowed the right to vote and hold political office it is still a very male dominated culture, “in fact, only 17 women have served in Lebanon's Parliament since suffrage” (Khalife, 2009). One of the major reasons that women's voices in Lebanon are marginalized is the fact that political parties are focused on sectarian differences. Lebanese politics are unique to the Middle East, with 18 separate political parties being recognized and allowed the right to represent the people. Although Lebanon is not considered free by Freedom House, it is one of the few countries in the Middle East that is actively working towards democratic representation of the people.

Countries in the Middle East that do not allow for the representation of the citizens need to take note of the strides that have been made in Lebanon as a starting block for democracy. The Lebanese political system in place now is not without fault and can often be found in disagreements resulting in violence in the streets, but it shows definite promise compared to many of the autocratic societies in other Middle Eastern countries. When working <https://assignbuster.com/right-to-vote/>

towards defeating the democratic deficit in the Middle East the recognition of women's rights and sectarian representation are two major factors that must be present in order for the system to succeed.

Bellin, Eva. 2004. "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: A Comparative Perspective." *Comparative Politics* 36. 2: 139-157.

Fish M. Steven. 2002. "Islam and Authoritarianism." *World Politics* 55: 4-37.

Khalife, Nadya. "A Womans Place, in Lebanon | Human Rights Watch.". July 2, 2009. Accessed November 21, 2014. <http://www.hrw.org/news/2009/07/02/womans-place-lebanon>.

Reply From other student

Harlan,

I like the notion you present by suggesting that empowering women within the region may in fact enable a more democratic environment. During the last few years in Bahrain, women have begun to be elected to representative seats within the Bahraini parliament—a huge step for all women within the region. Nevertheless according to Herb, the Bahraini parliament lacks real power (2004). If that is true, then the move, like others that are similar throughout the Middle East, is little more than a "bone" thrown in the direction of Middle Eastern citizens, to distract them from their genuine lack of input within their respective governments. As much as I have observed the Iranian state over the last few years, I continuously see the same types of things being implemented for women—steps that lack any real input or voice in the end. Perhaps as you suggested, by giving women a more equitable role within Middle Eastern society, more democratic principles can begin to take root. Thanks for the post and have a great week!

Richard Fisher

References

Herb, Michael. 2004. "Princes and Parliaments in the Arab World." *The Middle East Journal* 58. 3: 367-384. ProQuest.

----- Student Posting -----PART

2-----

I found it interesting when Michael Ross pointed out in his paper that most scholars who studied democracy avoided using the Middle East in their overall research¹. I also saw that the monarchies set up in the Middle East were basically installed, reshuffled, or redone to suit the needs of Europe². Between those two facts, it appears that western society does not want willingly want to examine why the Middle East is such a hotbed for strange governance. On the one hand, the majority of the heads of state for Middle Eastern countries were amicable to western needs, like oil such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, natural gas again with Iran, or waterway passage such as Egypt.

Michael Herb presented good information on parliaments in the Middle East and he talked about how European countries went from pure monarchies to a constitutional monarchy; however, those countries took years or even decades to get to the right form of government for its citizens. Those countries who wound up as constitutional monarchies and rigged the elections, usually failed for much of their history³. These types of government did not share the power as they were supposed to, and they certainly did not represent the views and expressions of the citizen majority.

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Countries like Iraq, Syria, and Egypt held elections, but the victors pretty much guaranteed their wins. Before the Arab Spring, Hosni Mubarak practically owned the presidency, even with the controversial 2005 election⁴. Saddam Hussein ran elections, but his Ba'ath Party always ensured he and his cohorts held all positions in Iraq. The Assad family has held the Syrian presidency for decades at this point, though Syria is still fighting through the effects of the Arab Spring. We tolerated rulers like these because they kept resistance in check and maintained a balance of power in the Middle East. There is no doubt that Saddam was ruthless; but considering that he bore the weight of an eight year war against a then-recently radicalized regime, it wasn't hard to overlook that a tyrannical religious minority held and kept power while fighting against Iran.

The U. S. also tolerates the Saudi rule not only because of the flow of oil out of the Kingdom and into the rest of the world, but because they keep some of the more fanatic extremists on their toes. We the people can condemn Saudi Arabia for all the beheading they do in accordance to their laws, but the U. S. and other western governments aren't going to apply a lot of pressure on the Saudi king to change their forms of punishments if the ruling party can keep some semblance of order. As our readings have shown, the Saud family wasn't always in power, but they have made sure that no one can oppose them from within.

My advice to policymakers will not sit well with anyone of influence. To me, the current rulers either need to stay in power, much to the chagrin of human rights observers, or we need to usher in a complete and uninfluenced-from-the-West set of democratic elections. I say uninfluenced because I think back to when the Muslim Brotherhood won the Egyptian

presidential elections, and yet many Westerners were not happy. To me, if the Egyptian people voted for someone with a good size majority, let them have their leader. Let the Egyptians deal with the consequences of what their election results.

I'm not saying that to be mean, but after our own revolution, the U. S. went several years before we had a Constitution that worked for the country. If anyone has seen the beginning of the movie " The Green Berets," it gives a good synopsis of how this country had to deal with its own troubles before it became what it is today; for the record, this movie is my brother's favorite film so it is always at the back of my mind.

Again, I would urge policymakers to encourage the various citizens of the Middle East to pick their form of government and if they choose to hold elections, ensure that they are unbiasedly and fairly held, probably with the help of UN observers. If the people of one country choose to democratically elect a government that is not so friendly to the US, then we pack up our bags and do A LOT more business with neighboring countries.

That last tactic is something I employed quite a bit in Afghanistan and Iraq at the bazaars. If someone didn't want to deal with me and my source of income, I had no problem going to the next vendor and flashing some money... after some heavy negotiating of course, and then walking by the original merchant to show them what they missed. I think I got away with this a lot because I didn't always let on that I knew the local language(s) and used that to my benefit.

-Will

References:

1. Ross, Michael. 2001. “ Does Oil Hinder Democracy?” World Politics, Vol 53: 3. p328.
2. Anderson, Lisa. 1991. “ Absolutism and the Resilience of Monarchy in the Middle East.” Political Science Quarterly, Vol 106: 1. p4.
3. Herb, Michael. 2004. “ Princes and Parliaments in the Arab World.” The Middle East Journal, Vol 58: 3. p371.
4. “ Controversy Swirls Over Egypt Vote.” Washington Post. September 9, 2005. Accessed November 19, 2014. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/09/08/AR2005090800151.html>

Reply From other student

Will,

I like a lot of your ideas. I especially like the notion of the US “ packing its bags” and choosing to work with countries that want a friendly relationship in order to provide an incentive in the region to yield to US pressure.

Nevertheless laced throughout the post, I continue to see Western meddling.

I simply cannot see how the Middle East can have democracy implemented for them; they have to do it. That is the pattern that was followed in the West and has subsequently worked.

I see this method in your example of Egypt, its elections, and the subsequent elections placing the Muslim Brotherhood in power. Though the West was not happy with this notion, I believe you are right in saying that if that is what the people of the region want, that is what they should get to elect. The problem with the Muslim Brotherhood is that shortly after being elected, they began to yet again employ authoritarian measures to create a nation to their
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liking, as opposed to listening to the people. This is exactly the kind of notion that Bellin references when he speaks of the state taking power over civil societies in order to control the population to their liking—a pattern that we have witnessed in the Middle East over and over again after what appears to be the probable hope for democracy shortly before it is snuffed out by yet another authoritarian regime (2004, 142). Before the coup in Egypt, I believe President Morsi showed what an elected government within the region could do as he worked to resolve the outbreak of conflict between Israel and Hamas. He was actually working within US interests by pursuing policies that also favored his own nation. Thanks for the discussion and have a great week.

Richard Fisher

References

Bellin, Eva. 2004. "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: A Comparative Perspective." *Comparative Politics* 36. 2: 139-157. Jstor.

Reply From other student

Richard,

That is a tricky tightrope I walked this week. I want the people of each country in the Middle East to decide for themselves what type of government they want and who they want to represent or rule the country, but no matter what, the West will have some say in it.

The problem with Morsi after he was elected was that he took more power

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for himself than what Hosni Mubarak had. The documentary that Professor Maye recommended to us showed the demonstrators coming back out to protest against Morsi after he had granted himself more executive power. However, the documentary showed that the Egyptian youth did clamor for government that seemed more in line with how modern society (Europe and democratic Asian countries with strong economies).

A lot more people should take notice of what happens with Egypt. The Suez Canal is vital to keeping the modern world running, but it shouldn't be at the expense of what happens to the Egyptian people.

-Will