Rights or Riots? Regional Institutional and Cultural Legacies in the MENA Region, and the Case of Turkey

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The study of political institutions over the last fifty years has demonstrated that they are, perhaps not surprisingly, critical to governance. While this statement may sound obvious to the reader, over the course of the last fifty to hundred years of scholarship on these issues, scholars and others have come up with many other ideas about what makes politics work, many of them centered on the individual action of charismatic leaders or strongmen, elections of the same, perhaps strong economic institutions, or even simply the hegemonic assertions of political corruption and domination on the part of power elites. Political institutions do not always receive enough of our attention.

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Samuel Huntington[5] was famous for putting political institutions first in this conundrum; he argued that political institutions must be developed before economic or other factors in order to manage successfully relations between civil society and the state, as well as relations between members of society. Without such political institutions, the outcome of new democratic engagement on the part of populations around the world (including the developed world) was most likely to be riots, or even outright revolution. Huntington argued that institutions may vary in their adaptability; complexity; autonomy/subordination to social groups outside of the state; and in coherence/unity[6]. Governments and regimes (meaning entire political orders) can change rapidly in the countries in which norms and institutional practices are not well established or agreed upon.[7] It takes time to establish persistent political institutions; and, once in place, they may be difficult to change. Institutions have very long staying-power. Affirming this point, Max Weber suggests that corporate groups from the most complex presidential system to the most simple church or organic small, traditional community carry with them some degree of authority; once in place, some number people will follow individuals and institutions just by virtue of their being in a position of authority.[8] Emile Durkheim, too, noted in his late 19th century dissertation, which became one of the most famous books of social theory across disciplines until present, that political authority structures tend to take on a life of their own once in place; that is, political authorities and political systems, once in place, develop their own interests, concerns, and modes of action which may depart from the communal consensus from which they first emerged.[9]

All of this is to say, it is very important to put in place the *right* institutions when we choose to do so at all. For, we are apt to be living with them for a very long time with many consequences, both seen and unseen in advance

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[5] Huntington, Samuel P. Political Order in Changing Societies. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968.

6. Huntington, Samuel P. Political Order in Changing Societies. New New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968.

7. Russett, Bruce. Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World. New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1993.

8. Weber, Max. Economy and Society. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978. Regarding a tendency to submit to authority, see also his concept of "discipline," 153; and his concept of "conventions," 127-128.

9. Durkheim, Emile. The Division of Labor in Society. New York: The Free Press, 1997.

If we know, then, from work in comparative politics that debates over practices within institutions may change the content of the institutions themselves from the inside-out;[10] and we know from work in international relations that democratic governments and institutions will be unstable if the norms governing their functioning are not fully developed;[11] at the very least, then, the lessons of international relations and comparative politics together are in agreement that significant attention is needed to the link or continuum between institutional design, on the one hand, and institutional norms (for the study of international relations) and practices (for the study of comparative politics), on the other hand. Given that institutions and practices may be difficult to change once they are put in place, it is worth paying significant attention to their construction and development, including the development of the norms that drive their actual practices with at least some degree of perpetuity.

We want to argue that the establishment of not only strong institutions, but the *hands-on* establishment norms and practices within those institutions will be critical to political outcomes around the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in the post-Arab Spring era. As an institutional matter, we suggest Turkey as an example of a country that has been able to maintain the integrity of its foundational political institutional design while incorporating religious parties. Religious constituencies have been systematically suppressed in most of the secularist regimes of the 20th century in the MENA region, and their incorporation into their respective political systems is a high priority for many religious constituencies in many countries of the MENA region. Some other MENA countries have similarly successfully incorporated religious parties into their political systems without endangering the institutional design of the political system at large, including Jordan and Yemen.

The Arab Spring, which broke out in January of 2011, spread quickly across the Middle East. A pressing concern for U.S. analysts in the post-Arab Spring period centers on the role of religious parties. Do we encourage their inclusion in newly forming regimes; or do we continue with a now at least 35 year tradition of distrust of Islamic parties (dating since approximately the Iranian Revolution)?

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10. Migdal, Joel S. State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
[11] Ibid, note 4.

Turkey in particular offers a valuable and fascinating lesson in answer to this question. Turkey has maintained for over ten years the "profane" (i.e., non-religious) institutional structures that allow the participation of a wide swath of the population in the politics of the government. Why has Turkey been able to do this? We suggest that the answer lies in: (1) Institutional Factors; (2) Military Structures; and (3) Education.

In the remainder of this article, we outline factors relating to Turkey's institutional legacies, military system, and educational system, all of which suggest it as locally-grounded institutional system that is more likely to be trusted by MENA regimes than is the United States as a direct actor in the region. We make this suggestion particularly in regard to the secularist regimes that emerge after World War I; these have tended to be the hardest hit by the Arab Spring. We suggest that the Arab Spring is primarily a protest movement against autocratic regimes. From a Middle Eastern perspective, many of the worst hit by the Arab Spring have been precisely the secularist regimes installed by European powers after World War I. We aver that Turkey, as a trusted ally of the United States and NATO, may carry a mediating role between the secular demands of "the West" and other MENA regimes, many of which prefer something other than a purely secularist model of state-building. The West tends to see secularism in politics as ensuring a "neutral" playing ground within which a range of ideas or interests can be navigated. In the Middle East, secularism has been associated with autocratic and totalitarian regimes, and is thus widely distrusted. Turkey is an ideal mediator between these two poles – a Western desire for secular regimes, and a Middle Eastern suspicion of the same – poles which are both institutional and cultural in nature in both places.

Turkey's institutional legacy, going back to the Ottoman Empire, of diffuse rule and local autonomy is suggestive of a long-standing local, Middle Eastern and North African institutional and cultural legacy of participatory governance or a sort of "pure democracy" at the very local level. This participatory governance, while not perfect, was substantial and may constitute a local form of democracy more in keeping with Middle Eastern and North African institutional, historical, cultural, religious, and popular expectations. As such, it is likely to be more stable as a form of rule for the region.

Institutional Factors

Turkey has the institutional advantage of having been the central Ottoman state of the Ottoman Empire. Most of the Middle Eastern countries today were part of the former Ottoman Empire, as closer-in or further-outlying provinces. Between World War I and 1963, all former provinces of the Ottoman Empire emerged as separate states independent of European rule. A number of states in MENA that emerged after World War I were initially ruled as Mandatory states by European powers, under the rule of either Britain or France. A number of mandates were established after World War I under the auspices of the League of Nations in both the Levante and sub-Saharan Africa. The Levantine mandates were established at the San Remo Conference of 1920 with Britain given authority over Palestine and Iraq, and France that over Syria and Jordan. The central form of "governance" in the region until then followed an institutional design based upon diffuse rule and communal autonomy with the Ottoman Empire as a non-demanding central power. Because this form of rule did not follow late-modern European models of rule from the center, expansive bureaucracy, and top-down capacity (and will) to enforce its rule in a direct manner on populations, the European powers at the time did not recognize this MENA model of *diffuse* imperial rule with local autonomy as "governance," *per se*. The Ottoman imperial form of rule was similar to a form of federalism in that it enforced taxation, conscription, and basic laws that applied across the empire[12]. Otherwise, however, local populations were encouraged to engage in self-governance to a great degree, within certain limits, and in a way that was institutionalized, regularized, and systematic.[13]

The encounter of European powers with MENA populations and forms of governance in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, then, reflected a fairly strong clash of cultures around institutional configuration. MENA populations simply expected a vastly different form of institutional design and governmental rule than did European powers who struggled to engage the region in the post-World War I era.

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12. Barkey, Karen. Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
13. Kasaba, Reşat. A Moveable Empire: Ottoman Nomads, Migrants, and Refugees. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2009.

Turkey's institutional history going back to the Ottoman Empire included both institutional and cultural legacies of incorporating a remarkably wide range of populations and social formations, some of which barely exist any longer, such as nomadic clan groups. Nomadic clan communities served the function of a merchant class as well as communication and transportation of material culture from China across Asia and to Europe and Africa. In the Ottoman Empire, during periods of expansion, nomadic groups also served the purpose of expanding and/or protecting the boundaries of the Empire. For scholars such as Kasaba, during periods of contraction, relations with nomadic groups were sometimes more strained, but, for our purposes, those relationships were always institutionalized and typically involved a high degree of local autonomy.

Institutional, legal frameworks, thus, guided relations between the central government and the populations in a manner that was both structured and flexible. Over the course of many centuries, this form of rule became the institutional and cultural expectation of local populations around issues of "governance." Ottoman citizens ranged culturally, linguistically, and in terms of their social formations from Berbers of North Africa through metropolitan areas of Egypt and the Levante to desert populations and clan confederations of North Africa and the Mesopotamian basin (Barkey 2008; Kasaba 2009). Their ethnic distribution included 13 ethnic groups for the Balkans alone, and 8 ethnic groups for Istanbul alone in 1897. The main identity groups listed in the *1906 Summary Result of the Ottoman Census* were: Muslims, Cossacks, Greeks, Armenians, Bulgarians, Wallachians, Greek Catholics, Armenian Catholics, Protestants, Latins, Maronites, Syrians, Chaldeans, Jacobites, Jews, Samaritans, Yezidis, Gypsies, and "Foreigners." [14] In a strong sense, the Ottoman population make-up and institutional design reflected a variation of a form of federalist rule. Other parts of that year's census identified still more ethnic, national, and religious groupings. This history of positive and institutionally successful distributions of power between the central state apparatus and its peoples provides an institutional and cultural legacy making it easier for the contemporary Turkish state to work with diverse populations without fear of fundamental structural changes in the basic institutional design of the country.

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14. Karpat, Kemal H. Ottoman Population, 1830-1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985.

After the independence of the Turkish state, October 29, 1923, other states in the region remained under the guidance, and sometimes rule, of European powers. This form of governance prevented them from developing their own, independent governing structures. It also constrained them from developing governing structures that might have been more suited to their populations, and their institutional histories. Outside powers, thus, had a great deal of impact on the region. Within the region, several types of regimes emerged. On the hard-left, these included the leftist, secularist regimes of Iraq, Syria, and Egypt. The first two of these were totalitarian regimes, while Egypt for most of the 20th century was usually categorized as authoritarian or semi-authoritarian. Constitutional monarchies, such as Jordan and Morocco, had a long history of interactive rule between state and society, and remarkably stable polities throughout the 20th century. Some of the Gulf monarchies also maintain constitutional monarchies and remain relatively stable, in part, due to the fact that only a few clan networks make up the population of the entire state. The relatively small and familial population context makes it relatively stable. The state structures in these regimes tend to be relatively pragmatist and moderate in terms of approach to religion.

By contrast, the main "secular" regimes of the 20th century in the MENA region were the national socialist regimes of Baathist Iraq, Baathist Syria, and Nasser's Egypt, most paradigmatically, in the 1950s and 1960s. Egypt and Syria engaged in a brief experiment of joining as one country, called the United Arab Republic, which lasted for one-and-a-half years from 1958-1961. These regimes in this period did not have systematic, democratic, secular and institutionalized channels of interaction between state and society. And, in fact, in the case of Syria and Iraq, the regimes were so brutal that they have left a lasting distrust on the part of many regional populations for "secular" rule. These were hard-left, national socialist regimes with policies of extermination of opposition (from men to women to elderly and children), and anti-religion platforms for significant proportions of their existence as regimes. Interestingly, it has only been religious constituencies in the 20th century that have had any staying-power in challenging these authoritarian and totalitarian regimes, which may contribute to the relative trust that some Middle Eastern populations have for religious versus secular authorities in the Middle East.

Contrary to the experience of the United States or Western Europe, where religious authorities became too much tied to autocratic political power, historically speaking, it has been religious authorities and constituencies that have been some of the only successful challengers of autocratic power in the MENA region. In 2007, Iraq, Syria, and Egypt – the main lasting autocratic states in the late 20th century – made up about 29% of the population of the MENA region[15] and have been among the strongest MENA militaries. While the United States has tended to pay more attention to what it has seen as autocratic *religious* regimes such as Iran or the Taliban, together, the secular regimes of the Middle East have outnumbered the religious regimes by population, and, because of the violently authoritarian and/or totalitarian nature of three of the largest secular regimes, it is they who have tended to be seen as the largest problem from the perspective of local populations in the region.

A tendency of some local populations to offer support to certain religious parties, then, may have a lot more to do with MENA suspicion of secularism based on the well-known and locally experienced history of secular regimes in the 20th century than any sort of extremist Islamic ideologies, which surveys suggest (very strongly, we might add) influence a far smaller range of people. Note, for example, a 2006 Gallup poll, which found that very high percentages of populations across the Muslim world and the MENA region want equal legal rights, voting rights, and rights to jobs for women and men. The same poll found that Muslims in most Muslim countries want religious law to play at least some role as a source of legislation[16]. Removing religion entirely from the political sphere, then, following something akin to the U.S. model, would be unresponsive to the needs and preferences of large segments of the population. Turkey is an ideal model of an approximately 99.8 % Islamic country,[17] which maintains secular institutions while maintaining a now twelve year history in which the majority ruling party has been the moderate religious party (Justice and Development Party [AKP], 34.29% of the popular vote 2002; Justice and Development Party [AKP], 46.52 % in 2007; Justice and Development Party [AKP] 49.80 % 2011).[18]

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15. World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision, 2007, Table A2.
16. Esposito, John and Dalia Mogahed. Who Speaks for Islam?: What a Billion Muslims Really Think New York: Gallup Press, 2008.
17. CIA The World Factbook, "Turkey", November, 23, 2013, see:
https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tu.html.
18. 3 November 2002, 22nd Term, Representative General Election Polls; 22 July 2007, 23rd Term, Representative General   Election Polls; 12 June 2011, 24th Term, Representative General Election Polls, results all available at: http://www.ysk.gov.tr/ysk/GenelSecimler.html.

There are five or six other political parties that are partially religious and are more conservative than the Justice Party, and they have received small percentages of the national vote as well in each election since 2002 (usually 1-14 per cent). The hard left parties that are a concern in some other states in the Middle East (e.g., communist parties such as the Baath Party in Iraq) are not a large constituency that Turkey has to address. In the 2007 election, the hard left parties received, respectively: Turkish Communist Party, 0.23% of the national vote; Labor Party, 0.08%; and Workers' Party, 0.37%; Freedom and Solidarity Party, 0.15%[19]. Turkey's state institutional structure is made up of a wide, effective bureaucracy within the Executive branch; a Parliamentary branch with a multi-party electoral system; and its judiciary has some judicial review powers and works on a system of separation of powers.[20]

Turkey's institutional legacy of incorporating diverse populations, maintaining secular state institutions, and nonetheless allowing religious constituencies meaningful participation in the political process is a key to Turkey's success. We strongly encourage institutional development of states in the region toward *secular* or *pragmatist* institutions, which allow for the incorporation of varied populations including religious constituencies, while maintaining institutional safeguards against change from within. Such a development requires attention to the establishment of *norms* and *practices* within institutions, and not only to institutional design on paper. This requires both attention to the internal workings of institutions, and considered attention to the same *over time*. These state institutions should encourage the flourishing of civil society organizations outside of the state. Those civil society organizations should be allowed to represent a wide range of interests, and should have meaningful channels of interaction with offices of the state in order to maintain stability in a region with a long cultural and institutional legacy of local autonomy and local governance.

Military Structures

The Turkish military has been part of Turkish politics from the establishment of the state under a strongly secularist leader, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, who charged the Turkish military with protecting the Republic and democratic institutions of the state.

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19. 22 July 2007, 23rd Term, Representative General Election Polls, see; http://www.ysk.gov.tr/ysk/docs/2007MilletvekiliSecimi/gumrukdahil/gumrukdahil.pdf.
20. Shambayati, Hootan and Esen Kirdiş, "In Pursuit of 'Contemporary Civilization': Judicial Empowerment in Turkey" in Political Research Quarterly 62:4 (2009): 767-780.

For many years, the military stood above the Executive branch in some arenas, in the form of checks and balances between institutions of state. The military, then, was a fourth primary institution of state, checking against any fundamental changes to the "rules of the game" of the system at large that might come out of any of the other primary institutions with which we are familiar: Executive, Legislature, Judiciary.

In this section, we will discuss the evolution of the role of the modernized Turkish Military going back to the Eighteenth Century. The Turkish military is part of the institutional framework and legacy of the Turkish context that makes it a particularly edifying state for comparison, as well as a potential mediator for the United States and the Arab world. During the second half of the 20th century, radical reform movements were started in the military system. The modernized Naval Academy (Mühendishane-i Bahr-i Hümayun) was established in 1773; the Military Engineering Academy (Mühendishane-i Berr-i Hümayun) was established in 1795; and the Military Medical Academy (Tıbbiye) was established in 1806. These modernized, rationalized military institutions were the pioneers of and models for the later non-military university system[21]. The institutional structure of the army formed the basis for many modern Turkish civilian institutions during this early period. The Turkish Military, thus, has a longstanding central involvement with both government and civilian institutions in the country. Not only has it had a very significant role as a fourth major branch of government for most of the 20th century, but it has had a formative impact on society through its educational models and organizational models as well. The relationship between the Turkish military and Turkish civil society was, thus, a creative and fruitful relationship rather than the fraught relationship seen in some contexts in the Middle East (such as Baathist Iraq).

Another reason explaining the importance of the military is the conscription system. Each young Turkish boy, when he reaches the age of twenty, joins the military for a certain period of time (from six months to one year). From each Turkish family, almost all boys are subject to this system. Eventually people from every walk of life become familiar with the military. The average male citizen, in any case, has a personal familiarity with the military.

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21. Simon, Reeva. "The Education of an Iraqi Ottoman Army Officer" in The Origins of Arab Nationalism, Rashid Khalidi, Lisa Anderson, Muhammah Muslih, and Reeva Simon, eds. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.

He may be more familiar with the military than the other organizations within the state; indeed, the military is more transparent to many citizens than are other organizations within the state simply by virtue of military conscription and experience.

The military tends to rank very high in terms of public trust. The Turkish military continues to be the most trusted public institution in Turkey (68% of the overall Turkish population); and more is trusted than the national government (54% of overall population), or the judicial system (56% of overall population)[22]. That is, the Turkish Military is the most respected public institution in the eyes of the national community and it, thus, hangs over the heads of the political parties like a sword of Damocles. Thirdly, the promotion system of the Turkish Army is strictly determined by the law of armed forces; that is, it is merit-based and professional, rather than a political process in any way. Every 30th of August is the promotion time for the Turkish Armed Forces. And, with the exception of court rulings, there is no possibility for any other institution of state to intervene in the promotion system up through the rank of Colonel. It means that governmental offices, or any other political organizations, have no impact on the delays or blockage of the promotions. This institutionalized promotion method makes the military system trusted.

Fourth, in comparison with the other countries' military strength in the region, the Turkish Military Forces are quite a big in number and equipped well. According to the Global Firepower Institution 2014 statistics, Turkey is the 8th largest military power in the world (making it the first in the Middle East and North Africa; Iran is the 22th largest military, globally)[23]. Egypt follows Turkey with the rank of 13. Israel follows at the rank of 11. We are aware that a powerful and well trained military should come under the command of democratic institutions or run the risk becoming a military-dominated system, or transforming the state into a non-democratic system as a whole (e.g., Iraq, Syria, to some extent Egypt). The threats from which a strong military under democratic rule may protect the state and society may include threats both internal and external to the political regime.

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22. Jan Sonnenschein, "Urban Turks' Trust in Major Institutions Drops Sharply," August 15, 2013, Gallup World, see:
http://www.gallup.com/poll/163979/urban-turks-trust-major-institutions-drops-sharply.aspx.
23. Global Firepower Institution, 2013, results available at:
http://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing.asp.

And, finally, international military experiences are very important for the armed forces. While engaging in internationally coordinated military efforts, it improves the national military capabilities, fosters contacts with civilian organizations at home and abroad, and it includes a concerted experience of sticking to the rules of international democratic institutions over a period of time. Turkey has a long history now of constructive interactions with other military and supra-national institutions. The interactions with the foreign organizations improve the self-confidence of military formations and help the militaries to evaluate themselves. The Turkish Military has contributed generously to the myriad of peacekeeping operations around the world. These contributions started with Korean War and continued other United Nations (UN) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) peace support operations. Past examples include: UN Operation in Somalia – UNOSOM; UN Protection Force-UNPROFOR (in Bosnia); NATO Implementation Force-IFOR/NATO Stabilization Force-SFOR (in Bosnia); UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo – MONUC; UN Mission in Sudan – UNMIS; NATO Training Mission Iraq - NTM-I; UN Interim Force in Lebanon-UNIFIL; and naval or air force operations including: Essential Harvest; Amber Fox; Allied Harmony; Concordia; Proxima; Deny Flight; Deliberate Forge; Joint Guardian; and Sharp Guard Operations. Today the Turkish military supports continuing operations including: Kosovo Force – KFOR; EU Operation ALTHEA (in Bosnia); International Security Assistance Force – ISAF (in Afghanistan); Combined Task Force 151 -CTF 151 (for preventing piracy in the seas of Somalia); the Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 – SNMG 2 (for preventing piracy in the seas of Somalia); and the UN Mission in Lebanon - UNIFIL. In addition to these operations there are also two centers belonging to NATO, Partnership Peace Training Center and Center of Excellence Defense Against Terrorism in Turkey, which increase the coordination between the international military personnel. Both of these NATO organizations are located in Ankara, Turkey.

The 35th article of Civil Service Law (2013) gave the privilege to the Turkish Military to protect the democratic institutions against internal or external threats. This privilege was given to the army by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in the earlier period of the Republic. But it led to a series of *coups d'état* in the past for the sake of protecting democracy. In 2013, the Turkish Government changed the 35th article of the Civil Service Law. The new law defined and limited the role of Turkish Military to external threats.

This change has resulted from the stabilized democratic institutions in the country, which no longer need to draw upon the military to address internal threats. Civilian institutions can be used for internal issues in the current polity. The military does not play quite as powerful a role internally and over the political system since the passing of this law. However, the principle of the military having a role in checks and balances, and balance of power among institutions of the state when absolutely necessary remains an unwritten *Grundnorm*[24] for the Turkish system. The Turkish military role is changing even at the time of the writing of this article. It has been put under the political branches of state for all purposes, and while we are encouraging the development of militaries with checks and balances authority under the auspices of democratic institutions, we do suggest that the military come secondarily to the power of the political branches of state (executive, judiciary, and legislature). We recognize that this is a tricky balance, but it should be the goal if the protection of the democratic nature of the system is to be achieved.

Military power capabilities, thus, *enhance the survivability of democratic institutions*. Due to historical, sociological and technological factors, the role of the Turkish Military is the key to Turkey's success. It has been used to support, develop and maintain secular state institutions, and social institutions such as education.

Education

The nearly universal secondary and higher education systems in Turkey are critical to the establishment of a reasonably rationalized economic system thereafter. Turkey has a system of universal education through 12th grade and free access to most higher education in universities with entrance by merit-based examinations (private universities are also available). Turkey is made up of 81 municipal regions, which are formed into states and organized in something akin to a city-state system. The region with the highest number of universities is the municipal region of Istanbul with 46 universities; it is followed by Ankara with 19 universities; and Izmir with 9 universities. Each municipal region has at least one university. The total number of universities in Turkey is 192 for 2013 (Yüksek Ögretim Kurulu, "Turkish Higher Education Council," 2013).

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24. Kelsen, Hans. Introduction to the Problems of Legal Theory. B. L. Paulson and S. L. Paulson, Translators. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992.

Entrance to these universities is achieved through merit-based testing. Seventy-one of these universities are run by private foundations, 121 of them are publicly funded state universities. Tuition for state universities runs in the order of a few hundred dollars per semester, making access widespread across social constituencies. Privately funded university tuition may range from $5,000 to $30,000 per year. The state universities are ranked most highly in the country; thus, money is less of a factor in garnering academic prestige than it is in the United States. Institutionally, this broad access to education contributes to satisfaction, stability, and public trust among the younger generations. This is by contrast to countries in which education and job opportunities are limited, which has been understood in many contexts to contribute to dissatisfaction and political unrest.

This situation makes access to higher education nearly universal, for boys and girls, men and women, by merit, across the country. In this way, Turkey is closer to the European continental systems regarding access to higher education. We suggest a similar model for the post-Arab Spring states in the Middle East and North Africa. That is, following something akin to the Turkish, French[25], or Japanese[26] models of testing from elementary school would allow students from across all class groupings and sub-societies within the country to be identified for civil service and other work appropriate to their skills and expertise. While it may smack of "tracking" to American sensibilities, in these contexts, if the testing is written and conducted correctly, it serves the function of taking away social, cultural, and economic bias from the equation in education and subsequent economic opportunities. It also grants the students/job applicants (male and female) legitimacy in their chosen professions, and provides the civil service (government) system in particular with well-trained, intelligent individuals in whom to entrust the running of the country from the smallest of governmental agencies and offices to the highest levels of state. This legitimacy may be significant for women as well as traditionally disenfranchised social classes entering the job force. Foreign language education is another important factor continuing from Turkey's institutional legacies of cultural integration with the other publics, both Ottoman and post-Ottoman. This education makes it easy to share or exchange the information. In Turkey, English is the most widely spoken second language in country.

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25. Provine, Doris Marie, "Courts in the Political Process in France" in Herbert Jacob, Erhard Blankenburg, Herbert M. Kritzer, Doris Marie Provine, and Joseph Sanders, etc. Courts, Law and Politics in Comparative Perspective. New Haven: Yale, 1996.
26. Upham, Frank K. Law and Social Change in Postwar Japan. Boston: Harvard University Press, 1989.

In schools, public or private, education of second language starts at the age of 8 for most schools, earlier for some. Second language education increases communication, interactions with other populations, and institutional alliances.

Conclusions

We have suggested that Turkey's success in incorporating religious parties and constituencies into the political system without fundamental changes in the institutional design of the system lies in three main factors. And, Turkey's history within each of these arenas makes it a better model for governance and potential leadership in the MENA region than a U.S.-only model of engagement with the region. The three factors that we have emphasized are: (1) Institutional Factors; (2) Military Structures; and (3) Educational System. Turkey's institutional history provides a long institutional and cultural legacy of incorporating highly diverse peoples into the then Ottoman Empire in an institutionalized and productive format. These included many religions and ethnic groups. In its 20th century modern history, Turkey's governmental institutions have been highly merit-based. The military has played an extraordinarily important and *positive* role as an educational model for the country, with military educational institutions used as a model for other education within the state system. It is a "People's Army" in which most men serve at some point in their lives, and it maintains the highest level of public trust of any governmental institution. It was historically responsible to oversee and protect the secular nature of the political system; in order to do so, it had, under certain conditions, oversight powers over the Executive Branch. Its place within the political system has recently been reduced so that it is formally and in practice under the oversight of the Executive Branch rather than the reverse. As a "People's Army" with great public trust, while the military is largely seen as secular, it is *not* seen by the public as "irreligious." This is important. Turkey's educational system has been highly merit-based as early as Mustafa Kemal and it is currently nearly free on a merit-basis up to the higher education and graduate levels for Turkish citizens. This creates great economic opportunities for Turkish citizens, and it contributes to a leveling out of issues of status and merit in the workforce. The merit-based education system also contributes to democratizing the Turkish people; it increases their respect for one another as citizens, their respect for the political system, and their respect for the educational system as well.

Turkey, and before it, the Ottoman Empire, has a long history of incorporating multiple religious, ethnic, class, normative, and other sorts of social formations, including nomadic peoples, into a coherent society and polity. At the time of transition to the nation-state system, with its direct form of rule (by contrast to the diffuse rule of the Ottoman Empire), Turkey similarly did not seek to rule the Arab world in any way. With the exception of a brief experiment of *turkification* (also known as pan-Turkism) policies at the hands of the Committee of Union and Progress (1908-1918), Turkey, thus, has a long history of respecting local traditions and political autonomy. While the Turkish state initially barred religious parties from participation in the state, center-right parties with significant religious components began to be established in the second half of the 20th century. In the 1990s, religious parties became part of ruling coalitions. Since 2002, a religious party has been elected as the ruling party in several elections in Turkey, led by Tayyip Recep Erdoğan. Turkey has quite successfully maintained the democratic structure of the regime; that is to say, the regime itself did not change with the rising of religious parties to significant places of power within the Turkish state. It is that example, institutionally, that we suggest should be followed in post-Arab Spring states, most of which grapple actively with questions of how to incorporate religion in a meaningful way into the political fabric of their emerging and still-forming political-institutional orders. We are living in a fragile and critical moment in the Middle East, one that requires concerted and long-term commitment to the building of democratic institutions, norms, and practices on the ground. This, we strongly believe, is what the grassroots – which is to say, the majority – of the Middle East has been asking for in the Arab Spring.

Turkey, in its democratization process, is a more likely candidate for this sort of institutional leadership role than is a country like the United States, due to the historical, institutional, cultural, and religious shared heritage with much of the Middle East and North Africa. Institutionally, we have emphasized state institutions that historically supported local communal and political autonomy; a highly and *positively* involved military in the fabric of the state and society as an institution and as an institutional model; merit-based educational institutions and access; and institutionally embedded allowance for cultural and religious diversity. In the Turkish case, all of this has been developed within the context of democratic institutions, initially protected by the military through specific institutional channels.

The process through which norms developed that would allow the democratic nature of the regime to stand on its own, without oversight of a sort of "outside" body (the military), was one that took most of the 20th century in the case of Turkey. This time frame may be even shorter than it was in some European and North American states, which may not be a surprise if we are thinking in terms of a Wallerstinian approach to the world system.[27] The development of norms to support democratic practices and processes takes time even after the establishment of formal institutions on the ground. Turkey can be a useful example – and a useful resource – as post-Arab Spring states go through that process.

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27. Wallerstein, Immanuel. *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004.