

Globalization and Political Elite Institutional Choices: The Impact on Democratization in Africa and the Middle East

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Newly independent nation-states grapple with governance, in the midst of globalization and “democratic waves.” The post-colonial political mavericks can manipulate the institutions in the fragile states to the extent that the choices may be antithetical to democratic consolidation. Thus, institutional choices will be one of the factors which will determine democratic maturation. This paper seeks to examine any patterns of institutional choices or generalities by political elites in Africa and the Middle East, coupled with the realities of globalization. Secondly, this paper will illustrate which institutional choices in general are perhaps more feasible for democratic consolidation in fragile states.

Key Words: *globalization, institutional choices, political elites, democratic maturation, democratic consolidation, Africa, Middle East*

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the Cold War, the push for democratization and globalization have been touted as the two-pronged “savior” of fledgling governments throughout the “Third World” or “developing” world or emerging markets (Agtmael 2007) might suggest. However, the majority of studies on democratization and globalization often ignore, or at best give scant attention to Africa and the Middle East. Democracy coupled with economic liberalization in the name of globalization has been viewed as the panacea for the world’s struggling and nascent countries. These nascent states, many of which are newly independent countries (NICs) as well, are “playing” catch up in many instances with the dominant well-established Western countries. Coupled with the realities of abject poverty, ethnic and religious pronomitics and class, a cleavage in many of these (NICs) is the experimentation of state-centric versus anti-state-centric institutional policies. Basically, state-centric institutional policies advance the idea that governmental intervention (or regulatory measures) in the political and economic realms will help lessen the chances for turmoil. Whereas, anti-state-centric policies advocate minimal governmental intervention; the notion of the “invisible hand” of the market should suffice any major political and economic deprivation.

Contrary to the “end of history” (Fukuyama 1992) thesis, Western forms of democracy are not necessarily appropriate for these politically fragile and economically weak states for a variety of reasons (which will be highlighted later in this article). A politically fragile state is a situation in which state authority has not been effectively established or consolidated (Marshall and Jagers 2002). Moreover, the state institutions are weak, and the state has very little direct control over either the citizens or resources under its authority. A quintessential example of a politically fragile state currently would be Iraq. By economically weak, I refer to David Simon’s (2003: 140) definition, nation-states that are “dependent on a narrow range of exports, especially of raw and semi-processed commodities and perhaps one or two groups of manufactures, are more vulnerable and have already seen domestic industry undermined by cheaper imports.” For example, during the decade of the 1990s, the average

level of subsidies and other transfers of income as a percentage of expenditures in lower middle income countries were only 18% in 1990 and 26% in 1997 (compared to highly industrialized countries where the average level of subsidies and other income transfers was approximately 60%) (worldbank.org), an example of an economically weak state would be current day Ethiopia.

Thus, this paper seeks to investigate the general patterns and implications of institutional choices on democracy in Africa and the Middle East in the face of the growing demands of economic glasnost and perestroika, i.e., globalization. A caveat, the generic geographical, political term “Middle East” is a colonial and Western imperial, Eurocentric construct, a byproduct of an unfavorable and inferior other, like the Orient connotation of Asia (Said 1978). Although countries in the Middle East have no common cultural, linguistic, religious, or socio-political identities (Alkadry 2002) they do however, exhibit general patterns of institutional choices by their political leaders just like in Africa. Thus, for the purposes of this paper, to minimize confusion and debate, the Middle East will be used to convey the general geographical areas between the Mediterranean Sea, and the geographical areas west of Asia, and including the Gulf States and the countries of North Africa (Egypt, Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, and Morocco). Additionally, the only two ethnic groups in the above areas which do not currently have a nation-state (homeland)- the Palestinians and Kurds- are also included in the Middle East.

The organization of this paper is as follows. First (after the introduction), I will briefly discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the literature on democracy generally and as it applies to Africa and the Middle East; secondly, I will address my theoretical framework, institutionalism; thirdly, I will examine some baseline data and discuss the findings; lastly, I will discuss the conclusions and implications for future research in the area of institutional choice, globalization, and democracy in Africa and the Middle East.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The end of the anxious Cold War between the United States and the former Soviet Union and the satellite countries (“puppet” regimes) in Africa and the Middle East, has ushered in vociferous calls for globalization and democratization (Grugel 2002). Even though in the last fifty plus years of Middle East independence, not a single country in the Middle East has achieved full-fledged democracy (Alkadry 2002) at least not according to Western, liberal standards of democracy (with perhaps Turkey being the exception). However, diverse Middle Eastern and African countries such as Israel, Kuwait, Lebanon, Iran, Morocco, Sudan, have made considerable strides toward constructing democratic institutions (Alkadry 2002). But, most Middle Eastern countries have only attained the level of procedural democracy (Ali 2002). There are elections for legislative and executive seats in Algeria, Lebanon, Iran, Israel, the Palestinian Authority, Turkey, and Yemen (The Middle East and North Africa 2001). On the other hand, in Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Syria, and Tunisia, there are elections for legislative seats. However, currently none of the oil-rich Gulf States (the oil monarchies), with the exception of Kuwait, have electoral participation- they include Saudi Arabia (coincidentally a United States ally), Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Oman (The Middle East and North Africa 2001). But, generally the democratization literature has struggled to explain political change such as liberalization in the Middle East and Africa, especially North Africa (Anderson 1995).

Unfortunately, much of the democratization literature focuses on “substantive policy content” (Powell 2004: 13) which limits our ability to analyze and compare across countries. Instead, Powell suggests that students of democratization should focus on the processes of democratic linkages, like structuring choices (first linkage), institutional aggregation (linkage two), and policymaking (final linkage). Regrettably, Western paradigms of democracy, suggest that any discussion outside of particular endogenous variables, are presumed to stymie political liberalization efforts. Additionally, liberalization efforts do not always open up the political process or help democratize. At times, liberalization efforts such as the essential tool, elections, have helped sustain authoritarian governments in sub-Saharan Africa by furnishing a tactical maneuver that kept the competitors at bay without acquiescing in the government’s authority (Joseph 1997). Moreover, Western, liberal democracies that tout “winner-take-all” or zero-sum games in majoritarian systems perhaps are not appropriate in highly stratified societies like in Africa and the Middle East. Grand coalitions which typically appease majority and minority groups are perhaps more advantageous for Africa and the Middle East. Furthermore, in majoritarian systems, the majority party governs with fewer constraints, not only regarding political choices but also fiscal policy choices (Persson and Tabellini 2003). This reality has colossal implications in the face of globalization’s “push and pulls” factors. “Push and pull” factors include notions of *free* trade and structural adjustment programs (SAPs) in order to compete in the global marketplace. Moreover, Dillman (2002) has demonstrated that in the case of North Africa, significant globalization measures in the form of economic trade and liberalization policies have had very little impact on political liberalization. Dillman (2002) attributes this shortcoming to political elites’ institutional choices which stipulate *partial* economic reforms that only sustain distributional coalitions, and which limit far-reaching political reforms to the masses. In other words, the autonomous preferences and interests of political elites override the public good of increased political liberties and civil rights for the community.

Likewise in most of the democratization literature, “suspects” such as primordial political culture, religion, ethnicity and class cleavages, low levels of economic development, low levels of education, and fragile or nonexistent civil society activities are considered quintessentially destructive forces to any democratic model. There is clearly a relationship between highly fractionalized (ethnic, class and religious cleavages) countries and the tendency to be associated with lower levels of constraints on their chief political executive (e.g., president, prime minister) (Aghion, et al. 2004). Thus, lower levels of executive constraints open the door to corruption and autocratic rule, which clearly are antithetical to democracy-building. Furthermore, ethnically fragmented societies’ political systems are less democratic (Aghion, et al. 2004). In such ethnically diverse societies, executives choose political systems and make institutional choices which shield or insulate certain groups and prevent others (out-groups) from having input.

In addition, there is other evidence illustrating that religious and ethnic cleavages have compromised democratic consolidation (Yegen 1999; Lewin and Stier 2002), not only in the Middle East, but throughout Africa as well. Notwithstanding, the “third wave” (Huntington 1991) of democracy appears to be gaining if not hurricane strength, at least “tropical depression” fortitude in previously unthinkable places throughout Africa and the Middle East. African countries such as Botswana (the longest standing democracy in post-colonial Africa), Mauritius, Mauritania, South Africa, Ghana, Cote d’Ivoire, Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and others have made the arduous trek to democracy and have consolidated democracy at various levels. Currently, 35% of Africa can be characterized as

democratic, i.e., nineteen of the fifty-four countries have democratic rule. This ratio should not be considered shabby by pessimists, given the reality that most of Africa, especially sub-Saharan Africa has only been “free” from colonial rule less than fifty years. Never mind the reality that democracy waxes and wanes and “one size does not fit all.” Rustow’s (1970: 346) parsimonious recommendation is quite appropriate even in this post-Cold War era, “there may be many roads to democracy.” Or put another way, “... the same formal rules and/or constitutions imposed on different societies produce different outcomes” (North 1990: 4). The next section of this paper discusses the theoretical framework, i.e., institutionalism.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: INSTITUTIONALISM

First, what are institutions? In the case of political institutions, they are public entities “with formally designated structures and functions, intended to regulate certain defined activities which apply to the whole population” (Bealey 1999: 166). Furthermore, “institutions define and limit the set of choices of individuals” (North 1990: 4). Institutions help constrain those innate human impulses. That is, institutions help shape and constrain political and economic policies. Institutions were especially important in the immediate post-colonial period, because of the trepidation of the residuals of colonialization, the “jockeying” for power by the elites and mobilization of competing interests. Institutionalism includes parliamentary and presidential-style democracy, social democracy and Islamism. For example, Libya’s hybrid model of governance by the populace via local Shari’a (Islamic law) councils. Moreover, Libya’s legal system resembles an amalgamation of Italian and French civil law, coupled with Shari’a. Political elite behavior (and all political behavior for that matter), including corrupt behavior (manipulating public power for one’s private gain) is by and large influenced by the way political power is organized. The key to constraining corruption is to provide some level of checks and balances on the passions of human nature. Institutionalism focuses on regulating the political behavior of the political leaders. Thus, institutionalism is the theory that posits formal political organizations like legislatures, executive branches, courts, and local governing councils as necessary to ameliorate political behavior that attempts to engage in malfeasance. Linked with constraining behavior and advocating accountability is non-state actors such as Non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Non-governmental organizations as institutions may facilitate democratic rule, but are not sufficient to create democratic consolidation. NGOs are endogenous “tools” that compete with exogenous “push and pull” factors such as globalization. Political elites in Africa and the Middle East in their attempts to wean themselves from the residuals of colonialism, including autocratic and military rule, should consider the types of institutional choices that are appropriate for their particular country. Political elite choices include constraining executive power in the form of legislative checks and balances; expanding executive recruitment efforts that go beyond nepotism; expanding the range of participants in the political process (e.g., not just males over the age of eighteen, or royal blood lines); and increasing the competitiveness of participation, all of which can be mandated and monitored via a written constitution.

Institutions are tools to help sustain democracy. Moreover, “institutions structure behavior into stable, predictable, and recurrent patterns,” thus “institutional systems are less volatile and more enduring, and so are institutionalized democracies” (Diamond, et al. 1995: 33).

This notion of institutions is a type of theory of organizational institutionalism. It suggests that there are necessary organizations such as legislatures, executives and courts that can facilitate democratic transitions and ultimately the institutionalization of democracy, that is, democratic consolidation. However, we still should heed Rustow's (1970) "pre-third wave" finding, in which he illustrated that transitions to democracy are dynamic and thus varied. Rustow warned us that "no two existing democracies have gone through a struggle between the very same forces over the same issues and with the same institutional outcome. Hence, it seems unlikely that any future democracy will follow in the precise footsteps of any of its predecessors" (354).

Colonial polices in terms of economic growth and democratic consolidation did not vary much in either Africa or the Middle East. And maintenance of hand-picked political elites as pawns of the Western colonializers helped perpetuate policy-implementing institutions (an executive branch), as opposed to policymaking institutions (legislatures). In other words, African and Middle Eastern colonial and post-colonial leaders were "forced" to be administrators of Western-propagated policies as "tools" of Western imperialism, as opposed to creating viable participatory, representative legislatures. Legislatures would be more beholden to their constituents, which would allow for some democratic maturation. As Riggs (1963) and LaPalombara (1974) illustrated years ago (the residuals of which are still quite conspicuous), the lack of effective legislatures, cumbersome bureaucracies, and entrenched military rule is still commonplace throughout much of Africa and the Middle East. Likewise, the nineteenth century European colonializers carved up Africa and the Middle East, establishing non-democratic and traditionally alien governments in the nascent states. Thus, general patterns of institutional choice by post-colonial leaders tended to reflect their colonial legacies of either liberal or statist political and economic policies. In the twenty-first century, Taylor and Nel (2002), caution the "New Africa" Initiative (comprising the political leaders from Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Mali, and Tanzania) to be vigilant in the neo-liberal discourse of globalization because it may perpetuate the benefits to only a small number of elites like themselves. Perhaps we might call it the Dhlomo effect. Dr. Oscar Dhlomo is a good example of the type of elite who would benefit most from this type of neo-liberal engagement (Moore 2001).

During the United States (US) Presidential administrations of Ronald Reagan (1981-89) and George Bush, Sr. (1989-92), US investment in the South African economy had a political and economic phase, i.e., funding for private sector investment initiatives and appeasing the Inkatha Freedom Party's objectives of dismantling apartheid. Oscar Dhlomo benefited when he left his minister post of the "KwaZulu 'homeland' Department of Education to facilitate meetings among the leaders of the contesting parties in order to reduce the violence and to work toward a smoothly functioning democratic system" (Moore 2001: 922). Political violence is often part of the transition phase of democracy, and only one indicator of the transition. Moore goes on to say "He (Dhlomo) sold the idea of an organization to perform such a function to Hank Cohen, the Assistant Secretary for African Affairs in the State Department at that time." Moreover, "Cohen gave him a letter that guaranteed him funding of five million rand a year to take to the USAID office in Pretoria" (South Africa). "Thus was born the Institute for the Multi-Party Democracy (IMPD) and the renewed career of a man who would play a key role, as member of the Independent Electoral Commission" Moore concludes, "That Dhlomo now directs Durban's (South Africa) first casino may bolster arguments that this sort of aid promotes a new bourgeoisie and a politics to match it ..." (922).

Therefore, the types of general patterns of institutional choices that the political elites of Africa and the Middle East are subscribing to, include the following: capitulating (or co-opted) to the whims of the Western powers for short-term economic gain (a type of economic “end of history” ideology); willingness to use coercion (and repression) as a tool to control and manipulate; political elites’ maintenance of coalitions that may not have an interest in democratization (but support economic liberalization because of self-interest); political elites’ maintenance of *dependent* distributional coalitions (which can partake in economic windfalls as long as they are politically loyal); and partial reform policies to appease international financial donors such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. However, despite these worthy economic liberalization reforms to accommodate the ever-growing demands of globalization, why have North Africa and a majority of the Middle East experienced very little political liberalization vis-à-vis poorer sub-Saharan countries with increasing political liberalization? To answer that question, we must investigate more closely the linkage between political elite institutional choices and the impact of globalization.

3.1. Globalization

Globalization, is also known as *free* trade with minimal barriers to access markets, liberal trade policies, international movement of transnational capital, goods, and labor, the hegemony of neo-liberal economic policies, and minimal state involvement in the exchange of those goods and services, that is, laissez-faire capitalism. Castells (1997) warns us that globalization undermines state-power (especially in “developing” countries), and any attempts at reconstructing national identities are also sabotaged by the forces of globalization. In short, globalization is the new form of imperialism. Globalization in many ways reduces the economic and political sovereignty of nation-states. Globalization does this by being hostile to protective markets, tariff measures, protective legislation, executive mandates, and so on. Globalization means that you must “play” by the rules regardless of your economic position vis-à-vis other countries’ competitive edge. The barriers to free trade are viewed with disdain and are a bane to economic development. Globalization means that political elites’ institutional choices have to be tailored in such a way that the political systems tend to become heavily bureaucratized in order to meet the economic requirements to “play” in the global marketplace of goods and services. Furthermore, political elites’ institutional choices are focused on the management and execution of national policies which must coincide with International Financial Institution (IFI) demands, like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, coupled with Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Globalization tends to focus more on political stability (Alkadry 2002) (rather than democratization), which can mean authoritarianism at worst, or pseudo-democracy, illiberal democracy (Alianak 2004) at best.

Globalization, coupled with the seemingly never-ending political and military instability in many parts of Africa and the Middle East, means that political elites’ institutional choices will have to attempt to abate such realities. A caveat, Lupu (2004) warns us, political violence may temporarily inhibit democracy (like other potential characteristics such as elite noncompliance and elite reception of radicals). Likewise, military expenditures continue to drain Middle Eastern budgets. In fact, on average, Middle Eastern countries devote a greater proportion of their gross domestic product to military purchases than any other region in the world (Henry 2003). The following are typical theoretical models of globalization manifested in the industrialized West and the “developing” world. These basic models provide a framework for my data, findings and discussion.

<u><i>Western Model of Globalization</i></u> (liberalization policies; increased free trade; FDI)	<u><i>“Developing” State Model of Globalization</i></u> (structural adjustment programs; defensive modernization to protect certain precious commodities)
Free-Market & Keynesian Institutional Policy Choices	Interventionist Institutional Policy Choices by Political Elites (includes social & economic justice outcomes and policies to mitigate ethnic & religious-prone politics); Islamism
Fosters Democratic Consolidation (Maturation) via political & economic liberties	Acts as a liaison to either augment or mitigate democratic maturation

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The primary goal of this paper was to identify information in regard to institutional choices that political elites in general in Africa and the Middle East perhaps should consider which will perchance generate democratic maturation. Democratic maturation should be based on a country’s particular cultural, social and historical nuances, not a “cookie-cutter,” normative notion of democracy. A caveat, although Islamism is an institutional choice, such as in the case of Libya’s hybrid model of local populace governance through Shari’a (Islamic law) councils, this study focused more on non-Islamist countries. Furthermore, the salience of Islamism as an institutional choice is becoming more apparent in transitory Iraq, and has been entrenched in Iran since the revolution in 1979. Moreover, obtaining data on Islamist states, was difficult at best for a variety of reasons, thus this paper does not address Islamism as an institutional choice to the degree that it focused on non-Islamism institutional choices. Institutional choices might mean deregulating participation, i.e., increasing who can participate in the political process, the pluralist notion. Institutional choice may also mean maximizing executive restraints so as to minimize the chances for autocratic rule and corruption, which will increase the chance for the consolidation or maturation of democracy. After all, corrupt behavior in public office is based on a monopoly of power coupled with indiscretion, where there is no accountability, nor transparency. That is, which institutional choices are necessary (although not sufficient) to ensure democratic maturation? Moreover, what are the institutional choices that political elites in Africa and the Middle East should seriously consider if they are earnest about democratic consolidation?

4.1. Hypotheses

H1: African and Middle Eastern country political elites that are making the transition to democracy, while deciding institutional choices, are more likely to institutionalize or consolidate democracy if there is less regulation of who can participate in the political process. Less regulation in the participatory process should lead to more competition, more viable choices for voters, thus more competitive politics.

H2: Political elites in African and Middle Eastern countries that are making the transition to democracy are more likely to institutionalize democracy if there are more constraints on

executives. More constraints on the executives will help minimize the chances for corruption, and autocratic rule (especially in nascent democratic systems). More executive constraint should lead to more competition and recruitment of viable executives in the political process, thereby facilitating democratic consolidation.

5. METHODOLOGY

In order to test the significance and provide preliminary evidence of the relevance of institutional choice and the related hypotheses, some partial regression plots and correlations were employed to quantitatively investigate the years 1960-2000. The forty years will allow trends regarding institutional choices to be analyzed over time.

5.1. Case Selection

The Polity IV data set by Marshall and Jagers (2002) was used and included most (50 out of 54) African countries and all 14 Middle Eastern countries. There are 436 cases in the sample, over a forty-year period (1960-2000).

5.2. Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is the institutionalized democracy score, i.e., the level of democratic consolidation or maturation. The democracy score based on the Marshall & Jagers (2002) scale, indicates the general openness of political institutions. The eleven point democracy scale is constructed additively, based on the autocracy score (general closed nature of political institutions) and the polity score (computed by subtracting the autocracy score from the democracy score). Autocracies tend to be more insulated, that is, as the insulation of the autocrat or chief executive increases, so too does the autocracy score.

5.3. Independent Variables

In order to evaluate the level of democratization, the Polity IV data set was used. Marshall and Jagers (2002) combined annual measures of the regulation and competitiveness of participation, the constraints on executives, competitiveness of executive recruitment, and the polity score to create an eleven-point scale. The eleven point scale was used to depict the country's democratic and autocratic characteristics. The regulations of executive recruitment are the institutionalized procedures regarding the transfer of executive power. That is, the openness of the executive recruitment determines the extent to which any eligible (e.g., minimum age and citizenship requirements) citizen has an opportunity (at least in principle), to attain the position of executive through a periodic process. The competitiveness of the executive recruitment is the extent to which executives are chosen through competitive elections. The openness of executive recruitment is the opportunity for non-elites to attain executive office. The executive constraint variable is the operational (de facto) independence of the chief executive (e.g., president, prime minister, premier). The regulation of participation indicates the level of development of the institutional structures for political expression by the populace.

Lastly, the competitiveness of participation variable indicates the extent to which non-

elites are able to access institutional structures for political expression (e.g., free speech, freedom to assemble, protest). The democratic and autocratic characteristics were then combined to produce a third indicator- the polity (country) score, which is derived by subtracting the autocratic score from the democratic score. Thus, this score produces a single regime score which ranges from a +10 (fully democratic characteristics) to a -10 (fully autocratic characteristics). This polity score indicator was used to operationalize the institutionalization or consolidation of democracy, i.e., level of democratization.

5.4. Findings

1) Regression Plots about Here

In order to provide preliminary statistical significance to institutional choice and related hypotheses, regression analysis and correlations were conducted. There were statistical significance and strong associations between the institutional choices with the following independent variables: competitiveness of participation, regulation of participation, executive constraints, competitiveness of executive recruitment, and the polity score vis-à-vis the dependent variable of institutionalized democracy. For example, the partial regression plot of the competitiveness of participation clearly indicated that institutional choices by political elites that engender more participation in the political process will increase the chances for democratic consolidation. Institutional choices such as opening up the process of whom actually can participate, less rigid voting requirements, no nepotism or inner circle requirements, and no socioeconomic status requirements should all help augment the chances for institutionalizing democracy in Africa and the Middle East, and more generally in nascent democracies.

Conversely, the partial regression plot of the regulation of participation and institutionalizing democracy illustrated that the more restraints on who can participate and how they can participate, the lesser the chances for democratic consolidation. Thus, political elites in Africa and the Middle East should seriously consider institutional choices which generate more participation, that is, fewer regulatory measures of participation. In terms of executive constraints, there is clear evidence that increasing political executive restraints so as to mitigate autocratic tendencies and dictatorial rule enhances the chances for institutionalizing democracy. Allowing political executives some latitude to rule is obviously a necessary condition (although not sufficient) for a functioning viable democracy. However, too much executive power is antithetical to democratic rule, like too much legislative and judicial power. There has to be a compromise or balance of power between the agents or branches of government for democracy to not only prevail but become entrenched. Likewise, there has to be a competitive environment for political executive recruitment so that there is a diversity of challengers in the political process each vying for a role in the democratic process. Thus, there is strong evidence as indicated in the partial regression plot that illustrates as the competitiveness of executive recruitment increases, so too does the institutionalization of democracy.

Lastly, in terms of the partial regression plot of the polity score and institutionalization of democracy, the plot illustrates as the polity score increases, so too does democratic consolidation. The polity score is derived by subtracting the autocratic score from the democratic score. Thus, this score produces a single regime score which ranges from a +10 (fully democratic characteristics) to a -10 (fully autocratic characteristics). That is, the higher the polity scores, the higher the institutionalization of democracy in a country.

2) *Correlations about Here*

The correlations of the above variables in this study were statistically significant, the strength of the association between the independent variables and dependent variable (institutionalized democracy) was robust and the direction was positive. All correlations are statistically significant, the majority at the .01 level, and only one (regulation of participation and competitiveness of participation at the .05 level). The most statistically significant correlation at the .01 level in regard to the dependent variable (institutionalized democracy) is the association with executive constraints (.871**). This illustrates once again (as evidenced by the partial regression plots), that constraining political executives' ability to have a *carte blanche* in their powers is a necessary condition for a viable, consolidated democracy, as opposed to an autocracy or military rule.

6. CONCLUSIONS/IMPLICATIONS

This paper provides baseline research in the area of political elites and institutional choices in Africa and the Middle East. Moreover, the research provides at least a starting point inside as well as outside of Africa and the Middle East when assessing the variables that impact democratization. Feasible institutional choices attempt to complement the usual suspects of democratic consolidation, e.g., "adequate" levels of wealth, and high educational levels.

Additionally, this paper has illustrated that political elites in Africa and the Middle East can help foster democracy by facilitating electoral rules that will augment participation. Increasing levels of participation regardless of ethnicity, class, religion, and socioeconomic status should be paramount in any discussion on democratic consolidation. Moreover, mitigating ethnic, class, religious, and socioeconomic cleavages with institutional choices involving proportionality, as opposed to majoritarian rules might help appease majority as well as minority groups. Institutional choices by political elites in Africa and the Middle East in the midst of "push and pull" factors of globalization such as *free* trade and structural adjustment programs in order to compete, might include more coalition building, instead of the more contentious Western, majoritarian "winner-take-all" system. A zero-sum political system whereby political elites and other vested parties either win or lose leaves no room for alleviating conducive dialogue between already historically contentious groups, especially in nascent democracies.

This paper has provided baseline data on the salience of increasing participation, constraining executives and creating institutional rules that facilitate notions of democracy, in the thick of the stresses of globalization. Future research in the area of political elite institutional choices in Africa and the Middle East should consider linking civil society actors with the elites to develop better partnerships which enhance democratic maturation, and sustainable social, political and economic development. Moreover, future research in the area of Islamism as an institutional choice by political elites should be considered. Additionally, future research should consider if parliamentary (e.g. England and Thailand), presidential (e.g., the United States and the Philippines), or semi-presidential (e.g., France and South Korea) systems are genuinely achievable in post-colonial Africa and the Middle East. Further, what political and economic costs are involved in the era of increased globalization, not only for political elites in Africa and the Middle East, but for the general populations? Lastly, democratization studies must seriously consider nonlinear (e.g., social

democracy) models of democracy if we are to capture the varying possibilities of democratic rule and sustainable development in the twenty-first century and beyond, throughout all regions of the world.

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