STEPHAN DE VRIES

NON-DEMOCRATIC RULE AND REGIME STABILITY
Taking a Holistic Approach

UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

people unlimited
Hivos

Colophon

Non-Democratic Rule and Regime Stability

Taking a Holistic Approach

Table of Contents

Introduction

Looking at historical facts, it becomes clear that non-democratic government has been the norm for most of human history. Until this day a significant proportion of the world's population is governed by non-democratic regimes (Brooker 2009: 1). Nevertheless, much of the existing (western-oriented) literature focuses on ideals of democracy and on democratization-issues. Besides being the historical dominant political system, Brooker names at least three more good reasons to study non-democratic regimes: (1) it highlights the moral ambiguities and contrasts involved in government and politics; (2) it is important to be aware of the differences of the structural behavior of different types of non-democratic rule and (3) it offers a comparative perspective on democracy (ibid: 2-3). Therefore, this category of regimes will be analyzed in this paper. First, a short general overview of different forms of non-democratic rule will be given by providing the answers on four different questions: 'How do they rule?', 'Who rules?', 'Why do they rule?', and 'When do they rule?' Secondly, a general model, in which (de)stabilizing factors/influences on non-democratic regimes are combined, will be introduced and explained. This model can be used as a toolbox in order to analyze non-democratic regime stability in specific cases.

Non-Democratic Rule as a Concept

Most simply put, non-democratic rule is rule by a government or political system any other than a democratic one. If we want to narrow things down regarding the content of the concept, however, the matter is more complex. In this section I will summarize the core of the existing literature on non-democratic rule. Much has been written about non-democratic regimes around the world and, to use the words of Juan J. Linz, it would be foolish to attempt to summarize that whole development, since there are other works to accomplish that task.[1] Therefore it is aimed here to cover the most important 'classics' and the most relevant new contributions on this subject. Where relevant, suggestions for further reading are given in footnotes.

Differentiating between (non-democratic) political systems is a difficult task considering the ever-changing political reality and because every particular case has contextual specifications. In order to conduct research and analyze non-democratic regimes, however, this complexity has to be reduced to a limited number of types that are sufficiently different to describe those elements that a number of polities share but also to take into account the variety between those policies in real life (Linz 2000: 50). In the eighteenth century, non-democratic regimes where mostly described as 'absolute' (from absolutism) or 'despotic' (from despotism), changing to 'dictatorships'[2] in the late nineteenth and twentieth century.

After the fall of Hitler's fascist and Stalin's Stalinist regimes a new concept came to the fore during the Cold War.[3] Regimes regarded as non-democratic were given the name 'totalitarian' and political entities were differentiated mainly between being democratic or totalitarian. Soon however, particular cases[4] proved this dichotomization to be simplistic and incomplete: particular regimes could not be understood as democracy nor as unsuccessful totalitarian regimes. In other words, these cases did not respond to any reality and that finding led to the formulation of a third regime-type, being 'authoritarian'. In order to clarify the true meaning of non-democratic rule[5], the following sections will elaborate on the different forms of it.

---

[1] See Linz (2000): *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes* (page 11) for a list of relevant contributions on this issue.

[2] The term 'dictatorship' nowadays has the more specific meaning of 'interim crisis government that has not institutionalized itself and represents a break with the institutionalized rules about accession to and exercise of power of the preceding regime, be it democratic, traditional, or authoritarian' (Linz 2000: 63).

[3] Brooker describes three modernization phases of non-democratic rule. The first began during the rule of Napoleon who legitimized his military dictatorship by using referenda. The second originated in the twentieth century when the ideological one-party state came into being. The third phase started during the 1980's when non-democratic regimes were being disguised as multiparty democracies. The section on 'authoritarianism' in this chapter will focus on the latter as well.

[4] For example the failed 'wave of democratization' in Latin America and the survival of Spain and Portugal as non-democratic 'enclaves' after the defeat of the Axis (Linz 2002: 53).

[5] According to Linz a fairly rigid borderline exists between nondemocratic and democratic regimes: 'one that cannot be crossed by a slow and imperceptible evolution but practically always requires a violent break, anti-constitutional acts, a military coup, a revolution, or foreign intervention' (Linz 2000: 60). I am not sure how close this remark comes to being true: the fact that most often a nondemocratic regime changes into a democratic one, or vice versa, via such rigorous events does not exclude slow evolutionary processes. The word 'practically' in Linz' explanation, therefore seems vital. More important however, and here I agree with Linz, he states that by 'by comparison, the line separating totalitarian systems from other non-democratic systems [like authoritarian ones] is much more diffuse [and] despite our emphasis on the importance of retaining the distinction of totalitarian and other nondemocratic types of polity, these have more in common with each other than with democratic governments, justifying nondemocratic as a more general comprehensive category' (ibid: 61). However, in order to understand twentieth-century politics, it remains crucial to make the distinction between totalitarian and authoritarian regime types (Huntington 1991: 12).

Debate exists about which theoretical approach should be used to analyze non-democratic regimes. One can distinguish between the 'who rules?', 'how do they rule?' and 'why do they rule?'- questions. Within this research all three approaches are used interconnected, however, the main differentiation is between totalitarianism and authoritarianism[6], or the 'how do they rule?' question. By focusing on subtypes within those categories the 'who rules?' question will be covered. The issue of legitimacy ('why do they rule?') will be answered separately. Besides the three mentioned questions, a fourth question will be raised within this research covering the dimension of time: 'when do they rule'?

---

[6] Another type of regime based on traditional legitimacy that does not fit into one of these two categories exists. Such regimes are called 'sultanistic' and will be mentioned (shortly) later in this chapter. Other labels given to regime forms are for example autocratic, despotic, dictatorial, tyrannical, absolutist, traditional, oligarchic, plutocratic and aristocratic (Schmitter & Karl 2009: 4). Although these forms may have (important) differences and similarities among each other and compared to the more elaborated forms in this research, they will not be analyzed as such.

How do they Rule? Totalitarianism, Authoritarianism and Sultanism

Totalitarianism

The essence of totalitarian rule is an ever-present total control over the individual (Schapirio 1972: 117; Brooker 2009: 17). Beyond this very general core, many different perspectives on the issue exist. Arendt depicted authoritarianism as a form of dictatorship that had the aim to dominate every sphere of life of each single individual. She pointed at the importance of ideology, domination (by secret police forces) and the leader of the system (Arendt 1962 [1951]: 326-420). Friedrich and Brzezinski came with a more detailed and widely applicable theory inserting examples of Nazi Germany, the Communist regimes of the Soviet Union and China, Eastern European regimes and fascist Italy (Brooker 2009: 19). Core of their theory was a 'model' containing six features of totalitarianism: (1) an ideology; (2) a single party (typically led by a single person); (3) a terroristic police; (4) a communications monopoly; (5) a monopoly on weapons and (6) a centrally directed economy (Friedrich and Brzezinski 1961: 9). These first two attempts to conceptualize the term and the dynamics surrounding totalitarian regimes opened the gates to more different interpretations. Scholars like Barber and Rigby pleaded for the abandonment of the term because of its ill-suited character to describe real-life complex political systems (Barber 1969; Rigby 1972). Others, like Schapiro (1972), chose to build on the theories of Arendt and Friedrich & Brzezinski. One of the most influential theories on totalitarianism comes from Linz (2000 [1975]). In order to be characterized as a totalitarian regime, he states, conditions on three different dimensions have to be fulfilled: 'an ideology, a single-mass party and other mobilizational organizations, and concentrated power in an individual and his collaborators or a small group that is not accountable to any large constituency and cannot be dislodged from power by institutionalized, peaceful means[7] (Linz 2000: 67). Because all three conditions have to be met, not all single-party systems are totalitarian: if a fair competition for power exists or if in a non-democratic system no active single party exists, the system must not be regarded totalitarian (ibid). Other characteristics of totalitarian rule that distinguish it from other non-democratic regimes are the subordination of the military, the decisive weakening (or even destruction) of all the organizations and institutions that already existed before a new political elite comes into place and organizes its own political structures, the encouraging and rewarding of citizen participation and active mobilization for political or social tasks (through a single party) (ibid: 67-70). Although totalitarian regimes have these characteristics in common, different totalitarian systems exist depending on the character of the single party and on the structure of the center of power (ibid: 69). [8]

The above mentioned theories of totalitarianism are regarded as not very relevant for analyzing contemporary dictatorships or political systems in general. Non-democratic rule these days seldom fits the description of totalitarianism and is more adequately described as 'authoritarian'.

---

[7] Within the single existing party, ideology works as the 'cement' of the totalitarian system. That does not always mean, however, that the elite is one cohesive power block. It is monistic but not monolithic (Linz 2000: 70): conflicts and factionalization are a possibility and might lead to drastic changes and/or disorders within the system.
[8] For a more detailed description of totalitarianism read Brooker (2009): *Non-Democratic Regimes* (17-24) and Linz (2000): *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes* (65-142).

Authoritarianism[9]

The notion of 'authoritarian rule' is often used as a synonym for 'non-democratic rule', probably because the term covers many forms of modern non-democratic government (Brooker 2009: 25). That is a reason why this category of regimes is important within this contribution. A classic and (still) useful way to describe authoritarianism is given by Linz (1975 [1970; 1964]). Firstly, authoritarian regimes need the presence of limited political pluralism. Such limits vary in degree between regimes, nevertheless, it is crucial that some groups have political influence and therefore are not controlled by the regime. Linz marks this feature as most distinctive of authoritarianism (ibid: 255-259; Brooker 2009: 26). Secondly, within authoritarian regimes an elaborate and guiding ideology[10] is absent. Although ideologies are not unknown among authoritarian regimes, they are not used as a binder or guideline for the regime (ibid). The third characteristic is the absence of political mobilization (intensive or extensive) throughout most of a regime's history.[11] Finally, the limits wherein the leader of an authoritarian regime exercises power are ill-defined but in reality quite predictable (ibid). Most of the time an authoritarian regime is ruled by one leader who is supported and assisted by a small hierarchy. The monopoly of power rests within this power centre and the regime can use coercion and oppression to almost unlimited extends (NIMD & Hivos 2010: 10). Two additions to this list are the depoliticization and privatization[12] of society by the regime (Linz 1970: 261-264; Brooker 2009: 27). An institutional approach to authoritarianism can be found in the work of Perlmutter (1981). Instruments of rule within authoritarian regimes are, according to him, (1) the single (active) party, (2) the 'bureaucratic-military complex' of civil service and the military and (3) a set of institutions (political police, paramilitary forces and militant youth movements) which support the structures of domination, mobilization and control (Perlmutter 1981: 9-13; Brooker 2009: 30).[13] Of course, the problem of generalizing exists in this case as well; examples in reality will not neatly fit this image considering the complexity and possible exceptions[14] 'out there'.

Different (sub)types of authoritarian regimes exist within the larger category of authoritarianism. Looking at and combining different dimensions (for example the degree of pluralism, the historical circumstances during appearance of the regime and the way of legitimization) Linz, describes several different kinds of authoritarian regimes: bureaucratic-military authoritarian regimes, organic statism, mobilizational authoritarian regimes in postdemocratic societies, racial and ethnic 'democracies',

---

[9] Just as totalitarianism and, more important, democracy and democratization, authoritarianism is a term loaded with context-dependent connotations. Such terms, like social categories in general, 'can be viewed as socially constructed and so may be socially contested, with the result that their core meanings may generate controversy as well' (Whitehead 2002: 9). I am not attempting to provide a timeless and universal definition/analysis here. The aim of this section is to give a description of what is most commonly understood as totalitarianism and authoritarianism.

[10] Following Theodor Geiger, we rather speak of a 'mentality' in this context. Mentalities are ways of thinking and feeling, more emotional than rational. Geiger uses an intriguing German expression to make the distinction between ideology and mentality: mentality is *subjectiver Geist*; ideology is *objectiver Geist* (Geiger 1932: 77-79; Linz 2000: 162).

[11] An exception is during the early stages of regime formation in particular cases. Popular participation can indeed be very intensive in such periods. Ultimately however, 'mobilization and participation become difficult to sustain unless the regime moves in a more totalitarian or democratic direction' (Linz 2000: 166).

[12] Debate exists about depoliticization and privatization of society actually being forms of mobilization because both might lead to support for official norms and goals. It remains difficult to categorize authoritarian methods in terms of mobilization (Brooker 2009: 27-28). An influential typology of this conception is given by O'Donell (1979 [1973]) in his work *Modernization and Bureaucratic Authoritarianism*. He introduced the term 'bureaucratic authoritarianism' to describe a depoliticizing, low-mobilization subtype of authoritarianism (ibid: 28-29).

[13] For a full overview on authoritarianism read the quoted works, especially the chapter on authoritarianism by Linz (2002) and chapter one (theoretical introduction) of the work of Brooker (2009).

[14] One of the exceptions mentioned by Linz is the populist regime type. The level of (political) mobilization of the people in such regimes is not quite as pervasive compared to the totalitarian model, however, quite exceptional for authoritarian regimes.

'defective' and 'pretotalitarian' regimes and post-totalitarian authoritarian regimes.[15] More recently however, different scholars claimed to have 'discovered' a *new* type of authoritarianism that has become the 'standard', especially in the Middle East and North Africa. It concerns '[semi-]authoritarian systems that display features of democracy such as (popular) elections and parliaments' (Brownlee: 2007: 25) and are being classified as 'hybrid regimes'.[16] Such regimes thus take the *form* of electoral democracy by pursuing some sort of window-dressing policy[17], however, fail to pass the actual test (Diamond 2002: 23; Albrecht & Schlumberger 2004: 372).[18] Although it was formerly believed that such regimes were to be regarded as being in a phase on route to democratization, some scholars draw the conclusion that actually that is not (*per se*) the case[19] (Schedler 2002: 38; Levitsky & Way 2002: 54-55). Diamond, for example, states that 'for some years now, it has been apparent that a great many of the new regimes are not themselves democratic, or any longer "in transition" to democracy'[20] (Diamond 2002: 23). However true such claims and findings might be, Brownlee argues that hybrid regimes are not a novel phenomenon and therefore do not deserve a new label: they fit the above mentioned description of authoritarianism that was given by Linz already in 1975. As Brownlee states, 'the advent of the category of hybrid regimes may have marked the long needed recognition of the 'actually quite predictable' limits in which many autocracies operate, boundaries that can be quite durable' (Brownlee 2007: 27). He continues by claiming that introducing new names for already known phenomena needlessly confuses scholarly discourse and fragments knowledge. 'As a flurry of new typologies outpaces the development and confirmation of explanations, these new authoritarian subtypes risk becoming an intellectual cul-de-sac' (ibid: 25). I agree with Brownlee insofar as we need to avoid a 'Babel' within political discourse on the subject. Apart from that, he is *partly* right when he states that hybrid regimes fit Linz' description. Partly, because, as Diamond notices, Linz barely mentions multiparty electoral competition within his section on authoritarian regimes (only in his revised work of 2000 he speaks of pseudo-multiparty systems).[21] And among his seven (earlier mentioned) authoritarian regime types nothing like the 'competitive authoritarian' or 'hybrid' regime can be found. According to Diamond this

---

[15] For a description of each subtype see Linz (2000), pages 184-261.

[16] Other names are also frequently used. Examples are "semidemocracy", "virtual democracy", "pseudodemocracy", "illiberal democracy", "democracy with adjectives", "semi-authoritarianism", "soft authoritarianism", "electoral authoritarianism", "competitive authoritarianism" and Freedom House's "Partly Free" (Karl 1995; Case 1996; Means 1996; Zakaria 1997; Collier & Levitsky 1997; Ottaway & Olcott 1999; Levitsky & Way 2002, 2003; Schedler 2006; Howard & Roessler 2006).

[17] One of the strategies mentioned is 'co-optation': 'the elements of plural society are then encapsulated by the regime without being forced to give up their independent identities. […] As a result, political parties, individuals, businessmen and civil society officially remain independent but de facto become, to a varying extent, dependent on and beneficiaries of the regime' (NIMD & Hivos 2010: 11).

[18] One of the seminal works on hybrid regimes is Ottaway (2003): *Democracy Challenged: The Rise of Semi-Authoritarianism.* The description she gives to the phenomenon is: '[…] regimes that cannot be easily classified as either authoritarian or democratic but display some characteristics of both […] They are ambiguous systems that combine rhetorical acceptance of liberal democracy, the existence of some formal democratic institutions, and respect for a limited sphere of civil and political liberties with essentially illiberal or even authoritarian traits. This ambiguous character, furthermore, is deliberate. Semi-authoritarian systems are not imperfect democracies struggling toward improvement and consolidation but regimes determined to maintain the appearance of democracy without exposing themselves to the political risks that free competition entails' (Ottaway 2003: 3).

[19] In fact, the authoritarian character of such states has proven to be quite resilient. For more on this see Heydemann (2007): 'Upgrading Authoritarianism in the Arab World'.

[20] Nevertheless, state-led liberalization, quoting Schedler, 'inevitably, although to varying degrees, contains the seeds of subversion. […] Even if nominally democratic institutions make autocracy work and augment authoritarian rulers' *probability* of surviving in office and governing effectively, they still contain the possibility of eroding authoritarian stability and governance' (Schedler 2010: 76-77). Institutional manipulation, thus, might proof to represent 'the last trench of authoritarian defense' and institutional liberation 'the final front in the struggle for democracy' (ibid: 78).

[21] Even Linz himself seems to disagree with Brownlee on this issue. In his introduction of 2000, he calls for conceptual clarity by proposing the addition of adjectives to 'authoritarianism' rather than to 'democracy' (Linz 2000: 34). Thereby he seems to fulfill both the wish for clarity by Brownlee and the 'wish' for recognition of the new authoritarian form by many of the earlier quoted scholars.

is understandable, considering that hybrid regimes are a product of the contemporary world. Especially in the Middle East the phenomenon is highly relevant and therefore the attention paid to it seems reasonable. Apart from that, I have to agree with Diamond that divergent forms of authoritarianism do matter: 'As democracies differ among themselves in significant ways and degrees, so do contemporary authoritarian regimes, and if we are to understand the contemporary dynamics, causes, limits, and possibilities of regime change (including possible future democratization), we must understand the different, and in some respects new, types of authoritarian rule' (Diamond 2002: 33). All in all hybrid regimes will not be regarded as a residual category, but as an independent concept within this contribution. A last note on this issue is that, although I do think that the debate on this subject is useful, we need to go beyond it. Apart from the definitional issue, Brownlee argues that we do not know very much about the consequences of authoritarian hybridity for regime stability and that what happens inside the regime is more influential than what happens outside of it (e.g. the presence or absence of elections). However, regime stability cannot be explained by isolated factors. Regime hybridity is not just about the presence of 'fake' elections; it is about the adaptability and possible innovative behavior of regimes and their political institutions. It is about the 'big picture': all possible factors influencing the stability of authoritarian regimes need to be analyzed in relation to each other. This will be elaborated later in this contribution.

Sultanistic Regimes

'Sultanism' as term and concept was introduced by Max Weber who used it to outline an extreme case of patrimonialism characterized by patronage, nepotism, cronyism and corruption. Chehabi & Linz describe the ideal type of 'sultanism' as: based on personal rulership, whereby loyalty towards the ruler is motivated by mixture of fear and rewards to his collaborators (and not by ideology, charisma or a personal mission). The ruler exercises power at his own discretion, without restraint and (above all) unencumbered by rules or commitment to ideology or value systems. Arbitrary personal decisions of the ruler constantly subvert the binding norms and relations of bureaucratic administration. The staff of the ruler, among them often family members, friends and business associates, is directly chosen by him and distinctive career lines are non-existent. Personal submission to the ruler enables their positions, however does not guarantee it. Corruption reigns at all levels of society and sultanistic regimes are characterized by weakness of traditional, legal-rational and ideological justification (Chehabi & Linz 1998: 3-7).[22]

---

[22] More on sultanistic regimes can be found in Linz & Stepan (1996), Chehabi & Linz (1998) and Linz (2000). The Pahlavi regime in Iran (1925-1979) is a good example of a historical sultanistic regime (Katouzian 1998; Lapidus 2002: 476-482). Strictly speaking, according to Katouzian, 'only' the periods between 1933-1941 (Reza Shah) and 1963-1977 (Muhammad Reza Pahlavi) can be marked as sultanistic (Katouzian 1998, in Chehabi & Linz). For more on this topic see Katouzian (1998): 'The Pahlavi Regime in Iran' (chapter 8 in Chehabi & Linz) and Lapidus (2002): *A History of Islamic Societies*. More important still, the current regime of Iran is said to have some classic sultanistic characteristics as well. Ganji labels the supreme leader of Iran, Ali Hoseyni Khamenei, as a 'latter-day sultan', what makes Iran a 'neosultanate' (Ganji 2008: 49-50).

Who Rules? Different Types of Non-Democratic Rule

The categories of non-democratic rule mentioned above can be divided further into different subtypes. The question that needs to be answered in order to classify those different types is 'who rules?'[23] Three main types of non-democratic rule can be distinguished when answering the question. The first is military rule in which 'the army' is the core element of the regime. Five classic different structural forms of military rule or regime exist: (1) a direct form in which a military junta or government rules, (2) a direct form in which military rule is 'covered' by civilian support, (3) a dual form in which military rule is supported by reliable 'civilian forces', (4) and (5) indirect forms in which military rule is disguised by a civilian puppet regime (Finer 1976 [1962]: 149-151, 245-246; Brooker 2009: 32-33).[24] A second type of non-democratic rule is a 'one-party-state' regime. One-party-state rule often is considered as a type of regime wherein the relevant party is the ruling institution. This however, is not *per se* the case. The single party can instead be used as an instrument of rule, in that case functioning within a 'weak' one-party system eclipsed by other political actors (Tucker 1961; Huntington 1970: 6-7; Brooker 2009: 36-42).[25] The third and last subtype is 'personal rule'. In that case a regime is not ruled by an institution but by an individual person. Although often related to the question of 'who rules?', personal rulership can touch upon the question of 'how do they rule?' as well. The answer in this case is through personal self-interest, mostly in the form of greed and fear (Brooker 2009: 42).[26] Examples of different systems of personal rulership are oligarchic democracy, *caciquismo* (rule by local political bosses), *caudillismo* (rule by military chieftains)[27] and modern sultanism (in the form of absolutist one-person rule) (Linz 2000; Brooker 2009: 43). Through these examples, the flexibility and applicability of the personal-rule category reveals itself. As can be noticed, the category includes sultanism (as mentioned earlier in this chapter), but also on totalitarianism or any other kind of non-democratic rule in which the ruler is not an agent of a ruling institution. On the other hand however, it also includes cases wherein the ruler does rule through institutional or ideological relationships and interests (Brooker 2009: 44).

The content of this paper so far shows that all categories, types and sub-types of non-democratic rule, whether we ask 'who rules?' or 'how do they rule?', overlap each other and can be 'mixed' to fit particular cases in practice.[28] An example is the political system called 'theocratic rule' (or 'theocracy'). A theocracy is a form of non-democratic government in which 'the rulers are the leaders of the dominant religion and their policies are strongly influenced by that religion' (Perl 2007: 13-

---

[23] This question will be dealt with very briefly, since it is only of minor relevance.
[24] More on military rule (e.g. on forms and goals) can be found in Finer (1976 [1962]), Huntington (1968), Perlmutter (1977), Nordlinger (1977), Brooker (2009).
[25] Different types of one-party-state rule can also be distinguished when looking at the goals of the regime (for example revolutionary or exclusionary). A subtype within this type of rule is the military-party regime, leading to an overlap with the military-rule type mentioned earlier. More on one-party-state rule can be found in Tucker (1961), Huntington (1970), Brooker (1995 and 2009).
[26] As Roth (1968) notices, personal rulership is based on personal loyalties 'linked to material incentives and rewards' (Roth 1968: 195-196).
[27] Both examples relate to Latin-American politics.
[28] Linz even indicates an overlap between totalitarianism and democracy. The possibility of the democratic decision of a majority to do away with the freedoms that are the essence of democratic government is one that we should not dismiss lightly. Although anti-liberal, totalitarian systems of the 20th century claimed to be democratic in a way authoritarian regimes never did (Linz 2000: 10-20).

14).[29] Although many examples of theocracies exist, according to Perl Iran 'is the prime example of a fervent contemporary theocracy that has existed since 1979' (ibid: 14).

Figure 1 gives an overview of non-democratic rule types mentioned in this chapter.[30]
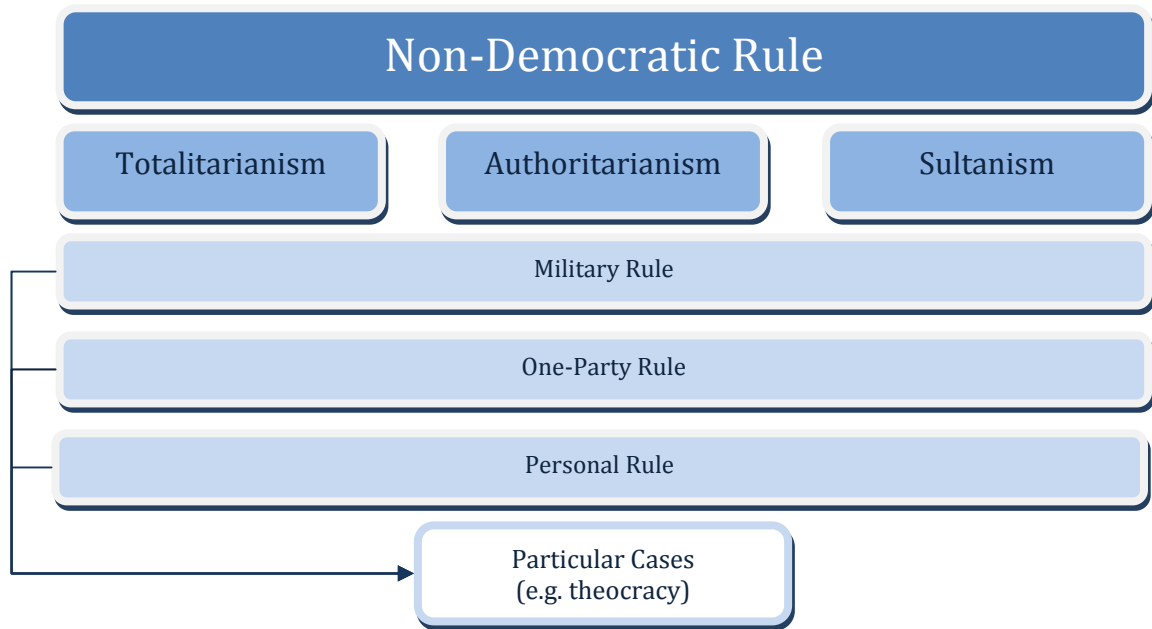

Figure 1 Schematic overview of non-democratic rule.

---

[29] Perl continues by explaining the origins of the word 'theocracy'. Coming from the Greeks (*theos* = god, *kratos* = power) the words points to a regime 'governed by a divinity or by high-ranking officials who are considered to be divinely guided' (Perl 2007: 14), or an intermediate link between the people and God.
[30] For a scheme on regime ideal types and their defining characteristics see Linz & Stepan (1996: 44-45).

Why and When do they Rule?

In order to create a model of (de)stabilizing factors on non-democratic rule, first two more questions, which partly overlap, need to be answered: 'when do they rule?' and 'why do they rule'? The following section aims at providing these answers after which the model will be introduced.

Why do they rule?

When asking why non-democratic regimes are able to rule, we have to look at three different but interconnected elements: motive, means and opportunity.[31] The ultimate answer to the question 'why do they rule?' can be answered by analyzing the motivations of the rulers in place. In short, the answer may be because they want to rule. Obviously, individual or corporate self-interest of involved persons is one, and often considered as the only or at least the most important motive to install non-democratic rule. This view, however, falls short because it (completely) neglects the possible impact of ideas on 'policy' outcomes.[32] That is why national, social and ideological interests must be taken into account, although such interests are seldom the real or primary motivation of power seizure but instead are used to disguise self-interested motives (Brooker 2009: 88). Which motives are dominant is dependent on a variety of variables and, obviously, often a mixture of motives is at work.[33] Besides that, motives change over time. A ruler may seize power e.g. to create 'order',- but over time and getting accustomed to the advantages of the position, personal interests may become more important, - often without the person in question realizing that.

Different means to seize power and subsequently use it in a non-democratic way exist. One of them is conducting a coup or to threaten with the possibility of conducting one. Coups can be carried out in a corporate way (in which the persons conducting the coup act as a unified, corporate body) or in a factionalized way (in which factions prevent the corporate body to act in a unified way)[34] (ibid: 87, 92-93). Another way is the electoral method, in which the regime seizes power democratically (by means of elections) but misuses that power to establish non-democratic rule (often in the form of a one-party state) (ibid: 112-115). The last method is the revolutionary seizure of power. In that case the relevant institution seizes power by leading a successful (often armed) uprising against the regime in place. The revolutionary seizure of power is often given a 'constitutional or electoral gloss'; however, it is little different from the (military) coup mentioned before (ibid: 116-120).

Non-democratic regimes arise not only because that is the wish of potential rulers; they also come into existence because they can. To put it differently, in order to succeed, apart from motivation, an opportunity to create non-democratic rule is needed. Non-democratic regimes have an opportunity to

---

[31] This method is based on Finer (1976 [1962]) and Brooker (2009) who apply it to military rule and one-party rule only. Brooker uses it mainly as a theoretical framework to predict the likelihood of intervention. His work can be used as an excellent reference for more information on this topic.

[32] A lively debate (still) exists between those who prioritize interests, those who prioritize ideas and the ones in between. This subject also touches upon the 'eternal debates' within International Relations. Many outstanding works can be found elaborating on such issues. In this case Baylis, Smith & Owens (2008) can be used as a starting point and further reading guide.

[33] Brooker speaks of 'inhibiting' motives as well. Such motives work against the seizure of power by a non-democratic regime and can be described as the belief in civil supremacy (in the case of military rule), fear of (coup) failure, fear of politicization of the military (in case of military rule), fear of repeat of past failures and belief in democracy (Brooker 87, 123).

[34] Factionalization during coups can even account for the failure of the intervention, because it functions as a capacity-reducing factor (Brooker 2009: 87).

arise during periods wherein state-power is weakened, for example by a foreign invasion, during a war of liberation or during fragile processes of democratization (in the aftermath of decolonization). More important seems the degree of legitimacy earned by the regime in place: opportunities for non-democratic rule arise out of the lack of legitimacy of ruling governments. When governments become discredited at certain levels, for example because of (alleged) corruption or disputed policies, their support base might collapse leaving room for non-democratic forces to seize power.

When do they rule?

An important issue is the question what it takes for a non-democratic regime to rule at a specific moment in time. It is obvious that both questions 'why do they rule?' and 'when do they rule' overlap each other. Looking at the previous section, non-democratic rule is able to come into existence only when motive, means and opportunity are present at the same time (see figure 2[35]). Many one-party-state regimes, or at least dominant parties within authoritarian regimes, emerged from societies during the struggle for independence from foreign domination and their domestic allies. Non-democratic regimes, however, might originate during post-democratic periods as well.[36]
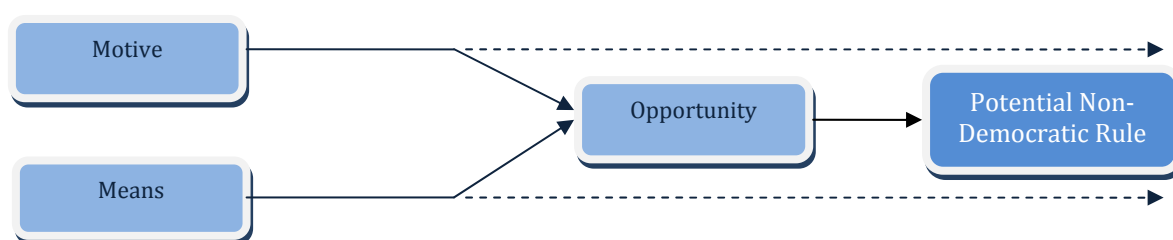

Figure 2 The elements necessary for non-democratic rule to come into existence

In fact, regimes can make a shift towards non-democratic rule in many different ways.[37] As mentioned in the previous section, non-democratic rule might come into existence *because* of a legitimacy deficit of the government in place. Therefore, the lack of legitimacy often marks the beginning of non-democratic rule establishment as well. Figure 4 illustrates the non-democratic rule life-cycle, providing an answer to the 'when do they rule?'-question.[38]

Although illegitimate regimes exist, in most cases the non-democratic regime[39] has to be regarded as a more or less legitimate alternative to the ruling government in order to be successful (step 1 in figure 4). Especially in the case of authoritarian regimes, the founding group or leader, before taking power, often has no or few ideological commitments. Legitimacy, defined as political stability without the need for coercion, therefore is won by using (often vague) ideas about overthrowing a corrupt

---

[35] The positions of the mentioned concepts, being motive, means, and opportunity, are interchangeable.
[36] For example the earlier mentioned possibility of the democratically initiated moves toward non-democratic rule, but also the seizure of power after the destabilization of democratic rule.
[37] Apart from shifts from democracy to totalitarianism, regimes can switch 'internally' between non-democratic system types (e.g. from totalitarian to authoritarian or from authoritarian to sultanistic, etc.).
[38] This figure was created by Gerd Junne during a discussion on the subject and (minimally) adjusted afterwards.
[39] In today's world, mostly being (semi-)authoritarian regimes or mixed forms with authoritarianism being the dominant type.

regime, rejecting foreign influences, defending order, uniting the country or modernizing the nation etc. (Linz 2000: 173). In such cases we speak of nationalist legitimacy, rational legal legitimacy, charismatic legitimacy or eudaemonic legitimacy (Al-Awadi 2004).[40] Of course it is possible to use ideology or traditions (for example in the form of religion) in this phase of rule-establishment. Linz points to the fact that often attempts of ideological justification are made in a later stadium, if not done at the beginning, in order to persuade intellectuals and international powers of their legitimate claim of power (Linz 2000: 173). The hybrid regimes mentioned earlier for example, try to receive justification by introducing shallow democratic elements and thereafter claim to be genuinely democratic (legitimacy by 'electoral' means).[41] Such regimes, especially in the Middle East, at the start gained legitimacy by making use of populist discourse and policies against foreign colonial powers and indigenous oligarchic rulers. However, their most important source of legitimacy came from promises regarding improvement of living standards and welfare. Highly relevant and interesting theories exist on the linkages between authoritarianism and sequential capitalist industrial development (SCID).

As Amineh states: 'Generally speaking, authoritarian regimes emerged as results of exogenous pressures (the global system) of marginalization, accompanied with indigenous economically backwardness and fragmented society' (Amineh forthcoming: 4)). In order to make a 'successful' transition to capitalist industrial development and to close the productivity-power gap with the Western capitalist powers, non-democratic rule was established in many underdeveloped regions, including the Middle East. Amineh continues by explaining that 'the main characteristic[s] of authoritarian regimes are thus strong centralized power structures, statism and developmental and interventionist tendencies' (ibid).[42]

The first step to power of a non-democratic regime has to be attended by a certain amount of consent of the people. The second step in figure 3 shows that non-democratic regimes, after consolidating power, become more obsessed by greed and self-interest. Political positions are replaced by the regime's own people, leading to marginalization or even repression of outsiders. In the Middle East such greed often comes with the roll-back of populist policies and rent seeking by the wealthy and powerful (King 2009: 14). Eventually the regime monopolizes resources and installs a crony economy, in most cases based on clientelistic relations. Together with mismanagement and corruption, clientelism becomes one of the main sources of feelings of injustice within the nation. Although regimes often try to counter such processes, for example by allying with elements from the 'old regime' and the new middle class, introducing coerced charity or state-led introduction of 'democratic' institutions (ibid), the alienation from the original constituency has become irreversible at this time of the cycle.

---

[40] Eudaemonic legitimacy 'is largely based on promises to improve peoples' living standards and welfare' (Al-Awadi 2004). For more on different types of legitimacy see Al-Awadi (2004).
[41] An important note is made by Linz regarding such claims, which deserves to be quoted fully here: 'No scholar should accept such claims at face value – not that the claims are irrelevant, since such initially vague commitments largely condition the international response to such regimes and influence their later development, opening certain possibilities and excluding others. However, it would be dangerous to base our classifications on those claims. Actual policies and the operation of political institutions [of different non-democratic regimes] might be very similar despite such pseudoideological differences, and the similarity in mentality of the rulers might make possible an understanding and affinity between leaders of systems apparently dissimilar' (Linz 2000: 173).
[42] For elaborations on this topic see Amineh (1999, forthcoming), Gerschenkron (1962) and several publications on the North-South divide by Dieter Senghaas.
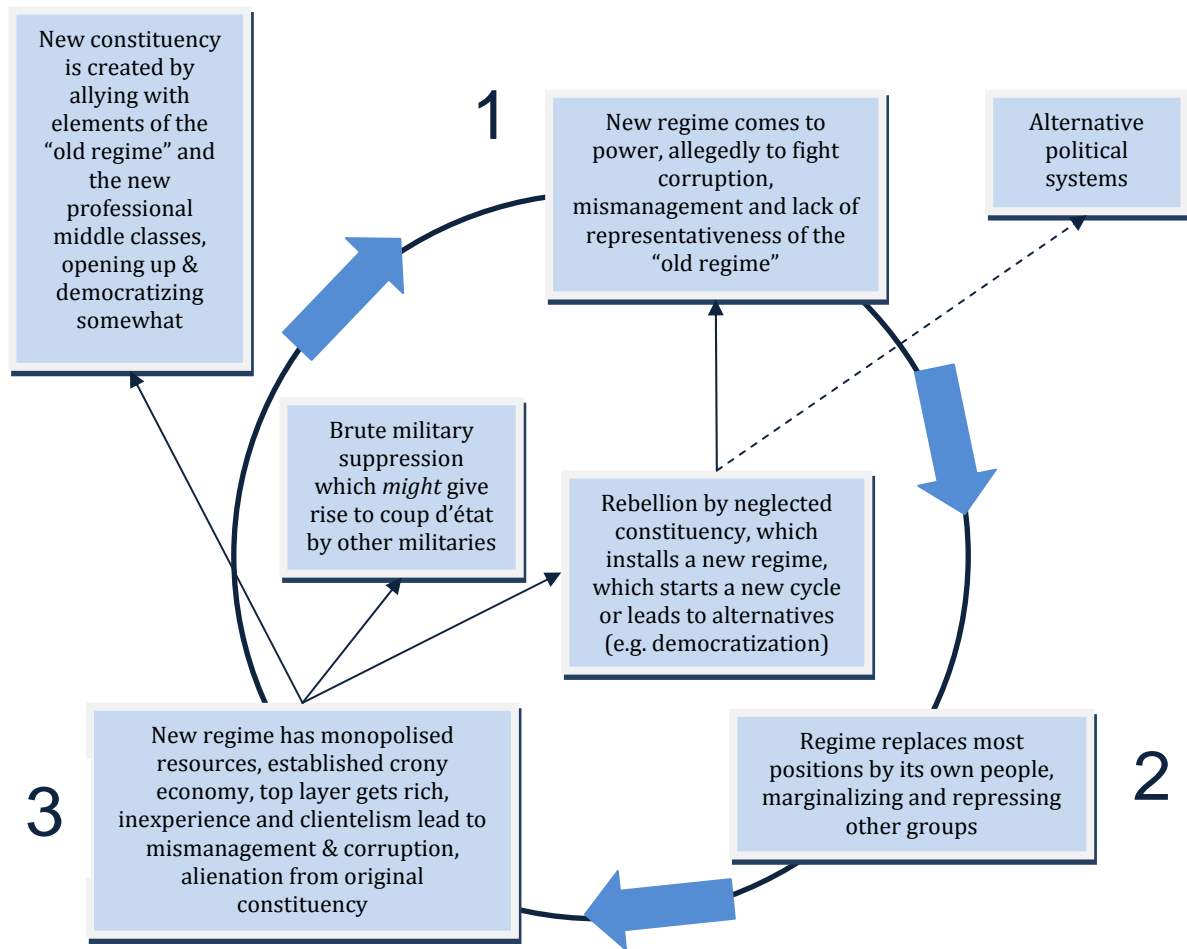
Figure 3 The life-cycle of non-democratic rule

When the regime receives the message that relying on consent is a past station, a usual reaction is the deployment of coercion in the form of the repressive apparatus. This reaction might lengthen or even consolidate the survival of the regime, but it might lead to its downfall as well. When the support of (different factions of) repressive forces crumbles, coercion may lead to a coup d'état of the military or rebellion by the neglected constituency and subsequently the installation of a new regime which starts a new cycle or leads to an alternative political system.

Factors of Non-Democratic Rule (de)Stabilization: the Introduction of a Model

The previous sections show that non-democratic rule, especially authoritarianism in the Middle East, 'is both persistent and dynamic' (King 2009: 15). In order to comprehend these characteristics we need to analyze the factors influencing non-democratic rule (in)stability.
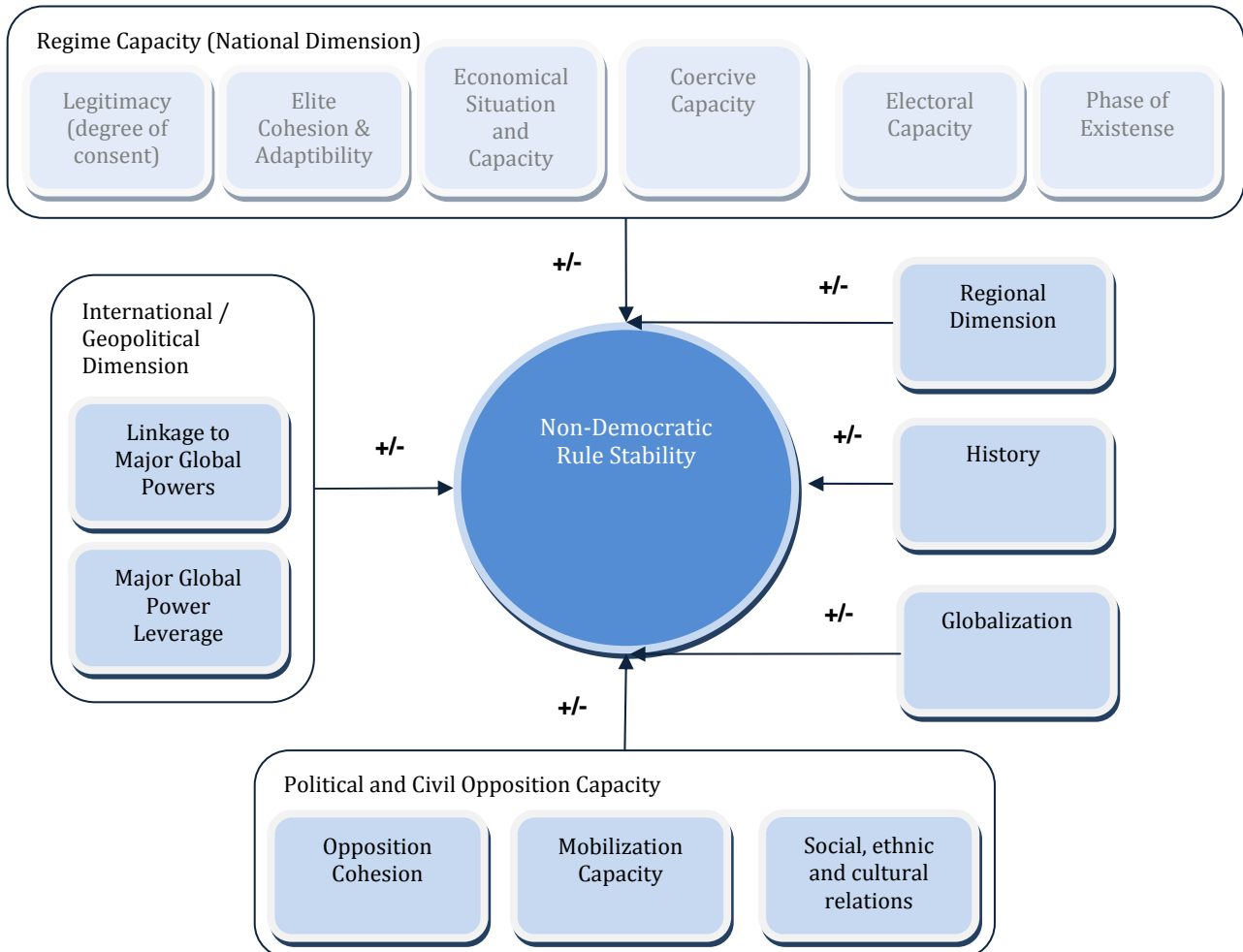

Figure 4 Factors influencing non-democratic rule stability

Regime Capacity

Regime capacity is the ability to perform all functions necessary, not only to hold on to power, but also to preserve rule stability. The capacity of the regime determines to what extent the objectives of state officials are able to be implemented successfully and exists out of five factors: the legitimacy that the regime receives of the people, elite cohesion within the regime, the regime's economical situation and capacity, and the regime's coercive and electoral capacity.

Legitimacy

As mentioned earlier, legitimacy is political stability without the need for coercion. In other words, it is the degree to which a regime is considered to rule in accordance with accepted patterns, standards and priorities and, therefore, is being justified. Because rulers, in one way or another, are linked to their constituents, consent empowers a regime and widens its menu of possibilities. Legitimacy, thus, is one of the cornerstones of stability: as long as a (non-democratic) regime is considered to be legitimate its stability is guaranteed *externally*. Externally, because internal elite dynamics are still able to undermine stability.[43] Legitimacy can be earned at different political levels: (sub-)nationally (from the people of the nation), regionally and internationally. When a regime is not being regarded as legitimate at all levels simultaneously, stability might decrease. In short: more legitimacy, as in being able to rule by consent, is more regime stability. As mentioned in the previous section, different sources can be used in pursuing legitimacy. Therefore, an overlap exists with other factors within the regime capacity category (e.g. economic capacity).

Elite Cohesion & Adaptibility

If legitimacy is one of the cornerstones of stability, elite cohesion, defining *internal* regime stability, is another one. The cohesion within elites refers to the degree of loyalty and discipline 'that executives can command from other regime elites' (Levitsky & Way 2003: 7). According to Brownlee (2007) elite cohesion is the most significant driver of regime stability: 'Failure to maintain elite alliances prompts defections and instability' (Brownlee 2007: 32). Considering the fact that elite cohesion is mediated through political institutions of non-democratic/authoritarian rule, elite formations and/or ruling parties are highly important in determining regime stability. As Brownlee states (and displays in figure 6): 'Ruling parties […] bridle elite ambitions and bind together otherwise fractious coalitions' (ibid). Rival opportunists cooperate when anchored in an institutional setting that generates political power and long-term security. The cohesion within the regime, resulting from such cooperation, 'enables control over elections and other points of contact with opposition movements' (ibid: 33). When, on the other hand, such parties have not been maintained, political power competition arises, leading to colliding rather that colluding factions. In such cases, 'losers [will] ally with the opposition in new countercoalitions' (ibid), leading to regime instability. The degree of elite adaptation, in the sense of elite rotation / reshuffling and partial exchange of structurally different elite segments, determines the degree to which a regime can adapt to (such) changing environments (Albrecht & Schlumberger 2004: 378-379). Figure 5 shows the potential consequences of different ways to manage initial elite conflicts.

---

[43] Note that externally does not mean outside of the state (thus regionally or internationally) in this context, but outside of the elite that makes up the regime.
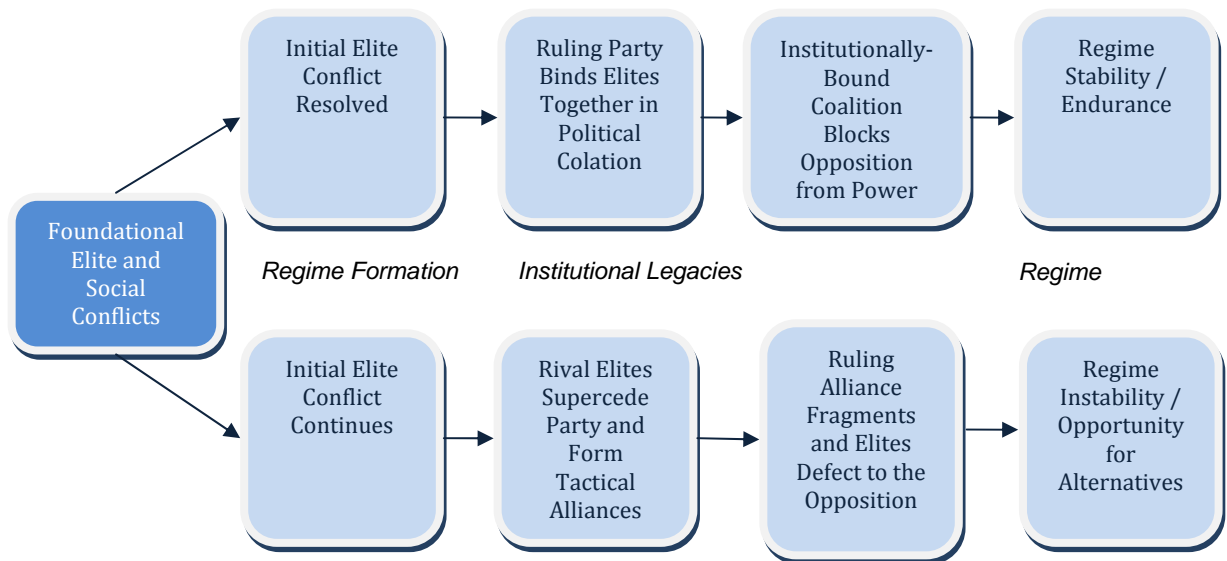
Figure 5 Elite cohesion and non-democratic rule stability (Brownlee 2007: 36, with minor adaptations)

Economical situation and capacity

As mentioned earlier, non-democratic rule might arise (sooner) in underdeveloped peripheral countries in order to 'deliver' the state intervention necessary in the face of stiff international competition (Gerschenkron 1962; Junne 2009). When rulers let go of their economic grip, as the thought goes, political liberalization will follow.[44] On the other hand, a wealthy regime, in general, will be able to generate more (eudaemonic) legitimacy and thereby more stability. Wealthy regimes are better able to improve the living standards and welfare of the people which consequently enables the regime to rule by consent (even if the regime itself benefits mostly from economic wealth). Fostering feelings of consent and dependency, regimes purchase compliance by means of clientelism and economic patronage. Foreign aid and strategic rent based on political alliances and geography serve these purposes (Pioppi 2007; King 2009: 29). The income from natural resources (e.g. oil) is an important aspect in this regard.[45] Especially in the Middle East great amounts of petrodollars are available for the purchase of compliance (King 2009: 29; Howard 2007: 126). Without the need for taxes, oil-money denies people the right, and to some extent even their wish, to participate in politics[46] (Luciani 2007: 161-162). However, there is the other side of the story as well: oil rents and the accompanying interventionism of states might stifle industrial development capable of surviving in a free market (Al-Khafaji 2002: 321-325). Besides that, the reliance on oil creates other problems: oil production for export generates few jobs which, in combination with migration issues, might lead to tensions and regime destabilization (Junne 2009).

---

[44] In social sciences literature and by politicians and opinion makers this assumption is widely maintained. It is not unchallenged, however. See Luciani (2007) for more on this topic.

[45] Although this is certainly the case, we must not overlook external revenues (mentioned a few sentences earlier). The rise and decline of oil prices does not always correspond with expenditure patterns of regimes, pointing to other sources of income. For more on this see Richter (2007).

[46] For more on the 'rentier state paradigm' see Chaudhry (1997), Herb (1999) and Ulfelder (2007).

Coercive Capacity

The stability of a non-democratic regime also depends on the capacity of that regime to control and/or repress opposition forces, coming from political or civil society. Indeed, coercive capacity enables the regime to repress citizens so that they become intimidated, discouraged from participating in opposition activities (both labeled as 'low level' repression) or even physically injured ('high level repression). As Levitsky and Way argue 'where incumbents lack the capacity to crack down [on opposition activity], they are more likely to fall' (Levitsky & Way 2003: 8). More coercive capacity, thus, means more stability.[47] Nevertheless, with regard to this factor we must be careful. Although domestic repression might prolong the survival of the regime, this does not imply automatically that it strengthens the regime's stability. To put it differently, coercion does not solve other political dilemmas, such as economic dissatisfaction or unmediated elite conflicts, which destabilize non-democratic rule (Brownlee 2007: 210). Downright repression might also, to a great extent, open the gates to a loss of legitimacy. As Sluglett states: 'Terrorizing and repressing the population for prolonged periods of time may keep regimes in power for a while, but modern technology has resulted in states finding it increasingly difficult to keep the rest of the world out […], and the process offers diminishing, often fatal returns at the end of the day, when internal or external pressures (or a combination of them) bring the regime to an end' (Sluglett 2007: 94).

Electoral capacity

This factor does not apply to every type of non-democratic rule, however it does in the case of modern hybrid regimes in the form of competitive authoritarian rule. Incumbents in competitive authoritarian regimes must, unlike their counterparts in full-scale non-democratic regimes, win elections (Levitsky & Way 2003: 8). However, they do not have to do so the honest way. In order to be successful, in winning or stealing the elections, regimes must be able to rely on an organizational infrastructure capable of mobilizing voters and implementing fraudulent measures. Most often the organizational infrastructure has the form of a party, using patronage networks combined with a coercive apparatus. In order to steal votes, regimes make use of the stuffing or destroying of ballot boxes, intimidating voters, manipulating electoral results, tampering with voter registration rolls, etc. All such activities, in order to be organized and coordinated, need a minimum of capacity (ibid). Obviously, electoral capacity overlaps with the factors mentioned above. In order to work, the mentioned electoral measures need a strong elite cohesion and the back-up of coercive capacity. Besides that, money is needed to provide for clientelistic practices and for the implementation of fraudulent operations. This overlap reveals a threat to regime stability as well: repression, injustice and (the discovery of) fraud can contribute to a possible loss of legitimacy and thereby a crumbling regime stability.

Phase of existence

This factor relates to the earlier shown figure 3. At the beginning, when a new regime comes into power, stability is usually weak because of the lack of elite cohesion and supportive networks and the fragility of new structures and 'rules of the game'. When those elements have been implemented and

---

[47] The robustness of coercive forces depends among other factors on the maintenance of fiscal health and international support networks and on its level of institutionalization. For more on this issue see Bellin (2004).

settled, combined with the generation of trust and legitimacy from the people, regime stability is able to increase between stages 1 and 3 in figure 3. From stage 3 onwards the regime risks losing legitimacy and thereby stability, leading to different possible steps. Regime destabilization might be reversed or might lead to the collapse of the regime, starting a new life cycle of non-democratic rule or introducing one of the political alternatives.

Political and Civil Opposition Capacity

The political and civil opposition capacity is the ability to oppose non-democratic rule. The capacity of opposing forces (partly) determines to what extent pressure can be applied on non-democratic incumbents and thereby in how far the political system opens up to alternative pathways. Three factors determine the strength of political and civil opposition: opposition cohesion, mobilization strength and the social, ethnic and cultural relations within society.

Opposition cohesion

A critical aspect with regard to the success of anti-authoritarian movements is opposition cohesion (Bratton and van de Walle 1997: 198-200; Corrales 2001; Levitsky & Way 2003: 9). Although scholars often focus on political society when analyzing opposition cohesion we should not neglect civil society. As stated by Biekart (1999) and De Vries (2009), both political and civil society (in combination with other factors) have an influence on democratization processes and thereby on non-democratic rule stability.[48] When the political and/or civil opposition is divided *internally*, opposition will be weak. To a great extent, this has to do with the sentiments and desires that are living in society. When political and/or civil society are shattered in different 'islands' of sentiments and desires, cohesion will be absent. A divided political opposition enables incumbents to win a mere plurality of the vote, even when they are unpopular (Levitsky & Way 2003: 9). Their true loyal support base in such cases will be reinforced with votes from constituents who do not regard the opposition worthy of their vote. Even if they do not vote for the non-democratic incumbent he/she profits from such a situation because it weakens the position of the opposition further. Combined with potential vote rigging, the incumbent, in such cases, will not have a hard time 'winning' the elections. A divided civil society, if a threat to non-democratic rule at all[49], will hardly be able to claim their role as a counterbalance to (the power of) the state. Still another possibility is that each political and civil society will be united *internally*, but divided between each other. In that case the polarized opposition enables the regime to employ divide and rule strategies. In extreme cases of internal or external division, one party may even decide to work together with the regime to prevent the victory of rival parties (ibid).[50] All in all a divided opposition enables a non-democratic regime to gain stability, not because the regime is regarded as legitimate, but because no danger of destabilization comes from opposing forces.[51]

---

[48] For more on this issue see Biekart (1999): *The Politics of Civil Society Building: European Private Aid Agencies and Democratic Transitions in Central America* and De Vries (2009). Both can be used as guides for further reading on (the relation between) political and civil society.

[49] As Jamal states: 'Clearly context matters. And only after we understand how different contexts affect patterns of interpersonal trust and their relationship to civic engagement in democratic reform. Crowning interpersonal trust with benevolent and unequivocally 'democratic' residuals may be applicable in democratic settings, but it certainly is not in nondemocratic ones. [...] Authoritarian leaders depend on their supporters and followers to cooperate to protect the interests of the state and its rulers. Significantly, the forms of social capital praised in current scholarly discourses as useful for democracy are also useful for authoritarianism [...] In states dominated by ruling governments and patrimonial linkages, where states are deeply embedded within society, the bottom-up approach to democracy is seriously flawed' (Jamal 2007: 95, 137). In other words, the role civil society plays depends on state-society relations.

[50] Cavatorta (2009) gives a good example of opposition cleavages between Islamists and secularists in Morocco in his article ''Divided they stand, divided they fail': opposition politics in Morocco'.

[51] Levitsky and Way measure (political) opposition cohesion in terms of three levels. In cases of high cohesion major opposition parties are organized into a single party or coalition. In cases of medium cohesion the opposition will be able to unite into broad-based anti-authoritarian coalitions during elections or moments of regime crises. Deep divisions along ideological, ethnic or regional lines lead to low cohesion and each other opposing forces within the opposition (Levitsky & Way 2003: 9-10).

Mobilization strength

Mobilization strength is the ability of opposition movements or parties to mobilize citizens against the regime (Levitsky & Way 2003: 10). Again, this applies for political society as well as for civil society and an overlap exists with opposition cohesion. More cohesion, in general, leads to more mobilization strength in the form of capacity to mount large and sustained protest movements. Demands ventilated by strong united and mobilized oppositions put pressure on regimes to respond to such claims. Regimes might be able to preserve stability by giving in to demands, however, the possibility of starting a chain-reaction which leads to more radical political opposition cannot be ruled out in such cases. Mobilization strength may lead to the usage of coercive measures by the regime resulting in a severely weakened opposition. Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, a regime risks losing legitimacy when playing the repression card. The gains of weakening oppositional mobilization strength in that case will not be very useful and might even backfire at a particular moment in time. An opposition capable of rallying against the regime therefore is by definition a threat to regime stability.[52]

Social, ethnic and cultural relations

Opposition cohesion, mobilization strength and opposition capacity partly depend on social and demographical factors. Numeral explanations of the link between culture and authoritarianism circulate through the academic world. One aspect of culture, for example, 'can be seen in patriarchal family structures, which frame expectations with regard to leadership from early childhood on' (Junne 2009). Another aspect is religion: a lively debate exists on the question whether Islam is compatible with democratic principles (ibid).[53] Religion must be taken into the equation as a potential spoiler when people support both democracy *and* some kind of religious (e.g. Islamic) form of government. Although religion is a malleable concept (in a way it is what actors make of it), when it is interpreted in a dogmatic way it becomes a potential threat to democracy – like any other extreme ideology. It becomes difficult, not to say impossible, to reconcile religion with democracy when people believe in the notion that there is no ruler but God.

More important, considering the subject of this section, is the possible existence of deep divisions along social, ethnic and cultural lines within societies. As mentioned earlier, such divisions have a great chance of leading to weak opposition cohesion and a low degree of mobilization. Although not *per se* (directly) leading to regime legitimacy, such divisions might strengthen non-democratic regime stability because the opposition will not manage to claim participation. Even more so, as Junne mentions, although different classes/groups may have lived together peacefully in the past, 'in a situation in which such groups collide on a global or regional scale, dormant identities are redefined, acquire new importance, and are used to mobilize groups in violent conflicts' (ibid). Such conflict can be used by non-democratic regimes to legitimize their control by presenting themselves as 'the only way out'.

---

[52] Good examples are the recent 'red shirt protests' in Thailand.
[53] I will not elaborate on this topics since doing so would request a complete research process on its own. Much is written on both issues and existing literature can be used to gain inside on different perspectives. See, for example, Anderson (2006), Halabi (1999), Fattah (2006), Joffé (2008) and Fish (2009).

International/Geopolitical Dimension

As Levitsky & Way notice, the effects of this dimension are difficult to measure or compare. International / geopolitical influences take a variety of forms and vary across time, region and individual states. 'Yet the effect of the international environment on regimes appears to be considerable' (Levitsky & Way 2003: 10; Starr 1991; O'Loughlin et al 1998; Kopstein & Reilly 2000; Brinks & Coppedge 2001). The international/geopolitical dimension brings two factors together: linkage to major global powers and major global power leverage.

Linkage to major global powers

Linkage to major global powers comes in a variety of forms. Examples are economic integration, military alliances, geographic proximity, flows of international assistance, international media penetration, ties to international NGOs and other transnational networks (Levitsky & Way 2003: 10), expat and diaspora networks and cultural/ideological bonds. Most scholars focus on western powers when analyzing linkages to major powers. Levitsky & Way, for example, claim that linkages to the United States or Europe 'raised the costs of authoritarian entrenchment in several ways' (ibid). Western governments are more likely to defend democracy because of cultural proximity, fear of mass immigration or conflict, etc. Secondly, the possibility to become a member of western alliances (e.g. NATO and EU) creates a strong incentive to play by democratic rules. Finally, close proximity to western (democratic) countries increases the flow of information, ideas and educated people across borders (ibid). All in all this might lead to the erosion of non-democratic rule stability within countries. Although this sounds plausible, and probably part of it is true, such perspectives neglect the (very important) other side of the story. In today's world we should not focus on western powers only but keep an eye on rising global powers as well. Especially China seems to become a major global power to be reckoned with. With its alternative (economic-)political system it is far from certain that linkages to China will lead to democratization incentives and thereby to non-democratic rule de-stability. The consequences of the linkages to major global powers, thus, depend on the character of that power and, of course, on the character of the non-democratic regime in question.

Major Global power Leverage

Leverage, in this case, stands for the mutual dependency of political powers and partly overlaps with linkages to major global powers. Non-democratic regimes, in a way, are often dependent on global major powers. Such dependency increases the influence of major global powers on non-democratic regimes. A linkage is most influential when it is combined with military and/or economic dependence on a relevant major global power. Those powers are able to use the 'carrot and stick' method in order to pursue their goals. Non-democratic regimes get punished when they do not meet major global power demands; they receive rewards when they do. This way, major global power leverage influences non-democratic rule stability. This connection, however, runs in the opposite direction as well. When non-democratic regimes possess something highly valued by major global powers, leverage of such powers may be reduced. A strong economy with a large domestic market, natural resources, military security, influence on key-factors or –actors being a few important examples. In fact, western influences are being regarded as one of the key factors influencing regime stability in

the Middle East. Especially during the cold war period this phenomenon has been a highly relevant and strikingly obvious truth. Non-democratic regimes were kept in place by the bipolar system of that time. Autocratic behavior was even rewarded as long as the regime in question took 'the right side'.[54] Although more radical back in the days, the present situation has not changed that much. The U.S. and Europe until this day maintain friendly relations with authoritarian regimes in the region because they value regional stability and geopolitical interests over non-democratic rule de-stability (which might lead to democratization). Fear of the alternative, in the form of Islamic oriented coups, keeps major global powers from destabilizing non-democratic rule within the Middle East (Aarts 2007). Major global power leverage, however, might lead to regime destabilization in an indirect way. When the ally is regarded by the people as illegitimate, linkage and leverage may lead to a legitimacy crisis and instability of the regime. In that case however, much depends on the strength of the opposition.

---

[54] The U.S. even had a policy in which it differentiated between authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. Although authoritarian regimes did not meet U.S. preferred standards and where not ready for democracy yet, there was hope that in the future such countries would. In the case of totalitarian regimes, in the form of communist allies of the Soviet Union, on the other hand, democratization was hardly thinkable and thus was opposed by the U.S. For more on this issue see Jeane J. Kirkpatrick (1982).

Remaining Factors

Besides regime capacity, opposition capacity and the international / geopolitical dimension some remaining factors have an influence on non-democratic rule stability.

Regional Dimension

Considering the proximity to surrounding countries, the regional dimension influences stability of (non-democratic) regimes. As mentioned before, ideas, information and even practices move across borders. When surrounded by states with opposing or opposite political systems, regime stability is likely to be pressured. On the other hand, when surrounded by similar 'minded' regimes, stability will not be negatively influenced by regional dynamics. Non-democratic regimes are said to be learning from one another, labeled as 'authoritarian learning' by Steven Heydemann (Heydemann 2007: 2). Gershman and Allen speak of 'a contagion or copycat effect of similar legislation or practices introduced across neighboring regimes' (Gershman & Allen 2006: 40). In that way, the regional dimension is used in order to try to strengthen regime stability. Besides that, a difference exists between a stable and a turbulent environment. Although a stable surrounding is certainly no guarantee for regime stability, a turbulent one can be exploited in order to legitimize a regime's political stranglehold.

History

The history of a state and its people influence regime types and regime stability. In the case of Middle Eastern states, colonial legacies are considered to be important non-democratic rule stabilizers. The artificial character, together with dependent state development, are said to contribute to processes that keep states prisoners of dependence (as mentioned under the heading 'economical situation and capacity'). The history of the Israeli – Palestinian conflict is another factor of influence. Regimes gain stability by using the conflict to legitimate their rule in the face of external threats. Finally, history can throw light on processes of habituation as well. The people of a country with a non-democratic history may be used to the non-democratic system in a way that keeps them from establishing or even appreciating alternatives (Avineri 2010).

Globalization

Globalization, in short 'the spread of transplanetary - and in recent times also more particularly supraterritorial - connections between people' (Scholte 2008: 1478) can be influential regarding non-democratic rule (de)stabilization in many ways.[55] Most important to note is that events in one part of the world (more and more) have effects on peoples and societies in other parts of the world because of the process of increasing interconnectedness between societies (Baylis et al. 2008: 8). Seemingly un-influential events may turn out to have a high impact on non-democratic regime stability.

---

[55] The same applies for internationalization, liberalization, universalization and westernization, however, such notions do not open new insights the way globalization does. For more on this subject see Scholte (2008). For more on globalization in general see Held & McGrew (eds) (2003): *The Global Transformations Reader: An Introduction to the Globalization Debate*. For a critical analysis on the topic see Rosenberg (2000): *The Follies of Globalisation Theory*.

Conclusion

When analyzing (prospects for) democracy and/or democratization we should be aware that issues considering different forms of non-democratic rule and the stability of such rule will inescapably come to light. Chances for democratization depend to a large extent on the stability of the regime in place. Thus, when trying to gain reliable insights into a country's prospects for democratization, one should, among other things, focus on the specific character of the regime and its (future) stability. This paper, covering issues surrounding non-democratic rule, aimed at providing a toolbox, in the form of a model, which can be used to analyze specific cases. A clarification of the model has been given, explaining the particular influences of all relevant factors. Although the specific impact of the factors on non-democratic rule stability turned out to be ambiguous and highly interrelated, which makes conducting research on this issue complex, using the model within analyses enables us to gain insight into regime stability of specific cases.

Bibliography

Aarts, P.W.H 2007, 'The Longevity of the House of Saud: Looking Outside the Box', in O. Schlumberger (ed.), *Debating Arab Authoritarianism: Dynamics and Durability in Nondemocratic Regimes*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, pp. 251-267.

Al-Awadi, H 2004, *In Persuit of Legitimacy: The Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*, I.B. Tauris, London.

Albrecht, H & Schlumberger, O 2004, '"Waiting for Godot": Regime Change Without Democratization in the Middle East', *International Political Science Review*, vol. 25, no. 4, pp. 371-392.

Al-Khafaji, I 2002, *Tormented Births: Passages to Modernity in Europe and the Middle East*, Dissertation, University of Amsterdam.

Amineh, M 1999, *Die Globale Kapitalistische Expansion und Iran: Eine Studie der Iranischen Politischen Ökonomie (1500-1980)*, LIT Verlag, Münster.

Amineh, M forthcoming, 2010.

Anderson, L 2006, 'Searching Where the Light Shines: Studying Democratization in the Middle East', *Annual Review of Political Science*, no. 9, pp. 189-214.

Arendt, H 1962 [1951], *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Meridian, Cleveland and New York.

Avineri, S 2010, 'Transformations in Eastern Europe and Lessons for the Middle East', in N.J Brown & E El- Din Shahin (eds) 2010, *The Struggle for Democracy in the Middle East: Regional Politics and External Policies*, Routledge, Abingdon, pp. 85-99.

Barber, B 1969, 'Conceptual Foundations of Totalitarianism' in C.J Friedrich, M Curtis and B.R Barber, *Totalitarianism in Perspective: Three Views*, Pall Mall Press, London.

Baylis, J, Smith, S & Owens, P 2008, *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Bellin, E 2004, 'The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective', *Comparative Politics*, vol. 36, no. 2, pp. 139-157.

Biekart, K 1999, *The Politics of Civil Society Building: European Private Aid Agencies and Democratic Transitions in Central America*, Basic Books, Utrecht.

Bratton, M & Van de Walle, N 1997, *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Brinks, D & Coppedge, D 2001, 'Patterns of Diffusion in the Third Wave of Democracy', Paper delivered at the 2001 *Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association*, San Francisco, August 30-September 2, 2001.

Brooker, M 1995, *Twentieth-Century Dictatorships: The Ideological One-Party States*, MacMillan, Basingstoke.

Brooker, P 2009, *Non-Democratic Regimes (2nd edition)*, Palgrave MacMillan, Basingstoke.

Brownlee, J 2007, *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Case, W 1996, 'Can the 'Halfway House' Stand? Semidemocracy and Elite Theory in Three Southeast Asian Countries', *Comparative Politics*, vol. 28, no. 4, pp. 437-464.

Cavatorta, F 2009, "Divided they stand, divided they fail': opposition politics in Morocco', *Democratization,* vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 137-156.

Chaudhry, K.A 1997, *The Price of Wealth: Economies and Institutions in the Middle East*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca.

Chehabi, H.E & Linz, J.J (eds) 1998, *Sultanistic Regimes*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.

Collier, D & Levitsky, S 1997, 'Democracy With Adjectives', *World Politics*, vol. 49, no. 3, pp. 430-452.

Corrales, J 2001, 'Strong Societies, Weak Parties': Regime Change in Cuba and Venezuela in the 1950's and Today', *Latin American Politics and Society,* vol. 43, no. 2, pp. 81-113.

Diamond, L.J 2002, 'Thinking About Hybrid Regimes', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 13, no.2, pp. 21-35.

Fattah, M.A 2006, *Democratic Values in the Muslim World*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder.

Finer, S.E 1976 [1962], *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics (second edition)*, Westview, Boulder.

Fish, M.S 2009, 'Encountering Culture', in Z Barany & R.G Moser (eds), *Is Democracy Exportable?*, Cambridge University Press, New York, pp. 57-84.

Friedrich, C.J & Brzezinski, Z.K 1961, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, Praeger, New York.
Ganji, A 2008, 'The Latter-Day Sultan: Power and Politics in Iran', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 87, no.6, pp. 45-66.

Geiger, T 1932, *Die soziale Schichtung des deutschen Volkes*, F. Enke, Stuttgart.

Gerschenkron, A 1962, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective*, Belknap Press, Cambridge.

Gershman, C & Allen, M 2006, 'The Assault on Democracy Assistance', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 36-51.

Halabi, Y 1999, 'Orientalism and US Democratization Policy in the Middle East', *International Studies*, vol. 36, no. 4, pp. 375-392.

Held, D & McGrew, A (eds) 2003, *The Global Transformations Reader: An Introduction to the Globalization Debate*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

Herb, M 1999, *All in the Family: Absolutisms, Revolution, and Democracy in the Middle Eastern Monarchies*, State University of New York Press, Cambridge.

Heydemann, S 2007, 'Upgrading Authoritarianism in the Arab World', *The Saban Center for Middle East Policy at The Brookings Institution*, analysis paper no. 13.

Howard, M.M & Roessler, P.G 2006, 'Liberalizing Electoral Outcomes in Competitive Authoritarian Regimes', *American Journal of Political Science*, vol. 50, no. 2.

Howard, R 2007, *Iran Oil: The New Middle East Challenge to America*, Tauris, London.

Huntington, S.P 1968, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, Yale University Press, New Haven.

Huntington, S.P 1970, 'Social and Institutional Dynamics of One-Party Systems', in S.P Huntington & C.H Moore (eds), *Authoritarian Politics in Modern Society: The Dynamics of Established One-Party Systems*, Basic Books, New York.

Huntington, S.P 1991, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.

Jamal, A 2007, *Barriers to Democracy: The Other Side of Social Capital in Palestine and the Arab World*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

Junne, G.C.A 2009, 'Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Here to Stay', *The Broker Online*, April 2009. Published on http://www.thebrokeronline.eu/en/Magazine/articles/Here-to-stay

Karl, T.L 1995, 'The Hybrid Regimes of Central America', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 72-87.

Katouzian, H 1998, 'The Pahlavi Regime in Iran', in H.E Chehabi & J.J Linz (eds) 1998, *Sultanistic Regimes*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, pp. 184-205.

King, S.J 2009, *The New Authoritarianism in the Middle East and North Africa*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington.

Kirkpatrick, J.J 1982, *Dictatorships and Double Standards: Rationalism and Reason in Politics*, Simon & Schuster, New York.

Kopstein, J.S & Reilly, D.A 2000, 'Geographic Diffusion and the Transformation of the Postcommunist World', *World Politics*, vol. 53, no. 1, pp. 1-37.

Lapidus, I.M 2002, *A History of Islamic Societies (Second Edition)*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Levitsky, S & Way, L.A 2002, 'The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 51-65.

Levitsky, S & Way, L.A 2003, 'Autocracy by Democratic Rules: The Dynamics of Competitive Authoritarianism in the Post-Cold War Era', *Paper for the Conference 'Mapping the Great Zone: Clientelism and the Boundary Between Democratic and Democratizing'*, april 2003, Columbia University.

Linz, J.J 1970 [1964], 'An Authoritarian Regime: Spain', in E Allardt & S Rokkan (eds), *Mass Poltics*, Free Press, New York.

Linz, J.J & Stepan, A 1996, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.

Linz, J.J 2000, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder.

Luciani, G 2007, 'Linking Economic and Political Reform in the Middle East: The Role of the Bourgeoisie', in O Schlumberger (ed.), *Debating Arab Authoritarianism: Dynamics and Durability in Nondemocratic Regimes*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, pp. 161-176.

Means, G.P 1996, 'Soft Authoritarianism in Malaysia and Singapore', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 7, no. 4, pp. 103-117.

NIMD & Hivos 2010, 'Beyond Orthodox Approaches: Assessing Opportunities for Democracy support in the Middle East and North Africa', NIMD Knowledge Centre & Hivos Knowledge Programme, The Hague.

Nordlinger, E.A 1977, *Soldiers in Politics: Military Coups and Governments*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs.

O'Donell, G 1979 [1973], *Modernization and Bureaucratic Authoritarianism: Studies in South American Politics*, University of California Press, Berkeley.

O'Loughlin, J, et al. 1998, 'The Diffusion of Democracy, 1946-1994', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 88, no. 4, pp. 545-574.

Ottaway, M & Olcott, MB 1999, 'The Challenge of Semi-Authoritarianism', *Carnegie Paper No. 7*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington.

Ottaway, M 2003, *Democracy Challenged: The Rise of Semi-Authoritarianism*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington D.C.

Perl, L 2007, *Political Systems of the World: Theocracy*, Benchmark Books, New York.

Perlmutter, A 1977, *The Military and Politics in Modern Times: On Professionals, Praetorians, and Revolutionary Soldiers*, Yale University Press, New Haven.

Perlmutter, A 1981, *Modern Authoritarianism: A Comparative Institutional Analysis*, Yale University Press, New Haven.

Pioppi, D 2007, 'Privatization of Social Services as a Regime Strategy: The Revival of Islamic endowments (*Awqaf*) in Egypt', in O Schlumberger (ed.), *Debating Arab Authoritarianism: Dynamics and Durability in Nondemocratic Regimes*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, pp. 129-142.

Richter, T 2007, 'The Political Economy of Regime Maintenance in Egypt: Linking External resources and Domestic Legitimation', in O Schlumberger (ed.), *Debating Arab Authoritarianism: Dynamics and Durability in Nondemocratic Regimes*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, pp. 177-193.

Rosenberg, J 2000, *The Follies of Globalisation Theory*, Verso, London.

Roth, G 1968, 'Personal Rulership, Patrimonialism, and Empire Building in the New States', *World Politics*, vol. 20, no. 2.

Schapirio, L 1972, *Totalitarianism*, Pall Mall, London.

Schedler, A 2002, 'The Menu of Manipulation', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 36-50.

Schedler, A 2006, *Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Competition*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder.

Schedler, A 2010, 'Authoritarianism's Last Line of Defense', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 69-80.

Scholte, J.A 2008, 'Defining Globalisation', *The World Economy*, vol. 31, no. 11, pp. 1471-1502.

Sluglett, P 2007, 'The Ozymandias Syndrome: Questioning the Stability of Middle Eastern Regimes', in O Schlumberger (ed.), *Debating Arab Authoritarianism: Dynamics and Durability in Nondemocratic Regimes*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, pp. 93-108.

Starr, H 1991, 'Democratic Dominoes: Diffusion Approaches to the Spread of Democracy in the International System', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 35, no. 2, pp. 356-381.

Tucker, R.C 1961, 'Towards a Comparative Politics of Movement-Regimes', *American Political Science Review*, vol. 55, no. 2.

Ulfelder, J 2007, 'Natural-Resource Wealth and the Survival of Autocracy', *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 40, no. 8, pp. 995-1018.

Vries De, S 2009, 'The Downfall of Simplicity and the 'Complex' Notion(s) of Democratization: A Revision of the Relation Between Political Society, Civil Society and Democratization', *Working Paper Knowledge Programme Civil Society in West Asia,* University of Amsterdam.

Whitehead, L 2002, *Democratization: Theory and Experience*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Zakaria, F 1997, 'The Rise of Illiberal Democracy', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 76, no. 6, pp. 22-41.

List of Figures

About the Author

After receiving his MA in International Relations from the University of Amsterdam in 2010 (with distinction), Stephan de Vries became a junior researcher within the Knowledge Programme Civil Society in West Asia at the University of Amsterdam. He focuses mainly on processes of democratization in general and, more specific, on the Iranian situation regarding regime stability and political change. Stephan has published several articles on the issue of democratization.

Other papers in this series are also available on www.hivos.net:

Working paper 1: Moth or Flame: The Sunni Sphere and Regime Durability in Syria, by Teije Hidde Donker.
Working paper 2: Civil Society Activism in Morocco: 'Much Ado About Nothing'?, by Francesco Cavatorta.
Working paper 3: Civil Society and Democratization in Contemporary Yemen, by Laurent Bonnefoy and Marine Poirier.
Working paper 4: The Downfall of Simplicity, by Stephan de Vries.
Working paper 5: Democratization through the Media, by Francesco Cavatorta.
Working paper 6: State-Business Relations in Morocco, by Farid Boussaid.
Working paper 7: Civil Society and Democratization in Jordan, by Curtis R. Ryan.
Working paper 8: Package Politics, by Aurora Sottimano.
Working paper 9: East European and South American Conceptions of Civil Society, by Marlies Glasius.
Working paper 10: Internet or Enter-Not: the Syrian Experience, by Salam Kawakibi.
Working paper 11: The Private Media in Syria, by Salam Kawakibi.
Working paper 12: The Uncertain Future of Democracy Promotion, by Steven Heydemann.
Working paper 13: Non-Democratic Rule and Regime Stability: Taking a Holistic Approach, by Stephan de Vries.
Working paper 14: Dissecting Global Civil Society: Values, Actors, Organisational Forms, by Marlies Glasius.
Working paper 15: Re- Rethinking Prospects for Democratization: A New Toolbox, by Stephan de Vries.
Working paper 16: Civil Society in Iran: Transition to Which Direction?, by Sohrab Razzaghi.
Working paper 17: Authoritarianism and The Judiciary in Syria, by Reinoud Leenders.
Working paper 18: Secular and Religious Strategies of Women and the Vision of the Iranian Green Movement.