

**Lebanese American University**

**School of Arts and Sciences  
Social Sciences & Education Division**

**The Paradox of Good Governance  
Under  
Authoritarian Regimes**

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment the requirements for  
the degree of**

**Master of International Affairs**

**2009-2010**

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Thesis approval Form (Annex III)


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Thesis Title : The Paradox of Good Governance  
under Authoritarian Regimes

Program : M.A. International Affairs

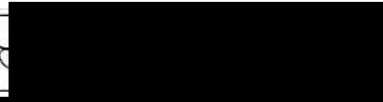
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## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to my little princess who is going to enlighten my world in couple of months.

## **Acknowledgments**

I am particularly indebted to my advisor Dr. Bassel Salloukh for reading and commenting on all the chapters of my thesis. He pointed out factual errors and areas for further research and elaboration, guided my writings in a way that has enabled me to develop a better understanding of the subject, and provided me with the support necessary to get this thesis finished just on time. I would like also to express appreciation and gratitude to my committee members, Dr. Sami Baroudy and Dr. Jennifer Skulte-Ouaiss for their helpful comments.

I would also like to extend special thanks to my family, Emad, Rabiaa and Nayla for always offering vital words of encouragement. Special thanks also go to my sister Nour for working on the design of the cover page of the thesis and reminding me always of my deadlines, and to Racha for her continuous support. And finally, I want to thank the one person who was most supportive and patient during the whole process of writing this thesis, my partner and husband Akram.

## **Abstract**

As the third wave of democratization recedes, many authoritarian regimes persist in the Middle East. These regimes have survived despite all calls for good governance, democracy and political liberalization from the international community. This thesis examines the paradox of good governance under authoritarian regimes in Tunisia and Egypt, arguing that although the last two decades did witness timid political reforms in the region, these reforms were only introduced to reassert authoritarian control.

The thesis reviews critically the literature on good governance and authoritarian persistence. It explores the main indicators used to measure good governance, focusing especially on the role of elections in examining the survival, durability and reproduction of authoritarianism in Tunisia and Egypt. These regimes have deployed elections, often assumed as a prerequisite for achieving good governance and an important stepping stone towards political pluralism, as a tool to tighten their hold on power and preserve authoritarianism.

Despite the existence of opposition parties and the holding of regular elections in both Egypt and Tunisia, political power remains firmly concentrated in the hands of Mubarak and Ben Ali and their respective parties. In these regimes, the manipulation of elections and thus the dominance of a single ruling party play an important role in sustaining authoritarian regimes and reproducing their power. The timid reform measures introduced by both regimes, have proven to be largely ineffective and have not altered Egypt's and Tunisia's political landscapes. Finally, this thesis contends that while initiatives for good

governance and democracy are multiplying in the Middle East, and especially in the two explored countries, authoritarianism will survive unchallenged for years to come.



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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The past decade witnessed a push for democracy promotion and the strengthening of good governance across the globe. This was perceived as both a requirement and a purpose for promoting development, reform and modernization worldwide. However, the significance of the democratization theory seems more problematic in the Middle East than in any other region. On the one hand, optimistic theories argue that the winds of change have finally reached this region and that Arab authoritarian regimes can not avoid these reform changes and transition . On the other hand, pessimistic perspectives maintain their theory of witnessing just another round of democratic and good governance rhetoric lacking any real transition to development and good governance. However, the terrorist attacks of September 11 initiated the conviction that these attacks were a result of the lack of good governance and democratization in this part of the world. Accordingly, democratization in general and good governance in particular became as one way of countering terrorism. Consequently, what might have been an ancillary aim to many regimes during the 1990s became a major policy dilemma following the attacks of September 11, when the world was left with one single inquiry: what triggered these attacks? By trying to answer this question, the roots of this chaos were credited to the absence of democratic principles and the weakness of good governance all around the world and especially in the Middle East region, and, consequently, to the dominance of authoritarian regimes in this part of the world.

A substantial academic literature exists examining the deficits of democracy and good governance in the Middle East region from a variety of epistemological and methodological perspectives.<sup>1</sup> Most of this literature focuses on the determinants of good governance and democracy as a tool to explain their deficiency, and consequently the persistence of authoritarianism in the region. The common set of determinants involves the historical origins of a country's political institutions, the existence of rent that can be captured by the state, the role of religion and specifically Islam, lack of modernization, taxes as a share of government revenue, ethnic homogeneity, the identity dilemma, external and internal conflicts, and many others.<sup>2</sup> All these determinants impede promotion of good governance and democracy in the region making it "democracy-unfriendly",<sup>3</sup> despite the introduction of reforms. The Middle East region in general and Arab countries in particular have already launched reform programs and change initiatives. Accordingly, the core question that this thesis attempts to answer is whether the proclaimed reforms are radical or rather cosmetic, rhetorical or real, and even more importantly, whether they can lead towards the promotion of good governance indicators or rather strengthen the authoritarian regimes.

Although theoretically the majority of the Arab states enshrine the principles of good governance in their constitutions, major laws and regulations as well as in their institutions' policies, and although they do practice such principles through the introduction of certain political reforms, such as the exercise of party pluralism; the

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<sup>1</sup>Marcus Noland, "Explaining Middle Eastern Authoritarianism," *Institute For International Economics* 05-5, (June 2005): 4.

<sup>2</sup>Noland, *Explaining Middle Eastern Authoritarianism*, 5.

<sup>3</sup>Samuel Huntington, "Will More Countries Become Democratic?", *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol.99, No.2 (1984): 20.

reality is that they do so under pressure mainly from the international community and internal opposition parties, namely to give the impression that they are reforming their outdated political systems. Governments, in their endeavor to respond to calls for reforms, ended up rendering their existing systems even more oppressive rather than opening them up to embrace the ideas of good governance and democracy. Moreover, Arab regimes appropriated to discover and utilize good governance indicators without undermining their power. Despite considerable economic and social reforms taking place in some Arab countries, these regimes continue to avoid substantial political reforms that would endanger and expose their own power and authority. This power remains in the hands of kings and presidents who have full control over the reform processes, and thus the freedom and authority to introduce as well as prevent reform. These rulers are unlikely to introduce reforms that will undermine their own power and interests.

Although there are indications in all Arab countries of a growing demand for more democratic political systems and greater popular participation, the institutions through which this demand is being raised still remain either considerably weak or under the full control of the ruler. The limited reforms that are being introduced by Arab regimes are providing some social and economic benefits to the people as well as some degree of political openness and freedom. These regimes have preserved their power despite attempts to give their countries at least a veneer of political openness and governance efficiency through holding elections and permitting party pluralism, in order to be more acceptable internationally and domestically. Paradoxically, and as the present thesis argues, elections and party pluralism are often used to reinforce authoritarianism. Reforms are thus deployed to ensure the

dominance of the ruling regime and the durability of authoritarianism which serve the interests of only the ruler and his political party.

While attention and efforts were focused, in the last decade, on prospects for global good governance, what emerged in the Arab world was "the globalization of new forms of authoritarian governance"<sup>4</sup>, exploiting elements of openness and reform to reinforce authoritarian ruling systems. These authoritarian regimes are willing to introduce change in the economic and administrative arenas but not into the political realm. Arab regimes have concluded that "the most effective strategy for resolving economic, political and social problems that threaten their stability is not democratization, but rather the upgrading of authoritarian strategies of governance".<sup>5</sup> They have demonstrated their ability to incorporate and exploit calls for political reforms, social change and economic liberalization in order to reshuffle and reinforce their hold on political power. The continuing impediments to political reforms demonstrate the inability of Arab regimes to change unless they maintain their authoritarian rule. Consequently, the continued vibrancy of authoritarian rule in the Arab world illustrates that democracy and good governance are not to be anticipated in the near future.

The call for reform in the Arab World is virtually sweeping through various sectors of society. Among the different approaches to political reform, strategies are being adopted to introduce formal institutional reform policies without actually transferring real power to these reformed institutions. These strategies are to be considered a double edged weapon, responding from one side to external and

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<sup>4</sup>Henner Furtig, *The Arab Authoritarian Regime between Reform and Persistence* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 22.

<sup>5</sup>Furtig, *The Arab Authoritarian Regime*, 22.



internal calls for reform and change, and ensuring from the other side the regime's control over the political arena.

This thesis argues that the promotion of good governance has provided Arab regimes with new tools for securing and maintaining authoritarian forms of governance, and that these regimes are converging around policies that are explicitly designed to preserve authoritarian rule. Promoting good governance indicators such as rule of law, accountability, transparency, participation and legitimacy of the opposition has paradoxically allowed Arab leaders to extend and reinforce authoritarian hegemony upon which their regimes depend, and to consolidate the authoritarian system rather than promote transition to true good governance and democracy. I argue, in this thesis, for the need to approach the question of good governance and authoritarian regimes from its paradoxical aspects focusing on the following set of questions: Does the current status of Arab regimes promote the growth of authoritarian values or good governance values? Why and how is authoritarian rule persisting in the Arab states? How do authoritarian regimes manipulate the indicators of good governance in order to safeguard their control? Are present authoritarian dynamics inherited within the Arab regimes structure or are they a product of political engineering? Does the existing authority practice of these regimes preclude a transition to good governance? And, finally, what are the prospects of good governance in the Arab world?

## **1.2 Map of the Thesis**

This thesis is structured along three key dimensions that might be considered most relevant for understanding the paradox of good governance under authoritarian regimes, in addition to an introductory chapter introducing the selected topic and indicating the sources and methodology being used, and a concluding chapter drawing together the main arguments of the thesis. Accordingly, chapter one constitutes the introduction of the thesis. Chapter two presents the definition and characteristics of the concept of good governance, and a description of the core indicators of good governance. Chapter three examines the definition and historical basis of authoritarianism in a theoretical context, and outlines the dynamics of authoritarianism compared to the good governance indicators.

While the first three chapters provide a certain general and theoretical framework, chapter four aims at enriching our understanding by means of case studies. It examines more closely the paradox of good governance under authoritarian regimes in two countries, Egypt and Tunisia, focusing on the manipulation of elections and the dominance of one single party in each country. The reasons for selecting these two cases is examined in the next section. The last chapter presents the concluding arguments of the thesis.

## **1.3 Case Selection**

Two Arab authoritarian regimes are explored in this thesis, those of Egypt and of Tunisia. These two regimes are considered illustrative examples of the paradoxical relation between the promotion of good governance and the persistence

of authoritarianism. The reasons for choosing these two particular cases are first because they are both exemplary autocratic states, secondly, they are both considered to be leading Arab nations and as such, are indicative of general Arab unwillingness to truly comply with calls for reforms, and thirdly, because they both risk alienating Western partners particularly the United States if they openly resist the good governance and democratization campaign. However, and under pressure from the international community as well as the domestic opposition to open up their political systems, the Egyptian and Tunisian governments have responded by tightening their grip even more over the political system.

In Egypt's case, and following the liberal period beginning in the 1920s, the Egyptian political system returned to authoritarianism under Gamal Abdel Nasser after the 1952 Free Officers Coup, and then went on to become a limited multiparty system under his successor, President Anwar al-Sadat. President Hosni Mubarak, who succeeded Sadat after the latter's assassination in 1981, has been in power ever since, and under him the system has wavered between forged calls for openness from one side and frightening repression and despotism from the other. Egypt has entered, more recently, a phase of more free-wheeling political debate with some institutional and legal reforms, legitimizing a number of political opposition parties and tolerating the existence of competitive elections. However harsh treatment of the opposition still exists. The regime intervenes to discredit and destroy the existence of any political party whose role threatens to become significant. Accordingly, Egypt's multiparty system suffers from two major deficits: First the transformation of the single political party into a hegemonic party headed by the president himself leading to the full dominance of this party in elections and thus in

the political life of the country. Second, the number of political restrictions imposed by the government to limit the role of liberal opposition parties that might play a significant role in introducing changes to the existing regime. Therefore, Egypt's multiparty system guarantees the production and sustainability of only a weak opposition that is unable to challenge the authoritarian ruling establishment. The Egyptian model demonstrates that institutional reforms introduced by the regime are extremely unlikely to affect the core power of the ruling establishment and to empower the opposition. Accordingly, it is unlikely to be categorized as a case of good governance despite the protestations of the regime's spokesmen.

The second case examined in this thesis is that of Tunisia, which is considered of great importance for exploring the paradox of good governance under authoritarianism. Mokhtar Trifi, president of the Tunisian League for the Defense of Human Rights, sent a telling letter in 2007 to the American government and a copy to the United Nations asking "if you want to support democracy in the Arab world, why did you begin with your enemies instead of your friends? Why Iraq and Iran? Why not us?"<sup>6</sup> This question affirms that although Tunisia seems closer to the West on the surface than most other Arab states, it still constitutes an example of an authoritarian state.

Tunisia used the myth of reform and political change to disguise from the world the deepening corruption, nepotism and stagnation of a one-party state, dominated by a president-for-life. During the 2004 and 2009 elections, Tunisians re-elected President Zein Al Abidine Ben Ali to a fifth consecutive five-year term with a

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<sup>6</sup>Anne Applebaum. "How Do You Solve a Problem Like Tunisia." *Slate*, 13 February 2007. Available from Academic Search Premier, Item 2159691. [Http://www.slate.com/id](http://www.slate.com/id). Accessed 3 August 2009.

record support of approximately 92 percent of the country's voters. As part of his strategic plan to safeguard his authoritarian rule while playing the role of liberal and reformist leader, Ben Ali permitted three non-threatening candidates to contest his re-election, as compared to two competitors in 1999 and none in 1989 and 1994. These three candidates did not constitute any threat to the expected victory of Ben Ali, who used this cosmetic measure as a tool to solidify his democratic credentials among his own people and his supporters in the West. In addition to the victory of Ben Ali, his ruling party - the Constitutional Democratic Rally – achieved an overwhelming victory in parliamentary elections which were held on the same day.

Ben Ali who overthrew his predecessor, Habib Bourguiba, in a constitutional coup on November 7, 1987, partially in response to Bourguiba's self-designation as president-for-life, seems to be following in his footsteps. Consequently, good governance characteristics were far from being implemented in the last decades in Tunisia as the president and his ruling party has dominated the political scene, making sure to eradicate all sources of significant opposition, whether secular or religious.

Accordingly, the selection of these two cases helps in demonstrating my argument that under the guise of the promotion of good governance, Arab regimes have developed new instruments for safeguarding and maintaining their authoritarian forms of governance. The analysis of both cases resulted in the assessment that the Egyptian and Tunisian regimes resort to populism and set the limits of political reform to better serve their interests and strengthen their survival. These regimes are converging around procedures and policies that are explicitly designed to protect authoritarian rule despite the continuing international and

domestic demands for political reform and liberalization. Promoting good governance indicators such as rule of law, transparency, accountability, participation and legitimacy of the opposition has paradoxically allowed both Presidents Mubarak and Ben Ali to extend and reinforce the authoritarian hegemony upon which their regimes depend.

### **1.3 Methodology**

The methodology used in this thesis is the comparative case method. In view of the nature of the topics tackled in this thesis, this method fits the best since from one side a comparison will be drawn between good governance indicators and authoritarian dynamics, and from the other side a comparison between the introduction of various reforms with an emphasis on elections, and the persistence of authoritarianism in manipulating these elections. The two case studies examined are the Egyptian and Tunisian regimes. I limited my research to these two selected cases in order to be able to examine thoroughly the literature related to the contradiction between the strengthening of good governance and the durability of authoritarianism within these two regimes.

In the course of writing this thesis, I explored a large collection of studies, research papers and articles from recognized international and regional organizations working in the field of governance, such as the World Bank (WB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Middle East Reports and many others. I also used the existing literature of books and

manuscripts related to good governance and authoritarian regimes to situate the existing paradox in its regional and international context and impact. I also examined Egyptian and Tunisian legislation related to the electoral process. In addition, I utilized in this thesis some untapped sources of information, i.e. oral sources, by means of interviews conducted with senior officers from international organizations such as UNDP, World Bank, Euro-Justice, and a number of official political figures such the Egyptian public prosecutor, in addition to scholars and academics as well as activists in civil society. These interviews introduce unrecorded information that sheds light on the mechanism and dynamics of the good governance promotion movement and its impact on Arab regimes.

## Chapter 2: Good Governance in Theoretical Context

### 2.1 Introduction

The concept of good governance is not new. While its origins may be traced to the Greek city-states, its meaning, purpose, execution, performance and scope have evolved over the centuries, reflecting specific concerns and changing circumstances. The concept has steadily entrenched itself in political debates around the world. Moreover, it has attained universality as a core indicator of adherence to the rule of law and democracy. Furthermore, the notion of good governance has become "a necessary condition for providing an enabling environment for sustainable human development and poverty reduction".<sup>7</sup> While it is stunning how quickly good governance became a "catchphrase" in the last decades and achieved prominence in international discourse, there has hardly been a consensus as to its meaning, and the mechanism of its application.

In this first theoretical chapter, I attempt to examine the evolution of the good governance concept from a consumed concept used by international organizations and agencies to a major criterion of political, economic and social development, an element of adherence to the international scene, as well as a weapon against the durability of authoritarianism. I begin with exploring the academic definitions of the concept and then I highlight the various adopted definitions which are mainly the product of international organizations and donor

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<sup>7</sup>United Nations Development Program (UNDP), *Reconceptualising Governance, Discussion paper 2*, (New York, Management Development and Governance Division – Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, January 1997), 1-93.



agencies. I then tackle the characteristics of good governance which are the combinations of a set of attributes, principles and indicators of a good governance system. Finally, I explore the measurement indices of good governance. These measurement indices and the good governance indicators constitute the core of this chapter since they represent the elements against the dynamics of authoritarianism which shall be explored in the next chapter and then in the illustrative case studies presented in chapter four. This comparative equation sheds the light on the main argument of the thesis, the paradox of good governance promotion under the durability and persistence of authoritarianism.

## **2.2 Definitions of Good Governance**

The concept of governance is conceived broadly as "the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority to manage a nation's affairs"<sup>8</sup> as well as "the exercise of control in a society in relation to the management of its resources for social and economic development".<sup>9</sup> In its broad conceptualization, four types of governance are identified: First, economic governance which includes the processes of decision-making that directly or indirectly affect a country's economy. Second, political governance which refers to decision-making and policy implementation of a legitimate and authoritative state. A separation of powers between judicial, legislative and executive branches should be maintained and the state should correspond to the interests of its people and allow its citizens to freely elect their representatives. Third, administrative governance which consists of policy

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<sup>8</sup>UNDP, *Reconceptualising Governance*, 9.

<sup>9</sup>Schneider, "Participatory Governance: The Missing Link for Poverty Reduction," *OECD Development Center, Policy Brief no. 17* (Paris 1999): 7.

implementation carried out through an efficient, independent, accountable and open public sector.<sup>10</sup>

Most international organizations and agencies, the UNDP and the World Bank in particular, have adopted an essentially apolitical conception of governance. Paul Wolfowitz, former president of the World Bank, delivered a speech in 2006 where he stated that "in the last half-century, the World Bank has developed a better understanding of what helps governments function effectively and achieve economic progress. In the development community, we have a phrase for it. We call it good governance. It is essentially the combination of transparent and accountable institutions; strong skills and competence, and a fundamental willingness to do the right thing".<sup>11</sup>

By the mid-1990s, international organizations, notably the UNDP and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) expanded the conception of good governance to include new elements such as participation, transparency and accountability. By 2000, more elements had been added to the concept and the focus extended beyond government and institutions to include the private sector and social society (non-governmental organizations). Moreover, in addition to the basics of transparency and accountability and civil society, a new dimension was later introduced in light of the financial crises at the end of the 1990s, namely, predictability. This last element led to a call for improvement in financial frameworks and corporate governance.

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<sup>10</sup>UNDP, *Reconceptualising Governance*, 9. 10.

<sup>11</sup>Paul Wolfowitz, "Good Governance and Development – A Time For Action." *The World Bank*, Jakarta 11 April 2006. Available from World Bank Database. <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNALABOUTUS/ORGANIZATION>. Accessed January 2010.

The future will definitely witness the emergence of additional new elements to the concept of good governance. However, we can state that the most important indicators are already highlighted in the various definitions presented till today by international organizations focusing on transparency, accountability, participation and rule of law. Accordingly, it is important to start by highlighting the general academic definition of the concept and then explore the definitions of the most prominent international organizations.

### **2.2.1 Academic Definition**

The academic literature on governance has its origins in the writings of scholars working with international development agencies and organizations. The majority of these scholars have concentrated on the issue of political legitimacy, considering it "the dependent variable produced by effective governance."<sup>12</sup> In this context, governance is defined as "the conscious management of regime structures, with a view to enhancing the public realm".<sup>13</sup> John Healy and Mark Robinson both define "good government" as follows: "It implies a high level of organizational effectiveness in relation to policy-formulation and the policies actually pursued, especially in the conduct of economic policy and its contribution to growth, stability and popular welfare".<sup>14</sup> According to them, good government also implies accountability, transparency, participation, openness and the rule of law. It does not necessarily presuppose a value judgment, for example, a healthy respect for civil and

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<sup>12</sup>The World Bank, "Governance Barometer: Policy Guidelines for Good Governance." Database on-line. Available from the World Bank. <http://www.gdrc.org/u-gov/governance-understand.html>. Accessed December 2009.

<sup>13</sup>The World Bank, *Governance Barometer*, 12.

<sup>14</sup>The World Bank, *Governance Barometer*, 12.

political liberties, although good government tends to be a prerequisite for political legitimacy.

This definition emphasizes the role of good governance indicators in achieving political legitimacy. However, and as described in the next section related to the definitions provided by various international organizations, good governance is considered a common denominator not only for political legitimacy but also for economic growth and social and human development.

### **2.2.2 International Organizations' Definition**

Governance has been generally defined as "the exercise of authority or control to manage a country's affairs and resources".<sup>15</sup> International organizations and multilateral donors agencies such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the WB, the UNDP and the United Nations Office of High Commissioner of Human Rights, yield a more comprehensive definition of governance as examined below. At this point, it is worth pointing out that I have limited my research to these four major organizations for providing a comprehensive definition of the concept of good governance for a number of reasons: First, because these organizations are considered pioneers in creating and promoting good governance. Second, because these organizations hold the largest literature and have developed extensive reports about the good governance concept. Third, because each of these organizations tackles the concept from a different perspective, where USAID considers good governance as a governmental tool only, whereas the WB views it as a main driver for economic growth. As for UNDP, it is a

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<sup>15</sup>Schneider, *Participatory Governance*, 10

medium to achieve human development. Finally, UNOHCHR deems it as a precondition for the protection of human rights.

USAID defines the concept of good governance as "a complex form of interactions among structures, traditions, functions (responsibilities), and processes (practices) characterized by three key values of accountability, transparency and participation".<sup>16</sup>

The World Bank provides a set of different definitions, the most prominent one states that "good governance is epitomized by predictable, open and enlightened policy-making, a bureaucracy imbued with professional ethos acting in furtherance of the public good, the rule of law, transparent processes, and a strong civil society participating in public affairs; while poor governance is characterized by arbitrary policy making, unaccountable bureaucracies, unenforced or unjust legal systems, the abuse of executive power, a civil society unengaged in public life, and widespread corruption".<sup>17</sup> Interestingly, the characteristics presented by the World Bank to what it calls "poor governance" correlate with the definition of authoritarian government which will be examined in chapter three.

Another important source for defining the concept of good governance is the UNDP, which argues that "the primary purpose of government should be the promotion of sustainable human development in ways to reduce disparities in

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<sup>16</sup>United States Agency for International Development, "Foreign Aid in the National Interest: Promoting Freedom, Security, and Opportunity." Database on-line. Available from theUSAID. <http://www.usaid.gov/fani/>. Accessed in November 2009.

<sup>17</sup>The World Bank, "Beyond Economic Growth: Meeting the Challenges of Global Development." Database on-line. Available from the World Bank. <http://www.worldbank.org/depweb/beyond/global/chapter1.html>. Accessed in November 2009.

education, income and thus well-being".<sup>18</sup> According to the UNDP, good governance is "the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences".<sup>19</sup> Hence, good governance is a transparent, accountable, effective, participatory, and equitable system which promotes the rule of law. It also ensures that political, social and economic priorities are based on citizen consensus and that the voices of the poorest and vulnerable are heard in decision-making regarding the allocation of development resources.

From a human rights perspective, the concept of good governance can be explained based on the rights and principles highlighted in the international human rights instruments. According to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR), governance is "the process whereby public institutions conduct public affairs, manage public resources and guarantee the realization of human rights".<sup>20</sup> The UN Commission on Human Rights in its Resolution 2000/64 emphasizes that the strengthening of good governance is possible through "the building of effective and accountable institutions for promoting growth and sustainable human development, and it considers that having good governance is a

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<sup>18</sup>The United Nations Development Programme, *Governance for Sustainable Human Development* (UNDP Policy Paper, 1997), 2-3.

<sup>19</sup>Adel M. Abdellatif, "Good Governance and Its Relationship to Democracy and Economic Development," in *Global Forum III on Fighting Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity, Seoul 20-31 May 2003*, 4.

<sup>20</sup>The United Nations Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR). "The Role of Good Governance in The Promotion of Human Rights." Database on-line. Available from UN Commissioner for Human rights.

[http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/E.CN.4.RES.2000.64](http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/E.CN.4.RES.2000.64). Accessed in December 2009.

continuous process for all governments regardless of the level of development of the countries concerned".<sup>21</sup> The resolution expressly links good governance to an enabling environment conducive to the enjoyment of human rights. In addition, it recognizes that a transparent, responsible, accountable and participatory government, responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people is the foundation of good governance.

Another resolution 2005/68 entitled "the Role of Good Governance in the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights" adds to the previous resolution (2000/64) that "an independent and impartial judiciary and an independent legal profession are essential prerequisites for good governance and the protection of human rights".<sup>22</sup> An active civil society is also considered essential to ensure that all citizens benefit from good governance practices, including members of vulnerable and marginalized groups. It is worth noting that these two resolutions are only illustrative examples among other Human Rights resolution, that tackle the concept of good governance.

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<sup>21</sup>The United Nations Office of High Commissionaire for Human Rights (UNOHCHR). "The Role of Good Governance in The Promotion of Human Rights."Database on-line. Available from UN Commissioner for Human rights. [http://www.unhchr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/E.CN.4.RES.2000.64](http://www.unhchr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/E.CN.4.RES.2000.64). Accessed in December 2009.

<sup>22</sup>The United Nations Office of High Commissionaire for Human Rights (UNOHCHR). "The Role of Good Governance in the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights."Database on-line. Available from UN Commissioner for Human rights. [http://www.unhchr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/E.CN.4.RES.2005.68](http://www.unhchr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/E.CN.4.RES.2005.68). Accessed in December 2009.

Accordingly, the various definitions of good governance provided by key international organizations can be summarized in the following table:

International Organizations	Definition - Elements of Good Governance
<b>USAID</b>	"Interactions among structures, traditions, functions (responsibilities), and processes (practices) characterized by accountability, transparency and participation".
<b>World Bank</b>	"Predictable, open and enlightened policy-making based on public good, rule of law, transparent processes, and a strong civil society participating in public affairs".
<b>UNDP</b>	"The striving for rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, participation, equity, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability, and strategic vision in the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority".
<b>OHCHR</b>	"The building of effective and accountable institutions for promoting growth and sustainable human development conducive to the enjoyment of human rights, in addition to an independent judiciary/legal profession and an active civil society".

**Table 1: International Organizations' Definitions of Good Governance**



## **2.3 Characteristics of Good Governance**

The concept of good governance cannot only be explored through its various definitions, but through its attributes, principles and characteristics which outline the indicators of good governance according to international discourse.

### **2.3.1 Good Governance Attributes and Principles**

In a 1992 report entitled "Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development: Goals in Conflict?"<sup>23</sup>, the United Nations Committee for Development Planning identified seven attributes of good governance. These attributes (listed in Appendix 3) address the main areas of development and reform in any regime, such as ethno-cultural representation which implies respect of minorities and the fair distribution of assets, checks on executive and legislative power which entails accountability and transparency, in addition to the role of civil society and the protection of civil and political rights.

These attributes are primarily driven from the main principles of a good governance regime founded on principles of protection of key freedoms. These principles include mainly: (1) freedom of opinion, expression and association such as assemblies and organizations in both civil and political societies; (2) full representation of the people in governance institutions; (3) institutions that work efficiently and with total transparency and that are subject to effective inter-accountability based on the separation of powers and direct accountability before

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<sup>23</sup>The United Nations Development Programme - Economic and Social Council, Committee for Development Planning, *Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development: Goals in Conflict?*(New York, 1992).

the people via periodic open, free and fair elections; (4) application of the law to all without exception in a form that is fair and protective of human rights; and (5) insurance of a competent, fair and totally independent judiciary to oversee the application of the law and the implementation of its rulings efficiently vis-a-vis the executive authority.<sup>24</sup>

Accordingly and based on the principles and characteristics of a good governance system highlighted above, this system ensures not only freedom but justice and fairness as well. However, I believe that since this system is to be considered an illustration of utopian regime, international organizations and agencies attempted to focus on good governance indicators, leaving a room for any lack or scarcity in the system. While these attributes and principles form the main ground and the seeds for the existence of a good governance system, the indicators explained in the next part of the chapter constitute the path that each system should strive to follow in order to reach such a free, fair and developed system. The focus on these indicators is also due to the fact that international organizations have developed it as a benchmark for measuring the level of governance of each country and consequently justifying their interference in "poor governance" countries or what is simply referred to as authoritarian regimes.

### **2.3.2 Indicators of Good Governance**

The growing interest by policymakers and scholars in good governance is reflected in the production and propagation of cross-country indicators measuring

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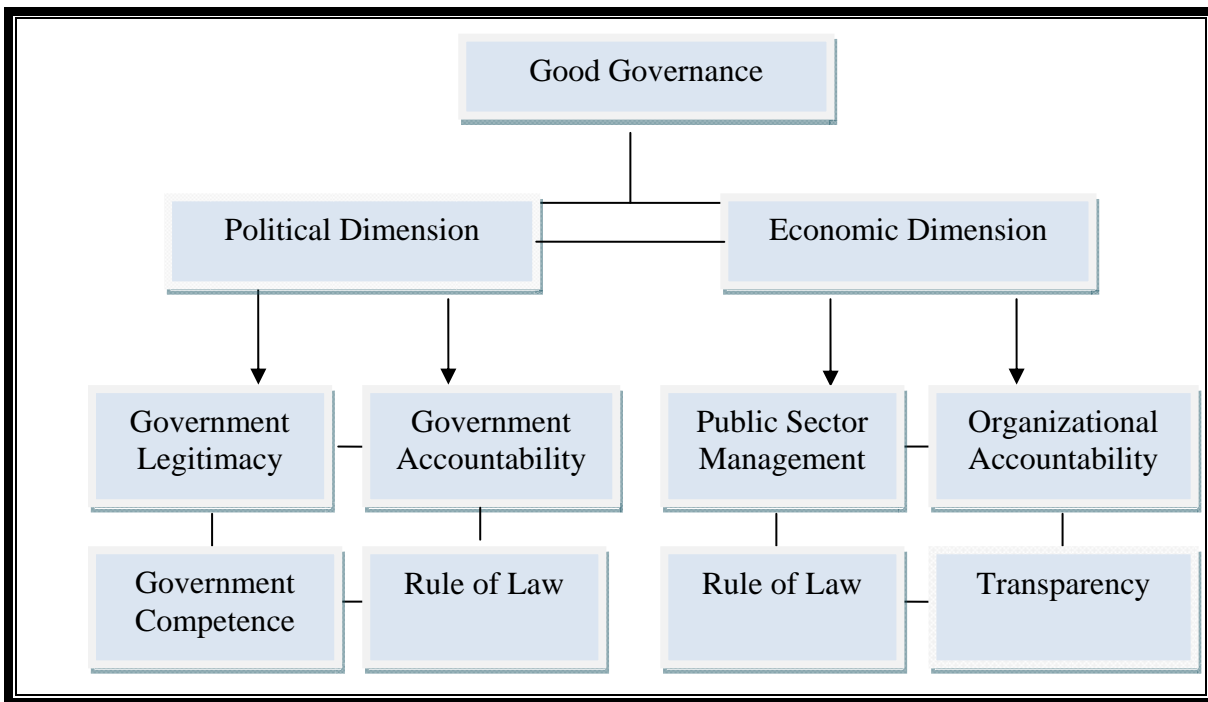
<sup>24</sup>Punyaratabandhu, Commitment to Good Governance ,23

various aspects of this phenomenon. Although it is ambiguous to provide very precise rankings for countries according to their level of governance, nevertheless, collective governance indicators are helpful because they allow international organizations to classify countries into broad groupings, facilitating the study the causes and consequences of failure or success of government regimes in various countries.

I believe that the most clarifying technique to highlight the partition of these indicators is by illustrating it in a diagram showing the dimensions and indicators of good governance as conceived mainly by the WB, UNDP, OECD, USAID and other international organizations. As is shown in figure 1 below, good governance consists of two major dimensions: political and economic. "The political dimension can be divided into four key components: (i) government legitimacy; (ii) government accountability; (iii) government competence; and (iv) the rule of law (human rights). The economic dimension also has four components: (i) public sector management; (ii) organizational accountability; (iii) rule of law (contracts, property rights); and transparency (includes freedom of information)".<sup>25</sup> For the purpose of this thesis, and while recognizing the significant and imperative role of the economic dimension, we shall concentrate on the political dimension of good governance since the main focus is to study and analyze the paradox between the political indicators of a good governance system and the dynamics of an authoritarian system.

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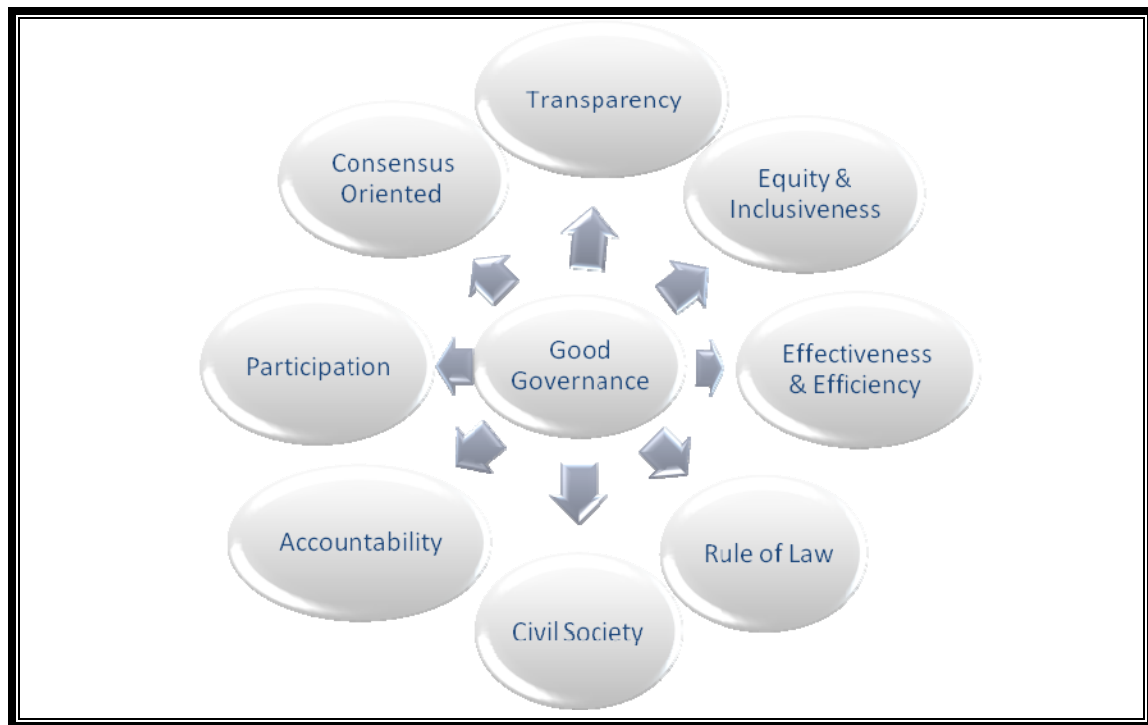
<sup>25</sup>Todd Landman. "Map-Making and Analysis of the Main International Initiatives in Developing Indicators on Democracy and Good Governance." *Colchester, University of Essex – Human Rights Center* (July 2003): 12.



**Figure 1: Dimensions of Good Governance**

Accordingly and building upon the above elements of the political dimension, eight major characteristics distinguish good governance (as described in Figure 2): (1) Transparency; (2) Accountability; (3) Rule of Law; (4) Participation, (5) Civil Society; (6) Consensus oriented; (7) Equity and Inclusiveness; and (8) Effectiveness and Efficiency. These characteristics assure that corruption is kept to a minimum, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in the decision-making process. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society.

I shall describe in detail only the first five characteristics which form the main comparative characteristics with authoritarianism, and present a general idea about the three remaining indicators.



**Figure 2: Characteristics of good governance**

***a. Transparency***

Transparency, which is a significant characteristic of good governance, refers to "the need for openness in government policies and decisions".<sup>26</sup> Such openness and provision of necessary information to citizens lead to a decrease in the exploitation of resources and consequently enhance public capacity to hold governments accountable. On one hand, transparent decision making processes are critical for the private sector to make responsible decisions and effective investments. On the other hand, it is also crucial in government decision-making and public policy implementation since it helps reducing ambiguity and corruption among public officials. While discussing transparency as a characteristic of good governance, we must tackle a crucial area in this regard which is the budget and the exploitation of a country's resources. The absence of transparency in these two

<sup>26</sup>Punyaratabandhu, Commitment to Good Governance ,25.

areas allows for corruption, inefficiency and inequity, and compromises the provision of public services and development efforts. Accordingly, the purpose of transparency is essentially the facilitation of accountability.

### ***b. Accountability***

Accountability is considered the coexistent characteristic of transparency. Three elements of accountability can be distinguished: financial, political and administrative. "Accountability can be an end in itself representing democratic values, and a means towards the development of more efficient and effective systems".<sup>27</sup> In general, accountability refers to the obligation of those in power to account to those on whose behalf they exercise such authority, for the discharge of the responsibilities entrusted to them. Accountability is a core element to ensure that this power is used properly and in accordance with the public interest. For this reason, we cannot enhance accountability without ensuring the practice of transparency and the rule of law.

### ***C. Rule of Law***

The objective of promoting and enhancing the rule of law is to ensure that the state is completely subordinate to law and not to individual interests. This objective leads to the prevention of arbitrariness in decision-making processes as well as in implementation mechanisms. Therefore when a government is ruled by law, equality before the law is ensured and the government acts through pre-written laws and the execution of its decisions and the changes and reforms of laws are

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<sup>27</sup>The United Nations Development Programme - Economic and Social Council, Committee for Development Planning, *Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development: Goals in Conflict?*(New York, 1992).

practiced through established legislative procedures. There are two different types for defining the concept of rule of law. The first type of definitions enumerates the goods and ends that rule of law brings to society, "a society where the rule of law exists is a society that illustrates these goods and ends, such as law and order and a government bound by law and respect of human rights".<sup>28</sup> In this type of definition, the concept of the rule of law is used to imply at least five different goals: (i) making the state law abiding; (ii) ensuring equality before the law; (iii) supplying law and order; (iv) providing efficient and impartial justice; and (v) upholding human rights.<sup>29</sup> Another type of definition describes the institutions that should exist in a society to be considered to possess rule of law such as an efficient judiciary, a non-corrupt police force, as well as published and publicly known laws. Rachel Kleinfeld Belton argues that the concept of the rule of law is not a single and unified good but is composed of five separate goods that must be advanced and promoted together: (i) a government bound by law, (ii) equality before the law, (iii) law and order, (iv) predictable and efficient rulings, and (v) human rights. "A government must be able to regulate itself via laws, regulations and policies, which encompass well-defined rights and duties, mechanisms for their enforcement and impartial settlement of disputes."<sup>30</sup> Accordingly, the rule of law refers to the institutional process of drafting and implementing laws and regulations which must be founded on the protection of citizen's rights and interests.

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<sup>28</sup>Carnegie Endowment for International Peace – Rachel Kleinfeld Belton, *Competing Definitions of the Rule of Law: Implications for Practitioners* (Washington: Carnegie Papers, January 2005), Number 55.

<sup>29</sup> Belton, *Competing Definitions of the Rule of Law*, 9.

<sup>30</sup> Belton, *Competing Definitions of the Rule of Law*, 10.

#### ***D. Participation***

Systems that reflect good governance imply that all citizens can influence the decision-making processes. Participation, which refers to "the involvement of citizens in the development process"<sup>31</sup>, is considered the foundation of legitimacy in democratic and good governance systems. It involves consultation in the development of policies and decision-making, elections and other democratic processes. However, participation needs to be informed and organized. This implies the need to ensure freedom of association and expression and enhance the existence of an organized civil society. Governments that involve their citizens are usually in a better position to make more effective and efficient decisions, and thus these decisions will enjoy more support once implemented.

#### ***E. Civil Society***

Civil Society, as participation, is considered a controversial indicators of good governance, because while international organizations consider the existence of an efficient civil society a confirmation of social freedom and political liberty, authoritarian rulers consider civil society "the terrain upon which regimes secure consent for authoritarian rule".<sup>32</sup> For most civil society actors, democratization and good governance entail the introduction of political and social reforms enabling real alternation of power and political competition. However, political opposition and disparity are excluded from power by the absence of fair and free elections. In addition, some opposition parties have been prevented from participation in

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<sup>31</sup> Punyaratabandhu, *Commitment to Good Governance*, 27.

<sup>32</sup> Nicola Pratt, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in the Arab World* (Boulder Co: Lynne Rienner, 2007), 14.



electoral politics as recognized political parties. The development of support among civil society actors in favor of individual rights and freedoms represents a significant step in the "war of position"<sup>33</sup> against authoritarian rule.

***F. Consensus Oriented – Equity and Inclusiveness – Effectiveness and Efficiency***

First, good governance requires mediating different interests in society to reach a broad consensus among the several actors of a society on what forms the greatest interest of the whole society, and what are the measures to achieve it. It also requires "a broad and long-term perspective on what is needed for sustainable human development and how to achieve the goals of such development".<sup>34</sup>

Second, a country's development depends on ensuring that all its citizens do not feel excluded but rather feel that they play a significant role in their society. This requires that all citizens and particularly the vulnerable ones have equal opportunities to maintain and improve their well being.

In addition, good governance implies that all institutional processes and policies meet the needs of citizens while making the best use of national resources. The concept of efficiency also implies "the sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of the environment".<sup>35</sup>

After tackling the major characteristics of good governance, we must examine the concept's measurement indices which constitute the foundation of

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<sup>33</sup>Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (New York: International Publishers Hoare, Q., Nowell Smith, 2003, 20.

<sup>34</sup>Punyaratabandhu, *Commitment to Good Governance* ,28.

<sup>35</sup>Punyaratabandhu, *Commitment to Good Governance* ,30.

international organizations for measuring good governance characteristics and accordingly classify states and regimes.

## **2.4. Measurement Indices of Good Governance**

"Whatever we wish to manage in society, we must measure and monitor".<sup>36</sup>

This statement by Dr. Mark Orkin, CEO of the Human Sciences Research Council in South Africa in 2002 reflects the position of international institutions and national governments in identifying measurement indices for each international concept. However, the challenge lies in its implementation. There have been many attempts<sup>37</sup> to adopt universal indicators for the measurement of good governance but no consensus has been achieved. However, the main obstacle facing these attempts is that when considering good governance indicators, one should also ask good governance for what? The answer to this specific question varies depending on the nature of the "what": is it good governance for poverty reduction, governance for economic development or good governance for political participation. Therefore, different indicators are used to measure governance, depending on the nature of the question itself. In this thesis, four major reports are presented to clarify the indices for measuring good governance, however I shall analyze in further detail the report of the World Bank since it was the first to launch the initiative of having indicators measuring good governance.

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<sup>36</sup>Punyaratabandhu, Commitment to Good Governance ,30.

<sup>37</sup>Some of these attempts are: the Common Country Assessments of the UN Development Assistance Framework; the OECD/DAC "incubator" with technical assistance from the World Bank; the Roadmap towards the Millennium Declaration; and the report by the Friends of the Chair of the UN Statistical Commission.

Reports	Good Governance Indicators
<b>Human Rights Centre</b> <b>- University of Essex</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Civil and political liberties.</li> <li>2. Frequency of political violence and political stability such as military coups and political assassinations.</li> <li>3. Expert assessments and opinions of good governance.</li> <li>4. Objective measures such as the "contract-intensive money" indicator.</li> <li>5. "Mixed measures" such as voice and accountability; government effectiveness; regulatory burden and rule of law.</li> </ol>
<b>UN</b> <i>Economic</i> <b>Commission for Africa</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Political system encourages input from civil society.</li> <li>2. Impartial electoral administration, and an informed and active citizenry.</li> <li>3. Strong public sector, legislature and institutions.</li> <li>4. Transparency, predictability, and accountability in political and regulatory decisions.</li> <li>5. Effective public sector management with effective resource mobilization, and efficient use of public resources;</li> <li>6. Adherence to the rule of law protecting personal and civil liberties and gender equity, and ensuring public safety and security with equal access to justice for all.</li> </ol>
<b>OHCHR</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Democracy and participation;</li> <li>2. Equity;</li> <li>3. Environmental protection and management;</li> <li>4. Human rights;</li> <li>5. Rule of law;</li> <li>6. Public administration and service-delivery;</li> <li>7. Transparency and accountability;</li> </ol>

	8. Security; 9. Peace-building and conflict management; 10. Informed citizenry; and e-governance.
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**Table 2: Good Governance according to some International Organizations**

**Report 4: The World Bank (WB)**

The WB was the first major international institution to adopt the concept of good governance as not only a provision for development and liberalization but as a condition for lending resources to Third World countries who usually are ranked poorly in good governance. Since the late 1970s, the WB has taken the lead in pioneering efforts to develop indicators to measure "the quality of development policy and good governance. Policy quality is measured by an index called the Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA)".<sup>38</sup> This index which is mainly based on WB staff assessments of policy quality is designed and based on numerical scores. Accordingly it is considered qualitative and judgmental in character and it classifies countries in the form of "quintiles" (for example, "top fifth" or "lowest fifth", and so forth). As a result of this confidential report, the WB has constructed six governance indicators, including the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced; the capacity of the government to effectively formulate

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<sup>38</sup>The World Bank, "Country Policy and Institutional Assessment." *WB Database on-line*. Available from World Bank Database. <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTABOUTUS/IDA/0>. Accessed in January 2010.

and implement policies and the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them.<sup>39</sup>

According to this classification, the first two governance clusters are intended to capture the first part of the WB definition of governance, "the process by which those in authority are selected and replaced". This complies with the concept of accountability, which includes a number of indicators measuring various aspects of the political process, civil liberties, and political rights. These indicators measure the degree to which citizens are able to participate in the selection of their governments. This category also encompasses indicators measuring the independence of the media, which plays a significant role in holding those in authority accountable for their decisions and actions. The second concept, labeled "political stability", captures the idea that the quality of governance in a country is compromised by the likelihood of wrenching changes in government, which not only has a direct effect on the continuity and effectiveness of policies, but also undermines the ability of all citizens to peacefully select and replace those in power.<sup>40</sup>

The second two governance clusters highlight various indicators related to the ability of the government to formulate and implement policies. At this level, the quality of public service provision is combined with the quality of the bureaucracy, the competence of civil servants, the independence of the civil service from political pressures and the credibility of the government's commitment to policies.<sup>41</sup> All these perceptions lead to government effectiveness. The main focus of this governance

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<sup>39</sup> The World Bank - Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kraay and Pablo Zoido-Lobaton, *Governance Matters II: Updated Indicators for 2000/01* (Washington, February 2002).

<sup>40</sup> Daniel Kaufmann and Aart Kraay, "Growth without Governance," *The World Bank* (April 2002): 6

<sup>41</sup> Kaufmann and Kraay, *Growth without Governance*, 8.

cluster is on the efforts required from the government to be able to produce and implement efficient policies and thus deliver effective public goods. The last two governance clusters focus on the respect of citizens.

Under the concept of rule of law, the WB includes several indicators that measure the extent of having confidence in and obeying the rules of society. This includes perceptions of the incidence of both violent and nonviolent crime, the effectiveness and predictability of the judiciary, and the enforceability of contracts. Together, these indicators measure the society's success in developing an environment in which fair and predictable rules form the basis for economic and social interactions.<sup>42</sup>

The final cluster, according to the WB, is the control of corruption, which is generally defined as "the exercise of public power for private gain". This includes measuring the perceptions of corruption ranging from the frequency of being obliged to make additional payments to get things done, to the effects of corruption on the business environment, to measuring grand corruption in the political arena or in the tendency of elites to engage in state capture. According to this perspective, the presence of corruption is often a manifestation of a lack of respect on the part of both the corrupter (either a private citizen or a firm) as well as the corrupted (usually a public official) for the rules and regulations that govern their interactions.<sup>43</sup> It thus represents a major failure of governance according to the World Bank.

The world bank classification of indicators into clusters corresponding to its definition cannot be considered definitive and universal; rather it reflects the WB's

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<sup>42</sup> Belton, *Competing Definitions of the Rule of Law*, 17

<sup>43</sup> Belton, *Competing Definitions of the Rule of Law*, 17

view of what constitutes good governance. The broad and diffuse understanding of the concept of lead to a disparity in the specification of its measures as well. Indices to measure governance are used for a variety of purposes, for cross-national comparisons and rankings, but also for tracking the development record of a country. Therefore, the main difficulty lies in how to develop general indicators that are considered from one side valid and from the other side can be measured reliably across cases. Validity of measurement is a problem with some of the above listed indices, and reliability is another problem, particularly when numerical scores are assigned to indicators that are based on subjective appraisals.<sup>44</sup> As a consequence, we should question whether these indicators share a common ground and measure the same thing, or does each one of them measure something different? Two main issues arise from this question. The first issue is related to the problem of definition. As we have seen earlier, different indicators represent an attempt to capture somewhat different aspects of governance; which is to say, "governance is not so much an elusive concept as it is multidimensional". The lack of a common and stable meaning to the concept of governance can be attributed in part to "the multidimensionality of the concept". In addition, confusion arises because the concept itself has been evolving over the years. Consequently, as long as the concept is evolving its meaning will also change. The second issue concerns the validity of the data presented as a result of these indicators. Using these indicators to classify countries and measure their level of good governance implies that these indicators are considered universal instruments complying with all types of governments and with all levels of development. The specification of each government and each

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<sup>44</sup>Punyaratabandhu, Commitment to Good Governance ,33.

country and the lack of common ground for measurement indicators entail a more complex assessment and study with regards to the universality of these indicators.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

This chapter recognizes the diversity of definitions given to the concept of good governance. Furthermore and apart from the lack of precision in its meaning, this evolving concept, embracing new elements with the passing of time. This arises from its normative conception and the observation that the main characteristics and principles of the concept are developed by international organizations and donor institutions. Given the imprecision of the meaning and instability of the concept, approaches to its measurement face difficulties and yield doubtful results with regards to its validity and reliability. Apart from being an instrument of public affairs management or a measure of political development, governance has become a useful mechanism to enhance the legitimacy of a government on the international scene. Expressed through factors such as reliability, transparency, open information systems, participation and accountability, good governance is increasingly seen as a key factor in ensuring the rule of law, equality and national prosperity, taking into consideration that "the quality of governance is recognized as fundamental to ensuring the quality of the life of citizens".<sup>45</sup>

It is important to note that a set of phenomena that have long been absent from the Middle East scene have reappeared signaling an emphasis on the promotion of good governance by external players and internal opposition groups.

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<sup>45</sup>Punyaratabandhu, Commitment to Good Governance ,35.



Numerous declaration of democracy transition and good governance reforms and human rights have emanated within the region such as in Tunisia in 2004 and the opening of the Egyptian presidential elections to competition in 2005. Another phenomenon is the presence of political protesters such as anti-government and even anti-regime opposition which took to the streets in numerous countries. All these factors will be examined in the next chapters of the thesis. However, the startling fact is that in the Middle East none of the mentioned reform initiatives of external actors and international organizations have produced a structurally enhanced quality of governance in the sense of guarantying basic freedoms for Arab citizens and abolishment of authoritarianism, but rather they led to the persistence of authoritarianism as demonstrated in the next chapter.

## Chapter 3: The Elements of Authoritarian Regimes

### 3.1 Introduction

According to many scholars, hopes for democratization during the last decades in much of the Arab world were far too optimistic. Despite the differences that exist between Arab polities, they are considered homogenous insofar as they are all characterized by an authoritarian mode of governance. "Many authoritarian regimes have survived the third wave of democratization and in many cases, the collapse of one kind of authoritarianism yielded not democracy but a new form of nondemocratic rule".<sup>46</sup> While an extensive literature has emerged concerning all aspects of good governance and democratization, remarkably limited research has been undertaken on the emergence and persistence of authoritarian regimes.

In this chapter, I examine the conditions of authoritarian persistence, noting that the causes of durable authoritarianism have been taken as dependent variables that can't really have a single explanation. Starting by defining authoritarianism as a form of government and a regime type, I explore the basis of authoritarianism in the colonial period and its emergence and persistence in the Arab countries. The classical typology of authoritarianism will not be tackled directly in the chapter, it is presented as an appendix to the thesis; therefore I focus on the modern typologies of authoritarianism since they are considered more relevant nowadays and because they describe the provisions of the case studies of the thesis, namely Egypt and

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<sup>46</sup>Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 24.

Tunisia. Afterward, I examine the dynamics that classify a regime as authoritarian, focusing mainly on four key factors: (i) manipulation of elections; (ii) concentration of power in one single party; (iii) fight and/or management of the opposition; and finally (iv) role of the army.

This chapter constitutes a continuation of the theoretical part of the thesis as well as constitutes a comparison between good governance indicators explored in the second chapter and the dynamics of authoritarianism explored in this chapter.

### **3.2 Definitions of Authoritarianism**

Authoritarianism is often defined as a regime type. The term is generally used to describe "a system or a state which enforces strong and mostly oppressive measures against the population".<sup>47</sup> It is a system of authority and power where citizens are subject to direct state control in most aspects of their lives. Typically, the leadership of an authoritarian regime is either an elite group and/or a single party and/or an autocrat that uses repressive means to stay in power. Moreover, authoritarian regimes are political systems with limited, not responsible, political pluralism without intensive nor extensive political mobilization, and in which a leader (or occasionally a small group) exercises power within formally ill-defined limits but actually quite predictable ones. Furthermore, authoritarian rulers govern according to three main principles that are elaborated on in the coming sections of this chapter. The first principle is "the rule of men and not the rule of law" where the informal and unregulated exercise of political power dominates and where

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<sup>47</sup>Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 32.

important decisions and policy making processes are restricted in the hands of the ruler and his official elites and not the consensus of the people and the promotion of accountability and transparency. The second principle is having controlled and managed elections instead of free and transparent ones. As for the third principle, it is the dominance of a single political party. Accordingly, what are the main characteristics of authoritarianism?

According to Theodore M. Vestal, authoritarianism is characterized by eight elements: (i) Highly concentrated and centralized power structures, in which political power is generated and maintained by a repressive system that excludes potential challengers and uses political parties and mass organizations to mobilize people around the goals of the government; (ii) a leadership that is self-appointed, even if elected, cannot be displaced by citizens' free choice among competitors; (iii) absence of any guarantee of civil liberties or tolerance for meaningful opposition; (iv) weakness of civil society where there is no freedom to create a broad range of groups, organisms, and political parties to compete for power or question the decisions of rulers, but instead an attempt to impose controls on virtually all elements of society; (v) maintenance of political stability by control over and support of the military to provide security to the system and control of society; (vi) a pervasive bureaucracy staffed by the regime; (vii) control of internal opposition and dissent; and finally (viii) the creation of allegiance through various means of socialization.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Theodore M. Vestal, *Ethiopia: A Post-Cold War African State* (Greenwood, 199), 17.

It is important to note that concepts describing regime types such as authoritarianism and democracy are better defined in terms of roots, dynamics and indicators, rather than by theoretical discourse, as described in the coming section.

### **3.3 Roots of Authoritarianism**

A large number of scholars of Middle East political economy<sup>49</sup> argue that the process of state formation in the Arab world plays a significant role in explaining the nature of politics within Arab states. In other words, authoritarianism emerges from the nature of the process of state building in the colonial period and the ways in which this process depended upon the construction of certain social relations, institutions and social coalitions rooted in the economy.<sup>50</sup>

The starting point for analyzing the emergence of Arab regimes as authoritarian regimes is the colonial period. The current system of states in the Arab region was established as a result of a growing colonial presence from the late nineteenth century onwards. Political and economic domination by colonial powers created a particular legacy that shaped the path of state development within the Arab region. It created the system of nation-states that exists until today in the region. This process of domination was completed after the First World War with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The colonial period created state institutions such as the police, the military forces, the economic enterprises and the bureaucracy, and state expansion acted in a way to concentrate resources and thus power in the

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<sup>49</sup>Such as Roger Owen, Simon Bromley and Nazih Ayubi.

<sup>50</sup>Simon Bromley, *Rethinking Middle East Politics: State Formation and Development* (Cambridge Polity Press, 1994), 17.

hands of the regimes that controlled the state, "paving the way for authoritarianism".<sup>51</sup>

According to Pratt, colonial rule also increased the pace of incorporation of the region into the global capitalist system and cemented its subordinate position within this system. This subordination also constitutes a major factor in the development of authoritarianism.<sup>52</sup> Regimes responded to the challenge of economic modernization by initiating heavy state involvement in the economy through the nationalization of industries, the redistribution of agricultural lands and control of trade. The degree of foreign political domination and economic penetration was uneven between the countries of the region. In those areas where there was considerable foreign control of the economy such as Egypt and Syria, state formation took an "anti-imperialist" direction. In this context, classes such as large landowners, whose interests were associated with the colonial rulers, were politically suppressed. This pattern of state formation through the suppression of certain classes and the concentration of resources and power in the hands of the regimes that controlled the state led to the creation and emergence of authoritarian political systems.

Colonial rule had long-term implications on the political, economic, social, and cultural development of Arab states. The injustice and indignities suffered shaped the aspirations of national movements across the region for gaining freedom from foreign domination and putting an end to social injustices. The major objectives of these movements were not only to free their countries from foreign influence, but

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<sup>51</sup>Nicola Pratt, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in the Arab World* (Boulder Co: Lynne Rienner, 2007), 6.

<sup>52</sup>Bromley, *Rethinking Middle East Politics*, 18.

also to eliminate the landowning elites privileges that were associated with colonial rule and as a result to set their countries on a path of national modernization. As a result of this colonial era, elite groups usually related to the president himself, were incorporated in the heart of Arab regimes. This factor in particular played a significant role in the survival of most of the regimes in the Arab world. We shall elaborate on this point in the coming sections of the chapter and in chapter four as well. However and while studying the roots of authoritarian regimes and before examining the techniques of safeguarding the authoritarian rule, we shall examine briefly the various methods of coming to power in the first place.

According to Geddes, "authoritarian regimes come to power in three principal ways".<sup>53</sup> The first method which is the least frequent one, is that they defeat incumbents in a revolutionary insurgency or civil war. Geddes argues that about 15 percent achieve power via insurgency or military victory of one kind or another. She argues that these insurgencies are usually lead and organized by political parties, therefore it is the first objective for leaders to create or reinforce the existing ruling party. Elected ruling parties or leaders prohibit in some cases the existence and in other cases the effectiveness of opposition parties. The second method, according to Geddes is via internal transformation of a constitutional government. This is a common case in Arab regimes, where leaders who achieved power through elections, change the procedures and regulations and introduce constitutional and legal amendments in ways that guarantee their indefinite control of the regime. However, the third and most common means of seizing power, is the

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<sup>53</sup> Barbara Geddes, "Why Parties and Elections in Authoritarian Regimes?," *Department of Political Science UCLA, California* (March 2006): 6.

military coup. According to Geddes, they initiate 60 percent of authoritarian regimes. Nevertheless, she argues that most of those who come to power via coups often create support government parties for themselves during the first years in power or co-opt one of the pre-existing parties as an ally and support base.<sup>54</sup>

The above examined characteristics and methods constitute the baseline for classifying the types of authoritarianism that are divided into two categories: the classical and the modern types. In this thesis, I shall focus on the modern typology of authoritarianism.

### **3.4 Modern Typologies of Authoritarianism**

The classical theories on nondemocratic regimes devised during the 1950s and 1960s were based primarily on a distinction between totalitarianism and authoritarianism.<sup>55</sup> Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan<sup>56</sup> refined the typology by adding to the classical distinction the categories of "post totalitarianism" and "sultanism". However a large number of scholars criticized this classification noting that it does not apply to a broad range of cases nor is it applicable over time. Richard Snyder and James Mahoney<sup>57</sup> argued that the insights provided by Linz and Stepan are "idiosyncratic" and "apply to just one country".

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<sup>54</sup>Geddes, *Why Parties and Elections*, 8.

<sup>55</sup>Axel Hadenius and Jan Teorell, "Pathways From Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol.18, No.1 (January 2007): 145.

<sup>56</sup>Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press,1996), 40.

<sup>57</sup>Richard Snyder and James Mahoney, "The Missing Variable: Institutions and The Study of Regime Change," *Comparative Politics* 32 (October 1999): 117.



Larry Diamond<sup>58</sup> puts forth a more ambitious and wide-ranging attempt of regime classification. He explores "hybrid regimes" that are considered neither fully democratic nor "politically closed authoritarian". Depending on the degree of competitiveness within these regimes, Diamond classifies hybrid regimes as either "competitive authoritarian" or "hegemonic electoral authoritarian", leaving a category of what he calls "ambiguous regimes". Although some of these "hybrid regimes" underwent prolonged processes of democratic transition, others remained or even moved in an authoritarian direction. In addition to Diamond, Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way<sup>59</sup> distinguish between "competitive authoritarianism" and what they name "façade electoral regimes" or "pseudodemocracies" or "virtual democracies" or "electoral authoritarian regimes". In the latter, electoral institutions exist but without meaningful contestation for power. However, criticisms related to Diamond and Levitsky and Way classification were also put forth. Axel Hadenius and Jan Teorell<sup>60</sup> both argue that Diamond's classificatory schema delineates groups of countries located at different intervals along one single quantitative dimension which is the degree of competitiveness. They even mention that if the degree of competitiveness were the only dimension along which authoritarian regimes differed, we would need no regime typology.

In contrast with the classification of "competitive/electoral authoritarianism", Geddes's typology highlights "qualitative distinctions between authoritarian

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<sup>58</sup>Larry Diamond, "Thinking About Hybrid Regimes," *Journal of Democracy* 13 (April 2002): 22.

<sup>59</sup>Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy* 13 (April 2002): 53.

<sup>60</sup>Axel Hadenius and Jan Teorell, "Authoritarian Regimes: Stability, Change, And Pathways to Democracy, 1972-2003," *Working Paper No 331, November 2006*. 2.

regimes".<sup>61</sup> Drawing partly on the work of Samuel Huntington<sup>62</sup>, Geddes distinguishes between "personalist, military, and single party regimes". The main added value of Geddes classification is the fact that she shows clearly that some regime types are more stable than others, using data with extensive county coverage from the postwar period. Based on her findings, "military regimes are the most fragile type and their life expectancy is the briefest; while personalist regimes tend to last longer".<sup>63</sup> The third type of one-party states is considered the most enduring. However Axel Hadenius and Jan Teorell also criticized Geddes's approach by arguing that she omits some important types of nondemocratic regimes, notably "monarchies" and "competitive" or "electoral" autocracies. In addition, they both argue that they do feel hesitant considering "personalism" as a regime type. Yet, they both concur with Paul Brooker, who argues that "the existence of personal rule is only a secondary or supplementary feature of a regime".<sup>64</sup> The most important criticism that Hadenius and Teorell provide is that Geddes does not distinguish between "true one-party regimes" where no opposition is allowed, and "dominant-party regimes" where a single party rules yet opposition parties do compete. Furthermore, they both tend not to restrict their attention to the effect of regime type on its survival. They consider that "the demise of authoritarian regime does not necessarily signify the commencement of democratization, as one authoritarian regime may simply give way to another".<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Geddes, *What Do We Know About Democratization*, 118

<sup>62</sup>Huntington, *The Third Wave*, 22

<sup>63</sup>Geddes, *What Do We Know About Democratization*, 118

<sup>64</sup>Paul Brooker, *Non-Democratic Regimes: Theory, Government and Politics* (New York: St Martin's, 2000), 9.

<sup>65</sup>Hadenius and Teorell, *Pathways From Authoritarianism*, 148

Another attempt at regime classification is the one presented by Raymond Hinnebusch.<sup>66</sup> For Hinnebusch, authoritarian regimes vary according to their level of institutionalization. In this respect, he distinguishes first between the "primitive forms, such as personalistic dictatorships and military juntas "which lack institutions able to include supportive social forces and implement policy and are, hence, only likely to be viable at lower levels of development and the "institutionalized authoritarian regimes" with single systems and bureaucratic institutions that are considered more relatively modern and potentially more developmentally capable, hence durable at a considerably higher level of development. Secondly, he distinguishes between "populist authoritarianism" and "bureaucratic authoritarianism" regimes. "Populist authoritarianism regimes" originate in the early middle stages of development in rebellions against oil oligarchies and they seek to mobilize and incorporate the masses in the name of redistributive reforms. Bureaucratic authoritarianism is a phenomenon of the later transition to mass politics in which military officers acting on behalf of the bourgeoisie use authoritarian power to exclude the mobilizing working class in the name of capital accumulation. According to Hinnebusch, the dominant institutional type in current Middle East regimes is "populist authoritarianism which has proven to be so durable and resistant to democratic changes".<sup>67</sup> He argues that "populist authoritarian" regimes have grown up as a reaction against ongoing Western penetration of the Middle East region and mainly the conflict with Israel. He further argues that by playing the nationalist card, these regimes were able to discredit the old pro-

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<sup>66</sup>Raymond Hinnebusch, " Authoritarian Persistence Democratization Theory and the Middle East: An Overview and Critique", *Democratization*, Vol.13, No.3 (June 2006): 375.

<sup>67</sup>Hinnebusch, *Authoritarian Persistence Democratization*, 376.

Western oligarchies while winning over the nationalist middle class and peasantry. This strategy allowed them to develop nationalist legitimacy in lieu of traditional and democratic legitimacy. Another characteristic of "populist authoritarianism" is the emergence and dominance of a single party where military and bureaucratic expansion usually produces the largest organizations in society, and where this single party takes over corporatist associations organizing the various sectors of society. However, the main cement of "populist authoritarianism" is the conviction that the elite could be built only through the dominance of one leader over the rest of the ruling elite, and the distribution of patronage is used to co-opt and ensure the loyalty of key groups, and the reliability on instruments of repression such as the intelligence and specialized security forces that maintain a pervasive surveillance and repress active rebellion.

After examining the most prominent modern typologies of authoritarianism, I shall focus, for the purpose of the thesis, on one particular type of "hybrid regimes" which is "competitive authoritarianism", mainly because it illustrates the two cases studied in this thesis: Egypt and Tunisia. However, it is worth pointing out that the "competitive authoritarian" type corresponds closely to what Hadenius and Teorell describe as "limited party regimes" and what Schedler<sup>68</sup> describes as "electoral authoritarianism".

In "competitive authoritarian regimes" or "limited party regimes" or "electoral authoritarianism", institutions are viewed as the principal mean of both obtaining and exercising political authority. In this type of regime parliamentary

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<sup>68</sup>Andreas Schedler, "The Menu of Manipulation," *Journal of Democracy* 13 (April 2002): 38.

and/or presidential elections are regularly held and at least some independent or opposition candidates are able to participate. However this does not mean that the elections in question are to be considered free or fair. Certain opposition groups or individuals may be excluded and the process may in various ways favor one side through the manipulation of these elections as described in the coming part and the next chapter. Even when opposition parties voluntarily refrain from taking part in elections such as boycotting to protest against prevailing conditions, the regime is still classified as "competitive authoritarian".

In a concise comparison between democratic regimes and "competitive authoritarian" regimes, four criteria can be highlighted: (1) in democratic regimes executives and legislatures are chosen through open, fair and free elections; while in competitive authoritarian regimes, though elections are held regularly, they lack freedom and fairness through the abuse of state resources, denying the opposition candidates rights such as adequate media coverage, and in some cases the full manipulation of electoral process and results; (2) in democratic regimes all adult citizens possess the right to vote; while in competitive authoritarian regimes opposition politicians, opposition supporters, journalists and other government critics may be threatened and even arrested; (3) in democratic regimes civil and political liberties and rights such as the freedom of the press, freedom of association and freedom to criticize the government without reprisal are protected; in competitive authoritarian regimes members of the opposition or members of civil society organizations are jailed, exiled or even assaulted and murdered. Finally, (4) in democratic regimes, elected authorities possess actual authority to govern, and are not subject to any control or interference in their duties; while in competitive

authoritarian regimes, the authority to govern is distributed among members of the government's single party. Accordingly, the main difference between these two types of regimes is that in democratic regimes, the opposition is not only legitimized but it plays a role in identifying authority and political power, and democratic institutions offer an important channel through which the opposition may seek power, while in authoritarianism, good governance indicators simply serve as tools to legitimize an existing authoritarian leadership.

Although the comparison of these criteria classifies competitive authoritarian regimes as distant from democracy and good governance; they also fall short of full-scale authoritarianism. This is especially apparent in the role of elections, where although competitive authoritarian regimes are characterized by manipulating democratic rules and electoral processes, they are unable to eliminate them. Elections are held, but manipulated in indirect means such as bribery and co-optation, leading to a significantly high rate of corruption. These aspects of authoritarianism shall be explained explicitly in the next chapter, where I examine two empirical cases, Egypt and Tunisia. In order to distinguish and classify the type of regime in these two cases, I shall explore the dynamics of authoritarianism that are considered the core and main constant factor that characterizes an authoritarian regime. Before this, however, we should examine briefly the frequency and longevity of the various typologies of authoritarianism as well as the possibility of a transition toward good governance regime.

### 3.5 Endurance of Authoritarianism and Transition to Good Governance

Based on the typologies examined in the previous section, in sum there are five main authoritarian regime types: (i) monarchy; (ii) military; (iii) no-party; (iv) one single party; and (v) limited multiparty. Moreover, they can be "hybrid regimes" combining elements from more than one regime type. For example, monarchies may carry out multiparty elections, or no party elections, or one party –elections as in the case of Iran under the Shah in the 1970s. The same applies to military regimes. However, the frequency with which the head of the government is replaced serves as an indicator of the degree of authoritarianism characterizing a regime.<sup>69</sup>

According to the study conducted by Hadenius and Teorell, in the 1970s and 1980s, military regimes and one-party states were the most common form of authoritarian regimes. Since the early 1990s, however, regimes of this type have receded and limited multiparty regimes have emerged as the most prevalent form of authoritarianism. In the Muslim world where the number of monarchies has remained remarkably stable: 15 in 1972 compared to 13 in 2003.

From 1972 to 2003, limited multiparty government was the most frequent form of authoritarian rule (1,277 countries). One single party regimes (968 countries) and military regimes (852 countries) were also prevalent. Military/one party states were considered the most frequent of hybrid regimes (205 countries). Other common hybrid forms were military/multiparty regimes (132 countries) and monarchy/no party regimes (137 countries).

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<sup>69</sup> Hadenius and Teorell, *Pathways From Authoritarianism*, 150.

Of the various regimes types, Hadenius and Teorell consider that limited multiparty systems have the highest average level of good governance and democracy. Among these multiparty systems, those regimes without a dominant party, in which the largest party takes less than two-thirds of the vote, have a higher average level of good governance than do dominant party systems. Yet, the latter are still far more democratic than pure one-party regimes. Among the other examined regime types, "no party regimes score higher than monarchies or military regimes".<sup>70</sup> Among hybrid regimes, the military/one single party regime is marked by a low score since these regimes combine two highly repressive forms of government.

The statistics of Hadenius and Teorell confirm Geddes's finding that "military dictatorships are more short-living than one-party regimes".<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, they argue that of the five main authoritarian regime types, limited multiparty regimes are the most fragile. Military regimes are next, followed by no party regimes. Governing monarchies are by far the most enduring type. However, we should clarify that the above listed findings and statistics are a reflection of the period of observation and investigation executed by Hadenius and Teorell which stops in 2003. Nevertheless, their main findings still hold, especially when exploring the number of regimes transitions to good governance and democracy.

"The breakdown of an authoritarian regime does not necessarily signal the onset of democratic transformation".<sup>72</sup> In fact, from 1972 to 2003, 77 percent of transitions from authoritarian government resulted in another authoritarian regime. Only 23 percent of such transitions lead to democracy. Accordingly, what are the

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<sup>70</sup>Hadenius and Teorell, *Pathways From Authoritarianism*, 152.

<sup>71</sup>Geddes, *What Do We Know About Democratization*, 127.

<sup>72</sup>Hadenius and Teorell, *Pathways From Authoritarianism*, 153.



patterns of regime transition presented by Hadenius and Teorell among the various types of authoritarianism?

First, they argue that monarchies tend to fluctuate from "pure monarchism to highly restricted forms of electoral monarchism". Pure monarchies are often transformed into no party monarchies, but sometimes may transition to a multiparty system within the monarchical framework. In most cases, there is a subsequent return to pure monarchy. Second, "pure one-party states exhibit a complex pattern of change". They transition to three other forms of authoritarian rule: dominant multiparty regimes, non dominant multiparty regimes, or pure military regimes. Third, "military regimes transition more frequently to limited multiparty systems". However, military/one-party regimes transform, more commonly, into pure military regimes. On the other hand, military/multiparty regimes transition most frequently to democracy, suggesting that the pluralist element of these regimes tends to win out. Finally, "the majority of transitions from nondominant-party limited multiparty regimes result in democracy". An authoritarian multiparty regime without a single dominant party is considered the typical "stepping-stone" to democratization. This is mainly possible since these regimes hold elections with a degree of openness and contestation and allow some basic political liberties.

However, the cases studied in this thesis refute Hadenius and Teorell argument that limited multiparty authoritarian governments hold the greatest prospects for good governance and democratization. Egypt and Tunisia constitute examples of persistent multiparty authoritarian governments with a very diminutive sign for any good governance transition. This argument is supported by the dynamics of authoritarianism examined in the next section.

### 3.6 Dynamics of Authoritarianism

"A third of the world's governments permits constrained pluralistic competition, but prevents the regular rotation of elites, the criterion of a procedural standard for electoral democracy".<sup>73</sup> The characteristic of being a regime that promotes regular elections does not have a significant effect on authoritarian regime longevity or strength, if the processes of preparing and holding these elections are not examined. Therefore, elections are considered a good opportunity to understand why a country is failing to democratize and what obstacles need to be removed to promote good governance, especially that regime endurance depends mainly upon the political institutions of a country. Accordingly, "the potential for ending authoritarianism depends as well on the core institutions through which unelected rulers manage their coalitions".<sup>74</sup> "Single-party regimes" remain the most robust type of regimes regardless of whether multi-party elections were introduced, since elections are manipulated, the power is concentrated in one single party, the opposition is being fought. Accordingly, four main areas of particular importance are examined in this context: (i) manipulation of elections; (ii) concentration of power in one party; (iii) fight of the opposition; and (iv) role of the army.

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<sup>73</sup>Jason Brownlee, *Ruling Parties and Durable Authoritarianism* (Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law 23, 2004).

<sup>74</sup>Brownlee, *Ruling Parties and Durable Authoritarianism*, 12.

### 3.6.1 Manipulation of Elections

In democracies, elections are considered a force for democratic transition and an approach for proving the rule of people, as well as a means by which citizens hold politicians accountable for the quality of governance they are providing. However, under authoritarianism, elections either are totally absent or are not fairly contested and electoral competition is usually eliminated by the proscription of opposition parties and opposition leaders. In addition and in most cases, independent or foreign observers are prevented from verifying the elections results. Consequently, opposition forces do not present a serious electoral threat to incumbents, and thus elections are not considered competitive. However, if conducting elections in authoritarian regimes does not lead to choosing leaders and government key decision makers, then what function do they perform?

Elections in authoritarian regimes are "a device used by these regimes in their attempts to increase their legitimacy".<sup>75</sup> They constitute a central element in the ruler's personal survival strategy. Elections results in authoritarian contexts tend to endorse rather than redistribute power. Accordingly, it is considered a common feature of authoritarianism that reinforces and prolongs autocratic rule.

Not all authoritarian regimes used to permit elections, but a substantial majority did, and the practice became increasingly common in the 1980s and 1990s. These regimes devote substantial resources to the support of their own party and they spend heavily on pre-election political campaigns. Brownlee describes the

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<sup>75</sup>Andreas Schedler, "The Menu of Manipulation," *Journal of Democracy* 13 (2002): 38.

elections held under authoritarian regimes as "limited elections".<sup>76</sup> He argues that the results of such elections, manipulated as they are to the advantage of the incumbents, act as "a barometer of the regime's control over the political arena and the opposition's capacity to contest that dominance". Consequently, manipulated elections are considered a common feature of authoritarianism that reinforces and prolongs autocratic rule. They are not a factor leading to political change and social reform, on the contrary they are considered "a safety valve for regulating societal discontent and confining the opposition".<sup>77</sup> The durable authoritarian regimes of Egypt and Tunisia examined in the next chapter, support this view of elections as mechanisms of control.

Considering elections as neither symptoms nor causes of regime change but rather means to safeguard and protect authoritarianism, directs attention further in the chain of explanation to the winner of these manipulated elections and the nerve center of authoritarianism: the one single ruling party.

### **3.6.2 Concentration of Power in One Single Party**

The one single ruling party plays a decisive role in authoritarian persistence. Even in the legislature, the party often plays a crucial role in giving authoritarian rulers a super-majority with which they can erect barriers to impede opposition. To understand how parties bring political stability to authoritarian regimes, we must explore the relationship of the party to the autocratic leaders. Even when a single

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<sup>76</sup>Jason Brownlee, *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 3.

<sup>77</sup>Brownlee, *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*, 7.

figure occupies the helm of the regime, autocrats do not rule completely alone, they depend on their political party and elites coalitions.

Jennifer Gandhi and Adam Przeworski argue that "authoritarian rulers rely on a single party to build and sustain the coalitions that are crucial for maintaining their power, a single party is an instrument by which the regime can penetrate and control the society".<sup>78</sup> The political party is often given the tasks of distributing benefits to citizens and spreading the regime's ideology or policy views. It is considered an instrument for building popular support for the government; although I shall examine in the next chapter of case studies that the existence of a regime support party does not necessarily imply greater popular support.

To counteract internal threats, to rule a country and to supervise the state bureaucracy and institutions, authoritarian rulers rely on a single party - the government party and on coalitions of elites. In most cases, they rely on consultative councils to give advice and on family members to staff key governmental posts because they know that fear is mainly from within their own ruling coterie and mainly their own family members, who are considered the people legitimately qualified to succeed them.<sup>79</sup> Beatriz Magaloni critically addresses the assumptions of Gandhi and Przeworski arguing that the existence of a party does not mean that party members have power and influence over policy since a dictator can dismiss dissenting voices from the party arbitrarily.<sup>80</sup>

The single party does not refer to a power-sharing arrangement, the party is an instrument for authoritarian leaders to consolidate their power. Jason Brownlee

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<sup>78</sup>Gandhi and Przeworski, *Authoritarian Institutions*, 7.

<sup>79</sup>Gandhi and Przeworski, *Authoritarian Institutions*, 8.

<sup>80</sup>Beatriz Magaloni, "Credible Power-Sharing and the Longevity of Authoritarian Rule," *Comparative Political Studies* 41 (April 2008): 716.

claims that "rulers consolidate regimes by beating their competitors in periods of polarization and open conflict; they sustain those regimes through one single party".<sup>81</sup> This is vividly illustrated in the case study of the Egyptian regime as well as the Tunisian one.

In addition to the party's role in helping authoritarian regimes survive and autocratic leaders consolidate their power, it has a major role in planning the manipulation and the fight of the opposition parties and individuals.

### **3.6.3 Fight and/or exploitation of the Opposition**

According to the WB, regimes can be classified whether authoritarian or not, according to the degree of participation permitted to the opposition. Dictators are classified as dictators because they are not able to win competitive elections, since their interests and priorities diverge from those of the citizens. To neutralize the threats to their rule, authoritarian rulers attempt to co-opt the potential opposition. As mentioned above, some authoritarian regimes do hold elections, which they tightly control just to obtain the intended results. Hence, autocrats may face all kinds of rebellion and they may certainly use force to impose cooperation and to eliminate threats of rebellion. But the use of force is most of the time costly and may not always be effective. Therefore, the instruments by which nondemocratic rulers solicit cooperation and thwart threats of rebellion usually include policy concessions and distribution of spoils.<sup>82</sup> In authoritarian regimes, sharing spoils is considered one of the most effective ways to prevent threats. It is worth pointing out that although

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<sup>81</sup> Brownlee, *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*, 10.

<sup>82</sup> Brownlee, *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*, 13.

spoils can be distributed directly to the autocrat's pocket, working out policy concessions requires an institutional setting where (i) access can be controlled, (ii) demands can be revealed without appearing as acts of resistance, (iii) compromises can be hammered out without undue public scrutiny and (iv) where the resulting agreements can be dressed in a legalistic form.<sup>83</sup>

Accordingly, authoritarian leaders use a combination of formal institutions that govern participation and informal mechanisms to balance and manipulate the strength of various opposition groups in order to stay in power. In general they use two strategies: either "fragmenting and moderating political opposition groups"<sup>84</sup> in order to promote a balanced set of forces with moderate but opposing political demands; or strengthening ideologically radical political opponents in order to create a threat to the moderates. Before examining why these two strategies are used, it is important to distinguish between co-optation and the strengthening of opposition groups. Co-opted groups or individuals are subject to concessions in return for a change in their demands. For instance, incumbents may co-opt opponents who advocate the regime's overthrow by giving them important government positions in return for abandoning the call for the regime's change. Although less commonly used, incumbents may also foster the growth and development of some groups as opposition groups, allowing them to continue their activities and gain popular support. In this case, the incumbents and the opposition groups do not make any agreements and thus the opposition does not change its demands to the favor of the incumbents.

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<sup>83</sup>Brownlee, *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*, 13.

<sup>84</sup>Oliver Schlumberger, *Debating Arab Authoritarianism* (Stanford University Press, California, 2007), 48.

The first mechanism usually used by incumbents is "fragmentation and moderation of the opposition". Incumbent elites minimize political opposition by developing opposition groups with divergent and incompatible ideological preferences. By strengthening moderate groups with incompatible policy preferences, incumbents make opponents unlikely to join in a coalition to demand political change. Consequently, incumbents minimize the challenges they face by ensuring that both sides prefer the status quo over a conflict that includes their ideological opponents. In order to achieve this, incumbents maximize the distance between the two opposition groups and ensure that both sides have reason to fear that the other could be strong enough to gain authority. Therefore, they seek to balance the political strength of opposition groups that dislike each other's policy demands more than they dislike the regime itself.<sup>85</sup>

The second mechanism is the "neutralization of the opposition through radicalization". Incumbents can also weaken their political opposition by strengthening much more radical but weaker opponents. They make sure that these radical elites are unable to mobilize on their own and thus ideological divides reduce the likelihood that moderates will join in a coalition. The more extreme the second opposition group is, the less likely that the opponents will be able to change the regime.

These two mechanisms shall be explored in greater detail in the fourth chapter since Egypt and Tunisia are considered fruitful cases for such a theory. Thus, we will demonstrate that both mechanisms are being used, whether under Sadat's regime or Mubarak's in Egypt, and under Bourguiba's or Ben Ali's in Tunisia. But

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<sup>85</sup>Schlumberger, *Debating Arab Authoritarianism*, 49.



what about the common factor shared by most existing authoritarian regimes: the role of the army where in most cases the existing autocrat is merely a student of this distinguished institution.

#### **3.6.4 Role of the Army**

One of the crucial arguments that has been put forward to explain the persistence of authoritarianism in the Arab world is the role played by the institutions of state coercion, and in particular the existence of a loyal army which is often deemed fundamental to the robustness and persistence of authoritarianism. However, although military organizations continue to play a vital part in the politics of many Middle Eastern countries, these countries are rarely classified as military dictatorships or military-dominated regimes. Even if the origins of some regimes lie in the politicization of military officers, the military uniforms were replaced by civilian suits starting the 1970s.<sup>86</sup> Thus the major authoritarian institutions have been "civilianized". However, the heads of state remain closely tied to the military, which therefore continues to have great weight in policymaking. The question that rises at this point is why the military has so often interfered in Middle Eastern politics?

Comparativists such as Finer and Huntington have long argued that military intervention in politics is a precondition for development. The military officers, infused with a sense of mission and nationalistic sentiments, and marked by their superior organizational capabilities, were seen as ideal instruments to direct the process of economic and political development. However, this argument holds on

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<sup>86</sup>Philippe Droz-Vincent, *From Political to Economic Actors* (Stanford University Press, California, 2007), 21.

solid grounds only if military officers remain true professionals dedicated to their mission and thus do not interfere in other institutions; in most Arab regimes this has not been the case. The army's professionalism is considered a double-edged sword fostering military interventions, especially given the close relation and mutual dependence between military officers and the government single party. Promotions of military personnel are based on loyalty to the regime, rather than on field ability or skills. The top officers of the military are often enticed by material and immaterial benefits and become an integral part of the authoritarian regime's power network.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Arab world witnessed a series of military coups. Many regimes rose to power out of the politicization of the armed forces, and their enduring stability has been closely related to the loyalty of the army. For example, military coups paved the way for new political orders in Egypt, Iraq and Libya, and made a clean sweep of civilian politics altogether in Syria. Enjoying broad popularity, the military became the main engine for large-scale political, economic and social change. It banned parties and filled the gap of mass organizations; it also followed radical economic strategies such as land reform and nationalization. Moreover, in many countries the intervention of the military was justified in nationalist terms such as the need to confront the enemy, Israel.

As early as the 1970s, a paradigm shift in Arab politics started occur transferring legitimacy and control from the military to the political regimes. Since then the number of coups had decreased in the region. However, the military still plays a key role in maintaining the power of rulers and sustaining existing regimes. This is apparent throughout the empowerment of the paramilitary forces such as the Presidential Guard in Egypt, the Tunisian Presidential Guard, the Royal Guard in

Jordan, the Republican Guard and the Special Forces in Syria and Iraq and so on. The stated role of these forces is maintaining internal security, but their real role is maintaining the power of the authoritarian rulers.

In conclusion, Arab militaries are still of paramount importance for the survival of authoritarian regimes. Without exception, the so-called "civilianized" rulers of the Middle East still rely heavily on the support of the army, relying upon it to share up their regimes. Egypt and Tunisia constitute examples of how much authoritarian regimes depend on the army and police forces.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

Based on the above examined factors, Arab regimes are still considered far from achieving the levels of good governance stipulated by the international community. Although they pretend that they are keen to introduce reforms and good governance indicators in their regimes, they are only hiding the truth of the durability of their authoritarian regimes where introduction of reforms leads to no change, no development, no rule of law, no justice and thus no civil and political rights. By holding regular elections, these regimes consider answering the reform calls and applying good governance indicators. However, elections are being manipulated and managed in a way that does not support steps towards reform, change and good governance, but preserve the authoritarian form of government. Hence, elections under authoritarian regimes do not introduce any hope for good governance and democratization but provide domestic and international benefits to authoritarian rulers, especially with the guaranteed victory of their own political

party. Subsequently, whether it is the manipulated elections, the dominance of one single party, the fight of the opposition or the role of the army, all these factors constitute the oxygen that keeps the authoritarian regime alive.

The development of a variety of typologies related to authoritarian regimes and their dynamics examined in this chapter does not destabilize these regimes, however it provides strong support for authoritarian rulers to stay in power. While classifying authoritarian regimes as "hybrid regimes", "competitive authoritarianism", "semi-democracy", "illiberal democracy", "partial or diminished democracy", "semi-authoritarianism", "soft authoritarianism", or "electoral authoritarianism"<sup>87</sup>, they still hold the main dynamics of an authoritarian regime, far from being a good governance regime. Holding elections, the existence of a ruling party, the management of the opposition guarantee political durability and regime persistence, and not freedom of presentation, transparency, change and governmental reforms. The next chapter explores more empirically this paradox between the implementation of good governance reforms and authoritarian dynamics in the cases of Egypt and Tunisia, demonstrating that despite holding elections regularly and allowing the limited existence of an opposition, Egypt and Tunisia fail to fit the criteria identified with "competitive authoritarianism", and consequently should be regarded as closer to full-scale authoritarianism.

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<sup>87</sup>Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy* 13 (April 2002): 12.

## **Chapter 4: The Paradox of Good Governance under Authoritarianism in Egypt and Tunisia**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The last decade witnessed a paradox in the Arab world between the introduction of social, economic and political reforms from one side, and the dominance and durability of authoritarianism from the other side. While most Arab regimes were subject to some political reforms, mainly promoting a multiparty system and endorsing open elections through accepting the opposition's participation, the lack of good governance indicators is still noticeable. Elections are being held but without any transparency, accountability and fairness in neither the processes nor the results; opposition parties are allowed to exist but without any role in power sharing; political reforms have been introduced but without any endorsement of rule of law. Therefore, if a checklist is to be developed for these countries for testing the existence of good governance indicators, we might conclude that these elements do exist in these countries; however if we want to explore the level of applicability of these indicators we shall observe the total deficiency of these regimes regarding most of good governance's indicators explored in chapter two. This deficiency of good governance indicators constitutes the chief argument explaining the durability of authoritarianism in the Arab states as demonstrated in this chapter.

In this chapter, I examine two Arab regimes, Egypt and Tunisia, that may look as if they fit the competitive authoritarian model, but upon closer scrutiny, it

appears that they are in fact closer to full-scale authoritarianism.<sup>88</sup> The selection of these two regimes is based on two essential reasons. The main reason is the fact that within these systems there has indeed been some room for economic and social reforms as well as political and civil society activities, however they both still constitute illustrative cases of authoritarian durability in the region. As Pratt observes, "these regimes have demonstrated the characteristics associated with a common definition of authoritarianism".<sup>89</sup> Accordingly, they provide valuable empirical data along an array of potential explanations for why authoritarian regimes still remain in power despite the persistent calls for reform in this region of the world. Another essential reason for the selection of Egypt and Tunisia is the common features they share, most importantly the manipulation of elections, the management of the opposition parties and groups as well the dominance of a single party: the National Democratic Party (formerly the Arab Socialist Union/ National Union/ National Liberation Rally) in Egypt and the Constitutional Democratic Rally in Tunisia. Therefore, in examining these two case studies, I shall demonstrate that the theory of durable authoritarianism still dominates in the Arab world.

My arguments shall be supported by some historical events that led to the emergence of authoritarian regimes in Egypt and Tunisia, followed by a brief overview of the chain of the timid reforms introduced in both cases. I then compare the incumbents' electoral victories, whether in Egypt or in Tunisia, as well as the manipulation of the electoral system and the management of opposition parties in both countries. Close analysis of both systems provides causal narratives tracing the

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<sup>88</sup>Brownlee, *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*, 10.

<sup>89</sup>Pratt, *Democracy and Authoritarianism*, 30.

political process by which the dominance of one single party and elections' manipulation enforce and sustain authoritarianism and thus, limit the existence of good governance indicators.

## **4.2 Historical Background Characterized by Reforms and Authoritarianism**

A brief examination of the historical background of Egypt and Tunisia is essential to exploring the roots of their present authoritarian regimes. Until the present time and despite the existence of some opposition parties, authoritarian rule persists, leaving Egypt and Tunisia as illustrative examples of durable authoritarianism. This status have been reached by the occurrence of some major historical events, followed by attempts to introduce reforms, but it ended however with the dominance of one single party at the social, economic and political levels, in addition to the full manipulation of elections. Therefore, the durability of authoritarian rule whether in Egypt or in Tunisia is rooted back to the monarchy. It survived all the changes in the various regime forms that followed until the current reign of Mubarak and Ben Ali.

### **4.2.1 Egypt**

Between 1952 and 1954, a military led dictatorship emerged and replaced the Egyptian monarchy that used to control parliament through election rigging, the gerrymandering of electoral districts, and the creation of several palace-dependent parties to do its bidding.<sup>90</sup> Six months after Egyptians across the country had

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<sup>90</sup>Schlumberger, *Debating Arab Authoritarianism*, 60.

clamored for independence, Gamal Abdel Nasser and the Free Officers overthrew the king, expropriated large landholdings and neutralized existing political parties. As Nasser and his elite were transformed from coup plotters into rulers of the new Egyptian republic, they developed a national party that would serve their regime for decades. The Free Officers envisioned themselves as "provisional stewards who would rout out the constitutional monarchy's worst elements" and as "embodiment of the nation's aspirations for socioeconomic development, socioeconomic justice, and freedom from British domination"<sup>91</sup> where would enable government based on popular sovereignty to take hold. Unfortunately, they did not really succeed in their mission.

Early on, Nasser came to perceive popularly elected government as an impediment to Egypt's development and thus reversed his initial plans of handing over power to one. Yet, the military was not captured by a dominant political trend, and the ideology of the Free Officers reflected the general views of the time, views of nationalism and social reform.

The Arab socialist policies that would later characterize Nasser's regime, and become typical to many Arab countries, were not initially apparent in the actions of the Free Officers in the first few years of their rule. Therefore, a series of reforms were undertaken and the most prominent facet of it was the land reform plan. While this reform plan might be identified as a step toward development and equality, it was also a hidden plan to weaken the old landed elites and a measure to bring all the power to the hands of Nasser and his Revolutionary Command Council (RCC).<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>91</sup>Schlumberger, *Debating Arab Authoritarianism*, 61.

<sup>92</sup>Schlumberger, *Debating Arab Authoritarianism*, 64.



Having subordinated Egypt's landed elite, Nasser's junta targeted the political parties that had opposed the monarchy and commanded popular support. In a span of months, the RCC replaced the fractious multipartyism with single-party dominance. Striking against movements from across the political spectrum, the RCC first placed party formation under the authority of the Ministry of Interior, limiting the ability of new parties to form. The RCC then revoked the 1923 constitution on December 10, 1952, and its officers began taking positions in the state bureaucracy. On January 17, 1953, the dissolution of all existing opposition parties was announced and the beginning of a three-year transition period to enable the establishment of a healthy constitutional democratic government was launched.

In June 1956, Egyptians approved a new constitution that formally ended the transitional period begun three years earlier. The constitution maintained the existing ban on opposition parties while dissolving the RCC into a circle of political elites centered around the president himself. Consequently, the 1956 constitution granted the president broad authority by allowing his decrees to carry the power of law. It also instituted the National Union, the organizational successor of the Liberation Rally, to which all Egyptians were to belong and which replaced all other alternative parties.

The most significant effort in Nasser's era was the creation of the Arab Socialist Union (ASU) which replaced the National Union in 1962. The ASU's main purpose was to advance the goals of Egypt's new National Charter. Approved on June 30, 1962, the National Charter<sup>93</sup> called for a socialist development path to be

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<sup>93</sup>Egypt Parliament Website, <http://www.parliament.gov.eg/arabic/search.htm>. Accessed in January 2010.

guided by the ASU. In pursuit of broad support from the lower socioeconomic classes, the National Charter established a quota of one-half of elected parliament seats for peasants and workers. Following this, Nasser announced on March 30, 1968 new structural changes in the system, including the transformation of the ASU and a clean-up of the government's most corrupt elements. The March 1968 declaration<sup>94</sup> signaled a major shift under Nasser in an attempt to move from repression towards liberalization, although its most basic promises went unfulfilled. The regime continued to repress its opponents: when students demonstrated, state security forcefully repressed them. As more than twenty lost their lives in such demonstrations, the regime effectively retraced whatever concessions it has offered, perpetuating violent dominance over the society it purported to lead. In September 1970, Nasser died of heart complications and Anwar Sadat, Nasser's most valued organizer, succeeded him.

Sadat prevailed in the same direction of his predecessor, purging the ASU of many of its top leaders and steering the country toward a limited multiparty system in which the president's single party predominated. On May 1, 1971, Sadat announced that he would be removing those leaders who no longer "had legitimate claims to impose their will on the people".<sup>95</sup> By the end of May, Sadat's "corrective movement"<sup>96</sup> had swept down through the ASU and the country's leading syndicates, removing or imprisoning his most viable challengers, "in one stroke, Sadat had eliminated almost everyone in the collective leadership that could

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<sup>94</sup>Egypt Parliament Website, <http://www.parliament.gov.eg/arabic/search.htm>. Accessed in January 2010.

<sup>95</sup>Brownlee, *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*,51.

<sup>96</sup>Brownlee, *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*,51.

conceivably pose a threat to him".<sup>97</sup> Camouflaging his purge in the liberal rhetoric of Nasser's 1968 declaration, Sadat established himself as an authoritarian president in deed and not just in title.

In 1973, Egypt began a process of peace negotiations with Israel. Six months later, Sadat proposed a series of reforms and changes that opened the country to economic and political pluralism through opening Egypt's economy to international trade, expanding domestic opportunities for political participation, and strengthening the country's relations with the United States. In addition to his economic reform plan, Sadat eliminated the previously compulsory nature of membership in the ASU, by which even the practice of some professions, such as journalism, depended on party membership. Moreover, in 1976 Sadat introduced three competing platforms (*manabir*) as a compromise between moving forward into multipartyism, as those on the right desired, and maintaining the ASU system favored by leftists protective of Nasser's ideology. The new system seemed to move closer towards democracy when the president authorized on January 1977 the creation of full alternative political parties.

However, three weeks later economic structural adjustments dominated political liberalization as tens of thousands of Egyptians rioted over proposed subsidy reductions for basic goods, mainly bread. While restoring public order, the security forces killed at least 79 people and wounded another 800. Thousands more accused of instigating the riots were arrested and detained in the following months. Moreover, Sadat re-introduced economic subsidies, while he slowed party development to a glacial pace. The formation of new parties outside the three

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<sup>97</sup>Brownlee, *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*, 54.

platforms that Sadat introduced would have to seek approval from a committee run by former ASU members. After January 1977, Sadat seemed to cling to power more tightly than ever, preserving the dominance of his own party behind the "fresh façade" of multipartyism.<sup>98</sup>

In the summer of 1978, Sadat introduced the National Democratic Party (NDP). During his final years in power, Sadat's earlier promises of pluralism and economic and political liberalization gave way to the stark reality of government repression. Increasingly alienated from the people, particularly due to his relations with Israel, Sadat lashed out against suspected domestic opponents, eventually jailing thousands of activists from across the political spectrum in September 1981. Imitating Nasser's maneuvers in 1954 and 1968, Sadat reduced political liberalization when it stopped serving his goals. However, and before Sadat could engineer another ruling party victory at the polls, a group of Islamist militants assassinated him on October 6, 1981. Vice President Hosni Mubarak, a former air force chief of staff and deputy war minister, became Egypt's new president. Like his predecessor, Mubarak initially promised gradual political openness and the continuation of government support to the lower classes as well as economic liberalization. However, all these promises were to be undermined by his retention of authority and control over party operations, elections and opposition parties.

Yet, some argue that political liberalization in Egypt began with Hosni Mubarak's coming to power in 1981. Ironically, Mubarak would eventually rule Egypt longer than either of his predecessors. The new president began his presidency with a fresh political opening and a grace period toward the opposition that had been

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<sup>98</sup>Brownlee, *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*, 145.

severely repressed by Sadat. When he came to office, he liberalized the political arena, released those politically imprisoned in the last months of Sadat's life and opened up a dialogue with them. He even permitted the press to criticize government ministers. Even the Muslim Brotherhood was tolerated, although not legalized, and members were allowed to stand for elections in 1984 on the Wafd's Party list. The Supreme Constitutional Court became an arena in which civil society and political opposition could make their voices heard. A constitutional challenge to the elections on the basis that they had excluded independent candidates resulted in the dissolution of the national assembly, an amendment to the electoral law, and the holding of elections in 1987.<sup>99</sup> The assembly introduced another amendment that removed all restrictions on independent candidates and called for early elections in 1990.

However these reforms maintained the regime's hegemony in the face of economic downturn. The ruling party's endorsement of candidates in elections enabled the regime to increase the number of businesspersons in the national assembly, and political liberalization aimed at transforming some of the structures of corporatism in order to co-opt the political opposition and thereby neutralize it. According to Pratt, "this transformation was not aimed at relinquishing the power of the ruling regime but maintaining it".<sup>100</sup>

In addition to the economic factor, the legal factor played a supporting role to the president in maintaining authoritarianism. Under emergency rule, Mubarak had the power to detain political opponents without charge and to try civilians in

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<sup>99</sup>Schlumberger, *Debating Arab Authoritarianism*, 67.

<sup>100</sup>Pratt, *Democracy and Authoritarianism*, 96.

military courts. The provisions of "Emergency Rule" are stipulated in the constitution of Egypt as a contemporary procedure that should not exceed the period of three months. It was introduced upon the assassination of President Sadat in 1981. However, it is in force nowadays and used as a tool for the hegemony of the President. Mubarak had initially used few of his emergency powers and spoke of providing democratic and good governance elements, however and before his first decade in office was over, the president had reserved direction and reverted to the autocratic mode of his predecessors.<sup>101</sup>

While Egyptians are not strangers to political repression, the scale of the current situation is alarming, innocent people are being beaten, thrown into prison, tortured, and even assassinated only because they oppose the government. The role of civil society's organizations is inefficient, the accountability and transparency concepts are totally absent. The early 1990s and on, it had become clear that the early liberalization measures were not signals of a gradual move towards good governance and democratization, but rather a façade to conceal the persistence of authoritarianism.

#### **4.2.2. Tunisia**

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<sup>101</sup>Brownlee, *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*, 146.

In the four decades since it gained its independence, Tunisia has experienced some economic, social and political progress. From July 25, 1957 until November 7, 1987, Habib Bourguiba was the president of Tunisia. Bourguiba was often considered the modern founder of the Republic of Tunisia especially with the pro-Western reforms which were enacted during his presidency. In his first years in power, he defined four areas of priority for Tunisia: "economic decolonization, the promotion of mankind, structural reform and self-development".<sup>102</sup>

At the economic level, the adoption and implementation of reform programs and policies, particularly financial and trade liberalization, significantly improved the competitiveness of the Tunisian economy. At the social level, priority was given to the improvement of education and social security and major attention was devoted to health policies. As for the political level, only some timid reforms were introduced; the basic idea that shaped Tunisia statehood after independence was that "authoritarianism was a necessary step to create the new independent state that was still fragile".<sup>103</sup> Accordingly, authoritarian centralized power was necessary to consolidate the benefits of independence and to dominate the opposing social and political forces and the tendencies towards regionalism. It was believed that only "a central authority that fully controlled the political process as well as the economy would be able to guarantee a stable future for the country and its citizens".<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup>Sofiane Ghali, "Tunisia Path to Development: 1961- 2001," A Case Study: Scaling Up Poverty Reduction: A Global Learning Process, Conference Held in Shanghai, 25-27 May 2004 (<http://ssrn.com/abstract=997381>), 2.

<sup>103</sup>Schlumberger, *Debating Arab Authoritarianism*, 60.

<sup>104</sup>Ghali, *Tunisia Path to Development*, 4.

In March 1975, the Tunisian National Assembly voted Bourguiba "president for life", and on the 7<sup>th</sup> of November 1987, Prime Minister Zein El Abidine Ben Ali impeached President Bourguiba on medical grounds and constitutionally replaced him as the President of Tunisia, on the basis of a strict reading of Article 57.

In a brief comparison between the two presidents, a significant paradox can be identified between the common reform and good governance promises that both declared once they were in power, and the application of these promises which served as a tool for safeguarding and protecting their authoritarian rule. From one side, and while Tunisia was struggling for its independence, Habib Bourguiba emerged as the nationalist movement's principal spokesman. As Tunisia's first president, he consolidated control over the party and state institutions by "co-opting and manipulating service networks in ways that would concentrate power in his own hands without alienating his bases of support".<sup>105</sup> As one commentator noted, "rather than becoming Tunisia's sole political patron, he set out to become its chief patron".<sup>106</sup> His strategy included granting important positions to individuals who are loyal to him personally and who could use their positions to service their own supporters. In this way, Bourguiba established himself as the maker and breaker of political careers. He created tangible incentives for loyalty that consolidated his personal power much more effectively than a system based solely on repression and fear.

From the other side, Ben Ali's strategy for consolidating and holding power was not very different from his predecessor neither in applied policies and measures

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<sup>105</sup>Schlumberger, *Debating Arab Authoritarianism*, 61.

<sup>106</sup>Christopher Alexander, "Authoritarianism and Civil Society in Tunisia (Middle East Report 205, accessed 31 January 2010); available from <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer205/alex.htm> ; Internet.



nor in the target to stay in power and dominate in an authoritarian regime. Ben Ali who spent his entire career in the military and security forces, became minister of interior in 1986. When he seized power in 1987, he stepped into the center of a paralyzed political system, in addition to a deep economic crisis that had discredited the ruling party's traditional elite. Therefore, Ben Ali's coup in 1987 inaugurated a period of some timid reforms, where he promised to establish the rule of law, to respect human rights and to implement democratic political reforms. However, these promises were not fulfilled and the introduced political reforms did not constitute a case of good governance, rather a case allowing Ben Ali to maintain the illusion of reform and good governance while considering his control over the country.

The political reforms following the ousting of the former president, Bourguiba, by Ben Ali started in 1987. Ben Ali was bent on establishing himself as the "country's most dedicated reformer", seeking to mollify his international and regional critics. He presented his reforms as designed to provide and enhance political pluralism. He introduced limits on pretrial detention, ratified the United Nations convention on torture, moved to abolish the post of general prosecutor, the state security court as well as the presidency for life, and released thousands of political prisoners.<sup>107</sup> In addition, he promised political openness and respect for human rights and opened a dialogue with the opposition forces, including the Islamists who were previously prosecuted under Bourguiba. He also restored Bouguiba's *Parti Socialist Destourien* (PSD) into the *Rassemblement Constitutionnel*

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<sup>107</sup> Christopher Alexander, "Authoritarianism and Civil Society in Tunisia (Middle East Report 205, accessed 31 January 2010); available from <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer205/alex.htm> ; Internet.

*Democratique* (RCD) and proposed a national pact (mithaq) to discuss issues of national identity, the political system, economic development and foreign policy. Ben Ali also supported new legislation related to the formation of associations and parties. In addition, he allowed the participation of a number of competing candidates in the last presidential elections in addition to himself, twenty percent of the seats in Tunisian parliament were allocated to legal opposition parties. However, by late 1988 and onwards, "the bloom had begun to fade".<sup>108</sup>

Nevertheless, Ben Ali refused to legalize the *Renaissance Party* (Hizb al Nahda), which is considered the largest Islamist organization in Tunisia. The 1989 electoral code maintained the old majority list system despite opposition demands for proportional legislative elections. These rules were combined with restrictions on media access and other interferences, allowing Ben Ali's RCD to win every seat in the April 1989 elections. Furthermore, the few legal opposition parties are considered weak and are limited to internal disputes. As a result of facing various restrictions on promoting their presidential candidates, these opposition parties failed to provide meaningful alternatives to the regime's authoritarian policies. Therefore, all the above mentioned reforms remained in a way or another promises and their introduction was justified to maintain regimes hegemony and did not result in a transition to good governance and democracy. Emma Murphy argues in her book that the political reforms that were pursued by the Ben Ali regime can be interpreted as an effort to relieve the political pressures on the state, to revive confidence in the

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<sup>108</sup>Christopher Alexander, "Authoritarianism and Civil Society in Tunisia (Middle East Report 205, accessed 31 January 2010); available from <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer205/alex.htm> ; Internet.

inclusiveness of the political system and to revitalize the institutional basis of government.<sup>109</sup>

Tunisians themselves expressed disappointment with the government especially after the last elections in 2009, openly doubting the declaration of the regime's intention to change what had long been a strongly authoritarian and repressive regime, intolerant of any form of opposition. "Tunisia's recent presidential and parliamentary elections presented an unflattering portrait of the country's political system".<sup>110</sup> Ben Ali, who has been in power since 1987, won an overwhelming victory, gaining over 90 percent of the votes. The RCD maintained its dominant position in parliament, leaving no space at all for alternative political contestants. Therefore and under these circumstances, the prospect of establishing a more pluralist political system in Tunisia remains very weak.

To protect his own position, Ben Ali used three main strategies. His first strategy was "to prevent state and party officials from developing into the centers of power".<sup>111</sup> In this context, he abolished "the office of party director" which was a position of considerable power in the 1970s, and he reduced the autonomy of his ministers. He had no tolerance for a prime minister who shows any signs of becoming a power in his own right, and made sure to prevent ministers from establishing lasting popular bases. Throughout his cabinet, Ben Ali carefully selected his key persons who should be technically competent but come from nonpolitical backgrounds or lack extensive connections to the ruling party. This selection measure was adopted by Ben Ali as a technique to prevent any individual from

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<sup>109</sup>Emma Murphy, *Economic and Political Change in Tunisia: From Bourguiba to Ben Ali* (Saint Martin, ESNB, 1999), 223.

<sup>110</sup>Murphy, *Economic and Political Change in Tunisia*, 230.

<sup>111</sup> Murphy, *Economic and Political Change in Tunisia*, 232.

competing him over his own authority. The second strategy used by Ben Ali is "the adoption and application of necessary measures to break the tie between elite and popular politics that was so vital in the 1970s and 1980s".<sup>112</sup> He ensured that opposition parties and civil society remains unavailable as political weapons.

Based on all the above facts, are Egypt and Tunisia classified as authoritarian regimes or as regimes in a transition phase towards good governance and democracy? How do these regimes maintain their authoritarian hold as well as a façade of a reforming regime? To respond to these questions and to demonstrate the dominance and durability of authoritarianism in these two cases, I shall elaborate on two chief elements: the manipulation of elections and the management of the opposition leading to the dominance of the ruling party. The focus on these elements is based on their paradoxical implications. While holding elections and tolerating the existence of some opposition parties are considered essential components of democratic, liberal and good governance systems, in the cases of Egypt and Tunisia, they are used as the main tools to reaffirm and sustain authoritarianism.

### **4.3 Manipulation of Elections – Management of Opposition – Dominance of One Single party**

"Regime durability means the ruling elite's survival of successive limited elections without loss of control of government".<sup>113</sup> The manipulation of elections

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<sup>112</sup>Murphy, *Economic and Political Change in Tunisia*, 232.

<sup>113</sup>Schlumberger, *Debating Arab Authoritarianism*, 6.

and consequently the capacity of ruling parties to maintain elite unity in the face of the opposition parties explain the durability of authoritarianism in both Egypt and Tunisia. Accordingly, exploring the elections' processes in both cases presents an opportunity to understand the reasons of failure of these two countries to democratize and the existing obstacles for the endorsement of good governance.

### **4.3.1 Egypt**

Since 1976 onward, presidents Anwar Sadat and Hosni Mubarak have overseen a period of "guided multipartyism"<sup>114</sup>, in which, by 2005, a total of eight parliamentary elections were held. However, the elections have been explicitly authoritarian whether in their process or results. Throughout these election rounds, the ruling party has maintained a super majority of seats, and the pluralist veneer of competitive parties has not kept the Egyptian regime from dominating the multiparty elections. At best, opposition groups have managed periodically to win approximately a quarter of the seats in parliament or to escape from prison or even death, but they have never disrupted the hegemony of the ruling party.

The 1976 elections changed the face of Egyptian politics but preserved the executive branch's supremacy over alternate political currents. During these elections, the center platform was recognized as the president's party, known as the *Egypt Party*, with Sadat's brother in law, Mahmoud Abu Wafia, as its formal head. Running a surfeit of 527 candidates for 352 posts, the Egypt party won 280 seats in parliament, equivalent to 79.5 percent. The right and left platforms took 2 to 12 seats respectively and 48 independents also won elections, signaling the persistence

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<sup>114</sup> Brownlee, *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*, 146.

of opposition trends outside the three party-platforms that Sadat had introduced. A portion of the independent bloc soon revived the Wafd Party, while others worked on behalf of the banned Muslim Brotherhood. These resilient movements, though not enjoying any freedom of expression or any equality of political rights, became prominent actors and participants in multiparty elections over the next thirty years despite the fact that the regime has never tolerated them as part of the political game with the right to practice their political privileges.

After the 1976 elections, the *Egypt Party* fell by the wayside, departing the scene completely with early parliamentary elections in 1979. These early elections were mainly the result of regional and international political factors, especially the close ties that Sadat was conceiving with common enemy of Arabs, Israel. Accordingly, the polls of 1979 timed to reinforce the president's position after the March 1979 Camp David Accords with Israel, increased the ruling party's parliamentary majority to 84 percent of elected seats.<sup>115</sup>

After the death of Sadat in 1981 and during Mubarak's first term in office, Egypt's opposition parties registered the strongest electoral success yet achieved against the NDP. Elections in 1984 were held under a new system of proportional representation based on party lists. This system prompted the two main opposition groups, the Wafd Party and the Muslim Brotherhood to partner together. The change in electoral law<sup>116</sup> benefited the opposition by aggregating votes that were dispersed across NDP favored districts. The overall opposition representation rose to

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<sup>115</sup>Brownlee, *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*, 125.

<sup>116</sup>Two main amendments to the Egyptian Electoral Law were introduced in the past three decades. In 1971, the presidential elections were in the form of public referendum. In 2005, the article 76 of the Egyptian Constitution was amended allowing to have several candidates running for presidential elections.

more than 13 percent. Afterwards, Egypt's Supreme Constitutional Court, which is largely independent of the president's influence, invalidated the list system because it did not permit individual candidacies. In response, parliament passed another electoral law that mixed proportional races for 400 seats with individual contests for 48 seats. The regime leaders had miscalculated the opposition's popularity and assumed that non-NDP parties would not meet the required 8 percent as a precondition to enter parliament in the proportional races. Instead, the opposition parties performed even better than under the combined system. One hundred non-NDP candidates were elected, a record of approximately 20 percent of parliament's elected seats. The Wafd Party won 36 seats, the Labor Party and Muslim Brotherhood, running on a combined list, won 56 seats, and the independents opposition members won 8 seats. These elections seemed to cast sparks of good governance indicators, mainly the tolerance of opposition and the fair participation and the acceptance of competition, into the Egyptian political system. Mubarak, worried about losing power, made sure to stamp these out in his second term from 1987 to 1993.<sup>117</sup>

Using executive decrees, military courts, and the broad deployment of security forces, Mubarak retraced his tolerance toward opposition movements and denied all the rights that they have previously enjoyed. In 1990, the Supreme Constitutional Court changed Egypt's electoral system once again but this time to the benefit of the NDP. Although the opposition first welcomed the return to the original electoral law, they were enraged by a number of modifications on electoral districts introduced by the government. These changes highlighted a clear attempt to

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<sup>117</sup> Brownlee, *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*, 147.

manipulate the elections and thus further reduce the already limited representation of the opposition parties in parliament. In response to these measures, the opposition called for judicial supervision of the election process, a procedure stipulated in the 1971 constitution but to date never implemented. As a result of these inequitable measures, the Wafd, Liberal and Labor Parties, along with the Muslim Brotherhood, boycotted the elections, arguing that participation would only legitimize a biased system in the country. However, the boycott did not prevent the regime from holding the elections and thus, the strategy of the opposition failed since the only result was to decrease its share in the parliament.

In 1993 presidential elections, Mubarak demonstrated his continuing commitment to concentrating power when he won reelection by single-candidate plebiscite to a third six-year term. During the 1995 parliamentary elections, the opposition chose to run in the elections, hoping to break the NDP's two-thirds majority in parliament and thereby deny the president a rubber stamp for his decisions and a tool for amending the constitution. However even this plan seemed very ambitious given Mubarak's record of tight control over the election process: "Government interference in the 1995 elections exceeded the levels of fraud and coercion exhibited in the previous five parliamentary polls".<sup>118</sup> Shortly before the November 1995 voting, the regime jailed fifty-four Muslim Brotherhood members, including much of the organization's leadership. Sixteen of those convicted were candidates, and 14 had served in the 1987 People's Assembly. Thousands more of Muslim Brotherhood campaign supporters were detained without charge. The formal opposition parties were frustrated by other restrictions as well, such as a ban

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<sup>118</sup> Brownlee, *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*, 148.



on campaign meetings in public areas and the full government control over the media. Each opposition party was allocated two forty-minute slots to present its political platform, while the NDP controlled the remainder of air time. However and even with dozens of its members in prison, the Muslim Brotherhood ran approximately 100 candidates, while the Wafd put forward 182 candidates, the Labor Party 120, the Liberal Party 61 and the Nasserites 65. In all 3989 candidates participated, of which 80 percent were independents. Because of the large participation of opposition parties, the campaign period of the 1995 elections showed the system's tremendous bias for the government ruling party and the regime interference escalated remarkably once the voting began. Government agents threatened voters and candidates of the opposition, blocked the opposition delegates from monitoring the voting process and excluded some independent figures from observing the election's vote counts. Moreover, "a grassroots election monitoring team reported that in some areas, "ready to use" ballots with NDP candidates checked off were exchanged for unmarked ballots along a bribe of twenty Egyptian pounds".<sup>119</sup> Thus, in addition to the full manipulation and management of elections, corruption and fraud dominated when the electoral client could vote for the ruling party and walk away with a handful of cash. All these elements brought the NDP its biggest majority ever and decimated the opposition. Final results gave the NDP 417 seats which is approximately 94 percent of majority. Consequently, the extreme layers of fraud and corruption, the distinctive presence of security forces and the vicious competition of local leaders have produced what

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<sup>119</sup>Brownlee, *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*, 149.

was reportedly Egypt's most violent election since the country's first experience with the national voting in 1866.<sup>120</sup>

Since the early 1970s, Egypt's NDP has survived over a half dozen parliamentary elections, always achieving a super majority of more than two-thirds of the available seats. The dominance of the single government party in Egypt is clear since the latter becomes "the site for national-level agenda setting, as well as a distribution network for political patronage, reassuring members that unsatisfactory outcomes are impermanent".<sup>121</sup> Moreover, the party has brought elite cohesion among leaders as well as electoral control against their opponents. Therefore and by regulating leadership politics, the NDP has a dominant cadre which enables it to repeatedly block opposition forces from winning control of government.

The mechanisms of the electoral process did not differ in the 2005 elections. While Egypt was under close US scrutiny during the national and presidential elections of 2005, the regime used a strategy of making minimum gestures towards political reform. A constitutional amendment allowed alternative candidates to run for the presidency, however without opening up the system for meaningful political contestation. The regime cracked down on the newly organized opposition parties, mainly Kifaya Party (Enough), including hundreds of arrests and massive human rights violations not only against protesters in the streets but also against the country's independent-minded judges who threatened to boycott the supervision of the 2005 elections. The party, which emerged as a new movement of street politics and which is not legalized by the state, grew quickly with respect to members and

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<sup>120</sup>Brownlee, *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*, 149.

<sup>121</sup>Brownlee, *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*, 150.

activities and their main demand to put an end to Mubarak's reign and his plans to shift the reins of power to his son Gamal. The strength of the new party arises from its possession of significant organizational capacities and it relies mainly on formal institutions traditionally used by the opposition such as NGOs (Non Governmental Organizations), professional syndicates such as the Press Syndicate and the Bar Association, and student groups at universities and colleges. Many other opposition parties joined Kifaya in its demonstrations and debate for political reforms, the most prominent among them was the Muslim Brotherhood. In addition to the violations of civil and political rights, the state of emergency remained once again un-lifted, and the chances to strengthen good governance indicators such as transparency and rule of law were thus further deferred.

Simultaneously, external pressure for political reform was reduced in 2006. The last two sets of elections showed that there is no place for the opposition nor even for any sharing of power in Egypt. The regime left no doubt of its determination to cling to power as firmly as it did in the past. Consequently, and even though the regime might appear "in the guise of democracy, this is a grand delusion, geared toward greater external legitimacy rather than at allowing political contestation at home", and thus "the third wave of democratization had circled the world but barely grazed the Mubarak regime"<sup>122</sup>, and not a very different scenario is expected in the coming 2011 elections.

#### **4.3.2 Tunisia**

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<sup>122</sup> Brownlee, *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*, 150.

In comparison to contemporary events in Egypt, the Tunisian leadership succession since Bourguiba was notably not better in measures related to the execution of power and the durability of authoritarianism.

The optimism that the post-Bourguiba era witnessed with the promised of promoting political pluralism has been all but extinguished in the last fifteen years as the president and his ruling party fully dominated the political scene while eradicating all sources of opposition whether secular and religious. "The 1988 elections marked the end of Ben Ali's honeymoon and the beginning of Tunisia's slide into deeper authoritarianism".<sup>123</sup> Indeed, many critics argue that Tunisia has become one of North Africa's most repressive authoritarian states, in which opposition forces of all shades are effectively muzzled. Human rights activists are frequently harassed by the authorities for various alleged felonies, and are often unable to continue their activities. President Ben Ali and his close associates have over the years repeatedly rejected international criticism of human rights violations and political repression. But the reality on the ground remains problematic. The state-controlled media refrains from any form of criticism against the authorities and public debate of pressing issues is limited and even inexistent.

Angered by their exclusion from parliament despite strong support for their candidates who ran primarily as independents, Al-Nahda activists "intensified protests at the streets and universities". The government, in turn, enhanced its repression against Al Nahda Party as well as the Tunisian Communist Workers' Party (PCOT). "Stories of late night raids, house-to-house search, torture under

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<sup>123</sup>Christopher Alexander, "Authoritarianism and Civil Society in Tunisia (Middle East Report 205, accessed 31 January 2010); available from <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer205/alex.htm> ; Internet.

interrogation as well as military court convictions multiplied". The campaign to crush Al Nahda party continued and it was intensified in 1991 following an attack on an RCD office after the government claimed that security forces had uncovered a plan to overthrow the regime. "It was reported that the government's extensive dragnet hauled in more than 8,000 individuals between 1990 and 1992". Battling Al Nahda party clearly has been "the government's single greatest preoccupation over the past ten years".<sup>124</sup>

All the internal and international pressures did not prevent president Ben Ali and the National Assembly to pass a new electoral law in December 1992. However and although Tunisians and international community considered that this new law is a demonstration of the president intention and commitment to introduce political reforms, the reality was different. This electoral law was only conceived as a cosmetic measure allowing legal opposition parties to share a pitifully small handful of seats. "Ben Ali stepped up his campaign during these elections, to invalidate and crush any form of opposition". He used methods of "co-opting and manipulating the press, unions, and other organizations".<sup>125</sup> It is worth pointing out the vast and dramatic expansion of Tunisia's internal security apparatus that Ben Ali ordered. Critics claim that "Ben Ali used a slush fund specialized for political bribery, labeled "sovereignty fund" in the budget". This slush fund was used to build up a parallel security apparatus run directly from the presidential palace. This organization, along with the Ministry of Interior, has implemented a ruthless campaign whose tactics run

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<sup>124</sup>Christopher Alexander, "Authoritarianism and Civil Society in Tunisia (Middle East Report 205, accessed 31 January 2010); available from <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer205/alex.htm> ; Internet.

<sup>125</sup>Christopher Alexander, "Authoritarianism and Civil Society in Tunisia (Middle East Report 205, accessed 31 January 2010); available from <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer205/alex.htm> ; Internet.

from surveillance and phone tapping to fabricated videocassettes, threats against family members, passport confiscations as well as beatings and even assassinations.<sup>126</sup> This organization did not only target human rights activities but also university professors and any kind of opposition in Tunisia.

In 2002, the election results were essentially predetermined when Ben Ali pushed through a new constitutional amendment. This amendment which was approved in a referendum in May 2002, called for the elimination of the three-term limit for presidents. Hence, Ben Ali seems to be following in the footsteps of his predecessor, Bourguiba, whom he overthrew in a constitutional coup in 1987, partially in response to Bourguiba's self-designation as president-for-life.<sup>127</sup>

On October 24, 2004, Tunisians turned out in record numbers - 91.5 percent of the country's (4.6 million) eligible voters - to re-elect President Ben Ali to a fourth consecutive five-year term. Determined to solidify his democratic credentials among his own people and international community, Ben Ali permitted three non-threatening candidates to contest his re-election, as compared to two competitors in 1999 and none in 1989 and 1994. His ruling party, the Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD-Rassemblement Constitutionnel Démocratique), achieved as well an overwhelming victory in parliamentary elections held on the same day. Muhammad Ali Halouani, head of the Ettajdid Party (ex-Communist) and representative of a bloc of independent politicians running under the Democratic Initiative label, publicly decried the results of the elections of Ben Ali after obtaining just 0.95 percent of the

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<sup>126</sup> Christopher Alexander, "Authoritarianism and Civil Society in Tunisia (Middle East Report 205, accessed 31 January 2010); available from <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer205/alex.htm> ; Internet.

<sup>127</sup> Murphy, *Economic and Political Change in Tunisia*, 235.

vote. Muhammad Bouchicha, Secretary-General of the Popular Unity Party (PUP-Partie de l'Unité Populaire), who also happens to be related to Ben Ali's wife, received 3.78 percent; while Mounir Beji of the Liberal Social Party (PSL-Parti Social Liberal) obtained 0.79 percent. However, it is worth noting that none of these "government-approved" candidates constituted at any stage a real threat to the President's hold of power and they do not challenge his authoritarian rule and policies. Ben Ali's modest 94.48 percent victory, in the view of regime supporters, down from his previous highs of 99.7 percent, 99.6 percent, and 99.4 percent in 1989, 1994, and 1999 respectively, highlights the authoritarian aspect of the presidential election.<sup>128</sup>

The outcome of the parliamentary elections paralleled that of the presidency. The Constitution mandates that four-fifths of the legislature's seats be reserved for the ruling party. Thus, the remaining 20 percent are contested by the country's seven officially-sanctioned opposition parties. Consequently, of the total 189 seats in the unicameral Parliament, the RCD won 152, and the remaining thirty-seven seats were distributed among the Social Democratic Movement (MDS-Mouvement des Démocrates Socialistes), the PUP, the Unionist Democratic Union (UDU-Union Démocratique Unioniste), Ettajdid, and the PSL. The ruling party is especially proud of its commitment to ensure that at least 25 percent of its candidates are women. RCD women won thirty-nine seats, compared to twenty in the previous Parliament. Overall, forty-three of the 189 newly elected deputies are women, one of the highest proportions in the world. However it is worth pointing out that the chamber of deputies plays a marginal political role and its influence over national policy is almost

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<sup>128</sup>Murphy, *Economic and Political Change in Tunisia*, 232.

negligible and none of the opposition parties represented in Parliament challenge the regime's hegemony or the absolute power of the presidency. The real opposition is either banned, imprisoned, or harassed. It includes the still popular Islamist party, Al-Nahda, headed by Rachid Ghannouchi, who lives in self-imposed exile in London. Modernist and secular figures representing a broad spectrum of political tendencies from liberal democrats (Moncef Marzouki) to communists (Hamma Hammami) to progressive socialists (Nejib Chebbi) have all criticized the blatantly manipulative character of the political process. Outspoken journalists, human rights activists, academics, lawyers and other public personalities have joined them in condemning the oppressive nature of political life where the media is tightly controlled, the internet monitored, and freedom of political expression all but banned.<sup>129</sup>

A similar scenario unfolded during the presidential elections of 2009. A new law stipulating that a presidential candidate must have been the leader of his party for at least two years at the time of his candidature prevented Mustafa Ben Jaafar of the Democratic forum for Labor and Freedoms, as well as Nejib Chebbi, head of the Progressive Democratic Party, from running as both parties experienced a recent change in leadership. As a result, the only genuine opposition party candidate participating in the presidential elections was Ahmed Brahim, head of the Movement for Renewal. But even this party complained of authorities interfering in their campaign by hampering the party meetings and by pressuring hotels not to rent them space or closing down the party's newspaper. The two other candidates who have been allowed to participate were Ahmed Inoubli, representing the Unionist Democratic Union, and Mohamed Bouchicha from the Party of Popular Unity, both

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<sup>129</sup> Murphy, *Economic and Political Change in Tunisia*, 233.



of whom are pro-government "opposition" parties. However, these two candidates will not bring any significant change: both have stated that the purpose of their candidacies is only to get people accustomed to pluralism, while calling for the re-election of Ben Ali.

What was really different between the 2009 elections as compared to those in 2004 is that Ben Ali emphasized the need for transparent elections and appointed a new National Observatory for Presidential and Legislative Elections committee. Intended to placate the Tunisian people and the international community after his rejection of foreign monitors, this structure consists mainly of members of the RCD. Such state laws and institutions helped Ben Ali alleviate demands for pluralism and good governance from one side and extend his control from the other side. Therefore, handicapped by "tailor-made" laws at every election, opposition parties face increasing condemnation from their own activists, either for taking part in a "waste of time" election instead of engaging in more radical methods or being unable to create a common front to oppose Ben Ali's monopoly.<sup>130</sup> Accordingly, and since the RCD holds itself above all parties, Tunisian presidential elections should not and cannot be understood as an open competition, but rather as a managed referendum for the president. Standing against the president is almost impossible, as the RCD dominates, regulates and controls the cross-sections of society, including the police who intimidate potential opponents and potential elections boycotters. Government-controlled trade unions and 8500 of the 9300 registered civil society associations declared their support for Ben Ali. Newspapers cover only Ben Ali's political campaign activities and ignore other political actors. The RCD itself had 2.7

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<sup>130</sup> Murphy, *Economic and Political Change in Tunisia*, 235.

million members, in an electorate of 5 million Tunisians. With other political parties so marginalized, supporting the RCD and Ben Ali is considered a prerequisite for any access to state services and any kind of social mobility. Consequently, the general description of Ben Ali's policies reflects the way this leader is perceived by opposition groups and the Tunisian people in general, as mere tools that serve to safeguard and continue his indefinite settlement in power.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

In an attempt to demonstrate the paradox of the emergence of some social, economic and political reforms with the persistence of authoritarianism, the regimes of Egypt and Tunisia were explored in this chapter. Both regimes are authoritarian despite obvious pushes for timid reforms related to the promotion of good governance, such as allowing opposition groups to participate in national elections. However, can we consider that the political reforms that we have seen in Egypt and Tunisia are tools leading towards democratization?

The answer is clear enough in both cases, Egypt and Tunisia, since there is no significant liberalization underway and no endorsement of good governance indicators. The limited reforms introduced in order to appease domestic and international demands for free, fair and pluralistic elections, have allowed the president to maintain an illusion of reform and liberalization, while consolidating his control over his country. Certainly there are some activities, some NGOs, some journalists and human rights activists who have struggled to raise their voice against the authoritarian power of the state. However, little evidence of change can be

perceived, especially when examining the manipulation of elections, the dominance of one single party and the intolerance of opposition parties. Indeed, Mubarak and Ben Ali might well be in the running for some of the most successful authoritarian leaders in the world.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

The collapse of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Soviet Union led some scholars to assert that "the end of history" had arrived, ushering a period in which liberal "democracy was the only viable form of government left standing".<sup>131</sup> Yet, in 2004 nearly 40 percent of the world's governments remained authoritarian, and more than half of the world's population lives under nondemocratic forms of government.<sup>132</sup> Along with Southeast Asia, the Middle East and North Africa have one of the highest rates of authoritarianism. "The Middle East is home to some of the world's most tenacious authoritarian rulers, whose very longevity calls into question the potential for rapid transformation in the region".<sup>133</sup> This reality raises inquiries about on one hand the nonexistence of basics requirements for strengthening good governance in these regions, leaving the region under authoritarian durability and persistence, while on the other hand a number of reforms were introduced and some major good governance indicators are being practiced. Accordingly, what are the roots of authoritarianism in this region? Did it emerge from colonialism, religion, culture, corruption, hegemony, personal interests or fear of change and losing power? How did these regimes manage to hold off international and domestic pressures for political reforms? Why do some governments remain authoritarian while others develop a more liberal system? How

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<sup>131</sup>Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and The Last Man* (Free Press, NY, 2006), 8.

<sup>132</sup>The United Nations Development Programme - Economic and Social Council, Committee for Development Planning, *Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development: Goals in Conflict?*(New York, 1992).

<sup>133</sup>Gandhi and Przeworski, *Authoritarian Institutions*, 9.

these countries are still classified as authoritarian while elections are being held constantly and opposition parties are being able to compete in these elections?

In an attempt to respond to all the above questions, I argue in this thesis that for the last decades, authoritarian regimes increasingly used good governance rhetoric as a tool to justify their legitimacy. They introduce and support all efforts of good governance stipulating political openness and pluralism, while in practice they just do this to preserve their authority and hold on power. In addressing this argument, I explored the main discourse about the definition of good governance, its indicators and its indices arguing that the growing interest of policymakers in governance issues has been reflected in the creation and propagation of indices and indicators representing the various aspects of governance. I examined the concept of good governance with a focus on its major indicators such as accountability, transparency, rule of law, inclusiveness, representation, participation and legitimacy of the opposition. After the exploration of the various definitions and characteristics of the good governance concept, we shall adopt the definition of good governance as "exercising authority in ways that respect the integrity, rights and needs of citizens". Afterward, I examined in chapter three the dynamics of authoritarianism in order to highlight the potentials for good governance promotion.

As a consequence to the first theoretical part of the thesis captured in chapter two and three, and while examining the case studies of Egypt and Tunisia in chapter four, I argued that the Arab world in general and these two cases studies in particular, have failed to experience a transition to good governance and democracy and maintain still their authoritarian regime. However, this failure is not due to internal or external factors that do not support good governance endorsement, but

rather to the absence of a consensus that challenges the post independence hegemony underpinning authoritarianism. The third chapter tackling the concept of authoritarianism illuminates that authoritarianism symbolizes not only a type of regimes among others but it is considered "a hegemonic system underpinned by a complex interaction between socioeconomic, ideological, and institutional structures".<sup>134</sup> The close inspection of the case studies of Egypt and Tunisia, highlights the causal process by which the indicators of good governance are only used to obscure authoritarian practices and ensure authoritarian regime persistence and durability, especially through the manipulation of elections, dominance of one single party and the eradication of the opposition parties. However, if we are to consider the economic and social reforms introduced within these regimes, the holding of regular elections, the promotion of a multiparty system and the existence of opposition parties, can we then classify these regimes as fully authoritarian, "competitive authoritarian" or at the beginning of a transitional phase toward good governance and democracy?

Some scholars argue that these regimes are actually not considered neither full authoritarian nor in the transition phase to democracy, they are classified under "liberalized autocracy" or "competitive authoritarianism". However these two typologies entail a regime type in which elements of political liberalization are used as tools to stabilize and safeguard authoritarianism rather than means for reforms and change. These regimes types are considered conservative and are unwilling to make the structural adjustments for good governance endorsement. They, rather tend to co-opt elites and middle class and to eradicate the opposition since these are

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<sup>134</sup>Brownlee, *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*, 10.

the groups most likely to disrupt power for a regime. The close inspection of the regimes of Egypt and Tunisia illuminated the causal process by which manipulation of elections and dominance of one single party bring authoritarianism persistence heard endurance.

Until the 1970s, Egypt and Tunisia were associated with radical nationalist ideologies and commitment to social and economic reforms aimed at addressing the injustice and underdevelopment that was seen as a legacy of colonial rule. Toward this end, they embarked on programs of industrialization adopting state planning and taking control of the economy. These attempts led them to be described as "radicals". The term "socialist" has also been utilized to define this period of regime consolidation. In the 1970s, these regimes were forced to turn away from their commitment to socialism as a result of economic difficulties which were compounded by the suffering of Arab armies in the 1967 war against Israel. Afterward, different phases of economic liberation were introduced and regimes began to lose some restrictions on political expression, thereby opening the way for a limited type of political pluralism. However in both countries considered single party states, there is a widespread feeling that voting for the government party is the "right" and even the "patriotic" thing to do, and thus to have one's constituency represented by a government party member is likely to bring benefits to the country.<sup>135</sup> Thus, people have little faith in the ability of opposition groups to change the current system, especially with their extremely limited resources and room for expression. Thus, these opposition parties are not in any position to offer a viable

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<sup>135</sup>Michael Field, *Authoritarian Government* (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 1996, accessed 2 February 2010); available from <http://library.fes.de/fulltext/stabsabteilung/00044002.htm>; Internet.

alternative to the regime and its political machine whether during the election campaign or after.

Starting with Egypt that has long been considered to have one of the most progressive regimes in the Middle East based on its tradition of political parties, including a liberal experiment in the 1920s and 1930s, and its relatively free press that seemed to position it for an eventual transit to democracy in the region. Some scholars have even called Egypt a democratizing state experiencing "occasional stagnation".<sup>136</sup> However such optimism no longer reflects the institutional decline and steady dominance of President Sadat as well as President Mubarak with the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) that we have witnessed twenty years ago and are still witnessing until today. Mubarak first granted moderate secular opponents greater political space and while both presidents used different political strategies, their objective was common, remaining in power. Both regimes countermeasures against the opposition parties revealed their potential and readiness to use coercive means of containment whenever deemed necessary. The Egyptian regime currently led by Mubarak since 1981 is considered one of the oldest authoritarian regimes in the developing world.

The second explored case in this thesis is that of a system that is competing with Egypt for the title of the most authoritarian regime in North Africa and even the whole Middle East. Despite the promises of reforms whether with Bourguiba or Ben Ali in power, Tunisia is still considered an authoritarian system when it comes to the political sphere. Most of the introduced reforms focused on economic and social

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<sup>136</sup>Bahgat Korany, "Restricted Democratization from Above" Egypt," *Brynen, Korany, and Noble, eds., vol. 2, (2000):63.*



aspects, leaving the political scene under the total control and manipulation of the President himself and his ruling party. Opposition parties are not tolerated as a political actor, but only as fake proof of political liberalization and openness. Elections are totally manipulated through laws and constitution amendments, total control of governmental bureaucracies, total management of media and open debate channels, as well as some brutal actions such as harassment, imprisonment and even assassination of some anti government activists.

Surely, the two cases explored in this thesis are just a snapshot that could be taken in nearly every Arab country from Morocco to Oman. The core is that the centers of political power in most Arab countries has remained firmly closed off from accountability, transparency, rule of law or a legitimate competition with the opposition, the main indicators of good governance as examined in previous chapters. Obviously, the promises not of introduction but of promotion and applicability of good governance indicators are not high on any Arab regime's internal agenda despite external pressures. The future does not reveal any positive prospects despite the urge of a legal infrastructure that reformers can use in order to promote and implement effectively and truly good governance indicators and not just rhetoric concepts and fake application. The recommendations that can be introduced regarding these two cases are mainly related to constitutional reforms; more separation of powers in the government and independence of jurisdiction; as well as the institution of a system for the respect of civil rights and freedoms; programs for poverty reduction and living standard improvement through enhancement of social services to address the problems facing the society; openness

and independence of media; and a fair electoral law coupled with transparent process and accountable results.

Nevertheless, after exploring the various aspects of this thesis, three major questions arise: First, on what basis good governance indicators and measurement indices are considered universal tools upon which the failure or success of a country at the governmental level is measured? Second, why is good governance considered the "right and commendable" political form of regime? And third, is good governance a reality or simply a metaphor created by international organizations to suit their own interests?

In trying to answer the first question, Dr. Mark Orkin, CEO of the Human Sciences Research Council in South Africa, suggested two main reasons for the failure. First, he states that all arguments about governance definition and indicators are "endemically ideological: What to measure, as well as which indicators to select, are based on public administration and political frameworks and no single measurement index can conceptually capture all aspects of the environment of the concerned country". Therefore, this operation is selective and subjective. This gives rise to a situation where the same indicator may have different interpretations depending on which ideological foundation is utilized to measure it. Added to that is the absence of a common definition of good governance adopted by international organizations as well as internal governments. Second, some regimes, although forced into compliance because of trade and aid considerations, are reluctant to produce and disseminate governance indicators that reflect adversely on the

progress toward good governance. "This reluctance is compounded when indicators are used in cross-country comparisons and rankings".<sup>137</sup>

From my own perspective, I believe that the focus should not be on the existence or non-existence of good governance indicators but rather on the quality of the existence of such indicators. Thus, and considering that governance is "a concept encompassing all aspects of the exercise of authority through formal and informal institutions in the management of the life of citizens and the resources of the state"<sup>138</sup>; the quality of governance can hereby be determined by the impact of this exercise of power on the quality of life and standards of living enjoyed by citizens. Accordingly, the enhancement of the quality of good governance is guaranteed through a set of elements. First, by ensuring that the government's policies match citizens' preferences and not the ruler's personal interests and that the government move closer to the people it is intended to serve by providing efficient and effective public services. This element ensures accountability as well as efficiency and effectiveness. Second, by demonstrating full commitment to the concept of rule of law, whether at the personal level as citizens or at the national level as policymakers and politicians. Third, by making sure that all citizen voices are heard equally, even the voices of the opposition. This element guarantees competitiveness through a fair and open electoral system which tolerates, respects and legitimizes the opposition. Fourth, by opening up the media, which secure political freedom and openness and freedom of speech. Fifth, by guaranteeing adequate procedures for judicial efficiency through separation of powers and

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<sup>137</sup>Punyaratabandhu, *Commitment to Good Governance*, 35.

<sup>138</sup>Brownlee, *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*, 10.

complete independence of the judiciary. Sixth, by fighting corruption and bureaucracy. Consequently, what is imperative is not to hold elections continuously but however to adopt free and fair multiparty elections where competition is exercised with integrity and the rights of opposition parties are protected and all citizens enjoy their political and civil rights.

Fukuyama provides a fair answer to the second question by arguing that "a world made up of liberal democracies should have much less incentive for war, since all nations would reciprocally recognize one another's legitimacy".<sup>139</sup> Accordingly, good governance encompassing all its indicators is to be considered the type of regime that do protect the civil and political rights of the citizens, do promote fairness and equity, do guarantee an atmosphere of human development and thus do endorse a regime of rule of law.

The answer to the third question entails a broader observation of good governance concept. Based on the perception that good governance indicators are the universal tools for adherence to rule of law and democracy, authoritarianism is not considered only a threat to international security but also it was identified as a major obstacle to sustainable human and economic development. Therefore international organizations and multilateral donors, such as the OECD, the USAID, the WB, and the UNDP, embarked on programs and initiatives to promote better governance and reforms in the direction of political openness in the Middle East. From my perspective, I believe that the failure to succeed in the democratization process launched by these organizations two decades ago led them to reshape this

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<sup>139</sup>Fukuyama, *The End of History*, xx.

process and give it a new and more detailed perception based on indicators. However, in my point of view, good governance cannot be promoted and endorsed in the Arab region unless it is accompanied with the emergence of social, economic and political conditions favorable to its endorsement. Accordingly, internal calls and pressure for having good governance regime are not sufficient to produce such a regime, political leaders have to be willing to take the risk of good governance to make it happen. And this risk which is their persistence in power is the main characteristics of authoritarianism.

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