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The Middle Eastern Societies:Institutional Trust in Political Turmoil and Stasis

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The Middle Eastern Societies
Institutional Trust in Political Turmoil and Stasis

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ABSTRACT. There is a general lack of citizen trust in governmental institutions in the Middle East, especially because of changing of governments and resulting turmoil. Sequential Mixed Methodology was used, in which data from the 2016 Arab Barometer were supplemented with qualitative insights from two professionals knowledgeable about the political climate in the Middle East and content analyses of relevant journalistic accounts. A comparison of North Africa (characterized by political turmoil) and the Levant (political stasis) countries in how government functionality (efficacy, stability, and corruption), as perceived by their citizens, differentially colored trust in governmental institutions was used to illustrate the citizen-government dynamics that resulted in citizens questioning the legitimacy of government authority. Predictions, based on Max Weber's theory of Political Legitimacy and Gaetano Mosca's Elite Theory, that, on balance, functional governments will garner more citizen's trust in the Levant than in North Africa, while corruption will have a more corrosive effect were supported. A trust surplus occurred as a result of governmental functionality, balancing out the trust deficit created by government dysfunctionality. These findings contributed to existing theoretical and empirical literature on the contested relationship between citizens and their governments. Additional research on sectarian and ethnic conflicts and types of government (monarchy, authoritarian, democratic) in the region as they have shaped citizen trust is warranted.

INTRODUCTION

The Middle East is a hard region to define, primarily due to the wide range of countries, the many languages or dialects, cultures, and traditions, it encompasses. Even though the region has no standardized definition, it can generally be split into three groups. The first group is comprised of the Gulf countries (Gulf Cooperation Council) which include Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar. The second group, referred to as the "Levant", is comprised of, but not limited to, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan. The third is the "North Africa" group which includes Egypt, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. The latter two is the focus in this research paper.

The Gulf countries have enjoyed economic success in the last few decades and are considered powerful Middle Eastern countries on a global scale. But, over the last couple of decades, many countries in the North African and Levantine regions of the

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Middle East have experienced turmoil as a result of multiple wars, including civil wars and revolutions. Others look more static, even if in their extreme class inequality. For example, among the Northern African countries, Egypt has gone through a revolution and a political coup. Even though Algeria and Morocco have not recently been through governmental turmoil, they are characterized by poverty and instability. In the Levant camp, Syria is currently fighting a civil war and dealing with a huge refugee crisis, Palestine is under military occupation of the Israeli army, and Jordan is in political stasis but characterized by class inequality.

The Middle East is a region that is always featured in the news, often under the section involving war, disaster and terrorism. Yet there is very little coverage and research regarding the effects of the turmoil and dramatic change in governments and war on citizens' lives. Such lacunae are especially acute in the United States whose foreign policy in the Middle East has greatly affected the political dynamics of its current landscape. Consequently, the level of trust Middle East citizens have in their governmental bodies have decreased over the last couple of decades.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is much scholarly literature on the politico-historical events that have occurred over the last few decades in the Middle East, specifically in the Levant and North African regions. Another stream in the Middle East scholarship has been about the economics-citizen trust equation, and the relationship between corruption and trust.

The New Arab Order and Political Trust

The 2011 uprisings that occurred across the Middle East created a "New Arab Order." But soon after, the hopes of new democratic reform to replace autocratic regimes vanished. The uprisings were a result of citizen frustration with their countries stagnant economy and lack of political freedom (Lynch 2018:120). In the end, regimes were either overthrown as the byproduct of popular uprisings, or remained standing, as a result of the failure of popular uprising, or did not experience any popular uprisings. In either event, a shift was created in which traditionally strong powers such as Egypt[2] have collapsed and are now "barely functional states" (Lynch 2018:116). On the other hand, Gulf countries, such as Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, for historical and unique global economic reasons, have been able to maintain a strong political and economic presence in both the Middle East and worldwide; these Gulf countries were not part of the Arab Barometer survey, and are not included in this research.

On the world stage, the Middle East has become a playground for both Western major powers and other powers such as Russia, to achieve their own political and economic goals. Power in the Middle East operates through "influence peddling and proxy

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[2] Which were included in the 2016 Arab Barometer Survey, the source of survey data for this paper.

warfare" (Lynch 2018:116). As a result, there is great sense of insecurity among the citizenry of the Middle East; for example, citizens are unsure of the likelihood of another uprising or civil war. In this volatile political climate, academics, politicians and others have posed important questions about the impacts of failed states, unresolved crises of governance, unrest and the resulting turmoil on the political attitudes of citizens.

For one, the protests that swept through the North African and Levantine regions of the Middle East changed "two key civic attitudes, trust and tolerance", fundamental to well-functioning democracies (Spierings 2017:4). Niels Spierings synchronized over 40 Arab Barometer and World Values Survey conducted in Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia, and Yemen, from before and after the uprisings. Using macro-level analysis, Spiering associated a fall in political-institutional trust with the uprisings in countries that went through democratic reform or regime change. Politics became less trustworthy to citizens as a result of "misbehaving" politicians and unsuccessful social reform policies.

<u>North Africa and the Origins of the Arab Spring</u>

The North African region of the Middle East includes Morocco, Libya, Sudan, Egypt and Tunisia, and Algeria. Tunisia was the birthplace of the Arab Spring in 2011, when Mohammed Bouzaizi, a street vendor, set himself on fire as a form of protest. His action was a catalyst for the wider Arab Spring. Since then, democracy and reform have become the focal point of pride in a region that needed it (Bremmer 2019). Protesters demanded that the government tackle rising corruption, reduce income inequality, create jobs, and increase wages. However, Bremer claimed that even though a democratic regime replaced the former president, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, it has not been a successful transition. For example, almost ten years later, Tunisia 's unemployment rate is 30%, GDP per capita is low, wages are stagnant, and there is heavy dependence on financial support from the International Monetary Fund. Amidst such economic chaos, almost 11,000 demonstrations took place in 2018.

Like Tunisia, Egypt, also saw the fall of President Hosni Mubarak in 2011 and in 2012, Mohamed Morsi, who represented the Muslim Brotherhood, was elected president. However, the democratic period in Egypt only lasted till 2014, when a military coup, spearheaded by Abed Fattah el-Sisi, led to the return of an authoritarian regime. The military coup used disorder of the popular protest to assume power (Ketchley 2018). Currently, Abdel Fattah el- Sisi's push towards a presidential term extension, by changing the constitution, is indicative of the corruption and illegitimacy of his reign.

Unlike Egypt and Tunisia, Morocco, the third country in the North African region, did not experience a change in government. However, in 2011, a new constitution was introduced that aimed to improve democracy and the rule of law (Al Jazeera and Agencies 2011). In addition, a stronger separation of powers within governmental branches was created, giving the prime minister and parliament more executive authority and ultimately reducing the authority of the King Mohammed VI. The referendum on constitutional reforms, held on July 1st 2011, was approved by 98.49%

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of voters, legitimizing the authoritative governing system in Morocco (No Author[a], *BBC News* 2011). Yet, despite the reforms, and increased transparency, corruption remains a major problem within the country, and elected officials power to change policy is heavily constrained (No Author[b], *Freedom House* 2019).

Algeria the fourth country in the North Africa region, suffered through a civil war during the 1990's, which resulted in the death of 100,000 Algerians (Algiers, *Economist* 2012). On May 10 1992, a general election was held. However, the electoral change was not deemed as revolutionary, especially considering that the 1992 elections were hijacked by the army in order to stop the Islamic Salvation Front from winning (Algiers 2012). On January 12, 2011 26-year-old Mohamed Aouichia set himself on fire in Algeria. The next day, January 13, 2011, Mohsen Bouterfif also set himself on fire. The two suicides were followed by many others causing hundreds of protesters to take to the streets. In response, a National Coordination for Change and Democracy was created with the aim of seeking systemic change. However, these protests notwithstanding, Algeria remained unaffected by the Arab Spring, mostly because it was recovering from the civil war and Algerians were fearful of further instability (Daoud 2015).

The Levant

The Levantine region of the Middle East, the second considered in this paper, includes Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Syria, Israel; the region is sometimes extended to include Cyprus and Turkey. This region has faced intractable sectarian and ethnocentric conflicts, including, but not limited to the Palestinian-Israeli crisis, the independence struggle of the Kurds, and the rise of ISIS. The Levant is a volatile region that is deeply affected by broader Middle Eastern conflicts. The geopolitical clash between the Iran-led and Saudi-led camps, the ideological conflict among the Muslim Brotherhood groups, and other religious conflicts has led to the internal fragmentation of the Levant (Dalacoura 2018:32). Global actors, such as the United States and Russia, have also contributed to the prolonged instability and vulnerable state of the region.

Lebanon, with its fairly longstanding constitutional system, was not affected by the Arab Spring, much like its Levantine neighbors (Di Peri 2014). Yet, Lebanon experienced its own "spring" in 2005, following the assassination of the former Prime Minister Rafiq Al Hariri. His death was a catalyst of political change, which ultimately led to the end of Syrian military occupation of Lebanon and the withdrawal of Syrian troops. Lebanon, typified by confessionalism[3], faces continued conflict in its civil society primarily because of the power imbalance among the various religious, ethnic, and associated political communities. But, even though the opportunity to change its political structure of

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[3] Confessionalism is a consciational system of government that proportionally allocates political power among a country's communities according to their percentage of the population (Harb 2006). Per consciationalist governing principles: there is a proportional (numerical representation) allocation of political posts among communities with a grand coalition between community leaders on common policies that serve all. But there is communal autonomy and freedom for each community to determine its own affairs (as in personal status laws and mutual veto power on any decisions deemed detrimental by any community.

consciationalism, presented itself during the Arab Spring, it was lost because of deepening sectarian divide and politics.

The legitimacy of the rule of Jordan's monarchy was based on its rentier system (Muasher 2018:114). A social contract, imposed from the top down, through public spending rather than political participation, secured support for governmental and elite rule. "In return for their patronage, states expected citizens to leave governing to a small elite, which, over time, became more and more isolated from the general population" (p.115). Unlike Lebanon and other Levantine countries, the instability in Jordan is more economic than political. For example, the 2011 protests in Jordan began as a fight against unemployment, inflation and corruption. A real constitutional monarchy and electoral reforms were demanded by the people. In response, economic reforms were introduced to address the holes in the social contract. But with no political changes, the economic reforms, of privatization of state-run industries and liberalizing trading systems, only ended up benefiting the elite as opposed to the general population. In the end, the economic reforms were associated with the self-enrichment of elites (p. 116-18). In the last decade, Jordan's patronage system has been threatened as a result of the declining financial support from oil-producing countries and the United States. While Jordan has taken steps to pacify the protestors, such as firing three prime ministers and reforming a third of the constitution after the 2011 protests, these measures have not led to more power sharing between the monarchy and the judicial and legislative branches of the government (Muasher 2018:121). In the long run, by buying the support of its elite class, the monarchical government is able to operate, even if inefficiently, and maintain is legitimacy.

The Palestine, another Levantine country, has been strife with economic and political instability, primarily because of external political actors and internal strife. The Palestine-Israeli conflict can arguably be said to be one of the main reasons for regional distress in the Middle East. The establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 has been the source instability both in Palestine and in the broader Middle East. The West Bank is currently under military occupation; Gaza remains under military siege, and there have been numerous bombings in the last decade. Yet, there has been no political change, nor was the area directly affected by the Arab Spring in 2011. The Hamas government has been the de-facto governmental institution in Gaza since its election in 2006, with Mohamoud Abbas as the president of the State of Palestine and Palestinian National Authority. However, instability and resulting dysfunctionality, both as a result of external forces, mainly Israel, and internal corruption, has become almost permanent. Elliott Abrams, an American Diplomat, stated that "corruption is an insidious destroyer, not only of Palestinian public finance but of faith in the entire political system" in his testimony before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia (Elliot, *CFR* 2012).

In short, starting in 2011, the Middle East region has seen an uneasy mix of great political turbulence and stasis. Even though the Levantine countries, such as Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine, are characterized by political stasis but without major upheavals, they were still affected by the neighboring uprisings and wider Middle Eastern instability.

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On the other hand, Northern African countries, except for Algeria, have witnessed immense political turmoil. In either case, whether political stasis or turmoil, citizen trust in the political institutions in the region has been shaky at best. In fact, according to Global Corruption Barometer, despite half a decade since the Arab Spring, there is still "widespread public dissatisfaction with government efforts to curb public sector graft" (Pring 2016:5). Sixty-one percent of citizens in the region perceive corruption to have increased in the last year.

Economic Vitality and Trust in Government

Aside from political volatilities and the resulting shattered citizen trust, scholars have identified economic instability or lack of economic vitality as two other sources of citizen discontent and distrust. Two distinct dimensions of economic instability, material instability and perceptions of economic instability, have been noted for their eroding influences on citizen trust.

<u>Material Economic Instability and Trust Erosion</u>

Economic stability, which has been scarce in the Middle East, particularly since 2011, is an important element in the trust equation. Economic stability refers to stable, material conditions in which a country offers its citizens job opportunities, opportunities for civil and political involvement for its citizens, and flowing economic activity (Hashemi 2017:87). And sustained economic stability is expected to lead to a higher standard of living for citizens. On the other hand, when there is economic instability in a country, the socially and economically marginalized, especially its youth, feel frustrated and powerless. Often, citizens hold the country's government and/or its corporations responsible for their economic security. Under these unstable conditions, it is not surprising that youth participate in insurgency or political militant movements, further deepening regional instability (p. 83).

Ironically, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region benefited from the wealth created by the increase in oil prices in the1970s. However, failure to create employment opportunities for the expanding labor force led to a deterioration in economic conditions. Non-oil economies in the region rely heavily on "aid, capital flows, and worker remittances" from the oil- producing Middle Eastern countries (Abed and Davoodi, *IMF* 2013). "Political fragmentation, recurring conflicts, and authoritarian rule have hampered the development of democratic institutions and remain major obstacles to economic reform" (Abed and Davoodi, *IMF* 2013). High-tariff barriers, imbalanced exchange rate policies, limited advancement of human capital, and poor provision of basic public goods and services are few of the many factors that have contributed to material or objective lack of economic growth within the region (Abed and Davoodi, *IMF* 2013).

The material or objective strength of the economy is widely accepted to be directly linked to citizen trust in institutions (Eccles 2015:17). Eccles referenced Nye's (1997) research which showed that governments who were unable to reduce unemployment, increase economic growth and provide social services were unable to gain trust from

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citizens. Increased globalization has provided citizens with access to more information, allowing them to be more aware of their rights and demand more from their governments (Eccles 2015:19). Also, over the last few decades, "social modernization" has led to the transformation of the relationship between citizens of the state and its governmental body. The growing distrust and skepticism of younger, more educated citizens has led to a new style of politics in which, as quoted by Eccles, there is "… less deference to authority, more assertive styles of action, and higher expectations for the democratic process" (p. 18). For example, Algerians protested against President Abdelaziz Bouteflika's decision to delay the April 18 presidential election despite announcing that he will not continue his presidency of 20 years for a 5th term. However, Bouteflika's move to step down did not guarantee that the ruling elite, consisting of his brother, the army and several industrial bosses, would relinquish their power (Nossiter 2019). Besides, while Algeria has natural gas reserves, the common citizens have seen very little economic gain, leaving the youth very concerned about the lack of job opportunities (Adamson and Charlton 2019).

Amidst such economic stagnancy, access to information has allowed citizens to more accurately assess the income inequality in their country. If governments are responsible for providing regulations that ensure stability, it follows that citizen trust in the efficiency of governments will be measured through the type of policies and regulations implemented as opposed to simply the quantity (Siems and Schnyder 2014). In fact, these authors argued that since the Global Financial Crisis of 2008, there has been a worldwide call for more government intervention, "ordoliberalism", to restart the market economy so that citizens' benefits, and interests can be furthered. Citizen awareness of the unfair distribution of wealth within the country was commented on by an Executive Director who was interviewed for this research (Interviewee #1). There is a pronounced difference, she said, between the lifestyle of government officials and that of regular working-class citizens. The government officials and leaders are always of the upper class while citizens are of the lower or middle class, with notably fewer material possessions and wealth. Therefore, citizens are demanding fair processes from their governments. On balance, it is not surprising that over the last few decades, public trust in government has been declining worldwide, including in the Middle East.

Perceptions of Government (In)Efficacy and Citizen Trust

A second stream in the literature on governments' responsibility for economic stability and trust is the public's perceptions of government efficacy and of their wellbeing. According to Tom van der Meer and Armen Hakhverdian (2016), while trust is based on the merit of governmental bodies, it is not based on actual policy performance but on the "perceptions of performance, accountability, impartiality, corruption" (p. 82). Meer and Hakhverdian, in their study of 42 countries in Europe (51,255 respondents) also showed that difference in process (greater accountability and impartiality), as opposed to macro-economic outcomes, explained variations in political trust, measured by "satisfaction with democracy" and "confidence in national political institutions" (p. 98).

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Other researchers who studied political trust have documented similar themes. According to Kong (2013), based on the archival data of 7,182 citizens in the Asia Barometer survey (2004), trust in government was contingent on government goodwill, namely their intentions and purposes and the extent to which the governmental systems operated in the best collective interest of the people. Institutional trust is also competence-based, which directly links to the performance and the system's ability to deal with problems. Trust in government is vital in order to have economic development and progressive public policy (p. 847). Kong found that the more goodwill and competence-based trust citizens had in their governments, the more satisfied they were (p.854).

Corruption and Trust

Corruption is an extremely negative version of government efficacy. According to the authors of the 2016 Arab Barometer (AlKhatib et al. 2018), financial and administrative corruption was the second (17.2%) most important challenge that citizens felt their country faced. Experts also posited that authoritarianism and corruption were two of the three most important challenges facing the region as per the "Arab Voices" survey conducted by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Forty-eight out of the one-hundred-and-three experts surveyed stated that corruption is among the most pressing issue. Corruption takes many forms in the Middle East, including the use of security and armed forces to quell uprisings, which helps maintain leaders in their positions, derails the fight against political, minority and gender inequality and allows for religious and minority oppression and prosecution (Aman 2017:172). Another 2016 Carnegie report titled "Arab Fractures: Citizens, States, and Social Contracts" also underscored the fact that political and economic control is linked to cronyism and corruption in the Middle East (Cammack et al. 2016). This linkage, they posited, must be broken if sustainable private-sector economic growth is to emerge.

Restoring of Trust

Broken trust (interpersonal and political) can be both a cause and consequence of corruption. Researchers have shown that countries characterized by corruption are stuck in a circle, where corruption creates a climate of distrust which, in turn, generates and nurtures more corruption. Restoring trust can be difficult since distrust "fosters a tolerant or acquiescent attitude toward corruption and, by creating the expectation of corrupt behavior among others, feeds individual participation in corruption" (Morris and Klesner 2010:1260). The normalizing and tolerance of official wrongdoing creates the casual expectation of negative conduct. Corruption erodes regime legitimacy, noted Morris. According to 2016 Global Corruption Barometer of MENA, nearly one third of citizens paid a bribe in the last year, approximately 50 million people. One in 3 people paid a bribe to the courts, while 1 in 4 paid a bribe to the police. Despite this, citizens feared retaliation if they spoke out about corruption, and 2 in 5 who did report corruption suffered retaliation. The unfair distribution of services through bribery, which undermines law and order, creates a negative environment that does not incite change. Morris went on to argue that the mutual causality between distrust and corruption make

it difficult to fight corruption; since distrust undermines citizen's belief in governmental promises to fight corruption and undermines governmental effort to mobilize society to fight corruption. As a result, citizens tend to be cynical about politics therefore tend not to participate in the political process as they believe that their actions will not have an effect. As he Professor who was interviewed by the author (Interview #2) noted, feeling of helplessness and the lack of empowerment to fight against government corruption leads to not only lack of trust, but unwillingness to change the status quo.

No doubt, it is worthwhile, despite the declining levels of citizen trust, for societies and their citizens, to ask how the broken trust can be restored. Chris Eccles (2015), in a 2005 survey of Canadian Citizens, documented that, in, despite the trend of declining trust in governmental institutions, trust can be restored when public organizations provide good leadership and management (50–65% impact), equal and ethical treatment (10–15% impact), quality services (10–20% impact) and services that meet citizens' and community needs (10–25% impact). In other words, the more citizens believed that governmental institutions benefit them, the more trust they had in the institutions.

Suggestions for Future Research

Economic Vitality (or lack thereof) and corruption have had tremendous negative impacts on citizen trust in the Middle East. The Arab Spring of 2011 dramatically changed the political landscape of many countries. While some countries, such as Libya, Sudan, Iran and Yemen, were not surveyed in the Arab Barometer, general political trends can be found within countries in North Africa versus the Levant regions. Many countries in North Africa experienced a change in regime type while in others governmental systems remained the same. Further research is needed in order to understand why certain governmental types, such as monarchies, despite corruption, were able to retain power and legitimacy using top-down social contracts and access to natural resources, while other governments and leaders were overthrown. Additionally, ethno-sectarian tensions exist within many countries, and across border lines in the region. For example, there has been an on-going religious Sunni and Shiite power struggle which has divided the populations, challenged political boundaries, and fueled terrorism and civil war. The polarization of identity groups has gravely affected stability in the region. These factors need to be examined to assess the extent of which internal conflict has affected citizen trust in governmental institutions and affected their perceptions of their government's ability to ensure the country's stability and the personal safety of all identity groups.

RESEARCH QUESTION

In this research, an attempt was made to compare the level of trust that citizens in North Africa and the Levant region had in their governments' functionality. Three dimensions of functionality were measured: perceptions of citizen's stability, government efficacy, and corruption. Stability was indicated by feelings of personal safety and economic

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stability. Perceptions of government efficacy covered areas of economy, employment, security and health. The third factor was corruption, based on perceptions of level corruption, government efforts to combat it, and cronyism. The following question was posed: "How does government functionality, as perceived by their citizens, differentially affect their trust in institutions in North Africa and Levant?" The control variables used in this research was level of education and gender to neutralize their potential confounding effects on trust in the government.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to theoretically explain why and how perceptions of government efficacy and stability, in particular personal economic stability and safety, as well as corruption affect the level of trust citizens have in their governments in the both North Africa and the Levant, political legitimacy and elite theory will be used. This analysis was theoretically framed using a synthesis of conceptual ideas offered by Weber (1964) and Dahl's (1971) political legitimacy and Gaetano Mosca's elite theories (1965).

Elite Political Legitimacy and Related Hypotheses

Political legitimacy refers to the right and acceptance of an authority, thereby giving the authority figure, or institutions as the case might be, the right to exercise power. The legitimacy of rulers or governments is derived from the population's belief that the governing power appropriately uses the country's laws and the constitution. To quote Max Weber "the basis of every system of authority, and correspondingly of every kind of willingness to obey, is a belief, a belief by virtue of which persons exercising authority are lent prestige" (Weber, 1964:382). Robert A. Dahl expanded on Weber and compared legitimacy to a reservoir, where as long as the water is at a specific level, political stability is maintained, while if it drops below the specific level, political legitimacy is endangered (1971:124-88). Therefore, functional institutions, including perceptions of government efficacy and stability, will legitimize their authority and cultivate a trust surplus among its citizens.

Gaetano Mosca in his elite theory outlined in his "The Ruling Class" (Meisel 1965), added more detailed nuances to the political legitimacy of elites. It is a given that political legitimacy is needed for governing and that there is always those who are rulers and those who are ruled. But, "the first class, always the less numerous" performs all political functions, monopolizes power and favour the benefits that accompany such power. On the other hand, the masses are directed and controlled by the ruling class, "in a manner that is now more or less legal" (p. 50). But, Mosca argued that power is not exclusively justified by the de facto possession of it, but states that those in power find a moral and legal basis for it, further legitimizing and deeming it a "necessary consequence of doctrines and beliefs" that are already recognized and accepted in societies (p. 71). However, the isolation of lower classes, and their lack of accessibility to the ruling class can lead to political upheaval (107). The consequent pressure arising

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from the discontent of the masses, who are swayed by their passions, can influence the policies of the ruling class (p. 51). In other words, those who rule must garner the support of the masses in order to maintain their power (p. 51). Such support is gained through the consideration of the majorities' beliefs and sentiments. Besides, in order for the minority to remain in power, they must be organized and efficient so that they can overcome the unorganized majority. Following Mosca's elite political legitimacy arguments, it can be argued that when governments are seen to be functional, they will garner more citizen's trust than otherwise. However, corruption can create a trust deficit, by corroding the trust that governments have garnered through their efficient provision of providing functional services to their citizens.

Applying these theoretical arguments to the citizen-elite dynamics in the Levant and North Africa, elites in the Levant could be expected to garner more citizen trust than the North African elite because Levantine elites have maintained political stasis or stability, even if not economic progress. On the other hand, North African countries are not only ridden with economic equalities but also have been in political turmoil, and have experienced regime change which despite the hopes of many, did not bring about the expected economic and social change. Against this background, the first hypothesis tested in this study was: Functional governments will garner more citizen's trust in the Levant than in North Africa, net of corruption, level of education and gender" (Hypothesis #1).

However, when citizens perceive corruption in their government their trust will be shaken, creating a trust deficit. And given the volatile political histories of the North African region (because of the numerous changes in types of governments or rulers), the trust deficit caused by corruption is expected to be higher in North Africa than in the Levant. The Levant, on the contrary, has been characterized by political stasis, with stagnant governments and rulers, despite persistent economic inequality. Countries in North Africa, on the other hand, have experienced leader and government changes as a result of the Arab Spring yet also are burdened with economic and political turmoil. Therefore, we can hypothesize that corruption will have a more corrosive effect on citizen trust in North Africa than in the Levant. The many changes in the government elite in North Africa and to the extent there continues to dysfunction in each new government, there will be more net trust deficit, in North Africa than in the Levant (Hypothesis #2).

METHODOLOGY

Sequential mixed methodology was used, where statistical analyses of survey data were followed up with narrative accounting by journalists and other professionals to further interpret the statistical findings. Secondary survey data from the Middle East were used to measure and test the hypotheses about levels of trust in governmental institutions in the North African and the Levantine regions of the Middle East. Two narrative assessments provided by an Executive Director of an NGO in Lebanon and an international studies professor at an academic institution were supplemented with journalistic commentaries on the Middle East.

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Secondary Data source

The "Arab Barometer: Public Opinion Survey Conducted in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia, 2016" was a public survey conducted to assess citizen attitudes about public affairs, governance, and social policy in their countries of residence in the Middle East. Questions about the political, social, religious, and cultural life of respondents were posed throughout the survey. In addition to some general questions, respondents were asked to evaluate their political institutions and political attitudes, elections and parliament, the media, democracy, social, religious and cultural topics, the Arab world and international relations, and current affairs. The Arab Barometer is vital to understanding key issues in the lives of ordinary citizens in Arab society so that governmental and nongovernmental bodies can use the information to base their solutions to the specific problems faced within specific countries and the region as a whole.

"Arab Barometer: Public Opinion Survey Conducted in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia, 2016" was carried out by eleven principal investigators (AlKhatib et al. 2018). Interviews were conducted in Arabic in the respondent's place of residence to ensure a higher response rate and more truthful answers. The sample was drawn with the use stratified multi-stage sampling to cover a nationally representative of non- institutionalized adults aged 18 and above. In most countries the sample size was 1,200 citizens. Furthermore, 300 Syrian nationals living in Jordan and Lebanon were interviewed. As shown in Appendix A, 49.9 % of the of the respondents were female and 50.1% were male in all countries except Egypt and Palestine. In Jordan, Lebanon and Tunisia 30.9% of the respondents had completed a secondary level of education while in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, and Palestine 28.9% of the respondents did so.

Narrative Commentaries

Several journalistic accounts in newspaper outlets, that offer commentary on current and past news in the Middle East, were used to ascertain on-the-ground perspectives on government functioning and citizen responses. The newspaper outlets included "The Economist," "The New York Times" and "Al Jazeera." In addition, two interviews were conducted with professionals who have deep knowledge about the functioning (or dysfunctions) of governmental institutions in North Africa and the Levant. The first interviewee (Interviewee #1, Professor) is an international studies professor at a university. Her specific focus is the Middle East. The second interviewee was an Executive Director (Interviewee #2) at an NGO in Lebanon, and has worked directly with the ministry of education to make education accessible to all children. She has volunteered for the NGO for 10 years, and has been the executive director for three years.

DATA ANALYSIS

Three types of statistical analyses, disaggregated by North Africa and Levant, were used in order to explore the validity of the hypotheses. Univariate analysis was, first, used to describe the sample using trust in institutions, perceptions of government efficacy, stability and corruption. Second, to explore the primary empirical relationship of level of trust in governmental institution with perceptions of government efficacy, stability, and corruption, bivariate correlations were used. Finally, multivariate analysis was used to assess the net impact of perceptions of government efficacy, stability and corruption on trust in governmental institutions. Illustrative examples of trust surplus and deficits in North Africa and the Levant were drawn from the narrative commentaries offered by journalists and professionals.

Operationalization and Descriptive Analysis

Overall, there was a low level of trust in governmental institutions in both regions. And as might be expected in low citizen trust environments, the governments in both regions were also judged to be less functional in their efficacy, their ability in maintaining stability and had high corruption ratings. However, there were notable differences in the two regions on trust as well as the functionality and dysfunctionality of their governments. North Africans perceived their governmental institutions to be more efficacious, stable, and less corrupt than their Levantine counterparts. More specifically, citizens in North Africa rated their governments to be more efficient in operating three of the four sectors considered; the economy, employment and security sector. It was only the health sector that Levantine nation citizens found to be more efficacious than the North Africans. An interesting note: even though citizens in the Levant believed that there was more corruption and cronyism in their respective countries than their counterparts in North Africa, the latter (North Africans) believed there was less crackdown on corruption and bribes.

<u>Trust in Institutions</u>

Given the recent turmoil in the Middle East, the low trust in institutions in both regions was to be expected. According to the Professor (Interviewee #2), economic hardship, instability, lack of accountability and high level of corruption amongst government institutions are the main factors that create trust deficits. The Executive Director (Interviewee #1) added, in order for there to be a surplus of trust, there must be a high level of ethics, transparency and accountability. However, for historical reasons discussed at the start of this paper, citizens of North African nations trusted their institutions a bit more than the Levantine citizens. The lower level of Levantine trust was captured in the Trust index mean ($\overline{x}$) of 9.01 on a scale of 6-14, in contrast to the mean ($\overline{x}$) of 10.16 in North Africa.

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Table 1.A. Trust in Institutions
Arab Barometer: Public Opinion Survey Conducted in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia, 2016

Concept	Dimensions	Indicators	Responses	Statistics	
				North Africa (n=4277)	Levant (n=3405)
Trust in Institutions	Legislative System	Q2011. Trust in government (council of ministers)?	1. No trust at all 2. Not very much trust 3. Quite a lot of trust 4. A great deal of trust	27.8% 27.7 29.3 15.3	47.1%*** 21.3 22.2 9.4
	Judicial Branch	Q2012. Trust in the courts and legal system?	1. No trust at all 2. Not very much trust 3. Quite a lot of trust 4. A great deal of trust	23.9% 27.9 29.5 18.7	32.9%*** 23.9 28.2 15.0
	Executive Branch	Q2013. Trust in the elected council of representatives (the parliament)?	1. No trust at all 2. Not very much trust 3. Quite a lot of trust 4. A great deal of trust	41.7% 29.0 20.2 9.1	55.1%*** 23.0 16.1 5.8
	Army	Q2016. Trust do you have in the armed forces (the army)?	1. No trust at all 2. Not very much trust 3. Quite a lot of trust 4. A great deal of trust	3.9% 9.2 22.2 64.8	12.6%*** 12.1 21.7 53.6
	Index of Trust in Institutions[1]		Mean ($\bar{x}$) (sd) Min-Max	10.16 (3.01) 4-16	9.01*** (3.05) 4-16

[1] Index of Trust in Government: ReversedQ2011 + ReversedQ2012 + ReversedQ2013 + ReversedQ2016; correlations among the indicators for North Africa ranged from 0.62*** to 0.18***; Levant 0.64*** to 0.11***; *** $p \leq .001$.

Some examples of the specific points of regional divergence in trust and mistrust are worth noting. Citizens of both regions registered "a great deal of trust" in armed forces; 64.8% citizens in North Africa even if only 53.6% of Levant citizens. But there was more distrust than trust in all the other sectors considered here, particularly in the Levant nations. For example, in the Levant, 41.7% had "no trust at all" in the councils of ministers as opposed to only 27.8% in North Africa. Citizens in the Levant also distrusting of their courts and legal system; 32.9% of the citizens stated they had "no trust at all" compared to the 23.9% in North Africa. A similar pattern of low Levantine institutional trust (55.1% "no trust at all") continued to the level of council of representatives (in contrast to the 41.7% of North African citizens).

Functional Governments

Trust in governmental institutions was hypothesized to be a product of the government's functionality and dysfunctionality as evaluated by their citizens.

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Governments were considered to be functional based on how efficacious they were perceived to be and how stable the citizens felt their lives were. On the other hand, corruption was used to identify dysfunction within governmental institutions. According to the Professor (Interviewee #2) there are negative perceptions of government efficacy. Limited efficacy is a result of the lack of accountability leaders and governmental institutions. In a sense, they are above the law. Whether leaders and governmental institutions carry out their responsibilities efficiently or not, they will almost never be punished or voted out of office.

Perceptions of Government Efficacy. Perceptions of Government Efficacy was measured by how effective the citizens thought their governments were in managing their respective countries. Citizen's evaluated the performance of their own government's ability to effectively grow the economy, creating employment opportunities, providing security, and offering health services. As illustrated in Table 1.B governments were perceived to be less efficacious, than not, in both regions; the mean ($\overline{x}$) efficacious index score in North Africa was only 10.7 (on a scale from 5-20) and 10.2 ($\overline{x}$) in the Levant region. With the exception of providing security, both sets of governments were rated negatively (bad or very bad) than positively, and more so in the Levant. It is only in providing health services that the Levant governments were rated to be more effective than the North African governments.

The case of Lebanon is illustrative. In Lebanon, 34.5% of citizens believed that government was not effective at managing the economy. Even though "Banque du Libyan," the government run central bank in Lebanon, has strived to preserve the two-decade old currency peg, the economy remained stagnant. The high interest rates have increased the risk within the financial system and is "strangling an already depressed economy" (Barrington 2018). Lebanon is currently the world's third most indebted state but needs urgent fiscal reform to help the economy. According to Barrington, regular citizens are feeling the effects of the weak economy as annual growth rates has decreased to 1-2%, lending is down, business activity is falling, and prices are falling in the real estate sector, the pillar of the Lebanese economy.

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Table 1.B. Perception of Government Efficacy
Arab Barometer: Public Opinion Survey Conducted in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia, 2016

Concept	Dimensions	Indicators	Responses	Statistics	
				North Africa (n=2076)	**Levant (n=3350)**
Perception of Government Efficacy	Economy	How would you evaluate: Q2041. The current government's performance on managing the economy?	1. Very Bad 2. Bad 3. Good 4. Very Good	25.5% 37.7 33.6 3.2	34.5%[***] 35.5 27.0 3.0
		Q2043. The current government's performance on narrowing the gap between rich and poor?	1. Very Bad 2. Bad 3. Good 4. Very Good	44.1% 37.4 16.3 2.2	45.7%[*] 37.8 15.1 1.4
		Q2042. The current government's performance on creating employment opportunities?	1. Very Bad 2. Bad 3. Good 4. Very Good	42.0% 37.5 18.4 2.1	50.1[*%**] 35.5 13.3 1.0
	Security	Q20421. The current government's performance on providing security in the country?	1. Very Bad 2. Bad 3. Good 4. Very Good	7.6% 12.6 54.6 25.2	23.6%[***] 20.0 33.4 23.0
	Health	Q2044. The current government's performance on improving basic health services?	1. Very Bad 2. Bad 3. Good 4. Very Good	28.4% 34.4 33.7 3.5	26.5%[***] 30.9 38.0 4.6
		Index of Perceptions of Government Efficacy [1]	Mean ($\bar{x}$) (sd) Min -Max	10.73 (2.97) 5-20	10.25[***] (3.32) 5-20

[1] Index of Perceptions of Government Efficacy: ReversedQ2041 + ReversedQ2042 + ReversedQ20421 + ReversedQ2011 + ReversedQ2043; correlations among the indicators for North Africa ranged from 0.49** to 0.25***; Levant 0.56** to 0.36***
[***] p<=.001.

Stability. Governments in both regions fared a bit better (but not by much) in offering their citizens stability (Table 1.C). But, as with trust and efficacy, North African citizens felt more stable in their lives; on a summative index scale that ranged from 6-25, the North African mean ($\bar{x}$) was 14.83 compared to 13.93 in the Levant. Citizen's based their perceptions about their stability on country's economic stability and their personal safety. For example, in North Africa 59.3% believed that their household economic situation was "good" in comparison to only 48.9% of citizens in the Levant. Additionally, 52.4% of citizens in North Africa reported that the future of their own personal as well as their family's safety was ensured; only 35.3% of citizens in the Levant felt the same. Additionally, citizens in the Levant were more concerned with a terrorist attack (13.3%)

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or of being harassed in the street (25.9%) than North African citizens (4.3% and 7.3% respectively). In short, even in relatively unstable circumstances, North Africans felt that there was more (than the Levantines) economic stability in their country and experienced a higher degree of personal safety.

Table 1.C. Stability
Arab Barometer: Public Opinion Survey Conducted in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia, 2016

Concept	Dimensions	Indicators	Responses	Statistics	
				North Africa (n=4586)	Levant (n=3536)
Stability	Economic Stability	How would you evaluate: Q101. The current economic situation in your country?	1. Very Bad	29.7%	31.7%***
			2. Bad	35.0	38.1
			3. Good	32.3	27.6
			4. Very Good	3.1	2.6
		Q101a. The economic situation in your country five years ago (before the Arab uprisings) compared to the current situation?	1. Much worse	8.5%	8.6%***
			2. Somewhat Worse	11.9	11.1
			3. Almost the same as the current situation	26.8	18.5
			4. Somewhat better	30.4	39.3
			5. Much better	22.4	22.5
		Q102b. Your current household economic situation?	5. Very Bad	10.3%	15.8%***
			6. Bad	26.4	30.2
			7. Good	59.3	48.9
			8. Very Good	4.1	5.1
	Personal Safety	Q105. Do you currently feel that your own personal as well as your family's safety and security are ensured or not?	1. Absolutely not ensured	7.6%	10.6%***
			2. Not ensured	14.9	24.9
			3. Ensured	52.4	35.3
			4. Fully ensured	25.1	29.3
		To what degree are you worried about: Q1072. A terrorist attack in your country.	1. Very much	79.6%	58.0%***
			2. Much	11.7	22.4
			3. Not much	4.3	6.7
			4. Not at all	4.3	13.0
		Q1074. Being harassed or threatened on the street.	1. Very much	69.3%	38.6%***
			2. Much	16.7	13.3
			3. Not much	6.6	22.2
			4. Not at all	7.3	25.9
		Index of Stability[1]	Mean	13.93	14.83***
			(sd)	(2.78)	(3.49)
			Min-Max	6-25	6-25

[1] Index of Stability: ReversedQ101 + ReversedQ101A + ReversedQ102B + ReversedQ105 + Q1072 + Q1074; correlations among the indicators for North Africa ranged from -0.02*** to 0.60***; Levant -0.01*** to 0.55***
*** $p <= .001$.

While stability is crucial to citizens of the Middle East, democracy is not necessarily perceived to be the solution (Interviewee #2). According to the Professor, in a state of

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instability and lack of personal safety, democracy and civil rights are considered a luxury. As a result, citizens are willing to settle for an ineffective government if its leader is able to guarantee, verbally at least, safety and economic security. In the Middle East, history has shown that citizens have a preference for tough leaders over democratic states and are willing to compromise on accountability and democracy in return of survival.

Government Corruption as Dysfunction

In addition to assess the functionality of governments, citizens were asked to evaluate the extent of corruption in their countries. Specifically, their perception of corruption within state agencies, cronyism in employment, and the extent to which corruption was being remedied was addressed. As shown in Table 1.D, both regions were marked by high levels of corruption, but corruption was more rampant in the Levant; the mean ($\overline{x}$) corruption index score was 10.09 (range of 4-12) in the Levant and 9.61 in North Africa. Two examples to illustrate regional differences in corruption levels. One, there was a notable difference in the level of cronyism; while 75.3% citizens in the Levant believed that obtaining employment through connections is "extremely widespread," only 61.5% of citizens in North Africa thought so. Second, more than half (57.2%) of Levant citizens believed that there was corruption in their state agencies to a "large extent" in comparison to the 55.2% of North Africans. But, Levantine governments (35%) were more likely to be seen as cracking down on corruption than the 25.2% of North Africans. That is, even though corruption was more rampant in the Levant than in North Africa, the former governments were doing more to combat corruption.

Once again, according to the Professor (Interviewee #2), high levels of corruption stem from the ability of politicians, with the use of the country's resources and the international support, to push certain agendas and create divisions within the country. Many citizens see governmental institutions as compromised or corrupted, and too tied up in politics. For example, the people that are chosen to take high positions within governmental institutions are based on political ties, as opposed to merit (Interviewee #1). Adeel Malik, a professor at Oxford University, mentioned in Kassab's article "The cost of cronyism under Mubarak," found significant cronyism between the late 1990's and 2001 in 385 companies in Egypt that had been associated the former president, Hosni Mubarak. Similarly, 497 companies in Lebanon and 662 in Tunisia had strong ties to the political regimes in place, while 370 in Morocco were owned by holding companies indirectly controlled by the King (Kassab 2019). Besides, Kassab noted that companies in Egypt that were politically associated with the regime received more benefits. For example, they received 92% of the total loans granted to the private sector, despite not having higher profitability compared to non-politically connected firms.

Corruption, as shown in Table 1.D., had a more corrosive effect on citizen trust, creating more trust deficit, in Levant than in North Africa. The empirical data from The Global Corruption Barometer are illustrative. According to the Barometer 92% of citizens in

Lebanon, 75% of Jordanian citizens and 70% of Palestinian citizens believe corruption had increased. On the other hand, citizens in North Africa did not believe corruption had increased as drastically as in the Levant. While 64% of citizens in Tunisia and 51% of Algerians thought that corruption had increased, this was a stark contrast to the 28% of Egyptians and 26%of Moroccans who held the similar belief.

Table 1.D. Corruption
Arab Barometer: Public Opinion Survey Conducted in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia, 2016

Concept	Dimensions	Indicators	Responses	Statistics	
				North Africa (n=4360)	Levant (n=3334)
Corruption	Perceptions	To what extent do you think that: Q210. There is corruption within the state agencies and institutions in your country?	1. Not at all 2. To a small extent 3. To a medium extent 4. To a large extent	2.7% 10.0 32.1 55.2	3.7%[***] 8.4 30.6 57.2
		Q211.The governments working to crackdown on corruption and root out brides?	1. Not at all 2. To a small extent 3. To a medium extent 4. To a large extent	12.9% 34.1 27.8 25.2	10.2%[***] 28.9 25.9 35.0
		Q213. How to get a job[1].	1. I do not know of any relevant experiences 2. Employment is mostly obtained without connections 3. Employment is sometimes obtained through connections 4. Obtaining employment through connections is extremely widespread	7.5% 3.5 27.5 61.5	2.0%[***] 2.6 20.0 75.3
		Index of Corruption[2]	Mean (sd) Min-Max	9.61 (1.80) 4-12	10.09[***] (1.65) 4-12

[1] Some people say that nowadays it is impossible to get a job without connections (wasta) while others say that jobs are only available to qualified candidates. Based on a recent experience (or experiences) you are personally aware of, do you think that…?

[2] Index of Corruption: ReversedQ210 + ReversedQ211 + ReversedQ213; correlations among the indicators for North Africa ranged from 0.36[***] to- 0.20[***]; Levant 0.40[***] to 0.20[***]

[***] $p<=.001$

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Bivariate analysis

A preliminary exploration of the connections of citizen trust with government efficacy, stability, and corruption were conducted using bivariate correlations (Table 2 in Appendix A). In North Africa, the more efficacious the government was perceived to be, and the more stable their personal life was, the more likely they were to trust governmental institutions (Efficacy r=0.47***, Stability r=0.31***). On the other hand, perceived corruption reduced trust in North African societies (r= -0.47***). Similar patterns were evident in the Levant region. For example, the more efficacious (r=0.59***) and the more stable their lives were (r=0.36***), the more trusting they were of their governments, but corruption led to less trust (r= -0.48***). As illustrated in Table 2, the level of trust in institutions was more reflective of government efficacy, stability and corruption in the Levant than in North Africa. Also, in both regions, the more educated citizens were, the less trust they had, particularly in North Africa (North Africa r= -0.15***, Levant r= -0.08**). Some gender differences were also evident, with men being more trusting than women (North Africa r= -0.06***, Levant r= -0.05**).

Linear Regression Analysis

In order to test the robustness of the hypothesized regionalized connections of citizen trust with functional-dysfunctional assessments of their governments and consequent trust deficits, two linear regressions were run, one each for the two regions. The functionality of governments was indicated by perceptions of government efficacy and stability, while corruption levels represented dysfunctionality in governmental institutions (Table 3).

In North Africa, on balance, perceptions of government efficacy were the main reason for increased levels of trust (β= 0.25***). While citizen trust in their governments was reduced by the corrosive negative effects of corruption (β=-0.29***), governments were able to combat the negative consequences of corruption, with functional services and stability. There was a parallel functionality-corruption-trust dynamic in the Levant. That is, functional Levantine governments engendered much more citizen trust (β=0.41***) than the negative trust consequences of governmental corruption (β=-0.23***).

Two additional trust connections, even if not as prominent as that of efficacy and corruption, were noted. Economic and personal stability contributed some to cultivating more trust in governments in both regions, even if more so in Northern Africa; Stability β in North Africa = 0.10***and 0.07*** the Levant. And educated North African citizens were less trusting of their governments (β = -0.12**than their Levantine counterparts (β = -0.04**).

Another look at the regional differences in the functionality-corruption balance in engendering citizen trust revealed interesting lessons in trust surplus and deficits. In the Levant, governments were able to cultivate a trust surplus; that is, the trust deficit

caused by corruption (β=-0.23***) was more than compensated for by functional governments (Efficacy β=0.41***and stability β=0.07**combined). While in North Africa, citizen trust that efficacious governments and stability were able to garner (Efficacy β=0.25***and stability β=0.10) were just about sufficient to make up for the corrosive effects of corruption (β=-0.29***). In other words, the trust surplus created in the North African region was significantly smaller than the trust surplus in the Levantine region.

Table 3. Regression Analysis of Trust in Government
Arab Barometer: Public Opinion Survey Conducted in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia, 2016; Beta (β) Coefficients[1]

	Regression Coefficients (β)	
	North Africa	**Levant**
Functional Governments:		
1. **Perceptions of Government Efficacy**	0.25***	0.41**
2. **Stability**	0.10***	0.07***
Dysfunctional Governments:		
1. **Corruption**	-0.29***	-0.23***
Education and Gender:		
1. **Level of education**	-0.11***	-0.04**
2. **Gender**	-0.02	0.03
Model Statistics:		
Constant	11.19***	8.79***
Adjusted R^2	0.24****	0.38***
DF 1 & 2	5 & 3410	5 & 2955

[1] Index of Trust in Government: ReversedQ2011 + RevesexQ2012 + ReversedQ2013 + ReversedQ2016; range 4-16;
Index of Perceptions of Government Efficacy: ReversedQ2041 + ReversedQ2042 + ReversedQ20421 + ReversedQ2043 + ReversedQ2043; range 5-20;
Index of Stability: ReversedQ101 + ReversedQ101A + ReversedQ102B +Reversed Q105 + Q1072 + Q1074; range 6-25;
Index of Corruption: ReversedQ210 + ReversedQ211 + ReversedQ213; range 4-12;
Level of Education: (1) Illiterate/No formal education - (7) MA and above;
Gender: (0) Male - (1) Female.
*** p<=.001.

CONCLUSIONS

In this concluding section, the theoretical and political implications of the empirical findings were reviewed. Some suggestions for future research to advance scholarly understanding of the contested relationships between Middle Eastern citizens and their governments were outlined.

Empirical and Theoretical Implications

The quantitative findings indicated that a trust surplus in governmental institutions in the Middle East was a result of positive perceptions of government efficacy, and stability. On the other hand, corruption eroded citizen trust. However, while both the North African and Levantine regions were able to garner an overall trust surplus, said surplus was significantly smaller in North Africa than in the Levantine region. Educated Middle East citizens were less trusting of their governments in both regions.

Some specifics of the trust dynamics between citizens and their leaders were found in the narrative commentaries of professionals and journalistic accounts. For example, The Professor (Interviewee #2) offered this scenario. Sectarian leaders are supported by foreign leaders and are historically from wealthy families. Therefore, in return for loyalty from their voters, they are able to provide tangible services, such as government jobs, education to voter's children in specific prestigious schools. The strong influence of leaders on the citizens make it difficult to mobilize against leaders, because voters are very dependent on these leaders. According to the Executive Director (Interviewee #1), the dependent voter-politician relationship is harmful. Citizens prefer working in the government public sector than in the private sector, because staying within the system grantees them benefits they would not achieve otherwise. The reinter system, coupled with corruption, allows for the elite class in the Middle East to continue controlling resources and solidify their power. According to the Executive Director, the economic differential between ordinary citizens and elites is vast; the government officials and leaders are always of the upper class while citizens are of the lower or middle class, with fewer material possessions and wealth.

In the Professor's experience, there is no motivation for governmental institutions to help and support citizens who do not have the ability to change the level of power of leaders, because of both the lack of accountability and dependency of Middle Eastern citizens on their leaders. Neither are the government agents motivated to facilitate economic growth. Lack of accountability also contributes to the little confidence in leaders and government agents, and ultimately leads to government inefficacy. Additionally, widespread corruption, that goes hand in hand with lack of accountability, is quite evident in the Middle East.

Citizens feel that the government is inefficient because they are corrupt. Yet, many do not feel they can make a difference, although this sense of powerlessness is not widespread throughout the region. As per the Global Corruption Barometer 2016 (Pring 2016) citizens in Tunisia felt empowered to help fight corruption, and believed ordinary people are able to incite change (71%). Citizens in Jordan and Palestine, also had positive outlooks on the ability for citizens to make a difference (66%). On the other hand, half of the citizens in Morocco, Algeria, Lebanon and Egypt felt disempowered to fight corruption. If left unaddressed, as the empirical findings presented in this paper has shown, corruption in both regions will erode the trust surplus in government institutions.

Theoretical Implications

From a theoretical standpoint, there was support in the linear regression findings (Figure 1) for predictions that were grounded in Max Weber and Gaetano Mosca's Elite and Legitimacy theories. As expected in first hypothesis, functional governments garnered more citizen's trust in the Levant than in North Africa, net of level of education and gender. The economic equalities combined with the political turmoil that has roiled the North African region, and the unmet expectations of economic and social change offer an explanation. The legitimacy of governments (measured by trust surplus garnered by government efficacy and stability versus trust deficits derived from corruption was also higher in the Levant (Hypothesis #2) as a result of Levantine elites maintaining political stability, even if not economic progress.

Figure 1: Empirical (Beta (β) Coefficients[1]) and Theoretical Models of the Impacts of Perceptions of Government Efficacy, Stability and corruption on Trust in Government Institutions in North Africa and the Levant[2]
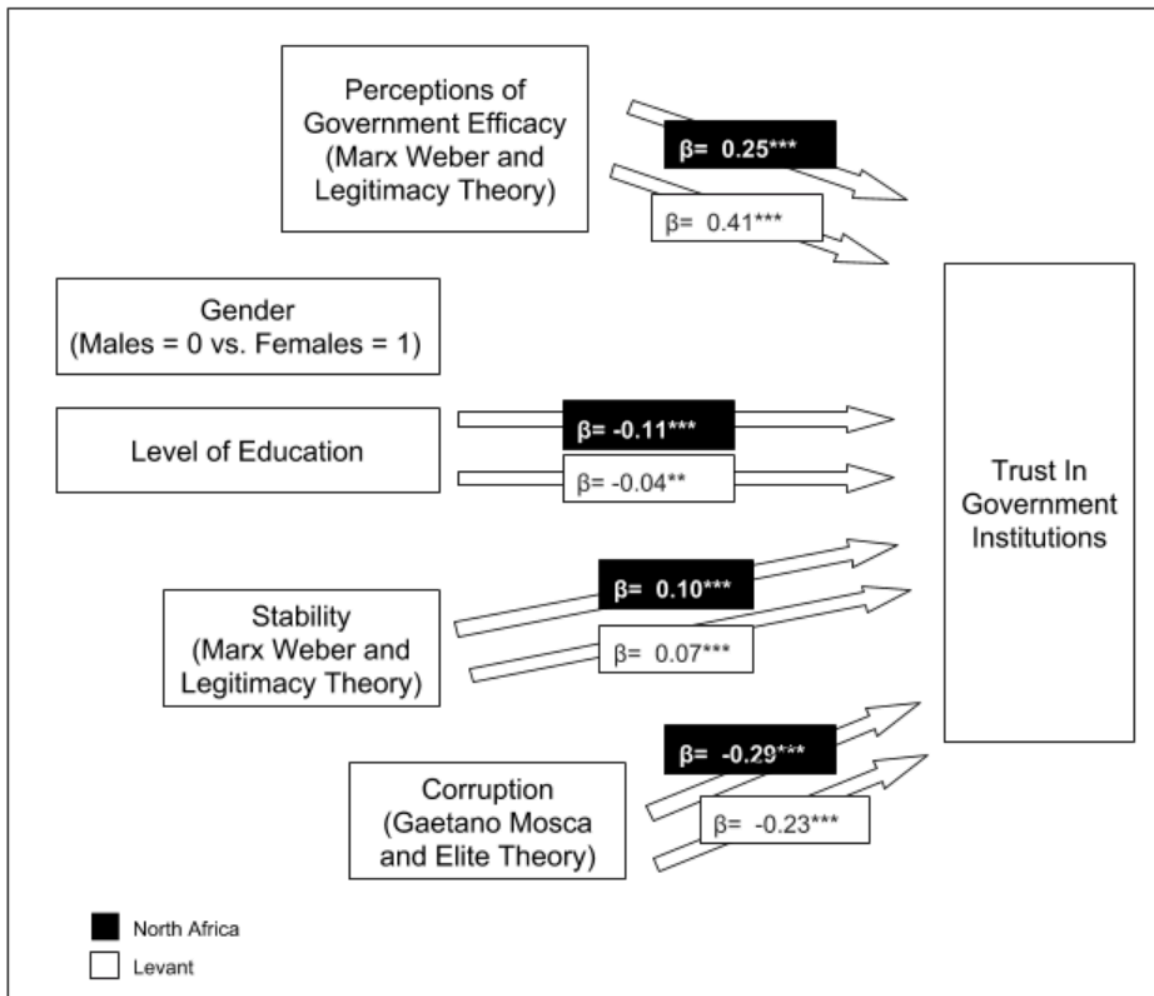
[1] Refer to Table 3 for index coding

[2] Data source: Arab Barometer: Public Opinion Survey Conducted in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia, 2016; [***] $p <= .001$.

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Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Despite the valuable insights presented in this research there is much left to be uncovered about citizen trust in government institutions in the Middle East. The fact that the adjusted R^2 in North Africa was only 0.24[***] and the Levantine R^2 was 0.38[***] indicated that there is more to the citizen-government dynamics than citizen perceptions of government efficacy, stability, and corruption.

Further research on civil participation in politics of the region will be valuable. In the Executive Director's (Interviewee #2) perspective, citizens expect solutions to social problems to come from the government, as opposed to a collaboration between citizens, NGO's and the government. The prevailing ethos in the Middle East is that because the leader or government agency was elected, the responsibility lies completely with them, without acknowledging the citizens' role in the challenges they face. For example, 150,000 children of Syrian refugees have entered Lebanon in the recent years, exerting extra pressure on the public schools. A proactive citizenry and support for these schools could enhance the efficiency of existing governmental institutions. A bottom up approach, through civil empowerment to participate and change the politics in favor of citizens, will create a ripple effect, said the Professor (Interview #1).

The ethnocentric and secretariat conflicts that persist in the Middle East is another issue that deserves more scholarly attention. According to the Professor, religion is manipulated and used by government officials to maintain their position of power. Besides, specific ethnic and religious minorities are discriminated against and are kept out of political power or autonomy. Ethno-sectarian conflicts are more visible in the Levantine region, especially in Iran, Syria, Turkey, and Lebanon. Based on the turmoil of the last decade, and the growing insurgency and terrorist groups, such as ISIS, their effects on corroding trust in governments in the Levant and North Africa need scholarly attention.

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Demographic Controls: Gender and Level Of Education
Arab Barometer: Public Opinion Survey Conducted in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia, 2016[1]

Concepts	Indicators	Responses	Statistics	
			North Africa	Levant
Gender	Male or Female	(0) Male	50.1%	49.7%
		(1) Female	49.9	50.3
Education	Level of Education[1]	Mean (sd)	3.42 (1.67)	3.70 (1.31)[***]
		Min-Max	1-7	1-7
		(n)	(4787)	(4200)

[1] <u>Level of Education</u>: (1) Illiterate/No formal education - (7) MA and above.

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Appendix B: Table 2. Correlation (r)
Arab Barometer: Public Opinion Survey Conducted in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia, 2016 [1,2]

	Trust In Government	Perceptions of Government Efficacy	Stability	Corruption	Level of Education	Gender
Trust In Government	1	0.589*** (n=3201)	0.358*** (n=3350)	-0.479*** (n=3187)	-0.075*** (n=3405)	0.049** (n=3405)
Perceptions of Government Efficacy	0.471** (n=3741)	1	0.495*** (n=3293)	-0.545*** (n=3117)	-0.060*** (n=3350)	0.050** (n=3350)
Stability	0.305*** (n=4127)	0.413*** (n=3944)	1	-0.319*** (n=3284)	-0.019 (n=3536)	-0.063*** (n=3536)
Corruption	-0.473*** (n=3959)	-0.535** (n=3802)	-0.310 *** (n=4191)	1	0.004 (n=3334)	-0.060** (n=3334)
Level of Education	-0.152*** (n=4266)	-0.052** (n=4065)	0.052*** (n=4573)	0.113*** (n=4360)	1	-0.012** (n=4200)
Gender	0.063*** (n=4277)	0.067*** (n=4076)	-0.024 (n=4586)	-0.099*** (n=4586)	-0.164*** (n=4586)	1

[1] Correlation below the diagonal of 1 is North Africa, while the correlation above is the Levant

[2] Index of Trust in Government: ReversedQ2011 + RevesexQ2012 + ReversedQ2013 + ReversedQ2016; range 4-16;
Index of Perceptions of Government Efficacy: ReversedQ2041 + ReversedQ2042 + ReversedQ20421 + ReversedQ2043 + ReversedQ2043; range 5-20;
Index of Stability: ReversedQ101 + ReversedQ101A + ReversedQ102B +Reversed Q105 + Q1072 + Q1074; range 6-25;
Index of Corruption: ReversedQ210 + ReversedQ211 + ReversedQ213; range 4-12
Level of Education: (1) Illiterate/No formal education - (7) MA and above
Gender: (0) Male - (1) Female.
*** $p <= .001$.

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