Religion, Conflict, and Regimes: A Two-Branch Model of Non-Democracy[1]

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Introduction

Despite the predictions of traditional modernization theory, the 21st century has not seen the collapse of religion on a global scale (Norris and Inglehart 2004; Inglehart and Welzel 2005). The continued importance of religion in social and political life has affected political variables in a variety of ways, both positive and negative. However, many observers argue that the salience of religion has sustained conflict in India, Northern Ireland, Iraq, and elsewhere. The consequences of this type of conflict are manifold: religious conflict destroys lives, shatters economies, and destabilizes regimes. The persistence of religious conflict necessitates analysis of its causes, features, and consequences. This project focuses on one dimension of religious conflict in particular – its impact on democracy. Specifically, this project addresses how religious differences (both in terms of piety and religious diversity in a given country) translate into regime outcomes. It analyzes two mechanisms by which salient religious divisions lead to non-democracy; first, by legitimizing authoritarian regimes, and second, by unsettling democratic arrangements.

This project uses a "nested design" (Lieberman 2005) to analyze the effect of salient religious divisions on regime type, combining large-N quantitative analysis with a pair of qualitative case studies in order to identify relationships among the relevant variables and to trace the processes by which these variables are translated into political outcomes. The organization of this study can be described in the following way: first, it will provide theoretical foundations for the impact of religion (broadly considered) on democracy. Second, it will test a handful of hypotheses relevant to this discussion in a large-N setting. Finally, it will engage in intensive testing through qualitative case studies in two countries, Lebanon and Yemen, in order

to trace the processes by which the presence of salient religious divisions both undermines existing democracies and prevents further democratization.

Theoretical Foundations: Consociational Democracy

Arend Lijphart's seminal work *Democracy in Plural Societies* (1977) addresses a key issue in the study of regimes: how can a democratic regime overcome strong, salient social divisions? Since the publication of this work, scholars have debated which types of divisions are most dangerous to democracy, when they will disrupt a democratic equilibrium, and what types of institutional arrangements can help to maintain democracy (see Yashar 1998 for a discussion of the importance of institutional engineering in divided democracies). The challenges posed by social divisions are numerous; democracies with majority-rule tendencies can often turn institutional competition into zero-sum games, and some scholars argue that conflict is an inevitable feature of multicultural democracy (Kohli 1997). Although there is great debate over whether or not social divisions impede democracy (Fish and Brooks 2004), it is important to consider what types of divisions might endanger democracy. This project undertakes a particular branch of this discussion. It argues that religious identities can, under certain circumstances, present especially strong dangers to democratic transition and consolidation. As a source of conflict, religious pluralism can make both democratization and democratic consolidation difficult.

Religion as a Unique Identity

Most studies of identity, conflict, and democracy focus on non-religious identities as a source of divisions (Horowitz 1985; Fearon and Laitin 2003; Reynal-Querol 2002). On the contrary, this project assumes that religion requires special study as a potential source of conflict and, by extension, a potential determinant of regime type. Although much ink has been spilled

over the implications of *ethnic* heterogeneity for war, civil strife, and regime type, relatively few analyses have paid adequate attention to *religion* as a separate—and potentially important—source of identity. This study aims to redress this oversight of the literature.

Why might religion play a unique role in influencing conflict and regime change? There are several theoretical reasons to consider the possibility that religious identities might impact war and regime types differently from any other type of social identity. First, religion is, in many ways, non-negotiable. Religious affiliations usually promote certain sets of values and expectations among all believers. In this sense, political competition based on religion is not simply about resources. It is much easier to find an equitable distribution of a country's resources (oil, diamonds, cabinet positions, etc.) than it is to mediate competing ethical and spiritual views.

Second, religion often raises the stakes of political competition: in contrast to ethnic identities, religion almost invariably forces believers to consider factors beyond this world. An individual's desire to go to heaven is likely to influence his/her political behavior much more strongly than his/her ethnic or linguistic identity. Consequently, religious beliefs often make compromise less feasible, therefore complicating the process of regime formation.

Third, religion can often serve individual needs more effectively than other types of identity. As Seul (1999: 559) writes, "While membership in any group has the potential to support the development of one's 'public self', religious groups often are better equipped to address the identity needs of the 'private self.'" Although ethnic affiliations provide identity with respect to a group, religious identities impact self-perception and internal identity. Thus, religion is uniquely equipped to shape individual values as well as community identity. In this sense, religion plays a more nuanced role in influencing an individual's worldview. Thus, there

is reason to suspect that religious identities might demonstrate a particularly strong impact on political variables.

For example, it is useful to consider some of Lijphart's (1977) prescriptions for managing democracy in plural societies. Two of Lijphart's features of consociational democracy might apply differently in cases of religious division as compared to cases of ethnic division. He argues for the use of mutual veto and "a high degree of autonomy" for each group in society (Lijphart 1977: 25). For ethnic groups, such arrangements might be feasible – the polity is decentralized as much as possible, allowing competing groups to adopt a live-and-let-live policy. In this sense, different groups can coexist as long as they do not overlap.

In the case of religion, however, such an arrangement might not be acceptable to any of the groups involved. Although ethnic groups do not recruit members, most major religious groups encourage members to proselytize. It is possible, then, that the most religious members of a given society will settle for nothing less than a homogenously pious state under which religion and government are united and all citizens are also believers. A less extreme example might involve religious beliefs on particular issues. For instance, suppose that a Catholic segment of a certain country steadfastly opposes the legalization of abortion, and would refuse to be a part of any political compromise that would allow for abortion to be legal in any part of the country, even in other autonomous regions. Under these circumstances, the likelihood of agreement is slim, and any "mutual veto" policy would create stalemate. When issues are non-negotiable, compromise is highly unlikely. It is reasonable to suspect that these circumstances are more likely to arise when a country is divided along religious lines (if the population is, on average, relatively pious) than when its divisions are primarily ethnic, linguistic, or racial in nature.

Moreover, it is important to remember that states rarely separate religion and state completely. Fox (2008) notes that separation of religion and state is not as common as those in the West frequently assume it to be, even in democratic countries. Consequently, it is difficult to picture a consociational arrangement in a highly religious (and divided) country that truly favors no religion over any others. Presumably, the state would need to favor each major religion equally, or remain entirely uninvolved in religion. Once again, this requirement creates unstable equilibrium conditions; changes in the state's policies towards one group or another (whether real or perceived) can significantly destabilize the consociational arrangement. Although such a possibility is present in ethnically-based consociational systems, it is likely easier to separate ethnicity from politics than it is to separate religion from politics. Because religion is professed rather than ascribed—and because it inevitably influences individual values in a direct and concrete way—its role in politics is perhaps less negotiable than the role of ethnic identities.

Thus, there is theoretical reason to suspect that religion poses unique challenges to democracy that are not necessarily remedied by traditional consociational arrangements. While most of Lijphart's (1977) cases are industrialized Western, postindustrial, and secular countries, many other countries are likely to face additional challenges in overcoming sectarian differences. In countries where political and economic resources are scarce, religious identities are powerful and salient, and high levels of mutual trust do not exist, social divisions are likely to pose a threat to stability and to reduce the likelihood of democracy. Moreover, the salience of religion seems to matter. Svensson (2007) finds that civil wars in which one or both sides make explicit religious demands are much less likely to be settled through negotiations. As a motivator of conflict, religion therefore seems especially powerful, suggesting a potentially strong impact on

regime type as well. This project presents a two-branched model of religion, conflict, and democracy:

1) In an authoritarian setting, the *potential* for conflict can pose enough of a threat to legitimize undemocratic rule by making democratization appear dangerous.

2) In a democratic setting, the *presence* of conflict can disrupt an equilibrium arrangement. This disruption can even result from fairly minor changes in the system.

These hypotheses therefore suggest that the presence of salient religious divisions in a given country can reduce the likelihood of democracy in two distinct ways: first, these divisions can serve as a source of legitimacy for an authoritarian regime, and second, these divisions can make management of consociational democracy much more difficult to maintain.

Case #1 can be depicted in the following way:

1) *Non-democracy + Salient divisions → Potential conflict → Maintenance of non-democracy*

An iconic case for this path is Yemen, to be discussed below.

For case #2, the process can be depicted as follows:

2) *Democracy + Salient divisions → Conflict → Breakdown of democracy*

An iconic case for this path is the breakdown of Lebanon's consociational democracy around 1975.

Plan of the Project

The remainder of this study will proceed as follows: first, it will survey the existing literature on social divisions, conflict, and democracy, addressing the various explanations for how societal divisions can endanger democracy. It will then evaluate the applicability of previous research to the particularities of *religious* identity. Second, it will formulate and test a series of hypotheses regarding the relationship between religion and democracy in a large-N setting. Third, it will engage in process-tracing through qualitative case studies of Lebanon and

Yemen, two cases that demonstrate the different branches of the theory. Finally, it will evaluate the implications of this model for future research and policymaking.

Religion and Democracy

Early studies of the relationship between religion and democracy saw piety as a boon for democratic government. Alexis de Tocqueville's (2004) influential study of democracy in the United States points to America's religiosity as a reason for the success of its democracy. Later, Weber (1985) suggested that Protestant values laid the foundation for the success of democracy in some countries. Each of these classic works assumes that religion underwrites a certain set of values that create better democrats, thus allowing democracy to function and even thrive in settings where the population is pious.

Recently, however, scholars of democracy have become much more skeptical of the role of religion in determining regime type. Although religion is frequently overlooked in comparative politics (Bellin 2008; Gill 2001), those who pay attention to the impact of religion on democracy tend to suggest a trend that is in stark contrast to the pattern observed by de Tocqueville and Weber. Modernization theory suggests that economic development triggers value changes that make democracy possible (Inglehart and Welzel 2005). These theories suggest that democracy is positively associated with shifts towards more "modern" values, in contrast to those values that are generally associated with religious individuals (Lerner 1958; Deutsch 1963; Pye and Verba 1963; Inkeles and Smith 1974). Thus, modernization theory implies that, in general, religiosity will be negatively associated with democracy.[2]

[2] Recently, supporters of modernization theory have begun to shift away from secularization hypotheses. For instance, Inglehart and Welzel (2005: 285) suggest that secularization is not necessarily associated with democracy in the way that traditional modernization theory suggests. Thus, it is only "classical" modernization theory that assumes a direct link between secularization and democratization.

Large-N Analysis

Unfortunately, the traditional tendency to de-emphasize the role of religion in comparative politics has persisted in recent years (Bellin 2008; Gill 2001). This pattern is especially strong in the study of democracy, where most analyses of religion have focused on particular religions or countries. The starting point of this project is the assumption that religion, as a potential explanatory variable, warrants inclusion in the study of democracy. This portion of the study will use quantitative methods to test a handful of hypotheses pertaining to the relationship between religion and democracy. In doing so, it will draw out relationships that will later be tested intensively through case study analysis.

Hypotheses

First, it is important to consider what hypotheses are suggested by the democracy literature, and how they might be tested in a large-N setting. This study surveys a variety of hypotheses of different levels of plausibility, and does not expect all of them to be confirmed by the analysis. It is important to disentangle the different concepts embedded in the notion of "religion." The quantitative portion of this project uses three religion variables: first, a composite religiosity variable (henceforth, "religiosity") derived from country mean scores in World Values Survey data (see Appendix 1 for an explanation of the sources of this variable); second, a combined measure of integration of religion and state[3] (henceforth, "IRAS"), provided by Fox (2008); and finally, a measure of religious fractionalization (henceforth, "RelFrac") provided by Alesina et al. (2003).[4] These variables, along with variables related to specific

[3] The religion and state variable used in this study measures integration of religion and state, so higher scores reflect a closer relationship between religion and state. This measure, provided by Fox (2008), is a composite measure derived from several dozen individual variables related to IRAS.

religious traditions (particularly, Islam), will be used to test the relationship between religion and democracy.

H1: Religiosity has a direct, negative, and significant impact on democracy. This simple hypothesis suggests that there is something about religiosity that makes democracy less likely. It is conceivable, for example, that religion might underwrite certain values that could clash with democratic values (obedience, superstition, etc.).[5] Alternatively, religious leaders might use the salience of religious identity as a means to an instrumental political end. In such a scenario, religion might be used to promote an authoritarian agenda, or to ignite conflict with other groups. This hypothesis is unlikely to pass empirical testing – it is fairly clear that religious countries are often able to establish and sustain democracy.

H2: Separation of Religion and State (SRAS) has a direct, consistent, and positive effect on democracy. This claim, disputed by scholars such as Fox (2008) and modified by others (Philpott 2007), suggests that the integration of religious and political authority will tend to inhibit democracy. Because most religions have non-democratic structures, supporters of this hypothesis argue, integration of religion and state will have spillover effects into political institutions; that is, political institutions will tend to mirror the non-democratic tendencies of religious institutions. The merging of divine power with political power, this hypothesis suggests, leaves no room for democratic "rules of the game." Because religious authority is, almost without exception, non-democratic authority, countries with high levels of integration of

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[4] This measure is computed as one minus the Herfindahl Index of religious group shares, reflecting the probability that two individuals selected at random will belong to different religious groups. The formula for this measure is as follows (where s_{ij} is the share of group i in country j) :

$$Frac_j = 1 - \sum_{i=1}^{N} s_{ij}^2$$

[5] Classical modernization theory implies that traditional religious values are likely to be abandoned along the path to democratization; thus, more democratic countries will tend to exhibit lower average levels of religiosity.

religion and state will tend to be undemocratic. This hypothesis is plausible; although complete SRAS is not a necessary feature of democratic government, it is reasonable to suspect that countries with higher levels of SRAS will tend to be more democratic.

H3: Religiosity negatively impacts democracy when it is coupled with integration of religion and state. This hypothesis holds that it is not religiosity or IRAS on its own that inhibits democracy, but rather the conjunction of both of these phenomena. In this sense, religion will only damage democracy if it both maintains a strong ideological hold on the population and becomes embedded in the country's political institutions. Thus, higher values of religiosity will be associated with a stronger negative impact of IRAS on democracy, and vice versa; the presence of one variable increases the impact of the other. For testing purposes, this phenomenon can be measured by an interaction of religiosity and IRAS – a multiplicative term, Religiosity * IRAS. This hypothesis is somewhat plausible, but it is more likely that SRAS on its own will impact levels of democracy; regardless of the level of religiosity in a country, SRAS will tend to make democracy more manageable.

H4: Religiosity has a negative effect on democracy at higher levels of religious fractionalization; that is, religiosity's negative impact on democracy is due to its presence as a source of conflict. This hypothesis suggests that religion damages democratic prospects only if the country is divided along religious lines and religious identities are salient. In this sense, the population must be both religious and religiously plural for either of these factors to yield a negative impact on democracy. The more divided a country is, this hypothesis suggests, the more threatening religiosity will be to its prospects for democracy. This implies that a Religiosity * Religious fractionalization variable would be significant and negative. This hypothesis is reasonable, and it is the primary focus of this study.

H5: Islam inhibits democracy. This hypothesis, advocated by Huntington (1996) and Kedourie (1992), among others, suggests that Islamic countries will be less likely to experience democracy because of perceived authoritarian tendencies in Islam. Others (Fish 2002) argue that the Islamic world has fallen behind in other areas (literacy, women's rights, etc.) that are crucial to democracy. In either case, this hypothesis suggests that something about Islam inhibits democracy. Thus, it implies that in the models presented below, an Islam dummy should demonstrate a significant and negative coefficient. Because this argument takes different forms, it is important to consider the different dimensions of this hypothesis; hypotheses 6 and 7 address this need. It is conceivable that Islamic countries will tend to be less democratic, but any causal explanation of this association requires further analysis.

H6: Islamic piety inhibits democracy. This hypothesis argues that Muslim religious values tend to inhibit democracy. In this sense, Islam simply makes for "bad democrats," and the political culture present in the Muslim world prevents meaningful democratization. If true, this hypothesis would suggest that a Muslim * Religiosity variable would have a significant and negative coefficient in a regression analysis.

However, recent scholarship calls this hypothesis into question. Scholars (Jamal 2006; Jamal and Tessler 2008; Tessler 2002) have found that survey data suggests that Islamic piety has little or no discernable impact on levels of support for democracy, in contrast to common assumptions. Thus, there is reason to suspect that Islam does not make for "bad democrats," and that Muslim countries with higher levels of religiosity might not exhibit lower levels of democracy.

H7: Integration of RAS in Islamic countries is particularly dangerous for democracy. This branch of H5 suggests that it is IRAS, not religiosity, that damages the

prospects for democracy in the Muslim world. It argues that Islam's involvement in politics, not its ideological grip on the population, makes democracy less likely. In this case, a Muslim * IRAS interaction would be significant and negative. This hypothesis is perhaps more feasible than H6 – high IRAS has played an important historical role in preventing democratization in many Muslim countries (Huntington 1996).

Large-N testing allows for these hypotheses to be tested simultaneously in a cross-national sample. This section uses OLS regression analysis to test these hypotheses. The purpose of this testing is to identify relationships between the proposed explanatory variables and the outcome of interest, democracy. The analysis is limited by the availability of World Values Survey data – consequently, only around 70 countries are able to be included in the analysis, and the lack of time-series survey data makes longitudinal analysis impractical. Consequently, the dependent variable of interest must become *levels of democracy* rather than transitions to democracy or democratic breakdowns. Nonetheless, this analysis will be useful for identifying the relationships between religious variables and levels of democracy. The findings of this analysis will then be used as a basis for process-tracing in the qualitative section of this study.

Quantitative studies of democracy have identified a plethora of potential explanations of varying levels of democracy. This analysis uses a number of commonly-used control variables in order to isolate the effect of religious variables on democracy scores. Specifically, it includes a measure of income (logged per capita GDP), which has been established in the democracy literature as perhaps the main correlate of democracy. It also includes a measure of ethnic fractionalization to control for varying levels of diversity that are unrelated to religion[6], and a

[6] Religious fractionalization and ethnic fractionalization are not significantly correlated (simple correlation: 0.224). It appears that religious and ethnic divisions, as measured by Alesina et al. (2003), are distinct from one another.

measure of conflict to control for intra-state conflict, which can potentially destabilize regimes. Finally, following Stepan and Robertson (2003), it includes a Middle East dummy variable to capture any potential regional effect of the Middle East that is separate from the Muslim effect.

Results

This section will present and discuss the findings of the OLS regressions performed in order to test each of the above hypotheses.[7] The data used in this section are cross-sectional; although time-series data would be ideal, the availability of World Values Survey data limits the number of observations for which religiosity values are available and renders time-series analysis impractical.

Hypothesis 1 suggests that religiosity has a direct and unambiguous negative effect on levels of democracy. A superficial glance at a simple bivariate relationship between these two variables would lend some support to this expectation. Table 1-1 presents the results of a bivariate regression of democracy scores on religiosity. As a robustness check, two typical democracy scores were used (Freedom House and Polity). The results of these regressions suggest that when no control variables are included in the analysis, there appears to be a significant and negative relationship between average level of religiosity and democracy.

Table 1-1: Bivariate Regression Results, Religiosity and Democracy

	(1) Freedom House	(2) Polity
Religiosity	-1.535*** (0.363)	-3.829*** (1.253)
Constant	6.196*** (0.511)	10.77*** (1.767)
Observations	75	71
Adjusted R^2	0.185	0.106

Standard errors in parentheses
* p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01

[7] See Appendix 2 for the list of countries included in the sample.

However, the true relationship between these variables appears to be a bit more complicated than this simple bivariate test might suggest. Table 1-2 presents the results of OLS regressions involving several religion variables (including relevant interactions) and a handful of controls that hold potential explanatory power in the study of democracy. Once again, a second model in which Polity scores serve as the dependent variable is added to the base model as a robustness check. These results serve as a basic quantitative test of the hypotheses listed above.

It is evident that the relationship between religiosity (or piety) and democracy is somewhat more complex than the bivariate test indicates. Indeed, when the other variables are included in the model, the coefficient for religiosity fails to reach significance, and is actually mildly *positive* in both the Freedom House and Polity models. These results challenge Hypothesis 1; there does not appear to be a clear and direct relationship between religiosity and regime type in either direction, and religiosity per se is not necessarily associated with more authoritarian regime outcomes.

Table 1-2: Bivariate Regression Results, Religion and Democracy

	(1) Freedom House	(2) Polity
Log Per Capita GDP	1.280***	4.106***
	(0.220)	(0.867)
Religiosity	0.0800	1.317
	(0.589)	(2.311)
Integration of Religion and State (IRAS)	-0.064***	-0.200**
	(0.024)	(0.089)
Religiosity * IRAS	0.030	0.114
	(0.0196)	(0.0770)
Religious Fractionalization	0.900	4.117
	(1.055)	(3.979)
Muslim Dummy * Religiosity	3.232***	11.370***
	(0.666)	(4.251)
Muslim Dummy	-4.490***	-12.290*
	(0.944)	(6.923)
Middle East Dummy	-0.426	0.678
	(0.470)	(3.801)
Ethnic Fractionalization	0.216	2.562
	(0.498)	(2.516)
Weighted Conflict Index	-1.32	-0.071
	(0.961)	(2.900)
Religiosity * Religious Fractionalization	-1.817**	-7.991**
	(0.873)	(3.739)
Muslim Dummy * IRAS	-0.069***	-0.353***
	(0.021)	(0.097)
Constant	1.146	-6.238
	(1.395)	(5.291)
Observations	73	69
Adjusted R^2	0.793	0.651

Robust standard errors in parentheses
* p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01

Hypothesis 2 finds considerably more support than does H1. Although scholars (Fox 2008; Barro and McCleary 2005) have suggested that separation of religion and state is not as common in democracies as it is commonly believed to be, these results suggest that countries with higher levels of separation of religion and state (SRAS) tend to be more democratic. Both the Freedom House and Polity models yield a significant coefficient for the RAS variable. The variable included in the analysis measures the inverse of SRAS, integration of religion and state (IRAS); thus, a negative coefficient indicates a positive association between SRAS and democracy. Importantly, however, this analysis cannot solve the endogeneity problem inherent in the relationship between regime type and SRAS (Barro and McCleary 2005). It is evident that countries with higher SRAS tend to be more democratic than others, but these results alone cannot determine which way the causal arrow points.

Hypothesis 3, which states that religiosity only threatens democracy insofar as it creates institutional integration of religion and state, finds little support in these results. Because this is an interactive hypothesis, the analysis includes a multiplicative term, Relig * RAS. If this hypothesis were accurate, this term would be expected to yield a significant and negative coefficient; as IRAS increases, the impact of religiosity becomes more strongly negative, and vice versa. Table 1-2 suggests, however, that the coefficient for this variable is slightly positive in both models, and fails to reach conventional levels of significance.

Hypothesis 4, another interactive hypothesis, finds support in both the FH and Polity models. The Rel * Frac coefficient is negative and significant at the 0.05 level in both models, while the component variables of this interaction fail to reach significance on their own. This result suggests that a conditioning effect is present – neither religiosity nor religious fractionalization on its own is especially dangerous for democracy, but the combination of the

two presents serious obstacles to democratic government. At higher levels of fractionalization, religiosity begins to exhibit a negative effect on democracy, and vice versa. This finding will be discussed in greater detail shortly.

Hypothesis 5 suggests that Islam, in one way or another, presents an obstacle to democracy. The findings presented in Table 1-2 are consistent with this claim, though the Muslim indicator variable only reaches significance at the 0.10 level in the Polity model. There is preliminary evidence, it seems, that other things being equal, Muslim countries tend to be less democratic than others.

Hypotheses 6 and 7 address this issue with more nuance. By including interactions of the Muslim dummy and either religiosity or RAS, this analysis is able to parse out the effects of the different components of religion in the Muslim context. The results suggested by this analysis are perhaps surprising. Observers who are skeptical of Muslim political values will be surprised to see that religiosity appears to have a strong and highly significant *positive* effect on democracy. In this sense, more religious Muslim countries tend to be more democratic than others, ceteris paribus. On the other hand, the Muslim * RAS variable shows a *negative* and highly significant coefficient. This finding suggests that it is not piety that causes Muslim countries to be less democratic than others, but rather the presence of Islam in the state. This curious finding will be elaborated upon in the qualitative portion of this study.

The coefficients attached to the control variables lend some insight into the causes of democracy controlling for religious variables. Unsurprisingly, income (log per capita GDP) is robustly and significantly associated with higher levels of democracy. Perhaps surprisingly, ethnic fractionalization does not appear to have an impact on levels of democracy, and the "Middle East" dummy does not yield any significant results. Much of the latter non-result can

be attributed to selection bias; since most Middle Eastern countries are not included in the WVS (and thus in either of these models), the model is unable to capture the entire picture. The effects of Islam and the Middle East as a region will be considered in the qualitative section of this project.

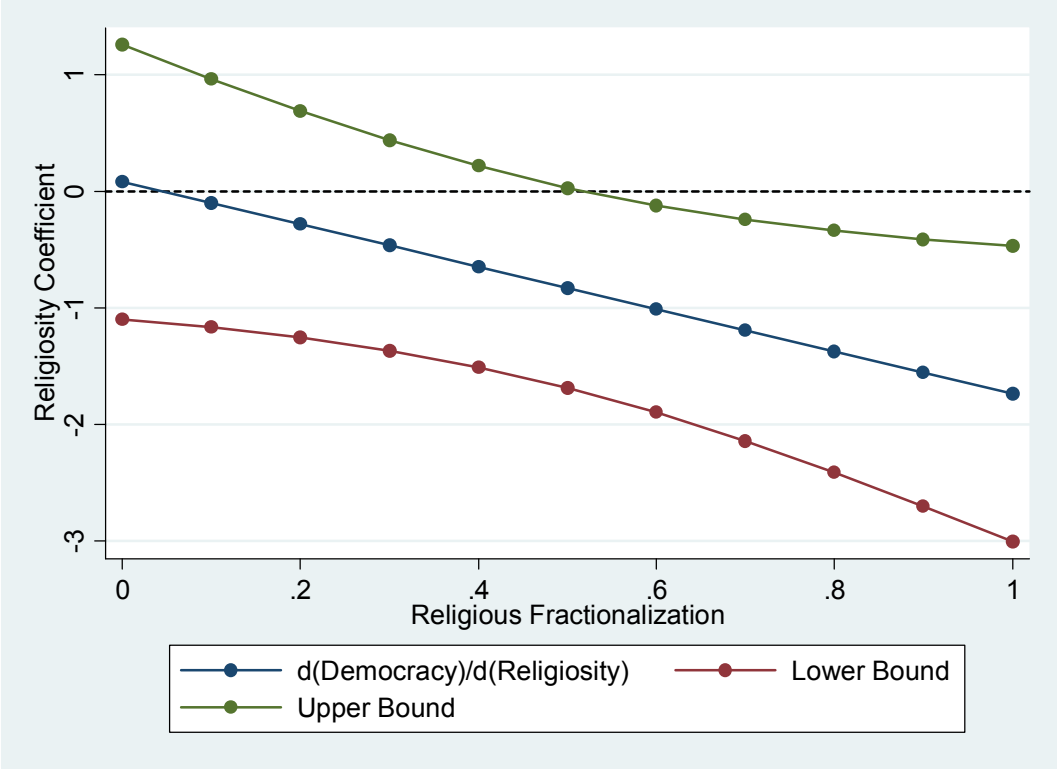
Religion, Conflict, and Democracy

The primary focus of this project is the relationship addressed in Hypothesis 4. This hypothesis posits that religion per se inhibits democracy only insofar as it serves as a source of potential (or actual) conflict. An important specification is necessary: the model presented in this study takes two forms. First, the interaction of religiosity and religious fractionalization in a country can serve to prevent democratization. In this case, an authoritarian regime is able to stave off democratization because of the *threat* of conflict in the country; the salient divisions in the society make democracy appear unmanageable, and therefore legitimize authoritarian rule. Second, the presence of both high levels of religiosity and religious fractionalization can serve to destabilize democracy in a country. In this case, democratic consolidation becomes extremely difficult in the *presence* of conflict. Because salient religious divisions are present, democratic regimes are forced into a fairly difficult position – they must divide scarce political resources among competing groups, and usually lack the repressive apparatus available to most authoritarian regimes. In this sense, a small shift in the equilibrium conditions (demographic changes, an increase in piety, the growth of religious parties, etc.) can cause a democratic breakdown (cf. Widner 2007). Although these two paths are distinct in the model,[8] they lead to the same authoritarian outcome.

[8] Data restrictions render separate quantitative analysis of democratic transition and breakdown unfeasible. For this reason, the statistical model is forced to treat the different potential causes of regime outcomes as identical. Greater availability of data in the future (especially with regard to the spread of the WVS) will hopefully make analysis of the separate branches of this theory possible.

Figure 1-1 illustrates the relationship present in this hypothesis. Following Kam and Franzese (2007), it presents the marginal effect of religiosity at various values of religious fractionalization, controlling for all of the other variables included in the above regressions.[9] The curves above and below the marginal effect curve represent the 95% confidence interval. This figure can be interpreted as follows: in a country with no religious fractionalization (a 0 on the x-axis), the model suggests no significant impact of religiosity on democracy. As the level of religious fractionalization increases, the expected effect of religiosity becomes increasingly negative, reaching significance at the 0.05 level around 0.5 on the fractionalization scale. Thus, at higher levels of religious fractionalization, the religiosity tends to have a strong, significant, and negative impact on democracy that it does not exhibit at lower levels of fractionalization.

Figure 1-1: Marginal Effects of Religiosity



[9] The graph shown in Figure 1-1 uses FH scores as the dependent variable; replacing this score with Polity measures yields substantively similar results.

The regression (and the graph in Figure 1-1) uses Banks' weighted conflict index as a control. At first glance, the failure of this variable to demonstrate a significant impact on democracy might appear to mean that the second half of the above hypothesis is not supported; this branch of the theory suggests that conflict caused by salient religious divisions can contribute to democratic breakdown. However, it is important to consider that the data used for this study are taken only from one year. The model predicts that conflict will cause democratic breakdown, not lower levels of democracy on the whole. Thus, if a country's democracy broke down due to such a conflict in a year other than the one included in this dataset, the regression would reflect the low democracy score but not the breakdown itself. If the conflict ended at some point after the breakdown but before 2002 (the primary year from which these data were drawn), then the results would miss the impact of the conflict completely. This feature of the analysis highlights the need for further data developments allowing more rigorous quantitative testing, but does not undermine the validity of Hypothesis 4.

The results presented in Table 1-2 and Figure 1-1 lend preliminary support to the argument described in Hypothesis 4 – higher levels of the Rel * Frac interaction appear to be associated with lower levels of democracy, even when controlling for relevant control variables, including the component variables. This relationship, however, does not necessarily indicate that the causal process actually operates in the manner described above. In order to evaluate the causal mechanisms at work in the relationship between religion, conflict, and democracy, it is essential to engage in intensive testing of particular cases. For these purposes, this study will now turn to its qualitative section, employing case studies of Lebanon and Yemen.

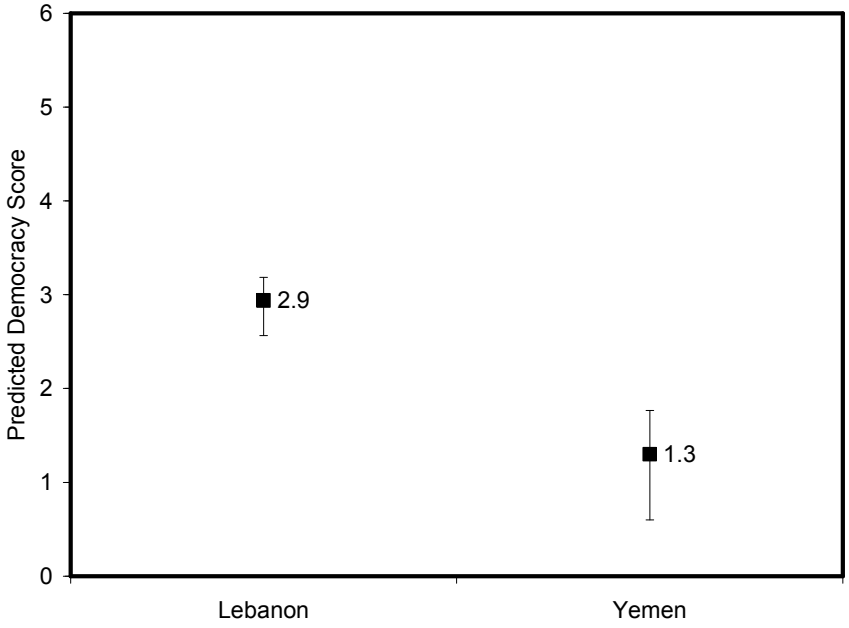
Case Studies

Having established a broad statistical correlation between the presence of salient religious divisions and the absence of democracy, it is now useful to turn to the qualitative portion of this study. Following Lieberman (2005), the preliminary large-N testing will be supplemented with case studies of two "on the line" cases, Lebanon and Yemen. The selection of these two cases allows for a "true test" of the hypothesis in question, since neither of these countries is included in the sample used in the quantitative analysis presented above.

Because religiosity data is unavailable for these countries, they were not included in the above regressions, but it is feasible to approximate roughly where they might fall on the variables of interest. On the 0-1 scale used to measure religious fractionalization above, Lebanon scores 0.789, near the top of the observed range. Yemen's exceptionally low score of 0.002 is misleading because the variable does not distinguish between Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims, nor between sects within these communities. The salience of these differences varies across countries, but Yemen is an instance in which the Sunni-Shi'ite divide is an important force in politics. Measurement of Yemen's religious fractionalization is further complicated by a lack of reliable data on the balance between Sunnis and Shi'ites in the country. Using one of the more common estimates of this balance (60% Sunni, 40% Shi'ite) yields a religious fractionalization score of 0.480, slightly above the mean of all countries for which this variable is coded. If other divisions were included, such as sects within Sunni and Shi'a Islam as well as other smaller religious minorities in the country, it is likely that this score would become even higher. Thus, there is reason to consider that religious fractionalization is, at the very least, above average in Yemen, and may be quite high.

It is more difficult to approximate religiosity in these countries, since World Values Survey data are not available for them. However, for the purposes of this analysis, it is sufficient to conclude that levels of religiosity are, broadly speaking, "high." Using the data in the above analysis, it is possible to approximate the level of religiosity in Lebanon and Yemen based on their neighbors in the Middle East. Among the 75 countries for which religiosity data are available, 7 are in the Middle East. The mean religiosity score (on a 0-2 scale) for the Middle East is 1.781, compared to 1.256 for countries outside of the region. Indeed, every one of the Middle Eastern countries in the sample was in the top one-third of the religiosity scale. Considering the persistence of religious conflict in both Lebanon and Yemen, it is reasonable to suspect that average levels of religiosity might even be higher in these countries than in their neighbors. At the very least, there is strong reason to believe that levels of religiosity are, on average, quite high in both Lebanon and Yemen.

Figure 2-1: Predicted Freedom House Scores, by Level of Religiosity



Note: Lebanon's score was predicted based on data from 1975 (the year its democracy broke down), except for its RAS score, which was calculated from 1990 (the first available year). Yemen's score was calculated using data from 2002.

Figure 2-1 depicts the predicted Freedom House scores for Lebanon and Yemen based on the model presented above. The middle point for each country represents its predicted democracy score assuming a religiosity score of the mean level of religiosity among Middle Eastern countries, with the error bars representing the predicted democracy levels assuming the highest and lowest levels of religiosity observed in the region. Lebanon's highest predicted democracy score (on a scale of 0-6, with 6 being the most democratic) is 3.2, while Yemen's is 1.8. It is therefore reasonable to label these cases as "on-the-line" cases, since their lack of democracy is predicted well by the model.

The following case studies will attempt to shed light on the processes by which salient religious divisions are translated into non-democratic outcomes in each of these countries, by illustrating each of the two branches of the hypothesis presented above. In Lebanon, it will illustrate how salient religious divisions contribute to political conflict that causes the breakdown of a democratic regime. In Yemen, it will assess the role of salient religious differences in preventing democratization. In both cases, this study will engage in "process tracing" to examine the mechanisms by which the causal variables lead to the outcome of interest, if in fact they do so (George and Bennett 2005: 6-7). Thus, while the large-N testing sought to establish "external validity," applying to a broader population, these case studies will hope to achieve "internal validity" through intensive testing in a pair of cases (Gerring 2007: 43).

Religion and Democratic Breakdown: The Case of Lebanon

In examining the case of Lebanon, it is useful first to consider the institutional makeup of the state and the background of the conflict. Lebanon's institutional configuration prior to 1975 consisted of a system known as "confessionalism," a form of consociational democracy in which political posts and rights are allocated to different groups based on their "confession," or religion

(Phares 1995: 82). The National Pact of 1943 divided the major political positions among Lebanon's main confessions. This pact was based on the results of the 1932 census (the last census to record data about confessions in Lebanon). Table 2-1 presents the proportions of each group as well as the primary political benefits allocated to them by the agreement.

Table 2-1: Confession Demographics and Political Allocations, 1943 National Pact

Confession	**Percent of Population, 1932**	**Political Allocation(s)**
Maronite	28.8%	President
Greek Orthodox	9.7%	Deputy Speaker of Parliament
Greek Catholic	5.9%	
Other Christian	5.6%	
Total Christian	*50.0%*	*6 parliamentary seats per 5 Muslims; control of army*
Sunni Muslim	22.4%	Prime Minister
Shi'ite Muslim	19.6%	President of National Assembly
Druze	6.8%	
Total Muslim	*48.8%*	*5 parliamentary seats per 6 Christians*
Other	1.2%	

Source: Adapted from Johnson (2001: 3).

This arrangement, though fairly successful from Lebanon's independence in 1941 until the outbreak of civil war in 1975, was rigid enough to be a major source of tension amid demographic changes. Lijphart(1977: 149-150) cites the National Pact as an example of a consociational arrangement that managed to hold a divided country together for an extended period of time, even in the face of a lower-scale civil war (in 1958). However, the divisions in the Lebanese polity generally hardened over time. Salamé (1986: 4) observes that although "it is very difficult to distinguish a Druze from a Maronite or a Sunni from a Greek Orthodox in the street…the system has rigidified and has become exceedingly compartmentalized into nearly

non-communicating confessions." Lebanon's religious divisions drew clear lines between citizens, but a spark was required for full-fledged conflict to begin.

The spark occurred on April 13, 1975, when unknown attackers fired upon a church gathering in Ain Rummaneh, a Christian suburb of Beirut (Khalidi 1979: 47). Among the Christians attending this service was Pierre Gemayel, the leader of the Phalangists, the primary Maronite militia. In response to this attack, which left three Christians dead, Maronite militia personnel attacked a bus in another neighborhood, killing 28, mostly Palestinians. This exchange of attacks quickly led to chaos throughout the country, and Christian and Muslim militias issued statements indicating their refusal to cooperate or even communicate with the other groups almost immediately. The war had begun, and would continue, in various forms, for 15 years.

The drawn-out conflict in Lebanon cannot be described as an exclusively religious conflict, nor a class struggle or an instance of political strife. The various layers of cleavages in Lebanese society created a complex and often puzzling environment of conflict (Phares 1995). Although occasional in-fighting within confessions erupted, the lines of the conflict were primarily religious in nature. The conflict would disrupt the everyday happenings of the Lebanese political system, polarize political parties, and lead to a sustained unwillingness to compromise on both sides of the war. The conflict led to an almost instant breakdown of Lebanon's consociational democracy, and indeed to a breakdown of the state apparatus itself (Krayem 2009). The conflict officially ended in 1990 with the Ta'if Agreement, resulting in a re-allocation of parliamentary seats to a 1:1 Christian to Muslim ratio, among other compromises. Social divisions, however, continue to haunt Lebanon, and the country has not seen a return to full democracy since the war.

Triggers and Fuses: The Palestinian Presence and Social Divisions

Although the incidents at Ain Rummaneh represented the "Sarajevo" of the Lebanese Civil War, many observers point to the PLO's "militarization" of Lebanese society as the trigger to the conflict (Johnson 2001: 24). Although the spillover of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict into Lebanon played an important role in sparking the conflict, it is important to consider the underlying social tensions (namely, salient religious divisions) that provided the fuel for the war.

Although the Lebanese Civil War can be described accurately as a combination of several wars being fought simultaneously, it is reasonable to conclude that the primary divisions in Lebanese society are religious in nature (Phares 1995: 4). These divisions are especially relevant to the discussion of the Lebanese state. As Salamé (1986: 8) notes, the Lebanese state was initially established as something of a Christian state in 1941. Consequently, members of other confessions were considered "Arabs" rather than "Lebanese," and had to prove themselves worthy of *becoming* Lebanese. In this sense, Christians (particularly Maronites) monopolized Lebanese nationalism from the earliest days of the state's existence, considering themselves "the founders of the Lebanese state" (Zamir 1999: 111). Of course, this understanding of the Lebanese state does not necessarily preclude the inclusion of Muslims in the political system. However, the words of leaders of Lebanon's major Christian parties reveal an attitude towards Muslims that seems to eliminate any possibility of co-existing with Muslims as equals. The vice president of the Phalange party stated the following in a 1969 interview (Johnson 2001: 153):

> While Christianity in the twentieth century is more spiritual than it was in the middle ages, Islam is today only in the fourteenth century although Lebanese Muslims, less fanatic than their coreligionists in other parts of the Arab world because of their contacts with Christians, are today in the eighteenth century, this in spite of their twentieth century appearances.

That the vice president of the major Christian party in Lebanon during this period would make such a statement about the Muslim community reveals the severe differences between the

confessions in Lebanon. Given this attitude towards the Muslims in Lebanon, it comes as no surprise that Lebanese democracy would break down.

But what caused Lebanon's democracy, which had kept sectarian tensions in check for thirty years, to break down in 1975? It is beyond doubt that a number of different factors led to this breakdown, but one of the most important slow-moving processes that accumulated to cause the breakdown of democracy was a series of demographic changes that rendered the National Pact impractical. The system put into place by the National Pact privileged the Christian community, which had constituted a slim majority at the time of the last census that asked about citizens' confessions. Massive immigration of Christians out of Lebanon, the influx of Palestinian refugees, and higher birth rates for Muslims in Lebanon all contributed to a significant demographic shift in the favor of the Muslim communities, especially the Shi'ites. Although no official figures are available, Hudson (Hudson 1985: 281-282) cites a common estimate of the demographic balance in the early 1970s: roughly 60% Muslim and 40% Christian, with Shi'ites representing the largest individual sect, constituting around 27% of the total population, compared to 26% Sunni and 23% Maronite. This shift towards a Muslim majority in the general population made the National Pact arrangement appear antiquated and unrealistic for the demographic realities of Lebanon in the 1970s.

In light of the demographic changes that Lebanon experienced during the three decades between independence and the 1975 Civil War, it is clear that the social divisions present in Lebanon throughout its history became even more complicated in the days leading up to the conflict. While these divisions provided the gunpowder for the conflict, tensions remained largely under control prior to the spark provided by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and triggered by Ain Rummaneh. Political tensions, however, had been building up even before Ain

Rummaneh. By 1973, President Suleiman Franjieh (a Maronite) had become unable to maintain a government for more than a year at a time, with high-level Sunnis refusing to assume the premiership (Hudson 1985: 283). Moreover, Shi'ite resentments began to grow as a result of Israeli involvement in Shi'ite areas of the countries, triggered by Palestinian guerrilla activity in the country. Recognizing their growing demographic power as well as their subjugation in the traditional Lebanese system, Shi'ites formed a "higher council" in 1969 and began to mobilize at unprecedented levels (Hudson 1985: 283). Thus, while violence was largely contained prior to 1975, Lebanon's heightened social tensions had created political strife and mobilization along religious lines several years prior to Ain Rummaneh.

Although it is difficult to determine what role religion played in this conflict, a wealth of evidence exists that suggests that religious identities and values served as *the* crucial dividing line between groups. In many ways, the struggle for the state can be viewed as a proxy for broader inter-religious conflict in the country. A statement made by the Phalangist Party at the outbreak of the civil war reveals their view of the conflict (as quoted in Barak 2002: 622-623):

> In our view, the underlying causes for this war, its distant–close, absent–present factor, is the violent push-and-pull between two fundamentally opposing positions: that of the Muslims, who are consciously allowed to live only in an Islamic state ruled by Muslim law, whose ruler is Muslim, with its Christians as second-class citizens (and Lebanon, thanks to its composition and its *raison d'□tre*, is not an Islamic state), and that of the Christians, who vehemently object to being second-class citizens.

This statement suggests that although other divisions undoubtedly played an important role in intensifying the conflict, at least some of its major actors considered it to be fundamentally religious in nature. This characteristic of the Lebanese conflict highlights an important feature of religious conflict that is not found in most other forms of ethnic conflict: the belief in competing worldviews as a catalyst for war. This conflict was, at some level, not simply about allocation of political and/or economic resources or

even competing visions of the state. On the contrary, it included a considerable "value dimension" which could not be reconciled easily. In a complicated war with a plethora of dividing lines across groups, religion nonetheless stands out as a powerful motivator of some of the conflict's most violent participants.

The Process of Breakdown

Because there was no coup that brought down Lebanon's democratic regime, it is difficult to identify a particular point in time during which Lebanese democracy can be said to have "broken down." However, it is possible to narrow this timeframe down to a fairly small range. First, it is necessary to identify the factors that can make a country such as Lebanon considered to be a democracy or a non-democracy. For the purposes of this study, it is useful to consider the element of *responsiveness*; as Dahl (1971: 1) writes, "a key characteristic of democracy is the continuing responsiveness of the government to the preferences of its citizens, considered as political equals." We will therefore consider Lebanon's democracy to have broken down when either the government fails to maintain its responsiveness to its citizens or citizens cease to be considered political equals.

Again, these complex issues do not lend themselves to easy identification. However, a few incidents in particular stand out as signals of the death of Lebanese democracy. First, Lebanon failed to hold parliamentary elections between 1972 and the end of the civil war; the Ta'if Agreement followed negotiations among the surviving members of the 1972 parliament (Hudson 1985: 283). Without meaningful elections, it is difficult to argue that Lebanon's government remained democratic following 1976, the year in which the first scheduled elections failed to take place. Thus, in a formal sense, Lebanon's democracy broke down by 1976 at the latest.

At the same time, other developments in the Lebanese political system—many motivated by confessional conflict—pointed to a breakdown of Lebanese democracy *prior* to 1976. Following Ain Rummaneh (in April 1975), the lines of communication between confessions broke down, with the Phalangists withdrawing from the government sponsored by the National Movement, comprised mostly of Muslims (Khalidi 1979: 47). This decision forced the resignation of the government, leading then-president Franjieh to nominate a lower-tier Sunni leader for the premiership, the first in a series of short-lived Prime Ministers who failed to cooperate with the Maronite establishment. With Muslim and Christian leaders disagreeing on whether security or reform should come first, the parties reached a deadlock which eventually led to intensified conflict orchestrated by the more radical elements in each camp. By the end of 1975, Franjieh had lost patience with the Muslim leadership, eventually calling for Syrian intervention (Khalidi 1979: 50). January 1976 saw a major Maronite military offensive and "strong hints of partition and 'federal' formulas" from the Maronite establishment (Khalidi 1979: 51). Thus, if the disappearance of the loyal Muslim opposition in mid-1975 did not signal the breakdown of Lebanese democracy, it is fair to say that the breakdown of the state by early 1976 provided just such a signal.

While Lebanese elites continued to work towards political compromise (to varying effects) throughout the civil war, it is clear that the procedures necessary to maintain a democratic responsiveness to the citizenry were no longer present by early 1976 at the latest. Sectarian violence had created a self-sustaining cycle of hostility which translated into political deadlock and eventually the breakdown of the state. Although the later years of the conflict would witness the dissolution of the classic Christian and Muslim parties into more complex, multifaceted groups, the lines were clearly drawn between confessions prior to 1976. Lacking

effective channels through which to voice their concerns about Lebanon's demographic changes and the influx of Palestinians, citizens began to resort to sectarian violence, beginning with Ain Rummaneh. The tensions created by this violence intensified the emotional aspects of the conflict and precluded lasting political compromise. Ultimately, these developments sparked the breakdown of democracy in Lebanon that coincided with a breakdown of the Lebanese state altogether.

After Ain Rummaneh

Although it is difficult to identify the exact moment when Lebanese democracy broke down, it is useful to consider some of the most important events in defining the breakdown, and to trace the process by which these events developed. Perhaps the most important events in the breakdown of Lebanese democracy occurred during April and May 1975. Following Ain Rummaneh (April 13), clashes erupted between the Phalangists and the Palestinians (as well as pro-Palestinian Lebanese Muslims). After a few days, relative calm returned to Beirut, but the environment remained tense. The Beirut Domestic Service reported that stores, banks, and commercial institutions remained closed on April 17 because of the shootings that persisted despite a quickly-declared ceasefire. On April 16, 3 days after the massacre, the Parliament (or Chamber of Deputies) held a meeting to try to address the conflict, but only 37 out of 99 members were able to reach the chamber because of security concerns. Failing to reach a quorum, the deputies nonetheless held private meetings and round-the-clock negotiations to attempt to settle the issue.

In addition to security concerns preventing MPs from reaching the chamber, Lebanon's elites began to behave increasingly autocratically during this period. Political disputes rapidly became clandestine, with deals being reached only behind closed doors and away from the public

eye. The changes in the political system created divisions within the government, eventually resulting in the resignation of six cabinet ministers simultaneously on May 7th. A week later, Prime Minister Rashid as-Solh submitted the resignation of his government in a move that had been demanded for weeks. For the following week, Franjieh deliberated with leaders of the various parties over the composition of the new cabinet. On May 22, the Beirut Domestic Service reported that political veteran and six-time Prime Minister Rashid Karami "headed the list" of the Prime Ministerial candidates, with wide support from the various Muslim parliamentary blocs (Beirut Domestic Service 1975).

The following day marked an important turning point in Lebanon's political history. In a surprise move, Franjieh declined to nominate Karami for the premiership, instead appointing retired General Nur ad-Din ar-Rifa'i, a prominent member of the military establishment. Within a week, Franjieh and ar-Rifa'i had constructed a cabinet composed of six military officers and only two civilians. Claiming "unanimous" parliamentary support for the new military government, ar-Rifa'i began a security crackdown. Viewing his appointment as a mandate to re-establish security at all costs, ar-Rifa'i was quoted as saying "the main task of this government is to consolidate security and stability in the country." His appointment heightened tensions in the capital, forcing the military to establish blockades in various parts of the city, and providing additional fuel for ar-Rifa'i's security crackdown.

It is important to consider, however, that the "unanimous" request of the deputies for a military government did not exist outside of ar-Rifa'i's rhetoric. The day after the announcement of the new government's formation, Kamil al-Asad, the speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, announced his rejection of the military government. The same day, many of Lebanon's prominent Muslim religious and political leaders met to discuss the new government,

ultimately deciding to ask ar-Rifa'i to resign. Indeed, by 1975, few segments of Lebanese society were willing to trust the military with any meaningful political role. Khalidi (1979: 67) notes that "even the Christian-dominated high command accepted its political unreliability and cautioned against its use in a security role." The appointment of ar-Rifa'i, it seems, was not based on "unanimous" consent, but rather on political expediency from the perspective of the Maronite elite. Although roughly half of the top military posts were occupied by Muslims, 65% of the officer class was Christian, and the military establishment was widely seen as a Christian institution (Khalidi 1979: 67).

Although ar-Rifa'i's military government only survived for a few weeks (and was replaced by a government led by Karami), it represented an important turning point in the rules of the game for Lebanon's political elite. Franjieh's appointment of ar-Rifa'i demonstrated a willingness to ignore the preferences of the loyal as well as the disloyal opposition, and perhaps even more important, a shift from responsiveness to a single-minded focus on security. During the negotiations, hostilities flared up considerably. The Karami government excluded the leaders of several key parties because of their refusal to participate in a government involving members of the other groups. Moreover, much blood was shed in Beirut and elsewhere while the politicians debated the composition of the next government. Such instability—and such bloodshed—were characteristic of the Lebanese political experience for years to come.

Although the removal of the ar-Rifa'i government and the subsequent return to power for Karami can perhaps be seen as a "reequilibration" of democracy (Linz 1978), it is important to consider the shift in focus that these events reflect. Following the appointment of ar-Rifa'i's government, Lebanese elites became both less responsive to the electorate as a whole and less willing to cooperate with one another. While it is perhaps reasonable to consider Karami's

government to be an indication of a move back towards democracy, Lebanon never fully recovered from the appointment of its short-lived military government. It is beyond doubt that Lebanese democracy failed to live past 1976, when cabinets were being formed by deputies whose terms were supposed to have run out, but the breakdown of Lebanese democracy—and the Lebanese state in general—likely occurred well before these terms expired. The events of April and May 1975, and particularly the appointment of ar-Rifa'i's military-dominated government, represent a significant shift in the rules of the political game that were likely emblematic of a democratic breakdown.

Karami's reinstatement was expected to bring about a democratic reequilibration and the return of law and order in the capital. As Hudson (1985: 284) notes, however, Karami's June 1975 cabinet was unable to deal with the opposition groups within the government or the violence occurring on the streets. Within three months of the formation of Karami's government, violence had reached a new high, and the total dissolution of the Lebanese state was soon to follow (Winslow 1996: 180). With the state unable to provide social services and businesses too afraid to conduct their daily affairs, Lebanon saw the emergence of a "black economy" that may have employed up to 100,000 Lebanese citizens (Kliot 1986). Moreover, in 1975-1976, the Lebanese army "completely disintegrated along confessional lines and the soldiers trained their respective sectarian militias" (Kliot 1986). The deterioration of the security environment in Lebanon led the government to invite Syrian intervention in February 1976, resulting in the surrender of a considerable portion of Lebanon's sovereignty. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that whether or not the appointment of ar-Rifa'i's military government can be viewed as a democratic breakdown, the Lebanese state as a whole broke down as a result of the sectarian violence that reached new heights during September and October 1975.

It is evident, therefore, that the breakdown of Lebanon's democracy can be traced back to the religious tensions present in the country and exacerbated by a number of political and international factors. Changes in the country's demographic composition as well as interference from several foreign actors provided the fuse—but not the fuel—for the civil war that ultimately led to the breakdown of the state apparatus. While it is difficult to determine with certainty which moment in Lebanon's history represents a breakdown of democracy, the events of mid-to-late 1975 serve as an important reference point. Following ar-Rifa'i's appointment, the political rules of the game shifted considerably, focusing on security rather than representation. This shift in turn actually heightened tensions, and the increased violence throughout the country led to the dissolution of the military and most major political and economic institutions. The dissolution of Lebanon's democracy (and its state, in a larger sense) was made more or less official by Syrian intervention in early 1976, but the process had begun in earnest months earlier. The important events in Lebanon's political history that can be used to identify the timeframe of its democratic breakdown can be traced back to religious divisions that have plagued the country since independence.

Religious Divisions and Authoritarian Survival: The Case of Yemen

> My country is handed over from one tyrant to the next,
> a worse tyrant; from one prison to another,
> from one exile to another.
> It is colonised by the observed
> invader and the hidden one;
> handed over by one beast to two
> like an emaciated camel.
>
> -Yemeni Poet Abdullah al-Baradouni, "From Exile to Exile"

This project's second case study addresses the second branch of the hypothesis suggested above. It illustrates how, in countries where salient religious divisions are present, authoritarian regimes will tend to survive. This phenomenon can take a variety of forms, but the primary

mechanism by which such regimes remain in power in the presence of salient religious divisions is by heightening sectarian tensions and/or using these tensions to legitimate authoritarian means of rule. By convincing the population that other religious groups present a serious threat to either the majority group or the state as a whole, authoritarian regimes are often able to present themselves as the only viable alternative to civil war. Whether implicitly or explicitly, these regimes send the message that democracy will only bring conflict, and that the only way to overcome the country's social divisions is to rally behind the regime in power, which is usually considered to be above these divisions.

Thus, this study of Yemen is of a different character from that of Lebanon. Unlike Lebanon, the Yemeni case does not present an instance of democratic breakdown. Indeed, it does not involve intensive analysis of one dramatic moment in Yemen's history, but rather the ongoing process of authoritarian survival that is aided, at least in part, by the regime's manipulation of the country's religious divisions. This section therefore aims to determine whether the Yemeni regime uses the Sunni-Shi'ite divide to legitimate its continued rule. Although this project neither promises nor aims to explain all of the reasons for the survival of the Yemeni regime through a religious lens, it is important to consider the potential religious elements that influence the regime's durability. In doing so, it will illustrate the mechanisms by which the second branch of the above hypothesis takes place; that is, how do authoritarian regimes use the presence of salient religious differences to remain in power? This question is the starting point of this section's analysis.

Background and History of Yemen

Before beginning the process tracing involved in this section, it is useful to consider the background and historical context in which the phenomenon described is taking place. Providing

such context will also help to identify particular "key moments" in Yemen's political history which will be singled out for intensive analysis.

A few demographic details are important in order to understand Lebanon's political history. Although no authoritative data are available as to the exact religious composition of Yemen, most observers agree that Sunnis (primarily of the Shafi'i sect) probably represent a slim majority of the population, with most of the remainder of citizens professing Shi'a Islam (of the Zaydi sect) (Burrowes 1991: 484). Despite their minority status, Zaydis have been an extremely influential political force throughout their history in Yemen. Most Zaydis live in the highlands of northern Yemen, while most Shafi'i occupy the southern lowlands and coastal areas. Although direct conflict between the two groups has been relatively infrequent, "this sectarian division has been a major basis of social differentiation and identity down to modern times" (Burrowes 1991: 484). Sunnis have traditionally resisted domination by Zaydis, despite the fact that Zaydis are much closer to Sunnis in belief and theology than most other Shi'ites (Peterson 1982: 14). Though religion is neither the only social division nor the primary political fault line in Yemen, its role has remained important throughout the country's history.

North Yemen, which had been colonized by the Ottoman Empire, gained independence in 1918. Between independence and 1962, North Yemen was ruled by the Mutawakkilite Kingdom, a Zaydi imamate in which political and religious authority were fused almost entirely (Zaydi imams had played a crucial role in liberating the region from Ottoman control). However, in 1962, a civil war broke out in North Yemen between members of the Mutawakkilite dynasty and the Yemen Arab Republic (the group that would later establish a state under the same name in North Yemen). The monarchists were supported by Saudi Arabia, while the YAR received considerable financial and military aid from Egypt (at the time intent on spreading

secular Nasserism) and the Soviet Union. This conflict, though explicitly political, became increasingly sectarian as the war continued (Burrowes 1991: 492). The war continued for eight years, effectively ending with the YAR's capture of Sana'a in 1970.

Meanwhile, South Yemen gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1967. In contrast to the highly pious imamate succeeded by a republican government in the north, South Yemen was, from the beginning, a socialist state that was among the most secular in the Arab world (Gause 1988). The Marxist tilt of the South Yemeni state was made clear by its official name change in 1970 to "The People's Democratic Republic of Yemen." North and South Yemen agreed to unity in principle shortly after the end of the Northern civil war, but only officially united in 1990 with the Cold War coming to a close. The new united Yemen was modeled more closely after the YAR (whose population was about four times the size of the PDRY), and the Zaydi president of North Yemen, Ali Abdullah Saleh, became the first (and to date, only) president of the united Yemeni state.

In May and June of 1994, the Yemeni state (then only four years old) experienced a civil war. This war was primarily a North-South conflict, instigated by Southern rebels who wished to re-establish the Marxist Southern Yemeni state that had existed before reunification. Some observers point to the 1993 legislative elections as the trigger of the conflict. Although the Yemeni Socialist Party won 90% of the seats in what was formerly South Yemen, they became only the third-largest party in the new legislature. Saleh's party (the General People's Congress) won 124 seats out of 301, twice as many as any other party (Gause 2002: 190-191). The Socialists, outraged by what they considered to be their under-representation in the country's new parliament, began to clamor for independence from the state. Ultimately, the southern separatists were defeated, and the YSP was eliminated as a major political force in Yemen.

After the war in 1994, no serious threat to Yemeni unity emerged – until recently. In 2004, tensions began to flare up between the government and rebels in the city of Sa'da in northeastern Yemen. The rebels who were targeted by the government are members of the Houthi militant group, comprised of Zaydis who follow the teachings of Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi, a spiritual leader. In the summer of 2004, Yemeni authorities began to crack down on Houthi rebels, killing around 500 of them over the course of the summer and arresting 640 Houthis outside the Grand Mosque in Sana'a on June 18th (Glosemeyer 2004: 42). Houthis have begun to call for a return to the Zaydi imamate in Yemen, and since Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi was a *sayyid*, a member of the religious leadership who claims descent from the prophet Muhammad, he could technically claim the right to lead such an imamate (Glosemeyer 2004). Yemeni security forces killed al-Houthi in September 2004, and he was succeeded by his brother, Abdul Malik al-Houthi.

Conflict between the Yemeni state and Houthi rebels has waxed and waned over the past several years, flaring up most recently in 2009. Although the Yemeni state possesses a clear advantage in terms of resources and strategy, President Saleh frequently expresses fear about the influence of the Houthi movement. Interestingly, Saleh himself is a Zaydi – thus, it is important to consider that this conflict is not simply a case of Sunnis fighting Shi'ites, but rather a multidimensional conflict in which different religious identities are laid on top of competing views of the relationship between religion and the state. What is clear is that the Houthi rebels are strongly motivated by their religion, and that the Saleh regime feels at least somewhat threatened by their increasing popularity and mobilization. It is useful to analyze the recent activities of both Houthi leaders and the Saleh regime in order to examine the role of religion in aiding (or perhaps weakening) authoritarian durability in Yemen.

Process Tracing

In order to determine whether or not the presence of salient religious divisions in post-unification Yemen demonstrates a causal relationship with the resilience of its authoritarian regime, it will be necessary to trace the process by which this relationship supposedly takes place. For the purposes of this study, it is useful to focus on the power struggles between the Yemeni government and the Houthi rebels. It therefore is practical to focus most of our attention on the ongoing conflict between these two groups which has waxed and waned in intensity since 2004. This section will analyze the dynamics of this relationship with a special focus on if—and how—the power games played between these two groups impacts the regime's ability to survive despite (or perhaps *because of*) the forces working against it.

The beginning of the conflict between the Houthi rebels and the Yemeni government is usually dated to 2004 with the occurrence of attacks by the Believing Youth (*Shabab al-Moumineen*) Zaydi against government targets. This group was established to counter the rise of Sunni fundamentalist groups in the Zaydi-dominant northern regions (Human Rights Watch 2008a: 2), but has since expanded its ideology to include strong anti-Western and anti-government elements. The movement is led by Zaydi Hashemites (descendants of the prophet Muhammad), who ruled northern Yemen (on and off) for over a millennium prior to the 1962 war. Since 2004, the region has seen several flare-ups of violence and an increasingly strong government response. In order to understand the relationship between these rebels and the government, it is useful to consider evidence from human rights reports in the region, particularly since the establishment of the Believing Youth.

Human Rights Watch (2008a: 4) notes that the Yemeni government has "apparently conflated the religious motivations that gave rise to the original Believing Youth movement with

armed rebellion." In doing so, it has devoted a surprising portion of its resources to silencing, detaining, and killing members of the religious elite or scholarly community. In many ways, the government has applied a distinctly religious label to a group whose ideology is, in fact, multi-layered. Although the Houthis have never constructed an official list of demands for the Yemeni government, their ideology is motivated by a handful of factors: first, it wishes to preserve and promote Zaydi identity; second, it opposes the government's cooperation with the United States (particularly in the Global War on Terror); third, it laments the perceived economic neglect of the Sa'da governate; and fourth, it opposes the government's use of military force to suppress the Houthi movement (Human Rights Watch 2008b). Despite the variety of demands characterizing the Houthi movement, the government typically presents the Houthis simply as a religious separatist group. Although the Zaydis enjoy a considerable amount of influence in the government (including the presidency), the Zaydi elite largely opposes the Houthi understanding of religion-state relations. Moreover, the Houthis' objection to the Yemeni government's involvement in the GWOT has been a source of embarrassment for the government, which has sought to ally itself closely with the West in fighting terrorism. Thus, it is easier for the government to label the Houthis as a fundamentalist group seeking to restore the imamate than to consider the multitude of negotiable grievances presented by the movement.

In combating the Houthi movement, the Yemeni government has frequently exercised overwhelming force, and rarely hesitates to repress large groups of Houthis in response to the actions of only a few. A UN report notes that although only a small portion of the Zaydi population actively supports the Houthi movement, the government sees the movement as a serious threat to its security (IRIN 2008). The same report observes that although the conflict has both religious and political dimensions, the Saleh regime views it as a political conflict

motivated almost entirely by religious doctrine: "the president became convinced that his tenure was threatened by Zaydi doctrine and that its restoration might leave him out of office… Saleh frequently expressed fears about the restoration of the Zaydi Imamate" (IRIN 2008). Saleh's paranoia about the Houthi threat has, in many ways, allowed him to justify the use of repressive measures in response to the Believing Youth as well as other threats. Whether real or contrived, Saleh presents the Houthis as a serious threat to the stability of both the regime and the state as a whole. It is conceivable that Saleh's attitude towards the Houthis is purely an instrumental tool, but it is likely that he genuinely perceives them to be a political threat. Whether the threat is real or not—and whether or not Saleh actually *believes* the threat to be real—the government uses the threat of the conflict as a means of justifying authoritarian crackdown.

The human rights statistics behind the conflict in northern Yemen are staggering. In a conflict involving perhaps a few thousand armed rebels, security forces have wreaked havoc on massive segments of the northern population. Human Rights Watch (2008a: 3) estimates that around 130,000 people were displaced from their homes because of this conflict by late 2008. This report also finds evidence of "hundreds of arbitrary arrests," with around 1,200 political prisoners having been detained by late 2008. The organization investigated 62 disappearances and arbitrary arrests and found that in nearly all of these cases, the detainee was not told why (or by whom) he was being arrested, and his family was not informed of his status or whereabouts for months at a time. Most of these detainees were captured by the Political Security Organization, the security agency directly tied to President Saleh's office (Human Rights Watch 2008a: 3).

It is possible, of course, that these arrests targeted only those who vocally and violently threatened the regime or the security of the state. However, evidence on the nature of these

arrests suggests that this has not been the case. Among the cases documented by Human Rights Watch (only a small portion of the actual universe of arrests), observers noted 14 cases in which "Hashemite identity or one's profession as a Hashemite scholar or preacher appeared to be the paramount reason for the arrest" (Human Rights Watch 2008a: 4). The report notes that even activities such as summer camps for teenagers and religious lectures have been targeted by the authorities (Human Rights Watch 2008a: 4). A separate Human Rights Watch report (Human Rights Watch 2008b) recalls that the Yemeni government has been accused of using heavy artillery, tanks, aircrafts, and landmines in the conflict with the Houthis (which has taken place in predominantly rural areas).

The government's crackdown on the Houthi movement has not limited itself to the use of physical force. Beginning in February 2007 (the beginning of another period of violent flare-up in the conflict), the government imposed an "information blackout" on the Sa'da governate (Human Rights Watch 2008b: 13). In addition to prohibiting journalists and aid agencies from traveling in or around the region, this blackout removed cellular phone access for everyone in the region except for a handful of government supporters. The government has threatened outside journalists who cover the conflict, and has imposed strict regulations about what Yemeni journalists can and cannot write. The government itself publishes no information about the humanitarian consequences of the conflict. In sum, the government's policies with regard to both the use of force and the protection of civil liberties are emblematic of increasing authoritarianism in Yemen. As Gause (2002) observes, political freedoms and civil liberties in Yemen have deteriorated rapidly, despite the high hopes for Yemeni liberalization in the early 1990s.

Human rights abuses represent one manner in which the Yemeni government has used the threat of the Houthi conflict to justify its increasing authoritarianism. In doing so, it has protected itself from both internal and international criticism. The conflict qualifies as a "non-international armed conflict" under international law, so the government has been able to minimize the amount of international attention that the war receives (Human Rights Watch 2008b: 11). Indeed, since the beginning of the conflict, the UN has operated in only two towns in the Sa'da governate, Sa'da and Malahit (Human Rights Watch 2008b: 40). Moreover, the government is aware that international donors—particularly in the West—will be hesitant to criticize its behavior in Sa'da because of Yemen's important role in the War on Terror. For instance, the European Union issued a statement in June 2008 regarding the conflict which stated that "the EU firmly supports the government and people of Yemen in addressing the country's economic, political security and social challenges" (European Union 2009). The EU has been unable to agree on terms for humanitarian intervention in Yemen, and has largely refused to criticize the government's increasingly authoritarian behavior in any significant way. Furthermore, the conflict has received little media attention both inside and outside Yemen, largely because of Yemen's sensitive position in the GWOT (Bonnefoy 2009: 32). It is evident that the Saleh regime is able to insulate itself from criticism by combining its strategic importance to the West with the perception of a significant threat coming from the Houthi movement itself.

What, exactly, does the government's attitude towards the Houthis mean for the prospects of liberalization in the country? In order to determine the relationship between these two features of Yemeni politics, it is useful to consider the Saleh regime's rhetoric and behavior during periods of flare-up. It is clear that the regime is willing to paint the Houthis as a threat to

the state itself. As Hamidi (2009: 174) recalls, President Saleh has publicly described the Houthis as "hankering for personal dictatorship and the racialist imamic regime," "enemies of the revolution . . . and democracy," and favoring "a racist, fanatical ideology that threatens everyone." Saleh's rhetoric paints the Houthis as much more than a political opponent or even a separatist or fundamentalist group. Recognizing the Houthis as a theocratic Shi'ite movement in a Sunni-majority country, Saleh describes them as an existential threat to the state itself. Moreover, it is important to consider *how* the regime depicts the Houthis as a threat to the state. The regime does not usually emphasize the Houthis' desire for secession or even their willingness to use violence as the most important threats to Yemen; instead, it emphasizes the group's hostility to secular government. Indeed, members of the Saleh regime have frequently been quoted as referring to the Houthis as *imamiyyun*; that is, supporters of the imamate (Hamidi 2009: 175). It is not the Houthis' use of violence or their destabilizing effect on law and order that makes them dangerous, according to the regime's rhetoric; it is their fondness for integration of religion and state and their hostility towards any non-theocratic, non-Shi'ite government that makes their existence unacceptable.

It is important to note, however, that the government itself has not shied away from religious rhetoric in its own handling of the conflict. The Yemeni news agency Saba reports that on September 10, 2004 (the date on which al-Houthi was believed to have been killed), the defense and interior ministries issued a joint statement which concluded with the following remarks:

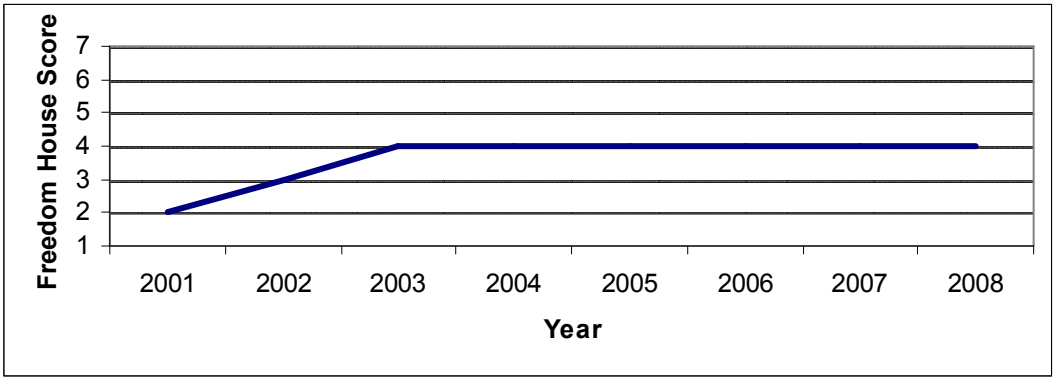
> We urge brother scholars particularly in Sa'dah Province to play their national and religious role to guide citizens and enlighten them on their religious and temporal duties correctly, and urge young people to avoid all type of extremism and be involved the rebuilding the nation, its progress and development in a positive manner.
> We beseech God Almighty to bless the martyrs of our armed and security forces and of the civilian volunteers who courageously confronted the sedition and gave their life to nation, its security and stability. May God reward them with His Paradise by the side of His Prophets.

Thus, it is evident that the government is careful to present itself as a theologically-approved regime, not a secular regime that is hostile to Islam. Indeed, this rhetoric presents the Houthis as an embarrassment to Islam. It invokes religious imagery as well as secular nationalism, encouraging citizens to cooperate with the government for both worldly and transcendent reasons. Following another round of fighting in 2005, Saba reported that the government had initiated plans to "re-educate" the Houthis through the "Theological Dialogue Committee," in a thinly-veiled attempt to discourage Houthis from mobilizing against the Saleh government. The regime, it seems, is aware of the importance of Islam in Yemeni political life, and is willing to use religious tensions to promote its own instrumental ends by presenting its opponents as threats to Islam as well as a danger to the unity and stability of the Yemeni state.

At this point, it is important to consider what these phenomena mean in terms of macro-level regime outcomes in Yemen. Clearly, Yemen remains an authoritarian state, but it is useful to examine the marginal changes in the regime's behavior that have occurred over the past several years. Figure 4-1 depicts Yemen's total Freedom House scores over time (the scores are inverted so that higher scores indicate higher levels of democracy). This figure illustrates an interesting trend in Yemen's recent political history. The state began to liberalize (albeit modestly) following the beginning of the Global War on Terror in late 2001; it is conceivable that Western pressure might have played some role in pressuring the regime to liberalize. After making improvements in 2002 and 2003, Yemen's liberalization appears to have halted entirely. Its Freedom House scores have remained the same since 2003 (the same "stickiness" can be seen in Yemen's Polity scores as well). Thus, it appears that Yemen's modest liberalization stopped altogether at a point roughly coinciding with the flare-up of its conflict with the Houthis. However, since this correlation does not necessarily indicate a causal relationship, it is important

to trace the mechanisms by which the inflammation of this conflict has led to a halt in liberalization – if, in fact, it has.

Figure 4-1: Freedom House Scores, by Year



The liberalization undertaken by the Yemeni regime between 2001 and 2003 was marked by a series of changes, some hospitable to democracy and some aimed at solidifying the regime's authority. Prior to this period, the country held its first presidential elections (in 1999); however, these elections were organized in such a way as to prevent the opposition from posing a serious threat to the regime. Consequently, the major opposition parties boycotted the election, and President Saleh was "re-elected" with over 96% of the vote. In many ways, this election represented a low point for the hopes for Yemeni democracy. However, in the next few years, the prospects for liberalization in Yemen improved to a certain extent. Press freedoms improved marginally, and political contestation became more visible. The 2003 parliamentary elections were widely considered to be significantly freer than previous elections, though still marred by incidents of violence and electoral irregularities. The 2003 elections resulted in the GPC (Saleh's party) winning 58% of the votes. Although the liberalization that occurred during this period was modest, and Yemen's regime remained far from democratic even at its most liberal point, the reform that marked this period signified *some* level of meaningful political change.

This process of liberalization, however, was short-lived. With the outbreak of conflict in the north as well as domestic strife in other regions of the country (caused in part by economic factors), civil liberties were denied on a more frequent basis and political discourse became more closed. Despite his promise to not stand for re-election in 2006, claiming a desire to "train Yemenis in the practice of peaceful succession," Saleh decided instead to remain in power, hoping to "deliver the ship of our nation to safe harbour" (Polity IV 2007). In this election, generally considered to be more open than the 1999 contest (but still far from ideal), Saleh won 77% of the vote. In 2001, the regime pushed through an amendment to the constitution (supposedly approved by 70% of the population) that increased the president's term from five to seven years, in a step that helped to preserve Saleh's rule despite the liberalization that was to come. The reforms initiated in the few years prior to the elections provided the opposition with more of a voice than it had previously enjoyed in the executive branch, but stopped well short of allowing true competition for the presidency.

In recent years, the cessation of Yemeni liberalization has become increasingly clear in the Yemeni legislature as well as the executive branch. Legislative elections that were scheduled to be held in April 2009 have been delayed for two years. The *Yemen Post* quotes Yemen's vice president as justifying the delay, stating that "it is in the national interest…to carry out political and economic reforms" before holding the next round of elections. Although the regime claims that these elections have been postponed in order to "reform the electoral system," the previous round of elections (originally scheduled for 2001) was postponed for similar reasons. This repetition suggests that electoral reform might not be the true reason for the delays. It is likely that the regime recognizes its potential vulnerability in the event of further liberalization. Moreover, the regime has proven itself to be willing to use the conflict with the Houthis as a

means of justifying increasingly authoritarian means of rule. Since "electoral reform" does not seem to tell the entire story about the delays in Yemen's legislative elections, there is reason to suspect that the regime has chosen to delay the contest out of practical necessity rather than a sincere hope for electoral changes.

Taken together, these trends in Yemen's recent political history suggest that the regime has attempted to use the conflict with the Believing Youth as a means of legitimizing its own authoritarian politics – and has largely succeeding in doing so. The process of liberalization and political "opening" that began during the early years of Yemeni cooperation in the GWOT has been halted, and the government has managed to reassert its control while at the same time maintaining the illusion of open elections. Moreover, the government has painted the Houthis as a purely religious movement with an intention of fusing religion and politics in Yemen completely. The regime's hostility towards the Houthis is perhaps reasonable, since the Believing Youth have frequently denied the regime's legitimacy and targeted government officials in their attacks. Nonetheless, the conflict in the Sa'da region has proven to be a convenient source of justification for stopping Yemen's process of liberalization.

Conclusion

This study has presented a two-branched model of non-democracy as a result of the presence of salient religious divisions. The model presented above is not intended to be deterministic; rather, it seeks to explain the instability of democracy and/or the resilience of authoritarianism in a select group of countries. Using a nested design, it has attempted both to illustrate the correlations between these variables and to trace the mechanisms by which religious variables lead to particular regime outcomes. The findings of this project suggest that religious variables *do matter* in determining regime type in particular countries.

The quantitative testing as well as the qualitative process tracing performed in this study indicate the following findings. First, neither average levels of religiosity nor religious fractionalization independently explains differences in levels of democracy across countries. Rather, the interaction of these two variables tends to lower democracy scores; that is, countries that are both highly religious and highly religiously divided seem to be less democratic than others, ceteris paribus. Second, this negative relationship can take two forms: first, outbreaks of religious conflict can disrupt democratic stability and lead to non-democratic outcomes; second, the mere *threat* of religious conflict (as presented by the presence of salient religious divisions) can sometimes provide authoritarian regimes with a means of maintaining their power, despite internal and external threats or efforts towards liberalization.

The model presented in this project is both partial and conditional. It does not suggest that countries with salient religious divisions are doomed to non-democracy, nor that countries without such divisions will be able to consolidate democracy easily. Moreover, it does not claim to explain the breakdown of democracy in Lebanon in its entirety, nor the trajectory of the Yemeni regime. Rather, it seeks to suggest a possible explanation for *some* of the difficulties experienced by religiously plural countries under *some* conditions. Other factors (perhaps overlapping cleavages, poverty/economic inequality, or the strength of religious political parties, among others) are certain to condition the impact of salient religious divisions on regime type, and this project can neither claim nor hope to provide a complete picture of how these variables interact across time and space to strengthen or weaken democracy.

Future studies of religion and democracy should strive to identify how these other variables might impact regime transitions and non-transitions. Much more research is necessary—both quantitative and qualitative—to understand the relationships and mechanisms

that these variables demonstrate. The continuation of the World Values Survey promises to make more sophisticated time-series analysis of these relationships possible. Once adequate data are available, it will be important to test how the religious variables in question impact *transitions* to and from democracy rather than simply analyzing *levels* of democracy, as this project has done. Moreover, further case studies will help to illuminate the causal processes by which religious factors are translated into regime outcomes in a variety of contexts. The combination of these two lines of research will allow for a more robust assessment of the validity of the claims made in this study. It is conceivable that the relationships and processes observed in this project are merely outliers, and that salient religious divisions only inhibit democracy in a handful of cases. In order to test this relationship more rigorously and to understand it more fully, more data—and much more research—will be necessary.

It is clear that the impact of religion on regime type is complex; however, the findings of this study suggest that *religion matters*. Although religious variables are often difficult to conceptualize and nearly impossible to measure, there is reason to believe that the omission of religious factors from studies of democracy creates significant analytical blind spots. Studies of democracy must consider the potential impact of religion precisely *because* it is such a slippery concept. This project represents an early step towards uncovering the complex relationship between religion and democracy, but much more work is necessary in order to understand the relationship between these two very challenging concepts.

Appendix 1: Composite Religiosity Variable

The "religiosity" measure included in this study uses World Values Survey data to capture average levels of religiosity in countries in the sample. Because not all countries are included in the WVS, this variable limits the number of observations in the sample. Moreover, because the WVS is a fairly recent phenomenon, and relatively few countries have been included in multiple waves of the survey, this project must assume constant levels of religiosity across time. Therefore, this variable reflects the mean religiosity scores of a country across the four waves of the WVS. In order to capture the effect of religiosity in one variable, principal-component factor analysis was used to derive a combined measure of religiosity. Any factors with an eigenvalue of 1 or greater were retained; only one factor reached this value, suggesting that these variables are all part of one broader factor. This variable primarily captures religious *belief* rather than practice; it is comprised of the following questions:

1) How often do you attend religious services?
2) Do you consider yourself a religious person?
3) Do you believe in God?
4) How important is God in your life?
5) Do you get comfort and strength from religion?

The factor loadings are as follows (respectively):

Variable	Factor1 (Religiosity[10])	Uniqueness
1) How often do you attend religious services?[11]	-0.711	0.495
2) Do you consider yourself a religious person?	-0.801	0.357
3) Do you believe in God?	0.841	0.293
4) How important is God in your life?	0.884	0.218
5) Do you get comfort and strength from religion?	0.849	0.279

[10] Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy: 0.855
Proportion of variance explained by Religiosity: 0.671

[11] The scales for variables 1 and 2 are inverted in the WVS; thus, a lower score indicates a more religious tendency. Consequently, the correlation between these variables and the religiosity variable is negative.

These factor loadings represent the correlation between the individual component and the composite variable. These numbers suggest that these five variables are closely correlated, and that the use of a composite religiosity variable is justified.

This variable was transformed to make the minimum observed value equal 0. Summary statistics for this variable are as follows:

Variable	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Religiosity	75	1.302	0.526	0	2.032

Appendix 2: Countries Included in Sample

Albania
Algeria
Argentina
Armenia
Australia
Austria
Azerbaijan
Bangladesh
Belarus
Belgium
Bosnia-Herzegovina
Brazil
Bulgaria
Canada
Chile
Colombia
Croatia
Czech Republic
Denmark
Dominican Republic
Egypt
El Salvador
Estonia
Finland
France
Georgia
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Iceland
India
Indonesia
Iran
Ireland
Italy
Japan
Jordan
Kyrgyzstan
Latvia
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Malta
Mexico
Moldova
Morocco
Netherlands
New Zealand
Nigeria
Norway
Pakistan
Peru
Philippines
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Saudi Arabia
Slovakia
Slovenia
South Africa
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
Tanzania
Turkey
Uganda
Ukraine
United Kingdom
United States
Uruguay
Venezuela
Vietnam
Zimbabwe

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