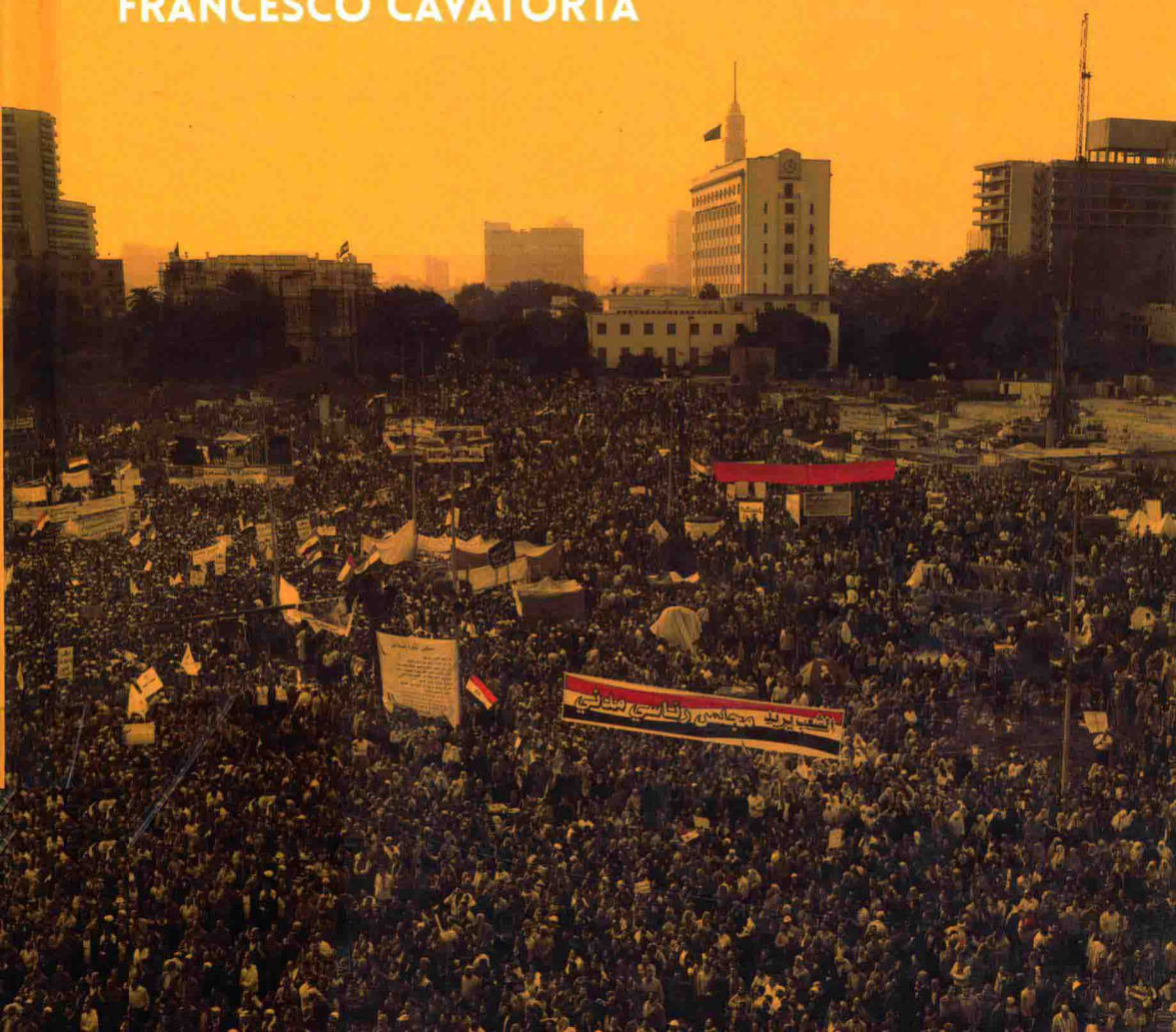


# POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

VINCENT DURAC  
FRANCESCO CAVATORTA



# **Politics and Governance in the Middle East**

**Vincent Durac  
and  
Francesco Cavatorta**



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**Politics and Governance in the Middle East**

*Also by Vincent Durac and Francesco Cavatorta*

**Civil Society and Democratisation in the Arab World:  
The Dynamics of Activism**

**The Foreign Policies of the EU and the US in North Africa:  
Converging or Diverging Dynamics? (co-editors)**

# Acknowledgements

Having worked together on a number of different research projects, we decided to write a textbook on Middle East politics and governance that would serve the needs of students interested in the topic. We have tried to offer students a book that does justice to the complexity of Middle East politics, while remaining accessible. When reading about the Middle East, students are very often confronted with either incredibly simplistic accounts, or highly sophisticated scholarly ones. In the first instance, students are not challenged to think deeply about how politics functions in the region, and what are the connections that can and should be made with how politics is conducted elsewhere. In addition, they are encouraged to think of Middle East politics as ‘exceptional’, which can lead to simplistic characterizations that have very little basis in reality. In the second instance, students who might not intend to pursue further research on the region find themselves lost, having to deal with articles or books that assume vast prior knowledge of Middle East politics. We have tried to make this volume both sophisticated and accessible. The sophistication lies in the extensive research that was undertaken, both theoretical and empirical, to provide a picture of politics and governance that integrates local and global dynamics. The accessibility lies in the linkage between research findings and the broader ‘story’ of the region, which we tell to account for its most significant events and political phenomena. It is this combination of complexity and accessibility that makes this textbook novel, and we hope that this volume provides valuable insights into, and information about, an often-misunderstood region.

The book naturally draws on our previous research work on different aspects of Middle East Politics, but it should be emphasized that the combination of theoretical frameworks employed in this textbook to describe and explain Middle East politics is an innovation in our work of which we are particularly proud. The chapter on civil society relies on research material that was published in our co-authored volume *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World* (Routledge, 2010), but we have expanded our previous categorizations further – in the process, challenging our previous assumptions. For the chapter on social activism, the textbook also draws from Francesco Cavatorta’s book *Civil Society Activism under Authoritarian Rule* (Routledge, 2013) and from the volume co-edited by Paul Aarts and Francesco Cavatorta *Civil Society*

*Activism in Syria and Iran* (Lynne Rienner, 2013). The chapter on gender and politics has benefited from the input of Emanuela Dalmasso, with whom Francesco Cavatorta co-wrote the paper 'The Role of Women in Islamist Movements in Morocco and Tunisia: Negotiating New Gender Roles?' presented at ECPR Joint Sessions held in Antwerp, Belgium, in April 2012. Chapter 10 develops themes explored in Francesco Cavorta, 'International Politics of the Middle East', in Ellen Lust (ed.), *The Middle East* (CQ Press, 2013). Beyond these, we have drawn extensively on the work of other scholars, as the list of references makes clear. No work of this kind is possible without the input of countless others. Any errors, as usual, are entirely our responsibility.

We acknowledge the contribution that the three external referees made to this project. Their comments were extremely valuable in improving the book and we are deeply grateful for their input. The editorial team at Palgrave have been tremendously patient with us and guided us smoothly through the publication process. We would like to acknowledge, in particular, the support and precious insights of Stephen Wenham, who has been unwavering in his support and attention, and unaccountably patient. Vincent Durac would like to thank Colm and Marjorie for ongoing support (and for Schull!), as well as colleagues in the School of Politics and International Relations at University College Dublin. He would also like to acknowledge the love, support and patience of Alexander and Amelia, and the apparently inexhaustible supply of the same from Denise, without whom, once more, his contribution to this project would not have been possible. Francesco Cavatorta would like to thank his former colleagues in the School of Law and Government at Dublin City University and his current colleagues in the Department of Political Science at Université Laval, for their encouragement and support.

VINCENT DURAC  
FRANCESCO CAVATORTA

The authors and publishers would like to thank the World Economic Forum for kindly giving permission to reproduce Figure 4.1.

# List of Abbreviations

AKP	Party of Justice and Development
ASU	Arab Socialist Union
BMENA	Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (United States of America)
DP	Democratic Party
EFU	Egyptian Feminist Union
EMP	Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FFS	<i>Front des Forces Socialistes</i> (Socialist Forces Front)
FIS	<i>Front Islamique du Salut</i> (Islamic Salvation Front)
FLANGO	First Lady Non-Governmental Organization
FLN	<i>Front de Liberation Nationale</i> (National Liberation Front)
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
GONGO	Government Organized Non-Governmental Organization
IAF	Islamic Action Front
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IS (Isis)	Islamic State
JMP	Joint Meeting Parties
JP	Justice Party
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MENAP	Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan
MEPI	Middle East Partnership Initiative
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDP	National Democratic Party
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRP	National Religious Party
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PDRY	People's Democratic Republic of Yemen
PJD	<i>Parti de la Justice et du Developpement</i> (Party of Justice and Development)
QUANGO	Quazi-Autonomous Non-Governmental Organization



PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
RCD	Democratic Constitutional Rally
RONGO	Royal Non-Governmental Organization
RP	Refah Party (Welfare Party)
RPP	Republican People's Party
SCAF	Supreme Council of the Army Forces
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UAR	United Arab Republic
UGTT	<i>Union Générale Travailleurs Tunisiens</i> (General Union of Tunisian Workers)
UM	Union for the Mediterranean
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme



Map of the Middle East



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# Introduction

Few regions of the world have attracted as much attention in recent decades as the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Clearly, this is a consequence of the importance of the region for world affairs and for comparative politics. Some of those who have written about the MENA have focused almost exclusively on the politics of individual countries in the region, while others have focused more broadly on region-wide political dynamics. This text adopts an entirely thematic approach to the politics of the region. Rather than opting for an in-depth analysis of the historic, political, social and economic particularities of individual countries, we have chosen to examine the region as whole, highlighting some of its shared issues, traits and challenges.

The MENA, for the purposes of this book, comprises the countries of North Africa from Morocco to Egypt, and those of the Arabian Peninsula: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, the Palestinian Territories, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. For background information on the countries of the region, see *The World Factbook* at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>. The area includes the formerly British- and French-controlled states of Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon and Syria. Finally, since neither the historic experience nor the contemporary politics of the region would be entirely explicable without reference to them, we also include the non-Arab states of Turkey, Iran and Israel.

In adopting a thematic approach to the region, we are certainly not proposing that its profound diversity and heterogeneity should be ignored. There are enormous differences, for instance, between the historical experiences of parts of North Africa and the countries in the Arabian Peninsula, just as there are significant differences in the way they are governed. While Islam is the dominant religion across the MENA, there is a variety of sects, interpretations and practices of it, in addition to the presence of other major religions such as Christianity and Judaism. Similarly, Arabic is the language most widely spoken, but in a variety of accents and dialects that are not necessarily mutually understandable. Other languages are also spoken, such as Turkish, Persian, Hebrew, Kurdish and Amazigh. In short, we are aware of the complexity and heterogeneity of the region but we believe, nonetheless, that there are processes and trends within



which considerable commonalities exist. This volume seeks to strike a balance between similarities and differences. It is also for this reason that the textbook contains ‘information boxes’, where we link a general theme to a specific historical event, or to a particularly important figure, or to a concept. The boxes have the objective of highlighting the significance of individual details and how they connect to a more general ‘story’ of the region.

The book is structured around two interconnected frameworks that, we believe, help to explain political, social and economic developments in the region. One is the dynamic interaction between international and domestic variables. The other stems from the ongoing academic debate regarding the tension between processes of democratization and the persistence of authoritarian rule. In relation to the first, rather than simply looking at the history of the MENA in chronological order or dividing the volume into key issues disconnected from each other, the book examines not only the historical context, but also the major themes in the politics of the region through a focus on the impact of international factors on the region and how, in turn, local developments have affected the perception and the policies of external actors towards the MENA over time. This approach avoids telling the story of the region in ways that marginalize the international dimension. Following recent work which built on Putnam’s (1988) notion of a two-level game to explore how the interaction between domestic and international factors helps explain political, social and economic outcomes (Haynes, 2003; Yilmaz, 2002; Yom and al-Momani, 2008), this volume locates external variables as central to key developments and events in the MENA, such as state formation, post-colonial political patterns, ideological radicalism, failed processes of democratic transition and the Arab uprisings of 2011. Putnam’s work focused specifically on how the negotiating positions of states on the international stage develop through the interaction of international pressures and domestic bargaining among crucial actors. But, the interaction between the ‘domestic’ and the ‘international’ can be expanded much further. In this volume, we extend this approach to the understanding of the politics of the region as a whole. Other scholars, including Owen (2004), introduced the international dimension into their discussions of MENA politics. The novelty of the approach adopted here is that we do so systematically for all the themes in the book. This does not mean that local and country-specific events and developments are irrelevant: quite the contrary. The focus on the international dimension in the volume should not be seen as minimizing the agency of local actors, or as an exercise in Eurocentrism but, rather, as a device that illustrates the many linkages and mutual