



Towards an Arab governance index



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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Towards an Arab governance index



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Introduction

In this paper, the authors propose a comprehensive index on governance that makes use of indicators that capture the quality of government and other institutions. While acknowledging that other indices may demonstrate that development has taken place, the authors believe that, without taking

governance into account, important long-term drivers of human development and human security may be overlooked. The authors also demonstrate how the development of a comprehensive index on governance can support the achievement of the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals.

1. Conceptual framework

In 1990, a distinction was made in the Human Development Report, the annual flagship publication of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), between the means and the end of development. After decades of measuring development on the basis of gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, Amartya Sen argued that individual capabilities were critical to understanding development. Though income may help in providing a means for fully realizing other freedoms, Sen argued that too much emphasis had been placed on that single dimension and that per capita income levels on their own were not a good indicator of achievements in the areas of health and survival (Anand and Sen, 1994). Although it was for long assumed that resources could be used to ensure that people do not go hungry, could travel if they were in danger, and/or find shelter, per capita income levels do not provide a complete picture without knowledge of how exactly resources are allocated. Sen was influential in formulating a new measure of development, known as the human development index (HDI). The new index took into account a broad range of development dimensions and was formulated to encourage the adoption of a more people-centred approach that moved away from looking exclusively at economic growth as a measure of development.

The HDI continues to be a prominent measure of development. There are three dimensions to the index: health achievement (measured by life

expectancy), educational attainment (now measured by average and expected years of schooling),¹ and living standards (now measured by gross national income (GNI) per capita).² Income is not viewed as more important than other variables, and all variables are given equal weight. Using the HDI, States that are comparatively wealthy but provide less extensive social services and more limited educational opportunities, such as Azerbaijan or Kazakhstan, are ranked lower than they would be solely on the basis of GDP per capita (life expectancies, for example, are lower in both those countries than in Guatemala). Similarly, States like those in the former Communist bloc that typically provide more extensive social services and educational opportunities but are not as wealthy typically receive higher scores than they do if consideration is only given to GDP per capita. In that connection, the authors underscore that the HDI offers a more nuanced picture than can GDP per capita alone.

However, while the HDI has been very helpful in shifting attention away from the exclusive use of income to measure and assess development, it does not directly address the issue of good governance. A State that is rich in natural resources, for example, may achieve high per capita income levels. Some of the rents from natural resources may also be allocated towards providing basic health care and increasing primary school enrolment. However, this does not offer a complete picture with regard to the

¹ Assessed prior to 2010 by looking at literacy rates.

² Originally assessed by looking at GDP per capita.

quality of governance and may skew results favourably towards resource-rich States. Additionally, some States are particularly vulnerable to infectious diseases, with their disease burdens significantly lowering life expectancy. Such States include Botswana, which has suffered disproportionately from the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In spite of this, Botswana is often considered a star performer in Africa when it comes to good governance (Robinson, 2013).

Furthermore, the scope of the human development index was deliberately restricted so that greater attention was paid to human development than to human security. The inclusion of life expectancy to some extent addresses the issue of human security, but it does not adequately capture freedom from fear and from want. Just as a human development approaches were gaining greater traction in the 1990s, by emphasizing capabilities, well-being, and welfare, so too were approaches that encompassed human security and the safety of individuals and communities and the acknowledgement that individuals in many parts of the world were facing a series of emerging and significant threats.

The rise in interest in human security approaches has been driven by the growing importance of human centred approaches. By placing humans at the centre of research paradigms, studies have moved away from looking at outcomes at the national level (such as the security of the State and GDP growth) and more towards outcomes that take into account individuals and communities.

Indeed, there is increasing recognition of the interlinkages among peace, development and human rights, now known as the security-development nexus. The concept of human security can therefore be seen as the intersection of the development and security spheres.³

While security and development are interlinked, they are not the same concept. Obstacles to development exacerbate human insecurity; improvements in human development will thus enhance human security and vice versa. At the same time, human development is difficult to achieve when the minimum conditions for human security have yet to be realized (Thomas, 2001). However, while human development aims to increase people's choices, opportunities and freedoms, human security is about ensuring that people have the freedom to exercise those choices safely (Alkire, 2010). Furthermore, while human security is about addressing basic needs, human development goes beyond those concerns and may look at the long-term objective of human fulfilment.

In any event, achieving human security and human development is not possible without good governance (Smith, 2007; Van Doeveren, 2011). Governance lies at the heart of efforts to address threats and risks, and is also key to fostering development through investments in human capital. Though both human development and human security are different concepts, they are increasingly interlinked. Therefore, a sound measurement of good governance is needed to accelerate the

³ The United Nations Development Programme highlights seven areas of human security, including security from poverty and unemployment; security from physical violence, crime, terrorism, domestic violence and child labour; security from inter-ethnic, religious and other identity-based tensions; security from political repression and human rights abuses; security from environmental degradation, resource depletion, natural disasters, and pollution; security from deadly infectious diseases, unsafe food, lack of access to basic health care; and security from famine and hunger.

achievement of desired human security and development outcomes.

The ongoing descent of Arab polities into crisis and armed conflict is mostly due to poor governance and ineffective and unaccountable institutions. One can therefore arguably state that the region's chronic lack of good governance undermines efforts to achieve inclusive and sustainable development in Arab countries. That being said, prevailing development models more often than not fail to account adequately for nuances and practical problems posed by that connection. Human security is therefore a concept that may strengthen understanding of development trajectories within poorly governed and conflict-affected countries. Furthermore, the adoption of a human security approach can enhance the efficiency of efforts to realize the transformative commitments made by member States within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In essence, human security puts the safety of the individual front and centre and good governance encompasses the institutional mechanisms to achieve that objective (Hameiri, 2007; Patrick, 2011; Rotberg, 2003, 2004). The rule of law and human rights need to be advanced and woven into a coherent strategy to protect the individual. Additionally, anyone who fails to abide by human rights and good governance standards should be held accountable. Everyone should be treated equally by the State and everyone should enjoy access to the public goods provided by the State. Therefore, good governance is not just critical in efforts to promote development, but also in efforts to achieve the goal of human security.

Against this backdrop, this paper proposes an Arab governance index to measure human development achievements and the quality of government driving them. The index does so by capturing three important pillars of governance: the rule of law and ease of access to justice; institutional accountability and effectiveness; and participation. Those pillars encapsulate the capacity of citizens to maximize their potential and achieve desired development outcomes.

A. The role of the State and good governance

To date it has been very challenging to measure governance without looking at *outcomes* of good governance, such as the absence of conflict, long life expectancies and economic prosperity. Good governance is a term that is commonly used in policy circles but is often difficult to define in practice. Before exploring how good governance can be measured, it is important to provide a framework for understanding the role of the State and public institutions in good governance. Though the role of the State has long been disparaged by neoliberalists, scholars such as Nobel Prize winning economist and former head of the World Bank, Joseph Stiglitz have also emphasized the importance of institutions in development, underscoring that strong and capable institutions may ensure the effectiveness of policies.

Economists have long held that markets are an engine for growth. However, when markets are not supported by sound institutions and good governance, even the best policies can fail. Although the dominant perspectives in political economy have long underscored the link

between small government and good government, development thinking had changed considerably: rather than emphasizing the need to get policies and prices right, there is now greater focus on the need to get institutions right. Notably, in 1997 the World Bank produced a report entitled *The State in a Changing World*, in which the Bank acknowledged that the State was important to development. Furthermore, in a 2013 report, the United Nations claimed that there was growing consensus that governments could act as engines of development, while also providing social protection and public infrastructure. Thus, the implication in policy circles is that good governance cannot be achieved without an efficient and professional bureaucracy, though its size and scope may vary according to the needs of each country. Scholars have also noted that the State can play an important role in coordinating, steering, and persuading agents to accomplish desired objectives (Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson, 2012).

But it is not just healthy markets that are desirable outcomes; achieving human security, or mitigating both direct and indirect threats, is an important outcome as well. Development is impossible in highly insecure environments. Take the case of the Syrian Arab Republic, for example: in 2010, before conflict broke out, life expectancy was 72.1 years, mean years of schooling was 6.3 and the GNI per capita was \$6,086. In 2018, life expectancy has decreased to 71.8, means years of schooling stood at 5.1 and GNI per capita was \$2,725. It is clear that

years of conflict and insecurity have severely undermined development in the country. Prior to 2010, it would have been difficult to predict, using the HDI alone, that conflict could erupt in the Syrian Arab Republic. But high levels of corruption, repression, and economic mismanagement preceded the conflict, and the State was ill-prepared to deal with natural disaster events, such as the severe drought that lasted from 2006 to 2011, which caused many Syrian farms to fail and plunged millions of Syrians deeper into poverty (De Châtel, 2014). Studies have demonstrated that the bureaucratic agencies that dealt with water management were inefficient and corrupt.⁴ The Syrian Government's failure to respond to the humanitarian crisis that ensued fed discontent in rural areas, and was a trigger for the uprising that sparked the ongoing conflict (Gleick, 2014).

The effectiveness of States has also been revealed in their handling of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic: States that have failed to invest in effective multisectoral institutions to address disease prevention and management have fared particularly badly. Insufficient investment in health care, education, information technology, epidemiology, risk communication and research meant that many countries were ill-prepared for the crisis. Iraq currently stands as the country with the most cases of COVID-19 in the Arab world. This is not surprising given the very limited funds available for healthcare provision and the country's severe shortages of diagnostic equipment and medicines. Corruption has also siphoned off

⁴ Reports show that a culture of secrecy existed in the Syrian Arab Republic around the issue of water, as data was not shared among and within ministries and research institutions. Different methods were used to assess the country's water resources and there was little coordination among agencies involved in water management. There was also a widespread lack of capacity: the majority of staff had failed to finish secondary school and only a minority had a university degree. Furthermore, low staff salaries encouraged corruption. As a result, water management agencies were ineffective in implementing policy. Hence, although ambitious policies were drafted on paper, relevant laws and regulations were inconsistently enforced, undermining water management and exacerbating the depletion of groundwater reserves (De Châtel, 2014).

resources allocated to the health-care sector and appointments to key positions in hospitals and medical schools have often been determined by factors other than professional experience and scientific qualifications. Health security and equal access to health-care services is an area where strong governance is especially important (Quinn and Kumar, 2014). For example, Bahrain, a relatively rich country, has the most COVID-19 cases per million in the Arab world. True, Bahrain is a small nation that is more likely to have high per capita numbers, but this may be indicative of the failure of the State to establish strong State-society relations that can facilitate the achievement of complex collective goals.

State effectiveness is also important in achieving human security in both conflict prevention and in curbing violence. The concept of State strength does not, in this context, refer to the repressive capacity or despotic power of the State, but rather to its infrastructural power to provide public goods and services (Mann, 2008). States with professionalized administrative and judicial institutions are better able to ensure that public goods remain accessible to all citizens. Moreover, strong States that uphold the rule of law and ensure higher levels of equality among their populations have lower levels of violence (Fajnzylber, Lederman and Loayza, 2002; Kelly, 2000; Vieraitis, 2000) and are better able to promote peacebuilding (Richmond, 2014). Studies have demonstrated that good governance and equality are also linked to human security more broadly (Bircan, Brück and Vothknecht, 2010; Thomas, 2001).⁵ Peacebuilding is particularly problematic when inequalities occur primarily along ethnic lines (Stewart, 2011).

B. Pillars of good governance

Rule of law
and ease of
access to
justice

Institutional
accountability
and
effectiveness

Participation

C. How do we measure good governance?

Broadly speaking, good governance refers to accountability, impartiality, transparency and efficiency (Johnston, 2006). Some scholars have also noted that good governance entails participation, legitimacy, competence and respect for the rule of law (Edralin, 1997; Schneider, 1999; Hooghe and Quintelier, 2014). The scope of good governance can be seen in two ways: more narrowly speaking, as a professionalized administration and sound policy outputs, or more broadly speaking, as a professionalized administration and sound policy outputs coupled with respect for democratic principles and processes. Thus, good governance is often defined as a combination of certain processes, procedures and outputs, making it difficult to measure.

Good governance also refers to a government that is legitimate, effective and accepted. But what makes a government legitimate, effective and accepted? Though there is an element of subjectivity here, studies have demonstrated that legitimacy and effectiveness are tied to corruption levels, in that governments that are less corrupt are viewed as more legitimate, and are also more effective in delivering goods

⁵ See also: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, "UN experts urge more action on inequalities that threaten peace and security, development, and human rights", 4 December 2018. Available at www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23969&LangID=E.

(Dix, Hussmann and Walton, 2012; Jackson and others, 2014; Seligson, 2002; Gupta and Abed, 2002; Kaufmann, 2005; Lewis, 2006). Corruption undermines good governance, development, democracy and political trust. If corruption and the abuse of power are the outcome of poor governance, then it is critical to identify solutions. Many scholars have noted that the fight against corruption necessitates the rule of law (Carothers, 1998; Gathii, 1999; Krastev, 2005).

Thus, the first pillar of the Arab governance index looks at the **rule of law and ease of access to justice**.⁶ It is not just the idea that no one is above the law that is important, but also that everyone should enjoy access to the law, there should be equality under the law and there the law should be applied transparently, as articulated in Sustainable Development Goal 16, and particularly indicator and targets 16.3, 16.10.2 and 16.b.1. In order for the rule of law to be fully implemented, rules, regulations and laws must be clearly stated, must offer predictability and stability and must be fairly applied to all and provide the basis for conflict resolution. Hence, it is not enough that rules are clearly stated, they need to be effectively applied in order to deter corruption and the abuse of power. A number of studies have empirically examined this issue and have found evidence that supports the notion that the rule of law contributes to development, economic growth and the welfare of citizens (North and Thomas, 1970; Knack and Keefer, 1995; Engerman and Sokoloff, 2002; Joireman, 2004; Hewko, 2002).

Additionally, the establishment of autonomous judicial institutions (including both lower and higher courts) is extremely important. An independent judicial system is more likely to deter acts of grand (executive level) corruption and lower-level corruption on the part of administrative officials (Gloppen, 2013; Rose-Ackerman, 1997; Rose-Ackerman, 2007). The judicial system is responsible for ensuring that rules, regulations and laws are interpreted by judges who uphold strong ethical standards. Governments that effectively implement the rule of law have lower levels of corruption, as called for in Sustainable Development Goal target and indicators 16.5, 16.5.1 and 16.5.2. (Knack and Keefer, 1995). Studies have also looked at the impact of judicial independence on judicial corruption and have concluded that the two are strongly correlated (Gloppen, 2013; Rose-Ackerman, 2007).

Other researchers have examined the connection between weak judicial institutions and organized crime. Some have argued that organized crime thrives in a society with weak judicial institutions (Bibes, 2001). Therefore, to deal effectively with crime, governments must strengthen their judicial institutions, in line with Sustainable Goal target 16.4. Analysis also shows that judicial independence is closely related to organized crime and that independent judges are less vulnerable to corruption and better able to impose penalties on those involved in organized crime even if other aspects of the State have been captured. In contrast, unpredictable judicial rulings are linked to higher levels of organized crime.

⁶ The rule of law is defined as the following: "A principle in governance in which all persons, institutions and entities, public and private, including the State itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated, and which are consistent with international human rights norms and standards. It requires, as well, measures to ensure adherence to the principles of supremacy of the law, equality before the law, accountability to the law, fairness in the application of the law, separation of powers, participation in decision-making, legal certainty, avoidance of arbitrariness and procedural and legal transparency." (United Nations, Rule of Law. Available at www.un.org/en/ruleoflaw/index.shtml).

Judicial independence also affects economic development. A study that looked at 57 countries concluded that judicial independence led to higher levels of economic growth (Feld and Voigt, 2003). Judicial independence reassures investors and others involved in economic activity that such activity will not be disrupted, which can in turn lead to higher levels of growth (Rugege, 2006). In Egypt, for example, some scholars have noted that the lack of judicial autonomy has significantly curtailed investment and that a lack of confidence in State institutions led to an estimated \$20 billion being taken out of the country in the 1960s (Moustafa, 2008).

In direct contrast to a rule-based system are systems that are highly personalized. In these systems, decisions are for sale and are based on personal loyalties. Institutions become meaningless as those holding power demand loyalty to them personally. Though rules may exist on paper, in practice many decisions appear arbitrary. As a result, policy output may not reflect the best interests of citizens. Highly personalized systems also tend to be characterised by one-man rule. There is one set of rules that apply to the executive and another that applies to those without connections. It is not just that laws are broken: for certain people in power, the law simply does not apply.

In addition to ensuring that no one is above the law, it is also important to provide equal access to the law. Accessibility means how much the judicial system is “equally available to citizens regardless of socioeconomic status or geographic location.” (Prillaman, 2000). Thus, accessibility to the courts should not be dependent on income and influence. This includes ensuring that all citizens, regardless of their income level, can access and afford civil justice, that there is equal treatment under the

law and that there is an absence of discrimination against any individual. Access to justice also includes due process under the law and an impartial and fair criminal justice system that is timely and effective in adjudicating cases.

It is well documented that access to justice is important for achieving development targets. Without access to justice, poor and marginalized groups may have few economic opportunities. A fair, independent and accessible legal system can serve as an enabling vehicle to build the capacity of vulnerable groups with a view to enhancing their situation (Banik, 2009; De Langen and Barendrecht, 2008).

Studies have also demonstrated that there is a clear relationship between judicial independence and development and human security issues (Feld and Voigt, 2003; Rugege, 2006). Additionally, there is a large body of literature that highlights the importance of the rule of law for development (Belton, 2005; Boettke and Subrick, 2003; Helmke and Rosenbluth, 2009; Haggard, MacIntyre and Tiede, 2008) and for human security (Benedek, 2008; Mani, 1999). Thus, the rule of law and judicial independence are key elements of good governance with a clear relationship with development and human security.

Here it is important to bring the topic of corruption into the discussion again. Corruption and poor governance are considered to be closely connected. As such, good governance is often measured by an absence of corruption. In many studies, corruption serves a proxy measurement for good governance, or it serves as one component of good governance, as in the case of the Worldwide Governance Indicators (Besançon, 2003; Cole, Elliott and Zhang, 2009; Kraay, Kaufmann, and Mastruzzi, 2010; Rubasundram and Rasiah, 2019; Tarling,

2007). The authors view corruption as an output or likely by-product of poor governance, although they acknowledge that there will be some countries that perform well on the Arab governance index yet have significant corruption, and countries that do not perform well and have very little corruption. To demonstrate the strength of this relationship, it is useful to compare the Arab governance index with the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), an index compiled by the Transparency International, a non-governmental organization. In theory, these two indices should be highly correlated. However, as these indices are not measuring the same concepts, we should not expect them to generate identical results.

At the core of good governance is the assumption that officials are responsible and accountable for their actions. Therefore, the second pillar of governance looks at **institutional accountability and effectiveness**. As the rule of law stipulates that no one is above the law, this pillar specifies that anyone who tries to break or circumvent the rules should be held to account. In order to ensure institutional accountability, public officials should be sanctioned for abuse of power and improper conduct (O'Donnell, 1998). Mechanisms of horizontal accountability are needed to prevent executive aggrandizement, executive overreach and the arbitrary implementation of rules (Verkuil, 1988; Weiner and others, 2012). It is important therefore to establish robust administrative and legislative oversight in order to investigate the executive if it engages in unconstitutional and/or illegal activity. Mechanisms to ensure executive accountability are necessary to curb cases of grand corruption, embezzlement and other examples of abuse of power and are related to Sustainable Development Goal target 16.6, and

indicator 16.5.1 more specifically (Rose-Ackerman, 2007).

The judiciary must also meet the same standards, as called for in Sustainable Development Goal 16. The judicial system must not only remain independent from political interference but must also be subject to the highest standards of accountability if there are any cases of misconduct. Integrity implies that judicial officials behave in an ethical manner, as defined by the State. Judges should participate in ethics training or know to recuse themselves on ethical grounds when needed. Judges should also comply with public disclosure of their assets and income, and be subject to ethical and disciplinary programmes and performance standards for officials. These standards need to be enforced through internal controls and non-political disciplinary commissions. Judges should be subject to appellate review and budget allocations within the judiciary when they are audited, with the right to a fair hearing and review process to ensure judicial independence. Decisions on ethical violations should be publicly available and any disciplinary commission should operate autonomously from the political sphere. Accountability provides for more consistent and fair legal judgments, while also ensuring that judicial resources are not wasted or dedicated to corrupt activities (Court and others, 2002).

Another key feature of good governance is the existence of effective administrative institutions that abide by the law. Public administration officials should be professional, well trained, ethical and committed to properly implementing laws and policies and enforcing government-mandated regulations. This is important to service delivery for a number of public goods that the State may be tasked with providing.

One of the key ways of capturing institutional effectiveness and the quality of government is to look at institutional impartiality (Dahlström and Lapuente, 2011). An impartial administration not only ensures that laws are followed uniformly, but is critical to delivering basic goods and services to citizens in areas such as development, education and healthcare (Kraay, Zoido-Lobaton and Kaufmann, 1999; Teorell, 2009). A study of 35 countries looked at the relationship between impartial administrative institutions and economic development and found that States that used meritocratic recruitment methods performed much better than those that did not. Other studies concur that this relationship is robust. Studies have also showed that impartial institutions are less likely to be engaged in petty corruption (Dahlström and Lapuente, 2011; Dahlström, Lapuente and Teorell, 2012; Van Rijckeghem and Weder, 2001). Here the authors look at how impartial the institutions are because this contributes to both service delivery and predictable implementation of policy directives, concepts that are closely related to Sustainable Development Goal target 16.6 and, more specifically, indicator 16.6.2.

A professionalized public administration system uses a meritocratic recruitment process for hiring (usually based on an entrance exam), for promoting and for demoting and dismissing. Decisions in that regard are based on the needs of the State rather than on the desires of certain political elites. Professionalized civil servants need to be adequately remunerated for their services and to be given some autonomy so that they have career stability and can develop their expertise. Special laws should be in place to cover the terms of employment and to ensure that promotions take place internally (Cho and others, 2013). In the Arab world, recruitment methods in many States are based on kinship

and loyalty. One study demonstrated that systems of cronyism and nepotism permeate the recruitment of governance structures (Jreisat, 2009). It is widely known that in the Syrian Arab Republic, Alawites have been favoured over Sunnis, while in Iraq under Saddam Hussein, Sunnis were favoured over Shiites and Kurds. In Libya under Qaddafi, certain tribes were favoured over others while in Lebanon, sectarian connections continue to drive promotions. Low pay has made it difficult to attract experienced personnel and has forced civil servants to seek out secondary employment. Low pay leads to petty corruption and low levels of commitment to public service.

Autonomous administrative institutions protect these bodies from politicization. Political interference has also been commonplace in the Arab world, usually as a result of the actions of overly powerful executives, but in some cases because of the persistence of sectarian identities. In Lebanon, sectarianism has led to political interference in administrative institutions (Rose-Ackerman, 2008). Political affiliations (often based on sectarian identities) dominate the appointment process, with those appointed remaining loyal to their political patrons rather than to the State agency that they work for. Higher level administrators also do not delegate authority to subordinates who do not share their political views. Political interference also affects promotions in the Middle East. In Morocco, for example, despite reform efforts, pay is not based on performance incentives but affected by political loyalties (Bauer, 2019; Wafa, 2019).

Good governance has also been described as a set of initiatives to strengthen the institutions of civil society in order to make the government more accountable, open and transparent (Minogue, 1997). The World Bank and other

international institutions have been using the language of participation for some time now, and have advocated for initiatives that promote consultation (Santiso, 2001). Consultation with civil society in particular is considered vital to development and can help policymakers gain insights from those that had previously suffered exclusion (Masango, 2002).

In light of the above, the third pillar of governance is **participation**. The fundamental aim of good governance is to promote human dignity, human security and human development. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), a true test of good governance is the degree to which it delivers on the promise of providing individuals with the capacity to meaningfully participate.⁷ Just as participation cannot be protected without good governance, participation is also critical to strengthening good governance frameworks. The right to participate should not be tied to an individual's political affiliation, social status, communal group, nationality or gender. The right to participate should not have to be earned and should be protected and enforced by the rule of law.

As articulated in Sustainable Development Goal 16, good governance is strengthened when it is anchored in a clear conceptual and legal rights framework. For Sen (1999), rights and freedoms are instrumental to development while also being constitutive of development. Human rights are critical to giving people the capacity to lead the kind of lives they value. Participation is an important human right that should be prioritized. A rights-based approach to development stems from the fact that developmental change is not possible without participation, equity, accountability and

transparency. If the goal is to lift people out of poverty, there should be rights in place that respect everyone's dignity and individual autonomy to participate in the development process (Uvin, 2007). In granting people the right and space to participate, there is also greater focus on accountability. The right to participate not only offers intrinsic value, but is also instrumental to creating an environment in which development can flourish (Kaufmann, 2006).

Participation rights are also related to the concept of human security. Human security is impossible without participation rights, and a secure environment is a prerequisite for enjoying human rights (Benedek, 2008; Ramcharan, 2002). Participation rights are interconnected to the notion of human dignity, an important aspect of human security. Furthermore, if people do not enjoy the freedom to work with the government to assert what their needs are, it is much more difficult for the government to resolve the issues people face. For this reason, participation is a major theme of good governance, as is adhering to principles of equity in participation (Kaufman, 2006). Empirical studies have demonstrated that good governance can only be effective when rights of participation are respected (Norris, 2006).

There are several approaches to capturing levels of participation: those that focus on community or social participation, usually involving civil society, and those that focus more on direct citizen engagement with politics, such as through voting and local politics. These approaches are increasingly being linked to a broader notion of participation and citizenship. Thus, participation can be defined in two ways: participation is the process of taking part in the

⁷ For further information, see: OHCHR, *OHCHR and good governance*. Available at www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Development/GoodGovernance/Pages/GoodGovernanceIndex.aspx.

formulation and implementation of public policies (Parry, Moyser and Day, 1992) but may also be defined as individual expression through voting, campaigning and contacting local representatives rather than exclusively

through direct participation in the process of governance itself (Dalton, 2008). The Arab governance index takes both approaches into account, as explained in further detail in the next section of this paper.

2. Methodology

A. Methodological concerns

In measuring the various pillars of governance, the identification of empirical indicators that cover the various aspects of governance is a difficult task. A choice must be made to use existing data, collect new data or use a combination of existing and new data. The overarching aim however is to ensure that indicators accurately capture the variable that we wish to measure in a precise and unbiased fashion. Data must, moreover, be compiled through a transparent, well-documented and replicable process. The data used must be available across all Arab countries for all of the years needed so as to ensure that there is enough coverage to formulate the Arab governance index. Finally, the indicators must be used to measure the effectiveness of government institutions or their outputs, and should not be driven by factors that are exogenous to the aspect of governance that we are trying to measure.

In measuring complicated concepts of governance such as the rule of law, access to justice, accountability, effectiveness and participation, there are four types of data that can be used: observational data which only measure observable facts; in-house coding data compiled by researchers; representative surveys, which sample the judgements of ordinary citizens; and expert surveys in which country experts provide an evaluation based on their in-depth knowledge (Skaaning, 2018). There are pros and cons to each of the four approaches, which means and a variety of data

should be used in order to understand the particular variable that we are trying to measure.

For example, representative survey data or citizen surveys work best when researchers need to understand the perspective of citizens with regard to the issue of concern. Representative surveys can be complimentary to other types of data, particularly with issues that cannot be measured by experts, such as political satisfaction, political beliefs and levels of trust. In-house coding may allow for better inter-coder reliability, and facilitate standardized and detailed documentation. However, one of the issues with in-house coding is that expert knowledge may not be available in all relevant areas. The authors have chosen not to use representative survey data because the available data available do not correspond to questions posed in expert perceptions' surveys. Moreover, citizen survey data do not fully cover all of the topics of enquiry, nor does it cover all of the years that researchers may wish to look at. Additionally, those surveys do not contain the same questions on corruption and political trust in all countries in the Arab region. Survey data collection is both laborious and expensive, and as a result, surveys are often carried out on an irregular basis in certain countries, while data for many countries is unavailable.

There is considerable debate regarding the relevant merits of using observational data or expert perceptions data. Expert surveys are criticized on various methodological grounds: doubts are voiced regarding the reliability of the

data collected (coders may weigh and assess evidence in different ways); there are questions regarding how representative the data might be; and there are sometimes issues with survey bias, which can skew results. It is important to bear in mind, moreover, that perception surveys measure perceptions only. This type of data also requires the use of practice quality checks. A number of organizations have taken a clear stance in favour of observational data, which are assumed to be relatively facts based, less subjective and easier to quantify. Observational data can be used to measure specific results, such as years of schooling, GNI, government spending, and the number of doctors per capita.

In spite of these concerns, perceptions data offer a means by which data can be gathered on complex phenomena that are intangible or difficult to measure or in situations in which it is difficult to gather accurate alternative evidence (Martinez i Coma and Van Ham, 2015). Observational data in social science is not only often hard to come by (as there is often missing data for every year and country in question), but may fail to capture the realities of governance processes accurately. This is a persistent challenge in the areas of governance and human rights. For example, it is possible to assess the human rights situation in a country by looking at data on repression, such as protests that have been repressed or the number of political prisoners. The issue however, is that finding accurate information on these matters is a difficult task.⁸ Another way of measuring human rights is to look at constitutions, but this is problematic

formulating an index because the results are likely to remain relatively static over time.

Transforming a concept into a measurement gives rise to numerous challenges. Measurements must be grounded in shared concepts in order to be scientific. Concepts need to match as closely as possible to what is being measured. Measuring important aspects of governance, including participation rights and the rule of law, with a view to accurately capturing those concepts, is a particularly difficult task. What is often done instead is to use proxy measures of observational data that do not accurately capture the concept being investigated. If one wants to examine a specific outcome of governance, observational data measurements offer many advantages, as they measure specific actions and outcomes. Objective data can be used to ascertain exact figures in ways that subjective indicators cannot. But as objective indicators are only measuring a narrow type of phenomenon (such as the number of potholes in a street), It is necessary to extrapolate from that data in order to ascertain whether governance is good or poor.

Using observational data alone may also direct investigators to the wrong outcomes. Observational data on the number of violent protests that have taken place could be used to measure government legitimacy, but the absence of violent protests does not necessarily mean that a government is legitimate as it could just mean that citizens live in fear of the security apparatus and are reluctant to take part in

⁸ There is also a misnomer that observational data are, by default, unbiased, reliable and transparent. Observational data are contingent upon there being complete and transparent public records of various dimensions of a concept. However, observational data are not always completely open to public scrutiny. There can also be irregularities in the data if they come from governments. Indeed, governments often have a political or other incentive to alter the data they are asked to provide.

protests. Observational methods could be used to measure democracy by only looking at instances of turnover in power of the executive through regular elections. However, this on its own may fail to capture the relative strength of democracies that continue to elect the same party, as is the case in Japan or Botswana. There could also be a change in power from one government to the next, but this does not necessarily mean that a country has shifted from autocracy to democracy. As such, it may be hard to understand, relying on observational data alone, the cause of that outcome. Take voter turnout, for example, which is often used as a measurement of the quality of democracy. If a country experiences low voter turnout in one election, is this due to democratic backsliding or to overall satisfaction with the incumbent, who may be perceived as likely to win an election in a landslide?⁹ Other factors could also be at play. In 2020, the United States had the highest voter turnout in a presidential election since 1960, in a context of notable democratic backsliding.

Additionally, because observational measures are so specific, they may fail to completely capture broad concepts. Only using voter turnout to measure the quality of a democracy will fail to measure other important aspects of democracy. Observational indicators are very useful and helpful in measuring certain aspects of governance but they do not encapsulate all its aspects. Perceptions data are important in ensuring that there is content validity, or in evaluating the extent to which indicators capture the true nature of the concept being measured. Subjective indicators also have an

advantage in that they can capture greater complexity and the interaction of different actors in governance (Golden and Picci, 2006).

Measuring any type of phenomena requires a certain degree of judgement. Constitutions, rules and laws can say one thing, but may play out very differently for citizens in practice. Citizens and the media may also self-censor, even if the laws stipulate that civil liberties are protected. Observational data also depend on researchers exercising some judgement. For example, although observational data can tell us whether an election has occurred, judgement calls need to be made regarding how free and fair that election was in practice. It is virtually impossible to capture every important aspect of governance without relying on judgements and perceptions to some extent. Another strength of perceptions data is that expert surveys capture the view of individuals with significant knowledge of their areas of expertise. Experts may also be able to provide estimates in cases where limited information and evidence are available.¹⁰

Recent studies have also shown that there is significant congruence between mass perceptions of corruption and elite perceptions (Charron, 2016). Perceptions data can be valid provided that surveys are designed carefully and cross checks are made. In that regard, significant improvements have been made in the techniques used. Take corruption surveys for example: many critics have claimed that the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), compiled by Transparency International, suffers from too many methodological issues to be considered

⁹ In the 1996 United States presidential election, the incumbent Democratic President, Bill Clinton, had a relatively high approval rating and was perceived as very likely to win in a landslide in the Electoral College. Turnout in the election was the lowest since 1924 and stood at under 50 per cent.

¹⁰ The Varieties of Democracy data set uses multiple (five or more) experts per country each year, and uses a range of experts to complete surveys in different knowledge areas.

valid, namely that it relies on the perceptions of experts rather than the views of the public to assess levels of corruption. But many perceptions indicators have been found to be robustly correlated with empirical evidence, especially when the standard errors of both are taken into account (Kaufmann, Kraay, and Mastruzzi, 2007). Others have concurred that, despite the CPI data set being based on perceptions, key subjective indicators are highly correlated with narrow objective indicators, as well as outcomes associated with less entrenched corruption (including trust in government). This makes it difficult to argue that objective indicators have a “validity-based” comparative advantage (Hamilton and Hammer, 2018; Olken, 2009).

B. Varieties of Democracy data set

In capturing what we mean by governance, such as the rule of law, access to justice, and participation, the authors have relied on data contained in the Varieties of Democracy data set, which uses expert perceptions data to provide an overarching view of the concept of governance. The data set aligns closely with the concepts described. The authors have focused on ensuring a high level of content validity and the use of reliable data. Expert surveys/perceptions data is the only data that fully captures the issues examined. It is possible to complement efforts to measure the processes of good governance with observational data, which can help validate results and suggest avenues for future inquiry.¹¹

The Varieties of Democracy data set addresses many of the methodological issues outlined above and provides consistent and reliable data that can be used to measure the principles and processes of good governance. The authors chose to use indicators from the same data sets in order to ensure continuity, and also to ensure that the same coding process was used throughout the exercise. The data set has received accolades for accuracy and reliability, and when checked against other data sets has demonstrated high levels of congruence (Gerring and others, 2020; Lindberg and others, 2014; Lindberg and Medzihorsky, 2020; McMann and others, 2016). An in-depth study that investigated data sets using other qualitative indicators, found a high level of congruence with the Varieties of Democracy dataset (Fariss, 2019).

The Varieties of Democracy data set has also been used because it asks the same questions over time and across countries to similar groups of respondents. This ensures that there are reliable data sets across a large number of countries. It is critical in comparative work to have consistent sets of data across countries and over time and significant challenges arise if the value of the measurement changes. For example, if researchers wish to investigate reconstruction costs with a view to inferring the likelihood of bribes being paid or resources being wasted, unreliable results may be obtained if the factors that determine costs are not controlled for.

The Varieties of Democracy data set has developed a measurement model that

¹¹ Future projects will look at objective indicators of governance to cross check the results obtained. Perception data may be able to measure broad governance issues, but objective indicators can be used to narrow in on select outputs of governance. There is growing consensus that both types of indicators can be valid and consistent, and it may be important for both types of indicator to be used so that data can be cross checked (Hamilton and Hammer, 2018).

minimizes coder error as much as possible and addresses some of the issues of comparability over time across different countries. It is compiled on the basis of data collected by 170 country coordinators from over 2,800 country experts, and, with over 18 million data points, is currently one of the world's largest social science data collection projects. The data set is used by many organizations, including the World Bank, UNDP and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. The indicators chosen are discussed in more detail in the following section of this paper.

C. Indicators

In social science, indicators are developed to link theoretical concepts and facts and to build a bridge between observable and unobservable properties. The authors have selected indicators from the Varieties of Democracy data set because it covers all the countries in the region and all of the years desired (from 1900 to present). It is also closely aligned with the concepts we wish to measure and makes extensive use of experts in the field. The data set also uses a reliable and unbiased process to recruit and work with coders and to synthesize the data collected.¹² Furthermore, the data set focuses on the specific characteristics of the concepts that need to be measured. Most quantitative analysis that links governance to development outcomes has relied on broad and subjective indicators of corruption and the rule of law (Knack and Keefer, 1995; Knack, Kugler and Manning, 2003). The authors made use of disaggregated measures of the rule of law to capture more specific aspects of that concept

and also relied on multiple indicators in order to reduce the impact of idiosyncratic measurement errors. An overview of that process is provided in table 1.

Pillar one of the index is informed by Varieties of Democracy data set indicators on: transparent laws with predictable enforcement; higher court independence; lower court independence; access to justice; and access to justice for women (or whether women enjoy effective, secure and safe access to justice).

The first indicator, namely transparent laws with predictable enforcement, examines whether or not the laws of the land are clear, well-publicized, coherent and consistent with one another, relatively stable from year to year and predictably enforced. This indicator can thus be used to assess the strength and transparency of legal rules.

The second and third indicators of the first pillar, namely higher court independence and lower court independence, ascertain the independence of the courts. In the absence of impartial judicial institutions, it is challenging for the rule of law to be enforced without arbitrary interference from the government. These two indicators examine when the high-level and lower courts rule in cases that are salient to the government and how often the judiciary makes decisions that reflect what the government wishes, regardless of what the courts' interpretation is of the legal record. These indicators look at the degree to which the courts are able to make decisions without political interference. Those questions can be answered by understanding the decisions being made by the courts, but can also be understood

¹² The Varieties of Democracy data set uses coders who have lived in the country they are coding for many years. Some 60 per cent of coders are nationals of that country. Coders also assign a confidence score from 0 to 100 indicating how confident that they are about the measures that they are rating (Lindberg and others, 2014).

by looking at how well qualified the judges are and whether safeguards are in place to prevent interference in the court system through the manipulation of budgets, salaries, career paths and working conditions.

The fourth and fifth indicators of the first pillar, namely access to justice and access to justice for women assess whether the judicial system is accessible to all individuals regardless of their income, influence or geographic location (Prillaman, 2000). Accessibility is often measured by examining the legal aid and public defender systems and by examining hours of access. Access is also measured by the time it takes to get a case heard and adjudicated and the direct and indirect costs of litigation. In countries with uneven access to justice, the poor are often compelled to await their trials while languishing in prison. Inefficient judicial systems include those without sophisticated case management systems in place to ensure that standards are adhered to in the assignment of cases to judges and other officials.

Most data sets do not distinguish between judicial institutions and their outcomes or between judicial and other State institutions. This is due, primarily, to the fact that data sets are rarely designed to capture judicial quality, but rather to capture other concepts. For this reason, the Varieties of Democracy data set is particularly useful in that it measures institutional quality rather than just outcomes.

Pillar two of the index is informed by Varieties of Democracy data set indicators on executive oversight, legislative investigations in practice, judicial accountability, and rigorous and impartial public administration.

The first indicator, namely executive oversight, assesses how likely it is that a body other than

the legislature, such as a comptroller general, general prosecutor or ombudsman, would question or investigate the executive and issue an unfavourable decision if officials in the executive branch were found to have engaged in unconstitutional, illegal or unethical activity. This indicator makes clear whether or not the executive is above the law, and the degree of power that the executive has over other institutions.

The second indicator of the pillar looks at the power of the legislative branch as compared with that of the executive and assesses whether or not the legislature has the power to conduct an investigation that could result in a decision or report that is unfavourable to the executive if the executive were found to have engaged in unconstitutional, illegal or unethical activity. This indicator can be used to assess how personalized and centralized executive power is, and what horizontal accountability mechanisms can perform an oversight role.

The third indicator looks at judicial accountability, or whether judges that are found responsible for serious misconduct are removed from their posts or disciplined. Just as it is important to establish accountability mechanisms to monitor the executive, it is also crucial to exercise oversight of the judiciary so as to ensure that ethical standards of conduct for judicial officials are meaningfully enforced, particularly as many members of the judiciary are appointed rather than elected to their positions.

The fourth indicator of the pillar, namely rigorous and impartial administration, assesses one of the key building blocks of good governance. The indicator assesses whether public officials are rigorous and impartial in the performance of their duties. In other words, it

assesses whether public officials generally abide by the law and treat similar cases in similar ways or whether the public administration mechanisms are characterised by arbitrariness, biases, nepotism, cronyism and other forms of discrimination. The indicator assesses how the issues raised by ordinary people are handled by public officials. If a country has no functioning public administration, the country in question is awarded a score of zero.

Pillar three of the index, namely participation, is informed by Varieties of Democracy data set indicators on consultations with civil society, a civil society participatory environment, the participation of women in civil society organizations and elections to, and the power of, local governments.

The importance of consultations with civil society has been well documented (Graham, Plumptre and Amos, 2003; Roy, 2008; Warren, 1999). Local governance is included in this index because it has been cited by researchers as important to good governance more broadly. Local governance should, in theory, bring the government closer to the people, and it should help to encourage greater participation by a wide range of constituencies, including minorities, women, and other marginalized groups. It should help give these groups better representation, which will empower them to voice their views to inform public policy decisions that may impact their future. More extensive consultation with local stakeholders can help improve living conditions, enhance

equity and promote human security among all groups in society (Gaventa and Valderrama, 1999).

The first indicator assesses whether civil society organizations are routinely consulted by policymakers, and whether they are recognized as important stakeholders that should be allowed to voice their opinions on a range of issues.

The second indicator assesses whether civil society organizations are State-sponsored and involuntary, voluntary but few in number or with few active members, or diverse and highly active.

The third indicator looks at women's participation in civil society organizations. It assesses whether women are prevented from participating in those organizations and whether civil society organizations that pursue women's interests are prevented from active engagement in the broader civil society arena.

The fourth and final indicator assesses whether local government officials are elected and the relative power of local government. Local government includes local assemblies (or larger bodies of officials) but does not, for example, include the judiciary. The local assembly should be directly or indirectly elected by citizens; appointments are not considered to be elected offices. The indicator also assesses the relative power of local elected authorities relative to non-elected local government authorities.

Table 1. Pillars and indicators of the Arab governance index

Pillar	Indicator
Rule of law and access to justice Weight: 33.33 per cent Data source: Varieties of Democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparent laws with predictable enforcement • Higher court independence • Lower court independence • Access to justice • Access to justice for women
Institutional accountability and effectiveness Weight: 33.33 per cent Data source: Varieties of Democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive oversight • Legislative investigations in practice • Judicial accountability • Rigorous and impartial public administration
Participation Weight: 33.33 per cent Data source: Varieties of Democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultations with civil society • Civil society participatory environment • Participation of women in civil society organizations • Elections to, and the power of, local government

D. Methodology used to formulate the index

To formulate the index, the authors used data from the Varieties of Democracy data set for the year 2018. The index was informed by five indicators for the first pillar, on the rule of law and access to justice, four indicators for the second pillar, on institutional accountability and effectiveness, and four indicators for the third pillar, on participation. In order to generate an overall score for each pillar, the authors conducted separate factor analyses for the pillars in order to reduce dimensionality. For each pillar, the variables were loaded onto a single factor. Principle component analysis provided a systematic approach for determining the contribution of each of the constituent variables to the overall index.

Each pillar was then given equal weighting. It was assumed that each of the pillars had an equal impact on governance, as there was no

theoretical reason, based on the authors' review of previous studies on the subject, to believe that any of the three pillars was of greater importance than the others. The average of the three factors generated as part of the three different factor analyses was then calculated, resulting in a composite index score.

In addition to composite index scores, the disaggregated scores for each pillar were calculated. This enabled the authors to identify with greater precision the factors that were potentially driving the results. Disaggregation provided greater transparency and made it easier to test empirical relationships. Data was obtained from the Varieties of Democracy data set, which provides expert placings for every country in the world from 1900 onwards. The authors also analysed data from 2000 to 2018 to gain a broader overview of current trends, although relevant data is available for a much longer time period.

3. Main findings

A. Results

The authors believe that focusing exclusively on the output measures traditionally used to assess governance may skew results for certain resource-rich countries. Indeed, assessing governance on the basis of traditional criteria, including wealth, life expectancy, years of schooling and literacy rates, may not result in a score that correlates well with most people's notion of good governance.

What the Arab governance index reveals is that countries that do well on the index generally have low levels of corruption. However, there are a number of countries with repressive, unaccountable and arbitrary governments that are perceived to have low levels of corruption and score highly on certain development indicators. Indeed, despite performing poorly on the Arab governance index, some Arab countries, including Bahrain and, to a lesser extent, Saudi Arabia, perform well on the HDI. Overall, and as illustrated in figure 1, there is only weak correlation (0.512) between the Arab governance index and the HDI. That anomaly is explained in a later section of this paper.

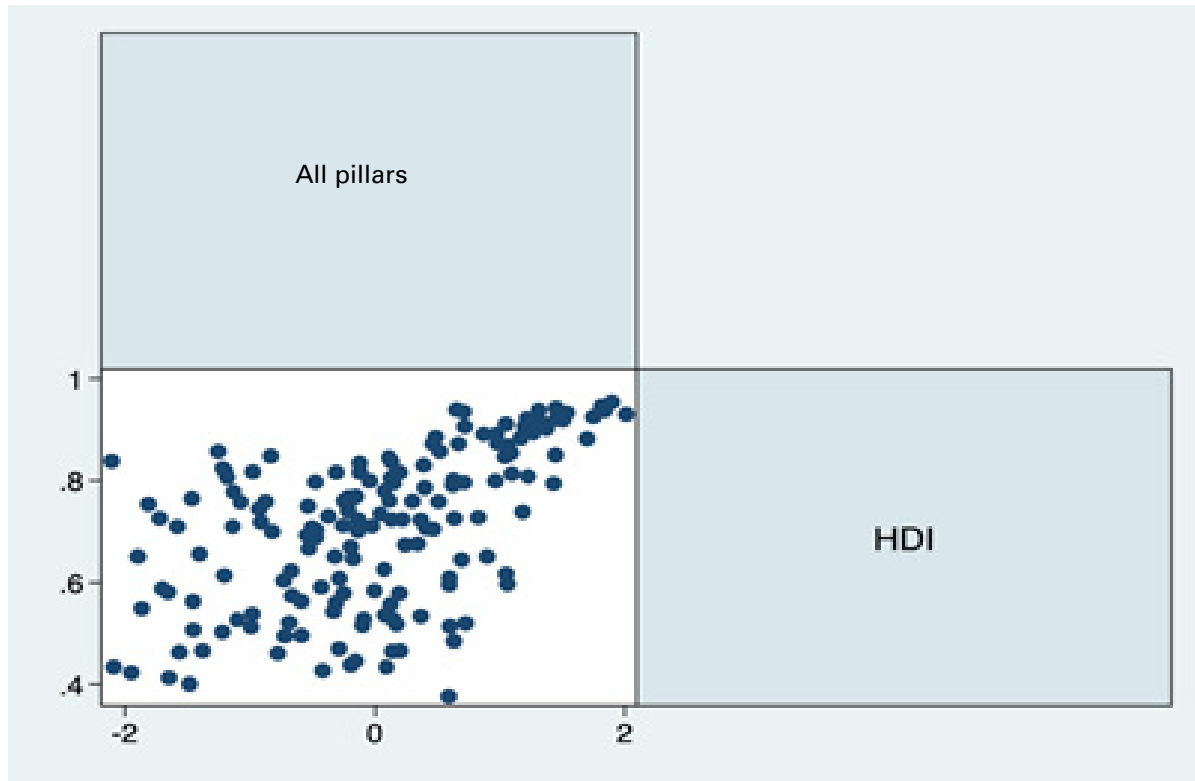
The top performers in the Arab region on the Arab governance index were Tunisia, the State of Palestine, West Bank,¹³ Jordan, Morocco and Kuwait. Tunisia performed particularly well on the rule of law and access to justice pillar. Only average Arab governance index scores were achieved by some of the wealthiest States in the region, however, including Oman, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar. Among Arab States, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, performed particularly poorly.

Not surprisingly, many countries with the highest HDI scores at the global level also score well if their data is fed into the Arab governance index. Those countries include Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. In fact, 13 out of 15 of the top HDI performers worldwide were among the top 15 performers on the Arab governance index in 2018.¹⁴ The performance of Arab States and other countries is illustrated in table 4 and table 5. The tables are colour coded, with the best quartile for each sample in green followed by yellow, orange and, lastly, red.

¹³ The results for the State of Palestine, West Bank were based on only two pillars, as incomplete data were available to inform the second pillar, namely institutional accountability and effectiveness.

¹⁴ Costa Rica and Estonia were in the top 15 countries when ranked on the basis of the Arab governance index, but were not when ranked on the basis of the HDI. Hong Kong, China and Singapore were in the top 15 countries according to the HDI but not according to the Arab governance index. Singapore ranked in the top quartile according to the Arab governance index, with Hong Kong, China in the third quartile.

Figure 1. Correlation between Arab governance index and Human Development Index (HDI) scores, 2018



Source: Authors' calculations on the basis of Varieties of Democracy data.

The performance of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain is not surprising, however. They are both wealthy countries with high life expectancy and literacy rates, but both performed particularly badly on the rule of law and access to justice and the institutional accountability and effectiveness pillars (pillars that some other Arab countries excelled on). Governance in both Bahrain and Saudi Arabia has become increasingly personalized. In particular, the steps taken by the government of Bahrain in response to the Arab Spring resulted in a sharp fall in its Arab governance index score.

Egypt also performed poorly on the Arab governance index compared to its HDI

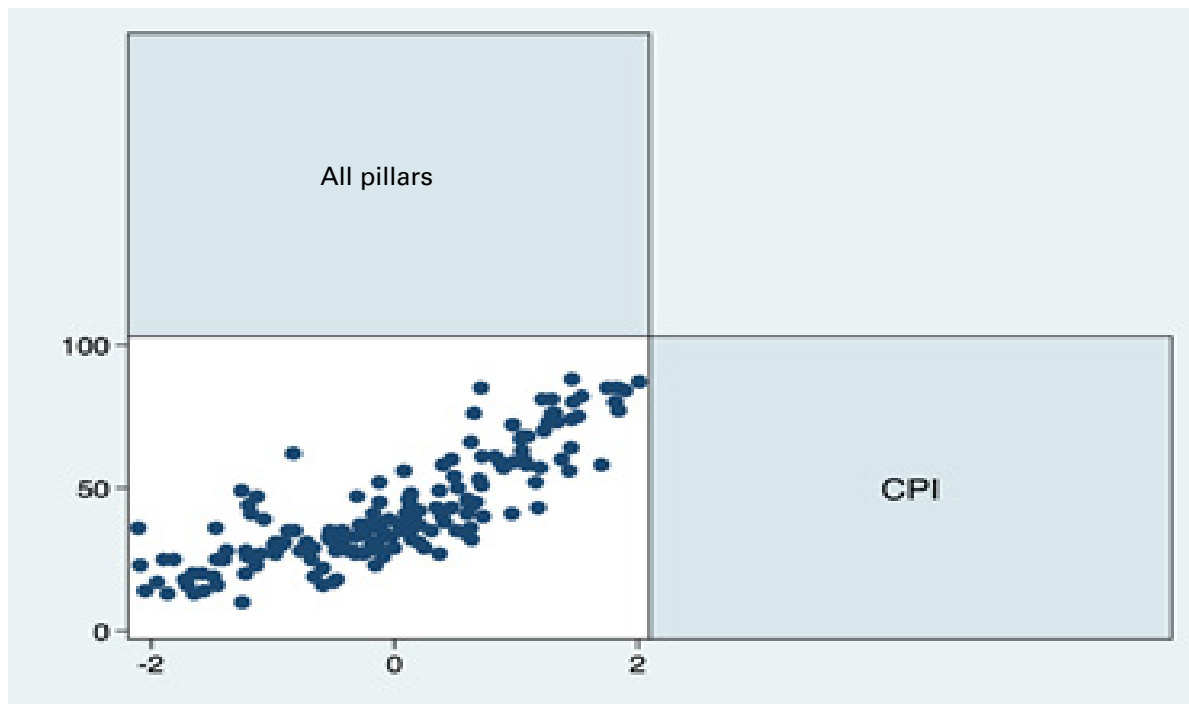
performance. While Egypt has seen its GDP per capita and economic growth rates steadily improve, with its GDP per capita now only slightly lower than that of Tunisia, poverty rates have increased in recent years and stood at some 32.5 per cent in 2018 (Armanious, 2020). Furthermore, when comparing life expectancy rates, Egypt has underperformed. Egyptians lived an average of 48 years in 1960 compared to some 42 years for Tunisians. Fast forward to today and life expectancy has stalled, with the average Egyptian living to 72.06 years of age compared to 76.7 years for Tunisians. Furthermore, literacy rates in Egypt have increased but so too have gaps between rich and poor. The discrepancies in scores is

explained by the fact that the Arab governance index captures aspects of the underperformance of the Egyptian government, whereas the HDI fails to do so. Moving forward, Egypt will need to decide what role the country's armed forces should play. In that regard, it should be emphasized that, while there is a perception among Egyptians that the country's armed forces provide stability, there are no checks on the military's power, a fact that significantly lowers its Arab governance index score (Transparency International, 2018).

As illustrated in figure 2, there is stronger correlation (0.7789) between the Arab governance index and the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI). This demonstrates that, as expected, there is a strong relationship between corruption and governance. In the Arab region, the countries that tend to perform strongly on the CPI also performed well on the

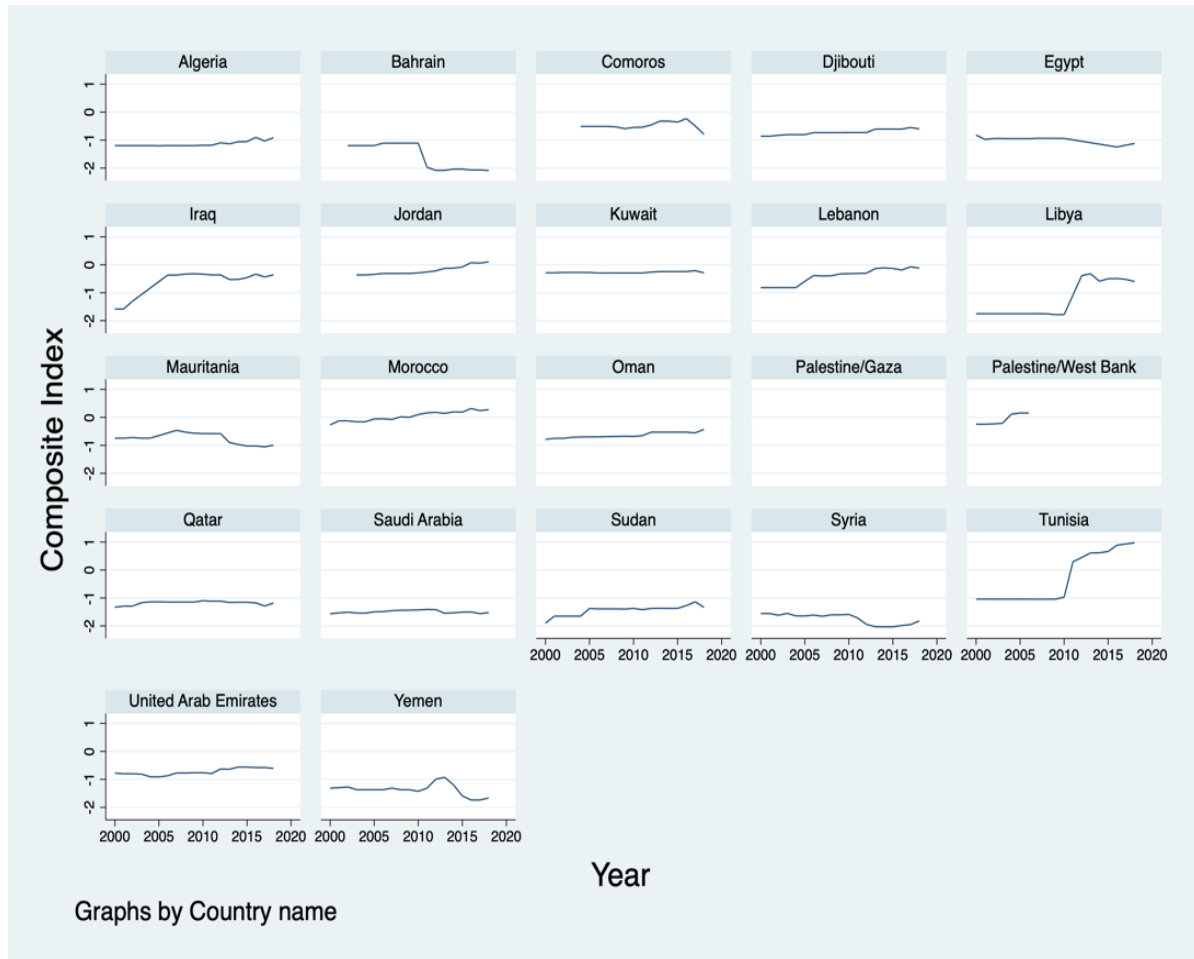
Arab governance index in 2018. The two glaring exceptions to that trend were Bahrain and Saudi Arabia once again, but Qatar and the United Arab Emirates were also ranked relatively highly on the CPI despite their weak Arab governance index scores. This is due to the fact that the Arab governance index captures other factors related to governance that go beyond the prevalence of bribery, including the strength of mechanisms that can be used to hold the executive authorities accountable for their actions. The other two Arab countries with wide discrepancies between their CPI and Arab governance index scores are Libya and Iraq, which both performed better on the Arab governance index than they did on the CPI. These two countries both performed poorly in terms of perceptions of corruption but achieved relatively high scores on pillar 2, due to the existence of mechanisms that can be used to hold the executive authorities in those countries accountable.

Figure 2. Correlation between Arab governance index and Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) scores, 2018



Source: Authors' calculations on the basis of Varieties of Democracy data.

Figure 3. Arab governance index scores (composite index of the three pillars) in the Arab region, 2000–2018



Source: Authors' calculations on the basis of Varieties of Democracy data.

As illustrated in figure 3, Bahrain, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen have all witnessed declines in their Arab governance index scores since 2000. The country that has witnessed the most significant improvement in governance is Tunisia, a country that underwent a far-reaching process of democratization in 2011. Despite some popular discontent, corruption and economic disruption, Tunisia has made significant progress since that date in all areas of governance, inter alia, through its adoption of an inclusive and progressive constitution,

strengthened respect for the rule of law and the establishment of oversight mechanisms through which the executive authorities can be held accountable. Democratic consolidation and the establishment of strong government institutions is a protracted process, but Tunisia has successfully improved all its governance mechanisms. Critical to the country's long-term success, however, will be its ability to eventually generate positive economic outcomes, reduce petty corruption and entrench a culture of inclusivity.

B. Discussion

The Arab region is the global region that extracts the most petroleum per capita.¹⁵ Oil wealth has been extensively studied as an independent variable in political science, with many researchers arguing that oil wealth increases the likelihood of conflict and can undermine democracy and governance. Resources such as oil wealth can generate significant revenues for States, which can use those resources to meet the basic needs of their populations and provide an illusion of stability. Many researchers have concluded, however, that rentier States are particularly vulnerable to corruption and nepotism and many of those States have established very weak extractive institutions (Aslaksen, 2007; Arezki and Brückner, 2011; Herb, 2005). Instead of developing robust institutions, oil-rich States often establish patron-client resource allocation and distribution networks, which create a strong sense of dependence among recipients. There is little incentive in those States to develop capable administrative institutions staffed by a competent, experienced, well paid and autonomous workforce.

Effective and efficient administrative institutions are rare in the Arab region and, thanks to revenue generated by their extractive industries, many Arab States have never needed to develop effective tax collection mechanisms. Many States in the region have, moreover, received assistance from abroad, including in the form of foreign aid, oil and concessionary loans. State security institutions across the

region have become increasingly powerful but States' administrative capacity continues to fall short of what is required. Following a period of significant growth between 1960 and 1975, the Middle East recorded the world's lowest growth rates between 1975 and 1990, undoing many of the region's earlier gains. Since 1990, growth rates across the region have remained stubbornly low.

Arab States receiving a steady flow of foreign rents have been able to make huge investments in State-owned enterprises, many of which are plagued by low levels of productivity. The result has been economic underperformance. Oil wealth has enabled political elites to solidify patterns of clientistic rule while also establishing a wider net of clients in ways that solidify political control (Kamrava, 2018). These patron-clientistic practices have been superimposed upon and reinforced by a modern administrative apparatus. This has led to overemployment and inefficiency in the public sector, low growth in labour productivity and a dependence on foreign labour. The possible exception to this trend is the Emirate of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, which has benefited from high levels of investment. Nonetheless, the Emirate still relies on oil revenues to survive economic downturns (Kamrava, 2018).

A number of more recent studies have, however, countered the view that oil wealth is an unmitigated curse, instead arguing that, provided they develop a set of inclusive political institutions and establish a series of checks and balances to hold its rulers accountable,

¹⁵ The countries with the highest production of oil per capita are Kuwait, with 721,575 barrels a day per million people; Qatar, with 500,000 barrels a day per million people; the United Arab Emirates, with 335,103 barrels a day; Saudi Arabia, with 324,866 barrels a day; Oman, with 217,178 barrels a day; Libya, with 159,383 barrels a day; Iraq, with 119,664 barrels a day; Bahrain, with 36,000 barrels a day; and Algeria, with 33,205 barrels a day. Egypt, the Sudan, Tunisia, the Syrian Arab Republic, Mauritania and Yemen also produce oil but at much lower levels. The only countries that compare in per capita production to the top seven Arab countries mentioned are Norway, with 313,000 barrels a day per million people, Equatorial Guinea with 125,068 barrels a day and Brunei with 257,959 barrels a day. All of these figures refer to oil produced in 2017.

resource-rich countries can reap considerable benefits from their resources (Elbadawi and Selim, 2016). The Arab governance index demonstrates that, while oil-rich States underperform other countries in terms of governance, within the Arab region it is the oil-rich States that are ranked highest according to the HDI. If the situation is examined closely, however, it becomes apparent that another factor may be driving that outcome.

In that regard, it should be noted that the Arab region is the global region in which there are most absolute monarchies, a particular form of governance in which the monarch is both head of State and leader. Absolute monarchies are to be found in Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. This form of government has resulted in policy stability and predictability (Herb, 2014). Monarchies sometimes earn high levels of legitimacy from their citizens and can demonstrate significant institutional flexibility (Herb, 2014; Menaldo, 2012). Monarchies in the region have been particularly adept at using formal institutions and constitutions to help diffuse discontent (Menaldo, 2012). They have also established structurally self-enforcing limits on executive authority and, in essence, are subject to certain checks on their leadership (Herb, 2004). Kuwait for example has had a parliament since 1967, which gives citizens a majority voice in determining economic policy (Herb, 2014). It is not wholly surprising, therefore, that, with the notable exception of Tunisia, the region's top performers in the Arab governance index are monarchies.¹⁶

But not all monarchies are structured the same way. Saudi Arabia and Bahrain perform poorly on all three pillars of the Arab governance

index. Indeed, neither of those countries have established mechanisms to ensure that no one is above the law or which promote universal access to the law. Bahrain, in particular, has coup-proofed its regime by de-professionalizing the security apparatus in order to preserve regime security. This has resulted in a system that appears more stable than perhaps it is in reality. In both countries, Shiites suffer discrimination at the hands of the authorities and are not granted the same access to justice as other citizens.

Some of the republics in the Arab region also face significant challenges in the area of governance. Certain republican regimes have had to deal with chronic instability and conflict, including the regimes in Libya, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. Most of the region's republics, many of which lack the revenues of oil-rich Arab States, have relied on strategies of repression, and have focused on the creation of militias and secret police forces rather than on attracting investment. Not surprisingly, good governance practices were not adhered to prior to the outbreak of the conflicts in those countries. The Sudan also recently experienced an authoritarian breakdown, which was not captured in the data used in this study, and it is too soon to tell how this will play out in terms of its governance scores.

C. Comparison with other countries

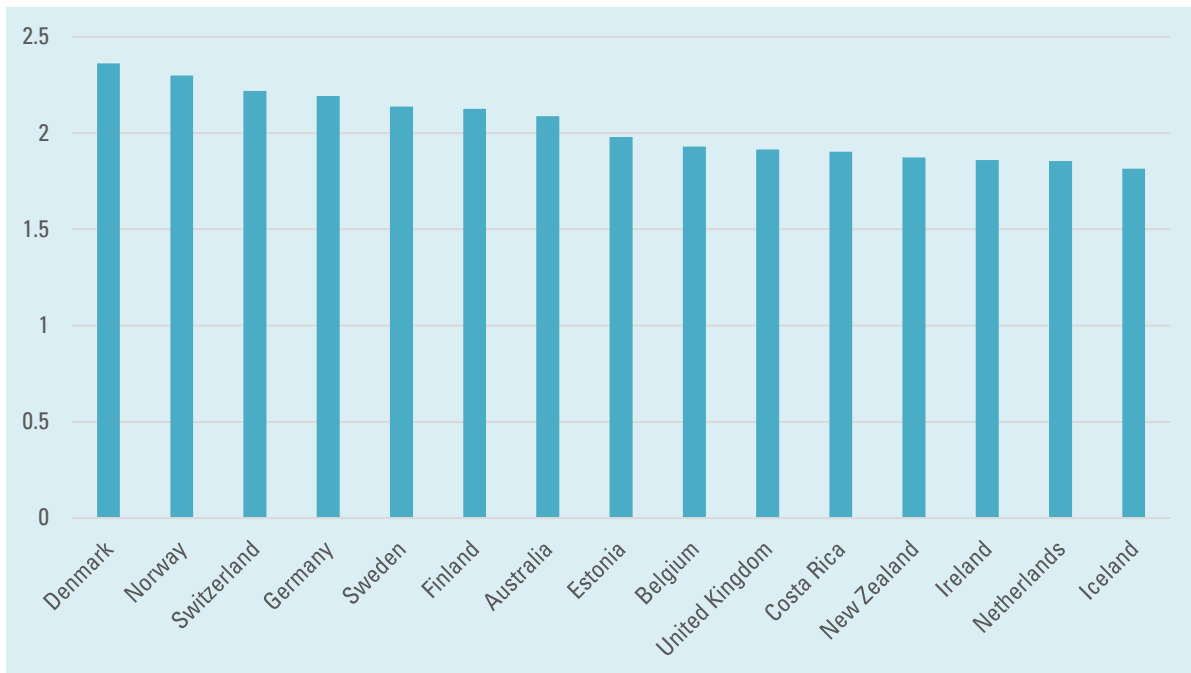
Compared with countries outside the region, Arab countries tended to be ranked in the lower half of countries on the Arab governance index, although four countries, namely Jordan, Morocco, the State of Palestine, West Bank and Tunisia were all

¹⁶ Palestine, West Bank was also placed in the top quartile in the Arab region, but no data was available to inform the second pillar of the index.

ranked in the upper half. All four of those countries outperformed other countries that scored much higher on the HDI. Yet only one Arab country, Tunisia, made the top 30 countries worldwide. On the other hand, four countries in the Arab world, namely Bahrain, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, were in the bottom 15 countries on the index. The rankings of the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen are not surprising, given how both countries are scored on the CPI and the HDI. Both countries are also involved in protracted civil conflicts. Saudi Arabia and the Sudan also scored poorly. As illustrated in figure 5, other countries that scored in the bottom 15 included Azerbaijan, Burundi,

Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of Korea, Equatorial Guinea, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. As mentioned earlier and as illustrated in figure 4, the top 15 countries included, primarily, countries that also performed well on the CPI and the HDI. The one exception to this trend was Costa Rica which performed much better on the Arab governance index than expected. But this may be because that index does not accurately capture a country's wealth but rather the processes that governments have established. Thus, countries that are not particularly wealthy but are developing sound governance processes may achieve higher than expected Arab governance index scores.

Figure 4. The 15 highest-ranking countries on the Arab governance index, overall scores



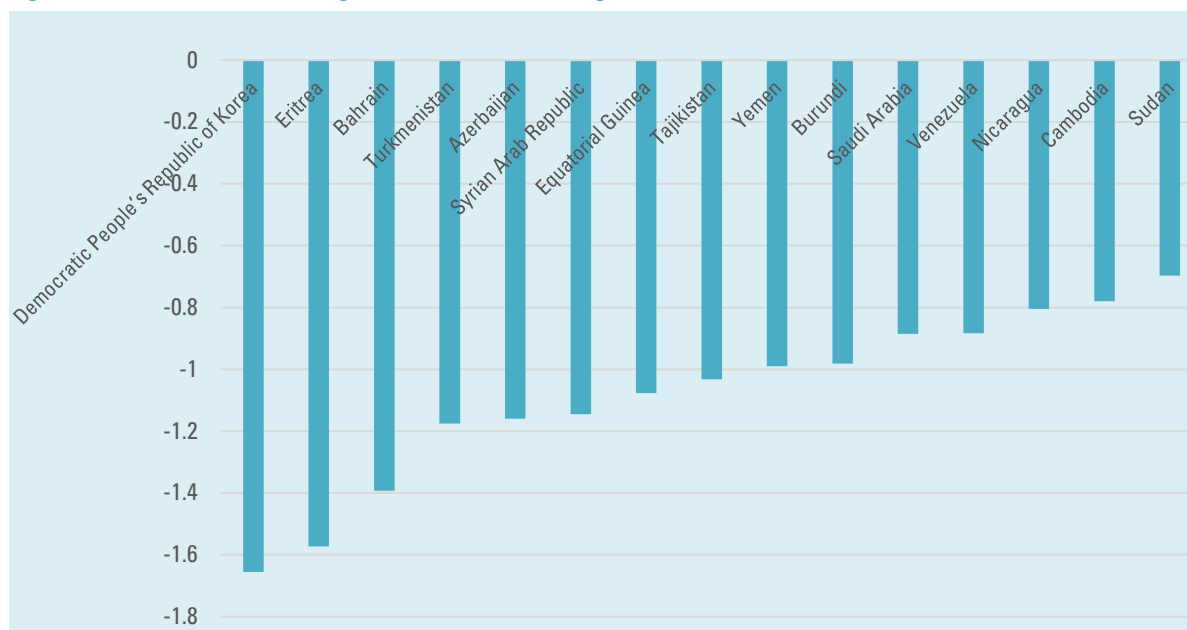
Source: Authors' calculations on the basis of Varieties of Democracy data.

Table 2. The 15 highest-ranking countries on the Arab governance index, scores for the three index pillars

Country	Pillar 1 score	Pillar 2 score	Pillar 3 score	Average of the three scores
Denmark	2.2773	2.6251	2.1867	2.3630
Norway	2.2007	2.4757	2.2183	2.2982
Switzerland	2.2145	2.2958	2.1493	2.2199
Germany	1.9445	2.5486	2.0832	2.1921
Sweden	2.3115	2.2444	1.8578	2.1379
Finland	1.9670	2.4061	2.0068	2.1266
Australia	2.2178	2.3498	1.6942	2.0873
Estonia	2.0207	2.2566	1.6627	1.9800
Belgium	2.0211	1.8671	1.8995	1.9292
United Kingdom	1.7732	2.0329	1.9360	1.9141
Costa Rica	1.4602	2.2718	1.9795	1.9038
New Zealand	1.9101	1.8862	1.8225	1.8730
Ireland	2.0390	1.7452	1.7932	1.8592
Netherlands	1.9759	1.9765	1.6143	1.8556
Iceland	1.8283	1.6812	1.9350	1.8148

Source: Authors' calculations on the basis of Varieties of Democracy data.

Figure 5. The 15 lowest-ranking countries on the Arab governance index, overall scores



Source: Authors' calculations on the basis of Varieties of Democracy data.

Table 3. The 15 lowest-ranking countries on the Arab governance index, scores for the three index pillars

Country	Pillar 1 score	Pillar 2 score	Pillar 3 score	Average of three scores
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	-2.0269	-1.2517	-1.6876	-1.6554
Eritrea	-1.8184	-1.5363	-1.3641	-1.5729
Bahrain	-1.8090	-1.5722	-0.7947	-1.3920
Turkmenistan	-1.1252	-1.2232	-1.1766	-1.1750
Azerbaijan	-1.2943	-1.5118	-0.6737	-1.1599
Syrian Arab Republic	-1.4538	-1.4360	-0.5460	-1.1452
Equatorial Guinea	-1.4882	-1.0884	-0.6541	-1.0769
Tajikistan	-1.4899	-1.5805	-0.0263	-1.0322
Yemen	-1.2158	-1.0913	-0.6633	-0.9901
Burundi	-0.7461	-1.2351	-0.9642	-0.9818
Saudi Arabia	-1.3708	-1.5977	0.3114	-0.8857
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	-1.4950	-1.1285	-0.0250	-0.8828
Nicaragua	-0.9482	-0.7358	-0.7285	-0.8042
Cambodia	-0.9904	-1.4906	0.1431	-0.7793
Sudan	-0.9462	-1.1237	-0.0212	-0.6970

Source: Authors' calculations on the basis of Varieties of Democracy data.

Overall, with the exception of Tunisia, the Arab region suffers from low levels of accountability and transparency. The results indicate that there are few ways to curb abuse of power by the executive authorities and ensure judicial accountability and administrative impartiality. Some countries scored well on the CPI, but badly on the Arab governance index. This may mean that the types of abuse of power taking place in those countries are not affecting perceptions of corruption.

Thus, when it comes to delivering solid outcomes in per capita income, literacy and life expectancy, the Arab world does produce reasonable results, particularly in countries that have high levels of oil production per capita. Nevertheless, those results appear to have been achieved *in spite of* the State and not because of it. Looking at how successful much of the Arab diaspora is, it is clear that there is huge potential in the region. However, a World Bank poll showed that the Arab diaspora feels that there is little transparency in the region, with 62

per cent citing this as a major reason why there was less investment in the Arab world.¹⁷ The poll also revealed that the Arab diaspora feels disappointed with how Arab governments

engage with citizens, with almost all those surveyed stating that they felt that Arab governments failed to treat their citizens as equal partners.

Table 4. Arab governance index scores, HDI scores and CPI scores, Arab region countries

Country	Arab governance index score	HDI score	CPI score
Algeria	-0.3202	0.759	35
Bahrain	-1.3320	0.838	36
Comoros	-0.1346	0.538	27
Djibouti	0.0384	0.495	31
Egypt	-0.4346	0.700	35
Iraq	0.2611	0.689	18
Jordan	0.6948	0.723	49
Kuwait	0.3685	0.808	41
Lebanon	0.4137	0.730	28
Libya	0.0832	0.708	17
Mauritania	-0.3855	0.527	27
Morocco	0.8406	0.676	43
Oman	0.2380	0.834	52
State of Palestine, Gaza	-.2854	0.690	N/A
State of Palestine, West Bank	1.24235	0.690	N/A
Qatar	-0.4923	0.848	62
Saudi Arabia	-0.8942	0.857	49
Sudan	-0.6870	0.507	16
Syrian Arab Republic	-1.1452	0.549	13
Tunisia	1.5143	0.739	43
United Arab Emirates	0.0426	0.866	70
Yemen	-0.9901	0.463	14

Source: Authors' calculations on the basis of Varieties of Democracy data.

¹⁷ For further information, see: www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2017/03/28/middle-east-and-north-african-diaspora-provide-more-than-just-money.

This brings us to one of the key narratives to emerge from this index: good governance cannot be proxied by outcomes of per capita income, life expectancy and literacy rates alone. Though these measures are a useful starting point for monitoring development, good governance encompasses more than just performing well on these three indicators. Good governance involves providing an environment in which citizens are best able to reach their potential. To do so, checks on leadership are needed. While it is possible that unchecked personalistic forms of leadership can deliver solid outcomes in some countries, citizens in those countries must rely completely on their leaders to pursue the best policies at all times. There is little openness about how or why laws are adopted and little societal and government input in decision-making. Many of the countries that performed poorly on the Arab governance index are ruled by highly personalistic regimes. The leaders of those countries face few consequences for any abuse of power and there

is little accountability for policies that fail to produce optimal outcomes.

It's also possible to achieve development in countries where the law is not evenly applied to everyone. However, it may not be clear to citizens what the rules are, how they will be implemented and if there are certain citizens who will pay more dearly than others. Development that takes place under these conditions is often skewed in favour of those who have access and connections. If citizens are not treated equally, not all citizens cannot make optimal use of their capabilities. Many citizens are, moreover, negatively affected by the arbitrariness of laws and regulations and are less likely to take risks or innovate. In that connection, the Arab governance index reveals that the achievements thus far achieved in many States in the region are indeed remarkable given the constraints that citizens face. Greater emphasis on improving mechanisms of accountability, transparency, justice and participation may help the Arab world unlock its full potential.

Table 5. Arab governance index pillar scores, Arab governance index composite scores, Human Development Index (HDI) scores and Corruption Perception Index (CPI) scores, all countries, 2018

Country	Pillar 1 score	Pillar 2 score	Pillar 3 score	Arab governance index composite score	HDI score	CPI score
Afghanistan	-0.3066	-0.0019	0.5893	0.0936	.496	16
Albania	1.2242	0.8864	1.0307	1.0471	.791	36
Algeria	-0.1050	-0.8147	-0.0410	-0.3202	.759	35
Angola	-0.0767	-0.4036		-.24015 ^a	.574	19
Argentina	1.1245	0.5265	1.4030	1.0180	.830	40
Armenia	0.6615	0.8014	1.0931	0.8520	.760	35
Australia	2.2178	2.3498	1.6942	2.0873	.938	77
Austria	1.7120	1.7487	1.8931	1.7846	.914	76
Azerbaijan	-1.2943	-1.5118	-0.6737	-1.1599	.754	25

Country	Pillar 1 score	Pillar 2 score	Pillar 3 score	Arab governance index composite score	HDI score	CPI score
Bahrain	-1.8090	-1.5722	-0.7947	-1.3929	.838	36
Bangladesh	-0.7642	-0.8155	0.9798	-0.2000	.614	26
Barbados	1.8103	1.2476	0.8111	1.2897	.813	68
Belarus	-0.7417	-0.8524	-0.0453	-0.5465	.817	44
Belgium	2.0211	1.8671	1.8995	1.9292	.919	75
Benin	1.4294	0.8840	1.7421	1.3518	.520	40
Bhutan	1.4580	1.5131	1.2665	1.4126	.617	68
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	-0.0831	-0.0134	1.4845	0.4627	.703	29
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.5095	0.0457	1.0511	0.5354	.769	38
Botswana	1.1444	1.3674	1.4925	1.3348	.728	61
Brazil	0.6785	0.4234	1.0160	0.7060	.761	35
Bulgaria	0.8125	0.4568	1.5824	0.9505	.816	42
Burkina Faso	0.6235	0.4166	1.8900	0.9767	.434	41
Burundi	-1.4899	-1.5805	-0.0263	-1.0322	.423	17
Cambodia	-0.9904	-1.4906	0.1431	-0.7793	.581	20
Cameroon	-1.1054	-0.9809	0.0091	-0.6924	.563	25
Canada	1.7219	1.5790	1.9964	1.7657	.922	81
Cabo Verde	1.2518	1.4212	1.1546	1.2758	.651	57
Central African Republic	-0.4280	0.1357		-.14615 ^a	.381	26
Chad	-0.6977	-1.4373	0.2512	-0.6279	.401	19
Chile	1.1704	1.7773	1.5297	1.4925	.847	67
China	-0.5252	-0.7899	-0.2398	-0.5183	.758	39
Colombia	0.0975	0.2886	1.4301	0.6054	.761	37
Comoros	-0.0847	-1.0193	0.7003	-0.1346	.538	27
Congo	-0.5478	-0.9835	1.0701	-0.1537	.608	19
Costa Rica	1.4602	2.2718	1.9795	1.9038	.794	56

Country	Pillar 1 score	Pillar 2 score	Pillar 3 score	Arab governance index composite score	HDI score	CPI score
Croatia	0.7834	0.3457	1.5039	0.8777	.837	48
Cuba	-1.1613	-0.2773	-0.4545	-0.6310	.778	47
Cyprus	1.5387	1.2765	1.3657	1.3936	.873	59
Czechia	1.4826	1.1190	1.3944	1.3320	.891	59
Democratic Republic of the Congo	-0.7893	-1.0081	0.3028	-0.4882	.459	19
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	-2.0269	-1.2517	-1.6876	-1.6554		14
Denmark	2.2773	2.6251	2.1867	2.3630	.930	87
Djibouti	0.1022	-0.7062	0.7191	0.0384	.495	31
Dominican Republic	-0.3308	-0.6966	1.2584	0.0770	.745	30
Ecuador	0.5889	-0.2069	1.1310	0.5044	.758	34
Egypt	-0.0993	-0.6882	-0.5163	-0.4346	.700	35
El Salvador	0.0822	-0.2550	1.1488	0.3253	.667	35
Equatorial Guinea	-1.4882	-1.0884	-0.6541	-1.0769	.588	16
Eritrea	-1.8184	-1.5363	-1.3641	-1.5729	.434	23
Estonia	2.0207	2.2566	1.6627	1.9800	.882	58
Ethiopia	0.2467	0.0206	-0.2936	-0.0087	.470	37
Fiji	0.7523	0.5478	0.9035	0.7345	.724	N/A
Finland	1.9670	2.4061	2.0068	2.1266	.925	85
France	1.4688	1.3355	1.6789	1.4944	.891	72
Gabon	0.6392	-0.0784	1.5831	0.7146	.702	31
Gambia	1.3835	-0.0980	0.8960	0.7272	.466	37
Georgia	0.5924	1.0675	1.2850	0.9816	.786	58
Germany	1.9445	2.5486	2.0832	2.1921	.939	80
Ghana	1.3960	0.6562	1.1792	1.0771	.596	41
Greece	1.3586	0.8393	1.5867	1.2615	.872	45
Guatemala	0.2284	0.0189	0.9010	0.3828	.651	27
Guinea	-0.5817	-1.3423	0.7311	-0.3976	.466	28

Country	Pillar 1 score	Pillar 2 score	Pillar 3 score	Arab governance index composite score	HDI score	CPI score
Guinea-Bissau	-0.2284	-0.4572	0.6581	-0.6092	.461	28
Guyana	0.7146	-0.2489	1.0199	0.4952	.670	37
Haiti	-0.9073	-0.6964	0.6624	-0.5138	.503	20
Honduras	-0.4104	-0.0877	1.0779	0.1933	.623	29
Hong Kong, China	1.4723	0.6906	0.4855	0.8828	.939	76
Hungary	0.7623	0.3126	0.8764	0.6504	.845	46
Iceland	1.8283	1.6812	1.9350	1.8148	.938	76
India	0.6907	-0.1675	0.8036	0.4422	.647	41
Indonesia	0.7447	0.9436	1.5856	1.0913	.707	38
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	-0.4231	0.3231	-0.4038	-0.1679	.797	28
Iraq	-0.1996	0.1169	0.8660	0.2611	.689	18
Ireland	2.0390	1.7452	1.7932	1.8592	.942	74
Israel	0.6323	1.6400	1.2926	1.1883	.906	61
Italy	1.6696	1.5209	1.2557	1.4821	.883	52
Ivory Coast	0.2567	0.3967	1.1227	0.5920	.516	35
Jamaica	1.1985	0.9497	1.9088	1.3524	.726	44
Japan	1.4013	2.1107	1.2782	1.5967	.915	73
Jordan	0.6631	0.9316	0.4898	0.6948	.723	49
Kazakhstan	-0.3887	-0.7355	0.0870	-0.3457	.817	31
Kenya	-0.1823	0.5466	0.7523	0.3722	.579	27
Kosovo	0.2814	0.1565	0.8657	0.4345	.741	37
Kuwait	0.7908	0.3635	-0.0487	0.3685	.808	41
Kyrgyzstan	0.3641	0.9750	0.7901	0.7097	.674	29
Lao People's Democratic Republic	0.1788	-0.7596	-0.1400	-0.2403	.604	29
Latvia	1.8632	1.1987	1.5482	1.5367	.854	58
Lebanon	0.2269	-0.1239	1.1381	0.4137	.730	28
Lesotho	0.7038	0.5164	1.3310	0.8504	.518	41

Country	Pillar 1 score	Pillar 2 score	Pillar 3 score	Arab governance index composite score	HDI score	CPI score
Liberia	0.9253	0.2313		.5783 ^a	.465	32
Libya	-0.5481	0.4051	0.3927	0.0832	.708	17
Lithuania	1.5784	1.4191	1.6829	1.5601	.869	60
Luxembourg	1.5097	1.9233	1.3949	1.6093	.909	81
Madagascar	-0.3102	-0.2089	0.7920	0.0910	.521	25
Malawi	0.9545	1.1776	1.1704	1.1009	.485	32
Malaysia	0.9093	0.2115		.5604 ^a	.804	47
Maldives	-0.6911	-0.2631	0.3010	-0.2178	.719	31
Mali	0.0608	-0.0534	0.8418	0.2831	.427	32
Malta	1.3402	0.4969	1.1970	1.0114	.885	54
Mauritania	-0.3444	-1.0103	0.1982	-0.3855	.527	27
Mauritius	1.0725	1.2046	1.2658	1.1810	.796	51
Mexico	0.1424	0.3042	1.1993	0.5486	.767	28
Mongolia	0.7776	0.1720	1.0267	0.6587	.735	37
Montenegro	0.6144	0.0025	1.2997	0.6389	.816	45
Morocco	0.9437	0.5960	0.9820	0.8406	.676	43
Mozambique	0.5333	0.0105	1.3302	0.6247	.446	23
Myanmar	0.1587	0.6896	0.5275	0.4586	.584	29
Namibia	1.1182	1.1324	0.9088	1.0531	.645	53
Nepal	0.6542	0.6082	1.4600	0.9075	.579	31
Netherlands	1.9759	1.9765	1.6143	1.8556	.933	82
New Zealand	1.9101	1.8862	1.8225	1.8730	.921	88
Nicaragua	-1.3708	-1.5977	0.3114	-0.6857	.651	25
Niger	0.9277	1.1061		1.0169 ^a	.377	34
Nigeria	0.9529	0.6407	1.5709	1.0548	.534	27
North Macedonia	0.3325	0.0946	1.0773	0.5015	.759	37
Norway	2.2007	2.4757	2.2183	2.2982	.954	84
Oman	0.3656	0.2112	0.1371	0.2380	.834	52

Country	Pillar 1 score	Pillar 2 score	Pillar 3 score	Arab governance index composite score	HDI score	CPI score
Pakistan	0.0003	0.2365	0.9766	0.4045	.560	33
State of Palestine, Gaza	-0.6692		0.0984	-0.2854		N/A
State of Palestine, West Bank	1.2982		1.1865	1.24235		N/A
Panama	0.6000	0.5558	0.8709	0.6756	.795	37
Papua New Guinea	0.4082	-0.1908	0.8026	0.3400	.543	28
Paraguay	0.3942	0.1825	0.8590	0.4785	.724	29
Peru	0.5449	1.3448	1.4838	1.1245	.759	35
Philippines	0.4872	-0.1577	1.3718	0.5671	.712	36
Poland	0.7699	1.0166	1.0931	0.9599	.872	60
Portugal	2.1624	1.6228	1.4078	1.7310	.850	64
Qatar	-0.1229	-0.7098	-0.6444	-0.4923	.848	62
Republic of Korea	1.4527	1.7947	1.5196	1.5890	.906	57
Republic of Moldova	0.9250	-0.1250	1.2023	0.6674	.711	33
Romania	0.2386	-0.0162	0.8768	0.3664	.816	47
Russian Federation	-0.8652	-0.7458	-0.1392	-0.5834	.824	28
Rwanda	0.1959	0.7878	1.0220	0.6686	.536	56
Sao Tome and Principe	0.8836	1.1720	1.2814	1.1123	.609	46
Saudi Arabia	-0.9482	-0.7358	-0.7285	-0.8042	.857	49
Senegal	1.2176	0.8333	1.0157	1.0222	.514	45
Serbia	0.3985	0.3584	0.4171	0.3913	.799	39
Seychelles	1.2878	0.8396	0.6966	0.9413	.801	66
Sierra Leone	0.0897	0.3512	2.1059	0.8490	.438	30
Singapore	0.7033	1.5550	0.1753	0.8112	.935	85
Slovakia	1.1984	0.7185	1.5853	1.1674	.857	50
Slovenia	1.9711	1.6586	1.6697	1.7665	.902	60
Solomon Islands	0.6205	0.5010	0.3709	0.4975	.557	44

Country	Pillar 1 score	Pillar 2 score	Pillar 3 score	Arab governance index composite score	HDI score	CPI score
Somalia	-0.6861	-0.9569	0.0827	-0.5201	N/A	10
Somaliland	0.0875	0.1899	1.0695	0.4490	N/A	N/A
South Africa	1.1098	0.6987	1.4207	1.0764	.705	43
South Sudan	-1.4258	-1.0366		-1.2312 ^a	.413	13
Spain	1.8561	1.5552	1.5065	1.6393	.893	73
Sri Lanka	1.0447	-0.0213	1.1865	0.7366	.780	38
Sudan	-0.9462	-1.1237	-0.0212	-0.6970	.507	16
Suriname	1.1007	0.0400	1.3398	0.8268	.724	43
Swaziland	0.0704	0.1860	0.4218	0.2261	.608	N/A
Sweden	2.3115	2.2444	1.8578	2.1379	.937	85
Switzerland	2.2145	2.2958	2.1493	2.2199	.946	85
Syrian Arab Republic	-1.4538	-1.4360	-0.5460	-1.1452	.549	13
Taiwan Province of China	1.6499	1.3121	1.7310	1.5643	.911	63
Tajikistan	-0.7461	-1.2351	-0.9642	-0.9818	.656	25
Thailand	-0.3543	-1.7261	0.3703	-0.5700	.765	36
Timor-Leste	0.2896	0.7256	1.2461	0.7538	.626	35
Togo	-0.4777	-0.6586		-0.5615 ^a	.513	30
Trinidad and Tobago	1.6312	1.1666	1.6075	1.4684	.799	41
Tunisia	1.8355	1.3996	1.3077	1.5143	.739	43
Turkey	-0.6870	-0.8270	0.1449	-0.4564	.806	41
Turkmenistan	-1.1252	-1.2232	-1.1766	-1.1750	.710	20
Uganda	0.5688	0.1109	1.0611	0.5803	.528	26
Ukraine	-0.3419	0.1112	1.3822	0.3838	.750	32
United Arab Emirates	0.0886	0.3657	-0.3265	0.0426	.866	70
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	1.7732	2.0329	1.9360	1.9141	.920	80

Country	Pillar 1 score	Pillar 2 score	Pillar 3 score	Arab governance index composite score	HDI score	CPI score
United States of America	1.8763	1.4520	2.0269	1.7851	.920	71
United Republic of Tanzania	0.4683	0.6949	0.9693	0.7108	.528	36
Uruguay	1.7485	1.5704	1.9881	1.7690	.808	70
Uzbekistan	-0.9300	-0.5215	-0.3328	-0.5948	.710	23
Vanuatu	1.3939	1.5988	0.9941	1.3289	.597	N/A
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	-1.4950	-1.1285	-0.0250	-0.8828	.726	18
Viet Nam	-0.3830	0.1411	0.8201	0.1927	.693	33
Yemen	-1.2158	-1.0913	-0.6633	-0.9901	.463	14
Zambia	0.0744	-0.0770	1.4618	0.4864	.591	35
Zanzibar, United Republic of Tanzania	-0.2424	-0.1091	0.0626	-0.0963	N/A	N/A
Zimbabwe	-0.3884	0.0652	1.1511	0.2759	.563	22

Source: Authors' calculations on the basis of Varieties of Democracy data.

³ Countries for which data informing at least one pillar were unavailable.

4. Conclusion

Assessing the quality of governance is an important but challenging endeavour. Although previous studies have relied on a series of indicators to capture the quality of governance, the authors believe that, to measure governance effectively, a judgement call on how the State is performing is required. To formulate the Arab governance index, the authors selected 13 indicators that informed three pillars of good governance, namely the rule of law and ease of access to justice, institutional accountability and effectiveness, and participation. The index diverges significantly from the HDI but is more closely correlated with the CPI. Although it is already well established that good governance can lead to numerous positive development outcomes the index provides a degree of clarity as to why many States in the Arab world continue to underperform in the field of human development. That is not to say that development and improvements in health, education and prosperity have not taken place across the region, but it is now clear that a number of institutional factors are impeding further progress. In that regard, the wealth generated from the extraction of some countries' oil reserves should be viewed as a double-edged sword: on the one hand, the wealth generated has provided States with the revenues they need to meet the basic needs of their populations. On the other hand, however, it has stymied the development of effective and impartial institutions (Elbadawi and Selim, 2016). One

factor countering this may be the continued role played by the region's monarchies, some of which have successfully demonstrated a degree of institutional flexibility that has facilitated consensus decision-making and oversight of the executive authorities (Herb, 1999).

More broadly, the Arab governance index may also help explain why there are high levels of human insecurity in the region. There are countries that rank similarly to certain Arab countries in the HDI but have suffered less from conflict, instability and repression. In fact, although all Arab States have achieved a degree human development, instability and insecurity, driven at least in part by weak judicial authorities and the concentration of power in the executive, remain hallmarks of the region.

The Arab development index differs not only from the CPI and the HDI but also from indices that focus, first and foremost, on democracy. Indeed, the Arab development index was not developed with a view to measuring the quality of electoral processes and democratic transition but rather to assess key aspects of governance, including equality, justice, transparency, accountability and respect for the rule of law. Those aspects of governance are a useful starting point for further studies on regional development, particularly as further progress on democracy in the region is unlikely at the present time.

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