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Ruling with Rules: Electoral Institutions and Authoritarian Resilience in the Middle East

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RULING WITH RULES: ELECTORAL INSTITUTIONS AND AUTHORITARIAN RESILIENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

A Dissertation Presented to
The Faculty of the Josef Korbel School of International Studies
University of Denver

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by

Andrew Barwig

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Advisor: Martin Rhodes
ABSTRACT

What explains the resilience of authoritarian regimes in the face of regular competitive elections that ostensibly should promote democratic transitions? This dissertation examines both why and how parliamentary elections in Jordan and Morocco have served to reinforce these two Arab monarchies. In doing so, it develops a framework in which the degree of cohesion among incumbent and opposition elites shape electoral system design and, in turn, particular electoral rules structure mass political attitudes and elite configurations. The main argument is that lower electoral thresholds generate unique electoral environments in which patronage politics thrive and opposition-based politics falter, thus producing a decidedly uneven playing field. In the end, this study examines four additional case studies from the Arab world in order to construct a typological theory about the conditions under which elections reinforce or undermine regime stability and then discusses the policy implications for democracy assistance programs. This project is grounded within the classic and contemporary literature on the role of elites in democratic transitions, the design and functioning of electoral systems and the relationship between elections and authoritarianism. The research design is based on a comparison of “most similar” cases and utilizes a “mixed method” approach that draws from qualitative and quantitative data. The empirical analysis, which focuses on the 2007 parliamentary elections in Jordan and Morocco, is derived from intensive fieldwork in both countries.
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INTRODUCTION:

WHY AND HOW ARAB REGIMES CONSISTENTLY WIN ELECTIONS

The past decade has presented a decidedly mixed record on elections in the Arab world. At the dawn of the new millennium, initial signs pointed towards a continuation of competitive elections as part of a gradual liberalization in the region. While the liberation of Iraq in 2003 failed to unleash a democratic “tsunami” and even gave fodder to some anti-democratic sentiments, a “new reform ferment” had taken hold in the region (Hawthorne 2005). During the first half of 2005, elections in Iraq, Egypt and Lebanon provided further impetus for political change. Buoyed by scenes of purple ink-stained fingers in Baghdad and popular protests in the streets of Cairo and Beirut, some media commentators and democracy enthusiasts quickly labeled this period as the “Arab Spring” that would mark the downfall of authoritarian regimes across the region.¹

Just few years later, however, a number of countervailing forces seemed to augur the return of a long, cold winter under authoritarianism. Elections in Iraq hardened sectarian divisions as politicians struggled with the practicalities of sharing political power during escalating violence. Subsequent elections in Lebanon and Kuwait yielded political stalemates that neutralized prior democratic impulses. Egypt imposed a

¹ Interestingly, this catch phrase also became part of the political debate over the Bush administration’s democracy promotion agenda. See Jacoby’s column in The Boston Globe on March 10, 2005.
crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood and the secular opposition fell into disarray. Islamist parties in Morocco and Jordan were dealt serious setbacks after parliamentary elections in the fall of 2007. By this time, the early euphoria for democratic transformation in the Middle East was displaced by the harsh reality of deeply entrenched authoritarian regimes.\(^2\)

**Puzzle: Do Authoritarian Elections Matter?**

Although the “Arab Spring” was short lived and quickly forgotten, the resurgence of authoritarianism and its durability presents an intriguing puzzle in the face of traditional assumptions about elections and political change. Political scientists traditionally have afforded great importance to elections and, for better and worse, have put these events at the center stage of their theoretical propositions and empirical testing grounds. Some overreach in claiming elections represent “moments of great drama” for democratic transitions (O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986: 62) and emphasize the role of elections in facilitating the breakdown of authoritarian regimes (Linz 2000). In the context of the Middle East, Marsha Pripstein Posusney (2002: 34) argues that recent Arab parliamentary elections “create the basis for democratic activists to gradually chip away at persistent authoritarian rule.”

This line of thinking is certainly in tune with theories that claim “liberalization is inherently unstable” (Przeworski 1991: 58) and liberalized authoritarianism is a “halfway house” that does not stand (Huntington 1991: 137). Przeworski’s (1991) famous “thaw” principle, for example, refers to liberalization as “a melting of the iceberg of civil society

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\(^2\)This echoes the sentiment expressed by Brown and Hamzawy (2005) in the “Arab Spring’s” aftermath.
that overflows the dams of the authoritarian regime.” We should therefore expect that a
general trend of political liberalization across the Arab world over the past two decades
would have released democratic floodwaters. Alas, this has not been the case. Elections
may expose small cracks in Arab authoritarian dams but they more often buttress them.

Although it has become fashionable to credit elections with the resuscitation of
dormant civil societies in the “third wave” era, this study presents a less sanguine view of
these so-called democratic impulses and expressions of “people power.” Indeed, my aim
here is to illuminate the unseen realm of electoral engineering that reinforces traditional
forms of control and insulates the regime from electoral accountability. The literature is
replete with works that discuss elections in the context of political liberalization and
democratization in the Arab world. But less is known about how these elections have
become instruments of authoritarian maintenance more than catalysts for political
change. This study examines the conditions under which elections reinforced regimes in
the Middle East, with a particular focus on recent parliamentary elections in Jordan and
Morocco. Was the lackluster performance of influential Islamist parties and success of
pro-regime forces attributable to particular electoral arrangements? If so, can we identify
specific mechanisms that reinforce authoritarianism and forestall democratization?

According to the conventional wisdom, these are not difficult questions because
they assume a priori that these elections were significant. Put starkly, the “Arab Spring”
ever materialized because these elections were orchestrated events and their outcome
was never really in doubt. Adherents to the “electoralist fallacy” school of thought

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3 Among the most well known works are the two edited volumes by Korany, Brynen and Noble (1999).
4 Wiktorowicz (2000) makes a similar argument with regards to the concept of civil society in the Middle
East and a particular form of state social control in Jordan.
dismiss elections and conveniently relegate them as “window dressing.” It is difficult to pinpoint exactly where this myopic viewpoint originates but much of our thinking about authoritarian elections, and particularly in the Arab world, has probably been colored by normative assessments of the region and its compatibility with democracy. From single-party elections under communism to a closed-choice referendum on a dictator’s rule, skeptics can easily point to harsh repression and overt manipulation that renders authoritarian elections downright farcical. If some form of competition actually did occur, the underlying sources of authority were “walled off” within the political system. Popular analyses have lent some credence to these arguments by labeling them “façade elections” and arguing that, even in the case of established democracies, elections more often epitomize a parlor game among governing elites.

Although this perspective has powerful appeal from those viewing elections through a prism of democratic ideals, it has recently come under much needed scrutiny and criticism. In the paragraphs below, I highlight a number of political realities in the Arab world that challenge the dominant understanding of elections and pose a series of research questions based on an emerging scholarship that force us to rethink both why

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5 The “electoralism” argument was first conceived by Karl and Schmitter (1991) with regards to Latin America but since has been applied frequently to the Arab world. Sadiki (2009) devotes an entire book to what he calls “electoral fetishism” in the region.

6 British historian Elie Kedourie argued in his oft-cited book (1992) that there is “nothing in the political traditions of the Arab world…which might make familiar, or indeed intelligible, the organizing ideas of constitutional and representative government.” Stepan and Robertson (2003) also present cross-regional evidence that the Arab world suffers from a severe “democracy gap” that is unique.

7 Among the more egregious examples, Saddam Hussein received a near unanimous vote of approval only months before the U.S. invasion. Five years later, Myanmar’s ruling junta somehow won a referendum just days after failing to provide aid to its own population in the wake of a devastating cyclone.

8 Lust-Okar (2006, 2008, 2009), most notably, has offered various critiques of this view and highlighted problems in its understanding. My thinking parallels her important work.
and how such elections are held. I contend that if we want to understand incumbent electoral dominance in the Arab world, we must shift our focus away from crude forms of coercion and fraud, and instead examine the institutional mechanisms that tilt the electoral playing field decidedly towards ruling parties and elites.

**Questions: Why Parliamentary Elections?**

A number of empirical realities problematize conventional wisdom about elections in the Middle East. First of all, we cannot ignore that Arab regimes have devoted substantial resources to organizing ostensibly “free and fair” elections. Besides the financial costs associated with administering elections, a number of Arab governments facilitated relatively open debates and tolerated some criticism, initiated efforts to improve voter registration procedures and invited election monitors to certify the tabulation of results. In terms of this study’s focus, incumbent rulers have also established electoral systems that promote political pluralism. Why would kings bent on monopolizing power allow rules that effectively disperse it among competing forces? And yet why have resulting partisan legislatures strengthened the regime?9

The second reason our understanding is flawed is because Arab parliamentary elections actually are contested and do feature vigorous competition across the political spectrum, including legalized Islamist parties with militant offshoots that reject the legitimacy of the regime in power. Moreover, it is difficult to reconcile the notion that Arab elections are meaningless when they are in fact extremely meaningful for insiders. In this case, the critical questions are framed around the motivation and participation of

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9 Benstead (2008) addresses this question in her study of casework practices in Morocco and Algeria.
elite actors. Why do opposition leaders agree to participate in elections they know are unfair? And yet why do Islamists often succeed? Along this vein, a popular assumption holds that Islamist parties would sweep elections and be catapulted into power under democratic conditions. But Muslim voters are still routinely swayed by clientelistic appeals and freely choose to re-elect local patrons. Why do the potent mobilization capacity and social networks of political Islam still fall short?  

Finally, many preconceptions about the influence of political economy do not hold in the region. For example, we should expect that poverty and unemployment, which is endemic to many Arab countries and is particularly acute in Morocco in Jordan, would create fertile ground for opposition groups to unite behind a common platform based on systemic inequality and disaffection. Yet Arab socialism has lost much of its electoral appeal and coordination among opposition parties produces few tangible gains. On the other side of the coin, the Arab world is not immune from the pressures of “rising expectations” created by globalization (Henry and Springborg 2001). Rulers that have spearheaded neoliberalist policies should also expose rifts between a rising class of entrepreneurs and an “old guard” of conservative forces. What then explains the persistence of incumbent regimes in the face of elite ruptures and opposition coalitions?

Arguments: Authoritarian Elections as “Windows,” not “Window Dressing”

My core argument is that we must examine the so-called “rules of the game” to understand more fully why Arab regimes consistently win elections. Consequently, this study focuses on the role of electoral systems in structuring electoral behavior and elite

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10 Massoud (2008) asks this poignant question in his analysis of Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood.
configurations in Morocco and Jordan. To begin, I reject facile arguments that elections in these two cases are merely “window dressing” with the sole purpose of manufacturing legitimacy for the monarchy. Rather, I contend that various electoral arrangements actually provide a window into the levels of elite cohesion within these two regimes.

Tracing the logic of electoral system design in Morocco and Jordan, I develop an explanatory framework in which the degree of cohesion among incumbent and opposition elites shapes electoral system design and defines the parameters of electoral manipulation. In a comparative historical analysis of the two main case studies, I argue that cohesion among ruling elites and disunity within the opposition have provided the regime ample leeway to engineer electoral outcomes in its favor. I also contend that in the absence of these conditions, most notably when splits occur in the ruling coalition, the capacity for electoral manipulation is eroded and regimes more likely face zero-sum choices in electoral strategies. I later demonstrate that this model holds not only for Morocco and Jordan but also for a series of secondary cases in the Arab world. The choice of electoral rules thereby reveals the inner clockwork of the regime.

Although insights into electoral system design may present a window into authoritarian regimes, they only provide a partial explanation for their durability. Therefore, my study also explores the consequences of electoral rules for two distinct sets of political actors in order to shed light on the micro-foundations of political behavior. Based on a “within case” analysis of parliamentary elections in 2007, I posit that the electoral setbacks of the main Islamist party in Morocco and the electoral successes of pro-regime elites in Jordan can be partially explained by recent changes to electoral rules. The main argument is that lower electoral thresholds generate unique electoral
environments in which patronage politics thrive and opposition-based politics falter, thus producing a decidedly uneven playing field. Lower electoral thresholds in these environments thus produce a different incentive structure for voters, candidates, parties and parliamentarians.

An electoral threshold is loosely defined as the minimum number of votes required to win an elected office. Thresholds can occur “naturally” in the sense that they are a product of other variables in the system or they can be imposed “artificially” by establishing a percentage of votes required to win a seat. I am interested in natural effective thresholds as the intentional result or unintentional byproduct of changes to electoral rules. Higher or lower electoral thresholds structure the arenas in which political actors compete, the choices available to voters and the methods in which votes are translated into seats.

This allows a number of propositions to emerge. My first working hypothesis stipulates that lower electoral thresholds create environments conducive to clientelistic politics. My second working hypothesis relates to the influence of these factors on regime preferences for electoral arrangements. The third and fourth hypotheses relate to the consequences of lower electoral thresholds on the ability of voters to coordinate and the constraints on parliamentarians. Each of the four working hypotheses listed below are unpacked and tested in a corresponding chapter (in parentheses) of the empirical analysis that follows.

**H1:** Opposition elites, ruling elites and voters respond to lower electoral thresholds by making personalistic appeals or accepting materialistic benefits. (Chapter 1)
H2: Regimes undergoing liberalization processes often opt for electoral rules that lower thresholds in order to reinforce clientelism. (Chapter 2)

H3: Lower electoral thresholds negatively impact the opportunities for mass mobilization and the parameters in which coordination can occur. (Chapter 3)

H4: Lower electoral thresholds negatively impact the ability of parliamentarians to challenge patronage networks controlled by the regime. (Chapter 4)

Approach: “Structured Contingency”

In making these arguments, I am sensitive to debates between structure and agency and recognize that an attempt to explain political behavior and electoral outcomes based on institutional arrangements is susceptible to an excessive functionalism in which electoral rules must serve the regime in some way. While there is no electoral archetype in the region and key actors do not have perfect information in designing electoral systems, I contend that ruling elites increasingly understand how particular electoral rules function and how they can be used to reinforce traditional forms of control. Similarly, opposition elites also weigh the costs and benefits of electoral participation and sometimes do not fully compete so as not to provoke an adverse reaction from the regime. They may scale back their platforms and run limited candidates or party slates in order to protect their own preexisting patronage networks. My study thus operates under the assumption that rational political actors make strategic decisions within the context of elections, even if it leads to seemingly irrational behavior and paradoxical outcomes at the ballot box.

11 Many analyses of electoral participation in the Middle East do not assume that Islamist parties are vote-maximizers in the traditional sense. Instead, some suggest that Islamists practice self-limiting behavior and envisage elections as a transitory stage while their ultimate ambitions and democratic commitments remain ambiguous. See Willis (2003) for a specific example and Brown et al. (2006) for a broader discussion.
Although I attempt to remain agnostic in meta-theoretical debates, my analysis is clearly situated within the actor-centric church of contingent choice. I acknowledge that this approach is imbued with a considerable degree of voluntarism and that many contingency models neglect deeper underlying conditions. As Colomer (2000: 5) also points out, “much of its work focuses on a contingency of the outcomes which seemed to be attained almost by chance, rather than the rationality of the actors involved in such circumstances.” To overcome potential ontological and epistemological dilemmas, my approach seeks to balance the explanatory weight of elite configurations in assessing the decision-making processes of key political actors (namely the king).

Consequently, I adopt the “structured contingency” approach developed by Bratton and van de Walle (1997) in which political behavior is not just the consequence of structural precedent but also an independent social force and analytic factor in its own right. But instead of explaining regime transitions (as Bratton and van de Walle do for Africa), I seek to develop a novel and theoretically enriching explanation of regime stability in the Middle East based on a neo-institutional framework that examines the extent to which formal electoral rules reinforce informal politics of patronage. While ideational factors, cultural legacies and historical tides offer compelling explanations for authoritarianism, they also should not be used to impose a static view of the Arab world. Following the influential work of others,¹² I contend that authoritarianism has changed qualitatively in recent years as part of a calculated strategy by key political actors. If we are to understand political change and continuity in the Middle East, we must therefore

examine the decisions of these actors, their context and the incentive structure that motivated them.

This explanation enables me to transcend well-worn cultural arguments about the compatibility of Islam with democracy and overly deterministic arguments about rentier economies. Instead, it seeks to uncover one of the underlying mechanisms of control—how certain Arab regimes successfully manage internal relationships among key political actors by manipulating the “rules of the game.” I contend that electoral rules are not only engineered for regime interests to “win” and the opposition to “lose” but go much further in terms of structuring elite configurations and the type of opposition in the political system. Unified ruling coalitions and divided oppositions have a positive effect on regime stability whereas elite defections and opposition coalitions produce instability. My explanation for authoritarian resilience in the Middle East thus centers on the relationships and bonds among elites. The concept of “elite cohesion” will receive more sustained discussion later.

This introductory chapter has so far described the central puzzle of this study, spelled out the main research questions and highlighted my arguments and approach. Having sketched out the broad contours of my study, I proceed by specifying the scope conditions and describing the main variables of the model that drives it. It is important to note that the following section is abbreviated by design. Subsequent chapters will elucidate my explanatory framework in greater detail and describe the methods used to evaluate various arguments and test specific hypotheses.

13 I recognize that Islamist movements are collective actors that key targets for electoral manipulation. But political Islam itself is not the focus of my analysis and I do not seek to explain Islamist behavior.
The central aim of this dissertation is to investigate how electoral institutions benefit authoritarian regimes. More specifically, I am interested in a regime subtype which Howard and Roessler (2006) have called “competitive authoritarianism” because it recognizes, among other characteristics, that elections allow for a minimal level of genuine competition. This conceptualization presents an appropriate scope condition for my study because it does not allude to particular regional or cultural dimensions that could relegate any potential subset of cases as idiosyncratic. For purposes of convenience, I use “competitive authoritarian” and the more generic term “authoritarian” interchangeably throughout this study.

To recap, one of my main arguments is that varying degrees of elite cohesion shape the design of electoral systems which, in turn, help to reinforce regimes by structuring configurations among elites. Following Burton et al. (1992: 10), I use the term *elites* as analytical shorthand for “persons who are able, by virtue of their strategic positions in powerful organizations, to affect national political outcomes regularly and importantly.” This definition helps to differentiate different types of elites within society and their role with collective actors such as political parties. While the role of economic elites is vitally important to the study of regime stability in the Middle East and has been

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14 See the authors’ tree diagram (Figure 1) for a helpful illustration of various electoral dimensions.

15 Other conceptualizations such as “electoral authoritarianism” (Schedler 2006) and “monarchical authoritarianism” (Lucas 2005) tend to reify the “electoralist” and “exceptionalist” arguments.
addressed elsewhere, I focus on political elites because they are the primary agents associated with the origins and consequences of electoral rules.

At this point, it is important to underscore that I do not claim that some arcane set of electoral laws explains Arab authoritarianism. But, at the same time, neither I do fall back on historical legacies, abstract socio-cultural frames or nebulous social structures so as to “explain away” the democracy deficit in the region. Rather, I seek to illuminate the interaction of particular electoral rules and forms of clientelism within distinct venues of electoral campaigns and elected legislatures. Before describing how this framework unfolds, I first conceptualize several key terms and operationalize some of them.

The explanatory variable is electoral rules. Since so many studies of electoral rules have focused on their supposed “effects,” the first step involves moving beyond this terminology. Effects imply causes, which are often elusive and difficult to prove in social science. As such, this study focuses on the general consequences of electoral rules. The definition is relatively straightforward as electoral rules constitute the legislative framework governing elections that are codified into law but open to amendment by the political process (Norris 2004: 7). Following Rae (1971), I operationalize this variable based on three critical components of electoral rules: ballot structure, district magnitude and the electoral formula. The ballot structure refers to how voters indicate their preference: whether one votes for a single candidate, a slate of

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16 The following works have addressed the role of business elites in Arab politics: Crystal (1990) and Chaudhry (1997) on merchants in the Arabian peninsula; Vitalis (1997) on capitalists in interwar Egypt, and Bellin (2002) on state-sponsored development in Tunisia.

17 This marks a fundamental departure from other prominent studies of authoritarianism in Morocco and Jordan. See the literature review in Chapter 2 for examples.

18 See Drummond (2006) for an example of this approach.
candidates or a party; the number of votes allowed; and the ability to rank-order votes by preference. District magnitude refers to the number of seats filled at an election in an electoral district and is commonly described as single-member districts or multi-member districts. The electoral formula is the method in which votes are translated into seats and is classified into two major families: majoritarian and proportional. In short, majoritarian formulae allocate seats to those who win a plurality or absolute majority of votes whereas the latter allocate seats according to the proportion of votes cast for each party or candidate.\footnote{See Reynolds et al. (2005) for a more detailed discussion of electoral systems and their consequences.}

Clientelism is another key term. It has often been used loosely to serve as a “catch-all” concept and various forms of clientelism have been described in a variety of contexts under a range of disciplines. Therefore, it is important for the purposes of this study to be more precise and provide a definition of clientelism that applies directly to electoral behavior and outcomes. At the same time, a definition should not be so narrow and limited that it lacks general applicability. With this in mind, I am interested in electoral clientelism within the context of contemporary authoritarianism.

In Elections without Choice, Rouquié (1978: 23) neatly summarizes this form of clientelism as an asymmetrical relationship between two parties that involves an unequal exchange of goods. In this case, individuals of higher socioeconomic status (patrons) provide benefits to a people of lower status (clients) who reciprocate by offering specific forms of support. Under these conditions, competition for political office features patrons who provide access routes to material resources and patronage that can be distributed to supporters who have helped elect members of the party or preferred
candidates. The ability of candidates or incumbent elites to deliver patronage thus depends on their acquiescence to the “rules of the game.” Even when voters prefer an alternative to clientelistic policies they vote according to their patron’s preference in fear of being shut out from the perks of clientelism.\textsuperscript{20}

The empirical chapters examine vote shares for candidates and parties across electoral districts to infer the extent to which voters were affected by clientelist logic. Assessing the role of clientelism without individual-level data is admittedly an imperfect approach but cross-comparison of districts that feature different characteristics and levels of competition does yield some interesting results. They show that votes were largely dispersed across the ideological spectrum and range of candidates, thus showing the lack of strategic coordination that occurred in recent elections.

The third key term relates to the outcomes of elections in terms of regime stability. Many studies about Middle East elections disproportionately focus on the participation and performance of Islamist actors at the expense of ruling parties, incumbent elites and other pro-regime forces. While this analytical lacuna is mostly attributable to the infatuation with political Islam among many Western scholars and policymakers, there are also a number of methodological dilemmas in defining regime stability and then comparing it across different cases. One of the first tasks therefore involves finding appropriate indicators to assess the density of authoritarian rule rather than simply measuring the absence of democracy.\textsuperscript{21} For this reason, I prefer the term

\textsuperscript{20} See Lust (2009) for a more current discussion of clientelism in competitive elections in the Middle East.

\textsuperscript{21} I am referring here to scores assigned by Freedom House, Polity and the World Bank that all tend to measure authoritarian regimes in terms of their non-democratic qualities. See Howard and Roessler (2006) for more discussion about these indices.
regime stability because it provides some conceptual flexibility while narrowing the scope of inquiry.

Although many analyses of authoritarianism privilege the coercive apparatus of the state and other regime power structures (Bellin 2002, Cook 2007), I favor a definition based on the *cohesion* of elites and opposition actors. This conceptualization allows me to operationalize regime stability as a function of *unified* or *divided* configurations of elites as originally developed by Higley and Burton (1988). This binary categorization is admittedly crude but my purpose here is not to provide a precise calibration of internal political dynamics. Rather, I seek to develop a general explanatory framework for regime stability that underscores shifting power equilibriums across cases during distinct temporal periods. This framework constitutes the crux of my research design, to which I now turn.

*Research Design: Plan of the Dissertation*

To recap, my basic model theorizes that the degree of cohesion among elites and opposition actors shapes electoral system design and, in turn, affects configurations of these key political actors. It follows that unified elites and divided oppositions help explain regime stability through electoral dominance whereas elite ruptures and opposition coalitions commonly lead to regime instability through electoral miscues. Although both formal electoral rules and informal patron-client relationships produce incentives and constraints for political actors, my study is primarily concerned with identifying the electoral mechanisms that reinforce clientelism. As such, electoral rules
in this model represent both the independent and dependent variable and suggest a recursive relationship between elections and authoritarian governance (see Figure A).

**Figure A: Basic causal diagram of research design**

The research design has two distinct parts related to the origins and effects of electoral rules even though they are intimately related. The first part examines the conditions under which two Arab monarchies established their electoral systems and what motivated the regimes to change the “rules of the game” when they did. Chapter 1 develops an explanatory framework for understanding electoral system design and changes based on elites’ perceptions of power in an explicit and parsimonious manner. Chapter 2 then provides a background of parliamentary elections in the primary case studies and applies the framework based on comparative historical analysis of secondary resources. The empirical puzzle that animates this chapter is why these “most similar” cases employed different electoral systems at the onset of liberalization and then both enacted fundamental electoral reforms under new kings. It develops an explanation in which changes to the electoral system occurred during periodic shifts in relative power among elites and the opposition. In doing so, I argue that political actors made strategic choices regarding electoral rules that were embedded within the larger game of political
reform (Schedler 2006). These rules are thus mechanisms not only for the purpose of engineering outcomes and providing material payoffs in the short term but also for structuring partisan politics within the broader system.

The second part of the research design focuses on the consequences of particular electoral rules. Besides presenting a model for institutional design, Chapter 1 also develops an explanatory framework for understanding the effects of electoral rules and assessing their explanatory weight within prevailing clientelist structures. My basic premise is that electoral rules under competitive authoritarianism encompass two fundamental purposes: 1) to manage arenas of competition among different groups; and 2) to maintain political control over rival groups. In order to gauge the influence of electoral rules along these two dimensions, I adopt the model conceptualized by Pippa Norris (2004:14) in which “formal electoral rules (the independent variable) impact the behavior of rational politicians (the intermediate variable) which then exert direct and indirect effects on the electorate (the dependent variable).” My model theorizes that changes to the electoral rules shape the political behavior of political actors which, in turn, affects the cohesion of elites and opposition actors. Figure B presents a basic causal diagram with these variables.

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22 As Schedler (2006: 109-110) states, “...neither incumbents nor opponents will perceive manipulated elections as an ‘equilibrium’ solution that corresponds to their long-term interests. Rather they will accept the rules of the electoral game as a temporary compromise, a provisional truce contingent on current correlations of force and open to revision in the uncertain future.”
In Chapters 3 and 4, I apply this framework to a “within-case” analysis of parliamentary elections in Morocco and Jordan that occurred only several months apart in the latter half of 2007. In both cases, Islamist opposition parties were dealt serious electoral setbacks and a number of pro-regime forces scored surprising victories. These chapters explore the extent to which electoral rules shaped the incentive structure for candidates, voters, parties and parliamentarians. I argue the failure of voters to coalesce around Morocco’s main Islamist party and the successful incorporation of Jordan’s “new capitalists” in parliament can be partially explained by changes to electoral rules that lowered thresholds.

The empirical analysis is based on original research derived from intensive fieldwork in both countries. The primary methods for data collection included direct observation of Morocco’s parliamentary elections in September 2007 and key informant interviews conducted with newly elected parliamentarians in Jordan in July 2009.23 In

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23 In Morocco, I was invited to be an international election observer for the National Democratic Institute (NDI). The observer mission included briefings with Moroccan officials and representatives several days before the elections. I was dispatched with a small team of observers to the town of Midelt and personally observed voting and tabulation processes on election day. In Jordan, I spent one month in Amman as a visiting researcher with the USAID-funded legislative strengthening program (SUNY/CID). During my
both cases, I utilized qualitative individual-level information and cross-national quantitative data as a methodological form of “triangulation”. The lack of reliable district-level data and inconsistencies with available resources largely prevented a structured comparison between the two cases.24

The empirical analysis will address two related questions. First, under what conditions did these two monarchies seek to change electoral rules? Second, to what extent do these rules enable the monarchies to manage elites? Morocco and Jordan are ideal cases to examine the origins and effect of institutional choice because the two monarchies share many characteristics, with exception of their electoral systems, and both regimes arguably have become more entrenched through recent elections. On the other hand, Morocco and Jordan are somewhat idiosyncratic cases in that their durability can be explained by the nature of the monarchy itself and the pervasiveness of clientelism coupled with the symbolic power of the palace. With this limitation in mind, Chapter 5 extends the empirical analysis to a theoretical model for understanding institutional change and regime continuity in the Middle East. Four secondary cases help to assess the external validity of my model by identifying electoral mechanisms that were not effective in dividing the opposition and unifying supporters.

*Case Selection: Why Morocco and Jordan?*

The kingdoms of Morocco and Jordan share many characteristics yet they also

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24 Limitations in the data and findings are discussed in further detail in Chapters 2, 3 and 4.
exhibit variation in electoral system design and reform trajectories. In order to define the parameters of the historical background and benchmarks for assessing changes to electoral rules, I focus on factors related to their parliamentary history, liberalization processes, as well as the participation and performance of Islamist parties in elections. Table A summarizes the main similarities, which are subsequently explained with other works cited that provide further details.

Table A: Summary of Main Similarities between Case Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Morocco</th>
<th>Jordan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Onset of Liberalization</strong></td>
<td>- SAPs lead to unrest during early 1990s</td>
<td>- SAPs lead to unrest during late 1980s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Founding elections in 1993</td>
<td>- Founding elections in 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course of Liberalization</strong></td>
<td>- New king in 1999</td>
<td>- New king in 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Economic liberalization and political de-liberalization (2000-present)</td>
<td>- Economic liberalization and political de-liberalization (2000-present)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Islamist Parties</strong></td>
<td>- Moderate party (PJD)</td>
<td>- Moderate party (IAF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- First participation (1997) and high-water mark (2002)</td>
<td>- First participation and high-water mark (1989)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2007 Elections</strong></td>
<td>- Widespread disaffection</td>
<td>- Widespread disaffection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Electoral setback for PJD: Vote percentage (11%), seat share (14%)</td>
<td>- Electoral setback for IAF: Vote percentage (3%), seat share (6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Explanation of Similarities

Parliamentary History: Although the parliaments of Morocco and Jordan have different origins, their histories have many parallels.25 Both parliaments experienced

25 See Baaklini et al. (1999) for a more thorough survey of legislative development in the two cases among others in the Arab world.
brief periods of assertiveness after independence and during the early 1950s that coincided with pan-Arabism and indigenous nationalist movements. The parliaments then crossed certain “red lines” during the 1960s and 1970s, which led to their suspension and dissolution. The parliaments eventually reasserted themselves following brief political openings and experiments with multipartyism in the 1980s.

Onset of political liberalization: Economic crises acted as catalysts for political liberalization in Jordan and Morocco even though the two monarchies dealt with them differently. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, both monarchies were forced to accept austere Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) that alienated loyalists and emboldened some opposition actors. Later, when social, political and economic pressures mounted, a series of elite bargains were struck that led to the initiation of a government-opposition dialogue, enactment of a national charter and a revival of parliament. It is important to note that in both cases, the onset of liberalization that was deliberately initiated by the regime and coincided with so-called “founding elections” under new rules in Jordan (1989) and Morocco (1993).

Course of political liberalization: Morocco and Jordan are generally regarded as “success stories” in political liberalization during the 1990s because they allowed a degree of social pluralism while also maintaining political stability. According to Brynen (1999: 276), both monarchies acted simultaneously as both interested players and far-from-impartial umpires in the political reform process. When aging monarchs passed away in both countries in 1999, many expected the young kings that ascended to the throne to accelerate political reforms. Although the western-minded kings have pushed forward with economic liberalization, they have slowed down political liberalization and have even undertaken de-liberalization in some regards.

Freedom House (FH) “Political Rights” Score: Morocco and Jordan generally share the same degree of political rights according to Freedom House. The FH ratings process is based on a checklist of questions related to electoral processes, political pluralism and participation. “Political Rights” scores are measured on a 1 to 7 scale with 1 representing the highest degree of freedom and 7 the lowest. Table B compares the “Political Rights” scores between the two cases across time periods. The results show very little variation 1990 to 2008 in both cases with the exception of the year 1992 when Jordan decreased to 3 and Morocco increased to 6.

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26 See the book by Lust-Okar (2005) for an extensive analysis of the different responses.

27 See http://www.freedomhouse.org for the time-series data and discussion of the methodology. The “Political Rights” section also contains two additional discretionary questions for traditional monarchies such as Jordan and Morocco.

28 As Stepan and Robertson (2003: 32) note, Arab-Muslim majority countries received a political rights score that rates as “electorally competitive” in only 3 out of 434 possible country years.
Table B: FH “Political Rights” Scores (Averages in Time Periods)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Islamist party: Morocco and Jordan have both allowed moderate Islamist parties to compete in the electoral arena, achieve representation in the parliament, and even wield some influence in select ministries. One could also argue that the participation of the PJD and IAF has allowed the regime to control them while staving off democratic pressures. Indeed, the Islamists initially fared very well in parliamentary elections, which gave the regime an opportunity to recalibrate various laws and regulations for subsequent elections. As a result, Islamist parties in Morocco and Jordan appear to have achieved their respective high-water marks in terms of voting percentages and seat shares.

2007 elections: The most recent parliamentary elections in Morocco and Jordan were marred by widespread disaffection and apathy. In Morocco, voter turnout plunged to a historic low of 37% while allegations of fraud and the general malaise among the public resulted in a dismal turnout as well. Despite this electoral context, the political opposition failed to register any significant gains at the ballot box. Most notably, the Islamist parties in both cases suffered stunning setbacks in failing to meet expectations regarding seats in the next parliament. This so-called “electoral disaster” for Islamists has led some to speculate that the two parties have become internally divided. On the other hand, both electoral outcomes also include surprising success for pro-regime forces and well-connected elites.

While the research design is based on an analysis of “most similar” cases, close inspection of their differences is also helpful to evaluate alternative explanations for electoral system design such as historical factors, demographic and economic characteristics, regime coalitions and opposition forces. Table C below summarizes these main differences, which are also subsequently explained.

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29 See Brumberg (2002) for this argument applied in general to the Arab world.

30 The November 17 edition of The Economist labeled these elections as an “electoral disaster” for Islamists in Jordan.
Table C: Summary of Main Differences between Case Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historical Factors</th>
<th>Morocco</th>
<th>Jordan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- French colonization</td>
<td>- British colonization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Struggle for independence</td>
<td>- Negotiated independence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic characteristics</th>
<th>Morocco</th>
<th>Jordan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Population of 35 million</td>
<td>- Population of 6.2 million</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 56% urban population</td>
<td>- 78% urban population</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Berber minority (20%)</td>
<td>- Circassian minority (2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic characteristics</th>
<th>Morocco</th>
<th>Jordan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Larger economy</td>
<td>- Smaller economy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Agricultural sector</td>
<td>- Service sector</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- High urban unemployment</td>
<td>- General unemployment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Modest oil production</td>
<td>- No oil production</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>World Bank (WB) “Stability” Score</th>
<th>Morocco</th>
<th>Jordan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Slightly less stable</td>
<td>- Slightly more stable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Polity “Autocracy” Score</th>
<th>Morocco</th>
<th>Jordan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Average: 7.5 (1990s)</td>
<td>- Average: 4.5 (1990s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Explanation of Main Differences

*Historical factors:* Morocco and Jordan have different colonial legacies. Morocco was colonized by the French and remained a protectorate for several decades before gaining independence in 1956. Morocco’s first king, Mohamed V, was an integral part of the struggle for independence even though it spawned a nationalist movement that would eventually challenge the monarch’s legitimacy. In contrast, Jordan’s Hashemite monarchy initially ruled under the British Mandate and King Abdallah remained closely tied to his British allies up until Jordan received formal independence in 1949.

*Demographic characteristics:* One of the largest disparities between the two cases is population. According to 2009 estimates, Morocco has almost 35 million inhabitants whereas Jordan only has approximately 6.3 million. Despite having several large urban centers, Morocco also has a much smaller urban population (56%) than Jordan (78%). Morocco and Jordan are predominantly Arab-Islamic countries but have significant minority populations. Morocco’s Berber population (approximately 20%) is significantly more than Jordan’s Circassian/Armenian minority (2%). Jordan’s substantial Palestinian population should also be noted considering that the traditional East Bank Hashemites may actually be a minority in their own country.

31 Lust-Okar and Jamal (2002: 348) dispute whether this factor affected electoral system design based on the fact that Morocco used single-member districts and plurality rules until it switched to a proportional system in 2002.

Economic characteristics: \(^{33}\) Although Morocco boasts a larger economy, its per capita GDP ($4,500) is less than Jordan ($5,200). Morocco’s labor force is also almost ten times that of Jordan, almost half of which is in agriculture (45%). While unemployment levels are slightly higher in Jordan (12%), Morocco faces nearly 20% unemployment in urban areas. Jordan produces no oil while Morocco produces a modest amount. In sum, most of these differences are negligible but they do indicate that Morocco may face more acute economic pressures. Indeed, Moroccan authorities understand that reducing poverty and unemployment is key to domestic security and regime stability.

World Bank (WB) “Stability” Score: \(^{34}\) According to Figure C, Morocco is slightly less stable than Jordan (with the exception of the year 2006). The WB Score is a subjective governance indicator aggregated from a variety of sources and measuring perceptions of the likelihood of destabilization (ethnic tensions, armed conflict, social unrest, terrorist threat, internal conflict, fractionalization of the political spectrum, constitutional changes, military coups). Estimates range between -2.5 and 2.5; higher is better. This difference could be a reflection of prevailing demographic and economic conditions as described above. It should be noted that Morocco and Jordan experience relative steady levels of instability from 2002 to 2007 after some fluctuations.

\(^{33}\) These figures are also taken from The World Factbook.

\(^{34}\) This scale seems to be sensitive to terrorism and external events in the region so it is difficult to assess whether the regimes themselves are actually more or less stable. For comparison, see the website of UNDP-POGAR at [http://www.arabstats.org/indicator.asp?ind=12](http://www.arabstats.org/indicator.asp?ind=12) for a compilation of the World Bank data for the rest of the Arab world.
According to Figure D below, Jordan has experienced greater fluctuations in autocracy than Morocco. The trend lines show a steep drop in Jordan’s “Autocracy” score at the beginning of the 1990s whereas Morocco only experienced a gradual decline over the decade. It is interesting to note that Jordan then became more autocratic during the mid-1990s. The Polity composite variable is constructed additively from several other variables related to political participation and competitiveness. The eleven-point scale ranges from 0 to 10 with the latter representing a full autocracy. Jordan’s average score during the 1990s was 4.5 while it Morocco’s average score for the same period was 7.5.

Polity “Autocracy” Score: According to Figure D below, Jordan has experienced greater fluctuations in autocracy than Morocco. The trend lines show a steep drop in Jordan’s “Autocracy” score at the beginning of the 1990s whereas Morocco only experienced a gradual decline over the decade. It is interesting to note that Jordan then became more autocratic during the mid-1990s. The Polity composite variable is constructed additively from several other variables related to political participation and competitiveness. The eleven-point scale ranges from 0 to 10 with the latter representing a full autocracy. Jordan’s average score during the 1990s was 4.5 while it Morocco’s average score for the same period was 7.5.

The Polity IV Project covers 161 countries and includes historical data from 1800 to 2007 concerning regime stability, authority characteristics and transitions. The Polity IVd dataset features a new format in which the "polity-case" (rather than the "country-year") is the unit of analysis. That is, each observation (case) gives information for a polity over a discreet time period during which the scores on all of the component variables remain unchanged. See the Dataset Users’ Manual (Marshall and Jaggers 2009) for more information about the methodology. When “Autocracy” is subtracted from the “Democracy” score, provides the more commonly known “Polity” Score.
Implications of the Study

The central thesis of this dissertation is that electoral rules are an important but overlooked mechanism that accounts for authoritarian resilience. Electoral rules provide a window into the regime because they indicate perceptions of relative power among incumbent and opposition elites. The manipulation of electoral rules often shapes the behavior of political actors (as an intermediate variable) as it relates to participation and competition in the electoral arena. In turn, the “rules of the game” also influence mass political attitudes toward political actors and the electoral process itself. The principal implication of this study is that it contributes to emerging scholarship on authoritarian elections by focusing on electoral rules and how they provide a window into the inner
workings of regimes. This line of inquiry is important for both academics and policymakers for at least two important reasons.

For one, my study heeds the calls, both past and present, for scholars to investigate the micro-level dynamics of authoritarian elections and the systematic differences between them in order to distinguish elections that promote democratization from those that simply reinforce the existing regime (Linz and Stepan 1978; Lust-Okar and Gandhi 2009). In addition to the obvious theoretical interest to scholars of democratization and authoritarianism, this line of inquiry can help policymakers both to understand why autocrats invite international election monitors and to identify the underlying “rules of the game” that often render ostensibly democratic elections as fundamentally “un-free and unfair.” The concluding chapter discusses the policy implications of this study on election observation and legislative strengthening programs.

Second, my study engages the emergent literature on authoritarian elections and challenges some of the orthodoxy regarding electoral rules by explaining variation in two “most similar” cases and developing contingent generalizations based on other cases in the Middle East. My study avoids the abstractness of cultural explanations and seeks to demystify the phenomenon of Arab authoritarianism by assessing the relationship between elections and authoritarianism. As such, my study illuminates the “black box” of electoral engineering and uncovers one of the underlying mechanisms of regime maintenance: electoral thresholds.
CHAPTER ONE
EXPLANATORY FRAMEWORK: REGIME CONTINUITY THROUGH INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

By examining the resilience of two Arab monarchies through an institutional lens, comparativists gain a better understanding of why authoritarian regimes choose particular electoral arrangements and how they reinforce traditional forms of control. Yet their metaphorical camera cannot capture the big picture if specific objects are obscured. As I mentioned in the introduction, my “structured contingency” approach attempts to bridge an intellectual divide between structure and agency by focusing on the decisions made by key political actors (with the approval of the king) about electoral arrangements but recognizes that relationships among elites and clientelist interests structure these choices.

According to my model, electoral rules under competitive authoritarianism are designed to manage arenas of competition among different groups and to maintain political control over rival groups. A number of key propositions follow from this basic premise. They are:

1. Political actors make strategic choices regarding electoral rules that are embedded within the larger game of political reform.
2. Changes to the electoral system occur during periodic shifts in relative power among elites and the opposition.
3. The combination of particular electoral rules and general forms clientelism shape political behavior which, in turn, produces certain configurations of elites.
4. Unified ruling elites and divided opposition elites help explain regime stability through electoral dominance whereas elite ruptures and opposition coalitions commonly lead to regime instability through electoral miscues.
These propositions enable me to derive concrete hypotheses regarding the circumstances under which Morocco and Jordan changed electoral rules and how they impact regime stability. But first I explain how this model is needed to address a theoretical bias within the existing literature.

1. **Theoretical Framework**

In the following section, I briefly survey the literature on authoritarianism and authoritarian elections while highlighting the influence of neoinstitutional approaches on these research programs. Although their ascendency is important for guiding subsequent scholarship, I show how many important works privilege either formal or informal institutions and explain why a synergy between them is needed. I also discuss relevant theories on electoral systems and clientelism separately.

*Literature Review: Authoritarianism and Authoritarian Elections*

Explanations for the contemporary phenomenon of authoritarianism are at the forefront of a longstanding debate on regime types and subtypes, democratic transitions and non-transitions, and regime breakdowns around the world. Some of the early literature on political modernization during the 1950s and 1960s provides a conceptual starting point for the question of authoritarian resilience in the Arab world.

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36 The literature on various thematic components of authoritarianism is exhaustive. The purpose of this brief literature review, therefore, is not to provide a full account of all the relevant resources or merely to summarize the most salient ones. Rather, the aim is to frame the central question regarding the relationship between authoritarianism and authoritarian elections.
After an initial wave of modernization theory failed to account for variation within the developing world, social scientists began to re-examine the salience of structural arguments and the validity of linear trajectories. Scholars from a range of disciplines developed new approaches. Some abandoned the study of formal legal institutions (i.e. laws) and moved toward particular aspects of political culture (e.g. Almond 1960) to explain slow-moving processes of political change. Others loosened the definition of institutions to include class configurations and ideologies that chart historical pathways toward democracy or dictatorship (Moore 1966). Relatively few sought to recast the role of institutions in explaining why some countries experience political development whereas others experience political decay. Huntington (1965), most notably, argued that the existence of political institutions capable of giving substance to public interests distinguishes politically developed societies from undeveloped ones. He later asserted that aspects of the so-called “modernization process” actually led to a deepening pattern of statist authoritarianism (1968).

During the 1970s, this line of thinking heavily influenced the study of political underdevelopment in particular regions. In the case of Latin America, for example, social and economic modernization in the context of delayed development led to a form of “bureaucratic authoritarianism” rather than democracy (O’Donnell 1979). Although this concept captured many empirical realities, “bureaucratic authoritarianism” did not apply particularly well to the Middle East or serve as a tool for comparative analysis. Instead, studies of Middle East politics increasingly focused on the exceptionalities and

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37 O’Donnell (1979) originally argued that social and economic modernization in the context of delayed development is more likely to lead to authoritarianism than democracy with special attention to the cases of Argentina and Brazil. Collier (1979) later questioned its applicability to other regions.
features unique to the region. The dominant narrative was that many Arab states emerged from political turbulence to a period of relative stability but still suffer from a “legitimacy shortage.” As a result, the introduction of multiparty elections in the region was linked reflexively with efforts to enhance legitimacy. Returning to the body of influential work by Huntington, he also postulated the well-known “king’s dilemma” in traditional monarchies such as Morocco where the demands of social mobilization clash with ineffective bureaucratic performance and governance, thus leading to political decay and the demise of such regimes. Other prominent scholars also forecast a similar fate for cases of neotraditionalism such as Morocco (Linz 1975). Yet over four decades later, monarchies have withstood the test of time and Huntington’s dire prediction that their future would be “bleak.”

The survival of Arab monarchies and neopatrimonial regimes in the Middle East has garnered significant interest from area scholars. While this body of work initially focused on cases of regime change, recent studies have contributed to our knowledge of authoritarian resilience. Other studies have contributed to our understanding the politics of Gulf monarchies by examining political institutions (e.g. Herb 1999) but they are somewhat limited in that these institutions only encompassed the self-evident role of ruling families. Consequently, there is a growing recognition that the persistence of Arab monarchies is unique and that it should be integrated into comparative studies of

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38 This narrative is commonly associated with the seminal book on Arab politics by Hudson (1977).

39 Kostiner’s edited volume (2000), for example, attempts to explain why some Middle East monarchies persist while others fail. Brownlee (2002) examines Iraq, Syria, Libya and Tunisia to explain why some neopatrimonial regimes survive the kinds of intense domestic crises that topple similar systems.

40 Lucas’ forthcoming book on Middle East monarchies promises to focus on the regimes’ institutional flexibility, careful management of support coalitions, opponents and publics.
authoritarianism (Lucas 2004). But instead of cluttering the conceptual landscape with new terms for “monarchical authoritarianism,” comparativists need to begin specifying particular mechanisms that operate across different cases.

More recently, a new generation of scholars within this research program has made the case for examining informal institutions associated with monarchical rule. Building on work that emphasizes the cultural frames of authoritarianism in Morocco (Hammoudi 1997), two recent doctoral dissertations argue that the monarchy’s use of “symbolic political manipulation” (Mednicoff 2007) and “rituals of power” (Daadaoui 2008) limit the ability of Islamist and non-Islamist opposition groups to mobilize. These studies do contribute to our understanding of the monarchy’s supremacy and continued political domination but they also carry the risk of resuscitating “exceptionalist” arguments with regards to this variant of authoritarianism. My study avoids the abstractness of cultural explanations and seeks to demystify the phenomenon of authoritarianism by assessing the relationship between elections and authoritarianism, the subject of the literature to which I now turn.

As I previously alluded to in the introduction, one of the principal arguments in the debate about elections under authoritarianism is whether such events destabilize or reinforce the regime. On one hand, some scholars point to a slippery slope that exists for authoritarian regimes trying to navigate between liberalization and democratization (i.e. O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986). Under these accounts, elections pose particular dangers to autocrats because of their inherent degree of uncertainty. Thus, “liberalization is inherently unstable” (Przeworski 1991: 58) and liberalized authoritarianism is a “halfway house” that does not stand (Huntington 1991: 137). Conversely, the other perspective
views elections as instruments of autocratic control that reinforce and even prolong authoritarian rule (Linz 2000). With regards to the Middle East, many scholars increasingly argue that liberalized autocracies manage to stave of democratic pressures by allowing tightly controlled elections (Brumberg 2002). How does one reconcile these contrasting claims?

Rather than focusing on the polemics of why elections matter, this dissertation offers a potential solution in focusing on how elections matter. In other words, the task at hand is to determine the conditions under which elections become competitive or uncompetitive. Such an analysis should begin with a clear conceptual distinction of various types of authoritarian regimes.

With increased scrutiny of the “third wave” and skepticism of the accompanying “transition paradigm”, many scholars within the field of comparative politics have developed new analytical frameworks and typologies for classifying non-democratic regimes. In fact, subtypes of authoritarianism have proliferated almost as rapidly as their earlier “democracy with adjectives” counterparts (Collier and Levitsky 1997). The common thread from this emerging research program is the use of intermediate categories to describe the “neither here nor there” qualities of various regimes (Diamond 2002) and the emphasis on the indeterminacy of transition processes (Carothers 2002). In devising methods of observation and measurement, standard questions used to classify regimes (who rules?), study elections (who wins?) and resource allocation (who gets what?) have become less relevant. Instead, they have given way to questions that seek to uncover how

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41 Some of the noteworthy conceptualizations include “competitive authoritarianism” (Levitsky and Way 2002), “electoral authoritarianism” (Schedler 2002) and “semi-authoritarianism” (Ottaway 2003).
authoritarian rule functions, how authoritarian elections differ systematically from each other and how political actors under authoritarianism deliver patronage. Without examining these questions, as Snyder (2006: 221) argues, we cannot understand variations in the dynamics and consequences of elections in the context of autocracy. Until these questions are more fully explored, political scientists and policy makers will be unable to distinguish elections that create momentum toward democratization from those which reinforce the existing regime (Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009). My study heeds this call by examining both why and how authoritarian regimes have proven to be so resilient within the context of political liberalization, especially in the face of ostensibly “free and fair” elections that produce multiparty legislatures. In doing so, it focuses on the interaction between formal electoral rules and informal politics and investigates how these types of institutions actually reinforce each other.

With this paradigmatic shift in the thinking surrounding democracy and authoritarian elections, scholars have now begun to explore the various roles that authoritarian elections fulfill and what both the regime and opposition hope to achieve from them.42 While this line of inquiry has yielded some conceptual clarity for understanding the logic of electoral authoritarianism (Schedler 2006), it still tends to reify the widespread assumption that the outcomes of authoritarian elections are determined solely through overt forms of electoral engineering and blatant coercion.43 For example,

42 See Gandhi and Lust-Okar (2009) for a concise summary of this emerging scholarship. Brown (forthcoming) also provides a cogent synopsis of the literature specific to the Middle East.

43 The controversial outcome of Iran’s presidential elections in June 2009 clearly demonstrates that authoritarian regimes still resort to fraudulent practices to secure favorable electoral outcomes and use coercion to enforce them. This case underscores the pitfalls of rigging elections and represents an exception rather than the rule for contemporary authoritarian elections.
studies that spell out the “menu of manipulation” (Schedler 2002a) and assess the “manipulative skills” of rulers (Case 2006) have generally focused on fraud, gerrymandering and vote tampering rather than explaining how the underlying institutional mechanisms skew electoral competition and shape elite behavior.

These issues also reflect a broader problem within the literature in that authoritarian elections are accorded importance only after they became competitive and the opposition has proved moderately successful (Levitsky and Way 2002: 54). As Brownlee (2004: 42) comments incisively, “the mechanisms driving such outcomes remain obscured since no explanation is given for why competition emerges from a process that previously reinforced the status quo.” A recent study on liberalizing electoral outcomes under competitive authoritarian regimes (Howard and Roessler 2006), for example, falls short in fully explaining the institutional mechanisms that affect the choices of opposition elites to form strategic coalitions. Unfortunately, it also reflects a tendency within the recent literature on authoritarian elections to focus on opposition movements rather than configurations among elites, and relationships between various factions within the regime’s ruling coalition.

These studies overlook or discount the classic work by Higley and Burton (1989) that examines the relationship between types of national elites and political stability. My study uses their tripartite typology of elite configurations to examine how recent

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44 In their cross-national statistical analysis, the authors merely test the effect of political institutions by creating a dichotomous variable for presidential or parliamentary systems (374).

45 Higley and Burton (1989) develop a tripartite typology of elite configurations: ideologically unified, consensually unified and disunified, which they claim is the most common type throughout history. According to their theory, the transformation from elite disunity to consensual unity is an essential precondition for political stability and that one of the routes for this transformation is when a consensually oriented bloc gains a stable majority of electoral support (27-29).
elections in Jordan were instrumental in incorporating a new elite of young economic entrepreneurs, thereby casting doubt on the argument that (at least in the case of Jordan) “change within Arab elites does not come through elections” (Perthes 2008: 26).

In sum, my study injects new evidence into the debate on authoritarian elections that these events are significant and meaningful to those who participate. While I agree that elections alone do not make or break regimes, they do have the capacity to either buttress or undermine them. The empirical analysis shows that elections have become a central arena for negotiations, relationships and competition among key political actors. In this sense, the combination of electoral rules and informal patron-client relationships do not determine so much who “wins” or “loses” in limited elections but rather structure configurations within the domestic political system. Thus, as Schedler (2006: 6) asserts, “the same way authoritarian governance engenders authoritarian elections, authoritarian elections feed authoritarian governance.”

This literature review has summarized some of the seminal works on political development and touched upon some of the recent work on elections under authoritarianism. My purpose is twofold. First, I wish to highlight the shift away from traditional theories based on modernization and democratic transitions. Although the history of elections before, during and after the “third wave” is replete with examples of elections that provided some impetus for liberalization, I am interested in cases that have been caught up in the autocratic undertow.

Second, I wish to introduce the broader theoretical debate between analyses of formal and informal institutions with regards to the study of authoritarianism. When political challenges threaten formal mechanisms of control at the ballot box, informal
institutions have proven decisive in deflecting, defusing and undermining these challenges. At the same time, however, formal electoral rules have also created an incentive structure that reinforces clientelism. Consequently, I attempt to explicate the interaction between formal electoral politics and the informal politics of clientelism.

Electoral Rules

Giovanni Sartori once famously described electoral systems as “the most specific manipulative institution of politics.” Since then, there have been numerous studies that have explained the logic of electoral manipulation in different contexts. Yet this research has rarely been integrated into a broader understanding of electoral malpractice that involves the elements of strategic design.

Arendt Lijphart, one of the preeminent scholars in comparative politics, opined that “the study of electoral systems is one of the most underdeveloped in the field of political science (1985: 3).” Lijphart further urged those working within the field “to discover the consequences of the different aspects of election rules (7).” This came in spite of the fact that such studies were already well established (Rae 1971, Lijphart and Grofman 1984) and continued to flourish throughout the decade (Grofman and Lijphart 1986, Taagepera and Shugart 1989) and beyond.

Although Lijphart’s survey is now considered among many to be a relic of the past, it does provide the basis for examining the scope of the field. One consistent theme, for example, has been the relatively parochial focus on established democracies (e.g. Lijphart 1994). While some recent studies have explored electoral systems in emerging

\[46\] For example, see Diaz-Cayeros and Magaloni (1998) about Mexico.

The limited literature on electoral systems in the Middle East suffers from several deficiencies. For one, it is confined to structural arguments based on regime type and largely overlooks the strategic choices of key actors. This study moves beyond the binary categorization of liberalizing one-party states and monarchies (Lust-Okar and Jamal 2002) and instead focuses on how divisions within the ruling elite or opposition affect the outcomes of bargaining over electoral systems. The second shortcoming relates to a normative bias against majoritarian systems that pervades studies of Arab regimes with strong ruling parties. One such study argues that most Arab ruling parties undergoing pluralization prefer “winner-takes-all” electoral system to produce desired outcomes and forestall democratic reform (Posusney 2002). I argue that incumbent dominance and authoritarian resilience is unrelated to the dichotomy between majoritarian and proportional systems. Instead, I point to a number of electoral mechanisms that shape political behavior and, in particular, reinforce traditional forms of control through patron-client relationships.

It is only within the past several years that scholars have studied the effects of particular electoral arrangements in Arab countries. Among these, Jordan’s electoral laws have attracted particular attention. Lucas (2005: 83), for one, explains how changes

47 To summarize this important article, Lust-Okar and Jamal (2002) examine seven cases of managed liberalization in the Arab world, two of which are Jordan and Morocco. They find that liberalizing one-party states are likely to develop electoral rules that favor dominant political parties, whereas liberalizing monarchies support electoral rules that balance political power among competing forces (338). As evidence, they present a series of bivariate tables and case histories in which monarchies are characterized by lower district magnitudes and an absence of electoral laws that shift power to large parties (349-351).
to the election law in the 1990s were designed to “reduce the voice of the opposition in Parliament so that questions about potentially unpopular policies could not be as easily raised.” Lust-Okar (2006) also examines the role of Jordan’s peculiar “one vote” system in recent parliamentary elections. She insightfully points out that voting behavior differs when elections are over patronage, not policymaking.

“When granted multiple votes, individuals often cast some votes for candidates they expected could supply them with resources and other votes for those representing their ideologies. When restricted to one vote, however, they cast their ballot for their personal interests.” (465)

Moroccan elections have also attracted some interest but less so in terms of strategic design. Comparing parliamentary elections across North Africa, Dillman (2000) posits that Morocco’s majoritarian system during the 1990s benefited the major leftist and royalist parties at the expense of smaller parties. Posusney (2005: 107) suggests that this electoral strategy was “risky” because the opposition would have an advantage over competing loyalist candidates if it could unify. Her analysis stops short of explaining Morocco’s change in 2002 to a proportional system and very few have analyzed the implications of Morocco’s new electoral framework.48

The following chapter provides much more discussion of electoral rules in the case studies and why they were adopted and sustained. For now, I turn to the study of informal institutions associated with clientelism and their significance for the two case studies.

48 Attempts to explain the 2002 electoral reform and its implications mostly surfaced in Morocco’s local press but have not received much scholarly attention in English. Other analyses primarily have been from democracy assistance organizations and are intended for a limited audience. See IFES (2005), DRI (2007) and NDI (2007) for examples.
Clientelism

To begin, clientelism is a term that has often been used loosely to serve as a “catch-all” for various social structures and forms of patron-client relationships. It is important for the purposes of this study to be more precise and provide a definition of clientelism that applies directly to electoral behavior and outcomes. At the same time, this particular conception should not be so narrow and limited that it lacks general applicability.

In one of the first projects to address clientelism in the context of non-democratic elections, Rouquié (1978: 23) describes clientelism as an asymmetrical relationship between two parties that involves an unequal exchange of goods based upon particularistic criteria. In this relationship and exchange, patrons use their influence and/or resources to provide protection and/or benefits to clients who in turn offer support and assistance; votes, in this case. Indeed, popular elections can be seen as a reestablishment of the redistributive mechanism of the traditional setting (Scott 1977). It is also important to note that in many hierarchical societies, particularly under authoritarian regimes, these processes of exchange are not based on equality and reciprocity. Rather, traditional forms of coercion and domination tend to determine political outcomes so that election results register not the political attitudes and choices of voters, but the reality of social relationships (Hermet 1978: 25).

This study does not rule out entirely the possibility that citizens vote in authoritarian elections according to ideological or policy preferences but also assumes that they expect to receive some sort of material benefit for their vote. While this assumption is based on conventional wisdom to some degree, it is firmly rooted in empirical evidence from the Middle East and elsewhere. Vote buying is so pervasive in
Egypt that it accounts for illiterates being twice as likely to vote as those who can read because they are more susceptible to targeted appeals and sanctions (Blaydes 2005). Evidence from Africa also confirms that the credibility of clientelist appeals and accessibility of clientelist goods greatly influence voting behavior (Wantchekon 2003).

Analyses that dwell too much on patronage tend to encounter some problems with Islamic movements, however, because their political party offshoots still “lose” in the electoral arena despite being deeply embedded within social networks and engaged in extensive welfare activities based on horizontal ties. Indeed, vertical patron-client relationships within Islamic social institutions are often weak (Clark 2004). On the other hand, some point out that the success of Islamists at the ballot box is precisely because they are not expected to dispense patronage. These analyses stress that Islamist parties largely represent the marginalized, educated middle class, not the disenfranchised poor. Massoud’s (2008) study of the electoral performance of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers in Egypt concurs that its candidates cultivate middle class constituencies that do not need to vote for narrow, short-term, material considerations. Pellicer (2007) also came to the same conclusion in the case of Islamist support in Morocco’s recent elections.

A growing literature examines the patronage that authoritarian regimes can supply and distribute through elections. In the case of Jordan, Lust-Okar (2006) has argued convincingly that voters cast their ballots for those who can, and will, deliver goods over the course of time. She uses the Arabic term *wasta*, which translates literally as “mediation” to describe the logic of voter calculus. According to Kilani and Sakijha (2002: 21), *wasta* is a “social tool with deep historical precedence in which loyalty to family, tribe, religion and sect is used to achieve a mutually beneficial exchange of
interests.” In contemporary usage, however, Benstead (2008: 71) notes that *wasta* generally refers to the use of an individual’s position within a state bureaucracy and the resources of the state’s power to gain power and influence to solve a problem or gain preferential treatment. *Wasta* thus has a dual meaning as both the individual who acts as an intermediary and the act of providing the favor itself. Although *wasta* constitutes a primary form of clientelism across the Arab world, I choose to emphasize a different aspect of clientelism in the context of Morocco.

Waterbury’s highly acclaimed book (1971) offers perhaps one of the best portrayals of clientelism within a distinctly Moroccan context. His anthropological explanation for the behavior among the country’s political elite also provides a striking contrast to traditional explanations within comparative politics. In short, he argues that the failure of Morocco’s nationalist opposition to dislodge the monarchy is deeply rooted in the country’s political culture and social structure. Waterbury’s work has become a touchstone for a number of other sociological analyses of Moroccan politics. The common theme among all these works has been their emphasis on the inordinate role played by the palace, which is commonly referred to as the *makhzen* in Morocco. The word “*makhzen*” literally means “warehouse,” but in the Moroccan political context, it denotes government as a network of power brokers. The *makhzen* has traditionally included palace retainers, regional and provincial administrators, and military officers, all persons in the service of the monarchy and connected to it by entrenched patronage networks. As such, the *makhzen* merges the political and bureaucratic spheres, which creates the basis for the domination of traditional forms of power over rational-legal ones (Sater 2007). Visible aspects of the *makhzen* include different rituals, ceremonies and
symbols used in socio-political discourse that permeate formal institutions and condition citizen behavior.

In sum, the makhzen as an informal institution has been essential for maintaining the stability of Morocco’s monarchy while overseeing a gradual and limited liberalization of the economic and political spheres. To ensure continual dominance and control, various kings have balanced competing groups and individuals against each other by handing out favors and punishments. Willis (2002:14) also stresses the importance of Morocco’s patron-client relationships during competitions for political office in which parties and their leaders provide access routes to material resources and patronage that can be distributed to supporters who have helped elect members of the party. Numerous other works also underscore the distinct nature of clientelism in Morocco and all emphasize the role of the makhzen within Morocco’s political culture.

The challenge for institutional analysis is to integrate formal electoral rules and informal clientelism in order to arrive at a fuller understanding of the durability of Arab monarchies and authoritarianism in general. In this light, I highlight a recent article by Helmke and Levitsky (2004) that seeks to develop a framework for integrating formal and informal institutional analysis. Although their argument is an important contribution to the field of comparative politics, I point out a number of shortcomings of their framework within the context of other influential studies. I use these criticisms as a jumping off point for my own approach.
A New Framework for Institutional Analysis?

Although institutional analysis has become a highly regarded approach in comparative politics and the study of electoral systems has gained considerable currency within the field, Helmke and Levitsky (2004) argue persuasively that “many ‘rules of the game’ that structure political life are actually informal—created, communicated and enforced outside officially sanctioned channels (725).” This definition implies that informal institutions are more than behavioral regularities or unintentional byproducts of formal institutions. As such, they offer a compelling case for incorporating informal institutions into mainstream political analysis.

Their article also proposes a new framework for examining how formal and informal institutions interact. They develop a typology in which this relationship can be conceptualized along two dimensions: first, the degree to which formal and informal institutions converge; and secondly, the effectiveness of formal institutions based on compliance and enforcement. Although this conceptual model is helpful for heuristic purposes, it falls short in three respects.

First, the model unduly privileges informal institutions as the principal causal force of political behavior. When the article finally considers change of formal institutions as a source of informal institutional change, the authors suggest that its impact is limited. For example, they argue that changes in the design in formal rules may only indirectly affect the incentives of political actors within relatively benign arenas where results are
expected and rules are enforced and complied with in practice.49 As such, the model implies that adherence to the informal rules of the game generally, though not always, subverts the intentions of formal institutional arrangements. One recent study about Egyptian parliamentary elections (Koehler 2008) adopts this line of reasoning and privileges informal institutions to an even greater extent.50

Second, Helmke and Levitsky apply a different set of standards to informal institutions in their model even though they note that good institutional analysis requires rigorous attention to both formal and informal rules (726).51 The authors argue appropriately that informal institutions should not be classified in simple dichotomous (functional versus dysfunctional) terms but they proceed to relegate formal institutions as either effective or ineffective in their typology. Informal institutions can also be either weakly or strongly influential, and effectively or ineffectively enforced. Many studies of formal institutions overstate perceptions of their ineffectiveness instead of exploring their functionality and relationships with informal institutions. Lust-Okar (2008: 78-79), for example, cites a 2006 democracy poll to buttress her claim that the Jordanian parliament is an ineffective policymaking institution unable to influence areas of importance.52

49 The only example cited by the authors as a change in formal rules affecting an informal institution is the 1974 Bill of Rights of Subcommittees in the U.S. House of Representatives (732). Electoral rules are conspicuously absent from their discussion.

50 According to Koehler (2008: 978), “the prevalence of the informal institutions associated with neopatrimonialism influences actors’ cost-benefit calculations in a way that makes it more promising to act according to the informal, rather than the formal, rules of the game.”

51 Instead, the authors appear more interested in justifying the study of informal institutions and describing their research challenges. Indeed, the authors devote an entire section of the article to identifying, measuring and comparing informal institutions without any mention of formal institutions (733-734).

52 In fairness, Lust-Okar (2008: 77) does call for a need to understand how authoritarianism “works” with regards to the politics of elections in the Middle East. It is therefore somewhat surprising that her analysis
Third, the authors neglect to mention the growing influence of “new” institutionalism\(^{53}\) within the field of political science and how an emergent scholarship has effectively combined formal and informal institutions. Analyses of regime transitions in Africa (Bratton and van de Walle 1997), for example, attribute change to the heritage of neopatrimonial rule in which “the customs and patterns of patrimonialism co-exist with, and suffuse, rational-legal institutions” (61). While emphasizing structural characteristics of neopatrimonialism, they also assert that strategic choices made by neopatrimonial rulers have widely influential effects on the course and outcomes of transitions. Likewise, Lust-Okar (2006) demonstrates how Jordanian elections provide an arena for significant competition over access to state resources and how incumbents can manage that competition through institutions.

While my study is admittedly interested in the impact of formal electoral rules in spite of prevailing sociological and historical factors, it recognizes that informal institutions are essential to understanding electoral behavior in authoritarian contexts. Nevertheless, the nature of the political system and clientelism should not become convenient fallbacks to “explain away” recent electoral outcomes. Seemingly small differences in institutional details can often have macro-political effects. The “rules of the game” matter and electoral rules are no exception.

The task at hand, therefore, appears not be whether formal or informal institutions should be afforded analytical primacy, but rather, how they interact. To examine this

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\(^{53}\) See Hall and Taylor (1996) for a discussion of “new institutionalism” and Thelen (1999) for an introduction to “historical institutionalism.” It is important to note that \textit{not all of the recent institutional analyses fall under the rubric of “new institutionalism.”}
interaction, I adopt Groffman’s (1999) terminology of “embedded institutions” to study the interaction of particular institutional choices and the wider political arena and political culture can be better understood. One of the methodological steps in this approach involves comparing similar institutions and then generalizing about them to more precisely specify mechanisms through which effects are realized (xii). Thus, when we consider the incentive structure of parties, candidates and voters under various electoral systems, we might take that electoral system as a given, but we should also look at how actors decide among electoral system. I turn to this task in the next section.

2. Theoretical Model

Electoral System Design

To recap, my explanatory framework stipulates that elections serve two fundamental objectives from the standpoint of the regime: 1) managing arenas of competition among elites (a “horizontal” dimension); and 2) maintaining political control over rival opposition groups (a “vertical” dimension). Figure 1.1 (see below) depicts a matrix along these two dimensions with degrees of elite cohesion. It is helpful to think of elite cohesion as lying along a continuum with ideal types of “strong” and “weak.” One extreme is marked by loose collections of local notables and significant infighting within the ruling coalition or opposition movements (“weak” cohesion) whereas the other extreme is identifiable by highly disciplined and organized elites with institutionalized structures for mobilizing citizens in favor or against the regime (“strong” cohesion).
The four quadrants describe the broad contours of the electoral system as well as
the type of configuration it produces among opposition actors.\textsuperscript{54} I use Posusney’s (2002)
ideal typical terms of “winner-takes-all” and “divide-and-rule” to describe electoral
systems. The former typically feature majoritarian systems with single-member districts
and candidate ballots whereas the latter refer to proportional systems with multi-member
ballots and party ballots. When cohesion among ruling elites is “strong,” incumbents
have more leeway to design electoral rules that can limit representation, reward certain
factions or foster divisions. Consequently, elections can structure the opposition as
“fragmented” or “loyal” in the political system. In contrast, splits within the ruling
coalition erode the maneuverability of the regime and typically force zero-sum choices

\textsuperscript{54} While other studies have focused on the composition of Middle East elites and the patterns of change
within them (see Zartman 1980, Perthes 2008),\textsuperscript{54} I am interested in the relationships among elites in the
context of political reform.
between electoral accommodation and intervention. If the degree of cohesion among the opposition is “weak,” the regime may seek electoral rules to include certain opposition groups. If these groups become too powerful and opposition coalitions begin to form, however, the regime may seek to exclude the opposition through blatant electoral engineering or even annulling elections such as the case of Algeria in 1991. With this framework briefly illuminated, a number of propositions emerge.

For one, I argue that the degree of opposition cohesion, broadly defined, determines the nature of the electoral system. Strong opposition movements often force regimes to accommodate them with inclusive rules that are candidate-oriented with the aim of producing a loyal opposition in the legislature. In contrast, weak oppositions allow regimes to co-opt elites through rules that exacerbate divisions in the opposition and prevent defections within the ruling coalition. In the following chapter, I assess the validity of these propositions through a comparative historical analysis of Morocco and Jordan over five distinct time periods.

Second, I contend that liberalizing autocracies are increasingly opting for “divide-and-rule” electoral systems rather than more risky strategies based on “winner-takes-all.” This hypothesis follows from Przeworski’s game theories of democratic transitions (1991), which postulate that architects of electoral systems tend to be risk-averse and opt for the “safe” choice of electoral rules when uncertainty is high. In separate chapters that focus on recent parliamentary elections in both Morocco and Jordan, I show that both incumbent and opposition elites have chosen electoral rules as a way to hedge within the bigger game of political reform. According to Figure 1.1, my argument for electoral
reform between “winner-takes-all” and “divide-and-rule” strategies is premised on shifts in relative power among opposition elites.

Finally, I believe these central cases provide insights that can be applied elsewhere. As such, I test the external validity of these arguments by broadening the analysis to four secondary cases studies of Bahrain, Kuwait, Egypt and Palestine—of which the latter two provide greater variation in regime type as presidential systems. All four experienced electoral miscues around the time of the “Arab Spring” in 2005 and 2006. I briefly survey the experience of these secondary cases in order to arrive at an explanation for the variation in electoral outcomes.

Consequences of Electoral Rules

In order to gauge the influence of electoral rules on political actors, I adopt the model conceptualized by Pippa Norris (2004:14) in which “formal electoral rules (the independent variable) impact the behavior of rational politicians (the intermediate variable) which then exert direct and indirect effects on the electorate (the dependent variable).” In my case, the dependent variable is the degree of cohesion among both incumbent and opposition elites through the behavior of political actors (recall Figure B). I begin by describing the independent variables.

My basic model theorizes that particular electoral arrangements help stabilize regimes by discouraging defections from ruling elites and sowing divisions within the opposition. It emphasizes that electoral system design is not limited to a dichotomous choice between majoritarian or proportional systems but also includes critical aspects such as the size of electoral formula and the type of ballot. These institutional variables
shape the strategies political actors (i.e. candidates) pursue to garner votes. I summarize below a number of Norris’ (2004) hypotheses about these variables.

**Electoral formula:**

H1.1: *Majoritarian systems* encourage political actors to seek a broad-based coalition of votes and support (i.e. “bridging strategy”) because they must win an outright majority or plurality of votes.

H1.2: *Proportional systems* encourage political actors to target their campaign appeals to a narrow base of homogenous votes (i.e. “bonding strategy”) because they win seats proportional to the number of votes received.

**Ballot structure:**

H1.3: *Candidate ballots* provide a strong incentive for political actors to offer particularistic benefits (i.e. “pork”) to strengthen their support in local communities.

H1.4: *Preference ballots* provide a moderate incentive for political actors to offer particularistic benefits in order to stand out from rivals within their own party.

H1.5: *Party ballots* encourage political actors to offer programmatic benefits that are focused on the collective record of their party.

Other scholars have also emphasized the importance of *district magnitude* as a “decisive factor” in shaping political behavior and party systems (Taagepera and Shugart 1989). I posit that district magnitude is very important for structuring the level of competition and degree of personalism within particular electoral districts. I summarize below a number of hypotheses about this variable.

**District magnitude:**

H1.6: *High* district magnitudes provide an incentive for more actors to compete for available seats. Lower electoral hurdles in each district encourage actors to cultivate a personal vote.

H1.7: *Low* district magnitudes discourage actors from competing for fewer available seats. Higher electoral hurdles in each district discourage personal vote strategies.
Recall my first working hypothesis (H1) that changes to district magnitude, ballot structure and electoral formula shape the behavior of opposition elites, ruling elites and voters through electoral thresholds. Electoral thresholds are the key mechanism in the causal chain because they structure the incentives and constraints for political actors during the course of electoral campaigns. My core argument is that lower electoral thresholds foster electoral environments in which patronage politics thrive.

To illustrate the incentives and constraints, Table 1.1 presents a number of electoral rules and their hypothesized effects on select groups of political actors. The first column includes the two major families of electoral systems with district magnitudes and types of ballots. These categories do not come close to capturing the breadth of electoral system design and the variation within particular electoral arrangements but they do serve to identify distinct electoral arrangements from the primary and secondary case studies. The first row lists opposition and ruling elites as the key political actors. Voters are also included because the electorate constitutes the decisive actor in electoral processes and often reflect cohesion or division among elites. I explain some the behavioral consequences of the electoral arrangements in the corresponding boxes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1.1: Hypothesized Effects of Electoral Rules on Political Actors</th>
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<td><strong>Opposition Elites</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Majoritarian</strong> (H1.1)</td>
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<td><strong>Proportional</strong> (high district magnitude) (H1.2/6)</td>
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<td><strong>Proportional</strong></td>
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To reiterate, my model links electoral rules to the cohesion of ruling and opposition elites through the behavior of rational politicians. I define these behaviors, herein referred to as “variables of interest,” in terms of incentives and constraints related to participation and competition in the electoral process. The nine variables of interest are: 1) costs of entry into the electoral arena; 2) incentives to defect to competing groups; 3) corresponding degrees of factionalism; 4) type of campaign strategies pursued; 5) type of reputation cultivated; 6) levels of party mobilization; 7) incidence of vote buying; 8) prevalence of sincere voting; and 9) extent of voter accountability. I now describe each intermediate variable and how electoral rules can determine different values.

1. **Entry Costs:** Political actors often make informed decisions about whether to seek elected office or participate in the electoral process based on perceived costs and expected rewards. Entry costs may determine how easy it is for candidates to run, either as independents or at the helm of new parties. The actual costs could refer to something straightforward such as registration fees or be subsumed under electoral rules that alter the incentive structure for incumbent and opposition elites. Proportional systems with higher district magnitudes result in “low” entry
costs for candidates to compete because the threshold required for victory is less. Conversely, majoritarian systems that feature single member districts or low magnitudes present “high” entry costs to smaller parties and weaker candidates. Open list or nomination processes for parties typically produce “low” entry costs whereas closed systems result in “high” entry costs. A mixture of majoritarian or proportional elements with varying district magnitudes, ballot structures and legal thresholds may produce “medium” entry costs for political actors.

2. **Defection:** Candidates are very aware of technical details that affect their electoral fortunes and will act accordingly. Changes to the ballot structure may determine whether they defect to another electoral camp. For example, proportional systems with closed party lists increase competition among candidates vying for a high ranking, particularly in multi-member districts with low magnitudes, thus creating “high” incentives for defection. In contrast, open lists or electoral procedures that allow preferential voting result in “low” incentives for defection. Candidate-ballots and multi-member districts similarly produce “low” incentives for defection because electoral competition is less structured and there are more seats available. Different contexts relating to party ideology and individual characteristics may create “medium” incentives to defect.

3. **Factionalism:** The participation of political actors in the electoral arena generates varying degrees of factionalism, both within ruling parties and among competing parties or political groupings. A degree of factionalism is a desirable outcome for autocrats because they can play various sides off one another. Factionalism may also erode the cohesiveness of opposition parties or blocks in parliament. As a result, regimes may manipulate electoral rules and institutional structures to encourage factionalism. A “high” degree of factionalism is typically associated with a weak party system or a degenerate ruling party. Conversely, a “low” degree of factionalism can exist within a disciplined ruling party or a starkly different situation in which a coherent opposition presents a unified front against an incumbent regime. A “medium” degree of factionalism presents a muddled picture of political dynamics within the regime and opposition.

4. **Campaign Strategies:** In many electoral contexts, political actors are “vote-maximizers” and seek to obtain a broad base of support. Their campaign strategies thereby attempt to “bridge” gaps between segments of the electorate, stitch together a diverse coalition and aggregate heterogeneous interests. Elements of majoritarian systems such as single-member districts and first-past-the-post formulas tend to encourage so-called “bridging strategies.” In other contexts, political actors are less likely to invest the time and resources to garner votes from a wide segment across the political spectrum. Instead, they pursue “bonding strategies” that target a narrow base of socially homogenous supporters and segmented sectors of the electorate. Electoral rules that lower effective thresholds through multiple-member districts and proportional formula typically reward this type of behavior.
5. **Reputation:** In virtually all kinds of systems, political actors rely on reputation to advance their political careers. Electoral formulas may be arrayed on a continuum regarding the degree to which they encourage candidates for legislative office to cultivate either a “party” reputation or a “personal” reputation. A formula that emphasizes party reputation typically fosters a political environment in which parties are responsive to the collective interests of the public. In contrast, a formula that generates incentives to cultivate a personal reputation usually produces an environment in which candidates cater to needs of individuals. Whether voters select candidates or parties on a ballot obviously determines the type of reputation political actors cultivate but variations within ballot structure also shape behavior. For example, personal reputations are normally at a premium in open list systems unless electoral rules produce incentives for candidates to distinguish themselves within closed list systems.

6. **Party Mobilization:** Arab regimes generally seek to dampen party mobilization to limit the popular appeal of opposition movements. Regimes sometimes may also enlist party loyalists to mobilize segments of the population to boost the legitimacy of the elections. Majoritarian systems typically encourage “high” levels of party-based mobilization because they require a greater number of votes to win. In contrast, proportional systems (especially those with higher district magnitudes) encourage smaller groups like tribes or ethnic communities to seek votes at the expense of national or ideological-based parties. Likewise, electoral formulas that allocate seats based on quotas or an “electoral average” also result in “low” levels of mobilization. Widespread political disaffection also poses significant challenges for party mobilization. Abstention and a range of other attitudinal factors often complicate party efforts but do not necessarily impede it, thus resulting in a “medium” level of mobilization.

7. **Sincere Voting:** As previously explained, the calculus of voting is not just based on preferences for parties, candidates or political issues but also on the likelihood that a preferred candidate or party has a chance at winning. Voter preferences may be altered based on an assessment of electoral prospects, thus resulting in strategic voting. In contrast, sincere voting occurs when voters stick to their preferences without regard to the expected outcome. Electoral rules that structure voter choices may have a profound effect on the prevalence of sincere voting. For example, some ballots allow multiple votes or for voters to rank order their preference. In these cases, the prevalence of sincere voting is “low” because voters have more choice and can dole out their votes based on ideology, personal connection or some other factor. A “high” prevalence of sincere voting is likely

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55 See Carey and Shugart (1995) for a rank ordering of electoral rules in terms of incentives for political actors to cultivate a personal vote. They assign scores to systems based on whether (a) party leaders control access to and rank on ballots, (b) votes for the candidate of a party are pooled across the party as a whole, contributing to the party’s share of seats, and (c) voters cast ballots for a single party, for multiple candidates, or for a single candidate.
when voters have fewer choices due to small district magnitudes or closed party list systems.

8. *Vote Buying*: The extent of vote buying is an approximate indicator in which elections contain clientelist forms of exchange. Regimes that rely on traditional forms of control are therefore willing to tolerate or even encourage vote buying. This practice can be a way for pro-regime elites to win election or to boost turnout for added legitimacy. Although there is no single root cause of vote buying, electoral rules can influence the incentives of political actors to purchase electoral support. Bonding strategies and personal reputation obviously offer strong incentives for vote buying. But certain electoral systems that foster intra-party competition can also be significant since co-partisans have strong incentives to make targeted appeals to voters. Among those most likely to encourage a “high” incidence of vote buying include SNTV and open list PR. Variations within these rules that increase the saliency of candidate positions on closed-list lists may contribute to the incidence of vote buying. Developing countries that feature typical forms of clientelism irrespective of electoral systems probably indicate a “medium” incidence of vote buying.

9. *Voter Accountability*: Corruption is deeply engrained to many political systems and its many permutations present an almost insurmountable obstacle for operationalization. As such, this study does not claim that electoral rules have an observable effect on corruption overall but rather seeks to investigate whether they can impose constraints on corrupt politicians through voter accountability. Put plainly, do elections allow voters to “throw the rascals out” or do they insulate them from accountability? The most straightforward institutional variable is whether the ballot allows choice among parties or candidates. Studies have shown that larger shares of candidates elected from party lists are associated with more corruption and less accountability (Persson 2003). Indeed, a party list system is typically characterized by indirect linkages between the candidate and voter, which thereby result in “less” accountability. In contrast, candidate ballots in plurality-rule elections tend to produce “more” voter accountability.

Many of the hypothesized effects appear to follow conventional wisdom about the incentives and constraints of particular electoral rules. Yet I propose a theory of how political actors behave when formal electoral rules interact with informal modes of patronage. Existing theories typically focus on the mechanical effects of electoral systems on party systems based on “Duverger’s Law” and assume that political actors follow the same logic of participation and competition regardless of the context.
Following Lust-Okar (2006), I argue that the calculus of political actors is different when patronage, not policymaking, is at stake. As such, the effects of electoral rules, both mechanical and psychological, are magnified under competitive authoritarianism. Since authoritarian elections are primarily about the distribution of political patronage through elites and access to clientelistic networks, I theorize that political actors respond strongly to electoral incentives that feature low electoral thresholds because they increase the saliency of “retail politics” with individual voters.

Thus, my empirical analysis is primarily concerned with the consequences of fundamental electoral reforms in Morocco in Jordan over recent years. Morocco switched from a majoritarian system to a List PR system in 2002 whereas Jordan adopted the Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) system in 1993. Even though both cases have held a number of elections since then and political actors have adapted to the new rules to some extent, the most recent parliamentary elections in 2007 still reinforced traditional forms of electoral clientelism that were beneficial to the incumbent regime. As such, subsequent chapters will assess the extent to which particular electoral rules affected the ability of voters to coalesce around the main Islamist opposition in Morocco and the degree to which it helped elect a group of “new capitalist” candidates in Jordan.

Incorporating these “variables of interest” associated with clientelism produce observable electoral outcomes and explain variation within and across similar cases.

My project also seeks to develop contingent generalizations beyond the experiences of Morocco and Jordan. In addition to the primary case studies, I also explore the conditions under which opposition parties fared well in other Arab parliamentary elections to advance the logic that elite ruptures and opposition coalitions
commonly lead to regime instability through electoral miscues. These chapters 
collectively examine the core argument that lower electoral thresholds generate unique 
electoral environments in which patronage politics thrive and ideological-based 
movements falter.

Although my study is primarily concerned with the effects of electoral rules, it 
also treats electoral rules themselves as outcome variables to address the so-called 
“endogeneity problem”56 so as to increase the level of confidence in the research findings 
(King, Keohane and Verba 1994: 198). Therefore, the following chapter traces the 
evolution of electoral systems in the two primary case studies in order to develop an 
explanation based on elite configurations.

56 Generally defined, the “endogeneity problem” in theoretical analysis is the reversal of the causal 
direction between the dependent and independent variables.
CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:
THE EVOLUTION OF ELECTORAL SYSTEMS IN MOROCCO AND JORDAN

This chapter provides a historical background of Morocco and Jordan (the two primary case studies) with a particular focus on parliamentary elections and the evolution of their respective electoral systems. In doing so, I seek to advance the argument that variation in electoral system design is attributable to the degree of cohesion among key political actors, most notably incumbent and opposition elites. I show that electoral reform typically occurred during shifts in power equilibriums within both regimes. In particular, I trace how elite ruptures or opposition coalitions often produced zero-sum choices between electoral manipulation and accommodation whereas strong regime coalitions and divided oppositions enabled more maneuverability in electoral arrangements designed to co-opt some factions but contain others. This argument goes beyond the binary regime type dichotomy previously used to explain electoral law formation in the Middle East (Lust-Okar and Jamal 2002).

The comparative historical analysis of Morocco and Jordan that follows is broken down into five distinct time periods that encompass: 1) colonial and post-independence elections (1920s-1960s); 2) elections of regime consolidation (1960s-1970s); 3) elections under regime duress (1980s); 4) elections under new rules (1990s); and 5) elections under new kings (2000s). The decades in parentheses provide rough approximations for
purposes of comparison and should be considered flexible. Nonetheless, the time periods do serve to demarcate a number of defining elections across the two cases. They are organized based on a series of synchronic “snapshots” of electoral reform and thus provide the basis for transforming descriptive explanations into analytic explanations.\(^{57}\)

Before delving into the annals of history, I must address the potential claim of selection bias by which particular historical evidence is presented in order to construct artificial narratives about the evolution of electoral systems. Without attempting to provide a lengthy justification for examining certain aspects of history over others, the purpose of this chapter is to examine the origins of electoral institutions and the context in which key actors (namely incumbent elites with the king’s acquiescence) established new institutions on top of them.\(^{58}\) This structural context defines the relative power of actors and the range of options available to them. Therefore, the historical evidence presented herein seeks to illuminate elite configurations across temporal settings and how changes in elite cohesion impacted electoral reform over time.

With this in mind, this chapter examines whether united or divided elites help to explain regime preferences for particular electoral rules. Since there is little variation in the type of electoral system used in both cases throughout their history, I highlight three “variables of interest” introduced in Chapter 1 in order to derive concrete hypotheses about the relationship between elite configurations and electoral rules. They are:

\(^{57}\) See George and Bennett (2004: 92-94) for more discussion about this methodological task. It was difficult to demarcate parallel periods and to avoid roaming among them. Accordingly, they should not be considered as fixed analytical units but rather as historical scaffolding for an evolving narrative.

\(^{58}\) Historical Institutionalism refers to “layering” to describe a polity as an interlocking set of institutions that were created at different times, often serve different purposes (Steinmo and Thelen 1992: 1-32).
1) **Entry Costs:** Political actors often make informed decisions about whether to seek elected office or participate in the electoral process based on perceived costs and expected rewards. Entry costs may determine how easy it is for candidates to run, either as independents or at the helm of new parties. The actual costs could refer to something straightforward such as registration fees or be subsumed under electoral rules that alter the incentive structure for incumbent and opposition elites.

   **H2.1:** Regimes with divided elites prefer electoral rules that lower entry costs to reward supporters, co-opt potential defectors and divide the opposition.

   **H2.2:** Regimes with unified elites prefer electoral rules that raise entry costs to promote favored candidates, discourage defectors and exclude the opposition.

2) **Personal Vote Strategies:** In many electoral contexts, political actors are “vote-maximizers” and seek to obtain a broad base of support. Their campaign strategies thereby attempt to “bridge” gaps between segments of the electorate, stitch together a diverse coalition and aggregate heterogeneous interests. Elements of majoritarian systems such as single-member districts and first-past-the-post formulas tend to encourage this type of campaign strategy. In other contexts, political actors are less likely to invest the time and resources to garner votes from a wide segment across the political spectrum. Instead, they pursue “bonding strategies” that target a narrow base of socially homogenous supporters and segmented sectors of the electorate.

   **H2.3:** Regimes with a strong ruling coalition or a divided opposition prefer electoral arrangements that feature multi-member districts, candidate ballots and proportional formulas in order to reinforce clientelism.

   **H2.4:** Regimes that face a united opposition prefer electoral arrangements that feature single-member districts and majoritarian formulas to reward loyalists and exclude opponents.

3) **Strategic Voting:** The calculus of voting is not just based on preferences for parties, candidates or political issues but also on the likelihood that a preferred candidate or party has a chance at winning. Voter preferences may be altered based on an assessment of electoral prospects, thus resulting in strategic voting. In contrast, sincere voting occurs when voters stick to their preferences without regard to the expected outcome.

   **H2.5:** Regimes with divided elites prefer electoral systems that disperse votes across the political spectrum and reduce the likelihood of strategic voting in order to protect established patronage networks.

   **H2.6:** Regimes with strong ruling coalitions prefer electoral systems that concentrate votes in key contests in order to reward pro-regime candidates and manufacture majorities for dominant parties in the parliament.
In sum, this chapter presents both a complex set of empirical puzzles and a theoretical challenge in explaining the evolution of electoral systems in Morocco and Jordan. What explains the rationale for different electoral systems in these two similar cases? Were electoral outcomes a direct product of electoral reforms? If so, can we identify particular electoral mechanisms that served to reinforce these regimes? These are the questions that frame this chapter, guide the subsequent empirical analysis and used later to develop a typological theory.

1) Colonial and Post-Independence Elections (1920s-1960s)

The colonial period in Jordan and Morocco reveals a number of similarities and differences in levels of elite cohesion as British and French administrators established political institutions that were closely tied to the monarchy. While nascent legislatures were far from being popularly elected or representative, they did serve as arenas for managing elites and channeling nationalist sentiment through political structures. The shifting power equilibriums in both cases led to distinct regime survival strategies and help to explain the origins of their respective electoral systems.

Elite Mobilization under Colonial Administrations

Jordan’s experience with parliamentary politics dates back to its establishment as a British colony in the 1920s. The king of what was then known as Transjordan hoped that the establishment of a legislature would bolster his power, weakening British influence over him (Lust-Okar 2005: 42). Thus, the first set of rules governing the Legislative
Assembly (LA), codified in the 1928 Organic Law, were designed to subordinate the LA to the palace by ensuring it was packed with loyalists.\textsuperscript{59} Despite these rules, the first legislature elected in April 1929 turned out to be quite assertive and critical of the colonial administration (ibid). A series of national conferences that convened in subsequent years brought together a number of notables and tribal representatives that were opposed to the electoral law and the LA’s lack of power (Abu Jaber 1973: 94-95). They also demanded that the British leave and end its support to the monarch.

Facing a direct threat to his rule, the king quickly reasserted control over the parliament in the 1930s and continued utilizing electoral rules that excluded opponents from political representation. After the disastrous defeat in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, however, two internal challenges confronted the monarchy were the influx of Palestinian refugees and mounting discontent within the traditional Hashemite elite. The sudden emergence of a unified opposition in a highly charged political climate led to an abrupt switch to a new electoral law for parliamentary elections in 1950 that granted equal representation to Palestinians from the West Bank.\textsuperscript{60} In the following years, a series of events including the assassination of the king and the replacement of his successor further underscored the fragility of the regime. When the 17-year-old King Abdallah ascended to the throne in 1953, few expected Jordan’s nascent monarchy to survive the turbulent era.

\textsuperscript{59} Among other mechanisms, Baaklini et al. (1999: 135) note that “through a system of quotas, the electoral law ensured that the Christian and Circassian minorities, which were seen as natural allies of the palace, would be overrepresented in the LA.”

\textsuperscript{60} Baaklini et al. (1999: 167) also point out that the East Bank’s smaller population elected the same number of deputies and that its constituencies were designed to the advantage of native Transjordanians (see footnote 2). Not to be forgotten, regime allies continued to dominate the upper house.
The case of Morocco differs from Jordan in that the French colonial administration did not establish a parliament but rather created centralized institutions without popular representation. It also worked to establish a modern administrative and bureaucratic system of government alongside the traditional authority of the palace. Indeed, reforms beginning in the 1920s allowed the monarchy to “gradually merge the traditional authority of makhzen with modern European-style institutions” (Ayubi 1995: 121).

There were unintended consequences of colonial-led centralization, most notably in 1930 when the French resident-general attempted to co-opt the Berber population and “pacify” the countryside through blatant manipulation and coercion.\(^61\) According to Ashford (1961: 61), “this divide and rule strategy effectively jump-started and unified the disparate strands of Morocco’s movement opposed to French rule.” Pro-independence groups eventually coalesced under the banner of the Istiqlal and, when the party was officially formed in 1944, it attracted widespread support among elites and the masses (Waterbury 1970: 50). This mass mobilization proved essential to the success of the rebellion and eventual return of the exiled king, who had allied himself with the Istiqlal and had become the symbol of the independence movement.

When the French effectively ended colonial rule in 1955 and Morocco achieved formal independence the following year, many governmental structures were preserved under the monarchy and newly created ones were powerless.\(^62\) Ruling elites remained in

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\(^61\) In 1930 the French administration issued a decree (commonly referred to dahir) that took mountainous Berber regions out of the administration of central Islamic courts and put them into French ones. This infamous dahir backfired, causing both Arabs and Berbers to form a common front against the French. See Hoisington (1995) for more about Lyautey and this turbulent period of Morocco’s history.

\(^62\) Waterbury (1970) argues that the 1955 declaration of “Celle-Saint-Cloud” assured the continuity of the governmental structures as reformed by the French. Other institutions created after the 1958 Royal Charter such as the National Consultative Assembly could debate but not set policies.
positions of authority and the popular new king quickly sought to monopolize them. As the post-independence struggle for power between the king and main political parties intensified, the Istiqlal suffered from internal splits between radicals and conservatives as well as a dwindling support base (Storm 2007: 14-15). A number of opposition elites defected to form a new party in 1959 called the Mouvement Populaire (MP), which appealed to the disaffected Berber population. Aware of the rift and hoping to weaken the principal opposition party, the king appointed one of the faction leaders as prime minister, which led to an irrevocable split within the Istiqlal (Waterbury 1970: 218).

Analytical Explanation

To sum up, this section has shown how shifting power equilibriums in both cases led to distinct regime survival strategies based on institutional design. Before Jordan’s independence, the king maintained control over the Legislative Assembly through a “winner-takes-all” system designed to include prominent families and elites. The decline of British colonial patronage in the 1940s and devastating Arab-Israeli War in 1949 led to the mobilization of opposition elites, however. As a result, the monarchy had to resort to a more inclusive electoral system that expanded representation to Palestinians in the West Bank. In Morocco, elites unified in opposition to the French colonial administration during the 1930s, thus spawning a powerful nationalist political party that earned a share of political power after independence in 1956. Towards the end of the decade, however, splits within the Istiqlal eroded its bargaining position vis-à-vis the monarchy and negotiations over subsequent elections. At the same time, the popular new king effectively exploited divisions within the opposition and created “palace parties.”
Figure 2.1 presents my explanatory framework for electoral system design with shifts in relative power during this time period. The diagram depicts the two case studies and the main changes to electoral institutions as a consequence of weakened opposition movements. Jordan’s King Abdallah kept a majoritarian system but doubled the size of the lower chamber in 1950 to allow more Palestinian representation in the recently annexed West Bank. Although Morocco did not have a legislature or electoral system during this period, the monarchy did move from a broad power sharing arrangement with the political parties after independence to one based on political factions in the early 1950s. Since Jordan’s electoral system remained majoritarian with single-member districts, my hypotheses about campaign strategies (H2.3 and H2.4) have limited plausibility. There is inconclusive evidence regarding entry costs and voting behavior.

63 Baaklini (1999: 167) notes that the East Bank was still favored under the system and districts were delineated in such a way to give clear advantage to native Transjordanians over Palestinians (note 2).
2) Elections of Regime Consolidation (1950s-1970s)

The next period of history in the two case studies can be described as a period of regime consolidation during which time the monarchies reasserted control over the political system. During the 1950s and 1960s, Jordan and Morocco had experimented with parliaments and political pluralism but the regional and domestic climate was simply too combustible for any sustained process of liberalization. After a series of political crises that challenged the legitimacy of the two monarchies, the kings ordered harsh crackdowns on political opponents. In the years that followed, parliaments were eclipsed by elections that featured heavy-handed forms of intervention and manipulation to ensure regime domination. Both monarchies gradually released their grip during the 1970s when they felt their position was secure. Therefore, elections at the beginning and end of this period represent critical junctures for analysis.

Elections Expose Elite Ruptures

In Jordan, a number of political undercurrents directly threatened the Hashemite monarchy during the early 1950s. For one, a young and politicized intelligentsia flourished in the East Bank under the banner of the National Socialist Party (NSP) and became highly critical of Jordan’s pro-Western orientation. Other leftist parties also organized protests and riots and opposition even spread through the army (Lust-Okar

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64 Baaklini et al. (1999: 142) define the period of regime consolidation in Jordan encompassing 1957 to 1978. Even though the authors refer to the same approximate period in Morocco as “Experiments with Parliamentary Politics” (112), they too can be more accurately conceptualized as period in which the monarchy solidified its rule. Storm (2007) uses “coercion”, “repression” and “turmoil” for these years.
2005: 52). After the 1956 parliamentary elections, in which NSP candidates won twelve out of the forty seats, the opposition party emerged as the principal parliamentary block and main threat to the palace. King Hussein, who had only assumed the throne several years prior, tried to co-opt this increasingly powerful movement by appointing its party leader—Suleiman Nabulsi—as prime minister. This tenuous arrangement quickly unraveled, however, as both sides lurched toward a showdown in the ensuing year. Finally, on April 25, 1957, King Hussein launched a massive crackdown, which included a declaration of martial law and a ban on all political parties.

Although the parliament was allowed to complete its term that year, a total of fifteen deputies were either expelled or forced to resign and were replaced by “friendlier” members (Abu Jaber 1972: 108). According to Baaklini et al. (1999: 142), the Nabulsi interlude contained important lessons, namely that a properly functioning legislature requires the existence of a “loyal opposition.” Moreover, the episode demonstrated that the monarchy needed to manage more carefully the composition of the parliament. As a result, the regime quickly increased the number of seats in the elected Chamber of Deputies and appointed Chamber of Notables to ensure that future parliaments would include a bigger bulwark of supporters.

In the case of Morocco, the regime also faced a growing chorus from political

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65 King Hussein attempted to co-opt many military officers with nationalist sympathies by negotiating with them over positions of power (see Lust-Okar ibid).

66 Baaklini et al. (2002: 141) notes that “progressive” and Arab nationalist elements controlled a total of 20 seats, or one-half of the lower chamber. Dann (1989: 39), however, stresses that there was a lack of cohesion among the rest of the opposition.

67 See Dann (1989) for a fuller account of the Nabulsi interlude and ensuing crises.

68 Abu Jaber (1972: 109) asks rhetorically whether the increase in membership would result in a larger number of grateful deputies and make it easier to diffuse the power of a larger group.
opposition parties that wanted to transform the monarchy into a purely symbolic role. The new king adopted a dual strategy based on active intervention in politics while deftly assigning blame on subversive political forces for the lack of democracy. In May 1960, the palace propagated the accusation that “preparations had been made not for a general election or for establishing true democracy, but for a nihilist revolution.”

Months before Morocco’s first parliamentary elections in 1963, King Hassan orchestrated the creation of the Front Pour la Defense des Institutions Constitutionelles (FDIC) with a staunch ally at the party’s helm. At the same time, the government narrowly managed to institute a majoritarian electoral system that allowed the FDIC and other palace parties to capitalize on their proximity to the monarchy’s patronage networks. Consequently, the FDIC managed to win as many seats as the two opposition parties combined despite receiving thirteen percent less of the total vote. Although the monarchy clearly benefited from a disproportional outcome, others point to the failure of the Istiqlal and its main rival, the UNFP, to form an electoral alliance.

Despite the blatant interference of the regime in Morocco’s inaugural national elections, the Chamber of Representatives elected in 1963 contained many vocal opposition deputies who wanted to curtail the power of the king and transform Morocco into a parliamentary system. In July, state security forces arrested nearly one hundred

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69. This accusation was actually made by the son of King Mohammed, Hassan II, in his 1978 memoirs. See Storm (2006: 18) for the full citation.

70. Without a doubt, the most authoritative resource on this election is by Leveau (1985), who was directly involved in the design of Morocco’s electoral districts in the late 1950s. In it, he singles out a key actor who switched his position in favor of a system of electoral lists that would have favored party organizations to one of single-member districts.

71. Zartman (1970: 260-261) claims that “the barriers to [an alliance between the UNFP and Istiqlal in 1963] proved insurmountable” but they did agree not to run rival candidates in districts in which one or other party was known to be strong. Storm (2007: 24) cites personal resentments among party leaders as a reason.
members of the UNFP on trumped up charges of plotting to overthrow the government.\textsuperscript{72} These arrests and an economic crisis that engulfed Morocco over the next year led to riots in March 1965 that rocked the country. The overall deterioration in the political climate provided the pretext for the monarchy to declare a state of emergency and suspend parliament for five years between 1965 and 1970. These events ushered in a dark period in Morocco’s history known as the “years of lead” \textit{(années de plomb} in French) during which time hundreds of palace opponents “disappeared” and thousands were imprisoned and sometimes tortured.

To sum up at this point, “winner-takes-all” electoral strategies were again instrumental in maintaining regime stability. This time, however, the majoritarian rules served to induce smaller parties to compete in areas which they enjoyed popular support and to prevent coordination with the more powerful nationalist parties. How did these majoritarian systems come into being? I argue that divided elites were instrumental to both regimes’ strategies.

Morocco’s king succeeded in getting “buy in” from opposition elites and nationalist parties to an electoral system that that catered to prominent local figures, that is, the new rural notability. As for Jordan’s monarchy, it also favored a strategy based on packing the elected parliament with supporters but underestimated the extent of their loyalty. The cases thus differ in that King Hussein’s room for maneuver after independence was considerably less than his counterpart in Morocco because of changes in opposition cohesion. Although Jordan’s opposition was not unified, the regime did suffer from an

\textsuperscript{72} Waterbury (1970: 293) suggests that the arrests were timed to halt the UNFP momentum in advance of local elections. He describes the entire episode in considerable detail.
erosion of elite support among East Bank intellectuals who formed the core of the NSP. Moreover, Jordan’s opposition was emboldened by the rise of Nasserism and the highly charged conflict in neighboring Palestine whereas Morocco’s opposition was relatively isolated and in a general state of decline during the 1960s.

Analytic Explanation

Figure 2.2 depicts these electoral arrangements based on my explanatory framework. It shows that levels of elite cohesion differed substantially before critical parliamentary elections in Jordan (1956) and Morocco (1963). As a result, Jordan’s relatively strong opposition and weak ruling coalition hamstrung the ability of the monarchy to manipulate electoral rules. The regime was forced to use a strict majoritarian system with single-member districts and candidate ballots in order to include loyalists and exclude the opposition as much as possible. The hypotheses regarding “entry costs” (H2.1/2) and “personal vote” strategies (H2.3/4) are not applicable because the regime was resigned to accept the outcome.

The case of Morocco, in contrast, reveals that divisions within the opposition allowed the king more maneuverability in designing electoral rules that would co-opt loyalist and opposition parties. Morocco’s monarchy was able to entice party leaders by encouraging the development of so-called “palace parties” whereas Jordan did not. Nonetheless, the inauguration of multiparty elections provided important signals to both regimes about the strength of opposition parties. Although they decided to stick with majoritarian systems, Morocco’s strong ruling coalition enabled the regime to redraw single-member districts that raised entry costs in order to reward loyalists and smaller
parties with token seats in parliament and curtail representation from the principal opposition (H.2). Interestingly, however, Morocco opted for a two-round system that could encourage opposition coordination, thus casting some doubt on the “strategic voting” hypothesis (H2.6).

Figure 2.2: Summary of Electoral System Design (1956 and 1963)

While Morocco and Jordan initially allowed a semblance of genuine competition in these elections, the two regimes also established “red lines” during this initial experiment with parliamentary politics. When opposition leaders and elected parliamentarians questioned the nature of the political system itself, it provided embattled kings the justification to intervene. Through the imposition of martial law and rule by royal decree, the two monarchies were able to establish their dominance over the next two decades. In
the paragraphs below, I describe how a series of external events impacted levels of cohesion among opposition and ruling elites, which thus produced different electoral arrangements in the 1970s.

**External Events Impact Elite Cohesion**

Although Morocco’s opposition suffered from harsh repression, it did find common cause in seeking constitutional revisions during the early 1970s. Nevertheless, a sustainable coalition never emerged that was able to put any significant pressure on the regime because of two main factors. For one, the new constitution stipulated that trade unions, communal councils and professional chambers would be part of the electoral colleges that indirectly elect members of the parliament. The electoral influence of political parties was diluted and the electoral colleges became less ideological in which members could be swayed by clientelist appeals.

The other factor relates to external events during the 1970s. In 1974 a territorial dispute over the Western Sahara erupted between Morocco and Mauritania. The ensuing political crisis enabled the king to rally hundreds of thousands of Moroccans to embark on the “Green March” to stake their claim to the area. This nationalist tide was the death knell for rejectionist forces still hoping to topple the monarchy. When the king called for new elections that year, the political environment provided extra leverage over opposition parties that returned to the bargaining table. According to Lust-Okar (2005: 58), “political forces that had shown themselves either too strong or intransigent during the previous decade would be excluded.”

The weakness of the opposition also allowed the regime to enact new electoral
reforms for highly anticipated parliamentary elections in 1977. Although overt forms of vote rigging and harassment were much less prevalent, the redrawing of electoral districts produced much higher thresholds in opposition strongholds and disproportional vote to seat ratios. Moreover, the use of a two-round system allowed the regime to correct for any imbalances that emerged from the initial ballot. The *Istiqlal* and UNFP (which became the USFP) only captured a relatively small share of seats because of the new system. This outcome further divided the political opposition and the two main parties experienced an irreconcilable split when the *Istiqlal* agreed to join the new government.

Meanwhile, Jordan’s monarchy forced a number of prominent opposition groups to operate underground during the decade as it sought to reestablish control over the political system. The catalyst for this newfound resolve was undoubtedly a result of the events during “Black September” in 1970 when the state army fought pitched battles with Palestinian militias that had become radicalized from the escalating tensions in the neighboring West Bank. By 1971, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) no longer had a presence in Jordan and the monarchy turned its focus to shoring up traditional domestic bases of support. Like Morocco, the monarchy needed an external catalyst to gain the upper hand over recalcitrant elements within the political system. After the UN adopted a resolution in 1974 declaring the to be the sole representative of the Palestinian people, King Hussein again dissolved parliament in part based on the rationale that the resolution was at odds with the substantial representation of Palestinians in the Jordanian institution (Baaklini 1997: 143). Instead of setting a new date for

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73 See Storm (2007: 40-42) for calculations of votes per seat and results of two rounds.

74 The precipitating event that led to “Black September” was the hijacking of a commercial airline by a Palestinian terrorist faction which then sought refuge for hostage negotiations at Amman’s airport.
parliamentary elections, however, the king decided to rule without a parliament and appointed an advisory council to serve as a tenuous bridge to the citizenry.

This period forms the critical juncture in Lust-Okar’s (2005) analysis because the two monarchies pursued different strategies for consolidating their rule. Morocco’s king manipulated the incentive structures that opposition elites face when deciding whether or not to demand political change by admitting some opponents into the formal political system while excluding others. As such, she argues that Morocco’s monarchy effectively co-opted the opposition in the 1970s by producing a divided political environment. In contrast, Jordan’s monarchy did not seek to foster a divided political climate but rather kept all opposition groups illegal during this period. Consequently, political opponents remained willing to mobilize popular opposition to challenge the government. As I will show in the next section, these structures of contestation would have important ramifications on subsequent elections and changes to the electoral system.

*Analytic Explanation*

Relatively stable levels of elite cohesion over the 1960s and 1970s produced breathing room for Morocco’s monarchy to initiate greater competition within the electoral arena and allow inclusion of some opposition groups within parliament. Since opposition elites were divided, my first hypothesis postulates that Morocco should prefer electoral rules that lower entry costs in order to reward supporters, co-opt potential defectors and increase factionalism within the opposition (H2.2). The delimitation of electoral districts and significant variation in the number of votes required to win provide compelling evidence for this claim. In turn, this “divide-and-rule” strategy allowed King
Hassan to stave off prolonged economic crises and sporadic bouts of political unrest
during these two decades.

In contrast, Jordan had experienced severe fluctuations in elite cohesion among
traditional allies such as East Bank intellectuals, the army and Palestinian notables. The
opposition had also coalesced around populist causes such as the Palestinian conflict and
the Arab nationalism. This flux between divided and unified elites should lead to
electoral rules that raise electoral entry costs in order to promote favored candidates,
discourage factionalism and exclude the opposition (H2.1), which I also find strong
evidence. Given the tense political situation, King Hussein had little leeway to
manipulate electoral rules with these objectives. He was forced to accommodate the
opposition’s demand for parliamentary elections and accept their outcome.

3) Elections under Regime Duress (1980s)

Both monarchies faced serious challenges during the 1980s in large part due to economic
crises and mounting social unrest. Yet each adopted different strategies for dealing with
an emboldened opposition and managing internal tensions. Many political histories of
Morocco and Jordan mark this period as the onset of liberalization because dormant
oppositions began to press their demands in the context of widespread discontent. The
two monarchies responded, to some extent, by allowing greater participation and
competition in elections. Building on the illuminating work of Lust-Okar (2005), my
analysis examines how changes in electoral rules altered the relationship between the
regimes and various opposition groups and vice versa.
Dissatisfied Elites Prompt Different Electoral Strategies

In 1983, six years had passed since the last parliamentary elections in Morocco and Jordan’s parliament had been suspended for nearly a decade. King Hassan had exploited divisions between moderates and radicals by successfully incorporating Morocco’s main opposition party into government. King Hussein had created the National Consultative Council (NCC), which was comprised of handpicked loyalists, to facilitate contacts between the bureaucracy and the Jordanian population. Although prospects may have appeared bleak for political reform, the two kings were sensitive to popular sentiments and wanted to inject some legitimacy into their rule. As a result, both regimes announced the resumption of elections while maintaining tight controls over electoral processes and the rules that govern them. At this point, the two cases diverge in the forms of electoral manipulation they employed.

Morocco held municipal elections in 1983 followed by parliamentary elections in 1984. The timing and sequence of these elections were inextricably linked to a palace strategy of controlling the electoral process and limiting the opposition’s ability to organize.75 Local elections tend to be more prone to manipulation due to their relative small number of voters and salience of parochial issues. In this case, however, the monarchy took an active role in engineering the outcomes. Two explanations for such blatant interference from the palace can be singled out. The first was to help manufacture a more pliant parliament. As García explains (2000: 103-104), Morocco has an indirect system for electing members of the upper chamber of parliament, one-third of which

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75 King Hassan issued a decree in May 1983 calling for municipal elections only a month later. The decree also coincided with the release of 1982 census data that provided the baseline for redrawing electoral districts. See García (2000: 6) for more information.
would be chosen by councils formed after the 1983 municipal elections. The second was
to blunt the likely electoral gains by the Istiqlal by redrawing electoral districts to
minimize its representation.\textsuperscript{76} Even though the party was a partner in the governing
coalition, the regime continually sought to undermine its influence through elections.

Despite these overt instances of electoral manipulation, King Hassan reached out to
opposition parties after the 1984 parliamentary elections and invited them to help form
the new government. This time, however, both the USFP and Istiqlal refused to be co-
opted. While some hoped the two parties would form a united coalition, disagreements
over positions emerged and personal differences resurfaced, leading to further intra-party
power struggles. The elections once again occurred on an uneven electoral playing field.

The rest of the 1980s were defined by continued stalemate between the palace and
opposition despite a combustible political environment. King Hassan had forced the
opposition to play by the rules of the game by requiring all candidates to be registered
members of a political party (Zartman 1988). This also weakened the influence of
Morocco’s labor unions, which had successfully mobilized strikes and protests against
the regime earlier in the decade. Continued divisions among union leaders and within the
USFP weakened the opposition’s bargaining position and enabled the king to postpone
elections for the remainder of the decade (Lust-Okar 2005: 134).

In Jordan, the political environment in the early 1980s was more polarized between
incumbent and opposition elites despite some efforts by the king to play upon divisions
among different groupings. Unlike his counterpart in Morocco, King Hussein did not

\textsuperscript{76} See Storm (2007: 46) for the ratio between registered voters per council seat and the number of voters
across various constituencies.
separate opponents into legal and illegal factions in the formal political sphere (Lust-Okar 2005: 60). As I have previously explained, Jordan’s regime maintenance strategies swung back and forth between intervention and accommodation. After more than two decades during which time all political parties were strictly banned, the palace recognized the inherent dangers of maintaining a closed political system indefinitely. It also realized that negotiations with Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) could produce a new political reality for Jordan. Consequently, King Hussien recalled the Chamber of Deputies in January 1984 and announced a series of by-elections to fill vacancies that had been left in the wake of the parliament’s suspension.

At this point, the case of Jordan and Morocco diverge substantially in the degree of electoral manipulation employed by the two regimes. Jordan actually reduced government interference in the by-elections and even reserved 11 seats for the Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan. Many considered the conduct of the elections to be fair as evidenced by the defeat of notables from prominent families closely connected to the palace (Robins 1991).\[77\] Ironically, this initial attempt at electoral liberalization resulted in de-liberalization after elites launched a counter-mobilization to protect their influence through electoral change (192). As a result of this pressure, the government enacted an electoral law in 1986 to shore up traditional bases of support. One of the main objectives of the new law was to strengthen rural kinship groups in the south through the creation of smaller constituencies with a disproportionately greater number of seats (200). Tribes that were loyal to the Hashemite monarchy dominated these sparsely populated regions

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77 Robins (1991: 192) highlights the electoral defeat of several notables from families closely connected to the palace including one prominent incumbent from Amman.
whereas most urban centers in the north feature a mixture of national origin, ethnic identity and political orientation. These electoral districts were allocated much fewer seats in relation to their population. The manipulation of electoral districts became a key component of promoting the interests of elites and structuring competition.

Not all elites were satisfied, however, and others became increasingly critical as Jordan’s government embarked on a number of controversial foreign and domestic policies during the 1980s that exposed fissures within the regime coalition. For one, the king’s decision to enter into negotiations with Israel was fraught with danger because Jordan’s policy became linked to the fate of Palestinians in the West Bank. The political situation in Jordan exploded after negotiations broke down during the spring of 1986 and a full-scale uprising, or intifada, erupted across the Occupied Territories in 1987. During these tumultuous years, the Islamist and secular opposition put aside ideological and factional differences to make political demands based on economic grievances. Some of the initial popular protests originated with university students who were associated with the Muslim Brotherhood and Community Party. Towards the end of the decade, other secular parties mobilized around general discontent with the steep decline in per capita income.\(^{78}\) The economic situation further deteriorated on July 31, 1988 when King Hussein announced that Jordan would sever administrative ties with the West Bank.\(^{79}\)

In response to the ensuing fiscal crisis, Jordan agreed to an IMF structural adjustment program that called for the removal of subsidies on basic commodities. In

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\(^{78}\) The *Christian Science Monitor* from May 1, 1988 cites a number of economic studies that showed a decline from $1,800 per capita in 1982 to $900 in 1988.

\(^{79}\) According to Lucas (2005: 26), Jordan’s unilateral disengagement in 1988 precipitated a fiscal crisis that included a capital flight from banks, a currency crash and a soaring external debt.
April 1989, price increases on fuel and food sparked riots in the southern town of Ma’an, a traditional stronghold of Hashemite rule. Clashes between security forces and citizens quickly spread across the country amidst public calls for the government’s resignation. With the regime reeling, King Hussein and a coterie of close advisors decided that a major political restructuring was necessary. Mufti (1999) provides an illuminating analysis of these internal debates and makes a compelling argument that the key catalyst for political reform came from within the regime’s power structure itself. Indeed, he credits the reinstatement of general elections, initiation of a government-opposition dialogue, enactment of a national charter and ultimately, a revival of parliament to a series of elite bargains struck in 1989.

The first order of business for Jordan’s regime after quelling the riots was revisiting electoral reform. In the 1986 electoral law, it had settled on a Block Vote system that granted citizens votes for as many seats as there were in any particular district. The rationale was that forcing voters to cast their ballots for only one candidate might provoke infighting among within clans and tribes, undermining patron-client hierarchies that serve as useful mechanisms of government control (Mufti 1999: 107). What the regime did not anticipate was the ability of Islamists and other highly organized groups to capitalize on the provision allowing multiple votes. While direct relationships and tribal affiliations factored foremost in voters’ minds, the electoral law stipulated that citizens could also vote based on ideology and service. As Baaklini et al. (1999: 150) explains, “the law enabled individuals to vote both their interest and their heart.”

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80 Schwedler (2006: 49) lists some of the hard-liners, intermediaries and reformers who were advising King Hussein on how to respond to the 1989 riots.
Jordan’s 1989 parliamentary elections empowered a number of disparate groups: the Islamists who would eventually win a plurality of seats; the secular left that captured a dozen seats; the traditional tribal candidates who were the regime’s strongest backers; and finally those independent candidates who represented professional and business interests that rejected both the Islamists’ and the left’s message (151). This final group became the “swing” vote within parliament when they banded with pro-regime forces to form a coalition (Robinson 1998: 392). Even though many heralded the 1989 parliamentary elections as a harbinger of democracy, the delimitation of electoral districts still provided a safeguard for the regime.82

**Analytic Explanation**

Figure 2.3 summarizes the elite configurations in Jordan and Morocco during this period and the electoral systems they produced. It represents a stark example of how “strong” and “weak” degrees of elite cohesion produced different electoral arrangements. Once again, Jordan was in a precarious position not only because of regional tensions but also because particular elite configurations placed added pressure on the regime. Although the government had enacted a new electoral law in 1986, the critical juncture came in April 1989 when domestic unrest exposed divisions within the ruling coalition. Consequently, the regime opted to maintain a Block Vote system that allowed opposition parties to capitalize on their organization and the ability of citizens to vote strategically across personal and ideological lines. Neither of the hypotheses regarding campaign

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81 Politicians that came from the private sector were increasingly successful. This trend has continued in subsequent elections and is the focus of the upcoming chapter on Jordan’s 2007 elections.

82 Lucas (2005: 47), for one, claims that the Muslim Brotherhood could have won a landslide had the seats in the House of Deputies more closely reflected population patterns.
strategies (H2.3 and H2.4) applies since this relatively open electoral system in Jordan featured multi-member districts and candidate ballots, but also a majoritarian formula.

Morocco, in contrast, devised electoral rules in 1983 under divided elites. Islamist opposition groups had gained some popular support but, unlike in Jordan, they did not form a strategic alliance with secularists. Towards the end of the decade, opposition parties did agree on the need for a common platform but lacked unity. Hopes for the return of an opposition bloc, or *kutla*, quickly faded. As a result, the regime redrew electoral districts and fielded additional pro-palace candidates in single-member districts to insulate it from voter discontent. This electoral arrangement had a mixture of incentives to lower entry costs, reinforce personal vote strategies and reduce the likelihood of strategic voting, thus neither confirming nor disconfirming the hypotheses.

**Figure 2.3: Summary of Electoral System Design (1980s)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opposition Cohesion</th>
<th>Ruling Elite Cohesion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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</table>

- **Jordan (1986)**
  - Block Vote
- **Morocco (1983)**
  - Redrawing of electoral districts, Two-round system
4) Elections under New Rules (1990s)

The beginning of the 1990s ushered in a widespread feeling that profound political reform was on the horizon. Revolutions had swept aside totalitarian regimes in Eastern Europe and some believed it would only be a matter of time before the “third wave” of democracy engulfed the Arab world. By the end of the decade, however, the two anachronistic monarchies of Morocco and Jordan had reinvented themselves by issuing an array of new electoral rules. Electoral reform was a key component to regime maintenance strategies under liberalization. This section explains how shifting elite configurations resulted in fundamental reforms.

Ruling Elites Rally

In 1990, Morocco was consumed by violent riots, union-led strikes and other forms of unrest related to the standoff against Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait. Yet the regime was still in a position of strength vis-à-vis a divided political opposition during debate over constitutional revisions. As such, the monarchy was able to promulgate a new constitution and electoral law in 1992 that made marginal improvements to the transparency of elections but made no change to the character of parliamentary elections themselves. Nevertheless, the opposition parties that participated as part of a renewed Kutla fared relatively well in the 1993 parliamentary elections, obtaining more one-quarter of the total valid votes and capturing 41 percent of the seats in the House of

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Representatives (Garcia 1999: 189). Again, the key for limiting the opposition’s electoral gains was the second round of indirect elections, which disproportionately benefited the palace parties in winning a combined seat share of 77 percent in the upper House of Counselors (190). While the close proximity of municipal and parliamentary elections in 1983 and 1984 partially explained the success of pro-regime forces in the previous period, the outcome in 1993 may be attributed to the vagaries of electoral colleges and the preferences of the independent councilors who composed them. Nonetheless, the elections produced no clear winner and left the opposition parties racked with internal divisions over whether or not to join the government.

In the case of Jordan, the 1989 parliamentary elections provided an opening for the opposition and governing elites to press for further reform. Indeed, the newly elected parliament pushed many initiatives with the Muslim Brotherhood as the driving force. While this assertiveness provided some immediate benefits in the form of cabinet portfolios and policy concessions, the Islamist block in parliament overreached in criticizing foreign policy matters in the Gulf crisis and Arab-Israeli peace process. As a result, the 1989 victory actually made the Islamists accountable for their rhetoric and moderated their influence in the business of day-to-day governing (Schwedler 2005).

Not to be overlooked, the 1989 elections also enabled the Jordanian monarchy to remove itself from the vicissitudes of daily political life. For example, King Hussein granted the prime minister and his cabinet greater responsibilities and autonomy to appease international and domestic audiences. This strategy mirrored the one previously

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84 Storm (2007: 68) attempts to explain this discrepancy but her analysis does not reach a definitive conclusion.
adopted by his Moroccan counterpart in co-opting governing elites and sheltering the monarchy from criticism (Baaklini et al.: 1999: 155). While many heralded this period as the onset of democratization in the kingdom, the reality was that the regime’s actions constituted a tactical retreat, leading some to label Jordan’s reform process as “defensive democratization” (Robinson 1998).

The most significant development in incumbent-opposition relations during the 1990s was Jordan’s National Charter, which was officially adopted in June 1991. Although this formal pact effectively normalized relations between the monarchy and political parties, it came with a number of costs for the opposition. For one, the process that produced the Charter exposed the deep-seated divisions within the opposition that the previous elections had masked.85 Lucas (2005: 47) adds that the process was also tightly controlled by the regime and the negotiations allowed the regime to circumvent the Islamist-dominated legislature and avoid public debate over sensitive issues. Perhaps most importantly, the Charter established the absolute legitimacy of the monarchy, thereby producing an irrevocable split between opposition radicals and moderates. According to Hamid (2010: 125), the pact “proved, in reality, an unfortunate bargain for the king’s erstwhile adversaries.” The longstanding goal of King Hussein to divide the opposition had been achieved in one fell swoop.

In contrast, the regime coalition during the writing of the National Charter was generally cohesive and cooperative (Lucas 2005: 48). The Charter also served to rally

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85 Lucas (2005: 31-49) devotes most of a chapter to discussing the formation, composition and various agendas of the Royal Committee that wrote the Charter.
loyalist forces and Hashemite allies around the core issue of Jordanian identity. In May 1993, the king appointed a new prime minister whom many considered to be a regime hard-liner. At this point, the power equilibrium had shifted enough to enable fundamental electoral reform. Ironically, this reform would come in the form of a subtle change to the ballot structure that governed previous elections.

In August 1993, Jordan discarded the open list Block Vote system in which citizens could cast as many votes as there were slots in multi-member districts. The new system, classified as Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) and known as sawt wahad (“one vote”) in Jordan, allowed citizens only one vote in each electoral district no matter its magnitude. The government justifications for the 1993 amendments were well documented and buttressed by royal decrees and throne speeches. The Muslim Brotherhood and opposition parties protested the new law but were unwilling to boycott the upcoming elections in fear of provoking a reaction from the regime and jeopardizing the tenuous gains made in the National Charter.

On November 8, 1993 Jordanians returned to the polls for the first time since the landmark elections and were able to choose among a multitude of legalized parties. The “one vote” system exerted significant psychological effects on voting behavior, however. Citizens could no longer cast extra votes for Islamists and other ideological parties in addition to candidates from their tribe or family who could deliver wasta (or “mediation”). With only one choice, the calculus of voters shifted entirely to identity and patronage. As a result, the IAF and Islamist candidates lost significant ground while

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86 Lucas (2005: 36) profiles the agenda of a regime hard-liner who viewed the Royal Committee as a place where the opposition abandoned claims to a non-Jordanian identity.

87 Lucas (2005: 76-77) provides an insightful summary of six such justifications.
centrists and pro-regime independents scored significant gains. These results did not translate into immediate benefits for the regime, however.

Following the 1993 elections, members of Jordan’s Lower House organized themselves into six parliamentary blocks but they lacked cohesion and rarely voted as single units (Baaklini et al. 1999: 159). Although some lobbed criticisms on the government and brought officials before the body for questioning, the body remained fractured and could neither regain the electoral mandate nor the numerical capability to be effective. Moreover, external events again dominated the legislative agenda as Jordan signed a comprehensive peace agreement with Israel. King Hussein would later rely on a more pliant parliament to ratify the formal treaty.  

Meanwhile, domestic pressure continued to mount during the 1990s in Morocco. Entering the twilight of his reign, King Hassan relented to some opposition demands while also insulating the regime for his eventual successor. In 1996, the monarchy again resorted to constitutional reform to establish a bicameral parliament for the first time. The resulting structure attracted considerable scrutiny from detractors of Morocco’s reform efforts.  

Morocco subsequently held parliamentary elections in 1997 that reaffirmed the

88 Lucas (2005: 81-83) actually suggests the 1993 election amendments were part of a deliberate strategy by the king to reduce potential opposition in parliament.

89 Ketterer (2001) notes that King Hassan had continually adopted new formulae for ruling, in which the precise powers and size of the parliament were adjusted to both meet the demands for greater openness and maintain the stability of the state. He argues that the bicameral parliament was created to address those previous experiments that had not succeeded. More specifically, White (1997) links the creation of a new bicameral parliament to the frustration of the opposition following the 1993 elections. He stresses that the amendments were part of a process towards gradual accommodation of the opposition’s demands. In contrast, Deneoux and Maghraoui (1998) contend that the monarchy proposed the bicameral structure in order to extricate itself from day-to-day politics and shift blame away from the monarchy. Howe (2005) concurs that restructuring the political system through a popular constitutional referendum was a “brilliant royal maneuver.”
control of the monarchy. While the opposition parties increased their vote shares, the new system actually penalized them in terms of seats. Indeed, the *Kutla* managed to win over one-third of votes but captured less seats in the new parliament whereas the pro-government coalition won more seats with fewer votes. One of the keys for the success of loyalist parties was that they concentrated their resources in smaller districts in which the number of votes needed to win a seat was significantly lower than larger constituencies (Storm 2005: 80).

The inconclusive outcome of Morocco’s 1997 elections frustrated the opposition and allowed the king to co-opt it once again. In March 1998, the king asked the leader of the USFP and longtime regime opponent, Abderahmane Youssoufi to form a *gouvernement d’alternance*—a government that, in theory at least, would alternate between centrist coalitions of the left and right. Youssoufi assembled a cabinet of forty ministers from seven political parties but they spent much of their tenure squabbling and proved to be too unwieldy for an effective government.

Meanwhile, the “one man” vote system in Jordan changed the electoral landscape so much for the opposition that the IAF took the bold step of boycotting the 1997 parliamentary elections. The party’s rationale was based on a variety of factors but the Islamists knew they faced an uphill battle under the existing electoral law. Moreover, efforts to replace SNTV with a more proportional system had been stymied in parliament. As Lucas (2005: 116) opines boldly:

Thus, what the regime’s SNTV electoral system began, the opposition boycott completed: the near “tribalization” of the Jordanian parliament and the exclusion of the opposition from the legislature. The Parliament elected in 1997, aside from a quarrelsome handful of opposition deputies, focused its activities on patronage as much as on legislation.
In the end, the decision to abstain from the balloting provided mixed results. The boycott did cast serious doubt on the legitimacy of the elections but Islamists were shut out entirely of the parliament and lost considerable visibility and popular support. The 1997 elections thus marked the end of the parliament’s brief quest to secure some degree of autonomy and institutional centrality within the broader political system.

Analytic Explanation

In sum, different forms of institutional manipulation undertaken by Morocco and Jordan in the 1990s were effective in containing opposition parties and expanding its governing coalition. Reforms to the parliament and electoral law were strongly backed by the monarchy. After the 1991 National Charter altered the political dynamics in Jordan, the regime abruptly switched from a multiple candidate ballot to the “one vote” system in advance of the 1993 elections. Likewise, the continued divisions within Morocco’s Kutla enabled King Hassan to institute a bicameral parliament in 1996 to offset the influence of opposition parties in the Lower House. Figure 2.4 summarizes this period under new electoral rules based on my explanatory framework.
In the aftermath of the 1997 parliamentary elections, both regimes emerged stronger but for different reasons. In Jordan, the deterioration of opposition cohesion in the early 1990s and resurgence of ruling elites motivated the regime to devise an electoral arrangement that would lower entry costs (H2.2) and reinforce traditional patron-client relationships (H2.4). As a result, so-called “service representatives” and pro-regime independents once again dominated the legislature.

As for Morocco, a series of constitutional amendments kept the opposition off balance. The establishment of a bicameral parliament appeared proved to be a bulwark for maintaining support in at least one of the chambers. Later, King Hassan invited the secular opposition to form a government of *alternance*, mindful that the diverse coalition would not be able to govern effectively. Put simply, institutional arrangements enabled
both monarchies to structure electoral competition to their advantage. As we will see, this strategy would be tested in following years.

5) Elections Under New Kings (2000s)

Ironically, both King Hassan and King Hussein died within the span of several months in 1999. After these two pillars of monarchical rule in the Arab world passed away, the challenges confronting their successors were enormous. Expectations for reform were high and early indications appeared promising as two new kings began their reign. In Morocco, King Mohammed released many political prisoners, fired the powerful Interior Minister who was loathed by the opposition and even promised to develop a “new concept of authority.” In Jordan, King Abdallah spearheaded an aggressive privatization program, pushed through administrative reform and eased press restrictions.

Kings Regain Control Over Elites

In the beginning, the democratic rhetoric of the new kings matched their actions. The initial optimism was short lived, however, as the young monarchs soon adopted the model of managed top-down liberalization of their fathers. As Ottaway (2007) notes, Mohammed and Abdallah introduced limited change in very specific areas rather than stimulate a sustained process of democratic transformation. They also inherited the institution of the palace and the symbolic power and informal rituals associated with it.

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90 King Mohamed referred to the “new concept of authority” in his Royal Speech of October 12, 1999. The concept was intended to promulgate a new era of transparency and accountability in state-society relations.
At the same time, both kings recognized the need for modernization and development. Economic liberalization therefore became the dominant mode of reform. New electoral rules were part of a broader effort to consolidate monarchical rule while promoting an image of reform to external audience.

After King Abdallah assumed power in 1999, Jordan’s monarchy became more sensitive to the appearance of parliament merely serving as a “rubber stamp” for the regime. This perception became more acute given the king’s determination to push through an economic liberalization agenda. Indeed, many of the new king’s neoliberal initiatives exposed the limitations of a parliament dominated by conservative figures (Sawalha 2001: 1). King Abdallah realized that much of the “old guard” needed to be ushered out of power quietly for his plans to move forward. Consequently, he appointed a noted businessman as prime minister in June 2000 and directed him to draft a “modern” elections law (Lucas 2005).

Enacting a new electoral law largely mirrored the process from 1993; the king dissolved parliament to keep the negotiations close to centers of power and to avoid unwanted criticism that would undoubtedly accompany a public debate. Opinions differ why the government dispensed with parliament at a time when it was generally supportive. One report (ICG 2003) suggests that the monarchy saw the parliament as a liability and a potential brake on economic reforms. It is hard to imagine, however, that many deputies would have opposed the king’s resolve for economic liberalization. Most likely, the king recognized that a critical juncture had arrived for many important decisions, including electoral reform, and dissolving parliament was a necessary step to push through his agenda.
When the king announced the new temporary law, it became obvious why the government had kept such a tight lid on the process. According to Sawalha (2001), the law was hardly “new” and, in fact, largely dressed up old provisions. First of all, it allocated 24 additional parliamentary seats but the distribution of those seats reflected the same geographic and demographic imbalances of representation. Second, the temporary law introduced a new national quota to ensure that women would be elected but it did not specify the number of seats and stipulated that female candidates would compete against each other on a national level. Finally, and most importantly, the new law preserved the controversial “one vote” system. Thus, the 2001 electoral law was developed in a fashion that reflected traditional forms of elite dominance with a keen interest in maintaining pre-existing power structures.

In Morocco, the monarchy also recognized that systemic changes needed to be made after the 1997 parliamentary elections. One of the earliest signs of impending reform was the resurgence of women’s rights associations at the end of the decade and the government’s discussion of proposals to revise the conservative family code (mudawanna) and the legal restrictions it placed on women (Sater 2007). Like Jordan, Morocco established a quota for women in parliament with national lists for female candidates.

91 The exceptions were by-laws that clarified voter registration procedures, rationalized voter identification cards and made the administrative process more accountable.


93 It is highly debatable whether the modest six-seat quota added in 2003 by governmental decree really “empowered” women in Jordan’s parliament. It should also be noted that quotas for other ethnic minorities were maintained but they could only compete in designated districts against each other.
Most importantly, however, Morocco’s government switched from a first-past-the-post system to a party list proportional system. Surprisingly, relatively little has been written about Morocco’s electoral overhaul in 2002 and what distinguishes it from other instances of electoral reform. In this case, the Kutla parties and Islamist opposition in parliament were involved in the discussions over the new law’s shape and form (Storm 2007: 87). The “hidden hand” of the palace obviously was instrumental but it did not “pre-cook” the new law, as in the case of Jordan, and then bypass normal legislative procedures for enacting it into law. In fact, the debate over the new law in the spring of 2002 was marked by relative transparency and civility. As Storm (2007: 88) concludes from several local media sources, “Although it was Prime Minister Youssoufi who initiated the reform of the election code, it was the corresponding support for the revision by the makhzen that enabled it to come true after demonstrations of accommodating behavior from both parties.” Why did these political forces that had been odds for many years suddenly come to an agreement in 2002 over the “rules of game”?

The answer may lie in the regime’s recognition that promoting more competitive, free and fair elections were in its best interests for the sake of both international and domestic legitimacy. King Mohammed had already traveled extensively around the country as part of an extensive publicity campaign to shore up support for his initiatives. The monarchy’s commitment to electoral reform was part of a broader effort to reassure citizens that the country was moving in a democratic direction. In a Royal Speech commemorating an important date in the country’s struggle for independence, Mohammed extolled the significance of the upcoming elections as “a landmark in the process of consolidating the march towards democracy” (quoted in Storm 2007: 85). By
appropriating the issue for himself, the king prevented the Kutla from controlling the debate on any reform proposals. The monarchy could thus position itself as the champion for certain democratic principles while maintaining a tight grip on the process. The king also recognized that the political dynamics within Morocco had changed and that elite allegiances were more fluid under his nascent rule.

Electoral reform also became a process around which various political forces could cohere. Indeed, a wide range of political forces fell in line with popular sentiments as the momentum for electoral reform grew in 2001. Even Driss Basri, the former Interior Minister and alleged mastermind of fixed elections in the past, came to the following conclusion in mid-2001: “the way of voting in force today contributes to the dispersion of the voices in a large number of candidates, disfigures the democratic representation and reduces the legitimacy of the representative institution.”94 The PJD agreed to electoral reform that featured proportional representation because the party believed it would benefit from its strong organization and mobilization capacity relative to other parties. In sum, the process and outcome became commonly regarded as a “win-win” situation for all those who were involved. In short, the details of the new law mattered less than being a part of the coalition.

In Jordan, regional events quickly overtook any hopes that political reform would become King Abdallah’s main preoccupation. Besides the resumption of the Palestinian intifada, the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States put security issues front and center. The buildup to the U.S. invasion of Iraq most directly impacted Jordan,

however. As a result of the growing unrest and public antipathy towards U.S. policy in the region, the palace decided to postpone elections in fear of an impressive opposition showing. King Abdallah probably did not feel secure enough to allow elections to go on as planned.

The 2003 elections were set against this backdrop of security concerns, growing domestic political pressure and regional crises. As such, there was significant interest in assessing the openness of the electoral process, the engagement of political parties and the representative nature of the elected parliament. But again the palace resorted to making significant changes to the electoral system outside of a normal legal legislative framework.\textsuperscript{95} The changes included an increase in the number of parliamentary seats— from 80 to 110—as well as an increase in the number of electoral districts—from 21 to 45. These changes not only reflected a deliberate strategy to dilute the strength of the political opposition, but also to bring more tribal and pro-government elements into the parliamentary fold.\textsuperscript{96}

Although IAF candidates registered a total of 17 victories in the 2003 elections, the presence of opposition parties in the parliament continued to decline. Two-thirds of the 110 seats were won by independent tribal or conservative pro-government candidates. One of the main reasons these candidates were successful was because could they focus their energies on offering patronage rather than being tied to an ideology and legislative program. In turn, voters were likely to reward those candidates who could deliver

\textsuperscript{95} Sawalha (2001:12) provides a detailed account of this critical juncture in Jordan’s electoral law.

\textsuperscript{96} See Lust-Okar (2006:466) for a cogent analysis of how the new electoral law did not rectify the discrepancies in representation between rural and urban districts. For example, the number of additional seats allocated to the regime stronghold of Kerak heavily outweighed the increases to Amman.
material benefits to them. Although it is not uncommon for representatives to play this role in a variety of political contexts, the presence of “service deputies” became a preeminent feature of Jordan’s parliament. They harbored no illusions about what they were supposed to do once elected and their constituents expected it.

In 2002, Morocco’s new electoral system divided the country into 91 constituencies and the proportional representation (PR) party list system was introduced. According to Willis (2002: 62), “the officially stated reason for these changes was to reduce the saliency of vote buying and, more curiously, to help strengthen and rationalize Morocco’s traditionally weak and balkanized party political map (emphasis added).” Willis does not provide a source for the latter claim but it is highly questionable whether the introduction of List PR would lead to these desired changes in the party system. In fact, out of the 25 parties competing in the 2002 elections, ten were formed between the beginning of the debate on electoral reform in 2001 and the election date in 2002 (Szmolka 2009). Moreover, party representatives have testified that the new system further frustrated the electorate by complicating the voting process (IFES 2004). The plethora of political parties taking part in the elections not only led to confusion and disinterest of the electorate but also to the impossibility of any workable majority in the new parliament (Howe 2005: 241). After the 2002 elections, the number of parties represented in the new parliament increased from fifteen to twenty-one.

Why didn’t electoral reforms have a greater impact on the party system? One lies with the motivation of parties themselves. According to Daadaoui (2008), Moroccan

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97 According to polling data from Transparency Maroc, a Moroccan civil society organization, 70 percent of voters in the 2002 elections did not clearly understand the voting process and 64 percent were unaware of the electoral reforms (quoted in IFES 2004: 22).
political parties increasingly seek a “positional strategy” in their contestation of the public sphere. Based on elite interviews, he argues: “[i]n the short term, political parties register their presence in the political system, and their commitment to participation and political reforms. In the long run, they seek to contest the rules set by the state (282).” As such, electoral reform under King Mohammed, has been part of a two-level game in which political parties accepted or rejected certain changes based on their own calculations of future electoral performance. Negotiations over a new electoral code in 2006 were telling as representatives of the main political parties were split on whether a final electoral code should revert to its old form, maintain the current version or incorporate elements of both. One group of influential parties—among them the Istiqlal, USFP and the PJD—seemed to favor the PR-list system first applied in the 2002 elections; another group including the MP was pushing for a return to the plurality formula used before 2002; while the loyalist parties such as the RNI were proposing a hybrid of these two systems (Chaoui 2006).

While Morocco’s political parties may be positioning themselves for the possibility of democratic change in the future, one should recognize that elections are also used to gather patronage for their supporters and to mobilize their clients. As Angrist (2006: 11) explains in her study of party building in the Middle East, “the ability to command the loyalty of large constituencies gives party leaders more potential for political influence than that wielded either by individual actors or by smaller clique-like groups.” At the same time, the public perception of political parties in Morocco and their role in

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98 According to Willis (2004), the PJD publicly welcomed the switch to List PR in 2002 based on the party’s own awareness that the new party-oriented system would favor those that were well organized and had clear and well-defined identities and agendas.
parliament has deteriorated to the point where they are no longer trusted as intermediaries between citizens and government.

In the years following the 2003 elections, Jordan’s reform movement continued to struggle. In 2005, the king appointed a Royal Committee, comprised of a wide spectrum of forces in the country, to develop a “National Agenda” for reform, including the electoral system. Marwan Muasher, who was former deputy prime minister and headed the committee, wrote a book (2008) with an inside account of the tug of war that erupted between conservative political elites (who he calls the “old guard”) and reformists. “All hell broke loose,” he penned, when the committee began discussion of the electoral law (250). In the end, however, the committee did compromise on a mixed system, with a portion of seats assigned to district candidates and the other to party lists. Despite this tentative agreement, the government chose not to follow the committee’s recommendations. The king’s initiative fostered inclusive dialogue but promises of genuine electoral reform were again left unfulfilled because of vested interests among the elite in maintaining the status quo.

Analytic Explanation

In sum, electoral systems evolved differently under new kings due to a range of external and internal factors. Under King Mohamed, Morocco relied on an inclusive strategy of accommodating the interests of various political actors in electoral reform whereas Jordan pursued an exclusive strategy in which the palace continued to

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99 Recent public opinion data has exposed a deep dissatisfaction with parliament as an institution and the members that comprise it. See IFES (2007, Tessler and Jamal (?) among many others.
manipulate electoral reform without broader participation from political actors. These differences are partially attributable to the destabilizing impact of conflicts in Palestine and Iraq. Shifting power dynamics among ruling elites led the regimes to choose between the two extremes. Ultimately, the level of cohesion within the main Islamist opposition caused the difference in electoral arrangements. The ascendancy of the PJD in Morocco coupled with renewed influence of the Kutla finally created the political conditions necessary for a new electoral arrangement. On the other hand, the IAF in Jordan was internally divided and the split became more polarized from the events in neighboring countries. These arrangements provide strong disconfirming evidence for several of my hypotheses regarding entry costs, personal vote strategies and strategic voting. Figure 2.5 depicts these relationships in the current period.

Figure 2.5: Summary of Electoral System Design (2000s)
Conclusions: Explaining Regime Continuity Through Institutional Change

The kingdoms of Morocco and Jordan are ideal cases to seek an explanation for the logic of institutional design because they share many characteristics yet they also exhibit variation in electoral system design and reform. The comparative historical analysis elucidated striking similarities and differences in causal configurations, temporal structures and historical sequences between the cases. Table 2.1 (see below) summarizes the results of the hypotheses (see page 83) as a subjective assessment of their explanatory weight based on available evidence. The results for many hypotheses were inconclusive or not applicable (n/a) to particular time periods. Although each case (Morocco=M, Jordan=J) displayed confirming and disconfirming evidence for certain hypotheses, several crucial junctures did show “strong” support for others. In the next section, I rehash the comparative historical analysis through the lens of an analytic narrative in order to develop contingent generalization about the relationship between elite cohesion and electoral rules. My theory lends support for an institutional explanation of authoritarian resilience in the Middle East.

Table 2.1: Summary of Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1920s-60s</th>
<th>1960s-70s</th>
<th>1980s</th>
<th>19990s</th>
<th>2000s</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entry Costs</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>H2.1: United=Higher</td>
<td>Inconclusive</td>
<td>Strong (J)</td>
<td>Inconclusive</td>
<td>Inconclusive</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2.2: Divided=Lower</td>
<td>Inconclusive</td>
<td>Strong (M)</td>
<td>Inconclusive</td>
<td>Strong (J)</td>
<td>Weak (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Campaign Strategy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2.3: Divided=Person</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Inconclusive</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2.4: United=</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Strong (J)</td>
<td>Weak (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic Voting</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>H2.5: Divided=Sincere</td>
<td>Inconclusive</td>
<td>Inconclusive</td>
<td>Inconclusive</td>
<td>Inconclusive</td>
<td>Strong (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2.6: United=Strategic</td>
<td>Inconclusive</td>
<td>Weak (M)</td>
<td>Inconclusive</td>
<td>Inconclusive</td>
<td>Inconclusive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analytic Narrative

The central premise of my theory regarding electoral law formation in Morocco and Jordan is that they are shaped degree by the degree of cohesion among ruling and opposition elites. In short, elite ruptures or opposition coalitions often produced zero-sum choices for regimes between electoral manipulation and accommodation. In contrast, strong ruling coalitions and divided oppositions provided regimes with more maneuverability in designing electoral arrangements to co-opt some factions but contain others. Although the five temporal periods has shown mixed results on the internal validity of this theory, examining the electoral laws help to provide a window into the health of each regime at various points of their recent history.

To begin, both monarchies employed electoral manipulation during the 1950s and 1960s to gain the upper hand over powerful nationalist movements. Morocco used the following multi-pronged strategy: smaller districts were created to control representation more carefully; ballots featured candidates so as to deemphasize party identification; and electoral formulas sought to reward pro-palace parties or loyal ethnic minorities. In Jordan, the regime employed a similar strategy but also increased the number of seats in the parliament in an attempt to co-opt Palestinian notables in the West Bank and to dilute the representation of opposition candidates. The monarchies hoped that these “winner-takes-all” arrangements would produce strong pro-regime majorities in parliament and placate a nominal “loyal opposition.”

This strategy also carried significant risks during initial post-independence elections when the victory of opposition candidates at the district level translated into sizeable numbers at the national level. This representation in parliament emboldened the
Istiqlal in Morocco and the NSP in Jordan to challenge the legitimacy of the monarchies. At the same time, competition among loyalist elites for seats in inaugural parliaments exposed differences and encouraged some to defect to the opposition. With cohesion weak among ruling elites and growing stronger within the opposition, both regimes were forced to resort to coercive strategies with direct intervention in elections. In the case of Jordan, martial law was imposed, opposition parties were banned and elections were suspended. In Morocco, massive repression was instituted and elections were rigged so as to exclude the opposition almost entirely. These heavy-handed forms of electoral manipulation afforded both monarchies time to consolidate their rule.

The limited openings that occurred in the 1980s were triggered by economic crises that produced of varying levels of cohesion among elites and opposition actors. The electoral trajectories of the two cases then diverge. Jordan decided to institute an open electoral system for landmark elections in 1989 as a result of a unified opposition and splits within the ruling coalition. Although Muslim Brotherhood held considerable sway in the newly elected parliament, the opposition suffered from problems in governing and the traditional elite rallied around the monarchy during negotiations over the 1991 National Charter. As a result, King Hussein gained considerable leeway for electoral manipulation and successfully switched to the “one vote” system in 1993. Morocco also faced mounting political discontent during the 1980s but elites were divided and did not link up with opposition demands for reform. Consequently, King Hassan employed a mix of electoral strategies to co-opt the opposition through constitutional and administrative reforms in 1991 and again in 1996. Continued divisions within the opposition and Morocco’s Islamist movement enabled the regime to perpetuate
electoral gerrymandering and the use of a two-round system. The *coup d’grace* was co-opting the relative success of the *Kutla* by establishing a system of *alternance* in 1997. This political sleight of hand enabled the monarchy to maintain effective control as the political system became nominally competitive during the 1990s.

The last decade under new kings in Morocco and Jordan also reveals distinct regime maintenance strategies through electoral manipulation. In Jordan, the monarchy relied on a cadre of elite support in parliament to maintain the “one vote” system. Meanwhile, the electoral system continued to foster division within the opposition as it could not overcome its built in bias towards clientelism and personal vote strategies. The regime was thus free to pursue a mix of “divide-and-rule” and “winner-take-all” strategies in adjusting electoral rules in 2001 to appease certain constituencies while maintaining overall control.

As for Morocco, the monarchy switched to a PR system in 2002 as an apparent concession to the opposition. In reality, however, it was another deft maneuver as new system effectively divided the country into electoral cantons with small district magnitudes and a closed list system. While the PJD made noticeable gains in 2002 based on its organization prowess, the switch to PR epitomizes a classic “divide-and-rule” strategy over the long term to dilute the electoral influence of Islamists while reinforcing traditional forms of electoral clientelism.

*Contingent Generalization*

The next steps are to generalize about the underlying sources of institutional change and to explain why electoral system design diverged at a number of critical
junctures within distinct time periods. Indeed, the central question underlying this chapter was why Morocco and Jordan—two Arab monarchies that share many institutional characteristics—adopted different electoral systems.

This chapter has shown that variation in electoral system design is largely attributable to the degree of cohesion among key political actors, most notably incumbent and opposition elites. I use the word “largely” as a qualifier because I recognize that electoral politics, like all politics, are complex and that the contingent choice of elites alone should not suffice for a causal explanation. As such, I do not wish to discount the role of colonial legacies, historical precedents and path dependencies. However, I believe that examining configurations of ruling and opposition elites provides a sort of “historical scaffolding” that yields considerable insights into electoral system design in semi-authoritarian regimes.

Electoral system design and subsequent reform in Jordan and Morocco demonstrate that autocrats, ruling parties and opposition leaders are closely attuned to elite configurations and the shifting balances of power within them. By nature, political elites are part of the calculus for electoral rules and they often occupy a seat at the table (in loose terms) during negotiations over them. Even though these processes are highly “unequal” in the Arab world (Brown forthcoming), the bargaining power of opposition elites and leverage incumbent elites are strongly influenced by cohesion within them. Electoral reform therefore occurs not only when government-opposition dynamics are in a state of flux but also when there are fissures among incumbent or opposition elites.

Therefore, the key to explaining variation in electoral system design then involves an examination of the micro-level politics among elites. Splits within the ruling
coalition, for example, erode the maneuverability of the regime in designing electoral rules and force it to choose between electoral strategies based on accommodation or coercion. These types of electoral rules more commonly reflect majoritarian, or “winner-takes-all” arrangements because they tend to exclude opposition movements, favor dominant parties and, if necessary, manufacture majorities in “rubber stamp” parliaments. Of course, this high-reward strategy is also a high-risk strategy, as I will show with the secondary case of Palestine in Chapter 5. In contrast, divided oppositions provide the regime more leeway in electoral system design and allow it to choose between strategies based on co-option or manipulation. These types of electoral rules often feature more proportional elements not only to “balance competing forces,” as Lust-Okar and Jamal (2002) claim, but also to reduce risk and uncertainty. That way authoritarian regimes can rely on traditional forms of control through clientelism.

I now test this contingent generalization by reversing the causal direction of my main variables. In other words, how do electoral rules affect levels of cohesion among opposition and pro-regime elites? I isolate the 2007 parliamentary elections in order to assess the consequences of particular electoral rules on coordination dilemmas and elite circulation from a within-case analysis. The next two chapters take up these tasks with respect to why the PJD failed to win in Morocco and why the “new capitalists” won in Jordan. The final chapter determines whether the scope conditions of these cases can be expanded and engages in typological theorizing to identify particular variables that link electoral rules with electoral outcomes.
CHAPTER THREE

MOROCCO’S 2007 ELECTIONS:
WHY THE ISLAMIST OPPOSITION FAILED TO WIN

Before Morocco’s 2007 parliamentary elections, many speculated that the Party for Justice and Development (PJD) would win a plurality of seats, thus emerging as the principal parliamentary powerbroker and potential counterweight to the palace. The PJD had performed well in previous elections and the party leadership had expressed confidence that it could capture more than 70 seats in the fractured 325-member Lower House. Yet the PJD only won four additional seats (from 42 to 46) and it was left out of the coalition government. The widely expected victory did not materialize.

What accounts for the PJD’s failure to win more seats? The PJD immediately assigned blame to the prevalence of vote buying and the influence of local notables in the countryside. While these claims do have merit, they do not uncover the underlying conditions of the elections. For example, several analyses have pointed to the intrinsic divisions within the opposition (Cavatorta 2009), competing versions of political Islam (McFaul and Wittes 2008), overarching disillusionment with the political process (Willis 2008) and inherent weaknesses of Morocco’s party system (Szmolka 2010). With exception of the latter, relatively scant attention has been given to the rules that governed the campaigns, the laws that determined the ballot structure and the formulas that translated votes into parliamentary seats.
This chapter thus explores the effects of Morocco’s electoral rules on the cohesion of the Islamist opposition from the lack of electoral coalitions between parties and coordination among voters. I develop an explanation in that the combination of a proportional system with low district magnitudes produced incentives for smaller parties to establish themselves as relevant players in the system and reinforced campaign strategies based on parochial interests and patronage. As a result, voters did not defect *en masse* to the PJD and competing parties siphoned off support. The absence of decisive victories across electoral districts prevented the PJD from racking up a plurality of total seats from a plurality of total votes.¹⁰⁰

My central claim is that moves towards greater proportionality in Morocco’s electoral system served to inhibit coordination among politicians and voters in the past two parliamentary elections, most notably in 2007.¹⁰¹ Using Cox’s (1997) “SF-ratio” (the ratio of the vote won by the “second loser” to that of the “first loser”), I examine the extent of strategic defections of voters from less competitive to more competitive options in local district-level contests. In addition, I also use a corollary of Rae’s (1967) index of “electoral fractionalization” (the dispersion of vote shares) to assess the degree to which the electoral landscape is fragmented with votes scattered among competing parties.

I recognize that a strict quantitative analysis that attempts to model political behavior based on institutional arrangements only captures part of the story and is susceptible to an excessive functionalism. I deal with this potential criticism by addressing qualitatively the following question: Are Islamists’ recent electoral setbacks

¹⁰⁰ Table 3.2 shows that the PJD received slightly more votes than the other parties but won fewer seats.

¹⁰¹ This claim tracks closely with the arguments of Diaz-Cayeros and Magaloni (2001) that electoral rules facilitated the long-term dominance of Mexico’s ruling party by inhibiting opposition coordination.
purely a function of exogenous electoral rules or might other factors be at play? The empirical analysis thereby considers alternative explanations that attribute electoral setbacks of Islamist parties to forms of self-restraint, palace intervention or preexisting patron-client networks. But rather than trying prove or disprove various hypotheses, my purpose in this study is to evaluate the explanatory weight of electoral rules.

This chapter is organized into four main sections. The first section provides a framework for the key theories and concepts. The second section presents a background of the PJD, the electoral systems in which it competes and the symbolic power of the palace. In the third section, I apply the framework to test various hypotheses based on official district-level data from Morocco’s 2007 parliamentary elections. The fourth section discusses the implications of the recent elections and political disaffection for the stability of the kingdom.

1. Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

The lackluster performance of the PJD in Morocco 2007 elections spurs at least two puzzles. First, why didn’t other opposition parties join forces with the PJD in order to realize potential payoffs? Second, why didn’t voters abandon weaker parties based on personalities and coalesce around the PJD? In order to address these questions, this section begins with a select review of various theoretical perspectives about electoral coalitions and coordination, highlighting key concepts along the way. From there, I theorize about how electoral rules that lower electoral thresholds reduce incentives and increase constraints for opposition coordination among parties and voters.
Opportunity Coalitions and Coordination

Scholars have debated extensively whether prospects for democratic transitions are enhanced by certain structural preconditions or the contingent choices of actors under a variety of conditions.\textsuperscript{102} With regards to the latter, an emergent scholarship within the democratization literature has begun to investigate the relationship between opposition cohesion and democratic transitions. The problem is that recent studies tend to be located on either end of a spectrum in which opposition cohesion is extremely consequential or relatively inconsequential. Howard and Roessler (2006), for example, probably go too far in claiming that opposition coalitions are the essential ingredient in explaining liberalizing electoral outcomes. On the other hand, Gandhi and Reuter (2008) argue that the prospects for democratic transitions actually cause opposition coalitions to form. Left unanswered is what actually happening that portends democratic transition.

Van de Walle (2006: 84) sheds some light on the causal mechanisms by offering a conceptualization of political transitions as “tipping games” during the course of which a majority of political forces moves from one coalition to another. The key dimension of a tipping game is a “problem of coordination” (ibid. 85). Regimes thus depend on the support of a select group of actors who bond together knowing that the costs of defection are severe.

At this point, some conceptual clarity is needed for the terms coordination and electoral coalition. How do we know an electoral coalition when we see one and how is coordination different from other forms of opposition cohesion? What kinds of assumptions can we make about the behavior of political actors and under what

\textsuperscript{102} See Anderson (1999) for an excellent overview of the literature.
conditions do opposition coalitions form?

Pre-electoral coalitions entail an agreement among party leaders both on a joint electoral strategy and distribution of office benefits (Golder 2006: 5). While this definition helps to identify objective and observable criteria (12), I find this standard too rigid for non-democratic contexts for three reasons. First, party systems in countries undergoing political transitions are often very fluid and defy any sort of programmatic categorization. Second, pre-electoral coalitions do not need to be hashed out formally among party leaders or publicly stated because of the inherent risks under repressive political systems. Third, and perhaps most applicable to cases in the Arab world, electoral campaigns are often accompanied by explicit and implicit agreements between the government and opposition over the boundaries of participation and contestation.

For the reasons briefly explained above, I prefer the term coordination to distinguish political actors that join together for strategic purposes from those alliances based upon ideological affinities or organizational bonds (Howard and Roessler 2006). Coordination among opposition parties can take a variety of forms, ranging from the issuing of joint statements to the creation of joint electoral lists or even uniting behind a single presidential candidate. Coordination at the mass level typically involves strategic voting in which citizens cast their ballots for front-runners.

Electoral Rules and Coordination Behavior

My core theoretical claim is that formal electoral rules shape the strategic behavior
of political actors, which, in turn, affects voter choices.\(^{103}\) To recap, this study identifies three critical components of electoral rules: \textit{ballot structure}, \textit{district magnitude} and the \textit{electoral formula}. This chapter theorizes that variations in these institutional variables shape the opportunities for political actors to garner votes and hence, the parameters in which coordination can occur. It assumes incumbent autocrats and ruling parties seek electoral rules that dampen mass mobilization and/or foster intra-party competition so that opposition parties remain weak and internally divided, thus inhibiting the formation of coalitions and coordination among voters. Regimes also opt for electoral arrangements that reinforce traditional forms of clientelism in order to maintain established patronage networks and to discourage political actors from coalescing around an opposition party or candidate.

With these objectives in mind, I adopt Norris’ (2004: 11) hypotheses regarding two ideal typical electoral systems. Below I summarize the incentives these electoral systems produce with electoral thresholds shaping strategic coordination behavior.

1. Majoritarian systems encourage political actors to seek a \textit{broad} base of votes and support (i.e. ‘bridging strategy’) because electoral thresholds are higher in each district.
2. Proportional systems encourage political actors to target their campaign appeals to a \textit{narrow} base of homogenous votes (i.e. ‘bonding strategy’) because electoral thresholds are lower in each district.

In sum, majoritarian systems generally encourage coordination because they require political actors to achieve a majority/plurality of votes from an electorate that tends to

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\(^{103}\) This claim originates from Downs (1954) and was examined systematically by Norris (2004). I adopt this theoretical orientation in order to generate testable hypotheses. I do not wish to diminish the importance of culture, norms and ideas on the political behavior of actors.
coalesce around the strongest candidates or parties on the ballot competing for one seat or a small number of seats. In contrast, proportional systems generally discourage coordination because they reduce entry costs for political actors and allow citizens to distribute their votes among different candidates or parties on the ballot competing for a large number of seats.

**Strategic Voting and Electoral Fractionalization**

Many scholars have sought to explain and evaluate the effects of electoral rules on voting behavior. In one pioneering work, Duverger (1954) describes the *mechanical* and *psychological* effects of electoral rules. He showed that mechanical effects flow directly from electoral rules because they tend to give a bonus of seats to larger parties and penalize smaller ones. Although Duverger did not provide a formal definition of psychological effects, some contemporary theorists (Blais and Carty 1991: 80) claim to have inferred a clear distinction: the psychological factor affects the vote, the mechanical factor affects the seats (given the vote), but both of these factors are mutually reinforcing. In other words, the manner in which votes are translated into seats can have a powerful psychological effect on the voter calculations of choice and utility. If citizens feel their vote will be “wasted” on a losing candidate or party, their choice could be altered or they could abstain from voting altogether.104 This incentive structure produces the phenomenon known as "strategic voting," which is also commonly referred to as “sophisticated” or “tactical” voting. In contrast, “sincere voting” occurs when voters

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104 Blais and Carty (ibid.) add that political elites and party leaders also anticipate the mechanical and therefore psychological effects as much as voters do.
stick to their preferences without regard to the expected outcome or shifting political winds.

Although studies about strategic voting have flourished in recent decades, our understanding of its causal mechanisms still suffers from two main deficiencies. For one, many assume that strategic voting can only occur in established democracies. The common assumption is that citizens unfamiliar with the norms and practices of democratic processes lack the political sophistication to vote strategically. Although Duch and Palmer (2002: 64) challenge the notion that new democracies have fewer strategic voters than mature democracies, the critical question is whether a given voter, even under definitively non-democratic conditions, can be sincere and strategic at the same time. Under this logic, voters in authoritarian elections can be strategic by recognizing situations in which their vote would be wasted on a losing party and sincere by casting their ballots only for those who can deliver material benefits.

The second deficiency relates to what Cox (1997: 12) describes as “the gap between our electoral theories (mostly district-level) and data (mostly national-level).” Indeed, one of the most powerful critiques of Duverger’s famous causal proposition about the relationship between the electoral system and party system is the former operates at the district level while the latter is often measured at the national level. Evaluating the psychological effect must focus on how electoral rules affect individuals in distinct electoral environments. As Taagepera and Shugart argue (1989: 214), “the Duverger psychological effect is a district-level phenomenon, and this is the only level at which a quantitative inquiry of this effect can be started.”
Although this study is animated by the lackluster performance of Islamists in recent parliamentary elections, one of the essential questions relates to why votes were scattered among competing parties across Morocco’s electoral districts. The first task could be to define the parameters of the party system by its number of “relevant” parties (Sartori 1976). A simple indication of registered parties, however, does not indicate the relative strength of each party in the electoral arena. As Rae (1967: 53) asks poignantly, how extensively is competitive strength dispersed among contestants? For this reason, Rae introduces the concept of fractionalization, which measures the dispersion of vote shares and signals the relative degree of competition among effective parties. For the purposes of this study, I use the effective number of parties (ENP) instead of Rae’s fractionalization index (1967) because the ENP is an integer that is easier to visualize. As I later describe in the section about my main variables, the ENP provides an index for the degree to which the electoral landscape is fragmented and allows me to infer the degree of electoral coordination among political parties across districts.

_Cox’s M+1 Rule and SF-Ratio_

A number of scholars (Sartori 1976; Taagepera and Shugart 1989; Lijphart 1994) also point out the significance of district magnitude as the key to Duverger’s findings as opposed to an exclusive emphasis on the electoral formula. In recognition of Duverger’s shortcoming, Cox (1997) develops a general model that stipulates for all electoral systems, the number of viable candidates (or lists) in any district is equal to the district magnitude plus one, or the “M+1 rule.” Cox purports that his model extends to multi-

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105 Taagepera and Shugart (1989: 81) use the effective number of parties for this same reason.
member districts but points out that as district magnitude increases, voters encounter informational obstacles in assessing the relative strength of front-runners and runners-up. Nevertheless, he claims that the model seems to be accurate at least up to district magnitudes of five seats based on empirical analysis of select cases (100). Cox first tests his M+1 rule in Japan’s multi-member districts. He finds that the strategic desertion of trailing candidates does indeed occur (i.e. a Duvergerian equilibrium), most likely in districts with fewer candidates. The M+1 rule is also applicable to other electoral systems, including those with proportional representation, as long as the ballot allows for choice between candidates or between alternate party lists.

These conclusions have led others to extend Cox’s theory to other cases and build upon his model to predict other outcomes of strategic voting. Moser and Scheinner (2005, 2009), for example, examine strategic voting as a source of ticket splitting by using the SF-ratio developed by Cox (1997), which is the ratio of the vote won by the second loser to that of the first loser. In addition to measuring the strategic defection of voters from less competitive to more competitive electoral options, the SF-ratio is also a useful indicator of the degree to which strategic coordination occurred across electoral districts. The SF-ratio for a district will tend toward zero under conditions in which citizens voted strategically whereas if they voted sincerely, the SF-ratio will be closer to one. In the empirical analysis, I calculate SF-ratios in Morocco’s electoral districts to determine if Cox’s theory holds and to explain the causal mechanisms underlying them. But first, the following section provides some background and historical context.
2. **Overview/Background**

This section first provides a brief overview of Morocco’s electoral system since 2002. From there, it provides a background of the Islamist movement and the 2007 elections, including the results and several explanations for the poor showing by the PJD. Finally, I highlight the role of the palace and its impact on party mobilization and voting behavior.

*Morocco’s Electoral System*

In August 2002, Morocco’s government overhauled the electoral system in advance of parliamentary elections the following month.\(^{106}\) In short, the country was divided into 91 multi-member districts and List PR was introduced. Reynolds et al. (2005: 60) summarize this system succinctly:

> In its most simple form, List PR involves each party presenting a list of candidates to the electorate in each multi-member electoral district. Voters vote for a party, and parties receive seats in proportion to their overall share of the vote in the electoral district. Winning candidates are taken from the lists in order of their position on the lists.

More importantly, they go on to note that additional details “have a small but sometimes critical effect on the outcomes of elections under PR (ibid.).” In the case of Morocco, the regime adopted an electoral formula that allocates seats in electoral districts based on an “electoral average” that is calculated by the number of voters divided by the number of seats, plus one. But since the number of seats in Morocco’s electoral districts only ranges from two to five and the total vote is fractured among many competing

\(^{106}\) Although it was the prime minister (and leader of the leftist coalition of parties) who initiated the electoral reform, the support of the palace was critical (Storm 2007: 88-89).
parties, the electoral average is difficult to achieve. Consequently, the party with a plurality of votes receives the first seat and the party and the second highest number of votes receives the next seat. This process continues until all the seats are filled.

If the electoral average is reached, the “largest remainder” formula is used, which makes the process even more complicated. The parties that receive the electoral average will automatically win seats but electoral average is subtracted from their vote total. The remainders are compared with the total number of votes of the non-winning parties. Winning parties can only obtain a second seat if their remainders are higher than the original number of votes of the other parties. Table 3.1 (see below) shows how the electoral average and largest remainder formula worked in practice with actual results from an electoral district.

| Table 3.1: Analysis of Rabat’s electoral district (partial results from 2002) |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Number of votes: 83831         | Number of seats: 4              |
| Number of seats: 4             | Electoral average: 16766        |
| Round 1 (votes per party)      | Round 2 (remainder votes)       |
| USFP: 22691                    | USFP: 5925                      |
| PJD: 16618                     | PJD: 16618                      |
| Istiqlal: 8422                 | Istiqlal: 8422                  |
| RNI: 6336                      | RNI: 6336                       |
| Democratic Union: 4514         | Democratic Union: 4514          |
| Popular Movement: 3528         | Popular Movement: 3528          |

In Round 1, the USFP was automatically awarded one seat because its vote count (22691) exceeded the electoral average (16766). The PJD missed the threshold by 148 votes. In Round 2, the other three seats were awarded to the PJD, Istiqlal and RNI. The USFP would have won a second seat if its remainder votes (5925) had exceeded RNI’s total votes (6336).

In short, Morocco’s electoral formula makes it very difficult for parties to win more than one seat in any given electoral district. The empirical analysis will provide evidence
about how this played out in the 2007 elections and will argue that this peculiar version of PR has inhibited electoral coordination, thereby affecting the electoral fortunes of the PJD. I now turn to evolution of the PJD from Morocco’s Islamist movement.

Morocco’s Islamist Movement

In recent years, Morocco’s Islamist movement has posed the most serious challenge to the king’s monopoly on power. Among the reasons why the Islamist opposition has become a more potent force than the secular parties include their superior organization, base of popular support and resistance of palace co-optation. The following paragraphs touch on each of these reasons but first it is important to explain the differences between the Islamist groups.

The two main branches\textsuperscript{107} of Morocco’s Islamist movement are \textit{At-Tawhid wa-Islah} (Unity and Reform) and \textit{Al-Adl wa Ihsan} (Justice and Charity). Whereas the former became a legitimate participant in Moroccan politics, \textit{Ihsan} has maintained an antagonistic relationship with the regime ever since its spiritual leader—Abdessalam Yassine—openly challenged the monarchy’s legitimacy in 1974. Although Yasinne has lived intermittently under house arrest and the group has been banned since 1990, it is regarded to have one of the largest memberships among Moroccan social movements.

In contrast, \textit{Islah} recognizes the legitimacy of the monarchy and has struggled to become a legal association. During the 1980s, the movement explored various strategies for political participation even though many of its members had radical roots from the

\textsuperscript{107} Munson (1993: 153-162) describes two other prominent movements—the Sunni movement led by Al-Zamzami and \textit{Shabiba Al-Islamiyya} (Islamic Youth)—but both were highly diffuse and now cease to exist.
previous decade. The monarchy and newly formed *Islah* finally reached an accommodation in 1996 and its candidates competed openly in the 1997 parliamentary elections under the banner of a moribund party. Although Willis (2002: 7) argues that the palace only allowed *Islah*’s participation to draw support away from the more powerful *Ihsan* movement, its relationship with *Islah* should be viewed as part of an evolving strategy to contain the broader Islamist opposition.

After the 1997 parliamentary elections, *Islah* split with the PJD emerging as the political wing. Since them, the PJD’s electoral influence has grown rapidly. Between successive elections, the party increased both its vote and seat share from around 250,000 (nine seats out of 325) in 1997 to around half a million votes (42 seats out of 325) in 2002 (see Table 1 below). In fact, the PJD gained the third-highest number of seats in parliament after the 2002 elections, despite fielding candidates in only 55 of the 91 constituencies and a call to boycott the elections from other Islamist groups. This deliberate restraint resulted from Islamists’ fears that winning too many seats might provoke a confrontation with the regime, as had previously occurred in Algeria. The PJD also decided not to join the new governing coalition, instead becoming the largest opposition party.

In sum, the PJD has become a major player in Moroccan politics because of its longstanding willingness to participate despite significant policy differences with the government and opposition to various laws. Ironically, the principal divide within the Islamist movement also relates to the extent to which it should participate in the political

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108 A senior figure within the PJD acknowledged before the 2002 elections that “the Algerian scenario is the fear of all Moroccans” (quoted in Willis 2002: 75).
system. *Islah* and *Ihsan* represent both a source of support and a challenge to the PJD for this very reason. In contrast with secular parties, cohesion within the Islamist opposition therefore depends less on the actions of the palace and more with the prospects of internal reconciliation. Nonetheless, an electoral system that encourages factionalism and continually limits the electoral influence of the PJD weakens its appeal to other Islamist groups for participating within the parameters set by the regime.

*Background to 2007 Elections*

Many expected the PJD to build on its strong performance in the 2002 elections with higher public support and more seats in parliament. In 2006, several reports and analyses appeared to portend a more convincing victory for the PJD in the upcoming elections.\(^{109}\) Perhaps the most dramatic evidence came in the form of two public opinion polls inadvertently released by an American democracy assistance organization in Morocco that showed the PJD attracting a near majority of the popular vote.\(^{110}\) Even though the electoral system would have prevented a “winner-take-all” scenario for the PJD, a party capturing so many votes and presumably seats would have sent shockwaves through the kingdom and provided momentum for a reconfiguration of political power. The king’s last minute decisions to invite international observers seemed to rule out that possibility that the results could be manipulated by the regime. The stage was set for an election with significant ramifications.

\(^{109}\) Some within the U.S. academic and policy community became infatuated with the PJD and prospects of an Islamist-led government (see Wegner 2006 and Sharp 2006). Two French journalists even published a book entitled “When Morocco Will Be Islamist.”

\(^{110}\) The polling was commissioned by the International Republican Institute (IRI). See Spiegel (2007) for a fuller account of the IRI polls and their aftermath.
The outcome proved once again, however, that the monarchy was several steps ahead of the electoral game. As the partial results in Table 3.2 show, there was no groundswell of support for the Islamist opposition. Instead, the PJD experienced an electoral setback in 2007 as it only gained four seats in the new parliament despite making a concerted effort to mobilize supporters across the country, field candidates in diverse constituencies and even develop a detailed policy platform based on its record of parliamentary activism.\(^{111}\) The result stands in stark comparison to many predictions, most notably the PJD party leadership itself, which had expressed optimism before the election that it could win upwards of seventy seats and become the largest block in the next parliament (Dahbi 2009). Moreover, political observers were already speculating about the PJD’s role in forming the next government and whether they could resist being manipulated by the palace, as the representatives of other secular parties have been before them (Ottaway 2006). What were some of the reasons for the PJD’s lackluster performance?

**Table 3.2: Partial Results of 2007 Elections (Aggregated from Local Constituencies)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Parties</th>
<th>Votes (%)</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seats (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Istiqlal Party (PI)</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice and Development Party (PJD)</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular Movement (MP)</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Rally of Independents (RNI)</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP)</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constitutional Union (UC)</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party of Progress and Socialism (PPS)</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Other Parties</td>
<td>~36</td>
<td>65 total</td>
<td>~33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\(^{111}\) See Hamzawy (2008) for details of the PJD’s record in parliament and electoral platform.

\(^{112}\) I use the English name of the party but provide the widely used acronym from the French translation.
The aftermath of the 2007 elections featured the usual finger pointing among political parties but, for the first time, the PJD was the principal protagonist. PJD party leaders criticized the conduct of the elections and alleged massive vote buying from competing parties had diminished its chances to register a more convincing electoral victory. While many of their grievances had merit, the general consensus across the political spectrum was that the actual process of voting and counting had been generally transparent and fair according to the post-election report published by the National Democratic Institute (NDI 2007a), a U.S. democracy assistance organization that led the observer mission.

Another view of the PJD’s performance is more introspective, arguing that the party had become too assimilated or isolated in the political system. Some suggest, for example, that the PJD had become too moderate in the eyes of many Moroccans and had lost its traditional support base after compromising on important reform issues. Others, including senior PJD officials, argued that the party had not done enough to establish links with the other political parties and coordinate with local “notables” during the campaign period.

A third explanation and the one that appears to have the most currency relates to the general malaise that accompanied the elections themselves. The fact that voter turnout

\[\text{113 Ottaway (2006: 16) notes, for example, that “the PJD received enthusiastic support when it organized a demonstration against the new, supposedly un-Islamic family code, but found it more challenging later to explain to its supporters [in Islah] why it ultimately decided to accept the reform.” Also see Tozy (2008).}\]

\[\text{114 Willis (2008: 11) provides evidence for this argument based on interviews with party officials. He attributes some of the Istiqlal party’s success, for example, to the recruitment of local candidates that could mobilize support for the party, particularly in rural areas.}\]
plunged to a historic low of thirty-seven percent with many ballots spoiled by disaffected citizens has been well documented. Many of these reports place the PJD’s dismal performance within the context of this disillusionment since the party did not receive an expected surge of so-called “protest votes” on election day. In fact, abstention was particularly high among younger, well educated, middle class and urban Moroccans despite considerable voter education and awareness initiatives targeted towards them.\textsuperscript{115} Willis (2008: 18) points out that this seriously damaged the party’s election prospects since they comprise the core constituency of PJD supporters.\textsuperscript{116} Having summarized the main explanations for the PJD’s poor showing in 2007, I now turn to testing related hypotheses with empirical data.

3. APPLICATION

In this section, I summarize the available data, describe the model, specify the variables and list the working hypotheses. Using a regression analysis, I then test the explanatory power of variables that features cross-national variation in institutional characteristics, levels of partisan competition and patronage. I conclude that higher SF-ratios and ENPs across electoral districts are attributable to a number of coordination dilemmas which

\textsuperscript{115}NDI’s pre-election statement details the role of various civil society groups in promoting voter education. One of the more remarkable groups was 2007 Daba, which specifically targeted young voters in an imaginative pre-election publicity campaign across the country. See Otmani (2007) for a summary of pre-election voter education efforts.

\textsuperscript{116}Pellicer (2008) examines the “PJD support profile” question based on the same data used in this study. His conclusion that the PJD could be evolving into an opposition that relies less on a “grievance” profile calls into question conventional assumptions about Islamists only winning “protest votes” (Wittes 2008) and other arguments that Islamist electoral support is driven by distrust of the coercive state and a demand for more religion in the state (Garcia-Rivero and Kotze 2007).
include informational obstacles due to the sheer number of competing parties; disaffection with the electoral process as evidenced by percentages of turnout and invalid ballots; material incentives for the poor and uneducated to vote sincerely; and a competitive marketplace for votes due to lower electoral averages. While these factors alone do not explain entirely electoral behavior among opposition parties and voters, they are useful to portraying coordination failures across electoral districts. I supplement these findings with qualitative evidence based on interviews and secondary resources.

Available Data

My method for explaining the relationship between electoral rules and coordination behavior combines quantitative data and qualitative research. The former is based on three types of data: electoral, census and individual-level surveys. The first two are from primary sources. Electoral data cover the elections of 2007 and of 2002 and include the votes received by all parties as well as the turnout and the amount of invalid ballots at the district level. The data show significant variation across districts, thus producing a diverse array of inputs and outputs for a multivariate regression analysis. The 2007 election results are official and were posted online by the Moroccan Ministry of the Interior.\footnote{Unfortunately, the official 2007 data are no longer available online. Adam Carr’s election archive does show the unofficial data at http://psephos.adam-carr.net/countries/m/morocco/morocco1.txt.} For 2002, the data used was compiled by the parliamentary block of the USFP and obtained through a U.S. democracy organization in Morocco. Inspection of this data has revealed some obvious omissions and mistakes and, for that reason, conclusions are drawn primarily from the 2007 data.
The census data are from the Kingdom of Morocco’s *Haut-Commissariat au Plan* (HCP), which includes socio-economic data for the year 2004. Ideally, I would have matched the HCP data with each individual electoral district (*circonscription electorale*) from both elections. However, the boundaries of electoral districts changed from 2002 to 2007 and the HCP data are reported at the level of region, province and commune, which only allowed me to merge some provincial data with electoral districts. For this and other reasons, the demographic data can only provide modest inferences.\(^{118}\)

The third type of data originates from individual-level surveys presented in a recent academic dissertation (Benstead 2008) about the casework practices of parliamentarians in Morocco and Algeria. Although this secondary data is aggregated at the national level and cannot be organized by district, the results provide the basis for this one of this study’s explanatory variables.

As for the qualitative data, the primary source of information is in-country fieldwork during the months of August and September 2007. During this time, I conducted personal interviews with academics, political party officials, candidates and ordinary citizens. Serving as an international observer for the parliamentary elections on September 7 also enabled me to obtain important primary documents, attend pre-election briefings and observe the elections firsthand.

In sum, there is a wealth of available data for comparing the extent of strategic coordination among voters and political parties across electoral districts. I now describe the two proxies that serve as dependent variables for electoral coordination.

\(^{118}\) For example, I fully intended to incorporate unemployment levels into a composite variable to highlight areas in which patrons could purchase votes more easily. Surprisingly, however, the HCP database did not provide a simple measure of unemployment (*le chômage*) in each province.
Variables and Hypotheses

The first dependent variable is the second-to-first (SF) loser’s vote total ratio as proposed by Cox (1997). The SF-ratio is simply the vote percentage of the second loser divided by the vote percentage of the first loser (2L%/1L%). The SF-ratio serves as a proxy of electoral coordination because it is a useful indicator of strategic defection of voters from less competitive to more competitive electoral options. The SF-ratio for a district will tend toward zero under conditions in which citizens voted strategically because they knew the race was competitive and did not want to waste their vote on an obvious winner or loser. In contrast, SF-ratios will be closer to 1 in districts where voters stuck with their sincere preferences regardless of the expected outcome. SF-ratios could not be calculated in all districts from the 2002 elections but they range from .2 to .99 in the 2007 elections.

The second dependent variable is the effective number of parties (ENP), which measures the dispersion of vote shares and relative degree of competition. The ENP is calculated by taking the inverse of the sum of each party’s vote percentage squared (1/∑ p^2). ENP serves as a proxy for electoral coordination because it provides an index for the degree to which the electoral landscape is fragmented. Higher ENPs in districts indicate that strategic coordination among parties and/or candidates failed because votes were more widely dispersed. In contrast, lower ENPs suggest that some coordination occurred among political actors in the form of electoral alliances or side payments to bow out of district-level contests. ENP values are also limited from the 2002 elections but they range from 2 to 19 in the 2007 elections.
Because of the relatively small number of observations from district-level contests, 95 in 2007 and 91 in 2002, it is necessary to limit the number of explanatory variables in order to arrive at a model that is useful in understanding the parameters of electoral behavior. Therefore, seven variables are tested relating to district magnitude, political competition and socio-economic characteristics. In the paragraphs below, I define these variables and hypothesize how they might affect electoral coordination.

1. **District Magnitude (M):** refers to the number of seats assigned to any given electoral district. In Morocco’s past two parliamentary elections, M has ranged from two to five. The median and mode was three, thus allowing a binary categorization of larger (M=4) and smaller (M=2) districts. Smaller districts should exert a mechanical effect that reduces competition among political parties by reducing the ENP, thus conforming to Cox’s “M+1 rule.” In turn, fewer parties competing for fewer seats also should exert a psychological effect on voter behavior. Some may vote strategically because there is less “noise” from insignificant parties and clearer choices emerge among the significant ones as evidenced by lower SF-ratios.

   **H3.1:** Small districts encouraged coordination more than large districts.

2. **Electoral Average (AVG):** refers to the minimum threshold of votes required to win a seat in a particular electoral district. A lower AVG reduces the entry costs for competing parties, thus diluting the electoral strength of opposition parties. The AVG also inhibits opposition mobilization because the party list has to garner a minimum number of votes to win a seat. Electoral campaigns focus on mobilizing a narrow base through patronage rather than seeking broad-based support through programmatic appeals. The AVG is closely associated with institutional characteristics such as district magnitude because it is calculated by dividing the number of voters (v) by the number of seats (M), plus one. Thus, the formula for AVG is: v/M+1.

   **H3.2:** As electoral averages increase across electoral districts, electoral coordination decreases.

3. **Islamist Performance (PJ):** refers to the performance of the PJD in each electoral district. Since the PJD represents the principal opposition and the party’s campaigns are primarily built around programmatic appeals, its vote share provides a strong indication of the degree of coordination that occurred in the electoral districts where it competed. In contests where the PJD performed well,
the ENP and SF-ratios should be lower. Districts are coded with a “+” if the PJD won a seat or finished as a first or second runner-up.

\[ H3.3: \text{Districts in which the PJD won a seat or finished as a first or second runner-up featured higher levels of electoral coordination} \]

4. **Turnout/Invalid (TO/INV):** refers to the percentage of registered voters who turned out on election day and/or cast invalid ballots. Since opposition parties rely on capturing so-called “protest votes” during elections, the logic follows that political disaffection is conducive to electoral coordination. In the case of Morocco, however, survey data shows that negative attitudes among citizens toward political parties, the parliament and the electoral process are widespread. Coordination among political actors is thus inhibited by inconsistent levels of turnout across districts and voters who purposely spoil their ballots in protest of the overall electoral process.

\[ H3.4: \text{Districts which featured lower levels of turnout and/or a higher number of invalid ballots suggest that electoral coordination was difficult.} \]

5. **Winners’ Margin (W):** means the difference in percentage between the top vote-getter \( (w_1) \) and the party that wins the last seat \( (w_0) \) in any particular electoral district. Since Morocco uses a largest remainder formula, it is difficult for a party to win more than one seat per district. Other parties and candidates, realizing the futility of winning a seat, may have reached formal and informal understandings to run joint lists, bow out of particular districts or engage in some other form of coordination. Larger margins of victories indicate that voters coalesced around the stronger parties or defected from trailing parties, thus resulting in a lower ENP and SF-ratio. The formula for \( W \) is: \[ w_1 - w_0 \]

\[ H3.5: \text{District-level results with large margins of victory reflect a significant degree of electoral coordination.} \]

6. **Uneducated Youth (DEM):** refers to the demographics in each electoral district between the age of 20 and 34 whose level of education is “nothing” (neánt). Based on theoretical expectations, elections register not the attitudes and choices of voters, but the reality of socio-economic conditions. Uneducated youth should be more responsive to particularistic appeals and susceptible to vote buying in the electoral marketplace. In contrast, higher levels of education and life experience enable individuals to reduce the costs of obtaining information and to translate grievances, interests and needs into forms of political action. Higher SF-ratios and ENPs are thus correlated with greater percentages of uneducated youth.

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119 Based on available data, I construct a composite variable of “uneducated youth.” First, I aggregated data from two voting age categories (20-24 and 25-34) to define a “youth” cohort. I then chose a single category of education to define a cohort of “uneducated” voters. Although those who only receive a primary level education could also be considered uneducated or under-educated, I wanted a stark categorization.
H3.6: Electoral coordination is less significant in districts with more uneducated youth.

7. Casework (CWK): refers to requests from citizens that members of parliament receive relative to housing, employment, education or some other personal matter needing assistance. In many developing countries, casework is one of the only forms available to parliamentarians to generate popular support since their lawmaking capacity is circumscribed. In Morocco, this form of constituency service serves as a major vehicle for building and reinforcing patronage networks. Therefore, we should expect a negative relationship between incumbent casework and opposition coordination because it discourages strategic voting.

H3.7: Increased levels of casework discourage coordination.

Table 3.3: Variables and Hypothesized Effects on Electoral Coordination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanations/Hypotheses</th>
<th>ENP</th>
<th>SF-ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Magnitude (M)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral Average (AVG)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actor-Centric</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PJD Performance (PJD)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnout/Invalid (TO/INV)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winners’ Margin (W)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sociological</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Uneducated Youth” (DEM)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casework (CWK)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results

Figure 1 shows the distribution of SF-ratios and ENPs in the 2007 election. The first feature of the figure to notice is the relatively high values of ENP and the SF-ratio along the Y and X axes respectively. It is clear that the 2007 elections featured a high degree of fractionalization and sincere voting based on this observation. The scatter plot

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Table 3.3 shows the variables and corresponding hypotheses grouped according to various theoretical paradigms. The table also summarizes their hypothesized effects, positive or negative, on the dependent variable in the particular election.
also displays a linear relationship between the two dependent variables until the ENP reaches about 9 or approximately .8 for the SF-ratio, which are the mean values. At that point, values along the Y-axis vary wildly and do not correlate at all with higher SF-ratios. This suggests that the dispersion of votes was highly unpredictable when the number of competing parties exceeded nine or, vice versa, when the difference in votes between the top two runners-up was minor.

Based on this nexus (see dotted lines in the figure), one can distinguish roughly three groups of districts with different degrees of electoral fractionalization and strategic voting: a first group where ENPs and SF-ratios are both high; a second group where the ENP is relatively low but the SF-ratio is high; and finally a smaller third group where the data points are close to the trend line. What factors cause this variation in electoral coordination across districts?

This study evaluates three explanations and corresponding hypotheses related to district magnitude, partisan competition and demographics. I now address the role of institutional constraints on opposition coordination, specifically in the apportionment of Morocco’s 95 electoral districts.
Explanation #1: District Magnitude

Many studies of electoral rules have shown district magnitude to be a “decisive factor” (Taagepera and Shugart 1989) in shaping strategic behavior among political actors. When the district magnitude is low, voters may refrain from voting or parties running in their districts with little chance of winning a seat, which discourages small parties from competing. I seek to determine whether the case of Morocco’s 2007 elections was consistent with these theoretical expectations. I begin with a simple descriptive analysis, which indicates a positive relationship between district magnitude and both SF-ratios and ENPs. In other words, the higher the number of seats available in a district, the higher is the effective number of parties competing in a district and greater the ratio between the second and first losing candidates.
The histogram below (see Figure 3.2) illustrates the distribution of SF-ratios by district magnitude. The first column shows that in 11 districts with two seats, the SF-ratio was relatively low (below .7), compared with the third column in which a total of 19 districts had SF-ratios above .8 and 1. But this does not provide conclusive evidence that district magnitude determines levels of strategic voting. Indeed, the second column shows clearly that most districts had high SF-ratios as the average value was nearly .8 across all 95 electoral districts. Although Morocco’s 2007 elections appear to be a case in which voters *en masse* did not abandon their sincere preferences for leading or trailing parties, there are still questions about the factors that explain the lack of strategic coordination. What are the underlying causal mechanisms that link district magnitude and party competition? Were there other institutional factors that had psychological effects on parties and voters?

**Figure 3.2: Histogram of District Magnitudes and SF-Ratios**
Answering these questions is critical for developing a theory about the role of electoral rules in inhibiting opposition coordination, but at the same time is challenging because it requires fine-grained information not available in large-N analyses or even within-case studies that use national-level data to explain individual behavior. Fortunately, some additional evidence does lend some plausibility to my core argument that electoral rules shaped the political behavior of political actors in Morocco’s recent elections.

To begin, the drawing of electoral districts and apportionment of seats has always been under the purview of the Ministry of Interior, which serves as a virtual appendage of the palace.\textsuperscript{121} When the new electoral map was promulgated in February 2007, it featured 18 constituencies with two seats, 49 with three seats, 27 with four seats and one constituency with five seats. Little is known about the delimitation of electoral districts in Morocco but this process is generally opaque elsewhere, even in established democracies. What is interesting for the purposes of this study are the observable changes that occurred between parliamentary elections in 2002 and 2007. In the following paragraphs, I explore whether variation in district magnitude may have affected the fortunes of the PJD.

Gerrymandering has been a traditional practice in Moroccan elections but to what extent was it utilized recently? Shortly after the 2007 electoral map was released, the PJD accused the government of gerrymandering (Boudarham 2007). This claim was also reiterated just days prior to the 2007 elections when a representative from the PJD

\textsuperscript{121} Driss Basri, a former Interior Minister, was a close ally of King Hassan and widely regarded to be the architect of manipulation in past Moroccan elections.
complained about malapportionment, naming the district of Tangier as one particularly egregious example.\footnote{NDI organized a panel of five political party representatives to brief the international observer mission on September 5, 2007. During this forum, I posed a specific question about the Ministry of Interior’s role in the delimitation of district boundaries. The responses were revealing. Four out of the five representatives stated that their party had been consulted about this process. The PJD was the only party that did not.} His argument does have considerable merit as Tangier has nearly twice the population as the rural Chichaua district but both were apportioned four seats (see Table 3.4). Although there are significant imbalances in population across many other electoral districts,\footnote{Discrepancies in demographic and electoral data from various sources prevented a more comprehensive analysis of malapportionment. Visual inspection of voter registration and turnout allowed this inference.} they did not lead to a major shift in seat distributions between elections. In other words, the PJD also performed well under malapportionment in 2002. Why was 2007 different?

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{District Magnitude} & \textbf{Minimum Population} & \textbf{Maximum Population} \\
(\# of Total Districts) & (Name of District) & (Name of District) \\
\hline
2 (18) & 10,240  (Aousserd) & 142,866  (Ben Msik) \\
3 (49) & 43,128  (Figuig) & 234,601  (Ain Sebaa) \\
4 (27) & 84,945  (Chichaua) & 189,873  (Tangier) \\
5 (1) & 99,963  (Ouarzazate) & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Minimum/Maximum Population According to District Magnitude (2007)}
\end{table}

Instead, more conclusive evidence is found by examining changes in district magnitudes to PJD strongholds, most notably the five seat-constituencies that were removed prior to the 2007 elections. Szmolka (2009: 20) notes that the aim of the new distribution of seats was to limit the potential representation of the PJD. Table 3.5 compares the results from these districts and shows the net gain or loss (+/-) in seats between elections. It shows that the regime deliberately reduced the size of these predominantly urban districts so as to prevent the PJD from picking up more than one
seat in traditional strongholds like Casablanca. Although the elimination or reduction in these five-seat constituencies only cost the PJD a total of four seats, this scenario undoubtedly played out in other districts in which the PJD had hoped to capture seats.

Table 3.5: Changes in District Magnitude Between Elections (5 seats only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>PJD Seats</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>PJD Seats</th>
<th>+/- Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chefchoen</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anfa</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hay Mohammadi</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hay Hassani</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tetuoan</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Devised by author based on Moroccan Ministry of Interior Data.

While changes in district magnitude did not produce telltale mechanical effects in the past two elections, there is evidence that it did exert psychological effects. Party strategists were clearly knowledgeable about the composition of particular districts and how they would affect their national electoral fortunes. Indeed, personal interviews with political elites, candidates and party leaders strongly suggest that the electoral system affected their campaign strategies on a macro and micro level.

For one, the number of seats clearly influenced parties’ calculus of mobilization in district-level contests. A campaign manager for one of the major parties told me privately after the elections that the electoral system did cause parties to seek a lower number of votes. On the eve of the 2007 elections, two leading candidates from the electoral district of Midelt revealed that their main campaign strategy involved targeting

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124 This Casablanca-based district was eliminated before the 2007 elections.

125 Personal interview conducted on 11 September 2007 in Rabat.
local leaders or tribal chiefs to secure votes. The PJD candidate, in particular, confided that he expected to receive about 25% of the vote in the district’s biggest town but that it would be enough because the rest of the votes would be split among other parties. His comment suggests that coordination with other local candidates was unnecessary because he was relying on a narrow base of support to win one of the district’s three seats.

In the end, the PJD’s list finished in fifth place with nearly five thousand votes, or 7.2 percent of the total. The outcome could be attributed to the political clout of the traditional parties in the region but an alternative explanation for the setback could be attributed to the number of minor parties that siphoned votes away from the PJD list. Indeed, 57 percent of the total votes were cast for losing parties and nearly one-quarter for marginal parties classified as “others” (according to Carr’s tally). If the PJD list had netted just a few thousand of these votes, it would have won the third seat. It is unclear to the extent that this scenario played out in other districts but, based on my calculations, there were twelve other districts in which the PJD narrowly missed winning a seat by finishing as one the top two runners-up. The PJD and other opposition parties could have benefited enormously from strategic defections.

Finally, two recent studies by Benstead (2008) and Szmolka (2009) show strikingly different conclusions about the impact of district magnitude on electoral behavior in

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126 I traveled with a small team of international observers and local field coordinator to the town of Midelt on September 5, 2007 to conduct an on-the-ground assessment of the political climate before the election. A full day spent in this area afforded me the opportunity to speak with key actors (with the aid of an interpreter) about the elections. The two interviews on 6 September were conducted in and around Midelt.

127 I witnessed a rally in Midelt’s town center for several parties on the day before the election. The sentiments of the crowd were clearly disposed toward the Istiqlal and personal observation of the counting process in one polling center on election night underscored the electoral dominance of its top candidate. According to the local field coordinator, candidates from big parties have special strategies to deal with elections in places that have many poor and uneducated people.
Morocco. Benstead argues that district magnitude did not have any bearing on the incentives of the Islamist opposition to cultivate a personal vote (266). Although her finding is significant as a measure of caseload levels of Moroccan deputies, it does not capture the psychological effects of district magnitude among political actors during electoral campaigns within districts. On the other hand, Szmolka argues that seat allocation by constituencies is the main factor of the electoral system that contributed most to party fragmentation (20). But her findings largely neglect the impact of clientelism on political behavior by claiming, for example, that low district magnitudes gives rise to party switching and encourage vote buying. The following explanations and subsequent typological theory attempt to compensate for these analytical shortcomings.

In sum, I do not wish to suggest that institutional characteristics are the primary factor in shaping political behavior but I can claim that my hypotheses about district magnitude (H3.1) and electoral averages (H3.2) do have some plausibility. Political actors on both the national and local levels knew that the key to winning a seat in any given electoral district was to place among the top several contenders. Smaller parties likely concentrated their resources in districts in which they had a popular candidate or party list in hopes that it garnered enough votes for a seat. Conversely, larger parties likely conserved their resources by seeking to obtain the electoral average in districts in which they had fielded lists since the “largest remainder” formula usually only resulted in a payoff of one seat.

*Explanation #2: Partisan Competition*

The second explanation emphasizes the role of human agency in explaining
strategic behavior. According to this logic, coordination is contingent upon situations and choices of the actors themselves. There are no intrinsic factors or structural conditions that inhibit or facilitate coordination. Instead, political oppositions cohere and voters coalesce around them when actors want to be on the “winning side.” Electoral outcomes are contingent upon shifting power equilibriums among political coalitions.

I therefore evaluate van de Walle’s (2006) conceptualization of “tipping games” as it applies to electoral coordination in Morocco’s recent elections. I first test the impact of factors related to participation and competition within district-level contests. The results allow me to make some preliminary conclusions about arguments that attribute coordination dilemmas to self-restraint by the PJD and disaffection among voters.

Tables 3.6 and 3.7 shows the results from simple Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regressions of ENP and SF-ratios respectively on different sets of explanatory variables. The first column shows the regression on dummy variables for the performance of the PJD in various districts. The results disprove my hypothesis that districts in which the PJD won a seat or finished as a first or second runner-up featured higher levels of electoral coordination (H3.3). In fact, there was only one co-efficient that displayed a marginal level of significance (p-value=.10) for strategic voting when the PJD finished as one of the top two runners-up (PJD 1/2).

Table 3.6: OLS Regression of ENP in 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intercept</th>
<th>PJD Performance</th>
<th>Institutional</th>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>Competition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.217</td>
<td>-0.633</td>
<td>-.443</td>
<td>-2.387</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PJD (Win)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.391</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PJD (1/2)</td>
<td>-0.234</td>
<td>-.058</td>
<td>-.038</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>-.074</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.115***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVG</td>
<td>.001***</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

141
Table 3.7: OLS Regression of SF-Ratio in 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PJD Performance</th>
<th>Institutional</th>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>Competition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>0.824</td>
<td>.349</td>
<td>1.272</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PJD (Win)</td>
<td>-0.037</td>
<td>.162</td>
<td>-.091*</td>
<td>-.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PJD (1/2)</td>
<td>-0.097</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.118</td>
<td>-.115*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.066*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVG</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>&gt;.001</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.007***</td>
<td>-.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invalid%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.006</td>
<td>&gt;-.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>&gt;-.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td><strong>0.02</strong></td>
<td>.173</td>
<td>.155</td>
<td>.416</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

The second column isolates two institutional variables: district magnitude (M) and electoral averages (AVG). M has a modest effect on SF-ratios but whereas AVG has a miniscule effect on ENP. Little can be inferred from such a limited model.

The third column adds variables related to participation: turnout (TO%) and invalid ballots (Invalid%). Both have a modest effect on ENP but only had a modest effect. Turnout had a very marginal effect on SF-ratios, thereby lending little support to my hypothesis about this relationship (H3.4). These results could imply that coordination dilemmas in part arise from inconsistent levels of turnout across districts and political disaffection in general. The negative attitudes among Moroccan citizens toward political parties, the parliament and the electoral process are well known but have not been analyzed within the context of recent political developments. Several recent studies have
highlighted the price that the traditional opposition has paid for participation in the *gouvernement d’alternance*. Popular perceptions that political parties such as the USFP have “sold out” are widespread and are evidenced by declining vote shares and representation in parliament. But instead of voters coalescing around other opposition alternatives, they have punished them by not voting or purposely spoiling their ballots as a form of protest. With record levels of absentia and spoiled ballots, some have commented that the real winner of the 2007 elections was the “protest vote.” This phenomenon appears to have played out with the PJD in the recent elections.

The fourth column investigates levels of partisan competition. Contrary to my initial expectations, the hypothesis about winners’ margins of victory (H3.5) did not yield any significant results. In other words, the presence of dominant parties across electoral districts did not appear to influence voter decisions to defect. Part of this could be attributed to informational shortages, a key factor for strategic voting and coordination. Despite the aforementioned voter education initiatives, qualitative evidence from post-election focus groups revealed significant shortcomings in citizens overall awareness and knowledge of the political process (People’s Mirror 2008). Many could not distinguish substantive differences among the myriad of competing parties. Otmani (2007) argues that many potential voters were also skeptical of short-term voter awareness efforts, thus making a logical extension between their general suspicion of politics and the election.

Based on this evidence, I attribute the PJD’s lackluster performance in 2007 less to self-restraint and more due to a severe erosion of public support. The background section

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128 I personally witnessed examples of spoiled ballots during the counting process at one polling center on the night of the election. Several ballots featured derogatory remarks toward particular individuals or obvious markings indicating the voter’s displeasure.
briefly touched upon some of the events that may have damaged the party’s image such as the 2003 terrorist bombings in Casablanca and the passage of the family code legislation.

The district-analysis by Pellicer (2008) also presents telling evidence of how the party has failed to make inroads within key constituencies in Morocco and its support base has become narrower, like other parties. While PJD leaders have legitimate grievances about the electoral system and can point fingers at other parties for vote buying, the PJD’s inability to capture so-called “protest votes” is a major reason why it failed to win more seats in the recent elections. Contrary to what the PJD might have hoped, voters did not defect en masse from other parties and an opposition coalition between the secular parties and the PJD was out of the question because their relationship had deteriorated severely.\footnote{Hamzawy (2008: 14) notes that some secular parties had even spearheaded an anti-PJD media campaign after the 2003 terrorist attacks and had sought to exploit an ensuing anti-terrorism law for political gain.}

Explanation #3- Patronage

The third explanation attributes the breadth and depth of patron-client relationships in Morocco to the strategies political actors pursue and their propensity to coordinate. This explanation argues that the access and distribution of patronage condition political behavior, not some arcane set of electoral rules or capricious choices made by individuals. As Denoeux (2007: 134) states plainly, “Moroccan society can be thought of as a gigantic patronage machine.” Although sources of patronage may be abundant within society, the wellspring begins with the monarchy itself.
As previously explained in Chapter 2, the *makhzen* exerts a tremendous influence on the political system through a variety of informal institutions. Indeed, a plethora of religious and cultural symbols associated with the king have effectively elevated his image so that he is considered above the political fray.\(^{130}\) Successive monarchs have skillfully employed this role of supreme arbiter among competing political forces and have doled out rewards and punishments as they see fit. As Anderson (1987: 221) duly observes about cases like Morocco, “Opposition has little place in a system where the ruler is accountable only to God and where it is the ruler’s responsibility to guarantee the continued and harmonious integration of each individual and group into the community.”

What evidence exists then with regards to the role of the *makhzen* on coordination behavior in recent elections?

To begin, cross-national comparison of electoral results from 2007 only yields a few cases in which coordination *did* occur but one is particularly telling about the influence of the palace. In the Rehamna district outside of the city of Marrakesh, a conspicuous party called the Movement for All Democrats (MAD) defied the intrinsic bias of the “largest remainder formula” and swept all three seats with a commanding margin of votes.\(^{131}\) The previously unknown party won a staggering 72 percent of the vote and the ENP in this district was less than two (1.9). This outcome is a direct result of Fuad Al-Himma, who headed the party’s electoral list and was well known for being a

\(^{130}\) Many cultural or sociological analyses of Morocco point out that the king enjoys wide discretion based on his symbolic legitimacy as *Amir al-Mu’manin* or “Commander of the Faithful.” This is the main theme of classic works by Waterbury and more contemporary studies by Mednicoff (2007) and Daadaoui (2008).

\(^{131}\) Recall the difficulty for parties to achieve this electoral feat based on the example from Table 3.3.
close confidante of the king.\textsuperscript{132} During his brief campaign, El-Himma successfully used this privileged access to cultivate a charismatic aura and since his election has secured considerable patronage for the district and amongst supporters of his newfound party and parliamentary coalition.\textsuperscript{133} While the PJD and other opposition parties were obviously no match for the “king’s man” in Rehamna, what explains their failure to coordinate across other districts?

This question is complex because actual patron-client relationships cannot be analyzed at a distance from their micro-level context. Testing for these relationships within the confines of an empirical analysis is a challenge to say the least. Fortunately, the HCP data does allow me to infer some cross-national patterns of clientelist voting based on particular demographic characteristics. A simple bivariate regression shows that both age and education did have a modest independent effect on ENP in the 2007 elections (see Table 3.3). The scatter plot below show that as the average age decreased across districts the effective number of parties increased slightly. The relationship is less linear with regards to the “no education” variable but the data points suggest that the prevalence of uneducated voters is correlated with a greater dispersion of votes. These results provide modest support to my hypothesis that a higher percentage of “uneducated youth” discourages electoral coordination (H3.7). Whether patronage is the causal mechanism is still left to speculation, however.

\textsuperscript{132} Al-Himma resigned as Deputy Minister of the Interior to run independently in the 2007 elections. He was a former classmate of the King and it was well known that he had very close ties with the palace.

\textsuperscript{133} See Liddell (2008; forthcoming) and Boussaid (2009) for more fascinating details about Al-Himma and his newfound Party for Authenticity and Modernity (PAM).
Figure 3.3: Scatter plots of ‘Youth’ (left) and ‘No Education’ (right) variables

On the other hand, qualitative evidence from area experts suggests that the demographic profile of “uneducated youth” is actually indicative of electoral coordination. In an in-depth analysis of which party won votes where during the 2007 elections, Bennani and Boukhari (2007) point out that in the areas where the [Istiqlal] party had its strongest showing (the southern provinces—winning 12 seats from the Souss mountains down to the border with Mauritania), it relied on the co-optation of tribal leaders. They go on to explain that people from these regions are largely illiterate and have little use for the game of politics. Voting was based on the influence of tribal leaders, whose co-optation or endorsement of Istiqlal candidates proved crucial. According to this logic, voters face acute coordination dilemmas because of the incentives and constraints of clientelism. Many suffer sanctions or punishment from patrons if they defect regardless whether their preferred party wins or loses. For certain parts of the public dependent on particularistic goods and material benefits, it is better to stick with their sincere preferences or those of their patron.

Patronage also exerts powerful effects on electoral coordination among parties and members of parliament. Contrary to the pure “instrumentalist” perspective that political
parties and candidates seek elected office based on vote-maximization strategies, incumbent elites and opposition actors in Morocco have had tacit understandings about the boundaries of political competition and acceptable electoral outcomes. Many Moroccan parties understand that elections are not ideological contests over competing policy platforms but rather represent a socio-political exercise for the sake of maintaining the legitimacy of the system. Other political groupings approach elections as a vehicle for supplying their own patronage networks. Even Islamists view elections as an opportunity to mobilizing their constituencies by emphasizing the value of religion in public life yet, as in the case of the PJD, are careful not to challenge the monarchy in fear of triggering a political backlash (Wegner 2006).

As in past elections, district results from 2007 continue to mirror demographic patterns and clientelist bases among various parties. Despite its organization prowess and ideological appeal in urban centers, the PJD could not make inroads in rural areas where certain politicians have long cultivated electoral fiefdoms (Tozy 2008: 40). Other parties with regional bases of support, like the Popular Movement (MP), had a vested interest in winning a requisite number of seats in Berber areas. Moreover, parties such as the National Rally of Independents (RNI) and the Constitutional Union (UC), for example, continued to consolidate their base in young urban-based professional constituencies to counterbalance the influence of the left within the urban middle class (including public

134 After the 2007 elections, the king appointed Abbas Al-Fassi, the longtime leader from Istiqlal, as the new prime minister since his party technically won the most number of seats. Despite hailing from the traditional opposition, Al-Fassi called his political program le discours du trône (the King’s program).
sector employees, service sector workers, intellectuals, and labor union members). As these examples show, the make-up of the political party and geography were often incompatible with electoral coordination.

Although the fundamental asymmetry in power between the makhzen and opposition movements most directly hinders electoral coordination, the monarchy also relies on a series of clientelist linkage structures to perform the actual duties of governance and regime maintenance. These structures are enshrined in administrative apparatuses and embedded in formal institutions. Members of Morocco’s parliament, for example, most commonly serve as intermediaries between the regime and citizens and become clients themselves for powerful brokers within the regime. Recent research by Zerhouni (2008) and Benstead (2008) shows how patronage permeates the institution. Their survey data reports that most parliamentarians are motivated by their will to defend the interests of their districts and constituents have similar expectations as evidenced by casework practices. While their methods are rigorous and include significant findings, they do not provide cross-national comparison for the role of patronage on coordination behavior. Despite this robust data, I conclude my hypothesis about casework (H8) is inconclusive.

**Limitations**

In attempting to show how institutional variables may have affected electoral behavior across districts, I recognize three methodological dilemmas. First is the

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135 The RNI consolidated its base in the Rif region to the North as did the MP over its well-established networks in the Gharb and Tadla (Bennani and Boukhari 2007).
problem of ecological inference about unobserved individual level behavior on the basis of available aggregate district-level data. In order to analyze the data, other studies (e.g. Blaydes 2008) have used Gary King’s estimation strategy, which allows quantities of interest (i.e. the proportion of citizens who vote) to vary over districts while at the same time incorporating the legal bounds for these values (1997). My analysis largely relies on descriptive statistics that do not require this procedure.\textsuperscript{136}

Second, this analysis only addressed the last two elections under the List PR system. Franklin (2004) clearly argues that the logical way to ascertain the impact of a variable on electoral behavior over time is to examine increases or decreases when that variable changes. Since reliable district-level results are not available from past elections conducted under a majoritarian system, this model begins with the 2002 elections. Bear in mind, however, that I seek to explain the persistence of authoritarian regimes, not transitions to something else. A study that takes a “snapshot” of opposition failure is therefore sufficient for this purpose.

Finally, this study would be remiss if it did not mention potential problems regarding the suitability of the proxies as dependent variables. Moser and Scheiner (2009: 55), for one, mention that there is no finely grained way of differentiating between different SF-ratio distributions, especially ones that are very similar. Cox himself also notes that SF-ratio values can be ambiguous. The fact that I use ENP as a second dependent variable helps to mitigate these shortcomings.

\textsuperscript{136} See Cho (1998) for a discussion of conditions to apply this procedure.
Conclusion

The reasons why Morocco’s opposition parties have failed to coordinate have varied over time and have involved a multiplicity of factors. Originally, palace interference played a prominent role in electoral outcomes through manipulation and other thinly veiled strategies based on coercion. But then the monarchy recognized that some degree of pluralism was necessary to maintain the façade of regime-led liberalization. The design of quasi-democratic institutions thereby became an increasingly important tool for managing the political opposition. As Korany notes (1999: 171), “multipartyism has been (ab)used to fragment, satellize and finally, paralyze opposition forces.” As such, I argue that electoral rules represent one of the most effective institutional constraints on the opposition by inhibiting coordination. They encourage the proliferation of political actors, facilitate rampant party switching and divide the electoral landscape.

Although the PJD has leveled direct criticism at the electoral system for its recent failure, it should not receive exclusive blame. Meyer-Resende (2008), for one, argues that Morocco’s electoral system is not as bad as generally believed: “To those who allege that the electoral system allows the regime to manipulate the results, the regime could not foresee outcomes in every constituency” Although he is correct in saying that “everything depends on local voting patterns,” I have argued elsewhere (Barwig 2008) that the monarchy cared less about manipulating the results than ensuring that no single party could win a substantial number of seats and therefore present itself as an alternative to the regime.
At the same time, a number of recent analyses of Morocco’s recent elections stress the primacy of clientelism and personalism over ideology and institutions in Moroccan politics (Liddell 2010). These arguments underscore the importance of informal institutions associated with the *makhzen* and present a foil for my central argument about the importance of formal institutions. For these reasons, I conclude that factors relating to political patronage play the central role in inhibiting opposition coordination. Nonetheless, electoral rules continue to shape the incentives and constraints of political actors within this context. In Chapter 5, I explore this interaction and attempt to develop a typological theory about the conditions under which elections reinforce competitive authoritarian regimes. For now, I turn to the case of Jordan’s 2007 elections to evaluate the effects of electoral rules on the success “new elites” in parliament.
CHAPTER FOUR

JORDAN’S 2007 ELECTIONS:
WHY THE “NEW CAPITALISTS” WON

In November 2007, Jordan held parliamentary elections within the context of widespread political discontent and powerful Islamist opposition groups. Yet, as in the case of Morocco several months before, traditional forces reasserted control and the main Islamist party did not perform well. While some analyses have focused on the “electoral disaster” suffered by Jordan’s Islamic Action Front (IAF), the 2007 elections also displayed the usual success of independent candidates with strong pro-regime orientations. These results were particularly noteworthy because they featured unexpected victories for more than a dozen young economic entrepreneurs known as the “new capitalists.”

The emergence and participation of this nouveau riche in Jordanian politics has become increasingly significant for the regime’s stability. After the 2007 elections, several newly elected “new capitalists” formed a relatively small but influential parliamentary block called Al-Ikha that attracted over 20 reform-minded deputies. The activism of Al-Ikha’s membership quickly raised the ire of traditional powerbrokers in the parliament and other conservative forces. Yet support from prominent deputies within

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137 The IAF suffered its worst electoral performance ever in 2007. See the article in The Economist from November 22, 2007 entitled “Islamists’ electoral disaster.”
the block for the king’s economic liberalization agenda has also proven instrumental.

What explains the electoral success of elites who neither had tribal weight nor any kind of previous political base? And does the emergence of *Al-Ikha* represent a vanguard for political reform or the continuation of politics as usual? Explanations and answers to these questions have so far proven inadequate. The defeat of popular Islamists in key electoral districts elicited immediate allegations of vote fraud, making it convenient to point to registration and turnout irregularities where a few “new capitalists” scored surprising victories (Abu Rumman 2007). Others have suggested these candidates simply bought their own election in order to further their own socio-economic interests (Hroub 2007). Few analyses, however, have examined the “new capitalist” victories in 2007 from the perspective of the regime and institutional survival strategies. Although the electoral pendulum did not swing dramatically as it did between consecutive elections in 1989 and 1993, Jordan’s electoral rules continue to exert a considerable influence on political actors, including the “new capitalists.” To what extent did Jordan’s “one vote” system enable their candidacies, facilitate their victories and constrain their activities in parliament. The main purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to examine the role of institutional mechanisms in maintaining traditional patterns of elite recruitment and the circulation of elites in parliament. According classical elite theorists, both of these processes are essential ingredients for stable and effective rule.

Using district and candidate-level data from Jordan’s parliamentary elections, I assess how electoral rules that reduced the number of votes required to win a seat have

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138 A post-election analysis by Hroub (2007) is an example of stereotyping the election of the “new capitalists” and their implications for the parliament. In particular, he questions the ability of these “millionaire members” to represent the poor and middle-class.
shaped political behavior among candidates, voters and deputies themselves. The results suggest that districts with lower electoral thresholds encouraged personalistic campaigns, reinforced clientelist structures and even have inhibited parliamentary capacity. In order to advance this argument, I also present qualitative evidence from personal interviews with more than a dozen Jordanian MPs that provides some insights about how the recent elections were successful in recruiting a new breed of “up and comer” elites and fostering new loyalties and allegiances to the monarchy. King Abdallah’s decision to dissolve parliament in November 2009 and institute a new system of electoral sub-districts sheds new light on this argument.

This chapter proceeds in four parts. The first part discusses classical and “second generation” conceptions of elite recruitment and circulation and then highlights contemporary scholarship that frames my main arguments. The second part provides an overview of Jordan’s electoral system, the current parliament and a background of the Al-Ikha block. The third part applies the framework to test various hypotheses with three stylized profiles of newly elected deputies. The fourth part discusses the new electoral law for upcoming elections in November 2010 and its implications for my core argument about electoral rules providing a “window” into the regime.

1. Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

To this mixing, in the particular case in which only two groups, the élite and non-élite, are envisaged, the term “circulation of élites” has been applied. We must pay special attention...in the case of various groups, to the ways in which transitions from one group to the other occur, and to the intensity of that movement—that is to say, to the velocity of the circulation.

The democratic tendency—the tendency to replenish ruling classes from below—is constantly at work with greater or lesser intensity in all human societies... When the democratic tendency does not exert too great an influence...it represents a conservative force. It enables ruling classes to be continually replenished through the admission of new elements.

- Gaetano Mosca, *The Ruling Class*, Paper XV §5

**Classical and “Second Generation” Elite Theory**

Pareto and Mosca are widely considered as the founding fathers of elite theory in general and a “classical” school of thought in particular.\(^\text{139}\) Although their voluminous works are instructive in many respects and the quotations above are illuminating, their theories about how the incorporation of new elites affects political stability are relatively embryonic within a comparative framework. Since the nature and organization of elites are not constant fixtures across societies, under what conditions do elites remain loyal or defect? This question, which has been posed by scholars in various forms, is essential to understanding the impact of traditional patterns of elite recruitment and circulation on political stability in Jordan. Before addressing it, I elucidate the term “elite” in broad terms, leaving aside specific characteristics for the empirical analysis that follows.

As contemporaries in the early 20\(^\text{th}\) century, Pareto and Mosca shared many views about the prevalence of inequalities in human society. However, in contrast with Marx and his disciples, they sought to unmask *non-economic* dimensions of those inequalities by examining a single cohesive *elite* which dominates the affairs of society (Parry 1969: 30). Exactly what constitutes this “elite” has been the subject of ongoing debate among scholars. Instead of providing an exhaustive review of definitions and elitist theories, I focus on a commonality in differentiating the elite from the general public by the extent

\(^{139}\) Others such as Weber, Michels, Burnham and Mills are highly influential in their own regard but are often grouped separately from Pareto and Mosca with regards to “classic” and “pluralist” versions of elite theory.
of their power and influence based on various overlapping resources, which include control of organizations and public support (Etzioni-Havely 1997: xxv).

How then do we understand what power and influence entail? Among the many who offer helpful conceptualizations, Putnam (1976: 6) describes power and influence as means to achieve desired outcomes and hence, “the probability of influencing the policies and activities of the state.” Subsequent scholarship (Burton and Higley 2001: 91) concurs that political elites are “persons who are able…to affect national political outcomes regularly and substantially.” In order to shed some light on these processes, I now return to the theories advanced by Pareto and Mosca.

Pareto’s thesis was that as long as a group governing elite can absorb into its ranks the most talented from the non-governing elite—while shedding the more degenerate of its own members—a “circulation of élites” would keep society in a state of equilibrium and gradual change (Etzioni-Halevy 1997: 44). As for Mosca, he argued that recruitment of the ruling class would display either an aristocratic or democratic tendency. The tendency is aristocratic when new members of the ruling class are recruited from the descendants of the existing ruling class. The democratic tendency is displayed where the ruling class is renewed from the lower class of those ruled (Parry 1969: 39). According to these authors, the key is assessing the “velocity” of circulation and “intensity” in which the ruling class is replenished.

In The Ruling Class, Mosca (1939: 154) also states famously: “When we say that the voters ‘choose’ their representatives, we are using language that is very inexact. The truth is that the representative has himself elected by the voters [or]… his friends have him elected [original in italics].” These “friends,” which I refer to as the selectorate, are
directly and indirectly responsible for recruiting new elites and determining the pace of elite circulation. According to Best and Cotta (2000: 7), the selectorate are the “party organizations, the personal cliques, the groups of dignitaries... involved in the selection of candidates and in their presentation to constituencies. Some have developed elaborate theories about the relationship between selectorates and regime stability but it will suffice here to describe how selectorates vary according to regime and types of society.\(^{140}\)

In a democracy, the selectorate is presumably the general electorate. In an autocracy, on the other hand, accountability of leaders and policy-makers is not, by definition, to the electorate. Rather, it is to a selectorate, which is some narrow subset of the population. Under authoritarian regimes, the selectorate is often dominated by the governing and non-governing elite, which includes military officers, merchants, administrators or some other set of interests usually centered around the state. Selectorates in traditional societies commonly featured informal caucuses of dignitaries or state officials whereas in modern societies they are more institutionalized. Traditional societies also tend to choose leaders based on ascriptive criteria such as lineage, ethnicity and religion. Modern societies, in contrast, place more value on achievement criteria.

Although both Jordan and Morocco feature monarchs who embody the ultimate source of power and authority within the polity, clientelist networks and patronage are essential instruments of elite maintenance (Tripp 2001: 220).

A “second generation” of studies on Middle East elites (e.g. Zartman 1980) draws from the work of classic elite theorists and also provides a framework for defining types

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\(^{140}\) For example, Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003) develop a theory of political survival that describes incentives on rulers using two key characteristics of a polity's institutions: the sizes of the selectorate (S) and the winning coalition (W). Rulers are in an advantageous position when W is small relative to S.
of elites and their roles. Many of these works conceptualize elites as mediators that serve more the interests of regime. Binder’s study on Egypt (1978), for example, focuses on middle-level elites, or a “second stratum” in Mosca’s terms, through whom central authorities rule. Weinnbaum defines a *brokerage* function whereby legislative elites act as intermediaries between the government and their constituents.

At this point, it is important to note two conceptual disclaimers regarding political elites under authoritarianism. For one, due to the informal institutions of personalist rule and patron-client relationships, I recognize that parliamentary membership does not automatically guarantee privileged access to the inner circle of the political elite.\(^\text{141}\) On the other hand, elections do confer a certain degree of “elite” status and that political participation is an “instrumental value” for most elites (Huntington and Nelson 1976: 29). Secondly, I admit the role of economic elites is vitally important to the study of regime stability, particularly in the Middle East. A number of works have focused on the relationship between particular Arab states and business elites.\(^\text{142}\) While their theories are certainly relevant to the “new capitalists” in Jordan, this chapter is concerned with the recruitment and circulation of political elites through institutional venues and electoral mechanisms.

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\(^\text{141}\) Bank and Schlumberger (2004) identify three concentric circles of influence among politically relevant elite in Jordan. They put the large majority of parliamentarians in the outer circle because they have limited influence and whose main duty is to “rubber stamp” decisions made by the king. I dispute the relegation of parliamentarians as seemingly insignificant in light of the “new capitalist” phenomenon in 2007. Why would they seek election to such a marginal role?

\(^\text{142}\) The following works have addressed the role of business elites in Arab politics: Crystal (1990) and Chaudhry (1997) on merchants in the Arabian peninsula; Vitalis (1997) on capitalists in interwar Egypt, and Bellin (2002) on state-sponsored development in Tunisia.
Contemporary Scholarship on Elites and Authoritarian Elections

A new generation of contemporary scholarship has reinvigorated the study of elites. In an oft-cited work, Higley and Burton (1989), for example, examine the relationship between types of national elites and political stability. They develop a tripartite typology of elite configurations: ideologically unified, consensually unified and disunified, which they claim is the most common type throughout history. According to their theory, the transformation from elite disunity to consensual unity is an essential precondition for political stability and that one of the routes for this transformation is when a consensually oriented bloc gains a stable majority of electoral support (27-29).

Since then, critics have argued that this so-called “new elite paradigm” fails to make important conceptual distinctions among elites and that the characterization of elites states are unsatisfactory.\(^{143}\) Their basic message is that studying the micro-politics of elite cohesion under authoritarianism must elaborate on a simple unity/disunity dichotomy and move beyond standard assumptions about elites and regime stability. Contrary to some empirical evidence from post-communist transitions,\(^{144}\) this study advances the argument that elite defection is not a telltale sign of cracks in the authoritarian edifice nor does elite consensus automatically shore them up. In the case of Yemen, powerful elites may choose to defect in order to reposition themselves within preexisting patronage networks (Longley 2008). Neopatrimonial regimes in the Middle East also create new institutions that are staffed on the basis of clientelist linkages, as

\(^{143}\) See Cammack (1990) for a critique of the “elite paradigm” developed by Higley and Burton.

\(^{144}\) Easter (1997), for one, argues that post communist elites that enter political transitions relatively intact successfully retained their monopoly on power whereas those who were fragmented were forced to compete for power in the same manner as the new political actors in the transition phase.

Likewise, much of the emerging scholarship on authoritarian elections (Levstisky and Way 2003, Howard and Roessler 2006, Magaloni 2006, Schedler 2006, Blaydes 2008) focuses on the electoral “game” between incumbents and the opposition with minimal attention given to explaining how electoral rules influence newly elected elites and their capacity as parliamentarians. Recent studies about authoritarian institutions (e.g. Gandhi and Przeworski 2007) tend to dwell on why dictators and other rulers create legislatures without addressing how electoral rules bind parliamentarians to the role of regime intermediaries. This chapter attempts to bridge these analytical gaps by examining how Jordan’s electoral system has facilitated the incorporation of so-called “new elites” into parliament. More specifically, it assesses the degree to which the Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) system shaped the campaigns of “new capitalist” candidates and their activities in parliament as members of Al-Ikha.

For architects of electoral systems, SNTV attracts scant attention because and has been utilized sparingly with mixed effects on political development.145 According to Reynolds et al. (2005: 113), the main advantage of SNTV is that it is better able to facilitate the representation of minority parties and independents, specifically mentioning Jordan as a case in which the system has enabled a number of popular non-party pro-monarchist candidates to be elected. SNTV also has some appeal because it offers a relatively simple ballot and menu of choices for unfamiliar voters. The list of

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145 Today, SNTV is used in Afghanistan and Vanuatu in addition for an allotment of legislative seats in Indonesia, Thailand and Taiwan. Its best-known application was for Japanese lower-house elections from 1948 to 1993.
disadvantages provided by Reynolds et al. (114), in contrast, have more profound implications but have not been explored systematically in the general literature outside of a regional study of SNTV in East Asia (Groffman et. al 1999).

Many analyses of elections in Jordan have singled out SNTV for being unfair and unrepresentative. Some have focused on the apportionment of seats and the bias towards rural districts. Others scrutinized its effect on political parties, especially the Islamic Action Front (IAF), and their ability to nominate candidates and mobilize voters. Surprisingly few analyses have recognized the broader impacts of the system on electoral competition as a whole with the notable exception of Lucas (2005) and Lust-Okar (2006). The former argues that Jordan’s electoral law helps explain a strong regime coalition and the success of overall regime survival strategies. The latter claims Jordan’s electoral system enables an electoral arena in which competition for votes is based on patronage and which candidates are best able to deliver on campaign promises. In a later work (2008: 92), she adds that “elites, seeking a successful bid for elections and aware of the constraints, are more likely to run if they have good relations with the state.” Voters, in turn, recognize elites that can offer wasta (mediation) for state services and benefits.

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146 Sawalha (2001) notes that in Amman’s second district, the ration was one deputy every 172,000 inhabitants, whereas in the southern district of Tafiileh, the ratio was one deputy per each 18,000 citizens.

147 Mufti (1999: 120) claims nomination and vote-equalization errors cost the IAF 11 chamber seats (out of 80) in 1993. Bachelani (1999) shows that changes in the electoral rules adversely affected the opportunities for ideological based parties to mobilize voters between consecutive elections. Abu Rumman (2007) concludes that the system’s continued use also played a role in the IAF’s dismal performance in 2007.

148 According to Kilani and Sakijha (2002: 21), wasta is a “social tool with deep historical precedence in which loyalty to family, tribe, religion and sect is used to achieve a mutually beneficial exchange of interests.” In contemporary usage, however, Benstead (2008: 71) notes that wasta generally refers to the use of an individual’s position within a state bureaucracy and the resources of the state’s power to gain power and influence to solve a problem or gain preferential treatment. Wasta thus has a dual meaning as both the individual who acts as an intermediary and the act of providing the favor itself.
As such, this study departs from the optimistic assessment in Baaklini et al. (1999: 6) that Arab parliamentarians are “genuinely interested in building their institution into a major force for democracy.” Instead, I show how Jordan’s electoral system reinforces clientelism and largely limits the role of legislators as “service deputies.” Drawing upon the study by Barkan and Okumu (1978) about “the Kenyan experience,” I argue a primary function of elections in Jordan is to recruit local political entrepreneurs into a national system of clientelist networks and contain their activities so they pose no challenge to the regime. Unlike other authoritarian elections, their main purpose is not to promote from within the ruling elite or to accommodate power-sharing with rival groups. Rather, Jordan’s electoral processes formalize clientelistic structures and then link them with the center of power through an inept parliament. The rules that govern parliamentary elections therefore serve as a vital institutional mechanism for regime stability.

In sum, the central thrust of this chapter is to emphasize the importance of elections as a tool for elite recruitment and circulation in parliament. It builds on the foundational theories developed by Mosca and Pareto about elite recruitment and circulation respectively. It then applies them to the case of Jordan’s elections and parliament within the framework developed by Higley and Burton (1989) as well as Lust-Okar (2006). Drawing upon “The Kenyan Experience” study by Barkan and Okumu (1978), it advances the argument that the primary function of elections in Jordan is to recruit local political entrepreneurs into a national system of clientelist networks so as to limit their influence and prevent their defection. Unlike other authoritarian elections, the main purpose is not to promote from within the ruling elite or to accommodate power sharing with rival groups. Rather, Jordan’s electoral processes formalize clientelistic structures
between the candidate and selectorate and then link them with the center of power through an inept parliament. The rules that govern parliamentary elections therefore serve as a new instrument of elite recruitment and circulation.

2. **Overview/Background**

In this section, I provide a brief overview of Jordan’s electoral system and a profile of the 15th parliament that was elected in 2007. I also highlight the role of Jordan’s parliamentary blocks and, most notably, the emergence of Al-Ikha on the political scene. This overview serves as a backdrop to the application that follows.

**Overview of Jordan’s Parliamentary Electoral System**

Although the king is the ultimate authority in Jordan, the political system features a bicameral legislature with limited legislative and oversight powers. The Chamber of Deputies consists of 110 elected members while the king appoints 55 members to the smaller and more exclusive Assembly of Senators. Draft legislation is referred to the Chamber of Deputies by the government, where it can be approved, amended or rejected, before being passed on to the upper house. If the Senate approves the draft law, it is sent to the king for his endorsement. In theory, the parliament can override a law that the king has vetoed, but this scenario is nearly inconceivable given the monarch’s role in appointing senators and ability to dissolve parliament.

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149 This overview is drawn from DRI’s (2007) assessment of Jordan’s electoral system.
As Chapter 2 explained, for most of Jordan’s post-independence history, direct elections have allocated parliamentary seats according to plurality rules in multi-member districts with multiple votes. Since 1993, however, the monarchy has maintained a controversial electoral system that only allows citizens to cast one vote in each district no matter the number of competing candidates or seats contested. In previous elections, each voter had been able to vote for as many candidates as there were seats in the electoral district, which typically ranged from two to nine.

Profile of the 15th Parliament

The Lower House of Parliament between 2007 and 2009 forms the fifteenth parliamentary council in Jordan. The vast majority of its members are independent deputies who are not affiliated with or supported by any political parties. In fact, most political parties did not even bother to field lists of candidates in 2007, with the exception of the Islamic Action Front (IAF), which won just six seats. As a result, tribal candidates and other loyalists control a commanding 98 seats in the House, not even counting the king’s allies in the Senate.

Despite a super-majority of pro-regime deputies, the parliament has not served as a “rubber stamp” for the palace’s agenda. A significant number of MPs have rejected and criticized several draft laws presented by them. Others have submitted questions to the government about issues related to the economy or summoned ministers for questioning regarding cases of corruption. The 15th parliament displayed an unexpected independence and capacity for legislative action even though it is comprised of so many
new deputies. \textsuperscript{150} Indeed, almost two-thirds of the current deputies are newly elected with only 29 incumbents from the previous parliament.

There are a number of explanations for the behavior of the new MPs. The one I wish to highlight emphasizes the mutual interests of the regime and individual deputies. According to this perspective, the king probably recognized that the political process needed to regain some legitimacy after mismanaging municipal and parliamentary elections. For this reason, the palace has allowed some degree of government criticism and deputies have picked up on subtle cues not to shy away from doing so. This assertive behavior on the part of newly elected members early in their tenure serves dual purposes of catering to domestic consumption with local constituencies and being in step with the general antipathy toward parliament.

\textit{Parliamentary Blocks and Al-Ikha}

Since 1993, Jordan’s parliament has featured a series of blocks in lieu of formal political parties. Deputies usually join blocks based on personal relationships and political marriages of conveniences. They use their affiliation as a means to extract patronage and are quick to defect if the other side has more to offer. These blocks obviously provide a weak substitute for political parties because they lack most semblances of internal cohesion and discipline. At the same time, the blocks do help to overcome the individualistic character of Jordan’s parliament.

In the past, a handful of parliamentary blocks typically had been formed among centrists and chaired by leading deputies. In the aftermath of the 2007 elections, this

\textsuperscript{150} See the report compiled by the “Jordanian Parliamentary Monitor” (2009) for more details.
trend appeared to hold true as over fifty pro-government deputies flocked to the National Trend Block under the leadership of Abdul Hadi Al-Majali, a high-ranking former official and party leader. Shortly thereafter, however, another block emerged known as the National Brotherhood, or Al-Ikha. While the new block initially consisted of young MPs from the business sector, it attracted a diverse membership of 20 deputies, including one female elected under the quota system. Most deputies were drawn to the “mentality” of block early on because they were newcomers and felt parliament needed an injection of “new blood.” Some also took stock of various options and decided that a smaller middle-of-the-road block better suited them. A few also defected from another block after becoming dissatisfied with its leadership and internal procedures.

Members of Al-Ikha have assumed an active oversight role in relation to other blocks. At the same time, the block has also drawn the ire of their colleagues in the Lower House. Some incumbents have criticized its members as being inexperienced and overly “aggressive.” Many others have called members of Al-Ikha political opportunists for abusing their position in the majority coalition to secure coveted positions including chairmanships of influential committees such as Finance, Agriculture and Public Services. As a result, some independent deputies with significant legislative and policy experience were shut out of committee memberships altogether. This configuration of elites has been characterized as an unprecedented (JPM 2009).

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151 This particular criticism came after several members of Al-Ikha proposed changes to the 1976 Citizenship Law in order to allow Jordanian mothers to grant citizenship to their children, an extremely sensitive topic given the sizeable number of Palestinians in Jordan.  
152 Upon the inauguration of the Lower House in 2007, the National Trend and Brotherhoo blocks forged a parliamentary coalition and largely divided up committee assignments amongst themselves. Even though a major split occurred at the beginning of the second session in early 2009, these two blocks still hold a virtual monopoly on the various levers of the legislative body.
To recap, this section has provided an overview of the electoral system as well as a brief background of the 2007 elections, the 15th parliament and the Al-Ikha parliamentary block. The key points are:

- SNTV was instituted in 1993 and only allows citizens to cast one vote in each district no matter the number of competing candidates or seats contested, thereby encouraging voting along family or tribal lines.
- The 15th Parliament has not served as a “rubber stamp” for the regime; but rather, many of its newly elected members have shown considerable assertiveness (with tacit acquiescence from the monarchy).
- Al-Ikha has emerged as a relatively small but influential parliamentary block that represents a potential counterweight to the dominant pro-government block but also has drawn the ire of other deputies.

3. Application

In this section, I first examine biographical data of Jordanian deputies in the Lower House and describe the attributes of those who comprise the Al-Ikha parliamentary block. Second, I present various explanations and corresponding hypotheses for their success and specify the analytical framework. Third, I assess the explanatory weight of each factor in an attempt to develop some contingent generalizations for the conclusion. Before setting out with the empirical analysis, I summarize the data and methods used in the study and then explain the rationale for my choice of subjects.
Data and Methods

This analysis utilizes a mixed-method approach that draws from both qualitative and quantitative data. As for qualitative data, semi-structured interviews were conducted in Amman, Jordan during the month of July 2009 with a non-random stratified sample. The primary subjects were ministers of parliament (MPs) that fit the profile of “new capitalists” but also included other newly elected MPs, including committee chairmen and those who won surprising electoral victories. Of the twenty-one members of Al-Ikha, I interviewed approximately half of them. The interviews consisted of standard questions that solicited factual and opinion-oriented responses about the campaign period, election process and parliamentary activity.

My method for explaining the relationship between electoral rules and electoral outcomes is based on district-level data compiled by Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center and published in Who’s Who in the Jordanian Parliament series. Unfortunately, the data are mostly limited to those who were elected so this analysis essentially compares electoral outcomes for winners. Therefore, I use candidates’ percentage of the total of vote and margin of victory as proxies for my dependent variable. I specify this and my explanatory variables later in this section but, for now, I describe the subjects of interest to this study.

153 Attempts were made by phone to contact all the members for interviews. Some did not respond.

154 The procedures for the interviews were designed with careful thought and attention to political sensitivities. Interviews were conducted in the MP’s office or a place of his choosing. The question format afforded significant flexibility and depth for responses with a “trigger” question that introduced the topic followed by a “probe” to elicit more revealing information. The questions generally covered the campaign period, election day and the current parliamentary session. The subjects were granted anonymity under the guidelines of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the University of Denver.
Choice of Subjects

This study concerns itself with *Al-Ikha* for three main reasons. First, the individuals from this parliamentary block embody many of the concepts and theories elucidated in the previous section about elites. Some *Al-Ikha* members personify the so-called “new capitalists” of Jordan that essentially “had themselves elected” through lavish campaigns or their campaigns reflect cases in which their “friends had them elected” (per Mosca’s observation). Their socio-economic status also raises the question whether they represent an aristocratic or democratic tendency (also explained by Mosca) of replenishing the ruling class. Second, *Al-Ikha* provides a focal point for examining electoral mechanisms for elite recruitment and circulation under authoritarianism. Many of its members represent the “new elite” in Jordan that is usurping power from traditional forces and tribal structures. Third, the emergence of a new political elite in Jordan allows me to draw some limited comparisons with the case of Morocco. During Morocco’s 2007 parliamentary elections, Fuad Al-Himma—a former Interior Ministry official and confidante of the king—emerged in the political scene and has since formed an influential parliamentary block.

While there is no official list of the “new capitalists” nor has much been written about them, they were certainly a “visible phenomenon” during the 2007 election campaign according to one resident observer. Different answers have been given to the question of who they are and why they were successful. These answers, however, are generally facile and do not cover a potential range of explanations. For the purpose of this chapter, it is useful to present some basic biographical information in order to derive

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155 Interview in Amman, Jordan on July 4, 2009.
a series of stylized profiles of Al-Ikha members that can help guide the empirical analysis. What follows, therefore, is not a comprehensive survey, but rather a preliminary examination of demographic and professional attributes.

Member Attributes

In terms of demographics, the membership of Al-Ikha is fairly representative of the country. A third of the membership is from the capital city of Amman. Two or three members each are from the governorates of Balqa in the south, Ma’an in the center and Irbid in the north. Several members also represent smaller towns or rural areas. The block has two Christians, one woman and a Circassian, all of who were elected under the quota system for minorities in Jordan. Finally, most of the Al-Ikha MPs are between 45 and 50 years old, with the youngest member being 30 and the oldest 52 at the time of the 2007 elections. Table 4.1 illustrates that Al-Ikha’s members are slightly younger than other deputies within the Lower House.
Table 4.1: Demographic Profile of 15th Lower House

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30-35</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-55</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-60</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-65</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66-70</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71-75</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Hourani (2009: 136)

The level of education and professional backgrounds of the members are perhaps their most impressive collective attributes. All of Al-Ikha’s deputies are college graduates with ten holding advanced degrees including two members with doctorates. Half of them are businessmen or come from the private sector. Four are educators and the rest are engineers, lawyers, former military officers and a doctor. Most of their careers are characterized by rapid advancement that has been facilitated by connections with important families, tribes or government officials.

In short, the membership of Al-Ikha is fairly diverse, relatively young, highly educated and upwardly mobile—all key indicators for effective reformers. Stereotypes of
the block from the local media and general public simply do not hold up against this
evidence. But the group’s diversity is also reflected in some distinct political
personalities among its members. The following paragraphs present a series of stylized
profiles that attempt to capture some of the main differences.

Stylized Profiles

While MPs in Jordan’s individualistic parliament have never fit neatly into various
political and ideological boxes, several distinct profiles emerge from interviews with a
dozen of Al-Ikha’s members. The following three categories will guide subsequent
empirical analysis and allow me to test various hypotheses:

1) “Up and Comer”: The first profile is personified by a handful of MPs who were
primarily elected from Amman’s affluent urban districts. They largely owe their
election to family pedigrees and wealth won during Jordan’s recent boom in real
estate and construction sectors. Many of these so-called “new capitalists” spent
lavish sums of money during their campaigns and made unlimited promises to
help people in need. Their vote shares were suspect in the face of allegations that
massive vote buying and vote transfers had boosted their final tallies. Because
they have limited knowledge of public policy and an unformed political ideology,
these MPs tend to fall back on populist causes while backing the government’s
legislative priorities. The distinguishing feature is their combination of personal
ambition with strong backing from various state apparatuses.

2) “One and Done”: Between five to ten members comprise the second category.
These are relatively older MPs who represent more of the traditional elite from
Amman and political class from other parts of the country. Their campaigns were
also built on patronage but they came to parliament with a stronger desire to
influence public policy, particularly on domestic welfare issues. As a result of
their knowledge and connections, many secured coveted committee assignments
or ascended to chairmanships during the second ordinary session. On the other
hand, these members are burdened by systemic constraints and have become
disillusioned with the excessive duties of being “service” representatives. For
these reasons, these MPs appear likely to return to their roles in the non-governing
elite after serving out the remainder of their term. Based on their limited tenure in
parliament, this profile can be labeled euphemistically as “one and done.”
3) “Insiders”: The third category has only a few members and they tend to share some of the characteristics of their “up and comer” and “one and done” colleagues. They have a mixture of both political clout and practical experience that they have been able to parlay effectively in their parliamentary duties. As a result, this select group has achieved a genuine “insider” status, both within the Speaker’s leadership circle and as “go-to-guys” on important legislative issues. In contrast to their “one and done” colleagues, however, these “insiders” are likely to seek reelection after consulting with their family, tribe or local association.

These profiles derived from personal interviews are important, but because of the small sample size and range, they should be interpreted with care. For one, the fact that many of the subjects are highly ambitious politicians should be considered in evaluating the internal validity of their responses. Nonetheless, I believe the categorization above is helpful for the purposes of framing select explanations and developing testable hypotheses, the task to which I now turn.

Explanations and Hypotheses

To recap, the empirical puzzle animating this study involves the surprising success of “new capitalist” candidates in Jordan’s 2007 parliamentary elections. However, this chapter’s objective is to examine the extent to which electoral rules have structured the political behavior among political actors as it relates to participation and competition both in the electoral and parliamentary arenas. As such, this section seeks to demonstrate empirically that the continued use of SNTV, or the “one vote” system, has established a new pattern of elite recruitment through elections and maintained the traditional pattern of circulation of elites in parliament.

156 In my view, the “up and comer” deputies have inflated values of self-importance in the broader political system. During the course of our interviews, they tended to exaggerate the extent of their popular support and claimed to have more influence on policy than they probably would like to admit.
Since limited data and sample size preclude detailed narratives and more extensive forms of process-tracing, I develop three parsimonious analytic explanations for the success of pro-regime candidates in Jordan’s 2007 parliamentary elections. In turn, these explanations spawn nine testable hypotheses about the “new capitalists,” which I use to refer to the three stylized profiles collectively. They are:

1. The state played a prominent role in supporting certain “up and comer” candidates that would incorporate the country’s nouveau riche and contribute to the circulation of elites in parliament. As such, authorities turned a blind eye to vote buying and even engaged in the transfer of votes as part of a strategy to recruit businessmen that would presumably support the king’s economic liberalization.

   *H4.1*: The difference in means from the percentage of vote totals between “up and comers” and other “new capitalists” was significant.

   *H4.2*: Districts adjacent or in close proximity to the districts in which “up and comers” were victorious had noticeable discrepancies in voter turnout from 2003 to 2007.

   *H4.3*: The percentage of businessmen elected as MPs has increased in successive parliaments beginning in 1997.

2. The electoral rules continue to favor those candidates who could draw on patron-client relationships to mobilize voters in districts that required a lower threshold of votes. Variation in district magnitudes shaped the incentives and constraints of political actors so that pro-regime candidates were well positioned to win and the selectorate exerted greater influence. At the same time, this system has inhibited reform-minded deputies in parliament and influenced their re-election prospects.

   *H4.4*: Candidates who competed in districts with fewer seats were more likely to have a greater margin of victory and/or percentage of total votes.

   *H4.5*: Lower electoral thresholds benefited local elites with strong personal or tribal connections with the district’s voters.

   *H4.6*: Differences in the number of questions submitted by “new capitalist” MPs are significant according to their political affiliation and profile.

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157 George and Bennett (2004: 211) describe analytical explanations as a form of process-tracing.
3. The role of money played an inordinate role in the success of the “new capitalist” candidates because they could promise material benefits above and beyond whatever the incumbent was able to deliver while in office. Voters also perceived that wealthy businessmen would be better able to deliver once in office.

H4.7: The campaigns of “new capitalists” were successful because they showcased their wealth to people in need of material benefits.

H4.8: The “new capitalist” candidates either displaced incumbents or gained higher vote totals than them in district-level contests.

H4.9: Businessmen candidates received higher percentages of votes and their margins of victory were greater.

Results

Before discussing the findings, I summarize the overall results in Table 4.2 (see below). The “expected” columns indicate that all nine hypotheses have a positive effect on the electoral fortunes of the various “new capitalist” profiles. I report the results of the tests in the “actual” columns as weak, moderate or strong as a subjective assessment of their explanatory weight. Although some of the tests were inconclusive (Incon.) or only provided weak evidence, the results of the hypotheses related to formal electoral rules were the most consistent across the board. The “up and comer” profile exhibit the most definitive attributes of the hypotheses.

Table 4.2: Summary of Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanation/Hypothesis</th>
<th>“Up and Comer”</th>
<th>“One and Done”</th>
<th>“Insider”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 State Interference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4.1: %Total Vote</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4.2: “Vote Transfer”</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4.3: Recruitment</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2 Electoral Rules</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4.4: District Magnitude</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4.5: Lower Thresholds</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4.6: MP Questions</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of course, the most likely explanation is that all the aforementioned explanations interacted with each other, and each played a role in the surprising performance of the “new capitalists” in the 2007 elections. However, this study also aims to assess the importance of institutional factors and the explanatory weight of electoral rules. This kind of analysis is made more difficult because limited district-level data and vote tallies do not provide definitive answers. Nevertheless, they can provide some insight when trying to develop a deeper and more objective analysis of each factor. I therefore discuss the results of each explanation in more detail.

Explanation #1: State Interference

The palace and various state apparatuses have a long history of interfering with elections and making their preferences known for certain candidates. Both municipal and parliamentary elections in 2007 were clearly no exception. The challenge for this empirical analysis is to present of evidence of fraud and malfeasance to corroborate the many official and unofficial sources. I approached this challenge by examining the electoral data in search of particular irregularities and anomalies that would signal some sort of quasi-official complicity in favoring “new capitalist” candidates.

I first sought to determine whether there were significant discrepancies in the percentages of total votes among different categories of “new capitalists” and how they compare with other independent candidates (H4.1). A handful of the “up and comers”
received an average of six more percentage points than other candidates but little should be inferred from this small sample. What is significant is the total number of votes that several “up and comer” candidates received, most notably in Amman’s 1st and 3rd districts. In these relatively affluent areas of the capital, the top two and three respective vote-getters in each electoral district amassed over ten thousand votes (see Table 4.3 below), a staggering sum considering there were over twenty other registered candidates that drew on their own preexisting vote banks. Several of these newly elected deputies had close ties to the regime’s pillars of power and undoubtedly benefited from them.158 In sum, there is some suggestive data with regards to this cohort but not the others.

Table 4.3: Vote Totals in Amman Districts (1st and 3rd)

| First District MPs | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| No. | Name | Vote Total | % of Total |
| 1 | Khalil Hussein Khalil Atieh | 14275 | 23% |
| 2 | Ja'far Marwan Salem Al Abdallat | 12141 | 19% |
| 3 | Hassan Mahmoud Khalid Safi | 8118 | 13% |
| 4 | Azzam Jameel Fares Al Hneidi | 4779 | 6% |

| Third District MPs | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| No. | Name | Vote Total | % of Total |
| 1 | Mamdouh Saleh Hamad Al Abbadi | 11604 | 14% |
| 2 | Ahmad Mohammad Ali Al Safadi | 10666 | 13% |
| 3 | Abdul Rahim Fathi Al Beqa'ai | 10061 | 12% |
| 4 | Yousef Ahmad Ali Al Bustangi | 8623 | 11% |
| 5 | Tareq Sami Hanna Khoury | 6945 | 9% |

Source: Hourani (2009)

As for vote transfers, there were numerous reports in the press and among candidates themselves that the government had arranged buses for voters to participate en

158 For example, Mamdouh Al-Abbadi and Jaafar Abdellat were younger members of particularly powerful tribes. Ahmed Al-Safadi was a high ranking officer in the Jordanian military.
masse in districts where the outcome was less certain. Abu Ramman (2007) claims this phenomenon had a direct, negative influence on electoral outcome for Islamists, especially in the Amman districts. He cites the case of one Palestinian refugee camp in which the Islamist incumbent won reelection despite receiving 5,000 votes less than he did in the previous election. More importantly, he singles out the third district of Amman because the five winning candidates split almost 50,000 votes. Although voter registration data fails to substantiate claims that the district does not have enough voters, respected tracking and exit poll data suggest the outcome could have been engineered.\footnote{These polls were conducted by the Jordan Center for Social Research with the support of the International Republican Institute (IR). The data is available from the author upon request.}

Several of the candidates from this district fit the “up and comer” profile and it is likely that at least one of them benefited from vote transfers.\footnote{The particular candidate in question is Ahmed Al-Safadi. I specifically asked him about vote transfer allegations and he dismissed them as people being “jealous of his influence.”} I conclude, therefore, that the “vote transfer” hypothesis (H4.2) has strong plausibility with a select few “up and comers” but there is a lack of conclusive data concerning the other cohorts.

Finally, I examined the make-up of several parliaments to discern whether there is a growing number of businessmen that are being elected (H4.3). Table 4.4 presents a longitudinal comparison of professional backgrounds among Jordanian MPs. One of the few definitive trends is the steady increase in the percentage of businessmen over the past three parliaments (9\%, 14\% and 21\%).\footnote{Momani (2004) concludes that only marginal changes occurred between the 13\textsuperscript{th} and 14\textsuperscript{th} parliaments with no trends in terms of occupation but his study does not include data from the 2007 elections.} Although the percentage of businessmen presently represented in Jordan’s parliament is significant, personal interviews did not reveal that any of the “new capitalists” were recruited by the regime specifically because...
they came from backgrounds in business. I conclude this hypothesis has moderate plausibility since each profile consists roughly of the same proportion of businessmen.

**Table 4.4: Professional Backgrounds of MPs in Successive Parliamentary Sessions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Businessman</td>
<td>7 (9%)</td>
<td>15 (14%)</td>
<td>23 (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physician/Pharmacist</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Professor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Employee</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writer – Journalist</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Sector Employee</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative/Manager</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
<td><strong>110</strong></td>
<td><strong>110</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Explanation #2: Electoral Rules**

Electoral rules provide relatively straightforward variables that can be used to assess the effect on competition and contestation with some degree of confidence. As previously mentioned, this analysis uses candidates’ percentage of total votes and margin of victory as proxies for my dependent variable because available electoral data does not specify vote tallies for losers. I calculate the margin of victory by taking an average of the vote total for losing candidates divided by the number of viable candidates.
competing.\textsuperscript{162} I then subtract this number from the winning candidate’s vote total to arrive at an approximation of their margin of victory. This is admittedly an imperfect measure for the distribution of vote shares but does allow a rough comparison between winning candidates and losing candidates.

To begin, the dataset presented some unique challenges because quotas for minority and female candidates might skew district level returns. Comparative analysis was also difficult because the size and composition of the districts are so varied and unequal. With this in mind, I organized the data by district magnitude and calculated averages of vote shares under each category. The results in Table 4.5 indicate that candidates won a higher percentage of the total vote (Vote\%) in districts with fewer seats, most notably in single-member districts, but this is not surprising. Additionally, larger margins of victory did not correlate with lower district magnitudes. Thus, my hypothesis that candidates who competed in districts with fewer seats winning by a greater percentage and/or margin of total votes (H4.4) has weak plausibility for all three categories.\textsuperscript{163}

Table 4.5: Average Percentage of Votes and Margin of Victory by District Mag.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Mag.</th>
<th># Districts</th>
<th>Vote%</th>
<th>Win%</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Margin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>3930</td>
<td>2252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>4817</td>
<td>2954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
<td>5544</td>
<td>3676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>6336</td>
<td>4179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>9580</td>
<td>7410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>3962</td>
<td>2032</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{Source:} Author’s own calculations from data compiled by Hourani (2009)

\textsuperscript{162} Annexes 1,3 and 13 in Hourani (2009) allowed me to construct my own variable to measure the margin of victory. I subtracted the number of candidates who received less than 500 votes and the number of winning candidates to determine the number of viable challengers in each district.

\textsuperscript{163} The percentage of winning votes (Win\%) was not applicable in this case.
On the other hand, the fact that 82% of Jordan’s 45 electoral districts range between one and three seats makes the use of SNTV that more peculiar because it essentially operates as a simple plurality formula in those 18 single-member districts. Much can be learned by the geographic distribution of district magnitudes, in particular the apportionment of seats and bias towards rural districts. Malapportionment provides some of the clearest evidence of electoral manipulation.

The principal effect of SNTV that has been understudied in the literature is that it significantly lowers electoral thresholds for victory since voters are only allowed to cast one ballot. This has profound implications for the participation and behavior of various political actors. In the case of Jordan, the change from multiple-candidate ballots to single-candidate ballots greatly enhanced the role of the selectorate because the value of each constituent’s vote was considerably higher. In 1993, for example, candidates needed approximately half the number of votes (2808) to win in districts than the previous election (5375). In terms of percentages, a winning candidate averaged about twenty-one percent of the total vote in 1989 when voters could cast as many votes as seats but only about nine percent in 1993 when they could only vote once. Table 4.6 depicts the change in the threshold of votes (T) across electoral districts between the two elections. The districts are listed according to the threshold of votes in 1993 in descending order.

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164 See Footnotes 4 and 23.
Table 4.6: Threshold of Votes in 1989 and 1993 Elections by District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>1989 T</th>
<th>1993 T</th>
<th>#Voters '89</th>
<th>#Voters '93</th>
<th>Win% '89</th>
<th>Win% '93</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amman 4</td>
<td>4260</td>
<td>6310</td>
<td>19262</td>
<td>40957</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amman 2</td>
<td>5082</td>
<td>5527</td>
<td>33170</td>
<td>42670</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. Badia</td>
<td>3569</td>
<td>5039</td>
<td>14622</td>
<td>21616</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramtha</td>
<td>5483</td>
<td>4297</td>
<td>26724</td>
<td>38458</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aghwar</td>
<td>6163</td>
<td>3811</td>
<td>27419</td>
<td>36787</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amman 1</td>
<td>9708</td>
<td>3469</td>
<td>27610</td>
<td>36733</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mafraq</td>
<td>2533</td>
<td>2644</td>
<td>14715</td>
<td>22928</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Badia</td>
<td>4303</td>
<td>2453</td>
<td>12191</td>
<td>16981</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma'an</td>
<td>4482</td>
<td>2436</td>
<td>19427</td>
<td>26534</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amman 5</td>
<td>4845</td>
<td>2302</td>
<td>28000</td>
<td>45507</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irbid</td>
<td>11178</td>
<td>2227</td>
<td>64000</td>
<td>93896</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Badia</td>
<td>2814</td>
<td>2200</td>
<td>12243</td>
<td>14993</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balqa</td>
<td>8721</td>
<td>2038</td>
<td>53143</td>
<td>72886</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amman 6</td>
<td>3088</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>22158</td>
<td>28713</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tafileh</td>
<td>3526</td>
<td>1931</td>
<td>15364</td>
<td>19787</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amman 3</td>
<td>6211</td>
<td>1582</td>
<td>27590</td>
<td>47191</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zarqa</td>
<td>6513</td>
<td>1235</td>
<td>58153</td>
<td>90949</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerak</td>
<td>9378</td>
<td>1024</td>
<td>35722</td>
<td>58594</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aljoun</td>
<td>2855</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>23417</td>
<td>29257</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerash</td>
<td>2787</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>20467</td>
<td>27480</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>5375</strong></td>
<td><strong>2808</strong></td>
<td><strong>27770</strong></td>
<td><strong>40646</strong></td>
<td><strong>20.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>8.9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Data from subsequent elections is inconclusive but still shows the effect of the continued use of SNTV on the size of the selectorate.\(^{165}\) Despite an increase in the number of voters by 250%, electoral thresholds remained relatively low in the 2003 and 2007 elections. In fact, a couple thousand votes would still win a seat in many districts.\(^{166}\) The average number of winning votes also decreased between 2003 and 2007 but, strangely, each candidate averaged almost three additional percentage points.\(^{167}\)

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\(^{165}\) The 1997 elections were not considered because the general boycott skewed the data.

\(^{166}\) According to a 2007 report by Democracy Reporting International (DRI), there is also a huge disparity between the number of votes needed by an elected deputy to win a seat. In Amman’s first district, the winning candidate secured 19,256 votes (27 per cent of votes cast in the district) but in Tafileh’s second district the highest scoring candidate won a seat with only 997 votes (14 per cent of votes cast).

\(^{167}\) The data and calculations from 2003 and 2007 are available from the author upon request.
I conclude that the “one vote” system continues to be instrumental for local elites with strong personal or tribal connections to a significant number of the district's voters (H4.5). Personal interviews with a number of “up and comers” with minimal political experience revealed that their extended family was the backbone of their electoral campaign. Public opinion data from recent elections also confirm that many Jordanians continued to vote for candidates based on family or close personal ties.\textsuperscript{168} Anecdotal evidence gleaned from other interviews strongly suggests that candidates were very aware of the minimum number of votes needed to win and tailored their campaign strategies accordingly.

This empirical analysis has so far yet to examine the activities of newly elected deputies in the 15\textsuperscript{th} parliament and whether electoral rules shape their legislative behavior. Unfortunately, votes in the Lower House are sparsely recorded and it would be exceedingly difficult to develop a litmus test for evaluating legislative initiatives submitted by the government and the response of individual deputies. I deal with this shortcoming by examining public questions raised by members. According to a report compiled by the “Jordanian Parliament Monitor,” Al-Ikha deputies addressed 22 questions to the government in the last session, of which nine were related on issues related to the economy. Seventeen of the questions, however, were from three members who fit the “one and done” and “insider” profiles, thus demonstrating a relative passivity among the block as a whole. None of the “up and comer” deputies have raised any questions, suggesting a hesitancy to upset their relationship with patrons within the

\textsuperscript{168} The public opinion data can be accessed from the websites of Center for Strategic Studies (\url{www.css-jordan.org}) and Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center (\url{www.ujrc-jordan.org}).
government and palace. These results do lend some credence to my hypotheses about deputies being bound with the institutional domain of parliament (H4.6). The electoral system certainly contributes to the degree to which deputies are beholden to their constituencies, which is reflected in their legislative behavior.

Explanation #3: Role of Money

Without a doubt, all three categories of deputies had successful campaigns based on their socio-economic status and visibility during the campaign. The question of interest is the extent to which money played in their election. The qualitative interviews included questions about the campaign period that provide some insight. The “up and comer” candidates held particularly large banquets that featured free food and direct access to the candidate or prominent supporters to attract large numbers of potential voters. These events were instrumental to their boosting their image and giving their campaign an aura of electoral clout. Anecdotal information about one particularly flamboyant “up and comer” obtained through a reliable source revealed that he bought tribal support for his candidacy through the sale of lucrative land around Jordan’s main international airport outside Amman.

In contrast, other candidates comprised of the more traditional business elite tended to rely on longstanding connections with associations and organized events based on

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169 One “up and comer” MP remarked to me that he had hosted a banquet dinner for 3,500 people several months before the election that convinced him that he would be elected. Many candidates from all parts of the country also held lavish campaign banquets under large tents. Many political observers commented how this election was unprecedented in the amount of money spent by particular candidates, with some likely exceeding one million dollars.

Almost all candidates admitted to doling out money and favors during the course of the campaign. Some indicated this behavior was normal and simply part of the game. Thus, the hypothesis (H4.7) about the type of campaign has considerable validity with regards to the “up and comers” but only moderate plausibility with the “one and done” and “insider” groups.

How did the role of money impact the actual electoral returns? This question is obviously extremely sensitive and could not be measured objectively. However, some public information allows some modest inferences. For example, a compilation of electoral data shows businessmen received approximately twenty percent of the total vote in their respective districts, almost five percent higher than those elected from other professions. This does not confirm my hypothesis (H4.8) about voter preferences for business acumen, however. In fact, a miniscule number of voters (less than 1 percent) indicated that they voted for a certain candidate because he was a businessman in one post-election poll (Al-Quds 2009). Rather, nearly half of the respondents indicated their reasons were because of a family or tribal tie. Other tracking surveys and exit polls confirmed that tribal and familial affiliations are still the most important considerations driving voter decisions.

As for the success rate of “new capitalists” vis-à-vis incumbents (H4.9), the results are inconclusive. According to a list of 17 deputies I classified as “new capitalists,” only three were successful in either displacing incumbents or receiving higher vote totals. It

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171 No public data exists on campaign expenditures and I did not broach this topic in personal interviews in order to prevent the appearance of a normative agenda to my study.

172 See reports from the Al-Quds Center, the Jordan Center for Social Research as well as additional polling data cited in Lust-Okar (2006: 461; 2008: 87).
should be noted that many districts that featured “new capitalists” also included powerful incumbents and there was likely some ”gentlemen’s agreement” between them about the electoral competition. Therefore, it is too difficult to assess this hypothesis on a cross-national aggregate level. It can be stated with a relative degree of confidence, however, that the palace has an interest in high rates of turnover in Jordan’s parliament so there is a continual incorporation of new members for three reasons.

First, the capacity of the parliament to enact laws and oversee the government remains weak because members lack the institutional knowledge and experience in such processes as bill drafting, budgetary analysis and so forth. Second, the parliament becomes an effective forum for channeling elite interests and containing potential dissent. New members are bound by the rules of parliamentary procedure and many are indebted to the government for their election and status in the legislature. Third, many deputies face significant challenges in balancing the particularistic needs of constituents while trying to affect some sort of “change” on policies or the political system as a whole. In sum, Jordan’s parliament has become an effective political institution for maintaining the circulation of elites in Jordan.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has attempted to make some sense of the surprising success of “new capitalist” candidates in Jordan’s 2007 parliamentary elections in hopes of providing

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173 This is the main thrust of the assessment by Baaklini et al. (1999).


175 This key finding emerged from interviews with deputies that formed the “one and done” profile.
insight into the broader question about why competitive elections strengthen authoritarian regimes. The empirical analysis showed that three leading explanations each have their own limitations based upon personal interviews with members of Al-Ikha, biographical data on newly elected deputies and statistical analysis of district-level returns. Although this study gravitates towards the role of formal electoral rules and, indeed, those hypotheses displayed the most consistent results, it would be a mistake to neglect the other explanations and shortchange subterranean forces associated with tribal politics. The three explanations presented in this analysis should be viewed as complementary, not competing.

State intervention, electoral rules and political money were therefore all factors that explain the victories of “new capitalist” candidates in 2007. A select number of “up and comers” benefited directly from vote transfers facilitated and even organized by the government. They also took advantage of their spectacular wealth to promote their candidacies and leapfrog more senior members of their tribe by essentially buying out support from under then. Of course, all this was enabled by an electoral system that places a premium on personal reputation. The change to a “one vote” system in 1993 lowered electoral thresholds to the point where prominent elites could rely on their own tribe and corresponding patronage networks to win localized races. Candidates had strong incentives to pursue bonding strategies that targeted narrow homogenous segments of the population. Ideological parties and candidates from the IAF were at a disadvantage because they could not garner votes based on platforms or programmatic appeals. In turn, voters recognize which candidates are best able to “deliver” on campaign promises. Indeed, Jordan’s system of tribal politics obligates well-to-do tribal
members to supply jobs, money and other forms of support to those who are less fortunate.

As the case of Jordan demonstrates, the relationship between elections, elites and regime stability involves a complex interaction between formal and informal institutions. The historical analysis of Jordanian elections in Chapter 2 helped illuminate how the regime periodically reshuffled ruling elites within the cabinet in order to prevent them from building patronage networks that could rival the palace. In recent years, the regime has become more adept at ensuring a never-ending circulation of elites through various ministries, the royal court and other political institutions. This chapter has examined a small sample of elites from recent parliamentary elections to show how an old mechanism for the recruitment and circulation of elites has been maintained. Electoral rules that lower entry costs, reinforce personalism and discourage strategic voting have become a modus operandi for the Jordanian regime. Thus, a formal institution (parliament) is populated by informal means (clientelism), a phenomenon others have called “formalized informality.” The following chapter attempts to model this interaction in developing a tentative theory of electoral rules under authoritarianism. Before doing so, recent developments in Jordan involving a new electoral law and upcoming elections warrant an addendum.

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176 See Bank and Schlumberger (2004) for a discussion of this strategy in relation to King Abdallah’s creation of the Economic Consultative Council (ECC).
4. Discussion

Even though Jordan’s parliamentary elections in 2007 were accompanied by a fleeting interest in the West, they carried important implications for competing political forces within the kingdom. Besides the compartmentalized competition among elites within individual districts, the 2007 elections represented a battleground between broader forces within Jordanian society.

For one, the election shed light on the dynamics of internal cohesion within the ruling elite as typified by the struggle between elements of a “new guard” and “old guard.” Although the outcome revealed a definitive trend toward a sustainable majority of pro-government deputies that are elected to parliament, their dominance did not translate into a consensually unified elite according to the classification by Higley and Burton. Instead, the emergence of the Al-Ikha parliamentary block showed that Jordan’s national elite has become more diversified and that a new generation of economic elites is challenging the “old guard” within Jordan’s traditional political hierarchy. The question is whether the brief ascendance of Al-Ikha foreshadowed broader political reform or the continuation of politics as usual. I present two arguments for the latter.

First of all, Al-Ikha is not sustainable. Even though its membership is fairly diverse, relatively young, highly educated and upwardly mobile—all characteristics of an effective group of reformers—it is doubtful that Al-Ikha will achieve more influence within parliament and a bigger following among the general public. While Jordanian elections do periodically inject “new blood” into parliament, they also serve to reinforce clientelist structures and maintain a circulation of elites. One of the key findings from the
empirical analysis was that some of Al-Ikha’s members were disillusioned with the realities of being a “service representative.” For this reason, the block’s influence most likely will wane after the next parliamentary elections when it loses a significant number of its members and a new group of pro-regime deputies are empowered.

Second, the “new capitalists” will also face a renewed struggle from tribal influence in Amman and elsewhere. The older generation of tribal members will seek to reassert control over the younger members that usurped power before the latest elections. The tribes are also keen mobilize against the encroachment of Palestinian elites into traditional domains of Hashemite rule. There is a pervasive belief that King Abdullah likes Palestinian technocrats in government and the tribes are losing a traditional important political position in the country. In 2007, some tribes made a significant push to capture seats from the Palestinians in Amman and they will continue to do so for the upcoming elections.¹⁷⁷ The outcome of local races in several electoral districts will have significant implications for the balance of power among competing forces in Jordan.

With possible tectonic shifts in Jordan’s power structure over the coming years, a series of recent events in the kingdom has been met with anxious speculation. In November 2009, King Abdalla decided to dissolve parliament in November and call for new elections. He then instructed the government to ensure that future elections were a “model of transparency and justice” based on a new electoral law. The hopes of reformers for an inclusive process that addressed fundamental issues of fairness involving the “one vote” system were dashed once again. The new deputy prime minister tasked with implementing reform was Rajai Muasher, a vocal opponent of the liberalization and

reform process. Adballah also appointed Samir Rifai as prime minister based on his conservative credentials and powerful family pedigree. This sequence of events was reminiscent of the call for electoral reform after the 1997 electoral boycott at which time the king handpicked a commission to fashion a "consensus" on a new system that only made cosmetic changes to administrative procedures of the electoral law.

The outcome mirrored the preceding experience for a number of reasons. For one, many traditional elites still quietly support the “one vote” system. According to Mustafa Hamarneh, a Jordanian journalist who was interviewed about the likelihood the controversial provision will remain intact, “there are conservatives who believe that this is the best way to maintain stability.”

Second, there was resistance to fundamental reform within the parliament itself. Most of the newly elected deputies I interviewed believed that the “one vote” system needed to be changed but only gradually. Finally, the advocates for change lacked leverage during negotiations over the new law. In the spring of 2010, a broad coalition of Jordanian organizations called for fundamental electoral reform but the participants could not exert any significant influence on the process.

The new law received harsh criticism from reformers and the IAF when it was unveiled in May 2010. Even though the new law addressed some of the opposition’s longstanding demands for greater representation in urban centers, it maintained the “one vote” system and did nothing to curb tribalism or encourage the development of political parties. Electoral reforms with macro-political effects have typically been introduced in the form of subtle changes. In this most recent case, the law divides current electoral...

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districts into electoral "zones" that are composed of multiple sub-districts. According to one resident expert, the redrawing of sub-districts further narrows the scope of support bases and forces candidates to be more localized.\footnote{179} The most noticeable impact may be on voters, however, as they will be able to “roam” and vote for one candidate in any sub-district (within their designated electoral zone) that they choose. Voters may become more susceptible to vote buying under the new system.

In short, the new law appears as though it was designed to satisfy the main pillars of support for the Jordanian regime. Tribes will continue to have the upper hand over parties and gain representation in the parliament. Conservative elites are undoubtedly pleased that the new electoral system did not incorporate the proportional system that liberal reformers have demanded. Many ethnic minorities are relatively secure knowing that the new system maintains their quotas for representation in the parliament. Some Palestinian notables are even happy because they stand to gain from the addition of seats in heavily populated areas. And finally, the “new capitalists” must feel that the electoral playing field is even more favorable as they can wield their financial resources with a smaller electorate.

Time will tell whether the new electoral law enhances the stability of the regime or exposes the fissures within the ruling coalition that gradually undermines it. It is probably safe to say that recent reforms show the palace is firmly in control of the reform process and will not relinquish any semblance of power. The IAF announced on August 1 that it would boycott the 2010 parliamentary elections, concluding that it stood to gain little under the new law from its disastrous performance in 2007. The “new guard” may

\footnote{Personal correspondence with Roula Attar, NDI Country Director, May 26, 2010.}
be content with the continuation of economic liberalization but most likely will have to wait for another opportunity to press for broader reform.
CHAPTER FIVE

A TYPOLOGICAL THEORY: ELECTORAL RULES AS REINFORCEMENT MECHANISMS

The empirical analysis has so far explored two related research questions. First, under what conditions do Arab monarchs seek to change electoral rules (Chapter 2)? Second, what is the impact of these rules on managing elites and the opposition (Chapters 3 and 4)? As previously stated, this line of inquiry is important to understanding the inner workings of authoritarian regimes. A comparative historical analysis first described how the evolution of electoral systems in Morocco and Jordan were linked to shifting power dynamics within the opposition and ruling coalition. I then presented an explanatory framework for electoral system design based on the cohesion of these actors (see Figure 1.1). From there, the empirical analysis shifted to the second question with regards to the impact of particular electoral rules. In separate chapters that focused on key actors from the 2007 parliamentary elections in both cases, I sought to examine the extent to which recent changes to electoral rules were effective tools for inhibiting voter coordination and recycling elites in parliament. This inductive approach has yielded mixed results.

On one hand, secondary resources and original research conducted in Morocco and Jordan give strong indications that electoral rules do shape political behavior significantly before, during and after elections. However, limitations in analyzing both
longitudinal and cross-national electoral data preclude conclusive results about the relationship between electoral rules and electoral outcomes. More sophisticated models that incorporate individual-level data are needed to test some of the more specific hypotheses. Although this study admittedly cannot address the impact of elections on regime stability across an array of authoritarian regimes, it does provide insight into two critical cases that can serve as building blocks for scholars wishing to investigate the question in a regional perspective. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to extend the empirical analysis to a theoretical model for understanding institutional change and regime maintenance in the Arab world.

In the following section, I introduce a number of secondary cases that will help to show how particular electoral arrangements were not effective in dividing the opposition and unifying supporters in contrast to the general experiences of Jordan and Morocco. These rare exceptions of elections that did not reinforce authoritarian regimes in the Arab world provide some variation on my dependent variable and allow more rigorous analysis of causal mechanisms. Some of them can be explained as simple miscalculations or attributable to the absence of information at the local level. For others, however, I argue that they could be construed as strategic blunders in the manipulation of electoral institutions. These deviant cases are thus helpful for tracing processes that produced deleterious electoral outcomes. Besides the regime losing control over the electoral reform process, I show how the “winner-takes-all” systems enabled the opposition to

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180 In an attempt to offset the disproportionate attention given to Arab regimes, this section also draws conclusions from a “least likely” case in which the Kuwaiti opposition failed to capitalize on an electoral system that was seemingly tailor made for its success.
capitalize on shifting political winds and temporary alliances. I now provide a historical background of the electoral miscues in the secondary case studies.

1. **Historical Background of Secondary Cases**

The monarchies and republics of Bahrain, Kuwait, Egypt and Palestine have used a variety of strategies to manage opposition movements. By and large, they have followed a familiar pattern where challenges to the regime are initially suppressed, followed by efforts to bring some dissident factions into the fold while containing the influence of broader and potentially more powerful movements. Put simply, I posit that the strategies generally follow a sequence of coercion, co-optation and containment and are reflected in the choice of electoral rules. Moreover, the logic of institutional choice follows theories in which regimes seek to reduce risk and uncertainty. In order to advance these arguments, I construct a typological theory inductively through a cursory examination of these secondary cases. I now provide a summary of these historical periods in order to flesh out any differences in electoral arrangements among them.

*Bahrain*

The Kingdom of Bahrain defines itself as a hereditary constitutional monarchy, but the powers of the king are too extensive for Bahrain to be considered a constitutional monarchy by the Western definition of a monarchy where the king rules but does not govern (Carnegie 2008). Members of the Al-Khalifa ruling family, who belong to Bahrain’s minority Sunni population, have been appointed to the most important
positions in government. As such, the king maintains a firm grip over state institutions, which has been instrumental for the regime to squash challenges to its authority.

The ruling family has also relied on institutional strategies to co-opt potential challengers and to contain the opposition. In a public address marking the country’s first National Day celebrations in December 1971, Sheikh Issa proposed the adoption of a constitutional form of government, which would include a parliamentary experiment (Lawson 1989). The first elections for the newly formed National Assembly produced three broad coalitions: a populist bloc that advocated traditional labor demands; a religious bloc that represented rural and suburban Shi’a; and a heterogeneous bloc of independents that generally favored economic liberalization (91). Although the parliament was only authorized to advise and consent to laws initiated in the cabinet, it soon became outspoken on several sensitive issues. The presence of antagonistic blocs and institutional inability to change government policies produced stalemate, which provided the pretext for the regime to suspend parliament in 1975. The introduction of parliamentary politics during the 1970s gave voice to segments of the opposition within narrow institutional confines. At the same time, it exposed its supporters and allowed the regime to assess their strength. As with the case of Jordan and Morocco, Bahrain’s rulers were also able to dissolve parliament when it crossed certain red lines while promoting the image that the monarchy was above the political fray. This brief experiment also had consequences for the opposition.

When Bahrain’s rulers forced the opposition to the sidelines, it allowed them to mobilize around issues of exclusion and identity. Indeed, since the late 1970s, the principal opposition to Bahrain’s rulers has been formed along sectarian lines. During
this time, militant clerics succeeded in recruiting poorer members of the Shi’a community and organizing demonstrations against the regime. Also in line with the primary case studies, the Bahraini regime responded to initial challenges with coercion and armed force. Militant Islamists were deported, political dissidents were jailed and state security forces broke up religious associations and other cells. The opposition was essentially crushed during the first half of the 1980s but political unrest would later resume and reach its apogee in what local Shi’a refer to as the “Bahraini intifada” from 1994 to 1998. This period presented new challenges to the regime that would require a more deft touch to co-opt and contain opposition elites.

At the turn of the new millennium, Bahrain began a gradual process of liberalization that coincided with the succession of a new monarch and was based on the new ruler’s personal initiative. As was the case with both Jordan and Morocco, Sheikh Hamad Al-Khalifa also came to power in 1999 after the death of his father. Faced with a number of potential rivals within the Al-Khalifa ruling family, he moved quickly to build an independent power base within society. Like Morocco’s King Mohamed, Hamad quickly enacted a number of symbolic gestures of goodwill such as releasing political prisoners and allowing certain opposition figures to return from exile. He also promised broad reforms to the public and made conciliatory efforts toward opposition. For example, Hamad called for the introduction of a bicameral parliament with a popularly elected chamber to enact laws. These proposals were spelled out the National Action Charter, which won widespread public support in a 2001 referendum and even garnered

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181 Niethammer (2008) notes the paucity of academic studies on this period of Bahrain’s history with the exception of one Ph.D. dissertation published in German (see Footnote 10).
accolades from the United States. When Hamad officially became Bahrain’s king in February 2002, he promulgated a constitution that was very different from the popularly endorsed charter, however.\textsuperscript{182} It included a number of formal mechanisms that spelled out the rules of the game by which both incumbent and opposition would play.

For one, the king’s constitutional amendments enhanced the role of an appointed upper chamber (Consultative Council) in order to check the elected lower chamber (Chamber of Deputies). This arrangement gave the king considerable leverage over the composition of the parliament and the ensured that regime allies could apply a procedural brake on any opposition-driven legislation.\textsuperscript{183} The new constitution also sought regulate Bahrain’s political societies, which function as de facto political parties, by prohibiting “election meetings” at strategic locations such as mosques and universities. Finally, a new electoral law divided the country into forty constituencies, some of which were gerrymandered to benefit the minority Sunni population. A simple majority electoral formula virtually guaranteed that these districts would elect Sunni representatives so as to manufacture sectarian parity in the elected chamber of parliament. Other measures intentionally designed to limit the power of Shi’a included granting residents from predominantly Sunni Gulf states the right to vote and obtain Bahraini citizenship.

In protest of the King’s constitution and other extra-legal reforms, four prominent political societies boycotted the 2002 legislative elections and roughly half of eligible voters abstained from participating. In the face of a united opposition coalition, known as

\textsuperscript{182} Niethammer (2008: 146-147) sheds some light how the Charter was modified behind closed doors by close allies to the ruling family.

\textsuperscript{183} According to Article 85 of the 2002 constitution, the chairperson of the Consultative Council (who is appointed by the king) casts the deciding vote on a legislative stalemate between the two chambers.
the Constitutional Alliance, the regime lost a considerable degree of legitimacy even though loyalists and Sunni Islamists dominated the newly formed parliament. In order to shore up his ruling coalition in subsequent years, King Hamad ordered two cabinet reshuffles and replaced several other ministers, most notably the minister of interior who was a member of the royal family in May 2004 (Niethammer 2008: 150). Following a course of action utilized by both new kings in Jordan and Morocco, Hamad also created new administrative bodies under the guise of economic liberalization that appropriated decision making from the cabinet and outsourced governmental functions to a “new guard” more closely controlled by the monarch.

Meanwhile, the principal opposition group and largest Shi’a political society—Al-Wefaq—had become a potent force both through formal political channels and other informal venues of participation.¹⁸⁴ For example, Al-Wefaq mobilized a petition in opposition to the 2002 constitution and also organized popular demonstrations during regional crises in Palestine and Iraq. After some initial leniency, the government increasingly began to suppress unlicensed activities, culminating in a violent crackdown on Shi’a demonstrations. While brute coercion clearly had a chilling effect on opposition activity, the most effective measure was a controversial Political Associations Law initiated by the regime and enacted by the rump parliament during the summer of 2005. In addition to restricting the goals and membership of political societies, the new law required all existing political societies to re-apply for a license with the Ministry of

¹⁸⁴ See Niethammer (2008) for an analysis of the interaction between formal and informal spheres of participation in contemporary opposition politics in Bahrain.
Justice. Al-Wefaq thus faced the unpalatable choice of either registering (and abiding by legal restrictions) or becoming an illegal organization (Niethammer 2008).

After much internal debate and some external persuasion, Al-Wefaq decided to register and participate in the next parliamentary elections scheduled in October 2006. Although some thought Al-Wefaq could capture a majority in the lower house, it still fared surprisingly well, winning 17 of the lower house’s 40 seats. Sunni Islamists won 12 seats despite and other pro-government candidates won a total of ten seats. Nonetheless, the dynamics of the elected chamber had changed considerably even though the regime had resorted to fraud and appointments in order to manufacture a slim majority in the parliament. Although the success of Al-Wefaq in 2006 has received considerable attention, the elections should be viewed from the broader perspective of regime maintenance. As Ottaway and Dunne conclude (2007: 7),

From the point of view of the regime, Bahrain’s institutional reforms have been extremely successful, strengthening its position in several important respects. Although the Shi’i opposition remains dissatisfied, civil unrest is much less than it was in the 1990s, partly because al-Wefaq has decided to play the political game by the government’s rule and partly because of undeniable improvements in human rights practices and civil liberties.

What then explains Bahrain’s electoral miscue in 2006? I argue that the regime’s decision to continue to rely on a simple majority formula in single-member districts was a strategic miscalculation. This electoral arrangement may benefit some Sunni loyalists

185 There was a split within al-Wefaq over registering as required by the law. The decision of the larger group led to the formation of an unlicensed group known as the Liberties and Democracy Movement (al-Haq). The National Democratic Institute (NDI), a U.S. democracy promotion organization, helped persuade Al-Wefaq to participate in the parliamentary elections.

186 Some pointed to the fact that the king had to appoint a plethora of liberals and pro-regime women to the upper house in order to offset the victory of Al-Wefaq. See the speech by Jamsheer in MEMRI (2006).
and pro-regime candidates but it also allowed the opposition to capitalize on its strength within an anti-incumbent environment. The popular support of the Shi’a coupled with the organizational prowess of Al-Wefaq translated into a sizeable number of district-level victories in the “winner-takes-all” electoral system.\footnote{Al-Wefaq reorganized its ranks, and held its general congress, which approved an electoral program and a strategy of nominating candidates in every district where it had at least 50 percent support, which meant only in primarily Shi’i districts. Niethammer (2008: 158) adds that Al-Wefaq became a major player with which the government had to seek compromise after its petition drive and show in massive demonstrations.}

On the other hand, Al-Wefaq’s success in 2006 may actually play into the regime’s hands in the long term as the opposition movement struggles with governing responsibilities. As Ottaway and Dunne also note,

The opposition has been fragmented due to disagreements over whether or not to participate in elections; al-Wefaq now faces competition from a new popular movement, al-Haq. Instead of being isolated and facing a united Shi’i opposition, the Bahraini regime has managed to position itself in the comfortable political center between the Sunni Islamist societies who hold a majority in parliament and a divided Shi’i opposition.

The level of cohesion among opposition elites will likely determine the future pace of political reform, including the shape of new electoral institutions. The kingdom of Bahrain has called for new elections in the fall of 2010 and Al-Wefaq is carefully plotting its strategy.

\textit{Kuwait}

Like Morocco, Kuwait held its first post-independence elections in 1963 and the resulting parliament soon became the principal counterweight to the regime. Confrontations between the monarch, referred to locally as the emir, and National Assembly have twice led to the suspension of parliament (from 1976 to 1981 and 1986 to 1995).
1992) without elections for a new one, which is required under the constitution. During each period, the regime changed the electoral system to alter the make-up of the legislative body comprised of 50 elected members. Thus, the size and composition of electoral districts has been a focal point of this ongoing power struggle. In 1981, the emir effectively curbed the powers of parliament by replacing the old system of ten districts each electing five representatives with a new one in which twenty-five districts each elected two representatives. Each voter could vote for two candidates, with the top two vote getters taking seats in the parliament. This electoral arrangement reinforced clientelism because it led to very close races and campaigns that centered upon neighborhood issues, pitting families and tribes against each other. The redistricting also diluted the strength of opposition elements in urban (hadhar) areas and powerful tribal blocs though not all of the tribes per se (Gavrieldes 1987).

The first parliamentary elections after Kuwait was liberated from Iraqi occupation garnered widespread international and domestic attention. Although the 1992 election used the same electoral law and district boundaries from the previous two elections, it brought out large numbers of candidates representing newly prominent social bases (Tétreault 2000: 110). To counteract the political realities created by gerrymandering, “tribal primaries” emerged as an effective way to ensure the election of members of the largest tribes to parliament. Although these internal elections are technically illegal, the Kuwaiti government tolerates them because they often result in pro-regime deputies being elected to parliament. As in the case of Jordan, tribal candidates in Kuwait often highlight their connections with the state and ability to deliver material benefits to constituents. In turn, the regime relies on these informal patronage networks to link the
center to the periphery. Tétreault (2000: 115) describes the outlines of this strategy in the following account of Kuwait’s electoral politics:

Favors for favors, measured in votes as well as in direct campaign contributions, are the province of the “service candidate” who acts both as ombudsman and benefactor to individual constituents in his district. The government is a silent partner in this patron-client system, helping to entrench service candidates by channeling favors through parliamentarians who prove themselves to be the kind of men the government prefers. Constituents who approach service candidates find it easier to obtain scarce and selective benefits ranging from permits to import labor to authorizations to seek medical care abroad—for which travel as well as medical expenses are paid—than if they were to apply through regular bureaucratic channels.

Since Kuwait’s first national elections in 1963 (also the same year as Morocco and Bahrain), the parliament has been the central arena for negotiation between the ruling family and the opposition. Consequently, elections that constitute this body were of utmost interest and the Kuwaiti opposition viewed electoral reform as the gateway to a serious political reform process (Brown 2006: 2). Yet the broad spectrum of Kuwait’s opposition—ranging from liberals to Sunnis and Salafis—seemed inherently divided and was constantly outmaneuvered by the ruling family. Beginning in the mid-1990s, however, the parliament became more assertive and these disparate groups found common ground albeit with different motives. In 2003, the parliament initiated a push for electoral reform, hoping this would create a more cohesive body oriented toward addressing broad issues more than constituent service (Brown 2008a). Bolstered by the parliament’s role in resolving a succession crisis after the emir died in January 2006, a pro-reform coalition emerged that consisted of 29 MPs in favor of electoral reform. Faced a cohesive and determined opposition within parliament coupled with the sudden emergence of student protests in Kuwaiti streets, the newly installed emir dissolved parliament in May 2006 and called for snap elections the following month, hoping to
reshuffle the parliamentary deck in his favor (Salem 2008: 216). The regime assumed that a new election under the old rules would work to its advantage but it miscalculated the popular support for reformist candidates.

With a highly charged political climate and boost in turnout, the “coalition of change” won a resounding victory in the June 2006 elections, renewing its majority in the new parliament. The emir recognized the electoral mandate and was forced to relent to the opposition demands as the cabinet approved a new electoral system in July 2006. Under the new law, the number of electoral districts was reduced from twenty-five to five in which each district elects ten parliamentarians. The ballot structure was also adjusted in that each voter now selects four candidates, with the top ten vote getters in each district being awarded parliamentary seats. Reformers hoped that larger districts and hence larger electoral thresholds would eliminate vote buying. They also hoped that the new electoral law would encourage more issue-based campaigns rather than personalistic campaigns based on family and neighborhood loyalties. Since an opposition-led coalition, which included the Islamist Constitutional Movement (also known by its Arabic acronym HADAS), had spearheaded the electoral reform, many believed the next round of parliamentary elections would be the “real test” of the system; the ruling family would be forced either to reduce its role in day-to-day government or to suspend the constitution and parliament (Salem 2008: 228).

This test would come much sooner than expected as relations between the parliament and regime lurched towards another crisis and the emir once again called for early elections to be held on May 17, 2008. This time, the new electoral law produced few of the desired effects on campaigning, however. Brown (2008a: 4), for one, wrote on
the eve of the elections: “Tribes have still been holding primaries, in some ways feeling that they now have to work harder to coordinate voting.” Since tribal primaries largely decided the fate of various candidates, they also facilitated political patronage and electoral clientelism. Hence, HADAS was unable to overcome these factors as evidenced by the high degree of dispersion of votes for candidates across electoral districts.

Like Morocco, the 2008 elections in Kuwait dealt a serious setback to the main Islamist party. But the result is even more puzzling considering that the electoral reform enacted in 2006 was supposed to benefit HADAS. Brown (2008b: 5) asks poignantly in his post-election analysis: “With a law seemingly tailor-made for its purposes and two years of preparation, why did HADAS see its share of seats cut by half?” The case of Kuwait thus presents a series of puzzles regarding the electoral fortunes of the pro-reform movement in 2006 and the Islamist party in 2008 that warrant further study. Why did the opposition perform so well under a disadvantageous system but so poorly under an advantageous one?

I argue that clientelism continues to thrive under an electoral system in which electoral thresholds are higher. Unlike Morocco, Kuwaiti elections have often featured significant amounts of strategic voting by which candidates trade the votes of their die-hard supporters for the votes of other candidates. The conventional wisdom tells us that allowing voters to select more candidates on ballots should facilitate vote-swapping and strategic coordination even more. Yet, contrary to what we might expect from a ballot that afforded four votes for candidates in each ten-member district, it is very possible that

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188 Kuwait’s district-level electoral data is available at www2.gsu.edu/~polmfh/database/database.htm. I have conducted plausibility probes of this data elsewhere (Barwig 2008).
more Kuwaitis cast their ballots for candidates they expected could provide them wasta rather than coalescing around candidates that were more likely to win. The case of Kuwait thus provides a foil to my central argument about Jordan’s switch to the “one vote” system and lower electoral thresholds. It appears in this case that when voters were afforded more choice, they still vote along tribal lines rather than distributing their remaining votes along ideological grounds.

_Egypt_

Egypt has sought to manage the opposition primarily through the manipulation of institutions that regulate political parties, associations and the press. These strategies are meant to reinforce the regime, which is embodied in the office of the president, but maintained in practice by a dominant ruling party. The Arab Socialist Union, for example, represented the power base of the Egyptian regime during the 1960s and 1970s. After multiparty elections were introduced in 1976, President Sadat created the National Democratic Party (NDP) to serve as the institutional reservoir for political elites and, more importantly, an instrument for containing conflict amongst them. The case of the NDP differs somewhat from Morocco’s “palace parties” and Jordan’s loyalist deputies in that it has become institutionalized to large extent within Egypt’s authoritarian edifice and has become a pillar of Mubarak’s rule. Analysis of the NDP’s electoral fortunes thus provides considerable insights into the health of the regime.

The traditional opposition in Egypt is made up of the Left and Islamists. Socialist parties vary across the Arab world but most originate from colonial independence movements that produced strong nationalist and secular undercurrents. Similar to the
cases of Jordan and Morocco, Egypt’s Wafd party emerged in the 1940s as the principal opposition to the British colonial administration and a potential counterweight to the monarchy but was later co-opted and ultimately displaced. Today, the opposition parties that constitute the Left remain structurally weak and are plagued by aging leadership, a history of infighting, and petty personal politics. As for the Islamists, the Muslim Brotherhood clearly represents the most significant political opposition in Egypt. It enjoys widespread popular appeal but its electoral influence is sharply limited and its political agenda is ambiguous. In broad historical terms, the Muslim Brotherhood has been tolerated by the state but it does not recognize it as a legal political party or political association. For this reason, Islamist candidates formally run as independents even through their affiliation with the Brotherhood is well known. As such, the boundaries of Islamist electoral participation and the degree of its parliamentary representation has been part of a prolonged bargaining process with the Egyptian regime throughout its modern history.

Despite its overwhelming influence in virtually every political sphere, the regime has changed the electoral system on a number of occasions to redistribute the balance of power in the Parliament between the opposition and the NDP. The most critical period of electoral reform occurred during the 1980s when Egypt moved from a party-list

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189 See the analysis by Brown (2007) about the commitment of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood to core principles related to democracy and human rights.

190 As Mitchell (1971: 27) notes, the founder and spiritual guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hassan Al-Banna, made a deal with the Nahhas government to withdraw his candidacy from the 1941 elections in exchange for a number of concessions.

191 Posusney (2002) provides more details about electoral engineering under Sadat and Mubarak. Much of her account derives from Kamal Khalid, one of the Egyptian lawyers who filed court cases against the electoral laws and authored an indictment on their tailoring by the regime. See footnote 38 in particular.
proportional system with 48 electoral districts to one in which the 444 seats were allocated to the top two majority winners in 222 constituencies. Even though Egyptian courts supposedly forced the regime to make the change, the new “winner-take-all” system was heavily titled toward the NDP because of its dominance of patron-client relationships. Egypt’s current electoral rules thus place a premium on a candidate’s (or party’s) ability to mobilize its core voters and, as a result, the system tends to promote the candidacies of local elites with ready-made vote banks (Masoud 2008: 120).

Many political analyses define Egypt’s electoral system as a relatively straightforward first-past-the-post system. In doing so, they essentially reduce the political impacts of the system to vote distortions that favor the ruling party (e.g. Posusney 2002) without illuminating some of the underlying mechanisms that shape electoral behavior more profoundly. In a recent dissertation, Masoud (2008) goes beyond facile descriptions to portray several unique features of Egypt’s electoral system such as the dual vote, electoral quota and runoffs (121-123). He emphasizes that one of the implications is that the value of a candidate’s personal reputation increases dramatically. To buttress this argument, Masoud points out the article by Carey and Shugart (1995) that rank orders electoral systems to the degree which they “affect candidates’ incentives to run on personal rather than party reputations.” According to this scheme, he notes Egypt’s system ranks fourth (124), thereby placing it just behind those used in Jordan and

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192 Various motivations for electoral reform have been addressed in the literature but the extent to which the Constitutional Court was able to impose a new system is speculative. Posusney (2002: 103) notes that in 1986 the Egyptian regime had anticipated the ruling and had issued a new electoral law to allow minimal opposition representation in the subsequent parliament. However, she later suggests that opposition parties made a miscalculation in endorsing the electoral reform (105).

193 See pages 121-123 for details about the dual vote, electoral quota and runoffs that he claims allow candidates to win without majorities.
Morocco. This shows that the major component to electoral system design in the Middle East, irrespective of regime type and binary majoritarian/proportional classifications, involves the degree of personalism that it engenders.

If the electoral system has benefited the NDP and inhibited the opposition, especially the performance of Left vis-à-vis Islamists, what explains the Muslim Brotherhood’s unprecedented success in the 2005 parliamentary elections in which it won 88 seats, more than five times its previous share in parliament?

The 2005 elections were a turning point for a number of reasons. For one, the opposition was galvanized by a series of political protests that occurred throughout the year, sparked by a new opposition movement known as *Kifaya* or “Enough” in Egyptian Arabic. The Muslim Brotherhood even participated in demonstrations while its leadership exercised restraint in its official discourse so as not to provoke a crackdown from the regime. Moreover, a number of secular parties jumped on the opposition bandwagon and put aside longstanding personal differences to unite in a common front. In this electoral context, the opposition was poised to make significant gains even though the dominance of the NDP would remain unchallenged. As Brown and Hamzawy summarize succinctly in a post-election analysis (2005: 3), “None of Egypt’s political actors expected that parliamentary elections would result in anything other than a victory for the NDP. But the extent of that victory, the nature and size of the parliamentary opposition, and the ability of the regime to prevent meaningful reform were all open to question.” Thus, the scope of the opposition’s success in 2005 is of critical interest.

Although the Muslim Brotherhood only presented candidates in a limited number of districts, it won 88 seats, five times more than the seventeen representatives in the
previous parliament. Contrary to past elections, the Muslim Brotherhood candidates captured a significant amount of the protest vote at the expense of the other opposition parties (Masoud 2008). According to Brown and Hamzawy (2003: 5), “Almost 70 percent of NDP nominees lost such contests. In other words, those voters given a direct and unambiguous choice between the NDP and the Brotherhood chose the Brotherhood by a wide margin.” The accountability principle is frequently cited by proponents of majoritarian systems and, in the case of Egypt, it clearly worked against unpopular incumbents in a combustible electoral climate.

Sensing the shock that a widespread victory of Brotherhood candidates would cast over the body politic, the regime engineered a number of key victories in subsequent rounds of voting by harassing opposition supporters and falsifying electoral results in a number of closely contested races. A number of independents who had defeated NDP candidates were abruptly ushered into the party with perks and promises of benefits no doubt. Even though the NDP ended up with 311 seats, the elections can still be construed as a blunder because the Egyptian regime had to rely on coercion and blatant electoral manipulation much more than the other case studies. As a result, the aura of ruling party dominance was shaken and the opposition has been emboldened to press for additional reforms. Whether the Brotherhood can solidify its position as the principal opposition and integrate itself as a legitimate political actor remains to be seen.

According to Koehler (2007: 983), Egypt’s struggle over the laws and practices regulating the electoral arena since the mid-1980s can be framed in terms of the regime yielding to oppositional demands in successive steps, thus leading to a more open arena of electoral competition. In some ways, this conclusion is accurate in describing the
liberalization of electoral administration and judicial supervision. But it is short-sighted, on the other hand, in the sense that the new electoral system instituted in 1990 reinforced clientelism and the traditional arenas of control under the ruling party. The system lost its effectiveness, however, when the opposition coalesced prior to the 2005 parliamentary elections and voters could make a clear choice between incumbent and opposition candidates. It further spells potential trouble for President Mubarak because he is clearly identified with the ruling party and cannot stand above politics the same way as the linchpin monarchs in Morocco and Jordan. In this context, it is interesting that the regime moved in 2007 to reintroduce a mixed electoral system not only to blunt any rising electoral influence of the Brotherhood but also to insulate it from electoral accountability. These subtle moves coupled with continued regime-sponsored coercion shows that Egypt uses all the “tools in the box” to suppress the opposition.

Palestine

The history of Palestinian elections and the electoral laws that governed them are intimately linked to the broader conflict with Israel. In contrast to other cases where parliamentary elections were introduced under the auspices of colonial administration and became a focal point for bargaining between incumbent elites and the opposition, electoral rules were not part of the Palestinian political calculus until secret negotiations occurred between the Palestinian Liberation Organization and Israel in the early 1990s. Even then, the 1993 Oslo Agreement only included a provision for an elected Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) to be established and did not spell out how the body would be

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elected. Subsequent negotiations during the Interim Agreement in 1995 hammer out the
details for the first scheduled elections in January 1996. At the time, the two principal
protagonists included Fatah, which had to a large extent controlled the Palestinian
movement from abroad, and Hamas, which had emerged from a Palestinian branch of the
Muslim Brotherhood during the intifada at the end of the 1980s. Although both entities
shared a commitment to the liberation of Palestine and self-determination for their
people, they have never been able to reconcile fully their competing claims for authority
and representation of the Palestinian national cause.

The dramatic breakthrough in 1993 changed the strategic situation on the ground
for both parties. The PLO gained a substantial foothold within Palestinian institutions of
self-governance (Rubin 1999) as its personnel were handpicked to populate the
bureaucracy and security services of the nascent Palestinian Authority. In contrast, the
primary means of recruitment and mobilization for Hamas were shut down since the
agreement stipulated an end to the intifada (Mishal 2000: 67). Although Fatah and
Hamas reached an understanding the following month regarding conflict over Oslo, the
asymmetric relationship between the two parties was clearly established. From this point
on, maintenance of the Palestinian Authority essentially came to rely upon the
management of relations among traditional elites within Fatah and control over the
Islamist opposition through various strategies of coercion, co-optation and containment.

As such, the case of Palestine demonstrates the importance of domestic factors as
the political dynamics among various Palestinian factions at the time played a significant
role in shaping the electoral system design. According to a brief analysis of the electoral
system used for the 1996 parliamentary elections, the choice of a candidate-centered "Block Vote" system therefore emerged in response to three pressures: the wish to provide a channel for informal candidacies of persons linked to movements which formally rejected the process; the desire of a number of prominent figures to stand as independents; and the recollection of historic elections. Ultimately, however, the fundamental difference over the peace agreement with Israel led to Hamas boycotting the elections with the knowledge that its participation would bestow it with tacit recognition and legitimacy for the Fatah-dominated Palestinian Authority. Unsurprisingly then, the new Legislative Council was dominated by members of the Fatah Party, who won 52 of 88 seats, and 14 independents affiliated with the party. While international observers deemed the election "largely fair," many candidates later filed complaints with the Central Election Commission that suggest incumbents and Fatah loyalists used resources at their disposal to affect the outcome. As such, a number of analyses (e.g. Mahler 1996) rightly conclude that the elections served to formalize the already empowered administration of Yassir Arafat and his Fatah Party.

After the climactic failure of the Camp David summit in 2000, the relationship between Fatah and Hamas was subsumed by the prospects of renewed conflict with Israel. The subsequent outbreak of violence and mass uprising within the Palestinian territories, which became known as the Al-Aqsa Intifada, dramatically changed the balance of power between Fatah and Hamas. Besides Israel’s military reprisals aimed at Palestinian institutions, internal politics also underwent profound changes. As Brown

195 See the summary entitled “Palestine: Political Realities Shape the System” by the ACE Electoral Knowledge Network. Available online http://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/es/esy/esy_ps.

196 For a synopsis of these reactions, see Kanaana (1996).
notes (2007: 7), a Palestinian reform movement emerged with the aim of transforming the authoritarian system into a far more accountable and democratic structure. By the time of Arafat’s death in late 2004, moderates within Fatah had accepted that they would have to divest some of the PA’s authority and share power with their rivals, an unthinkable proposition until recent times. In January 2005, newly elected Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, an Arafat loyalist and longtime Fatah apparatchik, agreed to hold parliamentary elections that would determine the face of a new Palestinian Authority. Once again, the political realities on the ground would shape electoral reform but this time the result was profoundly different for the principal political actors.

On June 18, 2005, after months of haggling, the Palestinian Authority reached an agreement that detailed procedures for candidate registration and the means by which candidates and party lists could qualify to run. More importantly, the Election Law stipulated a mixed (parallel) system in which half of the PLC’s members would be chosen through proportional representation (PR) with closed-party lists in one national district, while the other half would be chosen from sixteen multi-member local districts. Voters would cast one ballot for a national party list and one ordinal ballot for local district candidates. The electoral threshold for the national district seats would be two percent. Six seats would be reserved for Christian candidates. Some of the characteristics of the electoral system were negotiated among Palestinian factions, including Hamas, in Cairo, Egypt in March 2005. For Hamas, the Cairo Agreement cemented its participation in the scheduled elections.

By that time, Hamas had already emerged as the principal electoral opposition to Fatah in the Palestinian Authority. Hamas had built a network of supporters in the West
Bank and Gaza by delivering social services and taking a hard line against the terms of past peace agreements with Israel. However, the participation of Hamas as a political party was problematic because Hamas also retained an armed wing that had engaged in acts of terrorism. This issue opened an intense debate about whether Hamas should be allowed to participate at all. President Mahmoud Abbas’ strategy was to bind Hamas politicians by the rules of the Palestinian system once they were elected, not to bar or limit their candidacies before elections. Even though polls indicated Hamas was poised to make significant gains at the ballot box, Abbas consistently argued that he would be in a stronger position to integrate the party into the Palestinian Authority and disarm militant factions after the elections. The linchpin of Abbas’ plan was based on a limited role for Hamas in a Fatah-led government and the legitimacy that open elections would confer on his rule (Yaghi 2005).

On election day, turnout was over 77 percent of the Palestinian population. The “Change and Reform” Party (Hamas) captured a majority of seats (74) despite only winning a plurality (45 percent) of the popular vote. On the national list ballot, Hamas won 29 seats. The striking results, and the key to the Hamas victory, was in the multi-member district elections. In those contests, Hamas won a staggering 45 seats, nearly three-fourths of the seats allocated under the majority/plurality formula. While widespread dissatisfaction with Fatah’s decade-long rule of the Palestinian Authority certainly played a major role in its dismal performance, three ruling party made a series of strategic blunders with regards to the electoral system. I highlight three instances of electoral miscalculations.
The major blunder was adopting a mixed system in the summer of 2005. This decision was particularly perplexing given that Abbas and his allies in the Palestinian Central Committee knew that using PR in a single national district was the best way to limit the number of seats Hamas could gain in the elections. In the end, Abbas chose to accommodate demands for a parallel system and abandoned the strict PR system despite the polling and considerable political opposition from within his own party. By competing on a national level in one district, Hamas would have lost its advantage of fielding highly popular candidates in local communities and may have won only a narrow plurality of seats instead of an outright majority.

The second error was Fatah’s decision to hold a series of primary elections to determine its candidates on both the district and national slates. On one hand, Abbas probably sensed the popularity of the younger Fatah activists and hoped the primary elections would help him to usher out some of the so-called “old guard” who were viewed as corrupt and ineffective. Of course, Fatah’s “old guard” fought vigorously to retain their high positions on national and district party lists despite losing badly in Fatah’s primary elections. Many of them appealed to the “Committee of the Wise,” a body of high-level party officials who disregarded the primary results and appointed candidates at will. The two devices of selecting candidates, by primaries and party assemblies, operated concurrently and in direct conflict with one another. According to one political party building expert, parties that want to build support during this process...
“generally rely on one of these two devices.” Consequently, the primary process further divided Fatah.

The third mistake was establishing a weak electoral threshold for district-level candidates. As the party primaries drew to a close, it was obvious that the internal struggle had taken a toll on Fatah’s ratings. A damaging consequence of Fatah’s party list disputes was that it did not allow room for prominent and respected independents to join its ranks. In turn, many independents and deposed members of the “old guard” decided to run in the district races, which effectively siphoned votes away from Fatah candidates. In contrast, Hamas never ran more candidates than seats in multi-member district races. While Hamas’ supporters voted largely for Hamas candidates, supporters of Fatah and other parties scattered their votes among a large number of candidates.

In sum, the new electoral law promulgated in 2005 offers a powerful, albeit partial, explanation for the Hamas “tsunami” in subsequent parliamentary elections. Although the dramatic outcome did reflect a confluence of powerful societal forces, a number of electoral mechanisms were instrumental in locking the various parties and candidates into a set of rules and procedures that exacerbated divisions within Fatah and allowed Hamas to capitalize on its organization at the local level. As in the case of Egypt, it interesting to note that the Palestinian Authority has since changed the electoral formula by a presidential decree.

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198 See the paper published in 2005 for the National Democratic Institute (NDI) by Susan Scarrow entitled, “Political Parties and Democracies in Theoretical and Practical Perspectives.”
Conclusion

The brief comparative historical analysis of recent parliamentary elections in Bahrain, Kuwait, Egypt and Palestine supports the argument that the manipulation of electoral institutions can backfire for regimes under certain conditions. The Palestinian electoral reforms in 2005 demonstrate this proposition most clearly. The cases of the two Gulf monarchies also reveal that gerrymandering electoral districts enabled opposition gains when it fully participated in elections under a crystallized reform message. A high degree of political turbulence also changes the dynamics of accountability under “winner-take-all” arrangements as the case of Egypt shows. Not to be forgotten, in all the cases the regime lost control over the process of drafting a new electoral law.

In sum, this section has highlighted how these regimes made strategic miscalculations (and an outright blunder in the case of the Palestinian Authority) with their choice of electoral institutions. Decisions to leave electoral arrangements intact despite shifting dynamics within the regime and opposition also produced electoral miscues. My main purpose, however, was to illuminate the extent to which particular mechanisms affected the strategic behavior of incumbent and opposition elites, most notably in observable degrees of cohesion and coordination.

2. Developing a Typological Theory

This section aims to construct inductively a typological theory by using evidence gleaned from within-case analysis of two primary case studies and comparison of four secondary case studies. What purpose does a typological theory serve at this point of the study? As
explained by George and Bennett (2004: 235-236), it identifies “generalized pathways” or “syndromes” associated with an outcome of interest. Typological theorizing also recognizes that the same outcome can arise through different pathways and therefore only develops “contingent generalizations” rather than universal theories or causal explanations.

This project seeks to illuminate how electoral rules have reinforced Arab regimes through a series of domestic processes and electoral outcomes. My theory links the consequences of electoral rules to degrees of cohesion among elites and opposition actors by identifying nine variables of interest. They are: 1) costs of entry into the electoral arena; 2) incentives to defect to competing groups; 3) corresponding degrees of factionalism; 4) type of campaign strategies pursued; 5) type of reputation cultivated; 6) levels of party mobilization; 7) incidence of vote buying; 8) prevalence of sincere voting; and 9) extent of voter accountability. Chapter 2 described some of these intermediate variables and how electoral rules can determine different value for each one. Having described compared and contrasted the electoral experiences of primary and secondary case studies, I now seek to construct a typological theory that explains how lower electoral thresholds and candidate-oriented systems produced greater stability across regimes in the Arab world.

Results

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 places the primary and secondary case studies in the typological space with the corresponding values for the intermediate variables. The primary cases of Morocco and Jordan include the time periods before and after fundamental electoral
reform for comparison. The secondary cases of Bahrain, Kuwait, Egypt and Palestine encompass the period of interest between 2005 and 2006. The first three rows describe the electoral system of each case based on the aforementioned components of district magnitude, ballot structure and electoral formula.

The intermediate variables are ordered sequentially and grouped according to the “generalized pathways” depicted in the previous models. The first three variables (entry costs, defection and factionalism) capture the calculus of political actors regarding participation in the electoral process. The second three (mobilization, campaign and reputation) reflect strategic decision making during the actual electoral competition. The last three (sincere voting, reputation and accountability) attempt to measure the saliency of clientelism on voting behavior. Although all of the assigned values in the property space are subjective, they were informed from the empirical analysis, a number of post-election analyses and personal correspondence with area experts.
Table 5.1: Placement of Primary Cases in the Typological Space

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District Magnitude</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>No major changes in either case over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballot Structure</td>
<td>Candidate (Multiple)</td>
<td>Candidate (Single)</td>
<td>Candidate (Single)</td>
<td>Closed Party List</td>
<td>Major changes in both cases over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral Formula</td>
<td>Plurality (Block)</td>
<td>Plurality (SNTV)</td>
<td>Plurality (FPTP)</td>
<td>PR (Droop)</td>
<td>Major change in Morocco</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) Entry Costs | Medium | Low | Medium | Low | Major decrease after reform
2) Defection | Low | Low | High | High | No change in either case
3) Fractionalism | Low | Medium | Medium | High | Minor increase over time
4) Mobilization | Medium | Low | Medium | Low | Major decrease after reform
5) Campaign | Bonding | Bonding | Bonding | Bonding | No change in either case
6) Reputation | Personal | Personal | Personal | Personal | No change in either case
7) Sincere Voting | High | High | High | High | No change in either case
8) Vote Buying | Medium | High | Medium | High | Minor increase over time
9) Accountability | Less | More | More | Less | Different across cases

Table 5.2: Placement of Secondary Cases in the Typological Space

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District Magnitude</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Only major changes in Kuwait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballot Structure</td>
<td>Candidate (Single)</td>
<td>Candidate (Single)</td>
<td>Candidate (Two)</td>
<td>Closed Party List</td>
<td>Only major changes in Palestine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral Formula</td>
<td>FPTP</td>
<td>Plurality</td>
<td>Plurality</td>
<td>Plurality-PR</td>
<td>Only major changes in Palestine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) Entry Costs | Medium | Medium | Low | Low | Minor changes in Egypt/Palestine
2) Defection | Medium | Medium | High | High | No major changes
3) Fractionalism | Medium | Medium | High | Medium | No major changes
4) Mobilization | Low | Low | Low | High | Minor changes in Kuwait
5) Campaign | Bonding | Bonding | Bonding | Bonding | No major changes
6) Reputation | Personal | Personal | Personal | Personal | No major changes
7) Sincere Voting | Medium | Medium | Medium | Medium | No major changes
8) Vote Buying | High | High | High | Medium | No major changes
9) Accountability | More | Less | More | More | No major changes
The shaded boxes in Table 5.1 indicate changes in values across time in the primary case studies and suggest at least five theoretically important variables. It is important to note this does not suggest the other four variables are unimportant. Rather, they simply did not register a significant change after the new electoral system was instituted. For example, personalism and allegiances based on kinship are deeply engrained norms and ideas within many Arab societies and may not be affected by changes to electoral laws. While these aspects of electoral behavior may endogenous to institutional change, they are still useful for comparison. With this in mind, I explain the change in each variable of interest in turn, with a particular emphasis on the primary case studies. I draw from the secondary case studies in order to buttress certain arguments. Shaded boxes in Table 5.2 highlight instances in which secondary cases provide disconfirming evidence for my theory. In some cases, this helps to illuminate the different conditions in which electoral rules interact with clientelism.

Variables of Interest

The first is entry costs (#1), which decreased dramatically in both Jordan and Morocco after regimes enacted more permissive electoral rules in 1993 and 2002 respectively (see Table 3.4 in the case of Jordan). Lower entry costs, as indicated in these cases by the threshold of votes required to win, initially encouraged participation among opposition actors and elites. As more candidates threw their hat in the ring believing they could win, political parties faced difficulty in mobilizing support and coordinating votes under their labels. The chapter on the performance of the PJD in Morocco’s 2007 elections demonstrated how low entry costs inhibited coordination
among opposition actors and prevented the consolidation of competing forces around which voters can coalesce. On the other hand, large numbers of candidates and low voter turnout mean that victory requires relatively small vote shares, which in turn means that a party’s ability to mobilize its core voters is paramount—an advantage on which the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas capitalized in recent parliamentary elections in Egypt (2005) and Palestine (2006) respectively.

The primary case studies demonstrate that low entry costs encourage greater numbers of incumbent and opposition elites to participate in elections. In both, the field of candidates and parties expanded greatly after changes to electoral rules. Most notably, the switch to a “one vote” system in Jordan fostered the growth of independent candidates over the next decade and a half and eventually enabled “new capitalists” to compete effectively in the 2007 elections. On the other hand, low entry costs have also worked against the ruling parties in Egypt and Palestine. Indeed, Masoud (2008: 23) places low entry costs (or barriers to entry) at the center of his explanatory framework on electoral environments and stresses how low they became by the time of Egypt’s parliamentary elections in 2005 (26). He argues that low barriers to entry largely explain the success of Muslim Brotherhood candidates and divisions within the NDP. Likewise, the self-destruction of Fatah before the 2006 Palestinian elections can be traced to the low entry costs that ensued from the open nomination process and concurrence of party primaries and assemblies in the latter months of 2005. In sum, lower entry costs in the electoral arena represent a double-edged sword for many Arab regimes and opposition movements.
The second is *factionalism* (#3), which has increased in both Morocco and Jordan as a result to changes in the ballot structure. In the case of Jordan, the change in ballot structure from multiple votes to a single vote heightened competition within multimember districts. Candidates of similar political orientations were forced to distinguish themselves from others with similar ideologies or political orientations by drawing on clientelist networks and promises of patronage. Even though some groups have used traditional “tribal primaries” to overcome this dilemma, the “one vote” system continues to generate a “medium” degree of factionalism. The empirical analysis of Jordan alluded to the emergence of inter-generational rivalries among tribes in the run-up to the 2007 elections, for example. The degree of factionalism within Jordan’s recent parliament, as evidenced by the emergence of the *Al-Ikha* bloc, is also attributable to an electoral system that promotes individualism. In the case of Morocco, the adoption of closed party lists have generated a “high” degree of factionalism within established parties and led to rampant amounts of party switching before and after elections. Despite efforts to clamp down on this practice of *transhumance*, the competition among candidates over the rank ordering on party lists continues to engender significant factionalism. An open list or preferential system could alleviate factionalism in Moroccan politics. While some Islamist parties in the various case studies, including the PJD in Morocco, have shown the organizational capacity and internal cohesion to elude this fate, factionalism has significantly impacted secular opposition parties and the institutionalization of the overall party system. Both incumbent and opposition elites across the region are obviously motivated to hang on to their positions of influence within parties and other political groupings so they lack any desire for reform in this regard.
The third is mobilization (#4), which decreased to “low” levels in both Jordan and Morocco after new electoral laws reduced incentives for parties and candidates to mass mobilize and instead focus their resources on turning out their core supporters. In Jordan, the “one vote” system dramatically reduced the electoral threshold so that candidates continue to be elected with only a few thousand votes, thus reinforcing the use of wasta and patronage as the primary tools of mobilization. In addition to Bachelani’s (1999) study of party mobilization in Jordanian elections, my own personal interviews with newly elected parliamentarians in 2009 provide strong evidence that the electoral system inhibits mobilization. Likewise, in Morocco’s proportional system, the use of a Droop quota sets a relatively low bar, or “electoral average” as it is known, for parties to win a seat. Key informant interviews before and after the 2007 elections confirm that Moroccan parties and candidates devoted limited resources to mobilization beyond this quota in each district because the reward of capturing an additional seat is very difficult under the “largest remainder” formula. Interestingly, electoral reform in Kuwait that reduced the number of electoral districts and increased the number of votes was thought to encourage party mobilization but has had little discernable effect on subsequent elections (see Brown 2010).

The fourth is vote buying (#8), the incidence of which has increased to “high” under supposedly more “free and fair” electoral arrangements in both cases. Although various forms of electoral clientelism are widespread and routine in both cases, the practice of vote buying has become more sophisticated and more salient in recent elections. Some factors are directly related to the consequences of institutional-level variables such as Jordan’s switch from a block vote to single non-transferable vote. As
the empirical analysis in Chapter 4 showed, this change dramatically decreased the electoral threshold required for winning a seat and therefore increased the value of each vote by two or three-fold. The most recent parliamentary elections in 2007 witnessed an unprecedented amount of political money, which was instrumental to the success of the “new capitalist” candidates. Nearly all of the newly elected deputies I interviewed admitted to doling out money during the campaign or promising material benefits after their election. Whether this is considered “earning” votes or simply “buying” them is debatable. What matters is that political actors are increasingly turning to financial resources, not programmatic platforms, to promote their candidacies. In the case of Morocco, vote buying has persisted and also adapted to new technologies. Despite some reforms to the process of electoral administration, the underlying system still encourages party bosses and local notables to employ vote buying in elections. With limited mobilization and low turnout, vote buying has become a more salient factor. Focus groups conducted after the 2007 elections (see People’s Mirror report) provide strong evidence for this argument. Vote buying is also pervasive in the secondary case studies. Blaydes (2006), for example, and details how the practice has become essential to the sustenance of the ruling party in Egypt.

The fifth is voter accountability (#9), which shows mixed results in the two case studies over time. In Jordan, the switch to a “one vote” system has endowed a selectorate, narrowly defined, with greater accountability because their vote carries more weight. Consequently, the numerous requests levied by citizens have given them leverage to reward or punish their “service representatives.” The high rates of turnover among elected deputies and ability of challengers to promise more than incumbents can
deliver is further evidence that voters are able to impose accountability, but only within the confines of an electoral system that reinforces clientelism. In Morocco, the switch to a proportional system has led to the opposite effect as voters only select a slate of candidates of which parties rank order. The shares of votes and seats parties receive do not correspond with their participation and influence in parliament. In fact, the king often designates the prime minister irrespective of the election results. This system has exacerbated the alienation of the public with the electoral process and heightened its dissatisfaction with the role of parliament. In sum, the two cases show markedly different outcomes, often with conflicting purposes, with regards to linkages between citizens and elected officials as a result of new electoral systems. Yet the majoritarian formulas used in the secondary case studies had significant implications for accountability when the opposition crystallized. In Egypt, Muslim Brotherhood candidates fared very well in head-to-head match ups with incumbents. In Bahrain and Kuwait, Shi’a and Sunni Islamists were able to capitalize on winning seats in electoral districts which they dominated. And most notably in Palestine, Hamas was able to aggregate electoral victories in district-level contests into a parliamentary majority at the national level.

Conclusions

What can be learned from this exercise in typological theorizing? To begin, the typology and corresponding property space have identified some key intermediate variables. Values on each of the nine variables reflect distinct political phenomena in their own right, but it is only their combination that provides a fuller picture of
authoritarian regime maintenance strategies through an interaction of formal and informal institutions. Particular electoral rules have reinforced clientelist structures in the two cases through a number of mechanisms. There are two mechanisms, in particular, that are worthy of discussion and deserving of further research.

The first mechanism is the electoral threshold, which was proposed initially as four working hypotheses about electoral system design and consequences. The empirical analysis shows that lower electoral thresholds have been a critical institutional mechanism by which authoritarian regimes can dilute the electoral strength of opposition forces while, at the same time, structuring electoral competition for elites. Both cases suggest a process by which reduced barriers to entry foster an inclusive, but also a more divisive, political environment. Opposition actors face significant coordination dilemmas and elites commonly turn to patronage in the pursuit of votes and “pork” after they are elected. This was clearly the case in Jordan’s switch to a “one vote” system in 1992.

In the case of Morocco, however, the key electoral mechanism related to the combination of low district magnitudes and proportional representation with a “largest remainder” formula. This arrangement allows some minority parties to capture a seat in multi-member districts while reducing Duvergerian incentives to coalesce around stronger parties. At the same time, it prevents opposition parties from aggregating district-level victories into a parliamentary majority. Electoral outcomes are virtually guaranteed to produce electoral fractionalization and fragmented parliaments.

Moreover, this mechanism is desirable because it triggers a series of causal process that reinforce clientelist structures. Lower thresholds allow local elites to draw on preexisting patronage networks and utilize electoral “machines” in their campaigns.
This process continues in parliament as elected legislators feel added pressure to deliver material benefits to their constituencies so that potential challengers cannot poach their supporters based on targeted appeals.

Finally, the threshold mechanism indirectly links the periphery with the center of power by defining roles of various segments of the population under clientelism. Local patrons exercise their power and seek to placate national elites within the upper echelons of power. Political entrepreneurs are incorporated into an institution with closely defined rules for participation. In turn, they serve as brokers between the regime and their constituencies.

The second mechanism is copartisanship, which is manifested in intra-party competition over electoral lists and struggles among candidates to distinguish themselves from others competing in the same electoral district. Intra-party competition also undermines the value of party labels to candidates and voters. One reflection of this in the case of Morocco’s elections was the rampant party-switching prior to every election. Intra-party competition, the weakness of party labels and the relatively small districts also encouraged politicians to cultivate and respond to relatively narrow constituencies. Rather than moving along an ideological continuum of public policy positions, copartisans resort to traditional patronage and sophisticated forms of vote buying to affect electoral outcomes.

Based on incentive structure described above in the typological theory, I can offer the contingent generalization that authoritarian regimes wishing to institute liberalization under the guide of political pluralism are increasingly designing electoral institutions that lower electoral thresholds and foster intra-party competition. The following chapter
briefly discusses the broader implications of this argument and suggests an agenda for future research of authoritarian resilience in the Middle East.
CONCLUSION
POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR
DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

The so-called “Arab Spring” in 2005 revealed that authoritarian regimes, no matter how closed their systems may be, are not immune from popular pressures for political pluralism and democratic elections. At the same time, this period also demonstrated the ability of Arab autocrats to harness these pressures and channel them through competitive elections. The “Arab Spring” bore no resemblance to its predecessor in Eastern Europe where the thaw of civil society overflowed authoritarian dams. In the Middle East, romanticized notions of “people power” met the harsh reality of deeply entrenched Arab regimes. Instead of spring turning into summer, a cold winter returned across the region from Casablanca to Cairo and from Beirut to Baghdad.

This seasonal metaphor reaffirms the line of thinking among many that we should abandon questions about when democracy will occur in the Middle East and instead examine how authoritarianism persists under the veneer of political liberalization. With this paradigmatic shift taking hold, scholars have made significant strides in understanding the dynamics of “liberalized autocracy” (Brumberg 2006) and conceptualizing forms of “authoritarian upgrading” (Heydemann 2008) by which regimes adapt to changing conditions and circumstances. Likewise, political observers
increasingly recognize that Arab autocrats only pay lip service to democratic ideals and that few, if any, regimes are actually on the “right track” toward democracy.

It is surprising then that so few analyses of Arab authoritarianism address electoral institutions. On one hand, those that focus on elections tend to deal with examples of blatant fraud and electoral malfeasance without considering the underlying rules of the game. On the other hand, those that focus on institutions use relatively facile categories to explicate electoral system design and effects. These academic debates have limited utility for policymakers and practitioners, however, and do not help them to understand the actual tools of authoritarian statecraft including electoral manipulation.

For this reason, the conclusion to this study attempts to build a bridge between the academic and policymaking communities with regards to electoral authoritarianism in the Middle East. It does so by discussing the study’s implications for election observation missions and legislative strengthening programs. Without sufficiently addressing how particular electoral rules skew the playing field and reinforce traditional forms of control, I suggest that democracy assistance programs actually may be perpetuating authoritarianism. Before elaborating on this bold claim, I first provide a brief recap of the study’s main findings.

**Summary of Main Findings**

The central puzzle of this study essentially boils down to why Arab incumbents continually dominate competitive multi-party elections? I have argued that well-worn answers to this question—that elections are merely “window dressing” for the regime, or that underlying structural conditions preclude competition—are inadequate or only take
us so far. Instead, I have sought to advance an institutional explanation for authoritarian resilience in the Middle East by focusing on the origins and effects of electoral rules in Morocco and Jordan. The main argument was that lower electoral thresholds generate unique electoral environments in which patronage politics thrive and opposition-based politics falter, thus producing a decidedly uneven playing field. As such, electoral rules provide a window into these regimes and help explain their durability.

Although this study was motivated by an interest in electoral systems, the empirical analysis has shown that formal rules could not be examined in isolation. Ignoring informal institutions, cultural frames and symbolic rituals associated with monarchical rule would imperil the internal validity of the entire project. I do not dispute the importance of these factors and therefore attempted to incorporate working hypotheses that underscored the role of clientelism. I have shown the rules that govern elections and the politics of clientelism that condition them are not incompatible or mutually exclusive. The challenge then is to integrate these approaches.

The first part of this project took up this task by devising an explanatory framework in which electoral rules serve to manage arenas of competition among ruling elites and to maintain political control over opposition elites. It then put forth a basic model that illustrates the causal pathway from electoral rules to elite cohesion (see Figure 1.3). My theory stipulated that unified ruling elites and divided opposition elites help explain regime stability through electoral dominance whereas elite ruptures and opposition coalitions commonly lead to regime instability through electoral miscues. Subsequent chapters test this theory through an empirical analysis of elections in Morocco and Jordan.
Tracing the evolution of electoral systems in the two cases, Chapter 2 showed that choices regarding the so-called “rules of the game” reflect perceptions of relative power among incumbent and opposition elites. Cohesion among ruling elites and disunity within the opposition have provided these monarchies with leeway to engineer electoral outcomes in their favor. Since the onset of political liberalization in the 1980s, both have gradually moved away from “winner-takes-all” electoral strategies based on majoritarian rules and shifted toward less risky “divide-and-rule” arrangements that allow the distribution of patronage among competing forces. The conditions that led to such fundamental electoral reforms largely relate to external events and economic crises that forced key decision makers (namely the king) to make zero-sum choices between intervention and accommodation. Elite ruptures were more often a product rather than a cause of these crises.

In the following chapters, I also argued that the interaction between particular electoral rules and clientelism shaped the strategic behavior of political actors. Focusing on recent parliamentary elections in 2007, Chapter 3 provided some evidence that Morocco’s List PR system presented coordination dilemmas for opposition parties and voters. Chapter 4 showed that a combination of factors, including the “one vote” system, helps to explain the electoral success and incorporation of a new cadre of elites into Jordan’s parliament. These electoral arrangements largely serve to prevent the emergence of alternative power bases with autonomous patronage networks that could offset the influence of the palace.

Chapter 5 extended the empirical analysis in the Arab world by examining four secondary cases (Egypt, Bahrain, Kuwait and Palestine) in which electoral manipulation
backfired and the opposition registered significant gains in parliamentary elections. The research questions were under what conditions these mishaps occurred and whether we could identify any particular electoral mechanisms that produced undesirable outcomes for the regime. I found that opposition mobilization was a key characteristic of these elections and that regimes were rendered vulnerable by the use of a majoritarian electoral formula in districts with low magnitudes. This system enabled opposition movements to capitalize on widespread discontent, their own superior organization and partisan identification in competitive elections.

The empirical findings also suggest several notes of caution for democracy assistance programs in the Middle East and elsewhere. While democracy promotion may have played an important role in propelling democratic transitions in some post-authoritarian cases, it may be ineffective or even counterproductive with liberalized autocracies for two reasons. First, election observation missions and ensuing assessments may be missing important elements of institutional design that skew the electoral playing field. Secondly, foreign assistance programs aimed at strengthening legislatures or political parties may inadvertently be reinforcing patronage networks. I begin by discussing the implications for election monitoring.

*Implications for Election Monitoring and Assessment*

International election monitoring is one of the most recognizable forms of democracy assistance and has become a central part of the growing democracy promotion industry (Bjornlund 2004). Indeed, it is rare nowadays for a developing country to hold a legitimate election without the presence of international observers.
Election observers are charged with examining an electoral process and making a judgment about its quality. Studies have shown that the presence of these observers have varying effects on the electoral process and outcome.\textsuperscript{200} It is debatable, however, whether election observers are actually able to discern forms of electoral manipulation besides blatant fraud and vote tampering. As Carothers (1997: 19) argues, “the numerous teams of inexperienced observers who stay for only a short time around election day are unlikely to see beyond the obvious.” What challenges do election observers face in assessing electoral institutions?

The emerging literature on electoral authoritarianism provides some insight into this question. Hartlyn and McCoy (2006), for one, describe a series of “observer paradoxes” in assessing electoral manipulation and its effect on electoral outcomes. The four paradoxes they identify do capture both “up-stream” and “down-stream” forms of manipulation. They also expand the scope of analysis well beyond election day by calling for more thorough assessments of the electoral playing field. Rather than just describing a divided political opposition as a \textit{fait accompli}, the authors cite a number of difficult “judgment calls” for election assessments such as determining whether the fragmentation of the opposition is caused primarily by manipulative, undemocratic changes to electoral rules (46).

This study, particularly the historical analysis of electoral systems in Morocco and Jordan, suggests a fifth paradox for observers, what I call the \textit{paradox of intentions}. As the name implies, this refers to the intentions of those who design particular electoral rules. The paradox is lies in the realm between rhetoric and reality of electoral laws. On

\textsuperscript{200} See Bjornlund (2004) for a summary of case studies.
one hand, the process that produces gerrymandered districts and other rules hatched behind closed doors is opaque. On the other hand, the justification for certain electoral laws is often couched in the language of democracy.

The primary cases of Morocco and Jordan help illustrate this conundrum for recent election assessments. To begin, public proclamations from officials about elections cannot be taken at face value because the actual decisions were made by a select few. Secondly, throne speeches of both kings in Morocco and Jordan before, during and after elections were also carefully scripted for both domestic and international audiences but do not belie their true intentions. Finally, these regimes have invited election observers with the knowledge that strategic manipulation will be overlooked.

Observing the consequences of electoral systems and assessing the intentions of their designers are two distinct mandates and each is fraught with tough questions. How do observers determine whether electoral rules are engineered to produce certain outcomes? How can observers secure access and reliable information from those who actually made decisions on electoral laws? How do election assessments establish accountability for decision makers, namely the kind, who approve of manipulation?

As such, observers must exercise caution in making determinations about the intentions of electoral systems. As Chaudhry (1997) notes in her study of economic institutions in Saudi Arabia and Yemen, institutions do not “flow effortlessly from the design table of omniscient rulers.” But what distinguishes the cases of Morocco and Jordan is that negotiations over electoral laws. Brown (forthcoming) has characterized them as “prolonged and unequal bargaining processes.” Although I have shown how varying levels of elite cohesion strengthened or weakened the monarchs’ hand, they were
ultimately a product of ruling elites and pro-regime technocrats.

Consequently, the design of electoral systems in these two case studies was consciously undertaken with certain intentions in mind. This study has shown how institutional design and manipulation has been a consistent feature of regime maintenance strategies. As Hall and Taylor (1996) argue, institutions are designed to preserve the power, prestige, privileges and most importantly, the distributional advantage of the dominant elite and its allies at the expense of society.

The practical dilemmas regarding electoral assessments then come into sharper focus. While pre-election missions may analyze the mechanics of electoral formulas and so forth, post-election assessments rarely mention the electoral system. As a result, reporting on elections often miss these critical details. For example, Morocco’s pre-election assessment in 2007 expressed clear disappointment with the “largest remainder” system and that revisions to the electoral law “did little to address the problem of parties not being able to gain more than one seat in a district” (NDI 2007a). Later, the post-election statement (NDI 2007b) merely restated the fact that “the system for allocating seats makes it difficult for individual parties to win more than one seat per district and increases the likelihood that seats in parliament are distributed relatively evenly among major parties.” This leads me to a discussion of the implications for legislative strengthening programs.

Implications for Legislative Strengthening Programs

As Brown and Hawthorne (2009: 19) note, many programs in the Middle East have sought to borrow templates from democratizing regions instead of developing strategies...
tailored to the pre-democracy transition conditions of Arab countries. U.S. assistance has come primarily in the form of funding for non-governmental associations (NGOs) based on the romanticized notion of civil society as the “wellspring of democracy.” Yet many Arab regimes have not become more democratic and, in some instances, have even benefited from the use of NGOs as a form of social control.201 In comparison, the development of political institutions has received less attention and resources.

Despite the intrinsic importance of legislatures to democratic ideals, the institution itself has been often overlooked in systems that feature a powerful and dominant executive. Although authoritarian legislatures are subsumed under the regime and may never become a co-equal branch of government, their development also has the potential to play significant mediating roles under liberalization and democratic transitions. Legislative strengthening programs therefore constitute a vital component of democracy assistance and are closely linked to electoral systems. After all, legislatures are the arena where the democratic potential of elections is transformed into reality.

On the other hand, authoritarian legislatures also embody the faults of electoral processes and democratic deficiencies. For one, they can serve the interests of the regime by incorporating potential opposition forces as Gandhi and Przeworski (2007) have shown. More commonly they represent competitions over access to state resources and are seldom arenas in which the opposition and incumbents struggle over the rules of the game (Lust 2009: 124). Thus, authoritarian legislatures affect political stability by their capacity for the distribution of resources.202

201 Langohr (2004) and Wiktorowicz (2000) make this argument with regards to Egypt and Jordan.
202 This is based on the argument by Mishler and Hildreth (1984: 27) about democracies.
The empirical analysis demonstrated that established political actors in both cases have been reluctant to challenge controversial aspects of the electoral system because they owe their own success to their ability to exploit them. Simply put, their political livelihood is clientelist support networks that various electoral rules enable and facilitate. It is worth considering then whether legislative strengthening programs aimed at strengthening the linkages between citizens and representatives actually help to reinforce clientelist structures under authoritarianism. This implication presents a choice for democracy assistance programs: should the parliament be empowered to make the outcomes of elections more meaningful or should the electoral system be reformed to make the composition of parliament more meaningful?

The current line of thinking within the democracy promotion community tends to favor the former approach. In assessment of Morocco’s electoral framework (DRI 2007: 1), for example, it was stated that the “limited role of Parliament in the constitutional architecture and the political context reduces the importance of elections for democratization.” The parliamentary support projects of several democracy assistance organizations in Morocco (NCSL, NDI and IRI) reflects this “horse before the cart” thinking. Likewise, the U.S. government has also initiated legislative strengthening programs in recent years that are intended to improve the institutional capacity of the Moroccan parliament and its public image. According to USAID (2004: 1), the overall objective of these programs is “enhanced parliamentary and legislative oversight capacities that will lead to increased popular recognition of legislative legitimacy and broader recognition of evolving democratic processes.”
In the eyes of many democracy practitioners, these efforts are succeeding. Denoeux and Desfosses (2007), for example, point to the growing contributions that the Moroccan legislature is making within the political system. But they also highlight particular structural deficiencies that will prevent real change. Ottaway (2006: 10) identifies genuine political reform as the missing link to the process of democratic transition under King Mohamed, noting that royal power has been used for many important initiatives, “but not to open the way to genuine political participation, and even less to increase the capability of institutions that could check the imbalances of power.”

As for the case of Jordan, USAID had been funding a legislative strengthening program since 2005 that focuses on a range of technical assistance projects. This work is largely overshadowed, however, by the ongoing debate over the controversial “one vote” system. King Abdallah’s recent decision to dissolve parliament was scarcely contested and even publicly welcomed by many Jordanians who viewed the institution as corrupt and ineffective. By contrast, the accompanying call for a new electoral law to govern the next parliamentary elections generated substantial interest as a coalition of political forces launched a nationwide campaign for meaningful electoral reform. In Jordan, the opposition and many activists realize that the path towards true reform begins with repealing the controversial “one vote” system.

203 Since 2005, the State University of New York/Center for International Development (SUNY/CID) has been implementing the USAID-funded Legislative Strengthening Program (LSP) in Jordan. This five-year program organizes technical assistance, trainings, advisory services, and procurement for the parliament. See http://www.cid.suny.edu/our_work_projects_Legislative_strengthening23.cfm.

204 See the short article by Rantawi in Carnegie’s Arab Reform Bulletin from April 14, 2010. Available at http://carnegieendowment.org/arb/?fa=show&article=40604.
Policy Recommendations

The ingredients to successful democracy assistance programs do not simply involve increased funding for legislative strengthening programs and more in-depth analysis by election observers. While this study has shown the importance of the legal framework that undergirds elections and how it reinforces clientelism, the problem lies more within the democracy promotion industry itself and the political sensitivities that surround electoral reform.

Many democracy organizations have thrived in a results-driven bureaucratic culture and are often compelled to focus on high-profile projects or “feel good” organizations in order to secure continued funding. Many of these assistance programs are unlikely to produce significant change and also signal tacit acceptance of regime-led “transitions to nowhere.” Some have criticized the U.S. State Department's multi-million dollar "Middle East Partnership Initiative" (MEPI), for example, because it perpetuates a long-standing emphasis on the usual piecemeal reforms that avoid tinkering with the fundamental ruling institutions (Brumberg 2003, Wittes and Yerkes 2004). Meanwhile, the political and financial costs for many democracy promotion programs are steep and the case could be made that such activities now run the risk of becoming unsustainable.205

What kinds of policy levers are available then?

As this study has shown, many Arab regimes have established electoral systems that make it nearly impossible for any party to achieve a working majority in parliament. They have also increased representation for certain groups and instituted upper houses to

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205 For a powerful argument that the price tag attached to building democratic institutions is exorbitant and that a new paradigm is needed, see Ottaway (1999).
check the power of popularly elected chambers. U.S. public officials need to put these practices on the agenda for bilateral discussions and negotiations. Autocrats and ruling elites should no longer expect a “free pass” when visiting Washington and being able to hide behind vague promises of reform. U.S. organizations such as NDI and the Carter Center could also refuse invitations to observe elections when the rules of the game are manipulated to the extent that elections are patently “un-free and unfair.”

Democracy assistance programs should not treat the symptoms to the exclusion of underlying causes, however. I recommend two diametrical approaches for dealing with clientelism. On one hand, policymakers could call for targeted electoral reforms that reduce incentives to cultivate a personal vote and the overall saliency of vote buying. Arab regimes, particularly U.S. allies such as Jordan and Morocco, are unaccustomed to “tough talk” from Washington and may accede to public demands in order to avoid further scrutiny. This appears to have been the case in June 2005 when U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice called for more rapid democratization in Egypt. The outspoken criticism caught President Mubarak off guard and caused him to rethink any plans to crack down on the political opposition in advance of the elections.

On the other hand, democracy promotion could recognize the reality of clientelism in Arab societies and stop treating it as if it were a disease that must be eradicated in order for democracy to emerge. USAID handbooks and policy materials on anti-corruption often mention clientelism as a “syndrome” and assume that all types of patronage are created equal. This line of thinking clouds democracy assistance programs that deal with institutions such as the parliament that are embedded within preexisting patronage networks. As my analysis of Jordan’s Al-Ikha parliamentary block showed,
there are elites that rely on patronage for their political livelihood but are also pushing for political change. Carefully targeted assistance to these reform-minded figures could help them regain traction within the next parliament and broaden their base of support in society.

In conclusion, policymakers must recognize the linkage between formal electoral rules and informal politics of patronage. The first step involves fundamental electoral reform that creates meaningful incentives for political actors to mobilize voters based on programmatic rather than personalistic goals and establishes accountability for ruling elites. In turn, competition will be played on a more level playing field and institutions will grow. These challenges will not be overcome overnight. Understanding how electoral rules function under authoritarianism and why autocrats choose them may not advance democracy in the Middle East but it can help prevent authoritarianism from becoming further entrenched.


Dahbi, O. “El Othmani estime que le PJD aura entre 60 et 70 députés,” Aujourd’hui Le Maroc. 24 August 2007.


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Tripp (2001).


