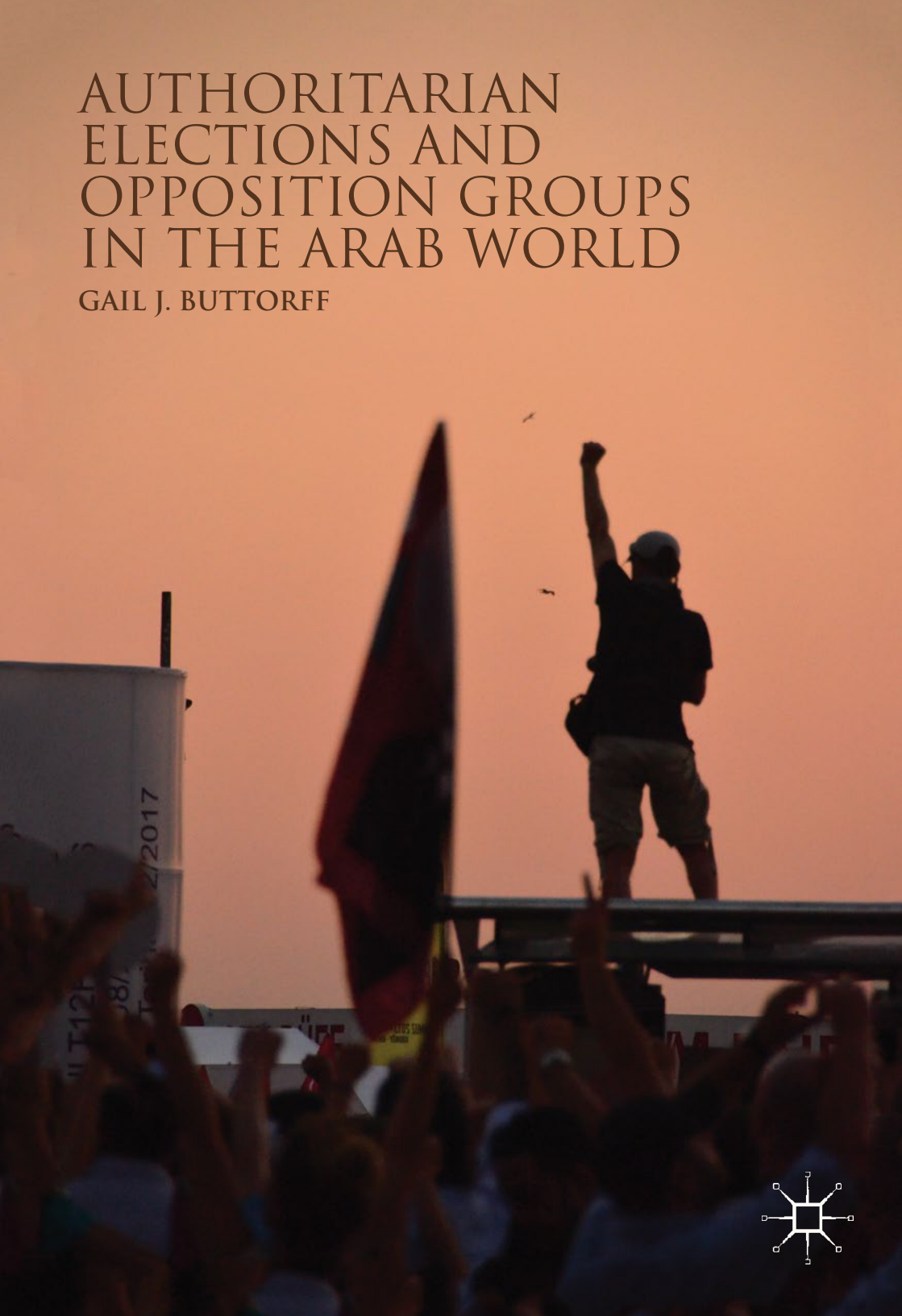
AUTHORITARIAN ELECTIONS AND OPPOSITION GROUPS IN THE ARAB WORLD

GAIL J. BUTTORFF



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For my dad

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Contents

Abbreviations

Political Parties: Bahrain

al-Wifaq	The National Islamic Accord, *Jama'iyyat al-Wifaq al-Watani al-Islamiyya*
Haq	Movement for Liberty and Democracy, *Harakat Haq al-Hurriya wa al-Dimuqratiyya*

Political Parties: Jordan

al-Wihda	Jordanian Popular Democratic Unity Party, *Hizb Al-Wihdah Al-Sha'abiyah Al-Dimuqratiyyah Al-Urduni*
HASHD	Jordanian Democratic People's Party, *Hizb Al-Sha'ab Al-Dimuqrati Al-Urduni*
IAF	Islamic Action Front, *Jabhat al-'Amal al-Islami*

Political Parties: Algeria

ANR	National Republican Alliance, *Alliance Nationale Républicaine*
FFS	Socialist Forces Front, *Front des Forces Socialistes*
FIS	Islamic Salvation Front, *Front Islamique du Salut*
FLN	National Liberation Front, *Front de Libération Nationale*
MDS	Democratic and Social Movement, *Mouvement Démocratique et Social*
MNR	Movement for National Reform, *Mouvement pour la Réforme Nationale*
MSP	Movement of Society for Peace, *Mouvement de la Société pour la Paix*
PST	Socialist Workers' Party, *Parti Socialiste des Travailleurs*

PT	Workers' Party, *Parti des Travailleurs*
RCD	Rally for Culture and Democracy, *Rassemblement pour la Culture et la Démocratie*
RND	National Democratic Rally, *Rassemblement National Démocratique*

Other

aarchs	*Coordination des ʿaarchs, daïras et communes*
AIS	Islamic Salvation Army, *Armée Islamique du Salut*
CPNR	Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GIA	Armed Islamic Group, *Groupe Islamique Armé*
HCE	High State Committee, *Haut Comité d'État*
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
SNTV	Single Non-Transferable Vote Electoral System or *sawt wahid*
UGTA	General Union of Algerian Workers, *Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens*

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CHAPTER 1

The Strategic Dilemma of Authoritarian Elections

At the turn of the twenty-first century, we faced a new and somewhat oxymoronic phenomenon: authoritarian elections. While the presence or absence of elections was once considered the dividing line between dictatorships and non-dictatorships, the past three decades have seen the combination of authoritarianism with elections. In the past, one of the first things authoritarian governments did upon coming to power was cancel elections and crack down on political activity, particularly among the opposition. Today, by contrast, most authoritarian regimes hold national-level parliamentary elections and even allow multiparty competition.

Today's authoritarian elections present opposition parties with a strategic dilemma (Schedler 2002a; Posusney 2005; Rakner and van de Walle 2009). Do opposition parties participate in elections despite concerns that the electoral process will be unfair? Or do they boycott the election in order to express their belief that the process lacks legitimacy, while forfeiting any possibility of parliamentary influence? In recent years, political parties and groups have regularly and consciously chosen the latter, even as many of these boycotting parties led the struggle for democratic reforms, such as the legalization of political parties and the right to participate in elections. The opposition strategy of boycotting an election raises an important question regarding political behavior under authoritarianism: why do political parties boycott elections? How can we understand when and why opposition groups adopt the strategies they do?

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The choice to boycott is in many ways to be expected given that most election boycotts occur under authoritarian regimes. The prospect of unfair elections, combined with the high probability of defeat, can make participation a questionable strategy for any opposition party that challenges the regime. This reality raises a further question: if meaningless elections and fear of losing at the polls are the main factors driving decisions to boycott, why do opposition parties sometimes choose to participate in authoritarian elections at all?

In this book, I take up these questions and explore the electoral strategies of opposition parties in the electoral authoritarian regimes of the Arab world. While other scholars have investigated critical questions surrounding why authoritarian rulers hold elections and whether such elections lead to further political liberalization, there has been comparatively little work on opposition strategies adopted during authoritarian elections.[1] This study takes opposition parties as its focus in order to illuminate the complex motivations that influence their decisions to participate or boycott, and whether to protest following contentious elections. I examine how perceptions of regime strength and stability influence electoral strategies and how these, in turn, affect the way elections unfold. In so doing, I provide a richer and more nuanced understanding of opposition strategy in authoritarian elections.

1.1 Electoral Authoritarianism in the Arab World

From 1974 to the early 1990s, during what Samuel Huntington (1991) has called the third wave of democratization, approximately 100 countries began to democratize. Authoritarian nations from Argentina to South Korea set up democratic institutions, restored or began holding elections, and in many cases liberalized restrictions on the media as well as on civil and political rights. The vast majority of the countries that began democratizing during the third wave are today neither democracies nor democratizing (Diamond 2002; Levitsky and Way 2002). In the end, slightly less than 20 percent of these countries successfully transitioned to democracies (Carothers 2002, p. 9). Some countries' democratization efforts stalled while others moved backward, undoing the reforms of the previous years. This reversion to authoritarian practices continues even today.[2]

The existence of regimes that began but never completed the process of political liberalization led scholars to generate a number of different regime classifications that aim to deepen our understanding of the dynamics of authoritarianism and democratization.[3] Andreas Schedler (2002a, 2006) coined the term "electoral authoritarianism" to classify regimes that hold multiparty elections for the legislature and/or the executive and have open political space, universal suffrage, and multiparty elections. However, despite their ostensible embrace of democratic fundamentals, these regimes lack the checks and balances, bureaucratic integrity, and judicial impartiality we associate with fully democratic states. Under these regimes, ruling elites engage in undemocratic practices (such as election fraud) and regularly restrict citizens' political freedoms and civil rights.

Electoral authoritarianism aptly characterizes the regimes across the Arab world that combine democratic institutions, specifically elections and national parliaments, with otherwise authoritarian governments.[4] The region's most recent foray into democratic politics began at the tail end of the third wave of democratization. For many regimes, economic crises of the late 1970s and 1980s prompted them to begin political liberalization. Declines in oil prices and reductions in international assistance, when combined with stringent requirements imposed by structural adjustment programs, brought economic hardship on much of the populace. To alleviate growing popular discontent, incumbent regimes, both monarchies and presidents, initiated a controlled process of political liberalization. For these regimes, limited political openings and elections were viewed as a way to relegitimize the status quo rather than foster real political change (Baaklini et al. 1999; Brumberg 2002; Brown and Shahin 2010).

After an initial surge in political liberalization swept across the Arab world, few countries continued on a straight path to liberal democracy. Instead, most oscillated between periods of greater freedom and greater repression. Of the six Arab countries—Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, and Tunisia—that began democratizing during the third wave, none could be considered democracies by the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century.

Despite these stalled or failed transitions, elections—or more correctly authoritarian elections—have become the norm and are now a central feature of Arab politics today. Nathan Brown (2012) has argued that elections persist because all involved have come to accept that electoral politics are here to stay: "Both government and opposition in the Arab world show little sign of asking many questions about whether and why to hold

elections, but instead think hard about how to use them" (p. 16). With both authoritarian regimes and opposition groups embracing electoral—if not exactly democratic—politics, authoritarian elections constitute the "central arena of struggle" between the regime and opposition groups (Schedler 2006, p. 1; Levitsky and Way 2002).

The spread of electoral authoritarian regimes across the Arab world opened up new options for political opposition that were not previously possible. One such strategy is the boycott. At their most basic level boycotts are, as Laidler argued (1913), "an organized effort to withdraw and induce others to withdraw from social or business relations with another" (p. 27). In an electoral boycott, a political organization refuses to participate in a particular election and refrains from running candidates. These boycotts often, though not always, are accompanied by appeals to voters to stay home on election day (Beaulieu 2014, p. 36).

Approximately 14 percent of elections worldwide, including those in both democratic and authoritarian nations, have been boycotted by opposition groups (Beaulieu 2014; Hyde and Marinov 2012). Figure 1.1 shows the number of election boycotts observed each year between 1945 and

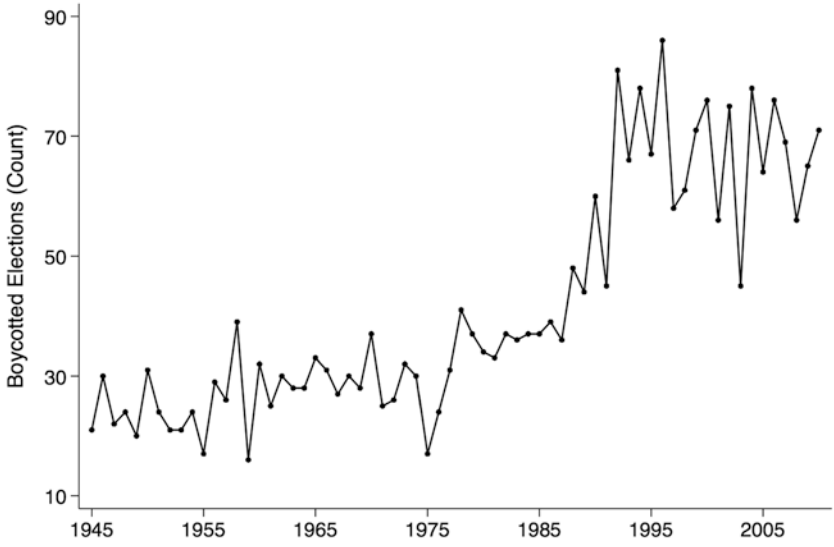

Fig. 1.1 Election boycotts in the world, 1945–2010 (Source: Hyde and Marinov 2012)

2010. The increase in boycotted elections beginning in the mid-1970s tracks with the third wave of democratization and the spread of elections across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East and North Africa.

Opposition groups in the Arab world boycotted approximately 50 percent of elections between 1990 and 2010. Given the frequency with which boycotts occur and the importance of elections and participation to Arab politics and political systems today, the reasons why opposition parties choose to participate or boycott warrant systematic examination. Despite this empirical regularity there has been comparatively little scholarship on these opposition strategies in authoritarian elections, in the Arab world or elsewhere.

1.2 Existing Explanations and Their Limitations

Existing literature offers some insight into the factors that can lead to electoral boycotts. Some have argued that weak electoral prospects drive opposition boycotts in authoritarian elections. According to this theory, when opposition parties believe they will do poorly in a given election, they will choose to boycott in an effort to "save face" (Pastor 1999; Bratton 1998). But under most authoritarian regimes, opposition parties that have little chance of gaining a majority in the legislature or a majority of votes during a presidential election still choose to compete in elections in the Arab world. Although the likelihood of electoral victory is certainly part of a party's calculus in deciding whether to participate in any election, whether authoritarian or democratic, additional reasons motivate parties and/or candidates to compete in elections. Scholarship on democratic elections shows that political parties may enter races knowing they will lose in an effort to gain concessions or increase votes in future elections (see, e.g., Cox 1997). Some scholars argue that opposition parties participate under less than democratic conditions because of their intense ideological differences with the current regime (Greene 2007) or their desire to increase visibility and mobilize supporters (Posusney 2005, pp. 109–110). Similar reasons can also factor into an opposition party's decision to boycott. Like an electoral campaign, a boycott campaign can raise public awareness of the opposition party and mobilize domestic and international support for its demands (Beaulieu 2014).

Other scholars regard boycotts as a way to focus attention on and protest election fraud and general unfairness in the electoral process (Bratton 1998; Lindberg 2006, 2009; Schedler 2002b, 2009; Beaulieu 2014).[5] Emily

Beaulieu (2014) argues that although boycotts are a function of the opposition's expected level of electoral manipulation by the regime, this factor is not the sole determinant in the decision to boycott or participate. Opposition parties are often willing to tolerate a certain level of electoral manipulation. It is when the opposition and the government fail to reach agreement on the "acceptable" level of manipulation, because of low information, misinformation, and/or credible commitment problems, that opposition electoral protests (including boycotts) are likely.

In the absence of blatant manipulation it can be difficult to determine whether elections were in fact unfair, particularly given the clandestine nature of fraud and the partisan nature of allegations (Lehoucq 2003; Alvarez et al. 2008). Indeed, the decision to boycott can taint observers' assessments of the freeness and fairness of the electoral process, making it more difficult to establish a link between boycotts and the likelihood of election fraud (Beaulieu 2006, p. 17; see also Bratton 1998; Kelley 2012). The relationship between boycotts and unfair elections is further complicated considering that the decision to boycott is almost always made prior to election day and even prior to the start of campaigning.[6]

Of course incumbent elites in electoral authoritarian regimes have a large "menu of manipulation" they can mobilize to ensure election victories (Schedler 2002a), ranging from blatant manipulation of the polling process (e.g., tampering with vote counts and registration rolls) to so-called legal manipulation, which includes redrawing district boundaries (i.e., gerrymandering), allocating seats disproportionally, and altering the electoral formula. In fact, a number of incumbent regimes control election outcomes using means that we would not traditionally characterize as election fraud. Bratton (1998) has noted that "[i]ncumbents who are intent on retaining office have found 'wholesale' rule changes (concerning who competes) to be a far more effective means of controlling outcomes than seeking to influence votes individually at the 'retail' level" (p. 63). In Jordan, for example, the regime has used disproportional distribution of seats and other levers in the electoral rules to engineer a parliament composed of regime loyalists (Lust-Okar 2006).

A significant oversight in the existing literature is the failure to account for the fact that not all authoritarian elections are boycotted. An opposition party that boycotts every election is the exception, not the rule. Of those countries that have experienced an election boycott since 1990, only a few countries had at least one opposition party boycott every election. Most opposition groups move in and out of the electoral arena, sometimes

participating, sometimes opting to boycott. Their participation occurs despite the persistence of unfair electoral processes and poor electoral prospects. The opposition's selective participation in elections suggests that more than just electoral factors drive the participation-boycott decisions of opposition parties.

While the electoral factors highlighted by Emily Beaulieu and others do help explain the decision to participate or boycott across authoritarian and non-authoritarian regimes, electoral-based explanations of election boycotts fall short in explaining why an opposition party would willingly participate in one authoritarian election and choose to boycott the next. In general, opposition parties under Arab authoritarian regimes always doubt the legitimacy of the elections. They object to the manipulation of electoral rules and, barring unusual circumstances, expect to lose the election. Nevertheless, we observe variation in the incidence of boycotting across authoritarian regimes and within a single country across elections. It is this intra-national variation across elections that existing theories are particularly ill suited to explain.

1.3 The Argument

This book offers an alternative explanation of boycotts that accounts for the within-country variation across elections observed in authoritarian elections in the Arab world. The central argument of this book is that the strategies adopted by opposition groups during and after authoritarian elections are driven by perceptions of regime strength and stability, extending well beyond election-related considerations such as the freeness and fairness of the election and an opposition group's prospects of victory at the polls.

Boycotts are a non-violent tactic that opposition parties adopt to try to gain concessions from authoritarian powers. They can also be part of a larger strategy to inspire post-election protests that could ultimately undermine the stability and authority of a regime. As such, explaining the incidence of boycotting and participation requires a theory that situates boycotts within the larger context of authoritarian elections and opposition politics. The theory laid out in this book attends to the strategies of participation and boycott as well as to the ability of the opposition to escalate confrontation with regimes through post-election protests if demands for reform are ignored.

The theory envisions the following sequence of play between a government and an opposition in the context of an authoritarian election. The opposition makes the initial choice to participate in the election or engage in a boycott. The opposition makes this decision under uncertainty about the true strength of the regime. If boycott is selected, the government then has two options: either reform, or ignore the boycott. If the regime chooses to ignore the boycott, the opposition has a final choice: mobilize post-election protests or back down and face the consequences of the earlier decision to boycott.

The central contention of this book is that beliefs matter for understanding the strategies that opposition groups adopt during authoritarian elections. In particular, I highlight the crucial role of opposition evaluations of regime stability in determining whether to boycott or participate in elections. Because boycotts are a contentious strategy aimed at obtaining concessions from the regime, the likely success of any particular strategy will be an important consideration. In addition, because the ultimate goal of any boycott is effecting change, the opposition will be particularly interested in identifying what makes a regime more or less likely to reform, which I argue is linked to its beliefs about regime strength and stability.

Here perceptions of success will be determined by the opposition's beliefs about whether it is facing a strong or weak regime. When, for example, the opposition perceives the regime as vulnerable, the opposition will be more likely to boycott the election and mobilize post-election protests in order to demand reform from what it perceives as a regime easily destabilized. All else being equal, a weak regime will not risk the possibility of further protest activity following the election and the destabilizing consequences. Instead, the government will prefer to offer reform to prevent further mobilization against it.

But what shapes opposition parties' perceptions of regime strength? I argue that a useful way to understand and analyze opposition beliefs—and changes in beliefs across elections—is to identify what sociologist Arthur Stinchcombe (1968) referred to as the "centers of power" for a given regime. Centers of power are the particular institutional (e.g., the military) and social (e.g., a particular ethnic group) structures within a particular political ecosystem as well as any external actors (e.g., foreign powers) upon whom a regime's stability depends. Opposition groups look to centers of power as barometers of regime strength. The resulting perceptions inform the basis of opposition beliefs about the likelihood of obtaining concessions, the decision whether to boycott or participate in an

election, and the subsequent decision of whether and how to mobilize after an election. The likelihood that the government is able to retain support from its key political support bases during periods of political instability influences the regime's response to the election boycott as well, helping determine whether it offers reforms or ignores the demands of the boycott. In this way, the theory incorporates opposition attributes, strategic interaction, and contextual factors that influence opposition beliefs. In examining opposition electoral strategies through the framework developed here, we gain an appreciation of the role that centers of power play, their influence on both opposition and regime strategies, and ultimately their contributions to the stability of the regime.

In emphasizing the role of beliefs in the study of electoral protests, this book enriches our understanding of strategic choice in authoritarian elections in several key ways. First, the theory I advance explains a number of the more contradictory features of authoritarian elections, including the seemingly irrational decision to participate in elections for which neither winning nor real power are realistic options. Electoral participation is rational in such contexts only when the opposition's threat of triggering post-election demonstrations is not credible, such as when, the opposition believes it is facing a strong regime that is unlikely to reform. In such cases, the opposition will choose to participate despite the fact that the election offers little chance of real power because it knows that a boycott would guarantee no reform or influence at all. By understanding how beliefs influence strategic choices during elections—and how these beliefs change over time—it becomes possible to explain the variation in opposition strategies in a way that existing theories fail to capture.

Second, empirically speaking, boycotts are a mixed bag of outcomes. Some boycotts achieve reforms while others do not; some arouse government response while others are ignored. Some seem to precede regime change, while others leave the incumbent regime in an even stronger position. The theory set forth here provides a way to understand the varied political outcomes arising from boycotting, including what opposition groups do when boycotts are unsuccessful. In addition, this project advances our understanding of the all too common outcome of failed boycotts, which leave a boycotting opposition party without reform, out of parliament, and ultimately worse off than if it had participated.

Fundamental to explaining the set of electoral strategies adopted is the issue of incomplete information. Opposition groups cannot know with certainty the true strength or stability of the regime or whether

undertaking a boycott will in fact produce concessions; they only have their best assumptions about what is likely or not at a particular point in time. Opposition parties are not always accurate in these determinations, which explains why boycotts sometimes fail to obtain reform. If the opposition had known it would fail beforehand, they would, all else being equal, likely have chosen to participate.

Finally, the focus on opposition beliefs provides a clearer picture of how groups make decisions. Electoral strategies are not only predicated on factors related to the elections but they also take into account beliefs about the regime, which are in turn informed by larger structural and institutional dynamics. I show that opposition groups look to a set of factors, which include centers of power, to gauge regime strength and then make calculated decisions about the likelihood of obtaining reform from a boycott. In thinking differently about how groups make decisions about electoral and post-electoral strategies, this work helps clarify when opposition groups are more or less likely to adopt contentious strategies such as boycotts and post-election protests.

1.4 Cases and Methods

Electoral authoritarian regimes dominate the Arab world, making it a particularly important region for the study of authoritarian elections and actors' strategies toward such elections. The case studies in this book focus on examples from Jordan and Algeria, using interviews and primary and secondary source material to construct analytic narratives (Bates et al. 1998) of recent electoral events over an approximately 20-year period. The combination of interviews and archival research sheds light on actors' beliefs about regime stability and the decision-making processes that led to the strategic choices observed. This approach allows for a more in-depth appreciation of strategic decisions about elections under authoritarian rule.

Although the region consists largely of electoral authoritarian regimes, it also encompasses a variety of political systems, ranging from monarchies to presidential and parliamentary republics. Within the Arab electoral autocracies, Algeria (a presidential republic) and Jordan (a hereditary monarchy) offer two classic cases of electoral authoritarian regimes found in the region. Regime-led processes of political liberalization in both countries began in the late 1980s amidst widespread unrest and rioting. The events of the 1980s shaped the opposition's perceptions

about the possibility of reform when tumultuous domestic situations surfaced again in the 1990s and the first decade of the twenty-first century. In both countries, elections have been criticized domestically and abroad as fraudulent and unfair, with questions raised regarding electoral rules, the electoral process, and the overall legitimacy of the elections. That opposition groups in both countries raised objections about the integrity of the electoral process exemplifies exactly the type of cases that make electoral-based explanations so appealing. As we will see, however, electoral malpractice and unfair rules were not the only variables that opposition groups considered when making their strategic choices during each election.

In Algeria there were four presidential elections and three legislative elections between 1995 and 2010. The first multiparty parliamentary elections in Algeria were held in 1991, but the overwhelming victory of *Front Islamique du Salut* (the Islamic Salvation Front or FIS) in the first round of the legislative elections prompted the military to cancel the second round, bringing an end to the short initial period of political liberalization. Elections were not held again until the presidential elections of 1995. Jordan, meanwhile, held six parliamentary elections between 1989 and 2010. Despite regular elections over the period of study, neither Jordan nor Algeria successfully transitioned to democracy or made significant steps toward further political liberalization. Jordan was classified as "Partly Free" by Freedom House for much of the 1990s until it was downgraded to "Not Free" in 2009. Similarly, Algeria was downgraded from "Partly Free" to "Not Free" after a military coup in January 1992 and remained so throughout this period.[7]

Within each country, I focus on a particular opposition political party: *Jabhat al-'Amal al-Islami* (Islamic Action Front or IAF) in Jordan and *Front des Forces Socialistes* (Socialist Forces Front or FFS) in Algeria. These two parties represented the main opposition political parties in their respective countries during the time under study.[8] Although there were many political parties in Jordan, most were small, insignificant, and often personalistic.[9] The IAF, by contrast, was the dominant opposition voice and by far the best organized and most widely supported political party in Jordan during the time under analysis. Likewise, of the six main political parties in Algeria, the FFS (the oldest opposition political party) was generally considered the "true" opposition party during the timeframe of this study.[10] Islamist opposition groups tend to be the most important opposition groups in Arab electoral autocracies but this was not the case in Algeria following the end of its civil war. The case of the FFS demonstrates its opposition electoral strategies

are also shaped by broader institutional and contextual factors and thus are more than simply Islamist contests over ideology and religion. Focusing on the opposition groups themselves—rather than simply looking at whether the election was boycotted—helps us understand when and how electoral variables like the fairness of the electoral process matter in relation to other factors that affect opposition parties' decisions to participate in or boycott authoritarian elections.

Jordan's IAF has moved in and out of the electoral arena over the years, a common pattern for opposition parties in electoral authoritarian countries. The party participated in four of six elections held between 1989 and 2010, opting to boycott in 1997 and again in 2010. Algeria's FFS, by contrast, exhibited a different pattern. Although the FFS participated in the first post-coup legislative elections in 1997, it then boycotted both the legislative and presidential elections held between 1999 and 2009.

Given the lack of variation in the FFS' strategy between 1999 and 2009, it would be easy to conclude that the opposition boycotted because of electoral factors. On their face, the FFS' electoral boycotts seem to be reasonable responses to electoral factors, echoing existing scholarly theories of election boycotts. Algeria was an authoritarian regime throughout this time and the FFS repeatedly expressed its frustration with stalled political liberalization and what it saw as unfair electoral processes. But as the case study in Chap. 6 shows, the party's decisions did not hinge on perceptions of the electoral process. Rather, the choices that the FFS made were the result of considered reflection about avenues of participation open to the party and the possibilities for change at each moment in time. In fact, in both Algeria and Jordan, the narratives reveal that the boycott-participation decisions were far from predetermined. Prior to each election, the parties debated, often vigorously, whether to participate or boycott.

These analytic narratives provide crucial information about the decision-making process and the context in which the strategic choices were made, highlighting considerations beyond electoral factors that influence opposition parties deciding whether to participate or boycott. Moreover, these two narratives allow us to explore four critical themes: (1) the opposition parties' reasons for boycotting or participating; (2) the perceived costs and benefits of various electoral strategies; (3) the opposition's decision whether to mobilize post-election demonstrations following an unsuccessful boycott; and (4) changes in opposition beliefs about the regime over time and how these evolving perceptions influenced their strategies at each moment in time.

1.5 Plan of the Book

Chapter 2 provides a detailed discussion of elections and boycotts in the 12 Arab authoritarian countries that regularly held elections between 1990 and 2010. This chapter also explores in greater detail the limits of extant scholarship, specifically with regard to electoral politics in the Arab world. Using cross-national data on election boycotts, I demonstrate that existing explanations that emphasize poor electoral prospects and fraudulent or unfair electoral processes as the primary motivations for a boycott cannot explain the variation observed within countries across elections during this period.

The opposition's calculus to participate, boycott, or protest is influenced by its beliefs in the stability of the regime and the possibility of obtaining reform with the contentious strategies of boycott and protest. While beliefs about regime stability are not the only factor driving opposition decisions, they are important in a way that has yet to be explored theoretically or empirically. Chapter 3 develops the theory of opposition strategy and sets out the conditions under which an opposition group will choose to participate or boycott as well as whether it will choose to protest following an unsuccessful boycott. The chapter also explores how the theory advanced here can explain several important theoretical and empirical puzzles, including why opposition groups participate in elections they are bound to lose and the variation in opposition strategies across elections despite consistently unfair electoral processes.

Chapter 4 translates theory into practice by exploring how we can understand opposition beliefs about regime stability. Taking centers of power as its focus, this chapter examines the relationship between centers of power and opposition perceptions of regime stability, with specific attention to the empirical application of this concept across countries. In addition, this chapter identifies the centers of power in Jordan and Algeria and discusses the set of centers of power commonly observed in the Arab world, such as the military and Western powers.

The analytic narratives that follow in Chaps. 5 and 6 explore the actors involved (the regime, the opposition parties, and the centers of power) and the ways that beliefs about regime stability informed opposition decisions to participate, boycott, and/or mobilize against the regimes in Jordan and Algeria, respectively. Chapter 5 systematically traces the electoral and post-election strategies of Jordan's IAF across the five legislative elections held in 1993, 1997, 2003, 2007, and 2010. Chapter 6 then

examines the strategic choices of the FFS across two legislative elections (2002 and 2007) and two presidential elections (1999 and 2004). Although the primary focus of Chap. 6 is analysis of the FFS' strategies, this chapter also considers a second political party, *Rassemblement pour la Culture et la Démocratie* (Rally for Culture and Democracy or RCD), since the two parties adopted similar strategies in 1999 and 2002, but different strategies in 2004 and 2007. Comparison of the FFS and the RCD offers insight into the divergent boycotting strategies of two parties facing the same electoral conditions and broader socioeconomic and political context.

The study ends by summarizing the main theoretical and empirical findings relevant for understanding strategic choices during authoritarian elections. The final chapter also discusses the implications of the theory and findings for policies aimed at reducing contentious elections and improving electoral integrity by increasing the likelihood of opposition participation. The book concludes with a discussion of the implications for studying opposition politics in the region and highlights key insights from this study that can inform how we interpret the contentious events of the Arab Spring and after.

Notes

1. See, for example, Geddes (1999), Gandhi and Przeworski (2006, 2007), Gandhi (2008), Lust-Okar (2006), Magaloni (2006, 2008), Brownlee (2007), Blaydes (2011), and Miller (2012). See also Gandhi and Lust-Okar (2009) for an excellent overview of the authoritarian elections literature.
2. Diamond (2015) notes that "around 2006, the expansion of freedom and democracy in the world came to a prolonged halt. Since 2006, there has been no net expansion in the number of electoral democracies, which has oscillated between 114 and 119 (about 60 percent of the world's states)." He further remarks: "the number of both electoral and liberal democracies began to decline after 2006 and then flattened out" (p. 142).
3. See, for example, Diamond (2002), Schedler (2002a, 2006), and Levitsky and Way (2002). Common classifications include pseudo-democratic, semi-democratic, hybrid, or electoral authoritarian regimes.
4. Another classification that is common, especially in the democratization by election subliterature, is competitive versus hegemonic authoritarianism. Brownlee (2009), however, notes that while Iran might be considered a competitive authoritarian state, the Arab states in the Middle East region would not be (p. 131; see also Brownlee 2007).

5. A related set of arguments looks at how electoral manipulation and the presence of international election observers affect the likelihood of an election boycott (Beaulieu and Hyde 2009; Kelley 2011).
6. There are of course exceptions; for example, the Islamic Action Front's boycott of the 2007 municipal elections in Jordan and the boycott of the 1999 presidential elections in Algeria by the "Group of Six."
7. Freedom House. 2016. *Freedom in the World, 1973–2016.*
8. The theory advanced here does not preclude non-party opposition actors. There are important non-party opposition actors (e.g., civil society groups, such as the *aarchs* in Algeria), in both Jordan and Algeria. However, given that one of the primary goals of the theory is to explain the strategic choices behind a party's decision to participate in or boycott elections, I selected opposition political parties as the unit of analysis for the case studies.
9. See "Assessment of the Electoral Framework," 2007, p. 9.
10. Aghrout and Zoubir (2012, p. 39). Roberts (2007) refers to the FFS as the "principled" opposition. One Algerian expert considers neither the Worker's Party nor the Rally for Culture and Democracy to be "proper" opposition parties (A1, Interview with author, April 2011). See also Storm (2014) on this point.

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CHAPTER 2

Explaining Election Boycotts

"Voting in the elections is a political farce that has no benefit."[1] This quote captures the essence of both popular and academic explanations for why opposition groups decide to boycott elections. Much of the theorizing about election boycotts emphasizes election-related causes. The emphasis on election-related causes of the decision to boycott is not without merit. Boycotts are after all *electoral* protests. Given the type of elections that are most frequently boycotted, the conditions under which elections are held certainly matter and electoral-based explanations have provided important insights into the factors that drive opposition boycott-participation decisions. But election-specific theories are unable to account for the fact that not all authoritarian elections are boycotted, nor can they explain why opposition parties rarely boycott every election. Instead, they participate some years and boycott others, all despite persistent authoritarianism and unfair electoral processes. Even within a single election, some opposition groups may choose to boycott while others decide to participate.[2]

This chapter surveys the state of the current literature and the limitations of existing theories for understanding how opposition groups have responded to the dilemmas posed by authoritarian elections in the Arab world between 1990 and 2010. I first offer a brief overview of elections and boycotts in the electoral authoritarian regimes of the Arab world. I then examine the electoral-based explanations, which fall into three broad categories: poor electoral prospects, fraud and unfair elections, and unjust electoral rules. I show

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that theories that understand boycotts solely as responses to election-specific factors fall well short in accounting for the electoral strategies of opposition parties across the Arab world. Which is not to suggest that the integrity of the electoral process is unimportant. Rather, the analysis motivates the need to look beyond electoral factors if we are to improve our understanding of strategic choice in authoritarian elections.

2.1 Elections and Boycotts in the Arab World

The Arab world has not been immune to the worldwide trend in the rise of electoral authoritarian regimes since the 1990s. Political reforms that swept across the region resulted in the establishment—or reestablishment—of multiparty elections and parliamentary politics. By the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, many Arab countries had established some kind of national-level elections. Others, like Saudi Arabia and Qatar, have municipal-level elections but have yet to hold elections for a national parliament or consultative council. The UAE has held national-level elections since 2006 but has yet to implement universal suffrage. Twenty of the 40 members of the UAE's Federal National Council are indirectly elected by an electoral college whose members are chosen by lottery; the remaining 20 are appointed. Likewise, although Oman has held elections for its consultative assembly since 1991, members were indirectly elected with suffrage restricted to approximately one in four citizens.[3] The 2003 elections in Oman were the first to have candidates directly elected through universal suffrage.

In the words of Nathan Brown (2012), "Elections have simply become part of the institutional landscape" (p. 19). During elections, citizens and elites have an opportunity to participate in the electoral process, build constituencies, publish election platforms, and hold rallies. In addition, elections are widely publicized events. In most of the electoral autocracies, opposition political parties are legal and multiparty elections are not a rare event. A few regimes retain more constraints on party politics: in Oman, political parties are illegal; in Kuwait and Bahrain, formal political parties are illegal but political groups (Kuwait) and political societies (Bahrain) are formally or informally allowed and function as de facto political parties.

Just as elections have become standard features in Arab politics today, so too have opposition boycotts. Table 2.1 shows the number of elections and boycotts in each of the 12 Arab autocracies for which there

Table 2.1 Elections and boycotts in the Arab world, 1990–2010

Country	*Regime type*	*Number of elections*	*Multiparty elections*	*Number of boycotts*
Algeria[a]	Presidential republic	7	Multiparty	6
Bahrain	Monarchy	3	Political societies	3
Egypt	Presidential republic	6	Multiparty	4
Iraq (pre-2003)[b]	Presidential republic	2	No	0
Iraq (post-2003)	Parliamentary republic	3	Multiparty	2
Jordan	Monarchy	5	Multiparty	2
Kuwait	Monarchy	8	Political groups	1
Lebanon	Parliamentary republic	5	Multiparty	3
Morocco	Monarchy	4	Multiparty	1
Oman	Monarchy	2	No	0
Syria	Presidential republic	5	No[c]	2
Tunisia[d]	Presidential republic	4	Multiparty	2
Yemen	Presidential republic	5	Multiparty	2

[a]Excludes the 1991 parliamentary elections that were canceled after the first round
[b]Presidential elections for Syria and Iraq are excluded as they were referenda on the incumbent presidents, as are the 1993 and 1999 presidential referenda in Egypt
[c]Syria allowed only a select set of parties (those within the National Progressive Front) to participate
[d]Presidential elections held concurrent with legislative elections

were direct elections for members of the national parliament or consultative council between 1990 and 2010. With the exception of Kuwait, where women did not regain the right to vote until 2006, there was universal suffrage for all elections. In the presidential republics, there was a mix of contested presidential elections and referenda on incumbent presidents. During this period, Algeria held several contested presidential elections—the first in 1995—whereas Egypt had only one contested (multi-candidate) presidential election in 2005. The remainder of the presidential elections, including Iraq under Saddam Hussein and Syria under Hafez and Bashar al-Assad, were referenda. For presidential republics, the number of elections listed in Table 2.1 excludes the presidential referenda in Egypt (1993 and 1999), Iraq (1995), and Syria (1991, 1999, 2000, and 2007).

Table 2.1 reveals that elections were boycotted in every country, with the exception of Oman and of Iraq under the Baathist regime. Opposition boycott campaigns generally justify the decision to withdraw from participation by citing election-related factors, including electoral rules and beliefs that the elections are unlikely to be free and fair. In addition, many also demand electoral reforms as well as broader political and constitutional reforms. However, not all opposition boycotts focus solely or even primarily on election-related concerns. Following the end of the civil war in Lebanon and the resumption of elections in the 1990s, boycotting parties protested the presence of a foreign power in the country. The 1992 boycott by Maronite political parties targeted the Syrian occupation, which the parties said inhibited the ability of Lebanon to hold free elections (Beaulieu 2014, p. 155). A boycott by a different set of Christian parties in 2000 also cited the continued Syrian occupation as motivating their decision to boycott.

Although in most countries opposition groups boycotted at least one national-level election during this period, we also observe opposition participation. In the majority of the countries, participation appears to be the norm, and boycotting the exception. Bahrain and Algeria, on the other hand, saw the opposite pattern, with boycotted elections more common relative to the number of total elections. Bahrain experienced an election boycott in each of the three legislative elections it held between 1990 and 2010. The National Islamic Accord (*Jama'iyyat al-Wifaq al-Watani al-Islamiyya* or al-Wifaq), one of the main opposition groups in Bahrain, boycotted the 2002 elections over concerns about the electoral process and the status of reform, but the group participated in the 2006 and 2010 elections. Another opposition political group, the unregistered Movement for Liberty and Democracy (*Harakat Haq al-Hurriya wa al-Dimuqratiyya* or Haq), boycotted the 2006 and 2010 elections in protest of gerrymandered electoral districts and the 2002 constitution.[4] Even though there was a boycott of every Bahraini election during this period, different opposition groups called for a boycott in each of the three elections.

Similarly in Algeria, with the exception of the 1997 legislative elections, at least one opposition group boycotted every election since 1995. The 1997 legislative elections were the first parliamentary elections to be held since the 1992 coup, which interrupted the initial political liberalization that began in the late 1980s. The main opposition party, *Front des Forces Socialistes* (FFS), participated in 1997, but boycotted the other six elections, both presidential and legislative, held during this period. In those

six elections, other political parties oscillated between participation and boycott. *Rassemblement pour la Culture et la Démocratie* (RCD), for example, boycotted two elections—the 1999 presidential and 2002 legislative elections—and participated in the other five electoral contests.

The cases of the Arab world are emblematic of a common pattern of boycott-participation often observed in authoritarian elections. Although opposition parties may not know the full extent of electoral manipulation, electoral loss and unfair electoral environments are virtual certainties in electoral autocracies. Boycotts are not. Despite the fact that authoritarian elections offer little possibility of turnover, we, nevertheless, observe that opposition parties participate in such elections at times and, at others, boycott. Furthermore, even if there is a boycott every election, it does not necessarily follow that the same—or same set of—opposition groups will choose to boycott each election.

2.2 Electoral Prospects

One electoral-based explanation for boycotts is poor electoral prospects. Myriad factors can influence electoral prospects, including the electoral rules, fraud and the fairness of the electoral process, access to media, and other laws and actions—such as violence—that restrict the ability of the opposition to campaign. According to this set of arguments, opposition parties boycott because they believe they will lose and want to avoid a loss at the polls (Bratton 1998; Pastor 1999). Bratton (1998) argues that "we should remain alert to the possibility that a boycott, rather than reflecting a flawed electoral process, can be a ruse by opposition parties that have concluded they have no chance of winning" (p. 53). Electoral prospects do factor into opposition parties' decisions, especially when considering in which districts to run. For example, when the Islamic Action Front (IAF) in Jordan participates, it does not nominate candidates in districts where it has little chance of winning. Although this argument may provide insight into why most boycotts occur in authoritarian elections, it offers little insight into the variation we observe across authoritarian regimes over time.

When opposition political groups are allowed to participate in authoritarian elections, they will often gain at least a few seats in the national legislature. Due to the nature of authoritarian elections, however, the opposition has, except in rare circumstances, little chance of winning a majority of seats or the presidency. As noted by Schedler (2013), "In electoral authoritarian regimes, governments deploy a broad repertoire of

manipulative strategies to keep winning elections. They ban parties, prosecute candidates, harass journalists, intimidate voters, forge election results, and so forth. Their proximate goal is to contain the uncertainty of electoral outcomes" (p. 1). Given the reduced uncertainty of electoral outcomes and the limited possibility of turnover, why do opposition groups ever participate?

Opposition groups in the Arab world appear well aware of the negligible probability of winning a majority. As one example that "victory is not an option" seems well understood by opposition groups, both Brown (2012) and Wegner (2011) point to opposition groups' electoral approach of limited coverage, which suggest strategies of "participation not domination" (Brown 2012, p. 6). Brown further notes,

> While most [opposition groups] would be delighted (if astonished) to win, they almost never enter any particular election expecting to win a majority…. For the most realistic opposition leaders, elections are not about governing in the near future but about building a movement, articulating an agenda, and using the limited openings that elections can offer. (p. 24)

Given that the opposition and regime alike are well aware that the opposition is unlikely to win in any significant fashion, avoiding a loss at the polls seems an unlikely driver of boycott-participation decisions and does little to explain the observed variation in these decisions. Even with biased electoral rules and electoral processes that are neither free nor fair, we nevertheless observe participation in elections in which the opposition has minimal hope of electoral victory. Opposition groups in the Arab world are always likely to lose, but poor electoral prospects have not beholden most opposition groups to a fixed response (e.g., always boycott) to the strategic dilemma of authoritarian elections.

2.3 Unfair Elections

Fraud and unfair electoral processes are perhaps the most commonplace explanation offered for opposition boycotts. Both in the scholarly literature and in the popular press, the dominant narrative is that opposition groups boycott elections to protest fraud and electoral processes that are neither free nor fair (Bratton 1998; Lindberg 2006, 2009; Schedler 2009; Beaulieu 2014). Undoubtedly, most boycotting opposition parties have legitimate objections to the way elections are conducted. Although boycotts occur in both democratic and authoritarian elections around the

world, the vast majority of boycotts occur in regimes rated either "Not Free" or "Partly Free" by Freedom House (2016). Given the nature of the regimes under which most boycotts occur, and the fact that the fairness of the electoral process is included as part of the ratings system for Freedom House, unfair electoral processes are, in fact, not unimportant in explaining the incidence of boycotting around the world. Still more, "by definition," Morse (2012) reminds us, "all electoral authoritarian regimes engage in some form of unfair electoral behavior" (p. 175).

Moreover, many of the statements made by opposition groups about their decisions to boycott, in the Arab world and elsewhere, call attention to concerns about fraud and the overall unfairness of the electoral process. Prior to the 2010 parliamentary elections in Jordan, then-president of the IAF Shura Council Ali Abdul Sukkar stated that for the IAF "to take part in the elections, there must be guarantees from the government and other bodies that they will not tamper with results" (Ben Hussein 2010). Similarly, boycotting parties in Algeria questioned the regime's ability to conduct free and fair elections in 2002, alleging that the previous two elections (in 1997 and 1999) were rife with fraud and asserting that the parties expected the 2002 legislative elections to be no different.[5] One encounters countless statements like these issued by opposition groups who have decided to boycott. It is therefore not surprising that one of the foremost explanations for boycotts is an unfair electoral process.

Incumbent elites have a large arsenal of tools to manipulate or engineer the results of elections in their favor, ranging from behavioral or blatant manipulation of the polling process (e.g., tampering with vote counts and registration rolls, violence, intimidation) to so-called legal manipulation, which includes redrawing district boundaries, allocating seats disproportionally, and altering the electoral formula (Bratton 1998; Lust-Okar and Jamal 2002; Schedler 2002, 2013). Unfair elections can also refer to the overall environment in which the elections take place, such as freedom of and access to the press and restrictions on opposition campaigns and candidates (e.g., preventing individual candidates from running).

To better understand the influence of electoral fairness on the decision to boycott, I utilize Hyde and Marinov's (2012) National Elections Across Democracy and Autocracy (NELDA) dataset. Electoral fairness is measured with four indicator variables that capture several key dimensions of electoral malpractice: (1) concerns about whether elections will be free and fair (nelda11); (2) preventing opposition leaders from running (nelda13); (3) harassment of the opposition (nelda15); and (4) widespread criticism of the government's handling of election (nelda28).[6] Information on whether the

election was boycotted also comes from the NELDA dataset.[7] For Arab elections, the boycott variable was recoded to correspond to my coding of elections in the Arab world as shown in Table 2.1.[8] In addition, the presidential referenda in Iraq, Egypt, and Syria are excluded from the analysis when examining the Arab electoral autocracies so that only presidential elections in which the opposition had the opportunity to nominate candidates are included.

Table 2.2 presents the relationship between these four electoral fairness indicators and boycotts for all elections, both democratic and authoritarian, held between 1990 and 2010 and in the 12 Arab electoral authoritarian regimes. We can see from Table 2.2 that there is certainly a relationship

Table 2.2 Relationship between boycotts and electoral fairness

	All elections		*Arab elections*	
	(Frequency)		*(Frequency)*	
	No	*Yes*	*No*	*Yes*
Concerns that elections would not be free and fair				
No boycott	96.35%	68.51%	66.67%	41.18%
	(818)	(346)	(14)	(21)
Boycott	3.65%	31.49%	33.33%	58.82%
	(31)	(159)	(7)	(30)
	$\chi^2(1) = 203.3555$****		$\chi^2(1) = 3.8690$**	
Opposition leaders prevented from running				
No boycott	88.47%	70.24%	50.98%	40.00%
	(1074)	(118)	(26)	(8)
Boycott	11.53%	29.76%	49.02%	60.00%
	(140)	(50)	(25)	(12)
	$\chi^2(1) = 41.3589$****		$\chi^2(1) = 0.6941$	
Evidence that the government harassed opposition				
No boycott	90.13%	70.20%	52.38%	42.86%
	(1005)	(172)	(22)	(12)
Boycott	9.87%	29.80%	47.62%	57.14%
	(110)	(73)	(20)	(16)
	$\chi^2(1) = 68.5151$****		$\chi^2(1) = 0.6100$	
Widespread reports critical of the government's handling of elections				
No boycott	86.22%	73.04%	57.14%	34.62%
	(344)	(298)	(24)	(9)
Boycott	13.78%	26.96%	42.86%	65.38%
	(55)	(110)	18	(17)
	$\chi^2(1) = 21.5316$****		$\chi^2(1) = 3.2627$*	

*$p < 0.10$; **$p < 0.05$; ***$p < -0.01$; ****$p < 0.0001$

between unfair elections and boycotts, both among all elections and to a lesser extent among the Arab authoritarian elections. Boycotts occurred at a higher rate in elections for which: there were concerns about the freeness and fairness of the elections; the opposition was prevented from running; evidence existed that the government harassed the opposition; and the government's handling of the election was widely criticized. In other words, all four measures of electoral fairness are significantly related to the incidence of boycotts when we pool democratic and authoritarian elections together.

When we consider only the authoritarian elections in the Arab world, however, we see that the incidence of boycotting was higher in elections for which there were concerns about the freeness and fairness of the elections and the government's handling of the election as well as harassment of and restrictions on the opposition. But the relationship between the measures of electoral fairness and the rate of boycotts is much weaker. Only the first indicator—concerns about freedom and fairness—has a significant relationship with the incidence of boycotting.

Moreover, a focus on the relationship between boycotts and electoral fairness misses important patterns within countries across elections. The electoral fairness indicators do not explain important variation and suggest more than concerns about the electoral process factor into the boycott-participation decisions of opposition groups. Consider the cases of Jordan and Bahrain. Table 2.3 presents ratings on the four electoral fairness indi-

Table 2.3 Electoral fairness indicators and boycotts in Jordan and Bahrain

Country	*Year*	*Concerns about fairness?*	*Opposition prevented from running?*	*Was the opposition harassed?*	*Widespread critical reports?*	*Were the elections boycotted?*
Bahrain	2002	Yes	No	No	No	Boycott
	2006	No	No	No	No	Boycott
	2010	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Boycott
Jordan	1993	No	No	No	No	No Boycott
	1997	No	No	No	No	Boycott
	2003	No	No	No	No	No Boycott
	2007	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No Boycott
	2010	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Boycott

cators for each election held by Jordan and Bahrain from 1993 to 2010 and notes whether the election was boycotted by at least one opposition group.

Jordan held five elections between 1990 and 2010. The first three elections (1993, 1997, 2003), according to these indicators, were reasonably fair: there were no concerns that the elections would not be free and fair, no evidence that the government prevented opposition candidates from running or harassed the opposition, and no widespread reports critical of the government's handling of the elections ("No" for each of four indicators). The IAF participated in 1993, boycotted in 1997, and returned to the polls in 2003. By contrast, the elections in 2007 and 2010 were regarded as unfair and earned "Yes" for each of the four indicators. In these markedly more unfair elections compared to the previous three, the opposition participated in 2007 but boycotted in 2010.[9]

We observe a somewhat different discrepancy between electoral fairness indicators and boycotts across elections in Bahrain. In 2002, the opposition group al-Wifaq boycotted the first election in which there were concerns that the elections would not be free and fair ("Yes" to the first measure). For this election, there were no concerns about the government preventing the opposition from running or its harassment of opposition candidates, and there were no widespread reports critical of the government's handling of the election ("No" for each of the remaining three indicators). Looking at Table 2.3, we can see that the second legislative elections in 2006 were deemed reasonably fair, with the newly established opposition group Haq boycotting and al-Wifaq participating. Haq boycotted and al-Wifaq participated again in 2010, which were the least fair of the three elections ("Yes" to all four variables) during this period. Looking only at al-Wifaq across the 2002 and 2006 elections, its electoral strategies would seem consistent with the argument that opposition parties boycott unfair elections. If we extend the analysis to the 2010 elections, however, this theory offers little help in explaining al-Wifaq's decision to participate in the period's least fair elections. In addition, the decision of Haq, which was established in 2005, to not participate in 2006 is also at odds with what we would expect if we conceive of a group's participation-boycott decisions solely as strategic responses to electoral malpractice.

Table 2.2 shows that some of the variation in authoritarian regime election boycotts can be explained as reactions to concerns about electoral

fairness. But when we look within countries across elections and, importantly, across opposition groups, there is significant variation not explained by the unfair elections argument. Electoral fairness cannot explain why an opposition party willingly participates in one election and chooses to boycott another. Moreover, the electoral fairness indicators cannot explain the divergence in strategies adopted by different opposition groups in the same country and electoral environment.

2.4 Electoral Rules

The third and final electoral factor to consider is the electoral system used for national parliamentary (lower house) elections. Staffan Lindberg (2006) argues that majoritarian electoral systems will be associated with more opposition boycotts due to "lower incentives for participation" and the more adversarial nature of majoritarian systems (pp. 157–158). Similarly, Schedler (2013) argues that boycotts are influenced by electoral systems, which can raise or lower the costs of boycotting. Specifically, Schedler argues that, "in proportional and mixed-member systems, even small parties (depending on effective thresholds of representation) have something to lose by withdrawing from electoral competition. In majority WTA [winner take all] systems, by contrast, they often cannot aspire to win seats even when they enjoy considerable popular support" (p. 320). Because majoritarian systems lower the costs to boycotting and lower incentives for participation, we would expect to observe more boycotts under majoritarian electoral systems than under proportional representation or mixed systems.

As with unfair electoral processes, the emphasis on electoral rules is not entirely misplaced. Opposition parties across the region, and in authoritarian elections more generally, have good reasons to protest electoral laws. Arab regimes use various aspects of electoral systems, including electoral formulas and districting, to engineer loyal parliaments. For example, in both Algeria and Jordan the regimes changed the electoral rules to disadvantage major opposition parties after the first post-political liberalization elections in 1991 and 1989, respectively.[10] Electoral systems continue to be a salient point of contention between opposition groups and regimes across the region and demands to reform the electoral rules are often the focus of boycotting campaigns. To take just one example, the Bahraini opposition pointed to biased districting as one of the reasons for its 2014 boycott of

parliamentary elections, declaring: "The ballot box cannot result in the true will of the populace and real representation without a fair redistricting [fair distribution of constituencies]."[11]

Nevertheless, the electoral rules argument has three important limitations. First, while the vast majority of legislative boycotts occur under majoritarian electoral systems, authoritarian regimes are more likely to use majoritarian electoral systems for legislative elections. For instance, Lindberg (2006), in his study of elections in sub-Saharan Africa, finds that majoritarian electoral systems are boycotted at a higher rate, but also finds that "75 percent of all flawed elections occurred in majoritarian electoral systems" (p. 161). After controlling for the overall fairness of the electoral process, any independent influence of electoral systems on the decision to boycott disappears. In the Arab world, eight of the electoral authoritarian regimes in Table 2.1 used some type of majoritarian-plurality electoral system for legislative elections throughout the whole period, as did Iraq for its legislative elections in 1996 and 2000.[12]

The second limitation concerns the relationship between the type of election, whether legislative or presidential, and boycotts. According to the logic outlined above, the "winner take all" nature of presidential elections lowers the cost of boycotting and the incentives for participation (Schedler 2013). We would thus expect presidential elections to be boycotted at a higher rate than legislative elections. Using the NELDA dataset, Table 2.4 shows the relationship between election type and boycotts for all elections—both democratic and authoritarian—and for the Arab authoritarian elections.

Table 2.4 Boycott and participation by election type

	All elections		*Arab elections*	
	Legislative	*Presidential*	*Legislative*	*Presidential*
	(Frequency)	*(Frequency)*	*(Frequency)*	*(Frequency)*
No boycott	85.58% (754)	87.15% (441)	53.23% (33)	27.27% (3)
Boycott	14.42% (127)	12.85% (65)	46.77% (29)	72.73% (8)
	$\chi^2(1) = 0.6639$		$\chi^2(1) = 2.5176$	

For both democratic and authoritarian elections, boycotts are no more likely to occur in presidential elections than in legislative elections.[13] Examining Arab authoritarian elections alone, we do observe much higher rates of boycotts in presidential elections; however, once we exclude presidential referenda, we are left with relatively few executive elections. Of the 11 presidential elections held during this 20-year period, 8 were boycotted—5 of which occurred in Algeria—and 3 were not. If electoral systems, and by extension the type of election, influence the decision to boycott, we would expect to observe patterns with respect to electoral institutions and boycotts that we simply do not.

Third, a more in-depth examination reveals a pattern for which electoral systems alone cannot account, even if there were empirical evidence of an independent effect. Although Arab regimes often tinker with various dimensions of the electoral systems, the type of electoral system—whether majoritarian/plurality, proportional representation, or mixed—remained relatively constant during this period.[14] Boycotts, on the other hand, did not. A recurring limitation of existing theories is the inability to account for within-country variation, where an opposition group in a particular country participates one year and chooses to boycott the next. In Jordan, the IAF vehemently opposed the adoption of the single non-transferable vote (SNTV) electoral system, which was adopted by decree just prior to the 1993 legislative elections. Despite the fact that SNTV was used for all parliamentary elections between 1993 and 2010, the IAF boycotted only twice in 1997 and 2010. The Jordanian case thus leaves us contemplating the relative infrequency of boycotting given the constancy of SNTV, one of the opposition's main grievances.

The theory's inability to explain within-country variation in boycotting behavior can also be seen in the case of Algeria. For the 1997, 2002, and 2007 legislative elections, Algeria used a proportional representation system with closed lists and a 5 percent threshold. The FFS participated in the first post-coup legislative elections in 1997 but boycotted the two subsequent two legislative elections. The RCD, on the other hand, boycotted the 2002 legislative elections but participated in both 1997 and 2007. The divergence between the FFS' and RCD's boycott-participation decisions raises further questions about how electoral systems can explain variation across political parties who face the same electoral rules each election.

2.5 Conclusion

Electoral factors are an important part of opposition parties' strategic choices under authoritarian regimes. Most boycotts occur in authoritarian regimes under elections that are neither free nor fair because of fraud, unfair electoral rules, and/or restrictions on political rights and civil liberties. But electoral factors alone are insufficient to explain the patterns of boycotting that we observe among the authoritarian elections in the Arab world. The limitations in the existing electoral-based explanations suggest that opposition decisions about whether to participate or boycott involve more than assessments about the fairness of the elections and electoral prospects. The next chapter sets forth a theory of opposition electoral decision making that can explain the variations unaccounted for by existing theories, and specifically why some elections appear to the opposition to be more favorable times to obtain reform via an election boycott and not others.

Appendix

Table 2.5 presents the NELDA electoral fairness indicators for elections in the 12 Arab electoral autocracies discussed in this chapter. In addition, the table displays whether the election was boycotted according to (1) the NELDA dataset and (2) my own collection and coding of elections in the 12 Arab electoral autocracies.

Information on the electoral fairness indicators as well as the coding of boycotted elections according to NELDA can be found here: http://hyde.research.yale.edu/nelda/. For NELDA's boycott variable (nelda14), "N/A" was coded if either the opposition was banned or if there was no opposition at all.

The data I collected on boycotts between 1990 and 2008 for all elections, both democratic and authoritarian, were gathered using *Keesing's Record of World Events*. This record is published monthly, with a specific entry for each individual country in a particular month. The dataset includes both parliamentary and presidential elections, but I excluded presidential referenda. Because presidential referenda are excluded, I denote "N/A" for these elections in Table 2.5. An election was coded as boycotted if a political party or organization called for a

Table 2.5 NELDA electoral fairness indicators and election boycotts, 1990–2010

Country	*Year*	*Election type*	*nelda11*	*nelda13*	*nelda15*	*nelda28*	*nelda14*	*Author Coding*
Algeria	1995	Presidential	No	No	No	No	Boycott	Boycott
	1997	Legislative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Boycott	No boycott
	1999	Presidential	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Boycott	Boycott
	2002	Legislative	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Boycott	Boycott
	2004	Presidential	No	No	No data	No	Boycott	Boycott
	2007	Legislative	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Boycott	Boycott
	2009	Presidential	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Boycott	Boycott
Bahrain	2002	Legislative	Yes	No	No	No	Boycott	Boycott
	2006	Legislative	No	No	No	No	No boycott	Boycott
	2010	Legislative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	boycott	Boycott
Egypt	1990	Legislative	Yes	No	No	No	Boycott	Boycott
	1993	Presidential[a]	No	No Data	No Data	No	N/A	N/A
	1995	Legislative	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No boycott	Boycott[b]
	1999	Presidential[a]	No	No Data	No Data	No	No boycott	N/A
	2000	Legislative	Yes	No	Yes	No	No boycott	No boycott
	2005	Presidential	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No boycott	Boycott
	2010	Legislative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Boycott	Boycott
Iraq (under Saddam Hussein)	1995	Presidential[a]	Yes	No	No	No	Boycott	N/A
	1996	Legislative	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No boycott	No boycott
	2000	Legislative	Yes	Yes	No	No	No boycott	No boycott
Iraq (post-Saddam)	2005 (Jan)	Legislative	No	No	No	Yes	Boycott	Boycott
	2005 (Dec)	Legislative	No	No	No	Yes	Boycott	No boycott
	2010	Legislative	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No boycott	Boycott

(*continued*)

Table 2.5 (continued)

Country	*Year*	*Election type*	*nelda11*	*nelda13*	*nelda15*	*nelda28*	*nelda14*	*Author Coding*
Jordan	1993	Legislative	No	No	No	No	No boycott	No boycott
	1997	Legislative	No	No	No	No	Boycott	Boycott
	2003	Legislative	No	No	No	No	No boycott	No boycott
	2007	Legislative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No boycott	No boycott
	2010	Legislative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Boycott	Boycott
Kuwait	1990	Legislative	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Boycott	Boycott
	1992	Legislative	Yes	No	No	No	No boycott	No boycott
	1996	Legislative	Yes	No	No	No	No boycott	No boycott
	1999	Legislative	No	No	No	No	No boycott	No boycott
	2003	Legislative	Yes	No	No	No	No boycott	No boycott
	2006	Legislative	No	No	No	No	No boycott	No boycott
	2008	Legislative	Yes	No	No	Yes	No boycott	No boycott
	2009	Legislative	Yes	No	No	Yes	No boycott	No boycott
Lebanon	1992	Legislative	Yes	No	No	Yes	Boycott	Boycott
	1996	Legislative	Yes	No	No	Yes	Boycott	Boycott
	2000	Legislative	Yes	No	No	No	Boycott	Boycott
	2005	Legislative	Yes	No	No	No	No boycott	No boycott[c]
	2009	Legislative	No	No	No	N/A	No boycott	No boycott
Morocco	1993	Legislative	Yes	No	No	No	Boycott	Boycott
	1997	Legislative	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No boycott	No boycott
	2002	Legislative	No	No	No	No	No boycott	No boycott
	2007	Legislative	No	No	No	Yes	No boycott	No boycott
Oman	2003	Legislative	No	No	No	No	No boycott	No boycott
	2007	Legislative	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	No boycott

(*continued*)

Table 2.5 (continued)

Country	*Year*	*Election type*	*nelda11*	*nelda13*	*nelda15*	*nelda28*	*nelda14*	*Author Coding*
Syria	1990	Legislative	Yes	No	No	No	No boycott	No boycott
	1991	Presidential[a]	No	Yes	No	Yes	Boycott	N/A
	1994	Legislative	Yes	No	No	No	No boycott	No boycott
	1998	Legislative	Yes	No	No	No	No boycott	No boycott
	1999	Presidential[a]	No	Yes	No	Yes	Boycott	N/A
	2000	Presidential[a]	No	Yes	No	Yes	Boycott	N/A
	2003	Legislative	Yes	No	No	No	No boycott	Boycott
	2007	Legislative	Yes	Yes	No	No	Boycott	Boycott
	2007	Presidential[a]	Yes	No	No	Yes	No boycott	N/A
Tunisia	1994	Presidential[d]	No Data	Yes	Yes	No	Boycott	No boycott
	1994	Legislative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Unclear	Boycott	No boycott
	1999	Presidential	No	No	Yes	No Data	Boycott	No boycott
	1999	Legislative	No	Unclear	Unclear	No	Boycott	No boycott
	2004	Presidential	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Boycott	Boycott
	2004	Legislative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Boycott	Boycott
	2009	Presidential	Yes	No	Yes	No data	No boycott	Boycott
	2009	Legislative	Yes	No	Yes	N/A	No Boycott	Boycott
Yemen	1993	Legislative	No	No	No	No	No boycott	No boycott
	1997	Legislative	No	No	No	No	Boycott	Boycott
	1999	Presidential	No	No	No	No	Boycott	Boycott
	2003	Legislative	Yes	No	Yes	No	No boycott	No boycott
	2006	Presidential	Yes	No	No	No	No boycott	No boycott

[a]Presidential referenda
[b]The opposition withdrew in the second round
[c]There was a call for a boycott in Beirut
[d]Tunisian presidential and legislative elections held concurrently. In 1994, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was elected unopposed

boycott of the election. The emphasis was placed on an organized call for a boycott to differentiate between voter abstention and decisions taken by opposition groups (the interest of this book). Thus, only those elections in which there was a clear call to boycott the election by an opposition party or group are considered boycotted in the dataset. The original dataset (1990–2008) was checked and updated through 2010 for the 12 Arab electoral autocracies using LexisNexis news sources and Google search engine.

Notes

1. Comment on the 2016 Moroccan parliamentary elections from Islamist and leftist boycotting groups. Al-Ashraf, H. (6 September 2016). 'Muqta'at al-intikhabat al-magrebiya tajma'a yasaryeen wa islamyeen.' *Al Araby*. Retrieved from https://www.alaraby.co.uk/politics/3af87186-e46a-4363-99da-0959d5911537.
2. Beaulieu (2014) refers to election boycotts in which all opposition parties choose not to participate as unified boycotts.
3. Al-Farsi (2013). See also http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/2378_07.htm for more information on how electors were selected (Inter-Parliamentary Union. 2008. "Majles A'Shura – Elections in 2007").
4. A former member of al-Wifaq, Hassan Mushayma founded Haq in 2005. According to Wehrey (2014), Mushayma led a hardline faction within al-Wifaq before defecting with others over disputes about strategy and participation in particular. He notes, "Well before 2005, tensions were brewing in al-Wifaq's ranks, between clerics and seasoned lay activists of the intifada. It is likely that the decision to form Haq was as much of a result of these cleric-lay tensions as it was a dispute over political strategy and the merits of boycotting or participating" (see "The Rise of the Rejectionists: Haq and Its Allies").
5. Tamani, 'FFS et RCD opposes aux elections,' *El Watan*, 14 February 2002, p. 2. Faouzia Ababsa, 'FFS rejette le processus electoral,' *La Tribune*, 30 March 2002, Front Page. Faouzia Ababsa, 'Le RCD dans la logique du rejet des elections legislatives,' *La Tribune*, 7 March 2002, Front Page.
6. For more information about this dataset, including the raw data and codebook, see http://hyde.research.yale.edu/nelda/. See also Norris (2014) and Donno (2013) for the use of the NELDA variables to measure electoral fairness. Another common measure of electoral fairness/malpractice is election observers' assessments of electoral fraud. The problem with

using observer assessments of fraud to examine the relationship with boycotts is the potential impact of a boycott on domestic and international observers' assessments of whether the elections were in fact fraudulent (see Beaulieu 2006, p. 17; Bratton 1998).

7. According to Hyde and Marinov, "If at least some opposition leaders announced and carried out a public boycott of the election, a 'Yes' was coded. If not, a 'No' was coded." Calls for boycotts from banned opposition are excluded from this variable (coded as "N/A").
8. For Arab elections, missing data in the NELDA dataset for whether the election was boycotted in Algeria (1991) and Oman (2007) were filled in according to my own data. See Table 2.5 for the discrepancy between my own categorization of boycotted elections in the Arab world and Hyde & Marinov's coding.
9. Table 2.5 presents this information for all 12 Arab countries for each election held between 1990 and 2010.
10. See Baaklini et al. (1999) on Jordan and Bouandel (2005) on Algeria.
11. (2014, October 11). The Bahraini opposition declares boycott of legislative elections. *Al Jazeera*. Retrieved from http://www.aljazeera.net/news/arabic/2014/10/11/.
12. Morocco used a majoritarian electoral system for two of its legislative elections (1993 and 1997). Algeria also used a majoritarian electoral system for its legislative elections in 1991.
13. An examination of Beaulieu's (2014) data, which covers elections between 1975 and 2006 in developing countries, similarly reveals no significant relationship between election type and boycotts: 11.17 percent (41 of 367) of legislative elections and 10.20 percent (40 of 392) of presidential elections were boycotted. Beaulieu's data is available from http://blog.as.uky.edu/beaulieu/?page_id=12.
14. There were of course some exceptions, such as the changes discussed previously to the electoral systems in Algeria and Jordan.

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CHAPTER 3

Participation, Boycott, and Protest in Authoritarian Elections

Boycott or participate? This is a critical question for opposition parties when authoritarian elections loom. A political cartoon published online amidst a widening call for an opposition boycott of Egypt's March 2018 presidential elections captures the dilemma opposition parties often face. In the first panel of the cartoon, a man proclaims, "He who runs will be humiliated!" The second panel shows a second man whispering to the first; and in the final frame, the first man updates his proclamation: "He who doesn't run will be humiliated!"[1] In the context of authoritarian elections, neither participation nor boycott may seem a particularly good option. A boycott can result in reform, but it can also fail, leaving the opposition with neither reform nor a voice in parliament.

Opposition groups vary in how they resolve this dilemma, with some choosing to boycott and others opting to participate. From one election to the next, a given opposition group may adopt different approaches. Most opposition parties do not take these participation-boycott decisions lightly. Heated internal debates often ensue and either option can result in potentially irreconcilable divisions within the party.

Boycotting parties face real costs when they choose to forego participation. By sitting out the election, the opposition loses any chance—however small—to influence policy through parliament. By extension, the boycotting opposition loses the opportunity to use parliament as a platform for criticizing the regime and making a case to potential supporters. For example, a leader in Jordan's IAF and Muslim Brotherhood—speaking

G. J. Buttorff, *Authoritarian Elections and Opposition Groups in the Arab World*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-92186-0_3

in 2009 about previous electoral choices—argued that the IAF should participate in elections despite weak electoral prospects, so that the party avoids losing a platform from which to speak on behalf of its supporters. He stated, "We have to share [participate] even when we don't have a big number. We are still on the ground, we still have a place to say something, and have power to protest for the people."[2] Boycotts can also impose additional financial costs for opposition parties, which can lose, in some cases, access to campaign finance if it is conditional on electoral participation (Beaulieu 2006).

Participating in elections in which the opposition is bound to lose may seem a fruitless endeavor or at the very least a waste of scarce resources that could be better allocated toward other activities. One cost, notes Wegner (2011), "is the potentially demoralizing and demobilizing effect [on supporters] of participation in elections that cannot be won" (p. xxviii). In addition, an opposition party may be reluctant to hold seats in the parliament for fear of appearing co-opted by the regime. A boycott, by contrast, offers a way to challenge a regime's purported commitments to democracy. In the post-Cold War era, many regimes face international pressure to at least appear committed to democracy, which includes holding regular elections (Beaulieu 2014; Hyde 2011).

The previous chapter highlighted the importance of looking beyond election-specific factors to explain variation in the electoral strategies of opposition parties across time and space. This chapter develops a theory that locates opposition actors themselves and their beliefs about the costs and benefits of each possible strategy at the center of this decision-making process. Ultimately, opposition beliefs about regime strength and legitimacy inform expectations about potential benefits and help determine the opposition's approach to a given election.

3.1 The Electoral Authoritarian Context: Strategies, Information, and Ideology

Even under authoritarian regimes, opposition parties have a wide range of strategies they can pursue to advance their policy agendas. Decisions about policy placement, which issues to adopt or emphasize, whether to be programmatic or clientelistic, how many candidates to run in a given district, and whether to form pre-electoral coalitions all offer important levers for parties seeking influence. Choosing whether to participate in an election is

another strategic possibility for opposition parties seeking change under authoritarian regimes. Because elections are an empirical reality of today's authoritarian regimes, attention to the choices that opposition parties make at election time is fundamental to understanding opposition politics in electoral authoritarian regimes.

As an election approaches, opposition parties have four potential actions at their disposal: participate in the election, boycott, hold post-election protests, and/or back down from its initial demands for reform. First the opposition must choose whether to participate or boycott. Boycotts are undertaken, at least in part, to secure reform of some sort, ranging from greater fairness in the electoral process to more general political reforms or even a particularistic benefit. If an opposition party chooses to boycott, the government then must decide whether to respond by offering reforms or to ignore the boycott altogether. If the government ignores the boycott, the opposition has another choice to make: mobilize post-election demonstrations, such as those experienced by Algeria after the 1999 presidential election, or back down from further confrontation with the regime, as the IAF did following its 1997 boycott of parliamentary elections.

If the opposition chooses to trigger post-election demonstrations, it will pay a mobilization cost and the government will pay a cost to silence or suppress the demonstrations.[3] Given that protests are costly, and knowing the opposition's threat of protests is credible, the government knows that ignoring the boycott will result in opposition-led protests which, as Beaulieu (2014) notes, "have [the] potential to destabilize the country" (p. 48).[4] For the government, the real danger of the opposition choosing to mobilize post-election protests is instability and the possibility of losing power. This does not mean that all or even most opposition parties seek to overthrow the regime; in fact, many would have reformist rather than revolutionary intentions. What it does mean, however, is that post-election demonstrations present the regime with some probability of losing support from its centers of power.[5] From the government's perspective then, the risks associated with such an event will depend on the support the regime is likely to receive from its centers of power, as well as on its costs of suppressing the protests. Importantly, "regimes," DeNardo (1985) reminds us, "differ markedly in their capacity to endure various kinds of disruption" (p. 35). Here regimes differ in their ability to endure periods of domestic unrest according to the willingness of centers of power to lend support during times of domestic turmoil. Weak regimes, by definition, are less likely to receive sufficient support from their centers of

power (i.e., are more vulnerable); thus the risks associated with post-election demonstrations are higher for weaker regimes than relatively stronger ones.

3.1.1 Information Asymmetries

Political actors rarely operate with complete information. Uncertainty is part of political reality. The key question, then, is who knows what when? Previous work on election boycotts explores how incomplete information about the level of electoral manipulation, opposition parties' electoral strength, and the regime's level of popular democratic legitimacy can influence the decision to boycott (Schedler 2009; Beaulieu 2014). Here, however, the choices of the opposition are made in the context of incomplete information about regime stability. While the government knows its own strength and the level of internal and external support it has, the opposition must rely on its beliefs about the government's true strength and vulnerability when determining the likelihood of obtaining reform through an election boycott.

Some have posited that the high potential cost of boycotting—namely, foregoing representation in the legislature—suggests that the opposition, not the regime, has private information.[6] In fact, much of the popular wisdom implicitly interprets boycotts as signals to both domestic and international audiences that the regime lacks legitimacy and/or the electoral process is irreparably flawed. Mainwaring and Scully (1995), for example, suggest that boycotts are an action undertaken to reject the legitimacy of the government and to achieve some reform in the rules. Others suggest that the decision to boycott can reflect private information about the opposition's weak electoral prospects (Bratton 1998; Pastor 1999).[7]

In the context of authoritarian elections in the Arab world, theories that emphasize the role of private information held by the opposition in boycott decisions raise more questions than they answer. For one, if boycotts signal a rejection of the legitimacy of the electoral process and/or regime, does participation signal acceptance? The assertion that a boycott conveys information about the legitimacy of the elections or the regime is not generally accompanied by a complementary argument about the information conveyed through participation. But we know that opposition parties rarely boycott every election, leaving us in a theoretical and empirical predicament regarding how to interpret the decision to participate.

Moreover, focusing on uncertainty about the opposition's electoral strength directs attention away from a critical actor: the regime. Uncertainty about the regime is fundamental to understanding government-opposition politics under authoritarian conditions and represents an important feature of the strategic environment in which opposition parties operate. In authoritarian states that control the dissemination of information and employ extensive coercive apparatuses (e.g., intelligence agencies, police, and military), the opposition is more likely to be uncertain about the situation of the regime than the regime is about the opposition (Lohmann 1994; Ginkle and Smith 1999; Gandhi 2008).[8]

Authoritarian regimes have "privileged access" to information (Svolik 2012).[9] Across the Middle East and North Africa, the *mukhabarat* (Arabic for "secret police") are one of the most powerful institutions, monitoring activities of citizens at universities, on street corners, in professional associations, and within opposition groups. In addition to extensive electronic surveillance, the *mukhabarat* also relies on networks of citizen informants to amass information about the opposition. In Jordan, for example, "the *mukhabarat* eavesdrops with the help of evidently thousands of Jordanians on its payroll, similar to the informant networks in the Soviet bloc" (MacFarquhar 2005).[10] This is not to claim that everything about the opposition is known by the regime; rather, the theory highlights the information asymmetries at play in authoritarian elections and the critical role that the opposition's uncertainty about regime strength can play in decisions about whether to participate or boycott.

3.1.2 Policy Preferences

In any given situation, the regime and the opposition will each have their own preferences for specific policy issues, such as the fairness of electoral process, access to press and publication freedoms, or any other reform an opposition party may seek.[11] The decision whether or not to boycott will be some function of the underlying distribution of power and policy preferences within the party itself. Which is not to say that parties easily arrive at consensus about the appropriate course of action. After all, parties are collections of individuals with differing preferences, and opposition groups, including the Islamic Action Front (IAF) and the Socialist Forces Front (FFS) discussed in Chaps. 5 and 6, often have vigorous internal debates about whether to participate or boycott. Ultimately, however, the various factions or individuals within the party must come to an agreement

on whether or not to boycott.[12] Thus parties can be said to act "as if" they were unitary actors (Laver and Schofield 1990).[13]

It is important to keep in mind that no assumption is made regarding the democratic leanings of opposition groups in authoritarian regimes. Some groups may espouse liberal democratic politics while others, like the Taliban—who have called for boycotts of recent elections in Afghanistan—may reject democracy entirely. Although many opposition demands can be considered efforts to advance democratic reforms—for example, seeking greater freedom of the press—they provide little indication of what the opposition would do if it rose to power. As such, the theory presented in this chapter places no restrictions on the ideological position of the opposition vis-à-vis democracy.[14] What matters here for understanding strategic choice during authoritarian elections is the degree of ideological polarization between the government and the opposition on a particular issue dimension.

3.2 The Decision to Participate

When an opposition party chooses to participate in an election, the probability of the party capturing power is inversely proportional to the government's likelihood of winning the election.[15] In electoral autocracies in the Arab world and elsewhere, the probability of a regime victory will be higher than in more democratic countries, reflecting the overall unfairness of the electoral environment.[16] Assuming a high probability of incumbent victory restricts attention to authoritarian elections. The high likelihood of an opposition loss at the polls under electoral authoritarian regimes raises a critical question: why would opposition parties that are overwhelmingly likely to lose decide to participate at all? Even when the probability that the government will win approaches 100 percent, opposition parties often still take part.

This willingness to participate despite the likelihood of a regime victory reflects opposition beliefs about regime stability and the cost of protesting post-election. If the costs of mobilization are too high for the opposition or the level of ideological polarization too low relative to the opposition's beliefs about regime stability, the opposition cannot credibly threaten post-election protests. Absent this threat, the government, regardless of strength, will ignore the boycott and its demands for reform. In this situation, a boycott would change nothing while also forfeiting any chance of exerting political influence by winning seats in parliament. Opposition parties value

parliamentary representation even when it provides little influence over policy because of the public platform it offers and potential access to resources.[17] Given that a boycott would leave the opposition without reform and without seats in parliament, participation becomes far more likely.

The electoral prospects of opposition groups in authoritarian elections are important (as discussed in Chap. 2) but not sufficient in explaining the decision to participate or boycott. Opposition groups that boycott are likely to lose the election, but not all groups likely to lose the election will boycott. Perceptions about the regime's strength, post-election mobilization costs, and policy preferences all factor into the opposition's decision. When a party has high mobilization costs, faces a strong regime that is unlikely to offer concessions, and/or espouses policy preferences relatively close to those of the regime, the odds of participation will be much higher. Differences in the costs of mobilization or opposition groups' policy preferences relative to the government also provide insight into why one group might boycott a particular election while another opposition party chooses to participate in that same election.[18]

It is important to keep in mind that participation should not be interpreted as opposition acceptance of the electoral process itself. Rather, it is about weighing the costs and benefits of the various strategic actions at the opposition's disposal. When an opposition group participates, it does so because of high post-election mobilization costs, its policy preferences relative to the government, and/or because it believes the government has strong support from its centers of power and is unlikely to offer reform. A statement from a member of Jordan's IAF underscores this point. Commenting on the party's decision to participate in rather than boycott the 2007 legislative elections, he explained that participation was not necessarily the "preferred" option, but it was the best option for the party given the conditions at the time: "It was only an option imposed on us at the time, and it does not necessarily express our satisfaction [with the strategy of participation]. The same was true in 2003."[19]

3.3 The Decision to Boycott

An important condition for boycotting is the ability to communicate a credible threat of post-election protests. In cases where threats to mobilize post-election demonstrations are not credible, the opposition will choose to participate despite the low probability of electoral victory. But when such a threat is at least initially credible, the opposition will instead opt for a boycott.

For the government to even consider offering concessions there must at least be a possibility of regime destabilization; otherwise, the government will ignore the boycotters' demands. To better understand this dynamic, consider the 2013 parliamentary elections held under Egypt's then-president Mohammed Morsi. In late February 2013, the National Salvation Front (a coalition of predominately leftist parties and groups) announced it would boycott the election. The decision to boycott drew both support and criticism. One critic, Egyptian activist Ahmed Abdelhamid, argued that "Boycotting elections is not enough … The opposition must make clear decisions, either continue the revolution or participate in politics" (quoted in Fleishman 2013). Abdelhamid's statement captures the intuition of the theory advanced here: if the opposition is not willing and able to mobilize post-election protests, it is better off participating.

Analyzing the decision to boycott or participate within this framework also provides an explanation for failed boycotts. Many boycotts, as noted by Frankel (2010), lead to neither reform nor regime change, leaving opposition parties worse off than before (p. 1). This fact has led many observers to dismiss boycotts as strategic mistakes and caution opposition parties against adopting this approach (Schedler 2009; Weeks 2013). If boycotts often do not result in positive change, why would a rational actor willingly choose a strategy that makes it worse off? One explanation is that the opposition parties are irrational or lack "strategic acumen" (Masoud 2014, p. 165). But to dismiss some actions as simply irrational is hardly a satisfying explanation. The literature has implied that opposition parties are strategic (at least at times), acting in their interests based on their calculations about participating in elections they are bound to lose and in parliaments that have little real power. Following Masoud (2014), it seems more appropriate to consider the conditions that lead a party to adopt strategies that leave it worse off rather than dismiss a party's decision as the product of irrationality or "political stupidity" (p. 165).[20]

The theory put forth here offers an explanation for the ostensibly counterintuitive decision to pursue a strategy that can ultimately leave the opposition party worse off than if it would have participated. For example, the 1997 Jordanian boycott left the opposition regretting their decision not to participate, which eliminated any chance of electing representatives who might publicize their concerns. But ex ante the decision to boycott made sense: given what the opposition believed was a possibility for reform as well as the low cost of mobilizing protests, the party made the right

decision based on the information it had at the time. When the decision to boycott appears irrational in hindsight, it reflects how information asymmetries can affect the opposition's calculus about the relative utility of strategies at its disposal.

3.4 The Government's Choice: Reform or Ignore

If the opposition decides to boycott the election, the government must decide whether to offer the opposition some sort of reform. Reform may involve the implementation of some compromise policy such as changes to the electoral rules. If the government opts for reform, the resulting policy outcome will fall somewhere between the government's ideal policy preference and that of the opposition. The benefit that the regime derives from offering reform depends on how far the new policy is from the government's ideal policy—the bigger the concession, the lower the benefit to the regime. Because offering reform can prevent the opposition from pursuing more contentious strategies after the election, the government's decision to reform or ignore will depend on its strength and support from its centers of power, the new policy outcome (reform), and the cost of suppressing post-election protests.

Boycotts that result in government concessions typically occur when the specter of post-election protests threatens a high cost for the government and low mobilization costs for the opposition. In these cases, even a relatively secure regime will offer reform rather than risk the price of putting down demonstrations. A similar pattern emerges with relatively weak regimes also facing high costs to suppressing protests. Under such conditions, regimes that can be easily destabilized will opt to prevent post-election mobilization by offering reform. By contrast, when both actors face low costs, the opposition will refuse to participate in the election, the government will ignore the boycott, and the opposition will protest after the election. Thus when the costs of suppressing demonstrations are sufficiently low, even weak governments are willing to run the risk of post-election demonstrations.

Heightened ideological divergence between the government and the boycotting opposition party can also result in reform. We typically think that the greater the divergence between these two actors, the higher the risk of escalating to a crisis. In some cases, however, an increase in polarization can lead to reform. For example, if the opposition is particularly extreme ideologically relative to the government, the likelihood of

reform increases. When protests are costly and risky, the certainty of a compromise becomes preferable to a lottery between extremes.

When the costs of reform and repression are neither too low nor too high for the regime, the determining factor in the decision to reform or ignore will be the government's strength. In these cases, strong governments will always ignore boycotts because they need not fear the consequences of post-election protests to the same extent as relatively weak regimes. Under these conditions, however, vulnerable regimes will choose reform in order to avoid greater instability, preferring instead to "trade concessions for tranquility" (DeNardo 1985, p. 35). As a result, reform will be more common among weak states that are in danger of losing their key bases of support. It is never the case that a strong regime reforms and a weak government ignores the demands of the boycotting opposition.

The willingness to engage in reforms if the potential costs of post-election conflict are high enough reveal that the regime's risks of a post-election political crisis are higher than the opposition's prior beliefs would have suggested. Situations such as this supply the logic for the oft-heard claim that a regime's willingness to consider reform will be interpreted as a sign of weakness. In addition, this finding echoes previous work that finds authoritarian regimes are more likely to establish institutions such as elections and legislatures when they are weak (see e.g., Gandhi and Przeworski 2006; Gandhi 2008; Miller 2013). The act of boycotting forces the government to respond, and the government's subsequent decision to reform or ignore can result in the regime revealing information about its own strength. Boycotting thus provides a way for the opposition to force the regime to reveal something about its own strength and ability to survive a potential post-election crisis brought about by opposition protests.[21]

3.5 The Opposition's Decision: Protest or Back Down

In addition to choosing whether to participate or boycott, opposition groups must decide whether to escalate when a boycott proves ineffective at generating reform. Of course, post-electoral protests occur for reasons other than failed boycotts. Opposition groups and citizens can take to the streets after the conclusion of an election to protest a fraudulent electoral process or the results of the contest (Tucker 2007; Kuntz and Thompson 2009; Chaisty and Whitefield 2013; Beaulieu 2014; Norris 2014; Sedziaka

and Rose 2015). But the demonstrations that follow an election boycott tend to be about more than just the election itself. Election boycotts are one element of a strategy opposition groups adopt to pressure authoritarian powers to reform; on occasion this means continuing the fight for reforms through post-election demonstrations if a boycott alone proves unsuccessful in obtaining reform.[22]

If the government ignores the opposition party's call for reform via a boycott, the opposition can continue its push for reform through post-election protests or it can back down and accept the failure of the boycott. Even before election day, the opposition must decide what it will do if its boycott is unsuccessful: will it continue its opposition via protests or will it back down from further confrontation with the regime? If the opposition choses to trigger post-election demonstrations, it will pay a mobilization cost and the government will pay a cost to silence or suppress the demonstrations. The opposition's decision to protest will also depend on its policy preferences relative to the regime and beliefs about regime stability and the likelihood of securing reform.

Strong regimes, recognizing the relatively low risk to their stability and power from any post-election protests, will always choose to ignore. Weak regimes face riskier prospects when confronted with demonstrations following an election and thus would prefer to reform if the opposition were going to protest. But if the opposition were to back down, weak regimes would prefer to ignore the boycott, resulting in a difficult strategic situation. In such situations, the opposition's beliefs are decisive in its strategic calculus: given its mobilization costs, the opposition will prefer to back down against a strong regime, but not against a weak one. In these cases, the opposition is faced with an incomplete information problem, not knowing with certainty which type of regime it is up against.

Backing down after a boycott represents the worst possible outcome for the opposition: not only has it backed down from a public challenge, but it is also left without an important platform (parliament) for broadcasting its views and attracting supporters. Because the decision to back down benefits only the regime, this set of choices represents the ideal outcome for the government, which not only avoids the costs of suppressing protests but also benefits from the lack of opposition in the legislature. No matter how much the opposition desires reform, if the party believes that the regime is well anchored to its bases of support and is unlikely to offer reform, the opposition will choose to participate rather than risk what it can only assume will be a futile exercise. On the other hand, when it is

relatively costless for the opposition to mobilize post-election protests, the opposition will be willing to protest *even if* it believes that the government is relatively strong, because under such conditions even a small probability of obtaining reform makes a boycott preferable to participation.

That boycotts are often unsuccessful in obtaining reform does not minimize the importance of these strategies for opposition parties seeking change under authoritarian regimes. What matters is that at the time the group decides to boycott, the opposition believes reform is possible. Sometimes this decision pays off, and the opposition either obtains reform that would have been impossible had it participated in the election or mobilizes post-election demonstrations that could also result in a positive political transformation. This is the nature of information asymmetries—in this case, the opposition's uncertainty about the regime—and the logic of strategic interaction, which can leave a player indifferent about what do to: protest or back down. Of course, if the opposition could know beforehand the true strength of the regime, perhaps we would not witness so many failed boycotts.

3.6 Conclusion

The theory advanced in this chapter connects several key parameters—post-election mobilization costs, ideological divergence, and perceptions of regime stability and strength—to the strategies of participation, boycott, and post-election protest. If the costs of mobilization are high and the ideological distance between the government and opposition small, the opposition will not be able to credibly threaten post-election protests and will, as a result, choose to participate in the elections. As the ideological divergence between the government and the opposition increases and/or the costs of mobilization decrease, an election boycott will become more likely.

But opposition strategies are also driven by beliefs about regime strength and the likelihood of obtaining reform. When the opposition perceives the regime as vulnerable, the opposition will be willing to boycott the election and mobilize post-election protests in order to demand reform from what it perceives as an easily destabilized regime. By contrast, even as the probability of its electoral success approaches zero, the opposition will choose to participate if it believes it is otherwise unlikely to obtain reform from a regime it regards as well supported by its centers of power.

In some cases, the opposition will end up deciding to end their electoral protest with the boycott, which will leave the party out of parliament, without reform, and ultimately worse off than if it had participated. In these cases, the party's decisions will appear irrational. But they are not. The outcome reflects the opposition's uncertainty about the true strength of the regime and its indifference in these cases between backing down and protesting.

Thus the opposition's perceptions about the stability of the regime and the possibilities for reform at a given moment in time are crucial to understanding why opposition parties pursue the strategies they do. These beliefs can change over time, as evidenced by the variation in strategies that a particular opposition party will adopt from one election to the next. The next chapter lays out this book's approach to understanding and analyzing opposition perceptions of regime strength across time. Underpinning this approach is the notion that centers of power—the regime's institutional, social, and foreign bases of support and their willingness to come to the aid of the regime—are fundamental to regime stability. Chap. 4 explores this concept of centers of power and their importance in understanding regime strength and stability. Taking unfair electoral processes as given, the theory and empirical case studies in subsequent chapters highlight the role of institutions and centers of power in structuring the possibilities for political transformation.

Notes

1. Saleem, A. (2018, January 30). *Al Masry Al Youm*. Retrieved from http://www.almasryalyoum.com/caricatures/details/14419.
2. J1, Interview with author (in English), February 2009.
3. The costs of mobilization depend on such factors as the degree of state freedom or repression in a country. Mobilization costs may also be a function of the unity, or cohesiveness, of a single opposition party or group of opposition forces. Whether an opposition political party boycotts alone or with other opposition groups will likely affect the costs of mobilization (a measure of strength) to any one party (Lust-Okar 2005; Beaulieu 2014). Lust-Okar argues, for example, that the costs of mobilization depend on whether all opposition groups are legal (i.e., on the "structures of contestation"), while for Beaulieu, opposition strength is a function of public support and whether the opposition is united or divided (p. 64).
4. Kuntz and Thompson (2009) also link authoritarian elections and mass protests. Although the authors focus on stolen elections as opposed to

contentious elections more broadly, they argue that elections in electoral authoritarian regimes can serve as triggering events for mass uprisings.

5. DeNardo (1985) on this point remarks: "We suppose, in our theory, that protesters and rebels seek ultimately to displace the policies of their governments by creating disruption in the streets. Since governments sometimes make it their policy to restructure society, this conception of the dissidents' purpose is general enough to accommodate even revolutionary aspirations" (p. 33). Similarly, the final stage of this game in which the opposition chooses to mobilize post-election protests is left broad enough to include groups who take to the streets to continue pressure on the regime to reform, as well as the relatively rare instances where groups with truly revolutionary intentions might take to the streets following a contentious election.
6. On incomplete information and signaling, see Akerlof (1970), Spence (1973), and Fearon (1994).
7. One dimension of opposition strength is its electoral support. Another dimension of opposition strength, according to Beaulieu, is whether the opposition is unified or fragmented. Whether an opposition political party boycotts alone or with other opposition groups will likely affect the costs of mobilization (a measure of strength) to any one party, as argued by Lust-Okar (2005) and Beaulieu (2014). This information will be revealed to the government when the election is held. The government will know before it makes its decision to reform if the boycott was undertaken by all opposition parties—what Beaulieu refers to as "unified opposition boycott"—and/or if there were any defections from within a boycotting party, as was the case with the IAF in 1997.
8. Beaulieu (2014) also notes that due to electoral manipulation neither the opposition nor the government may have an "accurate idea of its own support" (p. 40, fn. 25; see also Schedler [2002], pp. 115–116).
9. Similarly, Lorentzen (2014) assumes that the regime has "more precise information" compared to the public about the extent of social tensions or discontent, an indicator of how much support a revolution might have and therefore the probability it succeeds in overthrowing the regime.
10. See also Gandhi (2008) on this point: "With institutions such as the secret police and elections, many dictators can uncover with some accuracy the strength of potential opposition so they can determine the degree of concessions necessary to neutralize dissent" (p. 168).
11. I assume that both the government and the opposition party are unitary actors with well-defined preferences for policies. We can assume, for example that the government and the opposition have ideal points of xG and xO, respectively, and without loss of generality that $xG = 0$ and $xO > 0$.
12. In a discussion of party cohesion, Dion (1997) notes, "While we are assuming that a set of individuals are members of the majority party, there

is really nothing to prevent us from visualizing these legislators into party wings. In that case, party cohesion would involve getting the agreement of the various wings of the party (assuming that the individuals within the wings acted in a unitary fashion)" (p. 32). See also Beaulieu (2014) and Greene (2007) on this issue.

13. If we are interested in the effects that divergent preferences within the party have on the party's decision to boycott or participate, or their strategies more generally, we can, for example, look inside the party to examine these dynamics and their effects (see, e.g., Laver and Shepsle 1996; Wegner 2011).
14. See Blaydes and Lo (2012) on this issue.
15. Here the probability of electoral victory (or the proportion of seats won by the ruling party or regime loyalists) is assumed to be independent of regime strength. Although a regime's popularity may influence both the probability of electoral victory and the strength of the regime, it is important to distinguish analytically between these two factors. Autocratic regimes depend on more than just popularity for survival; institutions such as elections and the military are also fundamental to regime stability. Moreover, a strong government might be guaranteed to win by fair election or by cheating. As Simpser (2013) adeptly notes about the strength of incumbents and popularity: "*Popularity* may contribute to strength, but it is neither necessary nor sufficient for it: unpopular incumbent parties are sometimes perceived as strong (e.g., as being the 'only game in town')" (p. 4, fn., 7).
16. Given the focus on elections and opposition politics under authoritarian regimes, and specifically in the Arab world, I assume a high value for the probability of winning the election in order to capture the nature of Arab authoritarian elections discussed in Chap. 2. If, however, we assume a lower (or more competitive) probability for incumbent victory, the theory could produce implications about the choice of party strategies in both democratic and authoritarian electoral contexts.
17. One of the benefits of participation according to Wegner includes "nonmaterial resources," such as contacts with ministers and other "key personnel," which can provide parties access to a greater set of resources that they can then distribute to increase support (pp. 16–17).
18. Though not explored sufficiently in this work, Chap. 6 does briefly consider how we might understand divergent strategies between the FFS and the Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD) in Algeria from this perspective, focusing specifically on ideological differences between the two parties relative to the regime's ideal point.
19. J20, Interview with author, November 2010.

20. See pp. 165–166 for Masoud's eloquent counterargument to the assertion that the difference in the electoral successes of political parties (or party behavior, more generally) in Egypt is due to differences in "intelligence and strategic sophistication."
21. See Padget and Ansell (1993) on these types of strategic moves designed to force the other player's hand: "forced clarification of their (but not your) tactical lines of action" (p. 1264).
22. Beaulieu (2014), for example, finds that 20 percent of boycotted elections are followed by post-election protests whereas only 8 percent of elections in which the opposition participated resulted in protests following the election (p. 95).

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CHAPTER 4

Centers of Power, Regime Strength, and Opposition Beliefs

Boycotts take place in an electoral context, but they are not only about elections (Schedler 2002). Theories that understand opposition electoral strategies primarily as responses to unfair electoral processes overlook how the broader political environment shapes and constrains strategic choice at particular moments in time.[1] The framework offered here connects strategic choices to opposition perceptions about regime strength in a way that incorporates the broader socioeconomic and political context in which elections take place. In this book, regime strength is understood as the ability of the regime to call upon centers of power at times of domestic unrest. As anchors of a regime's authority, centers of power play a pivotal role in shaping the opposition's beliefs about whether the regime can withstand a post-election crisis and, by extension, the opposition's strategic decisions during authoritarian elections. In deciding whether to boycott or participate, opposition groups (facing incomplete information) consider the likelihood of centers of power lending support to the regime in a crisis, calculations which are informed by the broader social, economic, and political conditions surrounding elections.

Explaining changes in opposition perceptions, and the corresponding effect on electoral strategies, involves determining the centers of power that underpin a regime, which I classify by three types: societal, institutional, and external/foreign. In the pages that follow, I outline this book's approach to identifying the relevant centers of power during authoritarian elections as well as the set of common centers of power in the Arab world. Given the role of centers of power in guaranteeing a regime's stability, and

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consequently their influence on the beliefs and strategic decisions of opposition parties, I then consider the centers of power in Jordan and Algeria, which will be critical for analyzing the opposition's electoral and post-electoral strategies in these two countries.

4.1 Defining Centers of Power

The notion of centers of power as fundamental to a system of power and its stability comes from Arthur L. Stinchcombe in his classic work, *Constructing Social Theories* (1968). His definition of legitimacy, which highlights the critical role of centers of power to the exercise and survival of a power, forms the basis for this work's understanding of regime strength and its influence on authoritarian elections. In *Constructing Social Theories*, Stinchcombe explains the connection between a regime's legitimacy and its centers of power:

> A power is legitimate to the degree that, by virtue of the doctrines and norms by which it is justified, the power-holder can call upon sufficient other centers of power, as reserves in case of need, to make his power effective. (p. 162)

There are several key elements of this definition to highlight for the purposes of understanding opposition beliefs and strategic choice during authoritarian elections. First is Stinchcombe's use of the phrase "in case of need." A regime's effective exercise of power and ability to maintain its authority depends on the willingness of centers of power to come to its aid in case of need. Given this study's focus on authoritarian elections, "in case of need" refers to a post-election crisis in which the opposition chooses to mobilize following an unsuccessful boycott. When the regime faces a post-election crisis, the regime's survival depends on whether other sufficient centers of power are willing to come to its aid (i.e., whether the regime can call on at least one center of power whose support is sufficient to sustain the regime's authority).

The second element meriting closer examination is "by virtue of the doctrines and norms by which it is justified." Doctrines or norms provide a rationale for a center of power that decides to support the regime. Examples of doctrines of legitimacy include law, hereditary monarchies, national sovereignty, and the liberal doctrine of property rights (Stinchcombe 1968, p. 162). The willingness of centers of power to lend support to the regime depends on whether these actors believe that the authority of the govern-

ment is justifiable. That is, doctrines or norms are those factors that determine the willingness of centers of power to come to the aid of a challenged regime. There are, of course, many possible rationales for a center of power choosing to aid a regime, ranging from rational-legal to traditional, normative, democratically based, and/or religiously inspired. For example, we can think of rationales that align with Weber's (1978) original trinity of rational-legal, traditional, and charismatic justifications for authority. But justifications can also include various "isms" (e.g., Islamism, socialism, Pan-Arabism) as well as networks of patronage or geopolitical interests. In other cases, centers of power may be willing to support an authoritarian regime absent viable alternatives (Przeworski 1986). What is most important is that in these cases the doctrine is accepted by the center of power, providing the rationale for its support.

Regimes in the Arab world invoke various doctrines to justify their authority to their centers of power. Arab monarchies, for example, rely on traditional and religious justifications for their rule (Hudson 1977; Albrecht and Schlumberger 2004, p. 377). Monarchies have also used doctrines such as economic development and robust security apparatuses in what Hudson claims are attempts to bolster structural legitimacy. In so doing, these monarchies connect legitimacy and support to a combination of personal lineage and regime accomplishments. Arab republics, by contrast, have tried to establish and maintain support from centers of power through revolutionary credentials, such as participation in independence struggles or revolutionary coups (Hudson 1977, p. 27; Albrecht and Schlumberger 2004). In addition, Albrecht and Schlumberger (2004) note that the presidential republics have also relied on "collectivist ideologies and egalitarian development models referred to as Nasserism, Ba'thism, or Arab nationalism" (p. 377; see also Hudson 1977).

Just as we expect centers of power to vary across contexts, time, and countries, we should also expect the factors or rationales that influence the willingness of a center of power to come to the regime's aid will also vary across countries and time, as well as from one center of power to another. For example, external powers may locate justifications for their support in the strategic value of a client state, whereas societal centers of power may justify their support for a regime based on lineage, distributive social contracts or some combination. Because an economic crisis can hinder the government's

ability to perform as expected in providing jobs, subsidies, and other services, it can undermine the justification for its authority and consequently the willingness of a societal center of power (who sees the government's authority justified on patrimonial or distributive grounds) to come to the aid of the regime. Economic crises or downturns will thus also influence the opposition's decision to participate or boycott as it observes the weakening of the relationship between the regime and one or more of its centers of power amidst times of economic strain.

The final and most important element in the Stinchcombe quote is the notion of "centers of power" itself. According to Stinchcombe, the exercise of authority is not possible "unless certain other strategic *centers of power* recognize the right as legitimate" (p. 160, emphasis added). Given that the key role of centers of power is to aid a regime in a time of need, the relationship between the regime and its centers or power is essential to the maintenance of the regime itself. To get a better understanding of the connection between centers of power and regime strength, consider the case of one-party authoritarian regimes with a strong president (e.g., Algeria or Egypt). Despite the president's strength, this individual cannot act without constraint; rather, he or she must cater to a group of supporters through policy concessions or by distributing valuable rents or resources. These actions help the regime maintain its defense against potential threats and actual political crises. In this sense, the concept of centers of power resembles the formation of a coalition, wherein disparate groups form a common allegiance in order to promote their own interests. However, centers of power are also different from coalitions in that the centers of power are independent and individually sufficient.

We can sort centers of power into three main categories: (1) societal; (2) institutional; and (3) foreign or external. The first source from which centers of power can be derived is society, or particular groups within a society. We can think of societal centers of power as akin to a regime's level of public support. But societal centers of power, as conceptualized by Stinchcombe, extend beyond public support to include the underlying social structure that gives rise to groups that can in turn form centers of power.[2] Importantly, Stinchcombe notes that the will of the people is often insufficient for a regime to retain power as, for example, the 1973 coup against President Salvador Allende in Chile illustrates.[3] The reverse is also true: unpopular governments can still be stable because of their ability to call on other centers of power, such as the military or foreign patrons (Stinchcombe 1968, p. 160). Thus, a regime's stability or instability cannot be understood solely as a function of the extent of the regime's public support.

Societal centers of power may arise around the classic political cleavages outlined by Lipset and Rokkan (1967): (1) workers versus owners; (2) church versus state; (3) center versus periphery; and (4) urban versus rural. Any of these cleavages could provide the basis for group mobilization that leads to the emergence of a center of power. Besides these political cleavages, the mobilization of a group on the basis of socioeconomic, political, or ethno-religious grounds is another way of accessing state power. Thus, societal centers of power can also emerge from ethnic, religious, or linguistic groups along which society may be saliently divided or political mobilized.

Institutions such as political parties, the military, the legislative and judicial branches of government, and professional associations also have the potential to become centers of power. Stinchcombe illustrates how the judicial branch can operate as a center of power with an example of a police officer arresting a criminal (pp. 159–160). After making an arrest, the police officer calls upon the judicial system to come to his aid to keep the criminal behind bars. In this simple example, the judicial system acts as a center of power because a judge and jury must determine whether the policeman's arrest is justifiable (legitimate) and thus whether the criminal remains in jail or goes free.[4]

Armed forces, including the military, the police, and the secret service, are often considered institutional centers of power. The role of the armed forces in sustaining regimes is well established in comparative politics with numerous examples of armies backing a regime at critical times. The military's role in ending the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests and coming to the aid of the regime is one example. More recently, in the early days of Egypt's Arab Spring protests in January 2011, the media, protesters, elites, and myriad international observers took the actions of the military as a signal of what might happen to the regime of Hosni Mubarak. In this example, the regime ultimately fell after the army refused to lend its support.[5]

The third and final set of centers of power is foreign or external actors, which includes the international community, international organizations, or individual states. External actors have well-recognized roles establishing, sustaining, and sometimes even preventing states' independence. The international community, by upholding recognized doctrines such as national sovereignty, plays a key role in legitimizing the right of states to exist. The strategic interests of a state will certainly affect its willingness, as an external center of power, to lend support to a regime. For instance,

both Algeria and Jordan benefit from the support of foreign powers as a result of Western governments' economic and national security interests (Slisli 2009; Yom and Gausee 2012). While not all regimes depend on foreign patrons, or even the same set of societal and institutional centers of power, most regimes draw support from some combination. Therefore, focusing solely on societal groups (e.g., a particular ethnic group) or solely on institutional centers of powers (e.g., the military) provides only a partial picture of the sources of a regime's support and consequently its ability to weather periods of domestic unrest.

4.2 Identification Strategy

How do we determine whether a particular social group, institution, or external actor is a center of power capable of supporting a challenged regime during periods of confrontation with the opposition? Although his own focus is the characterization and analysis of authoritarian politics generally, Owen (2004) provides a useful starting point for identifying centers of powers. He argues that the forum of political activity, the various actors involved, and their relative importance are all relevant to understanding the power dynamics within a particular setting.[6] This determination often requires detailed knowledge of the case in question. Traditions, social contracts, laws, the formal and informal distribution of power, and the control and distribution of resources within a group or institution are all relevant for determining centers of power.[7]

The relative importance of centers of power will vary across contexts. For example, when one state invades another or when popular protests erupt, the relevant centers of power will differ from those involved when a police officer arrests a criminal. The focus here is confined to elections and post-election protests in authoritarian regimes, which makes for a similar context across cases. A second point to note is that centers of power can change over time. We might expect centers of power to change after some exogenous shock such as regime change or the end of the Cold War. In addition, a particular group can be a center of power in one country but not in another. For instance, writing in the late 1960s, Stinchcombe explained that while the Communist Parties of Italy and France would not be centers of power because of their inability to form part of a governing coalition, the party could be an important center of power elsewhere, as the case of Chile discussed by the author demonstrates (p. 175).

When identifying societal centers of power, several key factors give insight into the mobilization capabilities of a group as well as its motivation and constraints. First is the size of the group itself. The percentage of the population identifying with a particular group might be a sufficient condition, but not a necessary one. It is easy to imagine a center of power that represents a minority group but also controls a great deal of valuable resources that allow the group to exert an outsized influence within the country. Second, whether a group can form part of a majority coalition will also be important in determining its potential to be a center of power.

Third, capabilities and resources also influence which groups—and which institutions too—function as a regime's centers of power. For instance, a small wealthy business elite, although lacking numerical superiority, may have sufficient resources to influence the government and act as a center of power if a regime's stability is threatened by post-election protests. If other potential centers of power lack these resources, then an elite group may become a center of power despite its small size. A similar logic can be applied to institutions. The military, although a minority of the population, can often secure a regime faced with mass protests, most notably through its ability to squash dissent. Finally, the resources invested in a particular institution will also affect its capacity to act as a center of power.

Regarding institutional centers of power, the formal powers possessed by an institution are instructive as to whether it can operate as a center of power. For example, does the parliament have independent power to dismiss the executive or adjust and approve the budget? Stinchcombe notes that the formal powers granted to the legislature determine, in part, whether the executive is "more or less responsible to parliament" (p. 174). Independence from the executive and the ability to act as a constraint or check on the executive are also important in determining whether the legislature or other branch of government is a center of power. Important powers are not limited to those that are formally established (e.g., constitutionally mandated powers). De facto or day-to-day powers are also highly relevant to the role of an institution as a center of power because they represent another source of influence that can be leveraged to back up a regime in need.

Another institutional center of power is the military. When considering the military as a center of power, it is important to distinguish between outright military rule or military government and praetorian regimes in which the military wields significant influence over the civilian government, as in Algeria (Bellin 2005). For example, if the regime is a ruling

junta, then the military does not exist as an independent center of power because the military is in effect the same as the regime. Second, the type of military structure and its apparent goals and objectives affect whether the military is a potential center of power. Bellin (2005) points to the distinction between institutionalized and patrimonial armed forces as a key criterion for judging whether the armed forces are a center of power in a particular situation. Institutionalized armed forces, according to Bellin, will "have a sense of corporate identity separate from the state … a distinct mission and identity and career path" (p. 29). She further notes that institutionalized militaries can be "distinguished by a commitment to some broader national mission that serves the public good, such as national defense and economic development, rather than to some personal aggrandizement and enrichment alone" (p. 29). On the other hand, Bellin asserts that in a patrimonial-based military "staffing decisions are ruled by cronyism; the distinction between public and private mission is blurred … and discipline is maintained through the exploitation of primordial cleavage, often relying on balanced rivalry between different ethnic/sectarian groups" (p. 28). Unlike institutionalized militaries, patrimonial armed forces do not have a "distinct mission and identity" separate from the state. They are dependent on the regime and therefore more likely to believe they will be "ruined by reform."[8]

Finally, given that states exert power in part through foreign aid, attention to the sources of foreign aid a country receives can highlight potential external centers of power. Foreign aid can provide much needed revenue and increase the discretionary spending abilities of the grantee state, allowing it to spend more on the military or maintenance of patronage networks than it could without external support. A central and well-established determinant of foreign aid is the strategic interest of the donor government (Alesina and Dollar 2000; Meernik et al. 1998). Although the "strategic value" of aid decreased in the post-Cold War era (Neumayer 2003; Dunning 2004; Bearce and Tirone 2010), foreign aid is still an important source of support for many regimes, especially considering foreign powers' continued desire for stability and strategic allies in the Arab world.

4.3 Centers of Power in the Arab World

Regimes in the Arab world share many institutional, economic, and social characteristics. Therefore, the probable set of centers of power we are likely to observe will be similar across the region.

4.3.1 Societal Centers of Power

The states of the Arab world are "overwhelming homogenous" populations in that they are almost entirely Arab and Muslim.[9] Albert Hourani (1961) noted that identity in the region of the eighteenth century focused on religion and ethnicity, an assessment that remains largely true today. Which is not to say that divisions within the populations do not exist. Indeed, salient cleavages in the region today include (1) ethno-linguistic, for example, Transjordanians or East Bankers versus Palestinians, Arabs versus Berbers; (2) religious, for example, Sunni versus Shi'a; and (3) geographic, for example, North versus South in Yemen.

Since the end of World War II, the states of the Arab world exhibited three important trends that helped define which societal groups are likely to be (or become) centers of power.[10] First, high population growth rates led to increases in total population by multiples of three and four in the post-World War II era. This rapid growth resulted in a remarkably young population (often referred to as the "youth bulge" because of its appearance on population age charts). Unfortunately, despite huge development efforts, especially in education, economic growth rates and associated levels of job creation have not kept pace with rising populations. As a result, a large proportion of the population is young, educated, unemployed, and often disaffected.

Urbanization is the second trend affecting societal centers of power in the Arab world. The rate of urbanization since World War II outpaced the rate of population growth in many Arab countries (Hudson 1977; Richards and Waterbury 2008), resulting in high population densities and persistent housing shortages. The challenges of dense urban living have been exacerbated by a lack of sufficient infrastructure, such as water and transportation, as well as insufficient economic development. Hudson notes, "The Arab world has experienced the growth of a poor *lumpenproletariat*, an economically marginal, semi-employed working class" (p. 142). Over time, population growth coupled with rapid urbanization (and its subsequent problems) has created an additional line of cleavage in some countries: young versus old.

The third trend important for understanding the range of societal centers of power in the Arab world is the growth of government presence and capabilities. Since World War II, states have increased their share of employment as well as their involvement in many areas of administration, security, and the economy (Hudson 1977, p. 154; Richards and

Waterbury 2008). In contrast to employment in the public and service sectors of the economies, the manufacturing and agriculture sectors and related employment are small across much of the region.[11] In addition, according to Hudson, states have established their presence through the initiation of "far-reaching programs of socioeconomic development intended to improve the quality of life" (p. 157). Due in part to a weak private sector and the establishment of (state) industries, the state became the primary actor in economic development and continues to be a major economic player in Arab countries today. Given the role of the state in the economy, the private-sector elite remained small in many countries during the period of this study. Despite the historically large role of the state in Arab economies, in recent times privatization has increased, resulting in a growing set of private-sector elites (King 2009, p. 4). It is possible, therefore, that the private sector, and a private-sector elite more specifically, will become a center of power in some Arab countries in the future.

Many individual political parties in the Arab world would not be considered centers of power capable of sustaining a regime facing a crisis on their own—with exception of some ruling parties in the presidential republics. In some instances, a coalition of political parties and their supporters might present a possible center of power. But strong political parties are rare as is strong political party identification among citizens. Weak parliaments, the nature of elections, and the power of the state—which, as noted above, has expanded its capabilities and share of employment—all contribute to the relative weakness of individual political parties. As long as the state continues to dominate economic interests of large sections of society, through patronage or other means, it is unlikely that an individual opposition party would be strong enough to be a center of power.[12]

One exception to this rule is the Islamists. The high population growth rate and increased urbanization created an opportunity for Islamist organizations to appeal to disaffected groups. According to King (2009), Islamism is "the most powerful social movement in the Middle East and North Africa" (p. 91). Islamist movements have remarkable resources to reach out to potential supporters through mosques, clinics, and charitable organizations that offer a range of basic social services including education and health care. Wiktorowicz (2004) summarizes the importance of mosques in building support and promoting collective action: "Within the physical structure of the mosque, Islamists offer sermons, lessons, and study groups to propagate the movement message, organize collective action, and recruit new joiners" (p. 10). Moreover, Islamists are involved

in student and professional organizations and have formed political parties in many countries across the region. Political engagement has helped the Islamists in some countries demonstrate their strength and support through elections, such as in Algeria in 1991.

Although no regime has abandoned Islam "entirely" (Owen 2004, p. 29), regimes across the region have adopted various strategies for dealing with Islamist movements. Some have sought to eliminate Islamists' strength by formally and informally banning them from political activity.[13] Others have sought to co-opt Islamist movements, as seen recently in Algeria. Still others have allowed the Islamists to operate on a wider basis. Taken together, these varied approaches have led to Islamist groups of different strengths across the Arab world. Moreover, support for Islamist movements varies across the region and, more importantly, Islamists themselves disagree about the appropriate direction for political development (e.g., whether an end goal should be an Islamic Caliphate or Islam-based democracy).

There is no doubt that Islam is an important and prominent part of daily life and society. Islam is the official state religion of most Arab states. Still more, some regimes, such as Jordan and Morocco, rely heavily on Islam to bolster their legitimacy claims among key groups. It is important, however, to make a distinction between the use of Islam as justification for supporting a regime[14] and the center of power itself. Although Islamists can be a center of power, this is not universally true among the electoral authoritarian regimes in the Arab world. At issue is not whether Islam is important but rather whether Islamists—or other religious organizations—can form a center of power capable of supporting a regime in time of crisis.[15]

4.3.2 Institutional Centers of Power

Electoral authoritarian regimes in the Arab world have a set of institutions that are familiar in democratic countries. There are judicial, legislative, and executive branches of government and, in most cases, regular multiparty elections. In practice, however, the powers of Arab legislatures are constitutionally limited and parliaments exercise less effective power than their counterparts in established liberal democracies.[16] Moreover, many Arab parliaments consist of an elected lower house and an appointed (or indirectly elected) upper house. The constitutions adopted in the region in the period following World War II created strong executives that dominate

the exercise of power. Accordingly, these systems often lack the checks on executive power that we normally associate with democratic systems. Furthermore, the lack of executive accountability in Arab electoral authoritarian regimes contributes to the weak de facto powers of the legislative and judicial branches; and these branches of government also have limited independence from executive control.

Given the extensive range of powers and limited accountability of the executive, it is commonly the case that neither the legislature nor the judiciary will be considered a center of power in the context of authoritarian elections in the Arab world. In fact, as of 1998 only two countries (Lebanon and Morocco) had established legislatures that "have succeeded in negotiating and establishing most of the institutional arrangements required for enshrining the legislature as the principal arena of competition" (Baaklini et al. 1999, p. 66). Similarly, judicial branches commonly lack independence because the executive retains control over appointments and dismissals. Consequently, it is rare that judiciaries possess "any independent voice interpreting the constitution" (Brown 2007, p. 53). Egypt's judicial branch was (at least until 2011) perhaps the one exception, long noted for its independence and constitutional rulings against the regime.[17]

While the legislative and judicial branches of government are constrained in their powers, the military is one institution that is a strong candidate for an institutional center of power. High levels of military spending are the rule rather than the exception among Arab regimes. In general, the military is often a key support base for any regime and the authoritarian regimes of the Arab world are no exception. In fact, according to Ayubi (1995), "the military establishment [in the Middle East and North Africa] is both larger and more costly than it is anywhere else in the Third World" (p. 256; Richards and Waterbury 2008; Bellin 2005).[18] The ability to sustain such large expenditures stems from access to rents accumulated via the domestic exploitation of natural resources and/or in the form of foreign aid, often supplied by Western patrons and the oil-rich Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states. According to Bellin (2005), these rents offer "access to substantial discretionary resources so that even if the country is in poor economic health overall, the state is still able to hew to conventional economic wisdom and 'pay itself first,' that is give first priority to paying the military and security forces" (p. 32).

Following Bellin's distinction between institutional and patrimonial forms of military, the likelihood of the military operating as a center of

power decreases in the case of patrimonial militaries. Highly patrimonial militaries will be unlikely to act independently from the state. Bellin argues that patrimonial militaries are more likely to believe they will be ruined by reform and thus less likely to turn against a regime in crisis. In the Arab world, many of the coercive apparatuses in the region are characterized by patrimonialism with few exceptions (e.g., Egypt and Tunisia). Whether the military operates as a center of power, as in Jordan and Algeria discussed below, will therefore depend on the type of military and its relation to the incumbent regime.

4.3.3 External Centers of Power

External or foreign centers of power represent the third potential source of support for a regime. Understanding the importance of this center of power requires knowing the "degree to which the international context affects the domestic distribution of power and resources among key local actors" (Cavatorta 2009, p. 34). External actors have long played an important role in the domestic politics of Arab countries. The role of non-domestic centers of power in the Arab world and the wider Middle East and North Africa is particularly strong due to the geopolitical importance that Western governments attach to the region. In the past, this importance largely revolved around demand for oil as well as the desire for stability and the certainty of authoritarianism over the inherent uncertainty posed by democratic elections. After the 9/11 terrorist attacks against the United States, the strategic importance of the region further increased with the start of the US War on Terror and the 2003 Iraq War (Slisli 2009; Volpi 2013).

However, the relationship between external actors and regimes in the Arab world is more nuanced than simply Western governments propping up authoritarian regimes. External centers of power primarily show their support for regimes through foreign aid (including financial, technical, and military assistance), though public declarations and diplomatic support are also important. Financial support can provide regimes access to additional discretionary funds (rents), which regimes can use to maintain patronage networks or subsidies on basic goods (e.g., bread, petrol) that are popular with their citizens. In addition, the regime's ability to maintain and use its extensive security apparatus requires financial, technical, and diplomatic support from key international actors (Bellin 2005).[19] The willingness of external actors to provide this support is, in turn, related to the geopolitical

position of the country in question and its strategic importance to Western security and political-economic interests. As we will see, foreign actors as centers of power play an important role in shaping the beliefs of opposition actors about a regime's strength and the prospects for reform.

4.4 Centers of Power in Jordan and Algeria

4.4.1 Jordan

When the British established the territory of Transjordan as a protectorate in 1921 and installed Abdullah I as emir, the new Hashemite regime had to engender domestic support for a monarchy lacking local ties. The Hashemite family, descendants from the Prophet Muhammad, came from Mecca in present-day Saudi Arabia. Absent a natural local support base, the monarchy has been concerned with the bases of its rule from the start. Perhaps because of this, outside observers have often regarded Jordan as chronically unstable and on the brink of regime failure:

> For many decades, foreign observers of Hashemite Jordan have predicted instability, decline, and even its imminent destruction … But those few outsiders who really knew Jordan saw the considerable hidden strengths of the Hashemite regime: its loyal core East Bank [Transjordanian] constituency; the support of the Western powers and, tacitly, Israel; and the very considerable skill of its kings in maneuvering through social tensions within the country and regional threats without. (Garfinkle 1993, p. 85)

Garfinkle's observation highlights the importance of understanding a regime's strength and stability through its ability to call upon centers of power to back it up in times of domestic turmoil. Attention to the various centers of power on which the government relies allows us to explain the Hashemite regime's remarkable stability, especially during periods of unrest.

The population of Jordan is approximately 6.4 million, of which 1.9 million are registered refugees, mostly Palestinian but also Iraqi, and since 2011, Syrian as well.[20] The vast majority of Jordanians are Arabs (Transjordanians and Palestinians) and Sunni Muslim, but there are also Circassian, Chechen, Armenian, and Christian populations. Although no census data are available, approximately 60 percent of the population is estimated to be Palestinian and 78 percent of Jordanians live in urban areas.

The central role of the Bedouin in Jordanian politics dates to the early days of the British mandate (1921–1946). The British method of indirect colonial rule required local knowledge and collaborators, which the British found in the tribal *shaykhs* (Alon 2007, pp. 5–6). To establish and retain the loyalty of the tribes in Jordan, the nascent Jordanian regime relied on public-sector employment. Today, tribal identity in Jordan remains strong, perhaps most clearly illustrated through elections and voting behavior (Lust-Okar 2006; Buttorff 2015). This continued saliency is partly a consequence of the long-established patron-client relationship between the Hashemite regime and the Transjordanian tribes. Although there are some prominent Palestinians within the ruling coalition, East Bankers[21] or Transjordanians dominate the public sector and the media (Garfinkle 1993, p. 92).

Despite the large Palestinian presence in Jordan, the regime has sought to systematically limit the influence of that population. One way the regime constrains the potential power of Palestinian-Jordanians is through the electoral rules and the disproportional allocation of seats across electoral districts. Districts with large Palestinian populations are underrepresented in the national legislature compared to more rural, tribal districts. Palestinians are also disadvantaged in education and employment opportunities due to the entrenched *wasta*[22] system, a necessity for obtaining government jobs, education, as well as business contracts and permits. However, although the regime has made significant efforts to marginalize Palestinians in the country, this population nevertheless represents an important potential center of power due to its size. Garfinkle notes that "Unlike other Arab states, which could and did exclude Palestinians from mainstream social and political life, Jordan could not, for the Palestinians' demographic and economic weight was too large" (Garfinkle 1993, p. 105).[23] Moreover, as a result of a new ruling bargain forged by King Hussein in the 1970s, Palestinians dominated the private sector, and East Bankers dominated the military and the public-sector bureaucracies (Tell 2015, p. 2). The Transjordanians and the Palestinians form two societal centers of power.

The Jordanian state is heavily involved in the market through price subsidies and import controls (Piro 1998; Knowles 2005). The economy centered on the "Big 5" state-owned industries,[24] which emerged out of a period of increased Palestinian immigration when Transjordanians grew nervous about the effect of this demographic change on their own access to state benefits. As a concession to Transjordanian merchants, the regime brokered a deal that brought these merchants together with the state to

establish four of the five state-run industries (Piro 1998). These natural-resource-based industries, and by extension the state itself, dominated the Jordanian economy, and the public sector is Jordan's largest employer. Moreover, 77 percent of Jordanians work in the service sector; only a small percentage (3 percent) is engaged in agriculture and about 20 percent work in manufacturing.[25]

The private sector during the period of study was relatively weak but growing and largely dependent on the state. Rent-seeking among public officials is rampant and crony capitalism extensive. As noted by Knowles (2005), from the mid-1940s onward the private sector and the state became increasingly interdependent, ultimately evolving into a parasitic relationship (pp. 42–43).[26] Knowles further notes that "the overlap of state-private sector relations, as at 1989, was manifested in four areas: state involvement in productive companies; state involvement in the market; the use of access to the economy by the state for political purposes; and the institutional structure of the private sector" (p. 73). Although the private sector during the period under study would not be considered a center of power today, in the future it might be. The private sector is slowly beginning to push for reforms (liberalization and privatization) that the donor community (particularly via the International Monetary Fund or IMF) has long desired (Knowles 2005, p. 162).

Political parties were also weak in Jordan during this period, with the exception of the Islamic Action Front (IAF). The IAF, the political party of the Muslim Brotherhood, was the largest and best-organized political party in the country. It was the only opposition party to win seats in the national legislature consistently. Throughout much of King Hussein's reign, the Muslim Brotherhood had a close relationship with the regime. During the 1950s and 1960s, the regime sought closer relations with the Brotherhood to counter the Ba'athists and communists, and it was the only group that remained legal throughout the period of martial law. Although the full extent of IAF support is not known (at least to those outside the regime), it is unlikely that the IAF commanded sufficient public support or resources to alone be considered a center of power.

The Jordanian monarch's powers, as laid out in Articles 31–40 of the Constitution, include the power to appoint and dismiss the prime minister, the cabinet, and the senate, as well as dismiss the lower house of parliament (*Majlis al-Nuwuab*). The king calls elections for parliament and may choose to postpone or delay general elections if "a force majeure has occurred which the Council of Ministers considers as rendering the hold-

ing of elections impossible" (Article 73.iv). Although the lower house is elected, the king appoints the upper house (*Majlis al-A'ayan*). The power of the legislative branch is limited not only by the constitution but also by short sessions, electoral laws, and lack of legislative and technical experience on the part of its members. When parliament is out of session, the king has the power to pass temporary laws. During the 2001–2003 suspension of parliament, for example, the regime passed more than 200 temporary laws. Likewise, the judicial branch is subject to executive pressure through appointments, dismissals, and promotions (Burgis 2007, p. 145).[27] Although constitutionally independent, the high courts lack clear mandates to interpret the constitution, which negatively affects their ability to act as a check on executive power (p. 144).

The Jordanian military is one institution that could be a potential institutional center of power. Since the establishment of the territory of Transjordan, the army has been used as a patronage tool and source of Bedouin employment. The Transjordanian basis for the army dates to the early days of the Hashemite monarchy. As noted by Peters and Moore, "In exchange for their allegiance, co-opted tribes demanded payoffs in the form of tax exemptions, cash, weapons, and employment in Transjordan's new military" (p. 264). By the late 1950s, King Hussein had "firmly established" his authority over the army, retaining control as well as "personal links" through royal appointment of all senior personnel (Yapp 1996). Following a coup attempt in 1957, King Hussein purged the ranks of the military, disbanding units dominated by Palestinians and discharging many of their members (Hurewitz 1969, p. 323). As a result, the armed forces are overwhelming East Bank tribesmen (Hurewitz 1969; Yom 2016). Palestinians have limited opportunities for advancement within the armed forces and in the public sector more generally. In Bellin's terms, Jordan's military is patrimonial, with the king "coup-proofing" through the appointment of male relatives to important posts in the military (Bellin 2005, p. 33; see also Kamrava 2000, p. 89; Tell 2015, pp. 1–2). Thus although Jordan's military is one of the best in the Arab world, its ability to act as a center of power would be constrained by its patrimonial nature.

Finally, Jordan is a partial rentier state, as it depends on rents in the form of foreign aid and labor remittances from Jordanians and Palestinians working in the Gulf states to cover fiscal deficits. As noted by Ryan (2002), "The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has throughout its history been dependent on foreign assistance to keep its economy afloat" (p. 48). After the creation of the protectorate of Transjordan, Britain provided Jordan

with enough external revenue to "develop both the army and the central administration" (Owen 2004, p. 39). The foreign aid Jordan received from the British and later from other Arab states and the United States has affected domestic politics and development in important ways (Brand 1995, pp. 41–42). The Hashemite monarchy uses the external rents it receives to build a domestic coalition of support through patronage, resulting in an ingrained patronage system. Foreign aid has allowed the regime to maintain its network of patronage despite the various IMF structural adjustment programs to which Jordan has committed. As noted by Peters and Moore (2009),

> The majority of tribal side payments, such as public employment and the selective provision of welfare benefits [prohibited by IMF agreements], have persisted because the regime has been able to foot the bill through foreign aid as budget support and unregulated privatization proceeds. (p. 285)[28]

The United States was the largest external patron of Jordan and as a result served as an external center of power for the Jordanian regime. The 1957 domestic challenge that King Hussein faced is one example illustrating the important role of the United States as a center of power. During the turbulent period of 1957 in which the regime probably faced its biggest challenge yet in its short history, the Jordanian regime was able to secure US support after being previously "rebuffed" by the United States (Peters and Moore 2009, p. 268). Just days after King Hussein dismissed the leftist prime minister, Suleiman Al-Nabulsi, according to Peters and Moore (2009),

> An agreement was signed to grant Jordan $10 million in economic assistance under the guise of the Eisenhower Doctrine, which was immediately followed by another $10 million for the army and $10 million in budget support. In May, the White House instructed the Embassy to issue the grant substantially without conditions, claiming, 'political factors were overriding (The White House 1957).' (pp. 268–269)

During this period, Jordan also received aid from other foreign sources, including the European Union and the GCC countries. The United States was, however, Jordan's most important external source of support during the period of study. This support continued over the years as the United States rewarded Jordan for its policies toward Israel and its support of US efforts in Iraq and the War on Terror. As a result, the empirical study of

Jordan in Chap. 5 focuses on US support as an external center of power. The brief overview of Jordan's social, economic, and political structure above suggests three centers of power at work—two societal and one external: (1) Transjordanians; (2) Palestinians (Palestinian-Jordanians); and (3) the United States.

4.4.2 Algeria

The *Front de Libération Nationale* (National Liberation Front or FLN) declared revolution against French colonial rule in 1954. The fight for independence ended in 1962 with the FLN taking the reins of power. According to Quandt (1998), "Algeria arrived at independence without a powerful land-owning aristocracy, without an indigenous elite of privilege and wealth, and without great disparities between one region and another" (p. 110). Upon independence, the new regime, like Jordan, began the process of state building, which involved cultivating domestic and external support bases. As noted previously, in contrast to Arab monarchies, which have relied more heavily on traditional authority (e.g., kinship, religion, political tribalism, petro-Islam) to justify their rule at home, Arab republics like Algeria have relied on a combination of Arabist ideology and revolutionary credentials—what Ayubi (1995) refers to as a "distinct combination of *étatiste* and welfarist (i.e., populist) policies" (p. 199).

Algeria is a country of approximately 35 million people.[29] It is overwhelmingly Sunni Muslim (99 percent), and although the majority of the population is Arab (and the vast majority Arab-Berber), approximately 20 percent of the population identifies as Berber. There are several distinct Berber groups in Algeria, but Berberism (the social movement for the recognition of Berbers and their language Tamazight as integral components of national identity) has developed almost solely in the Kabilya region. Sixty-five percent of Algeria's population is urbanized, with urban migration continuing at a rate of approximately 2.5 percent between 2005 and 2010. Only a small portion of the population is engaged in agriculture (14 percent), industry (13.4 percent), or construction and public works (10 percent). Employment in the public sector comprises the largest share at 32 percent.

As in other Arab countries, the state dominates the economy, which affects the potential centers of power that are likely to emerge in Algeria and elsewhere in the Arab world. Algeria is also a rentier state, deriving some 60 percent of its budget revenues from the hydrocarbon industry; the

agriculture and service sectors contribute 8 percent and 30 percent, respectively. The neglect of the agriculture sector following independence led to a "rural exodus" which further exacerbated the "absorption crisis" in Algeria's cities (Bonner et al. 2005, p. 2).[30] The Algerian middle class is weak (Colonna 2005) and despite efforts toward increased privatization, the country still lacks a strong private-sector elite that is independent of the regime.

Labor in Algeria is an important social group, unlike in Jordan. For example, the national trade union, *Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens* (the General Union of Algerian Workers or UGTA), organized strikes in 1991 to protest price increases. Participation in the strikes according to King (2009) reached "above 90 percent in urban areas and above 60 percent in rural areas" (p. 151). Again in 1998, the UGTA demonstrated its power in gaining concessions on wages, factory closures, and several other issues. The UGTA belongs to the *famille révolutionnaire* and has regularly demonstrated, remarks Werenfels (2007), "its strong veto power" (p. 66). Werenfels further notes that the UGTA and other organizations like it "remained powerful tools for (electoral) mobilization for core elites and their clients in government and parliament" (p. 65).

Following independence, the Algerian state expanded nationalizing industries including minerals, banking, insurance, and manufacturing (Ruedy 2005, p. 216). In addition, as part of its agrarian reforms (the Charter of the Agrarian Revolution), the Algerian government in the 1970s expropriated some 1.3 million hectares of land from the private sector to distribute to poor peasants (Ruedy 2005, pp. 222–223; Owen 2004). The agrarian reform further increased the agricultural sector's decline in terms of both employment and contribution to GDP.[31] It was revenues accrued from the hydrocarbon sector that further facilitated and maintained the state's expansion.

There are several potential cleavages along which societal centers of power could arise in Algeria: language (French vs. Arabic), ethnicity (Berber vs. Arab), ideology (Islamists vs. democrats and/or nationalists),[32] and generation (young vs. old). In contrast to Jordan, Algeria's main societal center of power largely falls along generational rather than ethnic lines. Indeed, according to Werenfels, "the term 'generation' has been part of the Algerian political vocabulary for decades" (p. 79). The generational divide forms a center of power in part because the youth do not identify with the basic right-to-rule narrative propagated by the state. For much of the post-independence period, the Algerian regime relied on

anti-colonial and revolutionary credentials to legitimatize its authority. But domestically these same revolutionary credentials began to be challenged by younger generations who did not necessarily accept it as a doctrine of legitimacy.[33] As noted by Evans and Phillips (2007), "This new generation had no memory of French rule; no sense of the contrast between pre-1962 and post-1962" (p. 107). As a result, a principal justification of the regime's authority has divided the generations. The older generation accepts the basis of rule according to revolutionary credentials proffered by the nationalists (the FLN, the UGTA, and even perhaps the RND[34]) (Quandt 1998). Younger generations, by contrast, do not.[35]

This generational cleavage overlaps with other cleavages present in Algeria. For example, Roberts argues that the divide between *arabisants* (those schooled in Arabic) and the older, French-speaking population constitutes a "major cleavage." According to Roberts (2003), because the younger generation was schooled in Arabic as opposed to French, it has had limited employment opportunities since state corporations preferred French speakers, who were better equipped to deal with the West (Roberts 2003, p. 12).[36] Elaborating on the intersection of generation and *arabisants*, he states:

> A high proportion of *arabisants* came from poorer families in the remoter areas of the country, from those sections of society which had been least affected by French culture during the colonial period and whose traditional way of life in agriculture and stock raising had been undermined by developments and upheavals in the countryside … And, with the massive exodus from the countryside which began during the war and continued unabated after 1962, this category of frustrated *arabisants* increasingly constituted an important and potentially turbulent element of the urban population. (p. 12)

Algeria's economic situation further reinforced the generational divide. In 1985, three years before Black October, over 75 percent of those looking for work were under the age 35 (Evans and Phillips 2007). In the mid to late 1980s, Algeria's young, poor, and unemployed (mostly men) were referred to as *hittistes*—derived from the Arabic *heta* (meaning wall)—for the practice of leaning against neighborhood walls. The dire situation and lack of hope for improvement in the near future made the *hittistes* more amenable to the Islamist message. Evans and Phillips note that "The bedrock of the FIS support was unemployed youth, who saw the party as the natural expression of their anti-establishment feeling" (p. 151).[37] It was the youths who challenged the regime in October 1988 and formed the corps of rioters during the Berber unrest in 2001.

Algeria, like Jordan, is an electoral authoritarian regime, though until 2011, the country was under a constant state of emergency first imposed after the military coup in 1992. The president of Algeria is elected by direct, universal suffrage and retains extensive executive power. Until 2008, the president was limited to two terms but a 2008 referendum lifted the term limit, allowing the incumbent President, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, to run two additional times in 2009 and 2014. The Algerian constitution vests the president of Algeria with the powers to appoint and dismiss the head of government, one-third of the upper house (*Majlis al-Umma*), the president of the upper house, and a number of other civil and military posts. The 1996 constitutional referendum established an upper house of indirectly elected and appointed members. Other reforms from this ballot measure included efforts to strengthen the presidency, which retained important emergency powers connected to the prolonged state of emergency (Quandt 1998). In addition, it mandated that three-quarters of the upper house, which according to Roberts (2003), is "massively dominated by regime place-men," must approve all draft legislation (p. 264).

As with the case of Jordan, the lower house (*Al-Majlis al-Sha'abi al-Watani*) of Algeria's parliament has limited powers both constitutionally and in practice. Roberts further suggests that the parliament is in fact much closer to that of a consultative body and, "as such, the [p]arliament has so far failed to comprehensively amount to a significant centre of political power outside the executive of the state" (p. 265). Again as in Jordan, Algeria's legislative and judicial branches would not be considered centers of power. Executive power is vested in the king in Jordan and the president in Algeria, and there have been attempts to weaken the already constitutionally weak legislatures in both countries. Unlike Jordan, however, the military in Algeria is considered a center of power.

Since the War for Independence ended in 1962, the military has played a dominant role in Algerian politics. In fact, the legitimacy of the new regime, as noted by Evans and Phillips (2007), "was derived from the era of liberation and the figure of Ben Bella as one of the historic leaders of the FLN" (p. 74). But it was the military that took power in 1962 using Ahmed Ben Bella as a figurehead and later came to the rescue of the regime during Black October in 1988 (Evans and Phillips 2007). The military would again take control in 1992 following the Islamist victory in the first round of the legislative elections—the first round of Algeria's first multiparty legislative elections. As noted by Quandt (1998),

> The army remains an essential part of Algeria's political life. From the beginning, it has been the mainstay of each regime. Other political groupings have fragmented, but the military has never split in the same way. Its coherence and hierarchy has given it staying power, even if it lacks popularity. (p. 78)[38]

Since coming to power in 1999 (ironically backed by the military), President Bouteflika has attempted to marginalize and attenuate the military's power. Despite Bouteflika's efforts to dislodge the military's influence, the army remained an important center of power to the Algerian regime during the period of study.

An additional center of power for the Algerian regime can be found outside its borders. President Houari Boumediene (1965–1976) sought foreign allies in Egypt, the USSR, and China to support his regime, while his successor, President Chadli Bendjedid (1979–1992), preferred realignment with the West (Evans and Phillips 2007).[39] After the military coup in 1992 and the cancellation of the elections, Western countries, especially France and the United States, provided economic and political support to the Algerian regime. Both the United States and France, and the European Union too, recognize the strategic importance of Algeria to their own geopolitical interests (Cavatorta 2002). Because of this, the regime benefitted from debt rescheduling on two different occasions thanks to the United States and France. According to Cavatorta (2002), "the financial difficulties of the regime could have been exploited to pressure those in power into accepting a negotiated resolution, but the regime was instead bailed out" (p. 39). Werenfels (2007) also notes the importance of debt rescheduling for the survival of the regime:

> Debt rescheduling, linked to an IMF-induced structural adjustment programme, saved the Algerian state from bankruptcy and thus indirectly allowed the continuation of the costly military repression of the insurgents … It helped the core elite hold on to power by enabling it to renew and uphold clientelistic networks in which allegiances were bought through the distribution of rents and the conferring of economic 'rights,' such as import and distribution licenses. (p. 49)

Western governments' support also stemmed from their fear of Islamists. Cavatorta succinctly summarizes the attitudes of key Western countries about the Islamist victory in the first round of the 1992 legislative elections: "Washington preferred the generals to the Islamists" (p. 38).[40]

Algeria has also benefited from military support supplied by France in the form of weaponry, intelligence, and surveillance technology. The strategic importance of Algeria to Western countries increased following the 9/11 terrorist attacks against the United States (Martinez 2005; Slisli 2009). Discussing a counterterrorism program, the Pan Sahel initiative, Entelis (2005) notes that "Washington's new interest in regions like southern Algeria fit into a global strategic vision that dovetails with Algeria's own political agenda, including maintaining a robust authoritarian state" (p. 544).

The preceding discussion of Algeria's social, economic, and political structure suggests that, as in Jordan, the Algerian regime is underpinned by both societal and external centers of power. In Algeria, societal centers of power fall along generational lines rather than the ethnic divisions seen in the case of Jordan. But Western powers (the EU and the United States) constitute centers of power in both countries. Finally, while the military in Algeria functions as an institutional center of power, the patrimonial nature of the Jordanian military precludes the armed forces from servicing as independent base of support for the Hashemite regime during this period.

4.5 Conclusion

Understanding the strength and stability of a regime means identifying the various centers of power in play and their willingness to support the regime in times of need. Key to understanding the variation across elections will be changes in the opposition's beliefs about the willingness of these various centers of power to lend support to the regime. If there is some doubt in the minds of the opposition about the regime's bases of support—whether societal groups, institutions, or foreign powers—the opposition infers that it might get reform from what it perceives as a vulnerable regime. The broader social, economic, and political conditions surrounding elections inform the opposition's beliefs about the willingness of centers of power to aid the regime. Thus, changes in the socioeconomic-political environment from one election to the next can occasion the opposition to revise its beliefs about the true extent of support the regime has from its centers of power and, subsequently, its beliefs about the likelihood of obtaining reform with contentious electoral strategies.

The relationship between the regime's ability to satisfy its economic or distributive obligations and the continuation of support from various centers of power—especially societal ones—is crucial to explaining changes in opposition beliefs about the stability of a regime over time. Shrinking public coffers constrain the ability of the state to maintain public spending levels and vast patronage networks. From the opposition's perspective, then, this increases the probability that particular centers of power might withdraw their support. The link between support from a center of power and economic or social crises is especially important in Arab regimes that maintain vast patronage networks using distributive institutions. The commitment of support from centers of power, particularly societal ones, depends to some extent on the economic benefits the group obtains as part of the social contract or ruling bargain. A regime's inability to live up to its end of the bargain is likely to result in affected centers of power withdrawing support, thereby increasing the possibilities for reform in the eyes of the opposition. On the relationship of the effect of economic crises (or pressures) and support from societal centers of power in the case of Algeria, Quandt (1998) states:

> The oil-price drop [in 1980s] set the stage for the "retreat of the state," a typical moment of crisis for authoritarian regimes. Both in reality and in popular perception, the state was no longer able to fulfill its part of the bargain with a passive citizenry. This caused resentment and also made the state seem weak and vulnerable. (Quandt 1998, p. 38)

Understanding how opposition groups perceive regime strength in the lead-up to an election as outlined here—and the likelihood that the regime can call upon its centers of power if needed—helps clarify why opposition groups boycott some elections, but not others, and why the opposition considers some elections as more opportune moments to try to gain concessions from authoritarian powers. Chapters 5 and 6 explore electoral histories of Jordan and Algeria tracing the strategies adopted by opposition parties across elections. These cases studies are important in showing how and why opposition beliefs about regime stability change over time and how these evolving perceptions influenced opposition decisions to participate and boycott across elections.

Notes

1. DeNardo (1985) argues that the fundamental problem in theory is to explain how strategies and the environment in which these strategies are adopted interact. In particular, he notes: "Strategies are constrained by political circumstances, and a fundamental problem in a theory of strategy is to understand the interaction between strategy and political environment" (p. 28).
2. See Rogowski (1974) on social structure and legitimacy.
3. Specifically, Stinchcombe writes: "But power based *only* on the shifting sands of public opinion and willing obedience is inherently unstable" (p. 161).
4. A large literature in political science examines the role of the US Supreme Court in legitimizing laws (even unpopular laws) passed by Congress (Gibson et al. 2005). One such example is the 2000 presidential election, in which the Supreme Court conferred legitimacy on the election of George W. Bush, despite the fact that Al Gore had won the plurality of popular votes. It was the Supreme Court that solved the political crisis in the aftermath of the election.
5. The critical role of the military during the Arab Spring extended beyond Egypt to other Arab countries. According to Bellin (2012), "In every Arab country where serious protests erupted, regime survival ultimately turned on one question: would the military defect? Or, more specifically, would the military shoot protesters or not?" (p. 130).
6. Owen explains his approach as considering both the "different type of actors and different types of arenas involved, as well as their different orders of importance" (p. 32). "In the case of the former," he writes, "this will involve consideration of individuals, of unofficial as well as of organized groups, of classes, and so on. In the latter it necessitates a discussion of the various locations—bureaucratic, institutional, provincial, local—in which political activity used to, and still does, take place" (p. 32).
7. Lipset and Rokkan (1967) and Posner (2005) both hint at the need to rely on expert knowledge. The former argues that we must consider decision-making traditions and the "channels for the expression and mobilization of protest" (p. 26). Posner (2005) argues that the "particular identities that individuals will find it most advantageous to choose will depend on the nature of the political system's ethnic cleavage structure" (p. 21). And to know this structure, one needs to know the number of cleavage dimensions and the size of the particular groups.
8. Bermeo (1997) argues that "for the costs of toleration [as opposed to costs of suppression] to seem bearable, pivotal elites must believe that they will not be ruined by reform" (p. 315). How a center of power perceives the effects of reform (i.e., will it be ruined by reform?) is critical when

thinking about whether a center of power, like the military, will continue to support a regime faced with pro-reform demonstrations. Bellin (2005) draws on Bermeo's idea in her discussion of coercive apparatuses. She argues that more institutionalized militaries are less likely to perceive they will be ruined by reform compared to patrimonial-based militaries, who will in turn be more likely to come to the aid of a challenged regime. In addition, the notion that institutional elites, to be supportive of a particular reform, must perceive that they will not be ruined (or at least be severely hurt) by reform is seen in Jordan with respect to the business elite. Only slowly have they accepted economic liberalizations, and even begun to push for them, where in the past they viewed such reforms negatively.

9. There are of course important exceptions: (1) Sudan (South)—Black Christians; (2) Iraq—Kurds; (3) Morocco and Algeria—Berbers; and (4) Lebanon—Christians and Druze (Hudson 1977, pp. 38–39).
10. See especially Richards and Waterbury (2008) on the three trends.
11. There is of course variation. Waterbury (1989), for example, notes that working classes are stronger in Algeria and Egypt but not in Jordan and Morocco, where organized labor is largely absent (p. 42). On the salience of class, Razi (1990) argues that "all available evidence on the Third World so far indicates that class affinity is far weaker as a source of cohesion and commitment than are religion and nationalism" (p. 75).
12. This is a more general problem in authoritarian and dominant party contexts in which challengers face large resources asymmetries in attracting and mobilizing supporters. See especially Greene (2007) on this point.
13. I say formally and informally because although the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, for example, was officially banned, candidates known to be Muslim Brotherhood members ran as independents during the Mubarak era.
14. This is what Stinchcombe refers to as doctrines of legitimacy: doctrines or norms that justify the power of a regime to a particular center of power.
15. An analogous situation would involve looking at Western countries to determine whether Christianity (as represented by Christian political parties or other religious organizations) is an important center of power.
16. There have been periods during which the legislature could have been considered a center of power in some Arab countries. Unfortunately, as noted by Brown (2007), "On rare occasions in which elected institutions showed some vitality—Egypt in the 1930s, Morocco in the 1960s, Kuwait in the 1970s and 1980s—the ruler moved simply to shut them down, suspending parliament and sometimes the entire constitution" (p. 54). See also Herb (2014).
17. Since 1979, Egypt's Supreme Constitutional Council has had the ability to nominate new members/justices who serve until retirement. Since 1979,

the Court has declared a number of laws unconstitutional, including the country's electoral law. In fact, according to Brown (2007), "Over half the laws contested by the SCC [since `Awad al-Murr took over the presidency] were declared unconstitutional" (p. 62).

18. Bellin (2005) notes that "MENA states are the world leaders in terms of the proportion of GNP spent on security" (6.7% region average compared to 3.8 world average). Moreover, the proportion of population employed in security is also comparatively large: "16.9 men per thousand under arms compared to 6.31 in France" (p. 31).
19. The relationship between external support and domestic security is extremely important. As Bellin further explains, it is often the key in maintaining domestic power: "The security establishment is most likely to lose its will and capacity to hold on to power when it loses crucial international support … Withdrawal of international backing triggers both an existential and financial crisis for the regime that often devastates both its will and capacity to carry on" (p. 27).
20. Demographic data from CIA World Factbook: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/jo.html. Accessed 7 July 2011.
21. East Bankers is another term to refer to Transjordanians, people from the *east* bank of the Jordan River.
22. *Wasta* is understood as "special influence" that is afforded to members of a specific community, group, or tribe (Barnett et al. 2013; Cunningham et al. 1994).
23. Garfinkle notes that merchants and landlords are predominately Palestinian. In addition, Abdullah I incorporated the merchant elite of Syrian and pre-1967 Palestinian origins into his domestic coalition in the new territory of Transjordan (Owen 2004; Peters and Moore 2009).
24. The Big 5 companies were the Jordanian Cement Factor Company (JFPC), Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC), Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company (JPRC), Arab Potash Company (APC), and Jordan Fertilizer Industries Company (JFIC).
25. The contributions to GDP of the three sectors are as follows: 3.4 percent (agriculture), 30.3 percent (industry), and 66.2 percent (service sector).
26. Although beyond scope of this discussion, see Knowles (2005) for excellent overview of the changing relationship between the state and the private sector from the mandate period to the present, and the factors affecting this relationship.
27. The Supreme Court justice, Faruq Kilani, who had ruled the 1997 Press and Publication Law unconstitutional, was dismissed from the court shortly after the ruling (Ryan 2002, p. 120).

28. After the 1980s economic crisis, and subsequent domestic unrest, the United States "devoted substantial resources toward economic reform in Jordan, but it has done so while providing budget support that allows the Hashemites to maintain their tribal base, as well as by constructing new institutions that secure trade-based rents for the displaced Transjordanian economic elite" (Peters and Moore 2009, pp. 274–275).
29. Demographic statistics obtained from the CIA World Factbook: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ag.html. Accessed 7 July 2011.
30. The absorption crisis refers to the inability of the socialist Algerian state to provide education, housing, and employment to the population. According to Bonner et al. (2005), "Aggravating the crisis was a high population growth rate, which swelled the number of young Algerians seeking schooling, apartments and jobs" (p. 2).
31. Ruedy (2005) notes that more than 4 million hectares remained in private hands and in fact "very little privately held land had actually changed hands" (p. 223). He further remarks about the agricultural reforms: "By 1980, agrarian reform had created 5966 production cooperatives, 177 service cooperates, and 670 socialist villages. But employment, production, and earnings of the sector were far short of what had been expected" (p. 223).
32. The civil war largely eliminated the power of the Islamists (for a number of reasons), and they are no longer considered a center of power. Although Islamists might have been considered a center of power, they were not during the period of study. The civil war/Islamic insurgency and the co-optation of the main legal Islamist parties weakened the power of Islamists. In the last elections, the alliance of three Islamist parties (the Green alliance) only won approximately 6 percent of the seats in parliament.
33. The regime responded in 1988 by establishing multiparty elections as an alternative way to justify its authority and remain in power (i.e., legitimacy based on the ballot box).
34. Quandt (1998) notes that two major ideological currents in Algerian society are the nationalists and the democrats (represented by the FFS and other smaller groups).
35. Belkaïd (2012) argues that this generational divide ("fault line") was also apparent during the Arab Spring in Algeria, noting that "the majority of the protesters were young people under the age of thirty … a part of the population that was born and grew up with [armed] violence and the political crisis" (p. 145). The author further notes: "The older generations stayed away from the protest movement for the reasons described above, but also because they felt they had more to lose economically" (p. 145).
36. Specifically Roberts asserts that the "public administration and the state sector of the economy did not keep pace with that of secondary and higher

education, with the result that by mid- to late 1970s there were large numbers of young Algerians educated in Arabic for whom employment opportunities were scarce" (p. 12).

37. See also Ayubi (1995) who notes, "As the memory of the national liberation struggle faded away among a demographically young population, the 'socialistic' slogans were not matched by the reality of a just, integrated society, and 'political Islam' came eventually to haunt the bureau-technocratic elite and its military guarantors" (p. 123).
38. Quandt also notes, "True, the Algerian military had long been the real power behind the scenes, but there is still a difference between being a puppet master and being on stage" (p. 63).
39. The change in external support across presidents in Algeria is a good illustration of how centers of power can change over time.
40. This attitude was not unique to the United States and France as "many African and Arab leaders breathed sighs of relief. They had been fearful of the domino effect of an Islamist victory in Algeria, which might have been a beacon for Islamist movements throughout North Africa and the Middle East" (Evans and Phillips 2007, p. 73).

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CHAPTER 5

The Islamic Action Front: Between Participation and Boycotts

Chapters 3 and 4 provide a framework for understanding government and opposition behavior in electoral authoritarian regimes. This chapter uses the case of the Islamic Action Front (IAF) in Jordan to show how changes in the costs of mobilization, ideological divergence, and factors related to regime strength affected the behavior of both the opposition and the government in Jordan from 1989 to 2010.

Although Jordan began a process of political liberalization in 1989 with King Hussein's decision to reestablish parliamentary elections, the country never successfully transitioned to a democracy.[1] As a result, Jordan, like many of its regional neighbors, is today considered an electoral authoritarian regime. The opposition in Jordan has both participated and boycotted at different times during this period, a pattern observed in other electoral authoritarian regimes in the Arab world and elsewhere. Of the five elections held since 1989, the opposition boycotted twice (1997 and 2010) and participated three times (1993, 2003, and 2007). Strategies adopted by the opposition during times of boycott also varied: following the 1997 boycott, the opposition chose not to mobilize post-election protests, an approach it rejected following the second boycott in 2010.

This chapter follows three sets of actors: (1) the regime; (2) the opposition (in this case, the Muslim Brotherhood and its affiliated political party, the IAF)[2]; and (3) three centers of power: Transjordanians, Palestinians, and the United States. In developing this analytic narrative, I relied on a combination of over 40 interviews with IAF party leaders and

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members, elected officials, and individuals from nongovernmental organizations triangulated with archival work and existing scholarly work on Jordan (Webb et al. 1966). The case study of the IAF reveals how the opposition's shifting interpretation of regime strength drove the changes observed in electoral strategies during this period. The next section provides a brief summary of the political liberalization process and the return of electoral and parliamentary politics before turning to the analysis of the IAF's moves in and out of the electoral arena.

5.1 Political Liberalization and the Return of Electoral Politics

After an over 20-year hiatus, some semblance of democratic institutions and processes returned to Jordan with the resumption of parliamentary elections in 1989. Parliamentary life was suspended following Jordan's loss of the West Bank to Israel in 1967 and the subsequent implementation of martial law. King Hussein's decision to resume parliamentary elections, the first since 1967, was a response to domestic unrest in the 1980s over economic conditions. This political liberalization that saw the return of elections to Jordan occurred concurrently with similar processes elsewhere in the Arab world.

Prior to King Hussein's decision to hold elections in 1989, Jordan had already begun plans to reestablish parliamentary life. In January 1984, the government reconvened parliament, which subsequently ratified a new electoral law that planned for elections expected in 1987. However, at this time Jordan had yet to relinquish its claim to the West Bank, and following a breakdown in talks with the Palestinian Liberation Organization, on 10 October 1986 King Hussein announced the postponement of elections. When the First Intifada broke out in 1987, King Hussein took a step further and postponed the reestablishment of parliamentary life indefinitely (Mufti 1999, p. 104). But just two years later, following domestic unrest sparked by an economic crisis, the king finally restored parliamentary elections.

The oil shock of the 1980s precipitated the economic crisis that ultimately brought about political reforms and the restoration of parliamentary life. As a partial rentier state, Jordan was indirectly dependent on oil, relying on remittances from Jordanians and Palestinians employed in the Persian Gulf. Jordan also depended on significant foreign assistance

from those same Gulf States as well as Western powers (including the United States). When the oil economies contracted following the global drop in oil prices in the 1980s, Jordan lost its primary sources of revenue.[3] This reduction in capital inflow forced Jordan to borrow heavily throughout much of the decade. By 1988, Jordan's debt was twice its GDP (Ryan 2002, p. 51). International currency markets reacted strongly to Jordan's growing debt, with the Jordanian dinar losing half its value over a period of four months in 1988 (Piro 1998, p. 73).

After seeking debt relief from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Jordan agreed to implement austerity measures, which entailed reducing and in some cases eliminating price subsidies on basic goods. This change in government policy proved disastrous for both the general public and the regime itself. As Piro (1998) has noted, when subsidies were removed on 16 April 1989, prices increased by 10 to 65 percent. The increases affected many household staples, such as gasoline, sugar, and soft drinks, but also extended to industrial inputs such as steel (p. 73). The effects were felt immediately. Riots erupted in the city of Ma'an days later and soon spread to Karak and Tafileh. The unrest in these Jordanian cities was particularly concerning since they are overwhelmingly Transjordanian and were considered areas of traditional monarchical support. In addition to popular opposition to the IMF-imposed measures, citizens were also unhappy with what they perceived as "endemic issues such as long-term political and economic mismanagement" (Ryan 2002, p. 53). Recognizing the connection between the outbreak of rioting in southern Jordan and popular concern over political and economic realities, King Hussein expedited the process of political liberalization that had slowed following the start of the First Intifada. The result: Jordan's first parliamentary elections in over 20 years.

The 1989 elections were regarded as the most free and fair of the elections that have since taken place in Jordan. Various Jordanian political observers agree that these elections resulted in one of the strongest parliaments in Jordan's history; the only Jordanian parliament of comparable strength was installed by the 1956 elections.[4] This sentiment is affirmed by a former prime minister who argued, "Every elected parliament [since 1989] has been weaker."[5] The perceived open and fair nature of the election was remarkable not only because it followed the turmoil created by the April 1989 price increases, but also because it was held under martial law, which had been in place since 1967, and took place without formal political parties, which remained illegal until 1992.

The strength of the 1989 parliament is evident in the range of important political reforms that it enacted in the three years that followed. Between 1989 and 1993, the 11th parliament ended martial law, legalized political parties, and expanded media and press freedoms, among other key reforms. In addition, a National Charter was adopted in 1991 that outlined "the parameters of future political practice" (Mufti 1999, p. 14). In 1992 following the (re)legalization of political parties, which had been banned in 1957, a number of parties registered, including the IAF, the official political party of the Muslim Brotherhood.

These political reforms seemed to mark a watershed in political freedom and democratic transition in Jordan. There were, however, other forces of change operating within the 11th parliament, driven in large part by the Muslim Brotherhood and its Islamist allies, which between them controlled a plurality of parliamentary seats. In 1991, the Brotherhood held five cabinet positions and took responsibility for the portfolios of education, health, justice, social affairs, and Awqaf (religious affairs and endowments). Furthermore, the Brotherhood made its vote of confidence to Prime Minister Mudar Badran's government conditional on the satisfaction of a number of policy objectives, including an Islamic faculty at Yarmouk University and banning the sale and service of alcohol at public institutions (Mufti 1999, p. 112).[6]

In hindsight it is perhaps not surprising that major changes underway in Jordan sparked a reaction from the monarchy. On 4 August 1993, King Hussein dismissed parliament and 13 days later issued a temporary electoral law that changed the electoral system from a block vote system to a single non-transferable vote (SNTV) system (referred to as *sawt wahid*—one man, one vote—in Jordan).[7] The law is widely recognized as an attempt to deliberately disadvantage the Muslim Brotherhood by engineering a parliament loyal to the regime.[8] Those in the opposition, as well as independent journalists and academics, vehemently opposed both the new electoral law and its enactment by decree. The electoral law remained a major point of contention between opposition groups and the regime throughout the period of study.[9] In addition to its disdain for *sawt wahid*, the opposition contested the highly disproportional allocation of parliamentary seats (malapportionment), which overrepresents rural and tribal loyalist areas to the detriment of urban areas where a majority of Palestinians live.

In the context of this anger and frustration with the new electoral rules, the IAF, the Muslim Brotherhood,[10] and other opposition parties discussed the possibility of boycotting the 1993 elections. On hearing of these

deliberations, the king called on the IAF to participate in the elections and "assume its historical responsibility."[11] The IAF Shura Council voted 85 percent in favor of participating and the Muslim Brotherhood and its independent Islamist allies ultimately captured 18 seats, a marked decline from the 34 seats won in 1989. This decline in parliamentary representation occurred despite the fact that the IAF's share of the vote remained the same (Mufti 1999, p. 120). The king's effort to engineer a more loyal parliament was already succeeding.

In 1997, with the electoral law still unchanged, the IAF and other opposition parties decided to boycott the parliamentary elections. Their stated reasons for boycotting were first and foremost the electoral rule, followed by the 1994 peace treaty with Israel and the 1997 amendments to the Press and Publication Law, which were denounced as unconstitutional and, like the new electoral law, passed after parliament had already been dissolved. After the 1997 election boycott, the government chose to ignore the demands of the boycotting opposition and did not undertake reform of any kind to address the boycotters' demands. The opposition, despite the lack of meaningful reform on any of its three major grievances, chose to participate in both the 2003 and 2007 elections. In May 2010 the government implemented a new temporary electoral law that left the fundamental electoral system intact but changed the number of districts, adjusted the number of representatives elected in each district, and increased the lower house from 110 to 120 seats, with 12 seats reserved for women. Citing this new electoral law, the IAF adopted the strategy of boycott for a second time in 2010. The government again chose to ignore the opposition's demands, but this time the opposition chose not to back down.

5.2 Participation in the 1993 Election

Opposition participation in the 1993 election is an important example of the limitations of electoral factor-based explanations of boycotts and the added analytic leverage provided by the theory set forth in Chap. 3. Although the change in the electoral law has been cited as the main grievance driving the opposition's decision to boycott in 1997 and 2010, at the time of the 1993 election this same electoral law did not result in a boycott. There were, of course, voices within the Islamic Movement[12] calling for an election boycott in 1993 that cited the new electoral law and the handicap it posed to their ability to win seats in parliament.[13] Proponents

of a boycott remained few in number, however, as the majority within the Islamic Movement favored participation.

A shift from participation to boycotting can occur when the costs of mobilization decrease, the ideological divergence between the government and the opposition increases, and/or perceptions about the regime's strength change such that the opposition believes the regime is unlikely to maintain support from key centers of power if challenged. During this period in Jordan, beliefs about the strength of the regime were the most salient factor. The security of the regime increased between 1989 and 1993 and opposition beliefs updated accordingly. The regime's decisions, particularly in relation to the First Gulf War, allowed it to maintain its legitimacy among key bases of support and even improve its standing. Garfinkle (1993) noted that "in some respects, Jordan's general circumstances a year after the end of the Gulf War were better than they were a year before" (p. 102).[14] Opposition perceptions of regime strength would not, therefore, have been revised to believe that the regime was weaker in the lead-up to the 1993 elections than it was in 1989. If anything, beliefs would have been revised to perceive the regime as stronger, thus decreasing the likelihood of a boycott.

Several key factors contributed to the regime's strength—and the opposition's belief in it—during this time. First, although the relationship between Jordan and the United States, its primary patron, was strained following King Hussein's decision not to join the US-led coalition against Iraq, by 1993 relations were improving. The United States had resumed its foreign aid to Jordan and offered Jordan economic incentives to normalize relations with Israel. With this relationship mended, US support of the regime was unquestionable by the election in 1993.

Second, general economic conditions had improved since the 1989 election. This economic improvement has important implications for how opposition parties perceived the probability that societal centers of power—in this case Transjordanians and Palestinians—would come to the aid of the regime if its authority was challenged during post-election protests. During the First Gulf War, Jordan suffered two economic costs in addition to losing various sources of foreign aid. First, Iraq was Jordan's largest trading partner: Jordan sent 23 percent of its exports to Iraq and 17 percent of its imports came from Iraq (Ryan 2002, p. 75). In addition, until his fall in 2003, Saddam Hussein sold Jordan oil at prices well below market value, which lowered the cost of oil and gas for Jordanian citizens.

Still, Jordan's GDP during this time did suffer from a dramatic reduction in remittances from Jordanians working in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states. Prior to the First Gulf War, these remittances comprised a sizable portion of Jordan's GDP. Jordan's decision to align itself with Iraq alienated the other states in the region, which had until this time allowed Jordanian nationals to work in GCC countries. As Ryan (2002) succinctly explains,

> By maintaining alignment with Iraq, the kingdom alienated its other key economic allies, each of which delivered a sharp economic blow: the United States ceased its foreign aid to the kingdom temporarily, while Saudi Arabia and other GCC states cut off aid and oil supplies, and then deported hundreds of thousands of Jordanian and Palestinian laborers. (p. 75)

The return of hundreds of thousands of Jordanians and Palestinians from the Gulf threatened an increased economic burden for an already shaken Jordanian economy. Surprisingly, however, their return in fact stimulated economic growth through the resulting increase in consumer spending.[15] Although Jordan's per capita GDP growth was negative in 1991, it rose to about 12 percent in 1992 and remained positive until 1996.[16] By the 1993 elections, it appeared that the return of these workers was not the economic burden that had been assumed (Garfinkle 1993).

Lastly, King Hussein's decision to not join the US-led coalition against Iraq was very popular at home. Saddam Hussein was at this time popular among a significant portion of the population across the Middle East, and many Jordanians—both Transjordanians and Palestinians—greeted King Hussein's decision favorably. In fact, King Hussein's public image received a sustained benefit from this decision for a number of subsequent years. As noted by Garfinkle (1993), "The king's nationalist credentials, even among Palestinians, never shined more brightly, whereas Arafat's position had never been worse" (p. 102). Furthermore, King Hussein's decision to appoint a Palestinian, Taher al-Masri, as prime minister increased his standing among Palestinians in Jordan.[17]

Taken together these factors boosted the perceived strength of the regime among opposition actors. Thus, even with the most conservative estimate of no change in perceived strength, together with no change in either ideological divergence or mobilization costs, we would not predict a shift from participation to boycotting. The result: opposition participation. A 1993 statement to the press by the head of the IAF's Shura Council, 'Abd al-Majid Thunaybat, affirms this assessment:

> Therefore and despite our great reservations towards the current electoral law and the way it was introduced (and the fact that) it aims to limit the presence of the Islamic Movement and its representation in the next parliament…(the Brothers) out of their feeling of responsibility to their calling, their homeland, and their citizens, and out of concern for the sensitive developments in our nation at this time, have decided to participate in the upcoming parliamentary elections.[18]

While emphasizing the party's discontent with an unfair electoral law, Thunaybat also notes that larger contextual factors influenced the party's decision to participate. In particular, the statement reveals that the opposition, in deciding whether to participate or boycott, also took into account the significant political developments underway in the country that suggested this was not the time to seek reform via contentious electoral strategies.

5.3 The Boycott of 1997

Four years later, the IAF decided to boycott. This shift in electoral strategy was not limited to the IAF; other small leftist opposition parties boycotted as well, as did several high-level independent politicians such as former Prime Minister Taher al-Masri. Following the boycott, the government chose to ignore the opposition's demands for reform and the opposition opted not to mobilize post-election demonstrations.

Several political and economic conditions leading up to the elections in 1997 influenced the IAF's beliefs about regime strength and the likelihood of obtaining reform from an election boycott. Two events in particular that occurred strongly suggested to the IAF a likely decrease in the stability of the regime. First, and most importantly, was the signing of the peace treaty with Israel. The 1994 Wadi Araba Treaty was wildly unpopular among Jordanians of both Transjordanian and Palestinian origin. Although the treaty was sold to the Jordanian public as bringing great economic benefits to Jordan through increased ties to Israel, "the expected great upsurge in economic well-being … never happened" (Ryan 2002, p. 79).

Opposition to the treaty cannot be overstated. There was a continuous public tirade against the treaty in the popular press and by opposition parties. In response to this public criticism, the regime further agitated public opinion by enacting the restrictive 1997 Press and Publication Law to

silence dissent in the run-up to the elections. The 1997 boycott thus represented a protest against the newly decreed Press and Publication Law, the 1994 peace treaty, and the regime's efforts to normalize relations with Israel, and, most importantly, the temporary electoral law of 1993, which enacted the SNTV electoral system.

In addition to the public outrage created by the peace treaty, a series of economic challenges created further public dissatisfaction with the regime. This groundswell of popular frustration suggested that societal centers of power would not be as supportive of the regime compared to 1993, making the regime appear more vulnerable to the opposition. First, salaries had not kept up with the cost of living and efforts to reduce the budget deficit resulted in fewer government jobs and reduced government spending. This contraction in domestic economic opportunity alongside a rising cost of living was exacerbated by the fact that Jordanian citizens were still limited in their ability to seek employment in GCC countries. Second, with the domestic economy contracting and more vulnerable than it had been in previous years, the regime committed to another round of economic reforms in 1996. These economic policy adjustments, which included the reduction and/or elimination of subsidies on many staples, satisfied some of Jordan's obligations to the IMF but again created a period of price volatility at a time of rising public frustration with the regime. In an attempt to prevent these price increases, the IAF organized a boycott of the parliamentary session in August 1996, in which 23 deputies participated to protest the price hikes.[19] The boycott ultimately failed and the price reforms were enacted.

In order to soften the impact of the economic reforms, the government introduced various forms of state-subsidized living allowances. The government began paying members of the armed forces and government workers a cost of living allowance, while Jordanians not employed in the public sector were paid allowances through the Supply Ministry or even Jordanian banks (Ryan 2002, p. 56). Despite these efforts to cushion the economic blow, citizens were severely affected by the price increases. The price of bread more than doubled and dairy prices increased significantly as well due to increases in the cost of animal fodder. As in 1989, riots broke out within days of the 1996 price increases.

These riots again appeared primarily in areas of traditional monarchy strongholds, beginning in Karak and later spreading to Ma'an and Tafileh. This time, however, the government called in the army and imposed a curfew in Karak. This turn of events undoubtedly affected the opposition's

perception of the government's strength by raising doubts about whether the regime could count on societal centers of power to come to its aid if required. As a result, the opposition believed that the likelihood of a successful boycott was greater than in years past. A statement from a leader of the Jordanian Democratic People's Party (*Hizb Al-Sha'ab Al-Dimuqrati Al-Urduni* or HASHD) captures the perceived threat to the government posed by popular unrest during this period. He maintained that constituencies regarded as government strongholds were significant indicators of public frustration that the government needed to take seriously. While unrest in the Palestinian refugee camps might be overlooked, he asserted, discontent and unrest among Transjordanians must be acknowledged by the regime:

> Here in Jordan, the government is only affected by the Jordanians [Transjordanians]. For example, if the southern provinces of Ma'an or Karak moved and rejected some case [policy], then this may affect the decision of the system [regime]. But if the Baqa'a Camp did, they would do nothing about it.[20]

The opposition interpreted these riots and associated events as evidence that the government was vulnerable and that a boycott strategy could actually achieve reform. The influence of the riots on the opposition's beliefs was amplified by historical experience. Just seven years had passed since riots in Ma'an, Tafileh, and Karak had led to the reinstatement of elections and a period of political liberalization. With this precedent in mind, the opposition began to view a boycott strategy even more favorably.

The opposition's beliefs were further informed by the government's response to the opposition's announcement that it would be boycotting the elections. Upon learning of the pending boycott, the government held meetings with members of the opposition, focusing primarily on those connected to the Islamic Movement, to discuss the upcoming elections and the opposition's decision to boycott. King Hussein went so far as to ask that the IAF reconsider its decision. However, the opposition felt the king wanted them to participate only to "make a nice image."[21] "Why did the government ask us to participate?" reflected a representative from the Muslim Brotherhood. "Because it is very important to the government to have the opposition in the elections, to gain more credibility in front of the whole world."[22] An independent politician and journalist echoed this

sentiment: "Their [the IAF] participation gives the elections more legitimacy. If the opposition boycotts, the elections will look fabricated and not representative."[23]

Given these events, the theoretical framework set out in Chaps. 3 and 4 is informative in understanding the opposition's change in strategy between 1993 and 1997. The unrest among Transjordanians, a societal center of power, was a strong indication to the opposition that the legitimacy of the regime was suffering, which in turn made reform seem more likely in 1997 compared to 1993. The opposition regarded the peace treaty with Israel and the domestic unrest resulting from austerity measures combined with the king's overtures to the Islamic Movement as further confirmation that the regime was vulnerable. Due to the perceived weakened position of the regime, the Islamic Movement "did not feel it had to make compromise with the government."[24]

As a result, the opposition undertook the boycott in the hopes of achieving a change in the government's policies and a resumption of the political liberalization process. In the words of one former head of the IAF, the boycott offered "a peaceful tool of pressure on the government to draw the public opinion's attention towards the government's undemocratic and unfair procedures."[25] A long-time leader in the Islamic Movement offered a similar assessment: "We thought that the public's pressure would force the higher political bodies to back away from conducting restrictions and move ahead with democratization. However, they didn't have any concern for the public or the figures, and kept their same tactics." He continued, "We wanted to embarrass the government in front of the West, the United States, and the European Union who support the government in its approach."[26]

Domestic opposition to the peace treaty, when combined with domestic unrest resulting from the price increases, suggested to the IAF that the party could use a boycott to obtain concessions from a more vulnerable regime. In response to the boycott in 1997, the regime had made repeated promises of reform and the IAF and other boycotting actors placed faith in the government's assurances.[27] Despite these pledges, however, no concessions were made in any of the three main areas of grievance that led to the boycott and the opposition did not protest the regime's inaction after the election. Thus the question becomes: Why did the government choose not to reform and why did the opposition decide not to pursue a more contentious strategy after the government ignored its demands for reform?

The conditions in Jordan surrounding the 1997 elections suggest that the opposition was not in a situation where the government would always offer reform following a boycott. But while the government appeared willing to risk post-election demonstrations, it also seemed willing to offer reform. Having failed to procure reform, the earlier enthusiasm for boycotting was replaced by a lack of clarity about what to do: protest or back down. A significant indication of the incomplete information problem facing the opposition was the government's initial response to domestic discontent.

King Hussein took a strong public position on a number of critical issues after the August 1996 price increases and resulting unrest. First, the regime, as Curtis Ryan (2002) has noted, responded with repressive measures against the demonstrators in 1996. The king also gave a televised address in which he claimed that he was prepared to use an "iron fist" and "any other means necessary to restore order" (Ryan 2002, p. 58). This rhetoric indicated a newfound willingness to confront domestic challenges directly and push back against the demands for reform sought by the opposition.

Second, he expressed support for both the prime minister and the unpopular economic policies that had caused the volatile price changes, "suggesting that the previous years of bread subsidies had been 'a mistake'" (Ryan 2002, p. 59). In both 1989 and 1996, the public blamed the prime minister for the economic hardship induced by IMF reform obligations and in both years, there were widespread calls for the prime minister's resignation.[28] In 1989, the king responded to this sentiment by dismissing Prime Minister Zayd al-Rifa'i, and appointing Zayd bin Shakir, who was considered an intermediary between the hardliners who opposed elections and the reformers who felt that elections represented the best way forward (Schwedler 2006; Mufti 1999). In 1996, by contrast, the response of King Hussein was quite the opposite. The king not only initially rejected the public's widespread calls for Prime Minister Abdul Karim al-Kabariti's resignation, but also publicly defended the prime minister. King Hussein appointed Kabariti, who had been considered a reformer, only months before in February 1996.[29] Despite the initial show of support, Kabariti was eventually pushed out in March 1997, after only a year in office.

Another reason behind the regime's refusal to reform and the opposition's subsequent decision to back down is what the opposition's actions revealed about its potential payoffs to post-election protests. The IAF found itself in a difficult position after the 1997 boycott. The IAF's difficult position reflects the fact that in such situations the strategic choices of the

opposition depend on its beliefs about regime strength. While the opposition would choose to mobilize protests against a weak regime, its mobilization costs were too high to justify mobilizing against a strong regime. Although the opposition was not indifferent between participation and boycotting (it preferred boycotting), there were several indications that the opposition would not always protest if the boycott proved unsuccessful.

For one, there were some high-level defections. Two IAF members, Abdul Rahim Al-Akour and Abdullah Akaylah, defied the party's decision to boycott and ran in the 1997 elections as independent candidates. Another member of the IAF, Bassam Amoush, published an article in *Al-Rai* newspaper in which he refuted the decision to boycott.[30] All three members were subsequently expelled from the Islamic Movement. In addition, according to one former minister, the government received signals that the rank-and-file membership was highly critical of the IAF leadership for this decision to boycott.[31] Thus from the government's perspective, considering the reaction of some members within the party to the boycott, the opposition faced a difficult decision about whether or not to protest post-election. If a government knows the opposition will only sometimes choose to protest, then even a weak regime would have an incentive not to reform, or to at least mix, sometimes ignoring and sometimes reforming.

The second indication was that the IAF and the Muslim Brotherhood did not ask voters to boycott in 1997, which likewise intimated the party's indifference and indecisiveness. In 2010, the IAF and its allies undertook an extensive boycott campaign, distributing posters and pamphlets to the public to encourage them to boycott the polls.[32] During the 1997 boycott, by contrast, the IAF and the Muslim Brotherhood did not call on voters to boycott the elections. Reflecting back on why the party did not ask supporters to vote, one IAF member and former MP answered: "We did not ask people to share in the boycott because we did not want to break our relation with the king."[33] Another IAF member offered a similar explanation, arguing that "The IAF thought that embarrassing the government would provoke anger and indignation towards them."[34] These statements, when combined with the IAF's trepidation about post-election protests, suggest that the Islamic Movement believed the perceived payoff for contesting a failed boycott was lower in 1997 than it would be in subsequent years.

Moreover, the Jordanian government believed the risks associated with opposition demonstrations were on the decline. Participation in rural areas was seemingly unaffected by the boycott strategy, including

in locations traditionally in support of the monarchy, such as Ma'an and Tafileh. According to one former government minister, "Intellectuals, political parties, civil society organizations [NGOs], and political personalities are the ones criticizing the [electoral] law, not normal people."[35] He continued, "56 percent agree with one-man, one-vote. The opposition to the law is a minority." The opposition's skepticism regarding its ability to challenge the government can also be seen in a statement by a leader from the HASHD Party,

> Do we have to make popular revolution to make the government change the law? I don't think that people will do this for the sake of the electoral law. They may for earning a living or for their livelihood or for a significant political issue related to Palestine. The referendums still show that 50 percent of the society accepts the electoral law, and the tribal groups [Transjordanians] are content with this parliament for the services they get.[36]

Thus in 1997, the regime saw criticism of the electoral law as an elite reaction that did not extend to the populace. By 2010—17 years after the electoral law was enacted by decree—discontent with *sawt wahid* had spread beyond the IAF, extending to some Bedouin tribes who were long thought to benefit from the SNTV system (Buttorff 2015).

Lastly, the regime's authority was well-anchored by its international center of power: the United States. Given the United States' strong support for the regime at that time, it is likely that the regime appreciated that domestic challenges to its authority were less risky (and less costly) than in the immediate aftermath of the 1989 riots. Between 1994 and 1998, US debt forgiveness to Jordan totaled some US $700 million (Prados 2003, p. 13). In addition, US President Bill Clinton designated Jordan as a major ally of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1996. During this period, Jordan also benefited from an extensive military drawdown from the United States totaling US$100 million in equipment (Taylor et al. 1997, p. 4).[37] That same year, Jordan was a "leading recipient of free weapons" through the US Excess Defense Articles (EDA) program.[38] Furthermore, in November 1997, the US Congress allocated Jordan US $75 million in military aid and a further $1.7 million in military training assistance, making Jordan the largest recipient of US military training grant assistance for the fiscal year 1998.[39]

The support Jordan received from one of its key bases of support may be one reason the government felt emboldened to ignore public opinion, at least in regard to the peace treaty with Israel. A Jordanian journalist underscored this point: "In 1997, it was obvious that peace process was more important than democracy to the government—they were less sensitive to [domestic] opposition."[40] At the same time, the reforms demanded by the opposition were much more costly to the regime. The regime used the new electoral law to engineer a loyal parliament and weaken the influence of the opposition in parliament, which was particularly important at this time to secure support for the peace treaty with Israel. By 1994, Ryan (2002) notes,

> The regime saw the treaty [with Israel] as essential to the full restoration of its political-economic ties to the world's most powerful states and institutions. A regime much 'recovered' and strengthened since its 1989 scare then overrode public opinion—at least the opinion in opposition to the treaty—to secure longer-term economic gains and regime security. (p. 79)

The resxponses of the opposition when asked why the government did not reform following the 1997 boycotts affirm the importance of centers of power and the broader theory advanced here. After the election, the IAF and other opposition parties and figures concluded that both domestic and international pressure were insufficient to compel the regime to prefer reform. A former IAF member of parliament elected in 2007 said that the government did not reform because the "USA didn't have any desire for reform."[41] Reflecting on why there was no reform, a spokesman for the Muslim Brotherhood offered a clear example of the choices that the opposition faced:

> The public pressure was not sufficient. Many people acted but all the actions were insufficient. There was also no pressure from outside. In developing countries, change can only be accomplished by strong and hard efforts, and perhaps we needed to go out in the streets, which may actually result in violent actions.[42]

In the aftermath of the boycott, the IAF recognized the decisive role that the United States—as one of Jordan's centers of power—had over whether the regime would reform. The IAF's reflections further revealed a recognition that perhaps the party needed to mobilize protests to compel the regime to reform since, given the conditions at the time, the boycott alone was insufficient to gain concessions.

Although the Jordanian government appeared willing to ignore the boycott and risk the possibility of post-election demonstrations, it also repeatedly signaled that it would engage in reform, but in the end decided not to. In a sense, the inability to clearly delineate the two reflects precisely the incomplete information problem faced by the IAF. Given the opposition's costs of mobilizations and beliefs about the regime, there was no compelling rationale for either backing down or continuing the fight for reform through post-elections demonstrations. Groups in such a situation would experience a natural ex post regret: had they known beforehand that the boycott would fail, they would never have undertaken it.

The boycott of the 1997 elections produced a parliament of independent tribal loyalists and a greatly weakened institution in terms of skills and experience. Parliament ultimately became, according to one informant, a "follower" of the executive, which further strengthened the regime.[43] Reflecting on the opposition's 1997 decision to boycott and its aftermath, one veteran journalist recalled, "The boycott was the highest level of pressure on the government to amend the electoral law. Of course this attempt failed and the situation became even worse afterwards."[44]

As noted in Chap. 3, the decision to boycott and then back down represents the worst possible outcome for the opposition, leaving them worse off than if they had participated. The 1997 boycott illustrates how rational actors can find themselves worse off than they would have been had they contested the election. One could argue that the IAF simply failed to think through their choices in 1997 (i.e., they lacked strategic acumen). However, the theory advanced in this study offers a much stronger explanation. Changes in beliefs about the strength of the regime justified the boycott, but the response of the regime then placed the opposition in a situation in which it was faced with two alternatives—to protest or to back down—and no clear reason to favor one approach over the other. As a result, it chose to back down.

5.4 Back to Participation: The Elections of 2003 and 2007

The opposition returned to participation in 2003. Changes in regime strength and the costs of mobilization explain this shift in strategy. As in 1993 and 1997, the IAF and the Muslim Brotherhood debated whether to participate in or boycott the 2003 and 2007 elections. Members of the

IAF repeatedly expressed that the strategic set of choices in 1997 had left the party worse off. On the IAF's decision to return to participation in 2003, one representative from the group stated,

> We decided to choose the best of two bad choices. We believed that it would be worse to boycott these elections, to isolate ourselves from the public by not presenting our agenda in the electoral campaign and losing our voice inside the lower house.[45]

IAF members, as well as academics, journalists, and other politicians, cited two main reasons for the return to participation in 2003. The first stated reason for the change in strategy was that the 1997 boycott was not successful in achieving the very reforms it had sought. Indeed, the boycott failed to elicit reforms to either the Press and Publication Law or the Temporary Electoral Law and did not result in a change in the government's position vis-à-vis the peace process with Israel. Furthermore, what the IAF might have gained through the 1997 boycott strategy seemed less than it had lost in terms of influence since the election. IAF members and others repeatedly claimed that as a result of the boycott, the IAF had become isolated, losing its voice in parliament and through broader electoral campaigning. The IAF realized that without a recognized forum to communicate with the public, it would be more difficult to mobilize support, thereby increasing the costs of mobilizing post-election protests.

The sentiments expressed by the IAF and the subsequent change in electoral strategy by the opposition parties can be interpreted through the theoretical framework. For one, their concern over loss of voice is particularly significant when we consider the feasibility of a boycott strategy. Key to the boycott condition is the ability to communicate a credible threat of post-election protests and both costs of mobilization and beliefs in the strength of the regime can undermine this ability. If the costs of mobilization increase, the second component of the boycott strategy—post-election protests—becomes less feasible; and if the opposition cannot credibly threaten protests, the government will not reform, making the opposition better off participating.

Mobilization of supporters and the public at large is fundamental in the ability to credibly threaten demonstrations if the regime ignores the boycott. The party saw parliament and election campaigns as platforms for communicating with supporters and the wider public and believed that the boycott strategy of 1997 deprived them of important arenas to discuss

and debate ideas. In choosing to boycott in 1997, the IAF also lost the accompanying media coverage of their activities, which was important for remaining connected to the people. In the words of one journalist and independent politician:

> Did the party lose support from boycotting? Yes. Because citizens want to deal with the people who represent them, care about them, speak in the name of them. When you boycott the election, you put yourself outside. These years between 1997 and 2003, the Islamic Movement became weaker and lost [its] presence in front of the people. When the IAF was in parliament, you saw them every day. You saw them questioning government actions and making speeches.[46]

Without representation in parliament, the IAF had become cut off from supporters and the public at large. According to one representative of the IAF, "our popularity among the people lasted for only a few months after the boycott. People forgot us since our voice was not being heard in the parliament."[47] The loss of parliamentary voice was therefore important in reducing the IAF's ability to communicate with the general public, and in turn reduced their ability to credibly communicate any intention of post-election demonstrations if the government were to ignore the boycott.

There was also a common view among the opposition that the regime's objectives were more easily obtained without the presence of the opposition in parliament. The most salient example of this was the 1998 Press and Publication Law. A former MP from the IAF added that the government had exploited the party's absence, citing as evidence the more than 200 temporary laws passed by the government of Ali Abu al-Raghreb between 2001 and 2003 when parliament was out of session.[48] Moreover, the party's absence from parliament lasted longer than expected given that the elections expected in 2001 were postponed for two years in response to the start of the Second Intifada in Palestine in September 2000.

Greater restrictions on freedoms that followed the 1997 elections also increased the IAF's costs of mobilization. Although Jordan's High Court ruled the 1997 Press and Publication Law unconstitutional in 1998, the Press and Publication Law (PPL) that followed was actually more restrictive than its predecessor (Ryan 2002). A report from the International Centre Against Censorship stated, "The draft PPL, in fact, while replicating most of the restrictions contained in the May 1997 amendments,

includes significant additional restrictions and so constitutes an even greater threat to freedom of expression in Jordan."[49] Vaguely worded to provide maximum latitude for government interpretation, the law granted extensive government control over the regulation and content of media and imposed strict censorship and licensing requirements. By exerting more control over mass media and information flows, the government raised the costs of mobilization.

In addition, when the opposition believes it is facing a strong regime that is unlikely to reform, participation becomes more likely. The political and economic environment was markedly differently in 2003 than in 1997. The changed socioeconomic and political climate suggested that the regime had the support of key centers of power and would retain them if its authority were challenged. Significant domestic changes and the further strengthening of international relationships contributed to an increase in the (perceived) strength of the regime. King Hussein died on 7 February 1999 and his eldest son, Abdullah, was crowned king shortly after his death. In many ways, King Abdullah II represented a stark contrast to his father as he was Western-educated and only 37 when he took the throne. According to one journalist, the new king brought renewed hopes for reform: "Abdullah was proclaimed king after his father's death [only] a few days later. To judge from some of his initial actions, [he] was well aware of the popular criticisms of the system which had surfaced in Hussein's last years, offering the possibility of amendments to both the electoral law of 1997 and the repressive press law of 1998."[50] A former MP from the IAF insisted, "After six years, the IAF had a new evaluation. In spite of the same electoral law, the leadership said to participate. Jordan had a new king and a new impression of the king that he would be willing to reform. So we said let us not be far from him."[51]

The second significant change in the political environment was the run-up to the US decision to invade Iraq in March 2003, which put Jordan in a challenging position. As Owen (2004) explains, "It was the Jordanian regime which found itself in the most difficult position of all, with the new king determined not to repeat what he saw as his father's mistake in opposing the anti-Iraq coalition in 1990/1" (p. 221). In return for supporting the United States, the regime received a significant increase in its aid package. In 2002, US aid to Jordan grew from US$190 million to US$343 million, which rose to approximately US$1 billion by 2003. Given Jordan's crucial support for the Second Gulf War, there was little uncertainty that

the United States would back the regime if a political crisis arose that threatened to undermine the regime's authority.

Economic conditions in 2003 were also improved compared to 1997. Per capita GDP growth averaged 3.34 percent per year from 1998 through 2007 and reached over 5 percent between 2004 and 2007.[52] Taken together, a new king, the strong relationship with and financial support from the United States, and improved domestic economic conditions indicated that the regime was in a position of strength and unlikely to offer concessions if the opposition boycotted. The combined effect of this increase in perceived regime strength on the one hand and the increased costs of mobilization on the other is expressed by a leader in the Muslim Brotherhood:

> It was a new stage. After considering the changes in the region, in Jordan and the re-evaluation of the boycott. At the political level, there was the new king in Jordan in addition to the situation in Iraq and its occupation. The Islamic Movement also faced more restrictions since 1997 so it was necessary to find new forums and methods to participate politically and express itself … Boycotting is a political action that is not constant. At its time, it was positive.[53]

This quote directly speaks to the theory advanced here: Even though the elections were unfair and the loathed SNTV electoral system was still in place, the opposition made its decision to participate or boycott in 2003 based on a set of non-electoral-related factors. The first set was the changed political and economic conditions, especially given the war in Iraq, which suggested to the opposition a regime in a strengthened position; the second, the increased costs of mobilization. Thus, despite the still authoritarian nature of the parliamentary elections, the decision to boycott was by no means a given.

With no change in the key parameters, we would again expect participation in 2007, which is precisely what transpired. Despite no reform to the electoral formula and severe election fraud during the 2007 municipal elections, the IAF chose to participate in the 2007 parliamentary elections only a few months later.[54] Concerning the opposition's beliefs, there were no significant political or economic changes in this inter-election period that would suggest a change in the willingness of the centers of power to support the regime in a post-election crisis. Moreover, the costs of mobilization during this period increased, even as the IAF returned to parliament and thereby increased its visibility in the political realm and in the eyes of the public.

Two factors increased the costs of mobilization between 2003 and 2007. First, during this period, the state tightened its control over the activity of the Islamic Movement, banning its members from working in state mosques and restricting their activities in universities. According to al-Momani (2007a), the government of Jordan was "abandoning its traditional approach [towards the Islamists] in favor of a more Egyptian-style aggressive approach of imprisoning, rejecting, and isolating Islamists with no regard for their demands" (pp. 2–3). As part of this crackdown, the government took over the Islamic Center Society run by the Muslim Brotherhood in 2006. The Islamic Center Society (also referred to in English as Islamic Charity Society) is a large NGO providing health, education, and social services to Jordanians.[55] Its activities are wide-ranging and provided the Muslim Brotherhood an important forum through which to interact with the broader population. Given that the Islamic Center Society was also crucial for fundraising, the loss of the center constrained the Islamic Movement's ability to mobilize support. Under the guise of investigating corruption, the government dismissed the Center's board, which had been composed of all Muslim Brotherhood members, and installed new management. In the end, only one Muslim Brotherhood board member was retained.

The government takeover of the Islamic Center Society, together with other restrictions faced by Muslim Brotherhood members, meant that the Islamic Movement's abilities to mobilize supporters were severely hampered. Abu Rumman (2007) summarized the effects of the government's actions:

> Prior to the shutdown of the Islamic Center Society, the Brotherhood's activities in universities were also greatly reduced and its members were banned from working in mosques run by the government. The Center [Islamic Center Society] and these kinds of activities have been essential for enabling the Brotherhood to communicate and interact with the Jordanian public and for maintaining a wide social network. They have also allowed the Brotherhood to maintain a concrete presence in volunteer-based charitable societies, paralleling the state's social welfare system and offering much needed aid and assistance to the needy. In the 2007 elections, the direct impact of the diminished capacity of the Brotherhood's social work and network began to take effect, creating a "missing link" in their communication and connection with the masses. (p. 69)

Internal divisions within the Islamic Movement were the second factor increasing the costs of mobilization.[56] Although there have always been different factions within the Islamic Movement, in 2007 the internal debate between moderates and radicals spilled over very publicly.[57] With the party itself bitterly and internally divided, mobilizing post-election protests became that much more difficult. The internal divisions evident within the IAF were one explanation offered for the party's poor showing in the 2007 parliamentary elections; the other being the government's blatant interference in the electoral process. The Secretary General of the IAF at the time, Zaki Bani Irsheid, publicly protested the candidate lists and refused to endorse some of the candidates from his own party. Other members not selected as candidates also failed to support the IAF candidates. In fact, as noted by al-Momani (2007b), "hardliners not only deferred from campaigning with the IAF candidates, but often campaigned against them by arguing that the purpose of moderates' candidacy was solely to please the government" (p. 2). Thus with no change in regime strength and an increase in the costs of mobilization, the IAF could not credibly threaten protests and, as a result, the party chose a strategy of participation.

5.5 The Boycott of 2010

On 31 July 2010 the Shura Council of the IAF voted in favor of boycotting the 2010 parliamentary elections. Although not unanimous, this decision reflected the sentiment of a large majority, with only 18 of 120 members of the council voting in favor of participation. The Shura Council's decision followed consultation with party members at all levels, who also overwhelming favored boycotting.[58] In 2010, the IAF formed an alliance with another opposition party, the Jordanian Popular Democratic Unity Party (*Hizb Al-Wihdah Al-Sha'abiyah Al-Dimuqratiyyah Al-Urduni* or al-Wihda), as well as a broader national pro-reform coalition.[59] Al-Wihda organized a group, "Boycotters for Change," to involve youths in the boycott campaign. In returning to a boycott strategy, the opposition again sought political reforms, with emphasis on the reform of the electoral system.[60]

In both 2003 and 2007, the IAF had tried to achieve political reforms by working through parliamentary channels (i.e., through participation). However, as noted by one former MP from the party, "the IAF's demands to the government for political reform, our requests to amend the public meetings law and the election law, were never considered. The govern-

ment never met these demands, and [as a result] the base of the party decided to not participate in the elections."[61]

In the lead-up to the 2010 election, the IAF conditioned their participation on a revision of the electoral law and guarantees of a free and fair election process, which included the establishment of an independent body to supervise the elections. Perhaps reflecting their frustration with the failure of their parliamentary attempts at reform, the IAF said it would reconsider its decision to boycott only if it received concrete guarantees and, as one IAF member put it, "not only talks for the sake of talks."[62]

The initial response from the regime indicated its preference for IAF participation. As was the case in the 1997 election boycotts, the government actively engaged with the IAF and encouraged the party to reconsider its decision. The IAF met with Prime Minister Samir Rifa'i as well as King Abdullah, marking the first time the king met personally with the IAF since coming to power in 1999. Mohammed Abu Rumman (2010) notes that the government was "eager" for the IAF to participate due to its fear that low turnout and the absence of the one opposition party with any popular support would endanger the credibility of the elections. Despite the government's desire for IAF participation, an agreement could not be reached and the IAF chose to boycott the 2010 elections.

On the surface, there are a number of reasons that might explain this return to the boycott strategy. The decision to boycott was understandable given the events of 2007, which saw a close vote inside the Shura Council in favor of participating, an unfair election process, and a poor showing by IAF candidates. Both the 2007 municipal elections, from which the IAF withdrew midway through election day, and the parliamentary elections held several months later are widely acknowledged to have been rife with fraud. Prior to 2007, Jordanian elections were largely free of such blatant interference, though they were certainly not free and fair democratic elections.[63] In the 2007 parliamentary elections, the IAF won only six seats, a dramatic decrease that stunned even the most pessimistic observers. In terms of the scholarly literature emphasizing electoral fraud as a primary motivator of election boycotts, 2007 would have been the time to boycott. Instead, the government's conduct in the 2007 elections strengthened the position of hardliners in the Islamic Movement like Zaki Bani Irsheid, who had favored boycotting the 2007 elections, by giving the extremists evidence that their position was right (Abu Rumman 2010).

On the other hand, the 2010 boycott was surprising given the result of the 1997 boycott, which failed to achieve the desired reforms. As dis-

cussed previously, many in the IAF and the Muslim Brotherhood felt that they were actually worse off because of the 1997 boycott. On this point, a former minister and Islamist MP in June 2009 insisted:

> The boycott was considered useless by a majority [within the Islamic Movement]. It did not lead to reasonable positive results or pressure on the government. The government continued issuing its laws and decrees and we were kept away from parliament. The evaluation of the boycott revealed that we lost in the boycott and won nothing. This is why we participated again in 2003 … We returned back to participation and we concluded a rule that we intend to participate and the boycott was an exception.[64]

Despite the fraudulent 2007 elections and the poor result of the IAF candidates, the loss of political voice incurred by not participating in the 1997 elections seemed a major deterrent to boycotting, even more than a decade later in the spring of 2009. The party believed that it is more difficult to alert the public to government corruption and repression without the exposure offered by parliamentary representation, no matter how superficial that representation might be. The sense of the boycott's failure stretched beyond the Islamic Movement and led many observers to posit that because the boycott had failed to elicit reforms, the opposition would not boycott again. As noted by one Jordanian researcher in March of 2009,

> According to their assessment, the Islamic Movement lost a lot. One of the major tools they used to introduce themselves, to promote their ideas and policies, was parliament. Therefore, when they assessed the boycott after 1997, they decided they should participate again.[65]

Given the Islamic Movement's assessment of the 1997 boycott, it was somewhat surprising when the IAF announced its decision to boycott the 2010 parliamentary elections. What changed to make the opposition adopt a political strategy that only a year before was perceived to be a losing one? Using the theory developed in Chap. 3, we can explain this shift by focusing on changes in perceptions of regime stability and the costs of mobilization.[66] In particular, understanding why the opposition's beliefs regarding the willingness of the domestic (societal) and international centers of power to support the regime in a crisis shifted between 2007 and 2010 helps explain the IAF's decision to boycott the 2010 parliamentary elections.

According to members in the IAF, economic, social, and political conditions during the 2003 and 2007 elections were substantially different from those in 2010, prompting the party to reconsider its position vis-à-vis boycotting. In the mind of the IAF, deterioration in the economic, social, and political climate since the 2007 election was precisely what made the boycott a viable strategy in 2010, even in spite of the failure of the 1997 boycott. As expressed by one IAF member,

> We think that the regional and international changes, besides the political system, may provide good conditions to fulfill our goals. We may succeed in making a change … We expect the new amendments to the election law [sub-districts][67] to cause social problems, violence, and unwanted events which the government may control or not … So the opportunity to change the law is better than ever, and if we believed we could not make change this time, we would keep up our work and keenness towards political reform [in parliament].[68]

These sentiments reflect the opposition's updated beliefs regarding the ability of the regime to maintain support from centers of power in the lead-up to the 2010 parliamentary elections. In 2010, the IAF perceived the regime to be weaker than at any point over the last decade, providing the central motivation for the decision to return to the boycott strategy.

The most salient domestic factor weakening the regime's perceived position, from the opposition's perspective, was the deterioration in economic conditions, which had the effect of unsettling the support for the regime provided by the domestic centers of power. Difficult economic conditions increased the frustration of citizens and further strained the regime's ability to offer economic incentives necessary for continued support. Beginning in 2005, increases in oil prices and decreases in foreign aid began to hurt the Jordanian economy. The international financial crisis that followed in 2008 and 2009 only exacerbated an already vulnerable economic situation in Jordan (Jaradat 2010). According to official measures, unemployment reached approximately 13 percent in 2009, although unofficial levels were presumed to be as high as 30 percent.

Excluding external grants, the budget deficit was 10.3 percent of GDP in 2009. That same year, domestic revenues covered only 69 percent of total expenditures, down from 80 percent between 2006 and 2008 (Jaradat 2010). Jordan's total debt reached 55 percent of GDP in 2009 and 57 percent in 2010. These conditions forced the government to cut

food subsidy expenditures from US$715 million in 2007 to US$263 million in 2009. Concurrent with this spiral in national indebtedness, the prices of daily staples increased dramatically. The price of tomatoes, a central component of the Jordanian diet, shot up from 0.35 fils per kilo (approximately 50 US cents) to over 1 Jordanian dinar per kilo (about US$1.40) in the month of September 2010 alone.[69] Such a sharp increase in a short period of time had a significant impact on citizens' daily consumption habits and their confidence in the health of the economy and, by extension, the regime.

The deterioration in economic conditions and the regime's reduced ability to appease the citizens via economic relief did not go unnoticed by the opposition. A leader of the opposition party al-Wihda said that because of the global economic crisis the government had been unable to fulfill its commitment toward its bases of support, which had long been dependent on a system of patronage. He remarked, "We witnessed for the first time in Jordan's history a strike held by workers; this had never happened before. We witnessed a series of strikes held by day-to-day workers," noting further that such workers have historically been considered part of the government's support base.[70]

Further reduction in the perceived willingness of societal centers of power to aid the regime resulted from an increase in domestic conflict that was, in turn, related to the deterioration in economic conditions. The economic downturn exacerbated tensions among Transjordanians and tensions between Transjordanians and Palestinians, two key societal centers of power. In August 2009, approximately 15 months before parliamentary elections were to be held, a wave of inter-tribal violence began. The Public Security Department (PSD) reported that the number of violent, clan-based conflicts in 2009 was 229, a significant increase from the previous year (Schwedler 2010). In addition to the inter-tribal violence, Schwedler (2010) notes that "a more virulent strain of Jordanian nationalism" had given rise to "heightened tensions" between Transjordanians and Palestinians.[71] The conflicts among Transjordanians and between Transjordanians and Palestinians had significant implications in that these conflicts could affect the willingness and perhaps the ability of these two centers of power to support a challenged regime. The chief of the PSD, Mzain al-Qadi, noted that "the year 2009 witnessed a marked increase in the number and form of brawls with a social background in an unprecedented manner in Jordanian society" (Schwedler 2010). According to Schwedler, some Jordanians blamed the economy

for the increased violence between tribes, while others blamed the electoral system, which disadvantaged and weakened political parties in favor of the Bedouin support base.

In addition to the decline in economic conditions and the reduced likelihood of regime support from societal centers of power, the political environment had markedly changed both domestically and internationally. The experience of the 2007 municipal and parliamentary elections, which were tarnished by widespread accusations of election fraud, had a significant effect on the political situation inside Jordan. Although the government stopped short of admitting fraudulent behavior, it was widely understood that the government had misbehaved in both elections in 2007. Indeed, considerable government interference was widely suspected, including backing candidates from the same tribe in order to split the vote, turning a blind eye to vote buying, and allowing soldiers to vote and even telling them how they should cast their ballots.[72] According to one IAF member, widespread acknowledgment of the fraud in the 2007 elections, even among those high up in the government, gave "rise to a general feeling of frustration."[73] Public confidence in the parliament was low, and as a result, the king dismissed parliament after only two years in November 2009, a move supported by a large majority of Jordanians.

Jordan was also facing increased international scrutiny, and not only for the fraudulent conduct of the 2007 elections. Freedom House downgraded the Jordanian regime from "Partly Free" to "Not Free."[74] According to the Global Integrity Report, the integrity of Jordanian governance was considered "moderate" in 2007 (score of 72 of 100), "weak" in 2008 (60/100), and "very weak" in 2009 (55/100). Meanwhile, the Corruption Perception Index administered by Transparency International, which relies on citizens' subjective assessments of corruption in their country, suggested that Jordanian citizens themselves perceived greater corruption than in previous years.

With regard to Jordan's primary external center of power, the United States, the IAF's perception was that the regime might not be able to count on unwavering US support as in years past. Although the relationship had not officially changed, there were several factors that suggested to the IAF a potential shift in the United States' willingness to aid a challenged Jordanian regime. The first factor was the new presidency of Barack Obama, who had stated that he would not interfere with the process of democratic transition, signaling a change in US policy from the previous president.[75] The shift also conveyed a subtle message to the opposition

that the United States may not be willing to support a regime faced with demonstrations demanding reform and greater political liberalization. Second, the United States was winding down operations in Iraq, where Jordan had served as a key ally. Third, a number of US Agency for International Development's (USAID) projects in Jordan concluded in 2010. Prior to this point, USAID projects provided significant injections of capital, averaging US$200 million in cash transfers each year.[76] Taken together, these domestic economic, social, and political conditions combined with increased international pressure suggested to the IAF that perhaps this time the boycott could bring about reform.

In addition to changes in the opposition's beliefs about regime stability, the perceived costs of mobilization also decreased between 2007 and 2010. First, such blatant electoral fraud as witnessed in the municipal and parliamentary elections of 2007 can, as argued by Tucker (2007), lower the perceived costs and increase the expected benefits of post-election protests. More specifically, the widespread observation of electoral fraud can provide a focal point for individuals who might otherwise fall victim to a collective action problem. The resulting group that coalesces makes individuals less likely to believe they will be individually punished for their protests. The electoral fraud of 2007 provided a common point of focus for opposition parties and citizens alike. Under these circumstances, the general public's willingness to engage in a boycott strategy would be much easier for the opposition to encourage.

At the same time, the fraud in the 2007 elections and the 2008 struggle for power between the palace and the state intelligence agency generated new beliefs that there was in fact a crisis within the regime (Abu Rumman 2010). King Abdullah's decision to terminate the parliament installed by the 2007 election after only two years further heightened public perceptions of the regime's failings. These events created a general mood of protestation across society, which did not go unnoticed by the opposition. "Mounting frustration over the years as well as the impact of the recent [2007] elections," according to researcher Mohammad Abu Rumman, had a real impact "on the general mood of the party [IAF] members."[77]

Second, not only did the Islamists believe themselves to be more popular at this time, but also, and perhaps more importantly, there was now greater support for their continued demands to change the electoral law and end corruption. According to one Jordanian journalist, one of the reasons that public demands for reform can be ineffective is that momentum for change

tends to dwindle when "people are not directly impacted by events that are happening."[78] In 1997, there was a lack of knowledge about the law and its effects. By 2010, ordinary citizens had observed the negative consequences of the law, namely, the failure of the 2007 parliamentary elections and the resulting parliament. This idea is echoed by one of the leaders of the IAF, who argued that "the citizens lost faith" in the government as a result of its conduct in the 2007 election.[79]

Finally, unlike in 1997, there were no signs of indifference about what to do (back down or mobilize protests) if the regime ignored the boycott. In 1997, the IAF did not ask voters to join its boycott. During the 2010 elections, by contrast, the IAF and its partners undertook a campaign to encourage voters to boycott the elections. This campaign was overt, with fliers posted and public meetings held encouraging citizens to abstain from the polls. In addition, according to Abu Rumman (2010), "This time the Brotherhood [was] determined not to repeat that experience but to transform the boycott into a political platform, a course of action that will inevitably mean an escalation in the showdown with the government." Moreover, two days before the election, the IAF and al-Wihda parties staged a sit-in outside parliament calling for citizens to support a "Boycott for Change." The protest occurred despite the lack of official permission for the event.[80] Taken together, these actions reveal that the opposition was not going to back down if the government ignored the boycotters' demands for reform as it had in 1997.

The elections went ahead on 9 November without IAF participation. Turnout was officially reported to be around 53 percent (with lows of approximately 30 percent in Amman and Zarqa, and highs of roughly 80 percent in Bedouin districts). Despite challenges to the official election results, the new parliament was installed on 28 November 2010. As in 1997, the government chose to ignore the opposition's demands for reform. This time, however, the opposition chose not to back down.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter offers an explanation for the variation in opposition strategies observed in Jordan despite the persistence of the SNTV electoral system, the ostensible rationale for the boycotts in 1997 and 2010. The 1993 and 2007 elections are a particularly strong testament to the fundamental argument of this book, namely, that the electoral strategies of opposition parties in authoritarian elections depend on more than just electoral factors.

The electoral law that served as one of the primary official reasons for the 1997 and 2010 boycotts was enacted prior to the 1993 elections, but the IAF did not boycott in 1993. Instead, the party boycotted in 1997, the second election held under the SNTV electoral system. If one argues that the IAF required experience under SNTV before deciding to boycott, how can the subsequent decision to participate in 2003 be explained?

As this chapter has shown, the variation in the IAF's strategic choice across elections was largely driven by the opposition's beliefs in the willingness of centers of power to support the regime, which in turn informed their beliefs about the utility of boycotting in each election period. The case study demonstrates the important influence that centers of power have on beliefs about regime strength and the strategic choices of opposition parties. In addition, the chapter illustrated that the broader social, economic, and political conditions during elections informed the opposition's belief about the willingness of the regime's centers of power to aid the regime, which in turn influenced the opposition's strategic decision making. In the next chapter we turn to the case of Algeria to further explore the connection bewtween opposition beliefs in the strength of the regime and the strategies adopted during authoritarian elections.

Notes

1. Jordan's first national-level elections took place in 1947.
2. There are numerous political parties and opposition parties in Jordan, but most lacked popular support during this period and did not win many, if any, seats in parliament.
3. The World Bank estimated that aid to Jordan decreased by about one-third between 1988 and 1989 (see Garfinkle 1993, p. 90).
4. This was a sentiment widely expressed in interviews and informal conversations during fieldwork in Jordan. One veteran leader of the Muslim Brotherhood and IAF, for example, called the 11th parliament the "peak" of parliamentary life in Jordan (J1, Interview with author, February 2009). Moreover, in its official statement explaining the 1997 boycott, the Muslim Brotherhood argued that "during the period from 1989 to 1993, the 11th parliamentary session witnessed a democratic awakening which became evident by issuance of a host of laws that established grounds for a more advanced political life, such as the law of political parties, the 1993 press and publication law, the law of the state of the security court, the law of municipalities, and the abolition of marital law."
5. J6, Interview with author, March 2009.
6. Several of IAF's desired social reforms were blocked, including banning male hairdressers in women's salons and segregating children's sporting

events so that even fathers could not attend their daughters' events (Mufti 1999, p. 118).

7. Although the temporary election law governing elections in Jordan has been revised several times—and most notably during this period, reissued in May 2010—it remained a provisional law, a law not approved by parliament, during the period of study. Each time the law was revised, it was while parliament was suspended.
8. The SNTV system is an electoral system in which a citizen has only one vote even if he or she lives in a multi-member district, as opposed to having as many votes as there are representatives to be elected from the district. As noted by Baaklini et al. (1999), "the new election law granted each person only one vote, giving a clear advantage to those candidates who could best deliver services while creating a major hurdle for 'ideological' candidates such as leftists and Islamists" (p. 157). (See also Mufti 1999, pp. 107–108 and 118 on this point.)
9. The law not only raised concern amongst Jordanian civil society but also amongst international NGOs. The law has been the subject of much discussion with regard to how it increases tribal identities, weakens political parties, takes away Palestinian voices, and poses a major obstacle to political reform in Jordan. In 2003, for example, 62.8 percent of votes were wasted (i.e., 62.8 percent voted for a candidate who was not elected) ("Assessment of the Electoral Framework" 2007).
10. The Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic Action Front are separate bodies. Some members of the Islamic Action Front are not members of the Muslim Brotherhood. However, there are strong links between the two groups, as members of the Muslim Brotherhood established the IAF. In addition, the IAF has struggled to act and develop an identity independent of the Brotherhood and it is often suggested that the Muslim Brotherhood controls the IAF.
11. Murad, N., "IAF decision to take part in polls is pragmatic and realistic," Jordan Times, 1993.
12. The Islamic Action Front and the Muslim Brotherhood are often referred together as the Islamic Movement.
13. For example, one IAF member argued that it would have been better to boycott before the peace treaty in 1993 (J13, Interview with author, May 2009).
14. Ryan (2002) similarly notes that between 1992 and 1994 "the kingdom had realigned just as dramatically: stabilizing its economic situation, abandoning its political alignment with Iraq, achieving rapprochement with the United States and most Gulf States, and finally signing a peace treaty with Israel" (p. 54).
15. The *Shari'at* Garden area in Amman developed as a direct result of the returnees from the Gulf. "Economically, Jordan soon recovered from the

loss of foreign aid, of remittances and of the transit trade with Iraq. New foreign aid was supplied by Japan and the EC (especially Germany) and the 300,000 refugees from Kuwait proved to be much less of a burden than had been supposed because their arrival stimulated a boom in construction. And although relations with Kuwayt and Saudi Arabia long remained cool, Jordan's good relations with other Arab states and with the great powers were quickly restored" (Yapp 1996, p. 472).

16. GDP per capita growth rates for 1993, 1994, and 1995 were about −0.89 percent, 0.05 percent, and 2.08 percent, respectively (World Development Indicators).
17. According to Yapp (1996), "When the king wished to conciliate the Palestinians and the secular left he chose Tahir Nash'at al-Masri (June to November 1990), a Palestinian who had previously been associated with a policy of close links with Iraq. And when the issue of peace with Israel became dominant Husayn fell back on another member of an old East Bank family, `Abd al-Salam Majali (1993–1995), who pushed the necessary legislation through parliament in 1995" (p. 473).
18. "85 percent of Islamists front council vote in favour of participating in elections," *Jordan Times*, 1993.
19. Opposing price cuts and other IMF-mandated austerity programs has been a mainstay of the IAF's platform.
20. J14, Interview with author, May 2009. Baqa'a Camp is one of the refugee camps set up in Jordan for Palestinians fleeing the West Bank and Gaza Strip during the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.
21. J12, Interview with author, May 2009.
22. J16, Interview with author, June 2009.
23. J5, Interview with author, February 2009. Even government officials thought similarly: One former MP and government minister noted that if the IAF does not participate, "it means something is wrong. [Their absence] reflects poorly on the government and the credibility of parliament" (J6, Interview with author, March 2009, in English).
24. J5, Interview with author, February 2009.
25. J10, Interview with author, April 2009.
26. J13, Interview with author, May 2009.
27. J5, Interview with author, February 2009. According to a representative from the IAF, "This situation continued until 2003 when the king gave positive signs on the neutrality of the government in this field. There was still no reform of the electoral law, but promises from the king that it will be done under his rule" (J11, Interview with author, April 2009).
28. Replacing prime ministers is one of the concessionary strategies frequently used by the Hashemite monarchs during periods of domestic unrest as in 1989 and more recently during the early days of the Arab Spring.

29. According to Ryan (2002), Kabariti's "appointment also coincided with the regime's clear intent to increase the role of the *Mukhabarat* (intelligence service) in public life (in the aftermath of the peace treaty and opposition hostility to it)" (p. 29).
30. According to a former spokesman for the Muslim Brotherhood, the internal struggle was worse after boycott: "The boycott also left marks of the inner disagreement between the people with and against the boycott but they are not serious marks, but the harmony was better before the boycott" (J16, Interview with author, June 2009).
31. J9, Interview with author, March 2009.
32. IAF and Muslim Brotherhood members very visibly campaigned for voters to boycott polls prior to the 2010 elections. In 2010, the boycott slogan was "Yes to true elections; No to sham elections."
33. J3, Interview with author, February 2009 (in English).
34. J13, Interview with author, May 2009.
35. J24, Interview with author, May 2009.
36. J14, Interview with author, May 2009.
37. The military drawdown in 1996, according to Taylor et al. (1997), provided Jordan with "M60A3 tanks, CUCV's (Commercial Utility Cargo Vehicles), UH-1H helicopters, 40-foot personnel boats, a 65-foot air-sea rescue boat, and night vision devices. Deliveries in December 1996 culminated over one year's worth of work on the program. Of particular significance was that all equipment arrived fully capable" (p. 4).
38. Other leading recipients in 1996 were Bahrain, Colombia, Egypt, Israel, Mexico, Peru, and Turkey (See http://www.fas.org/asmp/library/handbook/WaysandMeans.html).
39. Foreign aid appropriations act H.R. 2159.
40. J5, Interview with author, February 2009.
41. J3, Interview with author, February 2009 (in English).
42. J16, Interview with author, June 2009.
43. J14, Interview with author, May 2009.
44. J12, Interview with author, May 2009.
45. J10, Interview with author, April 2009.
46. J2, Interview with author, February 2009.
47. J13, Interview with author, May 2009.
48. J8, Interview with author, March 2009.
49. Report retrieved from http://www.article19.org/pdfs/analysis/jordan-press-law.pdf.
50. J5, Interview with author, February 2009. Similarly, another journalist argued that, "There was a theory that there is a new king and a new era and now a real opportunity for reform" (J12, Interview with author, May 2009).

51. J3, Interview with author, February 2009.
52. GDP grew an average of 5.85 percent from 1998 through 2007, and around 8 percent from 2004 to 2007.
53. J16, Interview with author, June 2009.
54. After repeated and consistent claims of fraud from media outlets, on noon the day of the municipal elections in 2007, the Islamic Action Front announced it was withdrawing its candidates from the elections and boycotting.
55. According to Human Rights Watch: "It [the Center] runs 14 health care centers and two large hospitals in Amman and Aqaba, 50 schools at all levels catering to 16,000 students, and 56 centers for 12,000 orphans, compared to the Ministry of Social Development's responsibility for 3000 orphans." Report retrieved 29 March 2011 from http://www.hrw.org/reports/2007/jordan1207/3.htm\#_ftnref101.
56. Intraparty tensions have largely revolved around two main factions within the movement: hawks (*suqoor*) and doves (*hama'im*) (Abu Rumman 2007; Brown 2012; Hamid 2013). The factions differ in their positions vis-à-vis the regime, political participation, and the Palestinian Hamas. Doves, for example, are closest to the government and favor compromise and participation in elections. The hawks are furthest from the government, prefer a more confrontational position toward the regime, and tend to favor boycotting elections to participation (Abu Rumman 2007). Abu Rumman (2007) also identifies a third faction: the center group consisting of third and fourth generation Brotherhood members and located ideologically between the doves and the hawks.
57. While internal divisions within the movement are nothing new, and the Islamic Movement has experienced heightened periods of intraparty conflicts, these appear to have worsened since 2007 (Schwedler 2015; Patel 2015).
58. According to Abu Rumman (2010), 73 percent of the party's membership preferred boycotting to participation.
59. The National Committee of Retired Servicemen (NCRS) also supported the 2010 boycott of parliamentary elections, which, according to Tell (2015), "effectively stripped the incumbent Rifai government of any prospect of electoral legitimacy" (p. 9).
60. J19, Interview with author, November 2010.
61. J17, Interview with author, October 2010.
62. Hammam Saeed quoted in Mohammad Ben Hussein, "Islamists outline demands for participation in polls," *The Jordan Times*, 3 August 2010.
63. See discussion of electoral fairness and Jordan in Chap. 2; see also Herb (2005).

64. J15, Interview with author, June 2009.
65. J7, Interview with author, March 2009.
66. Ideological divergence also likely increased given the strengthened position of hardliners within the IAF.
67. The change to the electoral law, the subdistricts, referred to the creation of "ghost districts." The most objectionable aspects of the electoral law—SNTV and the disproportional allocation of seats (underrepresentation of urban areas)—remained unchanged.
68. J18, Interview with author, October 2010.
69. This was also a wider regional concern. The analogy of "shopping for tomatoes, shopping for politicians" was made in both Jordan and Egypt. The National Democratic Party candidates in Egypt, for example, provided tomatoes at lower prices prior to the parliamentary elections in November (Yasmine Saleh, "Tomatoes beat manifestos in Egypt election race," *The Jordan Times*, 29 October 2010).
70. J19, Interview with author, November 2010.
71. Schwedler further notes that, "The nationalist hardliners are critical of the Palestinian majority and of the regime for its supposed support for them. These views have proponents in high places, resulting in such policies as the seemingly arbitrary revocation of passports for some Jordanian citizens of Palestinian origin." See also Tell (2015, p. 8) on this point.
72. The army was forbidden by law to vote in parliamentary elections.
73. J20, Interview with author, November 2010.
74. Freedom House's explanation for downgrading Jordan's political rights rating and status: "Jordan's political rights rating declined from 5 to 6 and its status from Partly Free to Not Free due to King Abdullah's dismissal of the parliament and his announcement that elections would not be held until the end of 2010, as well as the security forces' increased influence over political life" (Report retrieved from http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2010&country=7849). The report also mentions the 2007 elections marred by fraud and the arrest of nine IAF members prior to the municipal and parliamentary elections for allegedly "threatening national security."
75. An additional signal of change mentioned from the perspective of the opposition was Obama's consideration of Charles Freeman to head the National Intelligence Council. The potential appointment would have signaled a shift as Freeman was considered to be an outspoken critic of Israel.
76. Report retrieved from http://jordan.usaid.gov/sectors.cfm?inSector=23.
77. Mohammad Ben Hussein "Islamists to boycott November elections," *The Jordan Times*, 1 August 2010.
78. J4, Interview with author, February 2009.

79. J22, Interview with author, October 2010. Similarly, a former minister and (independent) MP argued in 2009 that more and more of the public would turn against the election law as its lack of efficiency became clearer (J9, Interview with author, March 2009).
80. According to Thameen Kheeten of *The Jordan Times*, the authorities tolerated the protest because of the presence of international observers in Jordan to monitor the elections. Kheeten, T., "Activists stage sit-in outside Parliament," *The Jordan Times*, 7 November 2010.

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CHAPTER 6

Opposition Boycotts in Algeria

The tumultuous decade of the 1980s in Algeria heralded a remarkable, albeit brief, period of political liberalization. Although political liberalization came to an abrupt end with the 1992 coup, Algeria did subsequently experience periods of reform and relative liberalization after the reestablishment of multiparty elections in 1995. However, Algeria, like its fellow Arab countries, failed to emerge from its electoral authoritarian status to successfully transition to a liberal democracy. This chapter presents a detailed study of election boycotts in Algeria in the late 1990s and first decade of the twenty-first century in order to further explore how beliefs in regime strength and stability affect opposition behavior across elections. The case study developed in this chapter relies on archival research conducted at the National Library in Paris, France, as well as previously published work on Algeria.

Algeria is an important case to compare against Jordan. Both countries are electoral autocracies but differ in several key ways. For one, Algeria is a presidential republic with a multiparty system, dominated by a ruling party; Jordan, meanwhile, is a monarchy with a weak party system and no ruling party. Importantly, unlike Jordan, Algeria experienced boycotts with greater frequency. While the Islamic Action Front (IAF) moved in and out of the electoral arena, the main opposition party in Algeria, the *Front des Forces Socialistes* (Socialist Forces Front or FFS), boycotted four elections: the 1999 presidential, 2002 legislative, 2004 presidential, and 2007 legislative elections.

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The 2004 and 2007 elections are of particular interest in that the strategies of various political parties diverged. The *Rassemblement pour la Culture et la Démocratie* (Rally for Culture and Democracy or RCD), for example, boycotted in both 1999 and 2002, but returned to participation in the subsequent two elections; the FFS, by contrast, did not. This variation in strategies occurred despite the fact that the socioeconomic and political conditions informing opposition beliefs about regime legitimacy and vulnerability, while not identical, were similar across all four elections. Using the theoretical framework outlined in Chap. 3, this chapter explores how we might account for the divergence seen in the two later elections, with particular attention to how changes in the RCD's costs of mobilization and ideological polarization relative to the government helped drive the party's return to participation.

6.1 The First Multiparty Elections and Interrupted Political Liberalization

The economic crisis of the 1980s, precipitated by the sharp decline in oil prices—together with Algerians' broader socioeconomic and political grievances—sparked widespread unrest and riots. In response to domestic unrest over economic and political conditions, Algeria began a process of political liberalization in the late 1980s. As in Jordan, these efforts followed a period of economic decline and political mismanagement. As Quandt (1998) explains, "the 1980s were generally regarded as a 'black decade' [in Algeria] due to the disengagement of the state, the impoverishment of the population, the increase in corruption, and the contestation of power by Islamists movements" (p. 36). Although this so-called black decade began with the cultural movement known as the Berber Spring in 1980,[1] it was the October 1988 youth riots that prompted President Chadli Bendjedid to initiate a process of political reform. In response to the unrest, a new constitution was drafted and passed by referendum in 1989. This new political framework represented a departure from Algeria's previous constitution (1976) in its omission of references to the socialist economic structure and the ruling party since independence, *Front de Libération Nationale* (National Liberation Front or FLN). The new constitution also legalized political parties. Subsequently, Algeria's first multiparty elections for the national legislature were held in December 1991.

This period of political liberalization was short-lived. Following the overwhelming victory of the *Front Islamique du Salut* (Islamic Salvation Front or FIS) in the first round of the legislative elections, the military intervened in January 1992 and cancelled the second round. A period of direct military rule via the *Haut Comité d'État* (High State Committee or HCE) began, which lasted until 1995. Although multiparty elections resumed in 1995 at the presidential level and in 1997 for the lower house of parliament, Algeria never completed its transition to democracy and today, like many of its regional counterparts, remains an electoral authoritarian regime.

To understand recent opposition strategies in Algeria, it is worth considering the decade of tumultuous political activity that preceded them. Since independence, Algeria had adopted a largely socialist economic system that included centralized planning of the economy, a reliance on public provision of most services, a policy of import substitution, and extensive land nationalizations. These public-sector commitments had been financed by healthy hydrocarbon receipts throughout the oil boom of the 1970s, which had "generated sufficient domestic savings to avoid large accumulation of external debt until the early 1980s" (Nashashibi et al. 1998, p. 3). Once oil prices and revenues began to fall, however, the weaknesses of the centrally planned system surfaced. As explained by Nashashibi et al., "the rigidities and weaknesses of the centrally planned system became much more apparent when the reverse oil shock of 1986 caused both Algeria's terms of trade and hydrocarbon budgetary revenues to drop by about 50 percent" (p. 4).[2]

With oil revenues on the decline, Algeria began to borrow heavily to cover its budget shortfalls. The price of oil dropped to $10 a barrel in 1986, a significant decrease compared to the $30 a barrel commanded in 1982 (Quandt 1998, p. 38). As a result, foreign exchange earnings dropped by 80 percent between 1985 and 1991. The state soon realized that it would have to cut spending because it could not maintain its extensive commitments under the socialist economic structure.

The social unrest and riots that erupted in October 1988 were not just a result of the drop in oil prices and the related reduction in public expenditures. Significant demographic changes exacerbated the economic crisis.[3] By 1988, 60 percent of the population was under the age of 20. Both political and economic mismanagement meant that the socialist economy had not kept pace with surging population growth. With little economic

opportunity, the younger generation became frustrated and the collision of demographic and socioeconomic pressures soon erupted. As noted by Le Sueur (2010),

> When the labor and youth movements began to surge in October, the Algerian state's cumulative socio-economic and political failures could no longer be hidden from the public, especially after the full consequences of the 1986 collapse of the world oil market hit Algeria two years later. Unable to assist a growing and desperate population on virtually any level, the state was forced to enact dramatic cutbacks in daily provisions … Government support for basic goods simply disappeared. Food prices soared, a black market flourished, the already chronic housing shortage grew worse, and unemployment overwhelmed an already battered population. (p. 33)

The unrest of 1988 predominately involved young men (*hittistes*) driven to protest by the depressed economy and reduction in public services such as free education and health care. At the center of this protest movement were Islamist activists who, as noted by Quandt (1998), "appeared on the scene and seemed to take charge" (p. 39). The regime was unable to continue its strategy of placating the public through public expenditures. The regime's ability to manage the Islamic movement was also under stress, as the drop in oil prices and declining foreign exchange earnings made the regime's strategy of co-opting protesters and pitting the secular mobilized groups against the Islamists entirely untenable (Quandt 1998, p. 38).

When riots broke out in 1988, the Algerian regime initially reacted very differently compared to the Jordanian regime under King Hussein in 1989. The Algerian military was mobilized to impose control over the situation and ultimately fired on the protesters. This was the first time the military had fired on unarmed civilians in post-independence Algeria. By the end of the October 1988 riots, the army had killed some 500 people. Following this tragic loss of life, public discontent focused squarely on the regime, which in turn threatened its legitimacy.

Until this time, the FLN, like many ruling parties in authoritarian one-party states, had legitimized its rule by claiming that a single-party state with a controlled economic structure was the best way for Algeria to develop. The role of the FLN in winning the War of Liberation against France, and more recently in providing economic services to the population, had allowed it to maintain its centers of power and justify its authority.[4] For almost 30 years following independence, multiparty politics had been out-

lawed and formal political opposition parties banned. As the sole legal party, the FLN received the bulk of the blame for the bad economic and social conditions.

On 10 October 1988, only a few days after the riots, President Chadli gave a speech promising sweeping reforms. A new constitution was passed by referendum without debate in February 1989. The regime legalized political parties in July 1989 and formally separated the military from the FLN.[5] In the span of a few months, Algeria, according to Quandt (1998) had become "the most free, most pluralistic, and most enthusiastic defender of democracy in the Arab World" (p. 5).

The first multiparty elections for the national parliament were held in December 1991. The 1991 legislative elections used a two-round majority system. After the first round of elections on 26 December 1991, the FIS was set to win a large majority. Fearing an Islamist-controlled parliament, the army intervened on 11 January 1992, cancelling the second round of elections. The coup abruptly ended the process of reform that had begun in 1988. The military ruled via a group of five men known as the HCE[6] for a transition period of two years. In 1993, the *Groupe Islamique Armé* (Armed Islamic Group or GIA), *Armée Islamique du Salut* (Islamic Salvation Army or AIS)—considered the armed wing of FIS—and other armed Islamist groups challenged the rule of the HCE and a period of sustained violence began, claiming the lives of approximately 200 Algerians each week between 1992 and 1998 (Quandt 1998, p. 66). In 1994, at the end of its stated two-year transitional rule, the HCE appointed Liamine Zéroual as president of Algeria.

The 1995 elections were the first multiparty presidential elections held in Algeria. As in Jordan, the first elections were "carried out in reasonably honest conditions" (Quandt 1998, p. 73). Although the main opposition party (now the FFS since the FIS had been banned following the 1992 coup) boycotted the election, most observers say the 1995 election was clean and Zéroual undoubtedly the winner, receiving approximately 61 percent of the vote.[7] In second place was Mahfoud Nannah of the *Mouvement de la Société pour la Paix* (Movement of Society for Peace or MSP) who won some 20 percent of the vote. The election saw a remarkably high turnout, with nearly 75 percent of eligible voters going to the polls,[8] and, according to Quandt (1998), "For a brief moment, many Algerians felt a sense of hope because they thought that Zéroual would be able to move toward a solution of the crisis" (p. 73).

If the elections did not mark the resumption of genuine political liberalization, they did reestablish some semblance of the democratic process and spurred a period of reform. In the midst of these political changes, 1995 saw the implementation of debt rescheduling and the assuagement of the West's fear that the Algerian regime would collapse or be overrun by Islamists.[9] Yet another constitution was passed by referendum in 1996 and it appeared that a second wave of reforms was gaining momentum and that sustained political liberalization was on its way (Bouandel 2003, p. 14). Legislative elections took place two years later, marking a relative return to civilian rule. Although the 1997 elections took place against a backdrop of civil war, they were "reasonably competitive" by regional standards (Quandt 1998, p. 76). All legal opposition parties participated, including the FFS, which had boycotted both the presidential election in 1995 and the constitutional referendum in 1996. However, burgeoning hopes for sustained liberalization were shattered in the aftermath of the 1997 elections. Zéroual's party, *Rassemblement National Démocratique* (National Democratic Rally or RND), won a plurality of seats despite the party's creation just months prior to the elections, prompting outrage from major political actors (Quandt 1998, p. 77).[10] In addition, although Algeria maintained a relatively free press and a dynamic opposition (by regional standards), the country was still in the midst of a civil war (Islamic insurgency). By the end of 1997, notes Quandt, "the continuing violence, and the deep social and economic problems that faced the country, cast a dark shadow over the country" (p. 72).

6.2 The Opposition Boycotts: The 1999 Presidential and 2002 Legislative Elections

Just three years into his five-year term, President Zéroual announced his resignation on 11 September 1998 and declared that new presidential elections would be held in early 1999. In his resignation, Zéroual called for a peaceful and democratic transition of power and argued that new presidential elections would provide such an opportunity. Although he claimed his resignation was in the name of democracy, it was widely believed that he had been forced out by military hardliners like the Chief of Staff Mohamed Lamari (Ruedy 2005, p. 270). According to Le Sueur (2010), "there was initially great excitement about the upcoming presidential election," largely because it was the "first opportunity to elect a

president not directly related to the HCE and the 1992 coup" (p. 75). This opportunity, however, was marred by an opposition boycott and accusations of electoral misconduct.

The FFS boycotted the 1999 presidential election and the 2002 legislative election. In both cases, the regime ignored opposition demands and the opposition subsequently took to the streets. The conditions under which both elections were held were marked by widespread social discontent and unrest. As in Jordan, the opposition boycotts were driven largely by the opposition's perceptions of regime strength and, in particular, what it believed to be a dramatic decrease in the regime's legitimacy in the run-up to each election. Moreover, as in Jordan, the domestic unrest that had led to unprecedented reform in 1988 shaped the opposition's prior beliefs about the prospect of obtaining reform from what the opposition perceived as a vulnerable regime.

6.2.1 The Presidential Election of 1999

What prompted the decision to boycott the 1999 election after opposition parties participated just two years earlier? All boycotting parties referred to the "crisis" (hereafter, *la crise*[11]) facing the country and its multifaceted nature. In the Algerian press, *la crise algerienne* referred to (poor) domestic conditions presenting a multidimensional crisis of economic, political, and security concerns.[12] The opposition repeatedly expressed concerns about the upcoming elections given the deteriorating socioeconomic, security, and political climate in early 1999. Indeed, *la crise* facing Algeria was reflected in daily strikes across economic sectors, including transportation, all levels of the education system, metalworking, and mechanics. The opposition also raised concerns about the ability of the government (under the direction of Prime Minister Ouyahia) to organize free, fair, and transparent elections when the opposition believed the incumbent government had been elected through fraudulent elections in 1997.[13]

Algeria's economic situation played a major role in this multifaceted crisis. Algeria's economic reforms were put on hold following the coup in 1992 due to "political uncertainties, civil strife, and dwindling access to external financing" (Nashashibi et al. 1998, p. 6). Economic liberalization plans restarted in 1994 under an International Monetary Fund (IMF)-backed program, a process that President Zéroual and Prime Minister Ouyahia accelerated following their elections in 1995 and 1997, respectively. In addition to standard structural adjustment reforms, this period of economic

liberalization included the privatization of many state-owned enterprises, reduction in subsidies on basic goods, and price liberalization. This latter component of economic adjustment required an approximately 200 percent increase in the cost of food and petroleum products between 1994 and 1996, which had a significant impact on the lives of many Algerians.

The return of structural economic adjustments made the late 1990s difficult times for Algerians. Many blamed the government's commitment to economic liberalization for the increased hardship. A significant proportion of the unemployed had held positions in the public sector but lost their jobs in the privatization process. As a result, unemployment during the 1990s was higher than in the previous two decades and surpassed the average unemployment rate of other Arab and Middle Eastern countries (Kpodar 2007). By 1999, unemployment had risen to 30 percent. Currency depreciation compounded Algeria's economic challenges; from April 1998 to April 1999, the Algerian dinar lost 20 percent of its value against the US dollar.[14] The price of oil exacerbated the effects of structural adjustments. The price had yet to recover to its pre-1986 level and continued a steady decline observed since 1990.[15] In late 1998 and early 1999, oil prices were still lower than in the 1980s, reaching an all-time low of US$8.64 per barrel in December 1998. This presented further difficulties for public finances because the Algerian government based its budgets on a predetermined oil price. In 1999 the government had, perhaps naively, hoped for a price increase that would improve its fiscal position. At the close of 1998, Algeria's exterior debt was already about US$30.5 billion.[16]

During this period, Algerians also faced chronic and severe housing shortages, an unresolved problem dating back to the Boumédiène period (1965–1978). Rapid urbanization and population growth paired with a "sluggish" government response to the housing problem led to widespread overcrowding and squatting (Bellal 2009, p. 102). The slow completion of new housing projects and a housing allocation process rife with corruption only compounded the problems facing ordinary Algerians.

Political and security concerns also contributed to rising public frustration with the regime. During the late 1990s, Algeria experienced a significant deterioration of its domestic security situation. The regime seemed unable to cope with the level of violence created by the Islamic insurgency and in some instances may have been complicit in the violence as a result of the military's tactics (Ruedy 2005). In 1999, FFS leader Aït Ahmed declared that "since 1995, there [have] been more deaths, more orphans, more disappeared, and a lot of misery."[17] There was also rising concern

over human rights violations, abuses of power, and the treatment of the imprisoned, the missing, and the disappeared. The government increasingly threatened the independence and freedom of the press and, according to Quandt (1998), Zéroual gave the military "carte blanche" in its attempts to maintain order.

Further discontent emerged from the Berber region of Kabilya, which is primarily composed of three *wilayas* (states or provinces): Tizi Ouzou, Bejaïa, and Bouïra. In July 1998 President Zéroual passed the Algerian Arabic Language Generalization Law, making Arabic the only official language to be used in public. This Arabization policy drew criticism from a wide range of actors, including the FFS and RCD as well as journalists and French speakers more generally. The new law particularly frustrated the Berber population, especially in Kabilya, who had long demanded that their language (Tamazight) deserved national and official status alongside Arabic. The timing of this law could not have been worse considering the volatility of the situation in Kabilya since the assassination of the popular Berber singer Lounes Matoub in 1998.

In the eyes of the opposition, *la crise* signaled a decreasing probability that the societal center of power would lend support to the regime if needed during post-election demonstrations. Indeed, conditions were ripe for social upheaval.[18] After the Minister of the Interior refused to allow the RCD to use public meeting halls for the boycott campaign, Saïd Sadi, leader of the RCD, told the newspaper *El Watan* that it was a clear sign that "*le pouvoir* is scared of the boycott."[19] The pauperization of society, high levels of unemployment, the downsizing and sale of public enterprises were all indicators of an "explosive situation."[20] It was against this backdrop that the FFS and the other presidential candidates undertook a boycott of the presidential elections.

Although seven candidates were cleared by the Constitutional Council to participate in the 1999 presidential race, six candidates, who together became known as the "Group of Six," withdrew from the race on 14 April 1999, just days before the election.[21] The Group of Six included the FFS' leader and presidential candidate Aït Ahmed. The RCD announced its decision to boycott the election in February 1999.[22] As a result, Abdelaziz Bouteflika effectively ran unopposed, though the last-minute nature of the Group of Six's withdrawal meant that their names remained on the ballot.

All boycotting candidates and parties raised concerns over the fact that free and fair elections could not be guaranteed. For example, the RCD stated about its decision to boycott: "We are certain that this election is

technically flawed and politically dangerous."[23] The boycotting parties also had concerns that Bouteflika was the "consensus candidate" and, more importantly, the candidate supported and "validated" by the army.[24] In addition, they had concerns with the election law, which in their view encouraged fraud by allowing special *bureaux des votes* (polling stations) for the army, emigrants, and nomadic populations. According to the boycotting parties, these special polling stations made ballot tampering easier and more difficult to detect. Authorities also refused to invite international observers, which multiple political parties had demanded as a concrete guarantee for transparent elections. The candidates also asked that polling stations be open to their representatives in order to monitor the polling process, but this request was also denied.[25]

As early voting got underway in the special *bureaux des votes*, the Group of Six sought an urgent meeting with President Zéroual to demand the annulment of the results. After President Zéroual refused, the Group of Six withdrew from the elections, asserting that they had confirmation of fraud in the special *bureaux des votes* and proof of concrete measures taken by the *pouvoir* to commit massive fraud in favor of Bouteflika.[26] The Group of Six then called on their supporters to boycott the elections. The boycotting actors (the Group of Six and the RCD) said they would not participate, as Hocine Nia of the RCD put it, "[to] serve as the alibi to an electoral masquerade."[27]

Despite the Group of Six's hope that the election would be postponed following the candidates' withdrawal, the election went ahead and Bouteflika, now the sole candidate, won 73 percent of the vote. The boycott seemed to affect turnout, which at 60 percent was lower than that in the previous three elections.[28] The Constitutional Council, which was responsible for verifying results, claimed the participation rate was 73.79 percent but the opposition decried these official estimates as an "outrageous overestimation."[29]

Following the election, the regime ignored the demands for reforms and the opposition chose to protest following the unsuccessful boycott. After the election, the Group of Six decided to continue its fight for reform with post-election demonstrations, asserting that it would engage in a showdown with the regime. The Group of Six wanted to continue their appeal to the people of Algeria that Bouteflika did not have sufficient support from the public. The Group itself claimed popular legitimacy (i.e., that it had the support of the public) and warned against any limits imposed on freedom of expression and freedom of the press. They insisted

that these twin freedoms were crucial to their efforts, stating, "We are able to prove our strength, to justify our quality as the true opposition, as long as the media, especially those of the State, are not closed again."[30] Access to various media outlets and venues is critically important for the costs of mobilization. Without guaranteed freedoms of speech and press as well as equal access to the media, the opposition's ability to mobilize and communicate with its supporters becomes more challenging and costly.

What happened after the election gives insights into the regime's costs of suppressing protests and its ability to call on centers of power in a time of need. Just days after the election, the Group of Six planned a nationwide walkout on inauguration day (27 April 1999) and called on Algerians to stop their activities, cease work, and close shops at 11 a.m. The candidates connected with local party offices and support groups across the country in an effort to maintain local contacts and encourage local groups to take the initiative in organizing demonstrations. The purpose of the march, according to Seddki Debaïli of the FFS, was to show that Bouteflika did not have legitimacy. The Group of Six also viewed the demonstration as a way to reject the results of the presidential election, and to call domestic and international attention to the massive fraud that the opposition decried as a "palpable reality."[31]

Although there was a continued desire to maintain the pressure on the regime and denounce the fraudulent nature of the election, there was speculation about the Group of Six's capacity to sustain its challenge. For one, ideologies held by the members of the Group of Six diverged significantly. Questions were already being raised about one member's commitment to the group and other members were taking their own steps outside the activities of the Group. For example, Mouloud Hamrouche was attempting to establish a political party, and Mokdad Sifi was expected to do the same.[32] At the same time, the regime had prohibited the march planned for inauguration day, a prohibition that was in clear violation of the law. FFS members in Oran, Algeria's second largest city, were also refused permission to hold demonstrations.

Despite these setbacks, the Group of Six still hoped to orchestrate the protest. However, on inauguration day the regime heavily restricted all routes into the capital, Algiers, and all roads to Algiers's famous 1 Mai plaza were closed. As a result, the Group of Six reported that many of its supporters were prevented from reaching the capital city. The police were also told to close the plaza itself to prevent any rallies or gatherings. There was a heavy police presence that included riot police and all travelers were

subject to interrogation by the police and the gendarmerie. In the end, the attempt to hold the demonstration failed and only journalists and police were to be found in the plaza.[33]

Even though the opposition was unable to holds its inauguration day demonstrations, the Group of Six reaffirmed their intention to continue their protest efforts in a joint statement and later submitted a new application for a march on 16 May. Demonstrations in early May were also prohibited and access to meeting halls was restricted, further frustrating the group's mobilization efforts. A 5 May communiqué from the Ministry of the Interior stated that no demonstrations would be tolerated at this time.[34] Such formal prohibitions, when combined with the ability of the regime to prevent the opposition movement from gathering in defiance of the laws, raised serious doubts about political freedoms in the aftermath of the election. It also indicated that, for the regime, suppressing dissent and protests during this post-election period was relatively cheap. The regime made their commitment to retain control unmistakable but the opposition still desired to continue its challenge. As noted by Samir Bouakouir, the FFS's national secretary for information at the time, "We will never give up and we will continue to corner the *pouvoir* to impose upon it democratic principles."[35]

Given the regime's decision to ignore the boycotters and the opposition's subsequent decision to protest, why did the regime ignore the boycott despite the opposition's clear ability to credibly threaten post-election protests and willingness to take to the streets? The answer lies in the support that the regime received from its centers of power. From the perspective of the opposition, the conditions preceding the election (*la crise*) and the serious questioning of the election results made it conceivable that at least some of Bouteflika's domestic and external support bases would withdraw their support. However, in the days and weeks following the elections, the willingness of centers of power to continue supporting the Algerian regime became readily apparent.

In terms of domestic centers of power, Bouteflika's campaign was supported by a wide set of actors, including the three ruling coalition parties (FLN, MSP, and RND), and the main trade union *Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens* (UGTA), the Council of Mujahidin, and a number of *anciens*, such as Mohamed Chief Messdia, whose reemergence on the political scene characterized Bouteflika's campaign.[36] Given this unusual mix of coalition partners, it was understandable for the opposition, with incomplete information, to question the durability of the coalition. The

MSP's last-minute decision to support Bouteflika was particularly bemusing given that the Constitutional Council refused the candidacy of MSP leader Mafoud Nahnah—who had won 20 percent of the vote in the 1995 presidential election—on the dubious grounds that he had not fought in the War of Independence.[37] Another indication that the coalition might fracture was that in the days following the election, it emerged that a part of the MSP had in fact voted for one of the boycotting candidates, Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi, thus ignoring the decision made by the party's Shura Council.[38] Ultimately, however, the seemingly imminent collapse of domestic support for the regime failed to emerge. Even in spite of the opposition's decision to continue to protest, the regime managed to retain its domestic support base.

In addition, despite the Group of Six's claim of popular legitimacy, Bouteflika's campaign for peace had engendered popular support. The general public saw a candidate backed by the army as the best chance for stability and peace. Although many were dissatisfied with the regime's performance, a desire for stability and an exit to the prolonged violence were enough to ensure popular support for Bouteflika. Likewise, although Algeria's external centers of power supported Bouteflika in the end, it was initially difficult to determine whether these actors would come to the aid of an embattled regime. International reactions to the presidential election in Algeria were largely critical, with the United States formally stating it was "disappointed" by the process. However, in the period following the election and inauguration, international support for Bouteflika became evident. Newspapers reported that "Less than a week after the inauguration of the new President of the Republic, international opinion had adapted to the evolving situation that resulted from the election on April 15, 1999."[39] In early May, Paris expressed interest in reconciliation and Lionel Jospin, the French prime minister, said that the Group of Six's allegations against the legitimacy of President Bouteflika were unlikely to have "any echo internationally."[40]

Algeria also received visitors from its external centers of power, signaling their support. In early May, Molly Williamson, the US deputy assistant secretary of commerce, visited Algeria under the Eizenstat Initiative in the hopes of closer US-Algeria cooperation in commerce. Portuguese, French, Belgian, and Lebanese delegations soon followed. According to *El Watan* journalist Lies Sahar, the post-election period in Algeria was characterized by a resumption of business relations between Algeria and the international community.[41] On 5 May 1999, Algeria's state-owned Sonelgaz

received a US$98 million loan from the Arab Fund for Social and Political Development to build a power plant in Algiers[42] and the IMF granted Algeria a US$300 million loan from its Compensatory and Contingency Financing Facility to cover export shortfalls (Harrigan et al. 2006).

Algeria also affirmed its desire for "cooperation and dialogue" with the EU, provided that relations were based on "shared interest" and "mutual respect."[43] In early May, reports emerged that the EU and Algeria were to resume negotiations for an association accord similar to those the EU had signed with Morocco and Tunisia.[44] The negotiation process had been interrupted two years earlier. Six months later, Javier Solana (the EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy), Chris Patton (the European Commissioner for External Relations), and other EU officials met with Bouteflika in Algeria.

In addition to support from domestic and external centers of power, Bouteflika was the candidate of the army, another critical center of power. As noted by one expert on Algeria, "when the army is behind you, no one can do anything."[45] The use of repression by the regime against those who attempted to challenge it proved overwhelming and the Group of Six's activities petered out. With an increasingly fatigued public, the opposition could not sustain its challenge to the regime.[46] Bouteflika won over the populace with prospects for peace through amnesty.[47] Thus despite their best efforts, the Group of Six failed to obtain reform through its boycott and proved unable to force the regime to comply through post-election protests.

6.2.2 The 2002 Legislative Elections

As in 1999, the FFS boycotted the 2002 legislative elections, the government chose not to reform, and the opposition again chose to take to the streets after the unsuccessful boycott. The elections took place within the broader context of massive social unrest, including demonstrations, protests, strikes, riots, and increased violence from armed Islamist groups. If there was doubt leading up to the elections in 1999 about the willingness of centers of power to come to the aid of the regime, the chaotic context surrounding the 2002 elections similarly created doubts about the reliability of centers of power to lend support to the regime in a post-election crisis. Journalist Fayçal Metaoui noted that facing protests, sit-ins, strikes, marches, and riots, "Bouteflika and his entourage were locked in a deep silence. The credit given to Bouteflika at the beginning of his tenure has

largely deteriorated."[48] Furthermore, the fact that strikes and riots in 1988 had led to a remarkable but short period of liberalization in Algeria helped shape opposition beliefs about the potential for concessions in the lead up to the 2002 elections.

In 2002, five political parties boycotted the elections: the FFS, the RCD, *Alliance Nationale Républicaine* (National Republican Alliance or ANR), *Mouvement Démocratique et Social* (Democratic and Social Movement or MDS), and *Parti Socialiste des Travailleurs* (Socialist Workers' Party or PST). As in 1999, the parties refused to participate in what they decried as another electoral masquerade. The opposition also emphasized the deadlock that had resulted from the authorities' inability to resolve *la crise*.

In addition to the five political parties, many prominent personalities and civil society organizations called for boycotting the election, most notably the *Coordination des 'aarchs, daïras et communes* (*aarchs*), the umbrella organization behind the Kabilya uprising that began in the spring of 2001. The *aarchs* stated that the elections were "an alibi for the *pouvoir* to legitimize themselves vis-à-vis international public opinion wanting to give the image of a democratic regime, ignoring the political, socioeconomic, and democratic impasse in the country."[49] The uprising in the Kabilya region, combined with more general socioeconomic unrest throughout the country, proved a key motivation for the boycott. The five boycotting political parties also expressed concern about the "dangerous evolution of the situation" in Kabilya and the regime's failure to take steps to return calm to the region.[50] The *aarchs*, as well as the boycotting political parties, conditioned their participation upon concrete steps toward the satisfaction of the *aarchs*' 15 demands outlined in the El Kseur platform which was adopted in June of 2001.[51]

In making their arguments for a boycott, the opposition alleged that the previous two elections in 1997 and 1999 had been fraught with fraud and that they expected this election to be no different. The boycotters again cited the election law and the special *bureaux des votes* as potential sources of fraud. The boycotting parties questioned the *pouvoir*'s ability to pursue political solutions to *la crise* as well as return calm to Kabilya. They also challenged its capacity for conducting free and fair elections while at the same time engaging in massive repression against the citizens' movement in Kabilya. When the FFS announced in late March that it would boycott the legislative elections, the party cited the volatile situation in

Kabilya as one of the principal reasons for its boycott. The FFS, in particular, was motivated by the failure of *le pouvoir* to take measures to return calm to the region and to restore democratic liberties.[52]

Ahmed Djeddaï of the FFS went one step further, asserting that "Despite the crisis we are undergoing, they impose on us elections at the moment when Algerians are preoccupied with other things," such as poor living conditions and the deteriorating security situation across the country.[53] In defending its decision to boycott the elections, the FFS cited a survey conducted by the government which found that only 18 percent of Algerians were even thinking about going to the polls.[54] In addition, the boycotting parties raised concerns about the deterioration of democratic freedoms. Moreover, the FFS claimed the *pouvoir* lacked both a popular social base and public support.[55] The RCD's communiqué said that the party was concerned about the "stifling" of democratic freedoms and the continued harassment of the press. It called on citizens to reject "a system whose failures have impeded the evolution of Algeria's destiny."[56]

The May 2002 legislative elections, just as had the 1999 elections, took place amidst high levels of unemployment, rising poverty and economic hardship, increasing marginalization of youths and Berbers, housing shortages, and the continuation of *la crise*. Across this whole period, the anger (*la colére*) of the population persisted and the lack of security only worsened the social, economic, and political situation gripping the country. Compounding the situation in 2002 further was the massive unrest in Kabilya, coupled with mobilization against the penal code, interspliced with labor strikes. At the heart of the discontent was social justice—it was perceived as an uprising against unemployment, corruption, and *la hogra*, a uniquely Algerian expression referring to the contempt and humiliation that Algerians are subjected to by agents of the state.[57] Overall, the 2002 legislative elections in Algeria took place in an atmosphere of massive social unrest and a surge in terrorist violence. The various social problems leading up to the 2002 elections would again affect the opposition's beliefs about regime legitimacy and strength. Given the general unrest inside the country at the time of the election, a number of political parties—including those boycotting—called for a postponement. The fact that even the ruling FLN was willing to consider a postponement underscored a widespread belief that the nation was unprepared to hold legislative elections. However, in spite of these calls for a delay, elections proceeded as planned on 30 May 2002.

Despite 2002 being a good year for petroleum revenue, economic conditions remained dire for many Algerians. According to the Bank of Algeria, inflation increased from 0.8 percent to 4.5 percent in the space of 12 months.[58] There was a considerable decline in purchasing power as the prices of fruits and vegetables increased.[59] During the month of Ramadan, the price of dates rose by a shocking 200 percent. The effect of high and rising prices was "close to traumatizing" for the population.[60] This situation was compounded by an ineffectual economic stimulus plan that raised questions about where the money from the thriving hydrocarbon industry was going. The public provision of various utilities was also failing and citizens faced daily problems with access to electricity, potable water, and gas. In addition, a period of sustained drought led to water shortages, which were particularly acute in Algiers, the capital.[61]

The whole summer of 2001 was marked by violence, riots, and almost daily marches of students, Berbers, lawyers, and journalists. The numerous strikes, work stoppages, and walkouts, when combined with the existing social discontent across the country, seemed to worry the government. The regime gave instructions to relevant ministers to closely monitor developments in their relevant economic sectors and advance the economic stimulus plan wherever possible to increase Algerians' economic opportunities.[62] The ministers invited unions to engage in a dialogue, which gave the impression that the demands of the socioprofessional workers had credence[63] and further suggested that the government was in fact worried about the unrest in various economic sectors, and perhaps even in Kabilya.[64] The government also tried to make amends with the UGTA, initiating a deal on the electricity law and agreeing to pay back salaries of employees by the close of the year. This move was likely intended to defuse at least one social front at risk of erupting[65] and ingratiate the regime with the powerful UGTA in the lead-up to the election.

Although socioeconomic discontent characterized both the 1999 and 2002 elections, the popular uprising in the Berber region of Kabilya further exacerbated the electoral climate surrounding the 2002 legislative elections. After the arrest and subsequent death of a Berber youth, Massinissa Guermah, at the hands of the gendarmerie in April 2001, large-scale riots erupted and were soon followed by strikes, marches, and rallies. These demonstrations were not limited to Kabilya. Political parties, civil society organizations, and students at universities across the country held demonstrations and marches in solidarity, revealing wide support for Berber discontent with the regime. The situation in Kabilya oscillated

between riots and occasional calm from 2001 through 2004. The grievances espoused by protesters went beyond Berber-specific demands to include wider socioeconomic and political claims affecting the rest of the country.

The *pouvoir* kept a nervous and watchful eye on the protest movement and began officially prohibiting demonstrations as it had following the 1999 elections. The Minister of the Interior, Yazid Zerhouni, refused authorization for a 7 June 2001 march that was organized and supported by more than 30 groups. The organizers and their supporters marched anyway and in July 2001 all demonstrations in Algiers were officially banned. Authorizations for marches elsewhere in the country were also withheld. Protest marches continued through April 2002. Since the start of the Kabilya uprising in April 2001 "not a Thursday passed without political parties, national organizations or other professional groups or students deciding to march for the rehabilitation of the Tamazight language and identity as well as free expression."[66]

Meanwhile, a broad campaign against amendments to the penal code was underway. The changes to the penal code were widely opposed by lawyers, journalists, and civil society groups for imposing restrictions on freedom of expression and the press. The government had also begun to crack down on the right to strike and more general rights to association, in direct violation of the International Labor Organization's standards. For example, striking healthcare workers had their pay docked as punishment for engaging in labor protests.[67] The discontent and the government's uncompromising response risked alienating another sector of the population. From Chap. 3 we know that when a regime's costs of suppression are sufficiently low, both strong and weak regimes will ignore the boycott and risk post-election demonstrations and possible instability, which is not to suggest that the Algerian regime was weak. Rather, the government's response to workers' and Kabilya's *la colére* indicated low costs of suppression, one factor influencing a regime's decision to reform or ignore the demands of the boycotting opposition.

The pre-election environment in Algeria was also plagued by a surge in terrorist violence, raising concerns about the effectiveness of the amnesty agreement (*concorde civile*). In September 1999, just four months after Bouteflika took office, the amnesty agreement had passed with an overwhelming majority in parliament.[68] The agreement allowed members of armed groups to surrender without facing prosecution and reintegrate into society. Meanwhile, there was a large spike in the number of deaths by ter-

rorist attacks with over 1000 people killed between January and September 2001.[69] This increase in attacks called into question the effectiveness of the amnesty agreement, but Bouteflika was unwavering in his strong support for the *concorde civile* as the best way for Algeria to end the violence.

Perhaps more importantly for the opposition was the uncertainty surrounding the army's support for the incumbent regime. Prior to the legislative elections in 2002, speculation about fissures in the relationship between President Bouteflika and the military began to surface, although the full extent of this rift would not become clear until 2004. The 1999 amnesty agreement had created tensions between Bouteflika and the military, which rejected amnesty as a means to end the state's war against armed Islamist groups. To appease the military, Bouteflika made clear that soldiers would be immune from interrogations or prosecutions for actions taken during the civil war and the fight against terrorism.

The regime's response to the unrest that beset Kabilya was remarkable in its oscillation between repressive action and a more conciliatory approach. Initially President Bouteflika remained silent about the rising unrest in the Kabilya region and across many of the country's economic sectors. After several weeks, however, the president made a speech that used strong, even aggressive, language.[70] Bouteflika stated that "The demonstrations don't make any sense. Violence begets violence. No citizen has the right to engage in destroying the country's wealth, whether public or private … Today they revolt against whom? Against what?"[71] According to journalists, Bouteflika's speech was interpreted as a green light for continued suppression of the uprising in Kabilya.

The increasingly heavy-handed response to unrest also included reports that the gendarmerie and police were using real bullets against unarmed protesters. Human rights groups immediately condemned the actions of the regime. The regime also arrested large numbers of demonstrators in Kabilya, undertaking two significant waves of arrests in October 2001 and March 2002. Many of those detained waited long periods before seeing a judge and lawyers of detainees complained that they did not receive access to their clients' dossiers. These repressive actions were condemned on multiple fronts but Bouteflika did not replace either the Prime Minister or the Minister of the Interior, both of whom were heavily criticized for their handling of the situation in Kabilya.[72]

The regime's commitment to strong-arm tactics in response to protests, many of which appeared to be advancing legitimate grievances, suggested a confidence in their position. On the other hand, Bouteflika did

give way on some issues. Despite the regime's clearly repressive response, it offered some concessions to both workers and the movement in Kabilya. Bouteflika engaged the UGTA as noted above, with the two actors reaching a compromise on the electricity law and the payment of back salaries. The president also tried to engage the political parties after they announced their intentions to boycott. However, it was on cultural issues related to the Tamazight language and the gendarmerie's presence in Kabilya that Bouteflika appeared to give the most ground.

In January 2002, Bouteflika agreed to a partial withdrawal of the gendarmerie brigades in Kabilya.[73] The move came despite early statements by the president that all 15 points of the El Kseur platform were open for negotiation, except for the withdrawal of the brigades. As the gendarmerie withdrew from Tizi Ouzou and other areas in Kabilya, the number of arrests was increasing in most of the wilayas across the region. The last and most extensive wave of arrests in March 2002 coincided with the withdrawal of the gendarmerie. Meanwhile, the courts handed down harsh sentences to demonstrators just as the gendarmerie was departing. This contradictory approach offers another example of the repressive-then-conciliatory nature of the regime's actions.

In March 2002, Bouteflika announced his intention to amend the constitution without referendum to include the Tamazight language as a national language. Consistent with his pledge, the constitution was quickly amended in April 2002, just ahead of the May elections. The *aarchs*' movement considered this only a partial satisfaction of the El Kseur demands: the nationalization of the language was not the same thing as making it an official language of the state of Algeria alongside Arabic.[74] After the legislative elections, Bouteflika satisfied another key demand of the El Kseur platform. In early August 2002, Bouteflika announced the release of a select group of detainees, primarily those youths who had been arrested since riots erupted across the country. A communiqué released by the President announcing the release of the detainees affirmed that Bouteflika, "who places the highest value on ensuring that the next elections [local elections in October 2002] are held under the best possible conditions, is keen to make every effort to return social peace to all regions of the country."[75]

The regime's response to the domestic turmoil did not seem to affect its relationship with its foreign partners.[76] Under Bouteflika, Algeria's reentry into the international arena continued after decades of isolation. According to Werenfels (2007), one of the reasons the military chose Bouteflika in

1999 was his diplomatic experience and range of international contacts. Since his election, he had cultivated ties with the international community, specifically with the United States, the EU, and NATO. Algeria enjoyed increased cooperation with the United States, specifically in relation to counterterrorism and commercial interests. In July 2001, President Bouteflika became the third Algerian president—and the first since 1986—to visit the United States. During this visit, the two countries signed an accord for commerce and investment. In November 2001, Bouteflika made his third trip to the United States, during which he met with important groups specializing in the military and aeronautics.[77] In addition, throughout much of the unrest, the EU and Algeria had continued negotiations regarding the association agreement, which was finally signed in April 2002. In the same year, Algeria also concluded a deal with NATO.

The 9/11 terrorist attacks against the United States changed the perceptions of Western countries about terrorism, and in Algeria's case, the regime's war against it. After September 11, "Western countries, particularly the US, were now directly concerned with the stability of the Algerian regime and needed the cooperation that the Algerians could provide" (Cavatorta 2009, p. 152). Shortly after 9/11, in 2002, the United States ended its ten-year arms embargo against Algeria (Le Sueur 2010, p. 86). Commercial ties with American investors grew steadily and, according to journalist Lies Sahar, American petrol companies helped foster a *rapprochement* between Washington and Algiers with investments close to US$4 billion.[78]

These improved relations with the international community represented enormous support from the regime's external centers of power. The EU and the United States each committed to improved relations with Algeria precisely during a period in which domestic conditions were likely raising concerns about the regime's bases of support and ultimately its strength. Thus, we observe a mix in the centers of power for the regime, with the societal centers under pressure and potentially eroding while support from the regime's international centers of power seemed to improve. Meanwhile, as was the case in Jordan, beliefs held by the opposition about the stability of the regime were informed largely by the opposition's past experience, when widespread unrest in 1988 led to remarkable political liberalization in Algeria. With imperfect information about the true strength of the regime and extent of its support and a clear precedent for change rooted in historical experience, the opposition chose to pursue a boycott. Moreover, there were no doubts about the opposition's intentions to mobilize protests after

the election if the boycotter's demands for reform fell on deaf ears. According to a spokesman from the RCD, "the *pouvoir* is at an impasse which commands the overthrow of the system in place. Change can only come from the mobilization of democratic forces."[79] This statement reveals that the opposition was willing to raise the level of confrontation with a regime it viewed as vulnerable and ineffectual against *la crise*.

As in 1999, the boycotting actors of 2002 also chose to mobilize post-election demonstrations, but just as in 1999 the protests were quickly quashed. A group, referred to as the "Group of Four," consisting of Hocine Aït Ahmed of the FFS, Ali Yahia Abdennour, Rachid Benyelles, and Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi made a public call in June 2002 to mobilize in protest of the results of the legislative elections. A representative of the group, Ahmed Djeddaï of the FFS, stated, "At present, there is no reason to forbid us to go out to the field. In any case, this initiative takes place beyond 30 May [the date of the election]. The Four [Group of Four] will get closer to the population through several planned actions. Following that, there will be a meeting which will define the methods."[80] The *aarchs* announced that they, too, would continue to fight despite the boycott's failure to obtain concessions.

Despite this commitment, the actions of the government made it progressively difficult for the opposition to mobilize against the regime. As in 1999, public television and public meeting halls remained closed to the boycotting parties. The regime also continued its policy of banning demonstrations in Algiers and refusing to authorize demonstrations in other areas of the country. In addition, there were increased restrictions on democratic freedoms both before and after the election. Journalist Fayçal Metaoui described 2001—the year before the election—as an "*année noire*," with a number of democratic freedoms in decline. In 2001, the government amended the penal code to prohibit attacks against the state's institutions. In effect, this amendment was a direct challenge to the right to free expression. Members of the press faced threats, intimidation, and arrest. A number of academics and intellectuals were prosecuted for their opinions.[81] According to Ahmed Djeddaï of the FFS, the regime further extended its campaign of repression by targeting FFS members specifically throughout the country.[82]

Although the regime's crackdown suggested an increase in the costs of mobilization, this need not mean that the costs increased sufficiently to push the opposition to prefer participating, or that the opposition could no longer credibly threaten protests. Aside from mobilization costs, the ability

to credibly threaten protests also depends on the extent of ideological polarization between the government and the opposition, as well as opposition beliefs about regime strength. Moreover, the opposition was not indifferent about what to do if the boycott failed, unlike Jordan's IAF in 1997. Given the chaotic domestic context in which the 2002 elections took place, it was clear that the opposition was still willing to trigger protests even if their mobilization costs increased in the run-up to the 2002 elections.

Although the cycle of calm and unrest continued in Kabilya through 2004, it never reached the level of confrontation witnessed during 2001 and 2002 prior to the elections.[83] The government's harsh repression of the Kabilya movement and the wave of arrests in October 2001 and March 2002 seemed to contain the protests, as the movement became divided over whether or not to engage in dialogue with the regime. There was also growing suspicions of "rats" in the organization, a tactic that the regime also used against armed Islamic groups in the 1990s.[84] Through these ploys, the regime was again successful in draining momentum from the protests and within a few months after the legislative elections, opposition had been largely quelled. In the words of Werenfels (2007):

> Once the opportunity structures changed (i.e., elections had finished, an agreement with the EU had been reached, international media attention became monopolized by the developments in Iraq), the movement lost much of its nuisance power. In addition, the movement's heterogeneous structures and internal squabbles significantly contributed to its loss of impact. (p. 73)

6.3 The 2004 and 2007 Elections: Diverging Opposition Strategies

In the April 2004 presidential elections and May 2007 legislative elections, we observe divergent strategies adopted by the groups that had previously boycotted, with some choosing to boycott and others preferring to participate. This is a key difference from the earlier elections in 1999 and 2002, where a group of political parties, including the FFS and RCD, adopted the same strategy: boycott and mobilize post-election protests.

In a number of ways, the social, economic, and political conditions in Algeria during the 2004 presidential elections and the 2007 legislative elections were very similar to those experienced in 1999 and 2002. In

regard to the 2004 presidential contest, Bouandel (2004) notes that the elections were "held against backdrop of instability, mistrust in the state's institutions, and an atmosphere of fear" (p. 1527). Despite an electoral climate marked by instability and discontent, in 2004 only the FFS, MDS, and the *aarchs* called for boycott. The other parties that had previously boycotted returned to participation. *La crise*, a principal motivator of the boycotts in 1999, 2002, and 2004, persisted through the 2007 legislative elections and would have again shaped perceptions of regime strength and, by extension, the preferences of opposition groups for boycotting and protest. Yet, while the FFS decided to boycott once again, the RCD chose participation as it had three years earlier. The MDS (former communist party), the recently established Rachad (a faction of former Movement for National Reform (MNR) members who had split from the party), as well as the still banned FIS also called for a boycott. Voter turnout that year was only 35 percent, the lowest ever (Dris-Aït-Hammadouche 2008).[85]

6.3.1 The Social, Economic, and Political Climate Surrounding the Elections

This section first tackles the issue of the socioeconomic and political conditions leading up to the 2004 presidential and 2007 legislative elections. I discuss them together before turning to the question of why the FFS boycotted these later two elections but the RCD participated. The year 2003 saw the continued integration of Algeria into the world economy, which brought increasing levels of foreign direct investment and some improvement in macroeconomic indicators such as Algeria's ability to pay down "its-once crippling debt" (Roberts 2007, p. 2). The improved macroeconomic conditions were due in large part to a historic rise in the price of oil. However, these improvements failed to benefit most Algerians, who remained frustrated with limited employment prospects. A feeling that the government had somehow squandered opportunities for the average Algerian persisted. Writing in 2009, Cavatorta notes, "despite the enormous wealth generated over the last decade, the social situation remains explosive with unemployment steady at around official figures of 20 per cent and emigration remaining the priority of the vast majority of young people" (p. 177).

The official unemployment rate hovered around 16 percent from 2003 to 2007, though actual unemployment rates were suspected to be much

higher, especially among youths aged 15 to 24. The combination of rapid urbanization and population growth, when paired with a lack of urban planning policy, created a challenging situation for large sections of the population. Chronic housing and water shortages remained severe. Speaking in December 2006, Karim Tabou of the FFS asked why the National Assembly avoids addressing the problems facing trade unionists, particularly those in the education and public sectors, and continues marginalizing large sections of society, including the families of the disappeared.[86] Still more, by 2007, the *pouvoir* had yet to implement any sort of plan that would let citizens share in the nation's growing oil and gas revenues, which according to Zisenwine (2007) "raised public bitterness" (p. 2).

In addition, strikes continued to dominate the political landscape throughout 2003 and 2004. In 2003, Algeria experienced a particularly crippling series of strikes by education workers. The regime again used repression in response to the strikers and continued its campaign against the ongoing unrest in Kabilya. There was a further regression in democratic freedoms and harassment of journalists by the police persisted. During the 2004 presidential elections, the volatile situation in Kabilya remained unresolved. By the 2007 legislative elections, however, relative calm and stability had returned to Kabilya after more than three years of unrest (2001–2004). The government had made some concessions, agreeing, for example, to hold another set of local elections for the state assemblies and communes in the region. Moreover, since 2004 the regime had tried to discredit the citizens' discontent in Kabilya, with measured success, by branding *aarchs* a regionalist movement backed by foreign forces (Bouandel 2004, p. 1528). The government's public relations effort was successful in convincing much of the rest of country that the Kabilya movement now posed some sort of threat to the general population.[87]

Despite poor economic conditions, strikes, and ongoing unrest in Kabilya (all conditions similar to the situation in 1999 and 2002), the security situation had improved at last. By 2004, Algeria was a more peaceful place than in the 1990s. This decrease in violence was due primarily to two factors. First, the amnesty agreement (*concorde civile*), which was negotiated with the AIS, passed in 1999 and encouraged many members of the armed groups to surrender (Le Sueur 2010). Second, a military offensive against the GIA, and other combatants who refused to come in under the amnesty agreement, largely destroyed the GIA. Thus by 2004 the threat from the two leading armed Islamic groups had largely been pacified (Tlemçani 2008).

Indeed, the passage of the *concorde civile* in 1999 marked the beginning of a period of public support for Bouteflika.[88] During the presidential campaign of 1999, Bouteflika emphasized peace and stability and the need for amnesty and national reconciliation to end the violence, a message he would again embrace in the 2004 presidential elections. This message was popular across much of the population, especially the older generations, and Bouteflika used this popularity to his advantage. Algerians were tired of the violence and thus prepared to believe Bouteflika's promises that amnesty would indeed bring an end to the conflict. As Szmolka (2006) summarizes, "many Algerians have viewed Bouteflika as the architect of stability and peace in Algeria in recent years. In fact, Islamist violence declined during his first term of office" (p. 52). However, although the *concorde civile* helped decrease levels of violence, it was far from eradicated. The media reported regularly on terrorist attacks and assassinations and "many parts of the country remained unstable" (Bouandel 2004, p. 1527). Since Bouteflika took office in 1999 approximately 50,000 additional Algerians were "victims of civil strife" (Tlemçani 2008, p. 6).[89]

In addition, the *concorde civile* and the second amnesty agreement of 2005, the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation (CPNR), raised the ire of domestic and international human rights groups as well as the FFS. According to Le Sueur (2010), the amnesty agreements "represented a major departure from what is often called the 'truth model' of reconciliation" (p. 79). In 2003, families of the disappeared (estimated to be around 100,000) held weekly sit-ins to demand information about their missing family members because under the 1999 *concorde civile*, there would be no investigation into the disappeared nor would information be released about the existence of their remains (Tlemçani 2008, p. 7). An uptick in violence raised further criticisms of the new CPNR passed by referendum in 2005, which granted amnesty to Islamic insurgents and agents of the state (Le Sueur 2010). Although by 2007 the situation in Kabilya had stabilized, the resurgence of terrorist attacks presented a new security challenge. From the summer of 2006 well into 2007, terrorist activity continued to increase, which was, according to Roberts (2007), "striking—and quite unexpected" (p. 2). Many Algerians credited Bouteflika with quelling the violence and restoring relative peace. The increase in violence that came only months after the CPNR passed therefore raised questions about the ability of the regime to rely on its societal center of power for support if needed during a post-election crisis.

By 2004 internal divisions began to emerge within Bouteflika's support base, which influenced opposition perceptions about the vulnerability of the regime. It appeared that Bouteflika had lost support from the ruling FLN and the military, both of which supported his candidacy in 1999. The cause of this division stemmed from a disagreement between Bouteflika and Prime Minister Ali Benflis, a pivotal member of the FLN. Benflis, who had been prime minister since 2000, had become increasingly critical of Bouteflika. In May 2003, Benflis was fired and by October the leader of the RCD, Saïd Sadi, described the tensions between the president and the prime minister's majority party as "open war."[90] This conflict created a split within the ruling FLN with one group supporting Benflis and the other backing Bouteflika (Bouandel 2004, p. 1531). Benflis, who was later encouraged to run against Bouteflika by certain members of the military,[91] was considered Bouteflika's strongest challenger, receiving open support from two powerful retired generals, Rachid Benyelles and Khaled Nezzar, both of whom had spoken out against Bouteflika (Bouandel 2004).

In addition, tensions between Bouteflika and the military arose over Bouteflika's attempts to civilianize and concentrate power in the office of the presidency as well as the *concorde civile*. The forced retirement of several high-ranking members of the military in the summer of 2004, such as Lt. General Mohamed Lamari—who Bouteflika was unable to replace in a major reshuffle five years earlier—was one important success in Bouteflika's efforts to restore power to the presidency.[92] While Bouteflika was the army's candidate in 1999, Werenfels (2007) recalls "he soon found himself in a tug-of-war with the general command which, along with part of the Algerian political establishment, was wary of his own strong authoritarian ambitions" (p. 58). Bouteflika increasingly viewed the military as a threat to his popular support, and rightly so.[93] Both former presidents Chadli and Zéroual had been removed from power in part because of their attempts to distance themselves from the military.

Fissures between Bouteflika and the military also emerged around the amnesty agreements. The military opposed the 1999 *concorde civile* for fear the agreement could expose its activities during the "dirty war," as Algeria's civil war (Islamic insurgency) was known, including the use of torture and extrajudicial killings. However, as noted by Le Sueur (2010), "the 1999 law did not mention the role of the Algerian authorities, especially the state security forces." Le Sueur goes on to emphasize that in fact "the government had no intention of opening this discussion, or yielding calls for inquiries into crimes committed by the state" (p. 80). Moreover,

the second amnesty agreement, CPNR, made it a crime to "undermine the good reputation of agents who honorably served the country to tarnish the image of Algeria internationally" (in Tlemçani 2008, p. 9). Thus although the military opposed the two amnesty agreements, Bouteflika offered it a major concession by shielding the coercive apparatus from investigation and prosecution of its actions during the war. Given tensions between the president and the military, it was critical for Bouteflika to retain the support of other centers of power. On this point, Le Sueur (2010) explains,

> Many of the military commanders who had fought for years against Islamic terrorists opposed Bouteflika's magnanimous approach. Knowing this, it was all the more important for him—as a newly elected president, still unsure about his ability to thwart a putsch—to muster broad public support that could mitigate criticism from within the ruling elite and protect him from the real possibility of a forced removal. (p. 78)

Given President Bouteflika's efforts to distance himself from the military and the strained relations between the two, how can we explain Bouteflika's ability to retain power during this period? Despite the loss of important centers of power, namely, the military and parts of the FLN, Bouteflika retained support from several other groups, including the RND, MSP, UGTA, dissidents of the FLN, and the *Zaouïas* (religious brotherhoods).[94] Bouteflika also continued to consolidate his ties with the international community[95] and was the favored candidate of Western powers. According to Szmolka (2006), "his re-election [in 2004] was legitimized, especially by the USA and France. These two countries hurried to congratulate Bouteflika, even before the Algerian Constitutional Council officially declared him the PR [president]" (p. 53).

Furthermore, notes Werenfels (2007), Bouteflika was credited with a victory over armed Islamist groups, which strengthened his ability to withstand periods of opposition-led protests despite his position against the military:

> The principal reason for Bouteflika's emergence as a powerful and (somewhat) independent actor and a *décideur*, however, was the fact that he was credited nationally and internationally with having put an end to much of the violence by armed (Islamist) groups and with having relieved Algeria of the international isolation that developed during the civil war … Overall Bouteflika managed to overcome what Martinez (2003, p. 17) so poignantly

> termed 'l'embargo moral.' This can be seen as a main reason for the army not being able to dispose of him despite increasing divergences. (p. 58)

The credit that Bouteflika received in the international arena also presented the military with benefits. After 9/11, Algeria became a US ally in the War on Terror. Closer cooperation with the United States and NATO resulted in increased aid, training, and modern equipment for the military. Moreover, the military enjoyed an unlimited budget and its members controlled a significant segment of the economy. The military interpreted these gains as the product of Bouteflika's positive relations with other world leaders and his rising international reputation. In the eyes of the military, "he has fulfilled his task of making Algeria accepted and acceptable abroad" (Cavatorta 2009, p. 178).

The elections of 2004 and 2007, like the elections of 1999 and 2002, took place under the cloud of socioeconomic unrest. With incomplete information, the opposition made a guess about how much support the regime really had given the conditions on the ground at the time its decisions to boycott or participate were made. Of course the regime knew whether it could count on centers of power to back it up in a post-election crisis. The opposition, by contrast, only had its beliefs about the true vulnerability of the regime and the prospects for reform. Although there was dissent within Bouteflika's own ranks, the regime was not as vulnerable as the opposition initially believed when it made its decisions to boycott and mobilize post-election demonstrations. The opposition misjudged the weight of the credit given to Bouteflika by the military, much of the older generation, and even the international community, for a victory over terrorism and for drawing Algeria back into world affairs. Thus, despite the myriad domestic problems, the regime was able to draw support as a result of its efforts in subduing the Islamic insurgency.

6.3.2 Explaining Divergent Electoral Strategies

The preceding discussion highlighted the periodic unrest and grievous socioeconomic conditions facing many Algerians during the 2004 and 2007 elections, electoral environs that mirrored those in the previous elections. *La crise*, which motivated the boycotts in 1999 and 2002, persisted and remained a salient reality in the later two elections. Given the opposition's informational disadvantage, it looked to the conditions surrounding

the elections as indicators of a vulnerable regime. When the FFS boycotted the 2004 presidential and 2007 legislative elections, it continued to insist, as in previous boycotts, that the regime had failed to resolve the broader socioeconomic crisis (*la crise*) and for this reason elections could not be held freely and fairly.[96] However, the RCD, which also boycotted the 1999 and 2002 elections, returned to participation in 2004 because the elections, according to leader Saïd Sadi, presented an opportunity for the country to "exit the crisis if fundamental changes accompany the election."[97] The RCD went on to participate in the 2007 legislative election as well. Given that both parties boycotted the 1999 and 2002 elections, how can we explain the difference in strategies for the FFS and RCD in the two later elections?

The socioeconomic and political climate in which the 1999 and 2002 elections took place suggested to the opposition a regime vulnerable from the intractable *la crise*. A vulnerable regime in turn suggested to the opposition an opportunity to use the contentious strategies of boycott and protest to obtain reforms from a regime it believed would not be able to count on support from its centers of power. Going into the 2004 and 2007 elections, the socioeconomic and political conditions while not identical were similar in crucial ways, namely, the persistence of *la crise*. Absent sufficient changes in the key parameters, we would again expect boycotting. For the FFS, this is exactly what transpired. The RCD, on the other hand, chose to participate. Moreover, since *la crise*, a main reason for the previous two boycotts, persisted through 2007 elections—together with the rift between Bouteflika and the military—it is unlikely that beliefs about the integrity of the regime's support from centers of power alone induced a shift in strategy from boycotting to participation.

One explanation for the RCD's participation in the 2004 elections is electoral based—the fairness of the electoral process. According to Parks (2005), "the [2004] elections were the most competitive and transparent polls held to date" (p. 99). However, the RCD itself had raised doubts about the integrity of the electoral process throughout the campaign, and wavered in its beliefs about the possibility of fraud even up to the day before the election (Parks 2005).[98] Moreover, such an explanation cannot explain why the FFS chose instead to boycott when faced with the same, apparently more free and fair, election process.

Another explanation for why the RCD returned to participation but the FFS did not is that the FFS was the only "true" or "principled" opposition party (Roberts 2007; Tahi 1995). According to Addi (2009), there

were six parties of note in Algeria during this time: the FLN, the RND, MSP, MNR, FFS, and RCD (p. 14). Both Islamist parties, the MSP and the MNR, had been co-opted into becoming allies of the regime and thus were not considered opposition parties. Moreover, of the six, the FLN, the RND, and the MSP comprised the presidential coalition and thus would also not be considered opposition parties.

Besides these six parties, other Algerian political parties, such as Louisa Hanoune's *Parti des Travailleurs* (Workers' Party or PT), were "sometimes solicited only for reinforcing the pluralist image of the regime" (Addi 2009, p. 10). Indeed, the PT may be the clearest example of such a party. According to one Algerian academic, the PT was in "the pocket of the regime" during this period and Louisa Hanoune was regarded as a token figure designed to deflect negative attention from the outside world by providing a superficial indicator of women's progress in Algeria.[99] In 1999, she failed to obtain the minimum number of signatures required to qualify for the presidential race. In 2004 Hanoune qualified to run for president but several others who had qualified in 1999, most notably Mouloud Hamrouche and Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi—both boycotted with the FFS in 1999 as part of the Group of Six—did not, resulting in widespread speculation that she had received help from the regime. Specifically, according to one informant, rumors circulated that the regime gave local governments strict instructions to help her obtain the required 75,000 signatures in 24 departments in order to qualify to stand as a presidential candidate.[100]

Concerning the RCD and FFS, both draw support from Kabilya and are known as the two Berber parties. The FFS is the oldest opposition party in Algeria, established in 1963 by Hocine Aït Ahmed. Saïd Said and other former members of the FFS founded RCD in 1989. As Ilikoud (2006) notes, "the creation of the RCD was intended to supplant Aït Ahmed's FFS for the control of Kabilya. The government saw favorably the emergence of a rival to the FFS in this region" (p. 172; see also Tahi 1995). Ilikoud also notes that there are

> real political differences between the 'historic leader' (H. Aït Ahmed) and the young culturalist (S. Sadi), referring to the strategy of combat policy against power. In fact, H. Aït Ahmed remains faithful to the initial orientation of the FFS, which is indisputably an opposition group that broke with the system in 1963. Whereas Saïd Sadi is more inclined to a strategy of consistent entrism, adopting an attitude of 'critical supporter' or 'constructive criticism'. (p. 171)

Although the RCD is often viewed as the rival Berber party to the FFS in Kabilya, RCD's leader Saïd Sadi lacked the national respect commanded by FFS leader Aït Ahmed. The FFS has consistently outpolled the RCD in Kabilya in local and regional elections. According to one journalist, "Of all the elections in which it took part in Kabilya, the FFS has always emerged victorious. With the exception of the 1997 legislative elections when it was forced to share the 14 deputies with its rival, the RCD, the party of Aït Ahmed [FFS] has dominated all other elections."[101]

Yet another explanation, at least for the RCD's participation in 2004, is one offered by the party itself. According to the party, part of the decision to return to participation in 2004 was its belief that a "presidential election is not like the legislative and local ones."[102] When interviewed about the RCD's decision to participate in the 2004 presidential poll after boycotting the 2002 legislative elections, Saïd Sadi replied, "Be serious. The absence of a region [Kabilya] will not prevent a presidential election. Except for wanting to give a boost to Bouteflika, a regional boycott means nothing in this kind of poll."[103] But the party's decision to boycott the 1999 presidential elections and participate in the 2004 presidential elections *and* the 2007 legislative elections makes this explanation less than convincing.

Beyond the RCD not being a true opposition party, an alternative explanation is one provided by the theory outlined in Chap. 3 which suggests two factors that can account for the RCD's choice to participate in 2004 and 2007: the RCD's issue positions relative to the regime and its costs of mobilizing post-election demonstrations. The decision to boycott is a function of a group's perceptions about the strength of the regime and the likelihood of obtaining reform at a particular point in time. But participation-boycott decisions also depend on other parameters, namely, costs of mobilization and ideological divergence between the government and the opposition. According to the theory, parties that participate will be those with high mobilization costs, policy preferences relatively close to the regime, and/or those who are most certainly facing a strong regime. An alternative explanation for the RCD's shift in strategies, then, involves changes in mobilization costs and ideological divergence with the regime. Discussions and reports of the RCD's actions and relations with the regime, namely, what some would consider its co-optation, suggest a decrease in the ideological polarization between the RCD and the regime as well as higher mobilization costs relative to the FFS in these later two elections.

The first indication of the RCD's move closer to the regime was the party's support of the *concorde civile*. After boycotting the presidential

elections in April 1999, the RCD supported Bouteflika's *concorde civile* and campaigned in favor of the September 1999 referendum. This campaign was unusual given what Addi (2009) calls the RCD's "virulent anti-Islamism" which, according to the author, "led it to support the most extremist fringe of the army" (p. 8).[104] Given its extreme anti-Islamist position, the RCD's support for an amnesty agreement that would reintegrate Islamic insurgents back into society was surprising. A second indication is the party's decision to join the governing coalition in 2000. The party was offered two ministerial portfolios "in exchange for his [Saïd Sadi's] support for repression and violations of human rights" (Addi 2009, p. 9). Only after the unrest in Kabilya began in April 2001 did the RCD withdraw from the government, apparently "afraid of cutting itself off definitively from what it considered to be its potential stronghold" (p. 9). Given that the RCD draws most of its support from Kabilya, alienating the region's voters would have been a death knell for the party's ability to mobilize support and compete with the FFS. While the FFS is solidly democratic in its origin and positions, the RCD, according to Addi (2006), does not equate democracy with an electoral majority and its leader, Saïd Sadi, "dreams of being the Mustapha Kamel Attaturk of Algeria" (Tahi 1995, p. 155).

A third indication of the RCD's decreasing polarization relative to the regime following the 2002 elections were changes to the electoral rules. In 1999, the RCD made its participation conditional on changes to the electoral law in addition to guarantees of free and fair conduct in the elections. Prior to the 2004 elections, the election law was changed, reducing the number of special polling stations, a point of contention for the RCD. In addition, Algeria allowed international observers, another guarantee favored by the RCD, to monitor the elections. Representatives of the presidential candidates were also able to be present at polling stations and during the ballot counting process (Parks 2005).

In terms of the FFS' relationship with the regime, the party did not see this kind of reconciliation with the regime during the period that would result in the party preferring participation to boycotting. Addi (2009) argues that "the system of parties [in Algeria] has been fashioned in such a way that it is integrated into the regime and not the society" (p. 15). However, the FFS, unlike the RCD, refused to be integrated and rejected "any flirtation with the *pouvoir*."[105] One Algerian expert notes that the FFS has always been a party of the opposition and has always held the same view toward participation given the intransigent *la crise*.[106]

Moreover, the FFS was one of the few groups to oppose the military takeovers in 1962 and 1992 and was the "only legal party that demanded the return of the army to the barracks" after the 1992 coup (Addi 2009, p. 8). In addition, it was the only party to denounce the CPNR and, as stated by Karim Tabou of the FFS, "the only party to organize a debate on the charter for peace and reconciliation to call attention to the perversion of the text."[107] Furthermore, the party consistently opposed economic reforms (liberalization and privatization) implemented by the government and cited the proposed hydrocarbon law as a prime example of regime efforts to deprive Algerian citizens of their country's riches.[108] Thus, the ideological polarization between the FFS and the regime appears to have been greater than that between the RCD and the regime in the lead up to the later two elections; and remained so relative to other parties—and specifically the RCD—that boycotted in 1999 and 2002.

Mobilization costs also provide insight into the RCD's strategy of participation in later elections. When mobilization costs become too high for the opposition, it cannot credibly threaten the regime with post-election demonstrations. Knowing this, the regime will certainly ignore the boycott, leaving the party worse off than if it had participated; thus, all else being equal, participation becomes more likely with increasing costs of mobilization. Concerning the RCD, statements from the party indicated it was facing higher mobilization costs. In September 2004, there was a crackdown on the opposition and its activities that the party saw as increasing its mobilization costs and its ability to communicate a credible threat of post-election demonstrations if the regime ignored the boycott. That month, the RCD's Saïd Sadi stated that "The administrative and political repression that has affected our members [activists], punishes the opposition in its most basic activities … and the media censorship, which is stifling all dissenting voices."[109]

The FFS certainly attracted its share of hostility from the regime, causing the party to endure hardships.[110] However, the FFS had two factors working in its favor to offset a period of heightened repression: experience and greater support and visibility in its stronghold of Kabilya. In 1965, only two years after the party's founding, it was forced to go underground but continued to operate clandestinely until finally becoming legal in 1989. But whether illegal or legal, according to journalist Ghada Hamrouche, the party "remains loyal to the ideals, to the political ethics and intellectual honesty of its founders."[111] More than that, the party "rejects the established order. It demands a constituent national assembly

as a precursor to a participatory democracy and advocates for the installation of the second republic."[112] Speaking in 2006, Karim Tabou, spokesman for the FFS at the time, noted that "since 1999, the *pouvoir* has not ceased its attacks against the FFS, notably in regards to its policy proposals."[113] Even though the FFS was "a permanent target of the *pouvoir*," the party still managed to stay connected with its supporters and remained determined to "fight so that Algerians can continue to dream."[114] These statements by FFS members indicate that the costs of mobilization for the party remained sufficiently low, even as the RCD suggested its costs were increasing.

Besides its experience, the FFS did not view its absence from parliament in the same way as the IAF in Jordan or other parties in Algeria might. In particular, it did not think that being out of parliament cut the party off from the people and its supporters. That is, it did not view its absence from parliament as increasing its mobilization costs and making it more costly to credibly threaten protests. On the FFS decision to boycott the 2007 elections, journalist Ali Bahmane asserted, "The price of an empty chair is the lack of a voice."[115] While the opposition in Jordan would have agreed with this statement, the FFS did not, at least not about holding seats in the national parliament. Unlike Jordan's IAF, the party did not feel its absence from parliament penalized it in any appreciable way. The FFS operated clandestinely for over 20 years but remained active enough to win approximately 25 percent of the vote in the first round of the 1991 legislative elections, coming second just behind the FIS. This ability of the party to remain viable and competitive despite its absence from parliament is affirmed by Ahmed Djeddaï of the FFS who noted that the party was not scared to be absent from the National Assembly. He elaborated:

> If we must slip away from the artificial institutions and remain close to the population, we can only be confident. It must be remembered that the FFS has traditions. We have survived 24 years underground, with all that we have not disappeared. After 1989, there were polls in which we did not participate, but that did not prevent the party from expanding and having a larger audience.[116]

One reason for these differing assessments of the benefit of parliamentary representation stems from the fact that the FFS is active and influential locally and regionally in communes and state assemblies, yielding a level of visibility and allowing the FFS to remain connected to supporters and the

broader public. In 2006, the FFS had 890 elected deputies across the country.[117] In an interview ahead of the 1999 elections, several FFS members argued that the party would use all available forums to advance their agenda. Ahmed Djeddaï, for example, asserted: "If we decide to participate in the legislative and local [elections], it is in order to use all possible forums to advance the ideas of dialogue and peace. From which, I want to clarify, we have the ability to withdraw at any time we choose."[118]

Not only is the party active, but it is also influential at the local level. The following proclamation is typical of the FFS's political independence: "We were the only ones to hold a vote inside the state Assemblies to support the Lebanese people [after the 2006 war with Israel] and send them aid. In brief, we have done our best to exist on a constrained political scene."[119] Furthermore, unlike other parties, the FFS no longer considered national elections as a political priority, concentrating instead on local elections in order to remain close to the population. After boycotting the 2007 legislative elections, the party participated in the local elections for communes and state assemblies several months later. The party determined that it is best to focus its "investments in the national democratic landscape" on local elections rather than legislative elections.[120] Speaking in 2006, the head of the FFS in Sétif asserted that the party "will continue to represent a proactive force with its presence on the ground 'close to civil society,' but without dealing with the coalition parties in the *pouvoir* and their 'sham democracy' project."[121] As a result, the party's absence from parliament did not appear to increase its costs to mobilization. Given alternative platforms available to the FFS, combined with its beliefs and ideological divergence relative to the regime, the FFS did not face the same constraints on its choices as the RCD and decided in favor of boycotting over participation in 2004 and 2007.

6.4 Conclusion

Two intriguing considerations emerge from the Algerian case study that are likely to be important for the study of opposition politics in authoritarian elections, both within a single country and cross-nationally. First, the case calls attention to the issue of which political parties constitute the opposition. One explanation for why the FFS and RCD boycotted and participated, respectively, in the later two elections is that the RCD was not a true opposition party. On the "paradoxical status of the opposition" in authoritarian regimes like Algeria, Addi (2006) notes, "A party like the

MSP (Movement of Society for Peace), and, to a lesser extent, the RCD (Rally for Culture and Democracy), called themselves opposition while participating in the government" (p. 147).

Of course, as suggested here, it is also possible to understand the RCD's closer, more conciliatory relations with the regime—and its decisions to participate—as a reflection of the party's increased mobilization costs and decreased ideological polarization in later election years. On this point Storm (2014) explains, "Like the FFS, the RCD has remained in opposition to the regime over the years, but the two parties have generally differed in their approach, as well as their level of opposition. Whereas the FFS has consistently followed a radical line, frequently boycotting legislative and presidential elections, the RCD has tended to be more accommodating" (p. 148; see also Werenfels 2007). In the complicated game of electoral authoritarian politics, it is certainly the case that groups can move in and out of opposition status, or at least at times move further into the regime's orbit, such as when accepting cabinet positions. As the study of opposition electoral strategies under authoritarianism advances, recognizing that an opposition party's position vis-à-vis the regime may change over time, sometimes being co-opted and at others squarely in the opposition, will be important when analyzing and interpreting the strategic decisions to participate or boycott.

The second important point worthy of further study concerns the costs of mobilization, and the study of opposition electoral strategies cross-nationally. Compared to Jordan, Algeria's opposition seemed to face lower costs to mobilization on average, though as discussed above, costs could still vary from one party to the next. One reason for this, as discussed previously, is the forums available to the opposition beyond the national parliament which allowed the FFS to remain in the public's eye despite not holding seats in the National Assembly. Further, as noted by Addi (2009), "The political influence of these social groups [the non-Islamist parties] does not stem from their numbers but rather from their functions in the administration, the public sector, and the press, where they have great visibility" (p. 7).

A second reason for the overall lower mobilization costs is that civil society in Algeria is uniquely vibrant relative to its regional neighbors, thereby lowering the costs of mobilization. Bellin (2005) notes, "Low levels of popular mobilization are a reality in the MENA region. They lower the costs of repression for the coercive apparatus and increase the likelihood that the security establishment will resort to force to thwart

reform initiatives" (p. 35). The strength of Algerian civil society can be seen in the number of strikes, sit-ins, marches, and demonstrations organized and carried out both within and beyond its major cities throughout the period under study. The demonstrations throughout Algeria following the death of Berber youth Massinissa Guermah in April 2001 are a particularly strong testament to Algeria's relatively high level of mobilization and strong civil society compared to many of its regional counterparts. In addition, Algeria had a relatively free press—again relative to regional standards—during this period despite the curbing of press freedoms associated with Bouteflika's tenure. The press regularly criticized the government, the army, and elites, as well as the regime's handling of sensitive issues such as the Kabilya uprising. Moreover, the local and national activities of political parties were regularly reported in both the national and local media. The high level of mobilization evident in Algeria suggests that mobilization costs for opposition actors in Algeria are on average lower relative to other countries in the region. Accordingly, this may be one reason why we observed more boycotts in Algeria during this period compared to other Arab countries, inlcuding Jordan.

Notes

1. After a Berber writer was prevented from giving a lecture on Berber culture at the university in Tizi Ouzou in 1980, students went on strike. The regime responded harshly and violently and, in so doing, laid the "groundwork for an outspoken Berber cultural movement with the potential of rallying support from some 10 to 20 percent of the society" (Quandt 1998, p. 36). The primary demand of the Berber movement at the time was greater democracy.
2. According to Nashashibi et al. (1998), some of the weaknesses that became apparent in the early 1980s were: (1) state farms were not improving yields and Algeria was rapidly increasing its dependence on food imports; (2) long delays in the completion of investment projects meant that "capital was being immobilized for long periods without generating any income"; (3) industrial plants were running below capacity; and (4) "consumption subsidies and high money growth" (overvalued Algerian dinar) led to shortages and rationing of key staples (pp. 3–4).
3. Quandt (1998) notes that the transformation of Algerian society, the state's education and healthcare policies, as well as "bureaucratization and rapid urbanization," placed significant pressure on the Algerian regime. Moreover, Quandt notes that the regime faced pressure from an

emerging middle class and youths who did not buy into its revolutionary credentials: "A middle class of sorts was emerging, and with it some expectations of an easing of the strictures on political life. Also, the new generation, educated entirely since independence, and increasingly in Arabic, no longer showed automatic deference to the nationalists and revolutionaries who had won the country's freedoms" (p. 34).

4. On the regime's use of distributive institutions to engender support from the public, Bouandel explains, "But with the massive population growth, it also depended on the state's ability to provide for most of its citizens' economic and social needs. Healthy hydrocarbon revenues enabled the state to invest in social programmes such as free education, healthcare, and cheap housing" (2003, p. 5).
5. The law on political parties prohibited parties based on religion, language, or regionalism (i.e., Islam- or Berber-based parties). According to Quandt, "This provision could have been used to prohibit parties claiming to be based on Islam or which demanded Berber cultural rights. But instead of such a restrictive interpretation, the government of Kasdi Merbah, widely viewed as lukewarm towards reforms, went ahead and recognized" the RCD and FIS (1998, p. 48).
6. These five men were Mohamed Boudiaf (named president but assassinated shortly after), Ali Haroun (minister of justice), Tidjani Haddam (former minister of religious affairs), Khaled Nezzar (minister of defense), and Ali Kafi (general secretary of veteran affairs). After Boudiaf's assassination on 29 June 1992, Ali Kafi replaced him as president. Later, Redha Malek replaced Kafi and Bélaïd Abdessalam was appointed prime minister.
7. Amnay Idir, "Les consultations par les chiffres," *El Watan*, 18 April 1999, p. 3.
8. Amnay Idir, "Les consultations par les chiffres," *El Watan*, 18 April 1999, p. 3.
9. A5, Interview with author, May 2011.
10. Accusations of fraud were confirmed in 1998. The commission charged with investigating fraud in the previous legislative elections confirmed accusations made by parties of election irregularities (S.B., "La fraude électorale confirmée, et après?," *El Watan*, 20 November 1998).
11. To distinguish from post-election or economic crises, I use *la crise* (crisis), a term to describe the socioeconomic, political, and security conditions in Algeria that was used throughout this period. Tayeb Belghiche, "La corruption une 'vertu' en Algérie," *El Watan*, 8 May 2001, p. 2.
12. It was equally common to refer to solutions to exit the crisis. A number of statements from the opposition described their discontent with the *pouvoir* in terms of its failure to resolve or even alleviate the crisis and its refusal to implement policies that would help Algeria exit the crisis.

13. S.B., "La fraude électorale confirmée, et après?," *El Watan*, 30 November 1998, p. 3. The author notes, "The commission charged with investigating fraud in the last legislative elections confirmed the accusations of election irregularities made by the parties."
14. Nordine Grim, "Le dinar a perdu 20% de sa valeur," *El Watan*, 29 April 1999, p. 1.
15. Historic oil prices retrieved 22 April 2011 from http://www.wtrg.com/prices.htm.
16. Lies Sahar, "Dette extérieure: La situation reste critique," *El Watan*, 10 March 1999, p. 1.
17. "Aït Ahmed: la prochaine élection 'une chance à saisir,'" *El Watan*, 3 March 1999, p. 3.
18. Lies Sahar, "L'UGTA bandit la menance d'une grève générale," *El Watan*, 27 August 1998, p. 1.
19. Souhila H., "Le pouvoir a peur du boycott", *El Watan*, 23 March 1999, p. 1.
20. T. Assia, "Dure épreuve pour Ouyahia," *El Watan*, 7 September 1998, p. 1.
21. The six candidates were Hocine Aït Ahmed (FFS), Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi (backed by the banned FIS), Mouloud Hamrouche (formerly of the FLN), Adballah Djaballah (the leader of the MNR), Mokdad Sifi, and Youcef Khatib.
22. Another political party, the Workers' Party (PT), called on supporters to cast blank ballots in protest after the party's candidate, Louisa Hanoune, was rejected by the Constitutional Council for failing to obtain a sufficient number of signatures for her candidacy.
23. Souhila H., "Rejet d'un jeu électoral verrouillé," *El Watan*, 6 February 1999. In addition to the lack of transparency, the RCD raised concerns over the potential for the election to rehabilitate the FIS (Amine Lofti & Souhila H., "Cette election va réhabiliter le FIS," *El Watan*, 24 February 1999, p. 1.).
24. Souhila H., "Reject d'un jeu électoral verrouillé," *El Watan*, 6 February 1999, p. 2. Lyes Bendaoud, "L'élection présidentielle compromise? Six candidats menacent," *El Watan*, 14 April 1999, p. 1.
25. Lies S., "Garanties," *El Watan*, 14 January 1999, p. 1. Lyes Bendaoud, "L'élection présidentielle compromise? Six candidats menacent," *El Watan*, 14 April 1999, p. 1.
26. Lyes Bendaoud, "L'élection présidentielle compromise? Six candidats menacent," *El Watan*, 14 April 1999, p. 1. One expert noted that Bouteflika conditioned his acceptance of the candidacy on a guarantee that he would receive more support than President Zéroual in 1995 (A1, Interview with author, April 2011).

27. Souhila H., "Le RCD interpelle l'armée," *El Watan*, 6 January 1999, p. 3.
28. Amnay Idir, "Les consultations par les chiffres," *El Watan*, 18 April 1999, p. 3. Turnout in the previous three elections was approximately 65 percent (1997), 75 percent (1995), and 80 percent for the 1996 referendum (Axtmann 1999, p. 48).
29. Souhila H., "Les résultats officiels proclamés aujourd'hui," *El Watan*, 20 April 1999, p. 1.
30. Lyes Bendaoud, "Mise en garde des 'six,'" *El Watan*, 22 April 1999, p. 1.
31. Ali T., "La marches des 'six' interdite," *El Watan*, 25 April 1999, p. 1.
32. A.T., "Encore une marche interdite," *El Watan*, 5 May 1999, p. 3.
33. This was in contrast to 16 April, when even the citizens had tried to defy the ban (Ali T., "Les 'six' isolés à Alger," *El Watan*, 27 April 1999, p. 1).
34. A.T., "Encore une marche interdite," *El Watan*, 5 May 1999, p. 3. No clear reason was provided to justify prohibiting this demonstration. The communiqué said that no demonstrations would be tolerated during this period. To the Group of Six, it appeared that the sole reason for refusing the demonstration was the regime's desire to prevent all forms of political opposition.
35. Ali T., "Les 'six' isolés à Alger," *El Watan*, 26 April 1999, p. 1.
36. A. Samil, "Messaadia revient," *El Watan*, 4 April 1999, p. 1.
37. In fact, although he did not fight, he was exempted under Article 73 of the Constitution because he was born prior to July 1942.
38. Ziad Salah, "Doute sur l'engagement de la base du MSP," *El Watan*, 21 April 1999, p. 3.
39. Lies Sahar, "Paris veut se réconcilier avec Bouteflika," *El Watan*, 3 May 1999, p. 2.
40. Lies Sahar, "Paris veut se réconcilier avec Bouteflika," *El Watan*, 3 May 1999, p. 2.
41. Lies Sahar, "Intensification des relations avec l'étranger," *El Watan*, 9 May 1999, p. 3.
42. A.T., "Prêt de 98 millions de dollars pour Sonelgaz," *El Watan*, 6 May 1999, p. 2.
43. AGENCE France Presse (English), 2 November 1999, retrieved 24 April 2011 from LexisNexis.
44. Amnay Idir, "Les consultations par les chiffres," *El Watan*, 18 April 1999, p. 3.
45. A1, Interview with author, April 2011.
46. A2, Interview with author, April 2011.
47. A5, Interview with author, May 2011.
48. Fayçal Metaoui, "À quelle strategie obéit l'aveuglement du gouvernement?," *El Watan*, 21 May 2001, p. 3.

49. Mourad Hachid, "Le rejet des élections prend forme en Kabilya," *El Watan*, 27 February 2002, p. 3.
50. Faouzia Ababsa, "FFS rejette le processus électoral," *La Tribune*, 30 March 2002, p. 1.
51. The El Kseur platform outlined the movement's 15 demands, which included the officialization and nationalization of the Tamazight language, the release of all those detained since the uprising began in April 2001, and actions to hold accountable those responsible for the death of protesters and, in particular, Massinissa Guermah. The platform not only included Berber-specific demands but also extended to wider concerns facing citizens across the country.
52. Faouzia Ababsa, "FFS rejette le processus électoral," *La Tribune*, 30 March 2002, p. 1.
53. Faouzia Ababsa, "Entretien avec Ahmed Djeddaï," *La Tribune*, 14 March 2002, p. 5.
54. Faouzia Ababsa, "FFS rejette le processus électoral," *La Tribune*, 30 March 2002, p. 1.
55. M. Boumati, "Ahmed Djeddaï s'inquiète des prochaines élections," *La Tribune*, 10 November 2001, p. 4.
56. Faouzia Ababsa, "Le RCD dans la logique du rejet des élections législatives," *La Tribune*, 7 March 2002, p. 1.
57. *La Hogra*, as explained by Roberts (2001), is the "contempt with which they [Algerians] are treated by the authorities and the humiliations heaped upon them as their notional rights are routinely violated by official abuses of power" (p. 3). Roberts further argues that *la hogra* is a "fundamental problem of the state-society relationship in contemporary Algeria, and for the violence which is the inseparable corollary of this problem" (p. 38). See also Bouandel (2004, p. 1528).
58. Nordine Grim, "Un nouveau bond de l'inflation," *El Watan*, 28 March 2002, p. 4.
59. D.T., "Terreur sur les marchés," *El Watan*, 9 December 2001, p. 4.
60. D.T., "Terreur sur les marchés," *El Watan*, 9 December 2001, p. 4.
61. In addition to the deterioration in socioeconomic conditions that characterized daily life, Algerians suffered further after a terrible monsoon that killed 1000 people in Algiers alone and inflicted massive damage to infrastructure.
62. Fayçal Metaoui, "Les wilayas mises sous contrôle," *El Watan*, 24 October 2001, p. 5.
63. S.T., "Le *pouvoir* joue l'apaisement," *El Watan*, 26 February 2002, p. 2.
64. This point is underscored by journalist Fayçal Metaoui, who questioned Bouteflika's popularity. He writes, "No accurate poll has been conducted to know this information. By engaging in international activities like the

New Africa Initiative (NEPAD), the man gives the impression of wanting to escape from the difficult internal climate. In spite of this situation, the tenant of El Mouraida [the presidential residence] refused to forge alliances with institutions such as parliament or the political parties" ("Une guerre d'usure," *El Watan*, 15 April 2002, p. 3).

65. Abdelkrim A., "Les salaires de 40,000 travailleurs verses avant décembre: Benflis fait un geste," *El Watan*, 14 October 2001, p. 5.
66. Assia T., "Profitant d'un retour au calme en Kabilye: le *pouvoir* ferme le jeu," *El Watan*, 10 June 2001, p. 1.
67. Djamila Kourta, "Les grévistes pénalises," *El Watan*, 27 December 2001, p. 2.
68. Zéroual had attempted to negotiate an amnesty deal with AIS in 1997 (A5, Interview with author, May 2011).
69. Salmia Tlemçani, "Plus d'un millier de victimes en neuf mois," *El Watan*, 30 October 2001, p. 5.
70. Fayçal Metaoui, "Le langage muscle de Bouteflika," *El Watan*, 23 January 2002, p. 3.
71. Fayçal Metaoui, "Le langage muscle de Bouteflika," *El Watan*, 23 January 2002, p. 3.
72. Other actions that would suggest a low cost of fighting were: (1) The state of emergency was maintained for its ninth year without the approval of parliament, despite improvement in the security situation and widespread discussions (dating back to at least 1999 presidential election) about it being unnecessary. In fact, several high-ranking members of the military said ending the state of emergency would be a reasonable thing to do. (2) A number of actions taken by the Minister of Interior, including banning or refusing to authorize demonstrations, were done without explanation. No political party, for example, was approved to form in 2001, including Taleb Ibrahimi's Wafa party.
73. The platform also demanded the full and immediate departure of the gendarmerie brigades and the CNS (riot police) reinforcements.
74. The demand as put forth in the official platform was "To meet the Amazigh [Berber] demand in all its (identity, civilization, linguistic, and cultural) dimensions without a referendum or conditions; and the recognition of Tamazight as a national and official language."
75. Fayçal Metaoui, "Bouteflika libére les détenus," *El Watan*, 5 August 2002, p. 1.
76. Journalist Mohand Afroukh notes: "For the Western oil companies in Algeria, the situation [unrest] actually made no difference" (Mohand Afrouk, "Les sociétés pétrolières étrangères confiantes," *El Watan*, 8 July 2001, p. 4).

77. Le Sueur (2010) notes that Bouteflika's visit to the White House to meet with then President Bush in July 2001 was "a clear contrast with President Clinton, who had been disappointed in Bouteflika and refused to meet with him" (p. 85).
78. Lies Sahar, "Le pétrole rapproche Alger et Washington," *El Watan*, 12 July 2001, p. 2.
79. D. Tamani, "FFS et RCD opposes aux élections," *El Watan*, 14 February 2002, p. 2.
80. D. Tamani, "Entretien avec Ahmed Djeddaï," *El Watan*, 16 June 2002, p. 3.
81. Fayçal Metaoui, "Une année noire," *El Watan*, 2 January 2002, p. 2.
82. K. Medjdoub, "Les marches du FFS à Béjaïa empêchées," *El Watan*, 28 May 2002, p. 4; A. Benyahia, "Le groupe des Quartre revient à la charge," *El Watan*, 29 May 2002, p. 3; M. Slimani, "Les archs interdits de sit-in à Béjaïa," *El Watan*, 27 June 2002, p. 3.
83. Mourad Hachid, "Le mouvement á la croisée des chemins," *El Watan*, 18 November 2002, p. 2.
84. M. Slimani, "La quête d'un second soufflé," *El Watan*, 11 July 2002, p. 2.
85. According to Dris-Aït-Hammadouche (2008), the accusations of government interference and fraud were affirmed by the head of the national commission of legislative election control, who "immediately reported that some ballot boxes were full with FLN ballots, and that the authorities prevented some observers from being present at the polls … Surprisingly, he later retracted his statement and apologized. Close to 15 percent of the ballots were manipulated" (pp. 88–89).
86. Djamel Zerrouk, "FFS: neutraliser la politique 'du rouleau compresseur,'" *El Watan*, 13 December 2006, p. 2.
87. A1, Interview with author, April 2011.
88. A4, Interview with author, May 2011.
89. Tlemçani writes: "The official estimate for victims of civil strife thus increased from 26,563 in February 1998 to 100,000 before the presidential election, and finally to 150,000 during Bouteflika's presidency" (p. 6).
90. Farid Alilat et N. Sebti, "Saïd Sadi à *Liberté*," *Liberté*, 16 October 2003, p. 5.
91. A5, Interview with author, May 2011.
92. After taking office in 1999, President Bouteflika, according to Tlemçani (2008), "gradually replaced senior officers with people loyal to him and reduced the military's political role. The April 2004 elections demonstrated that he had largely succeeded" (p. 13). Roberts (2003), however, notes that Bouteflika was unable to replace either Lamari or Mediène in

the major military reshuffle on 24 February 2000, which according to the author "was the biggest change in the Algerian army leadership since December 1988" (pp. 271–272). The inability to replace these two men, Roberts stresses, "says a lot about the balance of forces inside the Algerian power structure" (p. 272).

93. A2, Interview with author, April 2011.
94. Bouteflika also retained support from the powerful Department of Intelligence and Security headed by Mohamed Mediène (also known as "Toufik").
95. For example, in 2003 Algeria received $600,000 from the International Military Education and Training program but had received only $30,000 in 2002 (Entelis 2005, p. 544).
96. A1, Interview with author, April 2011.
97. Arab Chih, "Pourquoi Sadi est candidat," *Liberté*, 10 January 2004, p. 3.
98. A week before the election, for example, "Sadi cooly declared to a group of reporters: 'there won't be any fraud'" (Parks 2005, p. 102). But the day before, the RCD and other candidates claimed that Bouteflika planned to "falsify the results" (p. 102). In March, Sadi remarked on his candidacy: "We decided to enter the campaign knowing full well that the television and the resources of the state are under the control of the president-candidate" (Monia Zergane, "Une fausse vision de la politique," *El Watan*, 8 March 2004, p. 2).
99. A1, Interview with author, April 2011.
100. A1, Interview with author, April 2011.
101. Ahmed Benabi, "Les partielles en Kabilya: Le FFS," *La Dépeche Kabilya*, 20 October 2005, p. 2.
102. Arab Chih, "Pourquoi Sadi est candidat," *Liberté*, 10 January 2004, p. 3.
103. A. Bahmane et A. Merad, "Entretien avec Saïd Sadi," *El Watan*, 23 February 2004, p. 2.
104. According to Bouandel (2003), "had political parties been required to declare a commitment to democratic principles and compromise on their positions towards particular issues, as in Spain for example, parties such as FIS and the RCD would never have been legalised" (p. 10). The RCD also declined to participate in the Sant'Egidio meetings for peace and "engaged in conflict with the opposition rather than concentrating on opposing the regime itself" (p. 14).
105. M.A.O., "Le FFS ou l'opposition sans concession au système," *El Watan*, 4 April 2006, p. 1.
106. A1, Interview with author, April 2011. The interviewee further noted that even in 2007, the attitude of the FFS was the same: elections could not be held freely and fairly under such conditions (i.e., under *la crise*).

Interestingly, he also noted that Aït Ahmed was offered the presidency in 1992 but refused it because the FFS opposed the military takeover.

107. Ghada Hamrouche, "Entretien avec Karim Tabou," *La Tribune*, 18 November 2006, p. 8. Addi (2009) in his discussion of the PT suggests that other parties, not just the RCD, were moving closer to the regime on certain issues: "For a long time allied, PT and FFS moved apart on the issue of the demand for an international commission of inquiry on the massacres and the assassinations. For Louiza Hanoune, in fact, the Algerian crisis must find its solution without the intervention of foreign NGOs or of the UN Commission on Human Rights" (p. 9).
108. Ghada Hamrouche, "Entretien avec Karim Tabou," *La Tribune*, 18 November 2006, p. 8.
109. R. B., "Le 8 avril est une remise en cause de la pluralité politique," *Liberté*, 9 October 2004, p. 2; Am. H, "Université d'été du RCD," *El Watan*, 4 September 2004, p. 3.
110. A2, Interview with author, April 2011.
111. Ghada Hamrouche, "43 ans après sa creation: une opposition nommé FFS," *La Tribune*, 18 November 2006, p. 7.
112. M.A.O., "Le FFS ou l'opposition sans concession au système," *El Watan*, 4 April 2006, p. 1.
113. Ghada Hamrouche, "Entretien avec Karim Tabou," *La Tribune*, 18 November 2006, p. 8. In particular, Tabou discusses the policy of national reconciliation, which the *pouvoir* "seized to give birth to reconciliation 'amnesia.'"
114. Ghada Hamrouche, "43 ans après sa creation: une opposition nommé FFS," *La Tribune*, 18 November 2006, p. 7. The full statement by FFS member Karim Tabou: "This war against the party against the backdrop of ambient violence will end up killing the Algerian dream and any possible political alternative. We refuse to let the dream be confiscated. We will fight so that Algerians can continue to dream. This is why the FFS is a permanent target of the *pouvoir*, which tries periodically to foment internal crises within the party."
115. Ali Bahmane, "Les choix du FFS," *El Watan*, 12 March 2007.
116. D. Tamani, "Entretien avec Ahmed Djeddaï: Le pouvoir est face à une dynamique de changement," *El Watan*, 16 June 2002, p. 3.
117. M.A.O., "Le FFS ou l'opposition sans concession au système," *El Watan*, 4 April 2006, p. 1.
118. Hocine Belkadi et Noureddine Azzouz, "Djeddaï affirme dans un entretien à *La Tribune*," *La Tribune*, 25 May 1998, p. 4.
119. Ghada Hamrouche, "Entretien avec Karim Tabou," *La Tribune*, 18 November 2006, p. 8.

120. Abdelhalim Benyelles, "La participation aux échéances électorales de 2007 demeure liée aux résolutions du congrès," *La Tribune*, 18 November 2006, p. 14. In addition, according to journalist Ali Bahmane, "The FFS does not presently preclude being present at local elections next fall. It [the FFS] is suspected of privileging this vote exclusively to ensure its continued elected presence, especially in Kabylia …" (Ali Bahmane, "Les choix du FFS," *El Watan*, 12 March 2007).
121. Abdelhalim Benyelles, "La participation aux échéances électorales de 2007 demeure liée aux résolutions du congrès," *La Tribune*, 18 November 2006, p. 14.

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CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

Authoritarian elections are neither free nor fair; nor are they competitive contests, and so they offer little possibility for turnover. Nevertheless, we observe opposition parties at times participating in such elections and at other times boycotting them. The theory I develop here provides a framework for understanding why opposition groups in such situations select the strategies they do; why they participate in less than democratic elections, as well as why they boycott; why they mobilize post-election protests; and why opposition groups back down from further confrontation with the regime after a contentious election. These strategies, I argue, are fundamentally driven by the opposition's perceived strength of the regime, which depends on the centers of power that anchor a regime's authority. In the lead-up to elections, opposition parties consider the willingness of centers of power to support the regime in a post-election crisis as they evaluate the viability of a boycott-protest strategy to obtain concessions from authoritarian powers. Consequently, these centers of power play a critical role in shaping the opposition's perceptions about the regime's vulnerability, and the possibilities for political reform and transformation. These beliefs on the part of the opposition, in turn, inform decisions about whether and how to mobilize after an election, and thus whether an opposition group decides to boycott or participate in an authoritarian election.

This work advances our understanding of the multiplicity of strategic choices opposition parties make when faced with authoritarian elections in several key ways. It highlights the surprising array of choices that opposition

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groups have at their disposal, even in authoritarian regimes, and helps us make sense of their decisions. First, I provide an explanation for why rational actors would participate in authoritarian elections for which a semblance of real power is not at stake and for which unfair electoral processes and authoritarian conditions are unexceptional. Participation is rational in such context when the opposition cannot credibly threaten to mobilize protests following an unsuccessful boycott—because of high costs to mobilization, insufficient ideological polarization, or when the opposition believes it is likely facing a strong regime. Since the regime, whether strong or weak, knows it faces no risk of post-election demonstrations, it will choose to ignore the boycott. Under these conditions, boycotting then backing down will only leave the party worse off. Participating in the election offers little chance of real influence, but a boycott would guarantee none at all. As one IAF member explained about the party's evaluation of the 1997 boycott and decision to return to participation in 2003: "We believed our presence—even if our influence was slight—was better than our absence."[1]

Second, identifying a regime's set of sufficient centers of power, and analyzing how their perceived willingness to aid the regime changes over time, enriches our understanding of the regime's response to electoral protests. Regime strength is a key factor in determining whether the regime will reform, and thereby defuse the conflict, or face the possibility—no matter how small—of losing power in a post-election crisis. Thus, understanding how opposition actors perceive regime strength helps determine the conditions under which election boycotts in the Arab world are successful strategies—and why so often they are not—and why some inspire post-election protests.

Finally, this book offers an alternative perspective on how opposition groups make decisions regarding which electoral strategies to adopt. Focusing solely on election-specific factors overlooks the larger context in which opposition parties make decisions. The broader social, economic, and political conditions leading up to an election inform the opposition's beliefs about the willingness of centers of power to support an embattled regime. Thus, this work illuminates how opposition groups take into account structural and institutional factors to gauge regime strength in deciding whether to participate, boycott, and protest. Opposition groups in both Jordan and Algeria emphasized how the payoffs to boycott may shift over time according to their beliefs. These beliefs are revised and

anchored in the socioeconomic and political conditions that define the context in which an election takes place.

Opposition groups in both countries made reference to the "crises" facing their countries at the time the decisions to boycott were taken. For example, a leader in the IAF noted that the decision to boycott the 2010 legislative elections was taken "in light of the political, economic, and social crisis in Jordan."[2] Similarly, according to a member of Jordan's al-Wihda party: "The people are currently suffering worsening economic and social conditions. With the absence of any prospects for political and economic reforms, we are now witnessing a real and serious crisis facing the people. And this crisis requires this stance [a boycott]."[3] In November 2001, commenting on the party's concerns about the upcoming legislative elections, which the party boycotted, Ahmed Djeddaï of the Socialist Forces Front (FFS) remarked that the conditions in the country in the lead-up to the election are characterized by a "deterioration in security, a complete clog on the political level, and especially a restive society and a deaf *pouvoir* that does not respond to the desires of society."[4] When asked in June 2002 if he thought the boycott was a good option, Djeddaï replied yes, listing among the reasons "taking into account all aspects of the Algerian crisis, including in security, political, and socioeconomic terms."[5]

Statements from opposition leaders which point to socioeconomic and political conditions surrounding the elections show why the electoral strategies of the opposition are far from inevitable responses to unfair elections. Rather, electoral strategies evolve according to beliefs about the strength of the regime, beliefs that are influenced by the overarching political environment in the run-up to an election. As one leader in the Muslim Brotherhood succinctly put it: "Boycotting is a political action that is not constant."[6] Each election presents opposition groups with a new strategic dilemma and opportunity to recalibrate their beliefs about the possibilities for reform. That the ultimate choice to boycott or participate is the outcome of deliberative decision-making processes at a particular moment in time is articulated again by Ahmed Djeddaï of the FFS. Speaking on the party's decision to boycott in 2002, he stated, "Just because we boycotted one time, does not mean we will always boycott. Politics is the consideration of the evolution of the situation."[7]

7.1 Policy Implications for Contentious Elections

Scholars have documented how outside powers can be a positive influence, resulting in freer and fairer elections and even transitions to democracy (McCoy and Hartlyn 2009; Bunce and Wolchik 2009; Beaulieu 2014). The Arab world is a region long recognized for the importance of international actors, though more for their support of authoritarian regimes as a way to promote stability and their strategic interests than for their democracy promotion efforts (Bellin 2005; Lust-Okar 2009; Yom 2016). Indeed, foreign powers, through their diplomatic, economic, and military assistance to Arab authoritarian regimes, have fostered what Yom and Gause III (2012) call a "permissive international environment" (pp. 75–76).

The theoretical framework offered here explicitly incorporates the role of foreign powers, but shifts the focus to the influence these external actors have on the strategic decisions of opposition parties during authoritarian elections. As we have seen in the cases of Jordan and Algeria, Western governments, as centers of power, play an important role in informing the beliefs of opposition actors about the regime's strength and willingness to reform. However, a regime's willingness to reform depends on whether it can call upon its centers of power, including foreign patrons like the United States, the EU, and the GCC countries. Reflecting on the failure of the 1997 boycott to effect reform, a member of the IAF underscored the crucial role of external centers of powers: "Frankly speaking, if the donor countries want to change the law, the government will change it. The donor countries that support Jordan with donations and aid are the major cause for change."[8] This research, in emphasizing the importance of centers of power and their influence on opposition beliefs, elucidates the role that external powers play in creating electoral environs that incentivize the adoption of contentious strategies like boycotts and post-election protests. In so doing, my work can inform policies and interventions aimed at mitigating the potential for contentious elections.

The international community, therefore, should be aware of the role that centers of power play not only in supporting and lending legitimacy to the regime, but also in influencing how authoritarian elections play out. A key implication is that Western governments and other foreign patrons of Arab authoritarian regimes need to rethink their diplomatic and rhetorical efforts at crucial times during the lead-up to an election. Withdrawing support for regimes during elections may at first result in an increase in contentious elections as opposition groups see the retreat of a key support base as one indicator that the regime might be more willing

to offer concessions. Opposition boycotts arising from such conditions, however, may compel a relatively more vulnerable regime to implement reforms to the electoral rules or other institutional safeguards to protect the integrity of the electoral process. If international actors are committed to incentivizing pluralism, as well as competitive and fair elections, they need to be aware of which actions and rhetoric during elections enhance actors on the ground and those that support the state.

Our understanding of why opposition parties choose to boycott some elections but not others is far from complete; even so, boycotts will continue to be an important strategy adopted by opposition parties in authoritarian elections. In the Arab world and elsewhere, contentious elections, including those that are boycotted, have a range of consequences: democratic transitions are less certain, societies are less stable, and violence can increase (Beaulieu 2014; Norris et al. 2015). Election boycotts have significant implications for the quality of the electoral process, representation, and democracy. Free and fair elections are a primary mechanism for ensuring fundamental principles of democracy such as representation, participation, and accountability; elections without the participation of opposition parties violate these principles. Moreover, over time, contentious elections can discredit the electoral process, and perhaps even democratization more generally, in the eyes of the opposition and citizens. Therefore, if we are going to devise policy to "mitigate or control the factors associated with contentious elections," as encouraged by Norris et al. (2015, p. 147), we need to reconsider how we study and interpret the strategic choices of opposition groups in authoritarian elections. Incorporating the support of external actors into our analyses of domestic politics in authoritarian regimes can help us explain opposition and government interactions more completely. Specifically, recognizing how centers of power, in particular Western governments, influence the decisions of opposition groups in authoritarian elections could help reduce the information asymmetries that characterize these contests leading to fewer failed boycotts and perhaps even to improvements in the integrity of elections that can revitalize the stake of citizens and opposition groups in the electoral process over time.

7.2 Centers of Power and the Arab Spring

The Arab Spring, the series of protests and political transformations that took place throughout the Middle East and North Africa in 2011, provides a strong reminder of the possibilities for non-violent political opposition even under authoritarian regimes. Both Algeria and Jordan saw

protests during the Arab Spring, but the intensity of activity was much less and protesters' demands more moderate compared to other countries like Syria, Tunisia, and Bahrain. The Algerian and Jordanian regimes relied on similar strategies in their attempts to quell discontent, implementing constitutional and other reforms as well as increasing spending. In the aftermath, opposition parties were once again faced with the dilemma of whether to participate or boycott authoritarian elections in their respective countries. The FFS finally came in from the cold, returning to participate in Algeria's first post-Arab Spring elections in May 2012, citing members' (activists) concerns about the future of the party and the need to remobilize. These were the first national-level legislative elections the party had participated in since 1997. It won 21 seats (about 4.5 percent) in the lower house, the fourth largest share behind the two ruling parties (the National Liberation Front, FLN, and the National Democratic Rally, RND) and an alliance of co-opted Islamist parties. The Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD), interestingly, chose to boycott these elections.

The IAF boycotted a third time in 2013, Jordan's first post-Arab Spring elections, which were held a year and half early. One of the official reasons for the boycott was yet again the electoral law, as it was in 1997 and 2010, despite an amendment creating a mixed-member system. Three years later, however, the party returned to participation in 2016 having been severely weakened by repression as well as widespread resignations and expulsions that ultimately left the party unable to credibly threaten post-election protests.

The Arab Spring protests and subsequent outcomes provide another context to further explore the implications of the theoretical framework for understanding the varied possibilities for reform and political transformation. Recognizing that a regime relies on a set of centers of power during periods of contestation with the opposition, and systematically accounting for the willingness of centers of power to continue to support the regime, allows us to better understand why a regime is able to withstand periods of opposition challenges to their authority. To understand the crucial role of centers of power to regime stability, consider the case of Tunisia and one of its external centers of power, the United States. The self-immolation of Muhammad Bouazizi is widely considered the catalyst for not only events in Tunisia and the fall of President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali, but also the subsequent series of protests that erupted

across the Middle East and North Africa in the early months of 2011. The decision by Wikileaks to release secret diplomatic cables revealed information regarding the willingness of a center of power (the United States) to come to the aid of the regime. As Tom Malinowski (2011), the Washington Director of Human Rights Watch, reported,

> The candid appraisal of Ben Ali by US diplomats showed Tunisians that the rottenness of the regime was obvious not just to them but to the whole world—and that it was a source of shame for Tunisia on an international stage. The cables also contradicted the prevailing view among Tunisians that Washington would back Ben Ali to the bloody end, giving them added impetus to take to the streets. They further delegitimized the Tunisian leader and boosted the morale of his opponents at a pivotal moment in the drama that unfolded over the last few weeks.

Bouazizi's self-immolation signaled the failure of the Tunisian social contract to exchange limitations on political rights for education-driven economic development.[9] The released diplomatic cables suggested an unwillingness of one of Tunisia's centers of power—the United States—to come to its aid.

Especially important for analyzing the influence of centers of power on strategic choice and outcomes is careful empirical analysis to identify the centers of power. This is precisely the kind of question where area expertise is so vital. The influence of the military, perhaps the most obvious candidate for a center of power, varies over time and across states. The military played a pivotal role in Egypt and the fall of Hosni Mubarak, but in Bahrain, the regime depended less on its own security forces than those of Sunni neighbors Saudi Arabia and the UAE.[10] The Bahraini regime's actions during the demonstrations are less suggestive of a general concern with David Easton's (1965) notion of diffuse support than recognition of the importance of maintaining domestic bases of power for the regime such as the Bahrain Financial Harbor and the Royal Court (Bronner and Slackman 2011).

Now more than ever, we need to understand the dynamics between government and opposition during contentious elections. In the Arab world, Tunisia is the last hope for democratic transition after the initial optimism of the Arab Spring has been replaced by ever-increasing pessimism watching the authoritarian resurgence across the region and the ongoing violence and war in Syria, Libya, and Yemen. This is not just a

phenomenon among Arab countries, but can be found the world over; seemingly no region is untouched by the recent resurgence of authoritarianism.[11] Scholars will be studying the Arab Spring for years to come and there can be no question that such dramatic events, especially after decades of resilient authoritarianism, beg for explanation. The key to understanding political opposition under authoritarianism, as argued here, is recognizing the importance of centers of power and perceptions of regime strength and legitimacy among opposition actors. Identifying a regime's set of sufficient centers of power and tracking how their willingness to aid the regime changes over time, we can better understand not only the opposition's behavior, but also the behavior of the regime, and ultimately the possibilities for reform and stability.

Notes

1. J15, Interview with author, June 2009.
2. J23, Interview with author, October 2010.
3. J21, Interview with author, October 2010.
4. M. Boumati, "Ahmed Djeddaï s'inquiète des prochaines élections," *La Tribune*, 10 November 2001, p. 4.
5. D. Tamani, "Le pouvoir est face à une dynamique de changement," *El Watan*, 16 June 2002, p. 3.
6. J16, Interview with author, June 2009.
7. Hamid Saïdani et Lyes Bendaoud, "Entretien avec Ahmed Djeddaï," *Liberté*, 19 September 2002, p. 2.
8. J22, Interview with author, October 2010.
9. As Anderson (2011) notes, "Tunisia has long enjoyed the Arab world's best educational system, largest middle class, and strongest organized labor movement. Yet behind those achievements, Ben Ali's government tightly restricted free expression and political parties."
10. Aljazeera, English. (2011, March 15). "Saudi Soldiers Sent into Bahrain," retrieved from http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/03/2011314124928850647.html. See also Yom (2013) on the key role of external support bases in the Bahraini regime's survival. He notes, "yet Bahrain's Sunni ruling family survived a revolutionary uprising that involved fully a fifth of the citizenry only by dint of armed Saudi intervention and Western complicity" (p. 133).
11. See especially https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/clusters/authoritarian-resurgence. The authors examine the "Resurgence of Authoritarianism" as led by China, Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Russia.

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[1]Note: Page numbers followed by 'n' refer to notes.

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