

LEADER SURVIVABILITY IN NON-DEMOCRACIES:

The Role of Blame Shifting

by

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# LEADER SURVIVABILITY IN NON-DEMOCRACIES:

## The Role of Blame Shifting

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This paper presents an alternative explanation for the possible incentives of the incumbents in authoritarian regimes to hold elections by utilizing a formal model that is derived to simulate the strategic interaction between the incumbent and the people. Equilibria of the models show us that, there exists feasible circumstances under which the incumbent would prefer to allow elections to be hold with the purpose of the selection of an officer that the incumbent may later on benefit from by shifting the blame of an external crisis, hence weaken the risk of a regime breakdown.

## OTORİTER REJİMLERDE LİDER DAYANIKLILIĞI:

### Başka Birini Suçlayabilmenin Rolü

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Bu tez, iktidar ve halk arasındaki stratejik etkileşimi simüle eden bir formal model aracılığıyla otoriter rejimlerde liderlerin seçimlerin yapılmasına izin verme sebeplerine alternatif bir açıklama getirmektedir. Kullanılan modelin denge noktaları, liderin ileride meydana gelebilecek dış kaynaklı bir krizde suçu üstüne atabileceđi bir pozisyon yaratarak rejimin dayanıklılıđını arttırma amacıyla seçimlere izin verebileceđi şartların var olduğunu göstermektedir.

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## 1 Introduction

Authoritarian regimes are problematic. First and foremost, defining what an authoritarian regime is in positive terms remains to be challenging even today. One of the most frequently used definitions is that the authoritarian regimes are the ones "in which rulers acquire power by means other than competitive elections." (Gandhi (2008)) Compared to the minimalist definition of democracy, "a regime in which those who govern are selected through contested elections" (Przeworski et al. (2000)), it is apparent that the autocracies are the regimes in which the leaders acquire power through any means except what is considered to be democratic, which in effect tells us nothing on dictatorships apart from them being *non-democracies*.

One reason for this ambiguity about authoritarian regimes may be found in the research trends in political science. These systems have been mostly seen as transitional phases into democracy, that would supposedly prevail eventually, for a good part of the last five decades after Lipset paved the way for the famous paradigm, known as the *modernization theory*, in 1959. (Przeworski and Limongi (1997)) Dismissed as a passage to an eventual conclusion, the point of academic interest has been on developing ways to hasten the transformation, and hence, naturally, understanding the factors behind this process of modernization, instead of the actual institutions that constitute, and perhaps help the persistence, of these regimes. Apart from a few notable exceptions (Linz (1973) and O'Donnell (1973))<sup>1</sup>, the structure of the regime or the constitution of these systems are deemed to possess little importance (Friedrich and Brzezinski (1961)) until the last decade.

Recently, some scholars came to acknowledge that these regimes may not be some mere phases on the path to the democracy. In fact, as we experienced regime breakdowns in which the democracies turned into authoritarian regimes (O'Donnell et al. (1986)), as well as countries that developed economically but not democratized (Przeworski et al. (2000)), the evidence pointed us that the road to democratization may not

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<sup>1</sup>Linz (1973) took the spectrum of regimes as separate categories, not as a continuum, hence did not accept the existence of a grey zone in between.

be a linear upward trend as the modernization theory assumed. But this new understanding of regime types brought about new questions, such as "How do these regimes persist?" To put it differently, which mechanisms are responsible for the survival of authoritarian regimes for very long time periods?

Among several explanations that have been proposed throughout the last twenty years, one of the most engrossing hypotheses focuses on the adoption of some institutions by these non-democratic systems that has been judged previously as exclusively democratic, particularly elections. Although authoritarian elections have come to be seen as a type of *window-dressing* by previous studies (Friedrich and Brzezinski (1961)), the empirical evidence shows us that the authoritarian regimes that hold elections are more durable than those who do not (Geddes (1999)), suggesting that authoritarian elections may be more than what has been attributed to them (Gandhi and Przeworski (2007), Boix and Svolik (2011)). More precisely, even though the literature seem to provide the basis for us to conclude that the authoritarian regimes survive longer when they adopt certain institutions that are usually linked with democratic regimes<sup>2</sup>, such as elections and legislatures, the mechanism behind this outcome is still far from being well-understood. (Bienen and van de Walle (1991))

To the best of my knowledge, the research that has been made on these authoritarian institutions has focused mainly on their use as a tool to share the spoils of the regime with the elites (Boix and Svolik (2011)), party members (Magaloni (2006)) or larger interest groups (Gandhi and Przeworski (2006) and Gandhi (2008)) so that the incumbent can secure the support of these groups or, to put in other words, eliminate the opposition they may pose. Hence, these institutions have been assumed to serve the role of a balancer between the incumbents and some interest groups.<sup>3</sup> Though this particular explanation of the employment of this institutions by authoritarian regimes may be quite intriguing, I believe co-optation may not be the only reason why we observe legislatures and elections in these systems, they may as well have other roles in increasing the survivability of the authoritarian regimes. More precisely, I believe these institutions may provide the necessary means to create a scapegoat to whom the incumbent can shift the blame in case of a crisis. Therefore, in this paper, I will study the possible existence of the trade off between consolidation of the incumbent's power and conceiving an insurance that can be utilized to decrease the probability of a regime breakdown by creating credible positions that can be presented as the responsible party via these institutions if need be, in authoritarian regimes.

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<sup>2</sup>Boix and Svolik (2011) provides a detailed account of this phenomenon.

<sup>3</sup>A more complete survey of the explanations that has been proposed by previous research will be presented in the next section.

In this regard, this paper will first derive a formal model to understand the strategic decision making process behind the implementation of such a mechanism and secondly it will provide the case studies to shed light on the feasibility of such a mechanism.<sup>4</sup> For this end the first section provides an overview of the previous research on authoritarian elections which will be surveyed with special focus on the proposed incentives for the autocrats to hold these elections, as well as a crucial evidence from the field of experimental economics for the hypothesis offered in this paper can base on. Then, the existing theories on the resilience of monarchies relative to the authoritarian republics will be presented with a special emphasis on how the hypothesis argued in this paper covers and exceeds the explanations provided by the previous literature.

Next, a formal model will be derived in which I will show the strategic interaction between the incumbent and the population as a whole to determine the circumstances under which the incumbent would have an incentive to resort to such blame shifting via holding elections. Then, we will continue with the somewhat quasi-experiment of the Arab Spring and it's effect on four different states, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan and Morocco, in MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region to see if such a mechanism holds empirically. We will try to demonstrate that the conditions (or values of the parameters that are incorporated into the model) vary between these countries which eventually led them to end up in different equilibria that translates into the survival capabilities of each regime.

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<sup>4</sup>The important point in this second part of my thesis is that I *do not* attempt to provide the whole story from the incumbent's decision to the society's decision. On the contrary, I simply aim to show that empirically it's applaudable to argue that shifting the blame can increase the chances of survival for an authoritarian regime.



## 2 Literature Review

Since this paper derives its explanatory power from two different sources of literature, the literature review section will also be divided into two parts, first presenting the previous studies on rational choice based theories that attempt to explain the incentives behind an autocrat's choice to hold elections and secondly, the suggested reasonings behind the seemingly more resistant monarchies of the MENA region when compared to the authoritarian republics of the same geography.

### 2.1 Formal Model

Along with several institutions, authoritarian elections came to be seen as a type of *window dressing* until recently. The phenomenon has been dismissed from majority of the research agendas in political science based on the belief that these elections do not have neither significant causes nor consequences. But considering that holding elections are costly both monetarily and politically for the autocrats, it is only logical that they serve a purpose. The crucial question that needs an answer to further our understanding on authoritarian regimes is what this purposes can be.

One of the reasons proposed for the existence of authoritarian elections revolved around the role of those elections as a deacon, either internally or externally. The grounds for both internal and external delusion arguments was the supposed increase in the legitimacy of the regime by making it seem less authoritarian. Neither of these arguments are quite convincing for legitimacy can be achieved through other means such as ideology and economic performance. Another, but closely tied to external legitimacy argument, explanation for autocrats to have incentives to hold elections as a deacon is the argument of *international norm*, in which the elections serve as a costly signal that the country is in fact a part of the international community and allow these authoritarian countries to access benefits of this status, even if the elections are -especially in some cases- evidently distorted (Hyde (2011)). Although this argument

## 2.1 Formal Model

provides a more substantial explanation of the phenomenon, it only provides incentives that autocrats might have due to external conditions.

A second set of arguments on the incentives for the authoritarian regimes to hold elections revolves around the role these elections might play for the survival or the persistence of these regimes internally. According to one branch of this literature, elections are way to reduce the possible pressure that has been built up against the regime. Gandhi and Przeworski (2007) argue that elections are a way to co-opt the opposition, and by creating an institution for the opposition to have a stake at the regime, the opposition is in fact somehow domesticated. But since the type of the threat the opposition constitutes as well as the threat's magnitude varies from case to case, not all authoritarian regimes resort such a mechanism. Another branch of the literature focuses on the inherent non-credibility of the autocrats' promises and its role in internal conflict. Boix and Svobik (2011) argue that elections in authoritarian regimes serve as an observable signal which reduces the non-credibility of the autocrats and hence ease the problem of power sharing by creating an opportunity for the autocrat and the elites to interact. Similarly, Gandhi and Lust-Okar (2009) see authoritarian elections as a way that enables the autocrats to increase their legitimacy by inclusion of the opposition, since by participating in these elections perforce the opposition to be a part of the system. Moreover, these elections, according to Gandhi and Lust-Okar, define the acceptable and unacceptable ways of participation which could serve as a stabilizing mechanism for the regime, as well as providing a relatively smooth mechanism of sharing the spoils of the regime with the elites.

A third branch examines another aspect of the possible benefits of the authoritarian elections, namely the information revealed through elections. Magaloni (2006), Ames (1970) and Brownlee (2007) argue that the authoritarian regimes identify their supporters via the information revealed by elections and they use this information to decide whether to punish or reward different segments of the electorate. Similarly, Blaydes (2006) and Birney (2007) contend that elections reveal useful information, though they claim that the information is about the competency and the loyalty of the regime's own apparatus such as the party. Finally, another possible use of the information gathered via elections is argued by Londregan and Vindigni (2006). They claim that the elections provide both opposition and the autocrats the information about each sides relative strengths, hence facilitate the grounds for bargaining by decreasing the uncertainty caused by the lack of knowledge. Though a problematic aspect of this explanation is the effect of electoral fraud on the credibility, and therefore the efficacy, of the results and the information that can be inferred, one can argue that the capability to execute a fraud that would alter the results significantly would also signal strength on the incumbent's

## 2.1 *Formal Model*

part.

Given the mentioned previous research on authoritarian elections, it is clear that several different explanations have been offered on the issue, though the question asked in this paper, and henceforth in my thesis, can be answered by none. To the best of my knowledge, no research has been conducted on the possible role of elections as a mechanism of blame shifting. This paper, on the other hand, will argue that the existence of elections, and the institutions related to them, may also be salutary if the incumbent can position herself more favorably by shifting the blame to the offices that has been created by this institutions in time of a crisis. In other words, the incumbent, in this case, does not share her power to create the support she needs in order to consolidate the regime today, but she trades her power to create an insurance like mechanism that may decrease the level of responsibility on the incumbent when and if an external crisis takes place.

Fortunately, the lack of previous literature on research question may be surmounted by another line of research from experimental economics. Oexl and Grossman (2011), based on the work of Bartling and Fischbacher (2011), argues that "dictators who choose selfishly via an intermediary are punished less and earn greater profits than those who directly choose a selfish outcome, while the intermediary is punished more." In other words, their results show us that the remaining players will react differently given the same outcome, when the dictator introduces an intermediary player. Moreover, they argue that their results are robust for the cases even when the intermediary is left with a choice between two unfair alternatives. This findings are critical for the research question of this paper, because the results of this experimental dictator game provides the necessary incentive for the incumbent in an authoritarian regime to introduce the institutions that would create the intermediary. In other words, the findings of Oexl and Grossman (2011) shows us that the incumbent in an authoritarian regime is better off with an intermediary, as long as the required share of power to create such an intermediary does not overcome the decrease in the punishment, since the incumbent will be punished less for her decisions, even when she presents the intermediary with alternatives that are both favoring her interests.

## 2.2 Case Studies

"The nearly universally complacent, unresponsive and often contemptuous policies and positions of the governments produced a nearly universal response: demands for effective citizenship, personal agency and government accountability."<sup>5</sup>

This paper is an attempt to understand what makes some of the regimes survive while others are overthrown during the Arab Spring. There are a few attempts to explain this diversity, though since the time elapsed from the beginning of the Arab Spring is quite short, the hypotheses that have been put forward are not fully developed. We can divide this literature into two categories: type independent (e.g., *authoritarian learning*<sup>6</sup>) and type dependent hypotheses.

The authoritarian learning hypothesis as an example of the theories that attempt to explain the diversity of outcome when faced with the Arab Spring protests argue that authoritarian leaders learn how to handle protests in their countries by observing the reactions in other countries. The fundamental novelty of this hypothesis is that it allows for the authoritarian leaders to have an evolutionary learning process, similar to the one that the society have in protests literature.

In regard with the hypothesis presented in this paper, I argue that the very assumption of the incumbent knowing that her chances for survival increases when she designates or allows for the election to held for the position of the officer somewhat depends on this learning process. To be more explicit, the rationale behind the assumption is that as the authoritarian leaders observe the past and present events in other countries, they *learn* that if there is another body in executive organization that can be utilized to avoid the regime breakdown. But this hypothesis on authoritarian learning by itself does not provide us with sufficient answers. For example, if all autocrats can observe successful methods that can be employed to avoid being overthrown, why some autocrats fail to choose these policies and allow a regime breakdown? If timing or the learning curve of the individual incumbents cannot be effective due to simultaneous processes in the MENA region, then we need to identify some other parameters that may effect the feasibility of such methods under different circumstances.

Type dependent hypotheses, on the other hand, focus on the differentiation of resilience between the republics and the monarchies in the MENA region. Menaldo (2012)

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<sup>5</sup>Anderson (2011), p. 6

<sup>6</sup>Heydemann and Leenders (2011), p. 648

## 2.2 Case Studies

provides the empirical evidence on the relative strength of monarchies in comparison to the authoritarian republics in this region without supporting this evidence with a substantial theory. The *innate structures of the monarchies*<sup>7</sup> hypothesis differentiates the types of authoritarian regimes and hence gets one step closer to defining parameters mentioned in the paragraph above, though it fails to put a finger on the exact mechanism that allows for these differentiated results under different authoritarian regime types. Anderson (2011), on the other hand, goes a little further and argue that this differentiation may be caused by one or multiple of a handful of reasonings. One of these paths are closely related to the argument of this paper. Anderson argues that "Monarchy may be a useful device by which rulers can distance themselves from the failings of their policies, salvaging the regime by dismissing the government." or in other words,

"Authoritarian regimes have different legitimacy formulae, and rulers who can distance themselves from their governments - as is often the case of kings - may have opportunities to respond to popular demands for change that permit regime survival."<sup>8</sup>

Even though Anderson identifies the monarchies advantage as their ability to distance themselves from their government, she does not single out why this ability increases their resilience. Therefore, utilizing the formal model that will be presented in the next section, this paper will attempt to derive a clear reasoning how monarchies are better suited to use blame-shifting due to their mentioned ability, hence take Anderson's argument to the next level.

Moreover, the hypothesis presented in this paper should not be viewed only as an attempt to explain the differences between monarchs and authoritarian republics. This is a more general theory then  $\hat{O}$  monarchs are more resilient than other autocrats  $\hat{O}$ , it can be applied to any part of the world for any time period for the modern states.

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<sup>7</sup>Keyman (2011)

<sup>8</sup>Anderson (2011), p. 8

### 3 Formal Model

To be able to speculate that some authoritarian leaders implement policies to be utilized in times of crisis knowingly and willingly, we need to show that the incumbents have incentives to choose to share their power to create such a mechanism, knowing that the society will also behave accordingly. Moreover, we need to define the regions for parameters in which the incumbents will be better off by utilizing this mechanism, in other words, conditions for such a strategy to be an equilibrium.

#### 3.1 Formal Analysis

This paper will employ a formal model in order to examine the circumstances required for an incumbent of an authoritarian regime to have an incentive to hold elections with the intention of using the institutions created as a result of them as a blame shifting mechanism if need be later on.

Before moving on to the presentation of specifications and the equilibria that are driven from the model, it might be beneficial to define the players, whose definitions will be constant through out the remaining of the paper. The model has two players. The first player is the *incumbent* (I), the head of the state, or in other words the autocrat in power, who will be assumed to have a single interest to protect. In other words, even though this specification does not limit the incumbent to one-man systems, preliminary analysis revealed no additional benefit in including the concerns over other interests, such as the wellbeing of the ruling party or the future position of the military in the system. Therefore as a simplification of the complications that are born out of the classification issues regarding authoritarian regimes, the model will assume that the incumbent, whomever that player represents in a given case, has a stake in the survival of the regime as it is and does not have any additional concerns that conflict with this incentive.

### 3.1 Formal Analysis

The second player is the *society* (S). The word society is chosen on purpose because restricting the second player to a certain group such as elites does not provide a better understanding of the mechanism the model aims to analyze. On the contrary, the nature of the model requires the second player to remain as general as possible, to keep the second player's interests separate from the interests of those who might gain extra utility by filling the offices that might be created by the institutions mentioned.

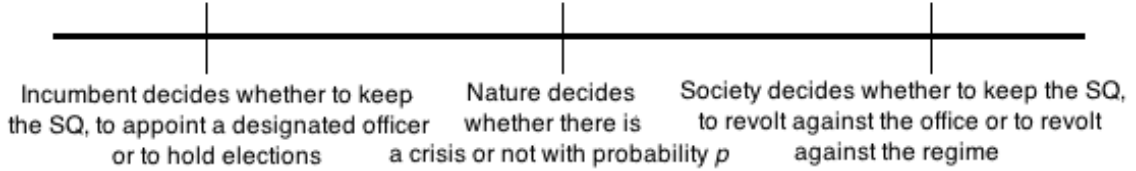


Figure 3.1: Sequence of Events

The model is a two stage extensive form game with perfect and complete information between the incumbent ( $I$ ) and the society ( $S$ ). The sequence of events is as follows: in  $t_0$ , the incumbent, given that the country does not hold elections at that moment, has three choices, she can decide whether to create the necessary institutions and assign someone to the post, she can allow elections and let the winner to take the post created or she can just keep the status quo as it is. In  $t_1$ , nature determines whether a crisis takes place or not with probability  $p$ . If the crisis does not actualize the status quo is preserved, whereas if it takes place then in  $t_2$ , the society is faced with three alternatives. They can revolt against the office, given that it has been created by the incumbent in  $t_0$ , and take down whomever took the post with a probability that depends on the nature of the institution that created the office, they can revolt against the regime, therefore the incumbent, with a probability again depends on the action taken by the incumbent in period  $t_0$  or they can decide to keep the status quo as it is.

Based on this specification and the sequence of the game there are eight different outcomes of the model. The utility outcomes for each player is as shown in *Figure 3.2* where  $\beta_{1,2,3}$  is the value the incumbent gets when the status quo is preserved under each alternative respectively, whereas the  $\alpha_{1,2,3}$  is the utility the society gets if and when the alternative they chose succeeds<sup>9</sup>,  $c_{1,2,3}$  are the costs of each alternative for the society and correspond to  $\alpha_{1,2,3}$ .<sup>10</sup>, and  $\sigma_{2,3}$  are the utilities the incumbent receives if the society

<sup>9</sup>For simplicity,  $\alpha_1 = 0$ , meaning that when society choose to keep the status quo as it is they receive no utility in return. Moreover, since this alternative implies no active participation on behalf of the society it succeeds automatically.

<sup>10</sup>Similarly,  $c_1 = 0$ , hence the model assumes that keeping status quo do not have a cost for the society. It is important to notice that these utilities are not loss functions for the outcome the players face

### 3.1 Formal Analysis

revolts against the officer and succeeds for saving the regime from being overthrown, for designated and elected officers respectively.

Finally,  $\lambda_{1,2,3}$  are the probabilities for the action taken by the society *not* to succeed.  $\lambda$ , therefore, represents the the bearing of the action taken by the incumbent on the *possibility* of a regime (or officer) removal. Theoretically it consists of two parts: the effect of the incumbent's decision on the blame shifting opportunity in case of an external crisis and the effect on incumbent's consolidation of power,  $i_{1,2,3}$  and  $k_{1,2,3}$  respectively. These two parts of the function are combined under  $\lambda$  is because for each alternative available to the incumbent, she necessarily chooses a pair of  $i_j$  and  $k_j$ , therefore only the combined effect of  $i$  and  $k$  are relevant to the decision making process of the incumbent. This specification of the incumbent's utility outcomes does not reduct the functionality of the effect of the choice she makes, on the contrary, the formulation of the research question based on the work of Oexl and Grossman (2011) focus on the comparison of the magnitude of both  $i$  and  $k$  and predicts that the incumbent's decision to be based on this combined effect. In other words, the incumbent is not expected to decide based on only the expected advantage of creating a blame shifting mechanism, she would also consider the cost of this mechanism in terms of the loss of consolidation of her power and the regime and decide accordingly.

All parameters used in the model are nonnegative and though there are no defined intervals for each, based on the theoretical background of the game, model is constructed on the following assumptions:

$$\beta_1 > \beta_2 > \beta_3 \tag{3.1}$$

$$\alpha_1 = 0 > \alpha_2 > \alpha_3 \tag{3.2}$$

$$c_1 = 0 > c_2 > c_3 \tag{3.3}$$

The reason behind (3.1) is relatively straightforward. The incumbent, given that she is the autocrat, assumed to have an incentive to preserve the power she has. To create an office that can be blamed in case of a crisis requires her to transfer a portion of the authority she has to this newly found institution even if it is mostly a window dressing in terms of responsibility. Therefore, she gets the highest utility when she keeps the regime as it is. Secondly, the model assumes that designating an officer to this post would mean less of a power loss for the incumbent than allowing for elections to be hold. Hence the utility of creating an institution in which the incumbent assign the officer provides a higher utility for the incumbent than allowing the officer to be elected

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given the strategies each follow, instead  $c$  only denotes the *cost of the action* taken by the society and therefore does not represent the possible discontent for the existing institutions and the effect of the external crisis.



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by the constituents.<sup>11</sup>

The model also assumes that the society prefers to take down the authoritarian regime to pushing for a change of the officer, and both to keeping the status quo, given that an external crisis takes place (3.2), but the cost of revolting against the regime is higher than revolting against the officer in duty (3.3).

#### 3.1.1 Society

Based on this specifications of the game, society would choose to revolt against the office instead of the regime, and hence the incumbent herself, if and only if

$$[1 - \lambda_3] \alpha_2 - c_2 \geq 0$$

$$\alpha_2 \geq \frac{c_2}{[1 - \lambda_3]} \quad (3.4)$$

and

$$[1 - \lambda_3] \alpha_2 - c_2 \geq [1 - \lambda_3] \alpha_3 - c_3$$

$$\alpha_2 - \alpha_3 \geq \frac{c_2 - c_3}{1 - \lambda_3} \quad (3.5)$$

when the incumbent chose to allow for elections in  $t_0$ , where  $\alpha_2 - \alpha_3$  is the difference between the utilities the society gets from revolting against the elected officer and the regime itself, and  $c_2 - c_3$  is the difference of the costs of these two alternatives which is normalized by the probability of succeeding at undertaking the officer,  $1 - \lambda_3$  given that the officer is elected.

Similarly, the society would choose to revolt against the office if and only if

$$[1 - \lambda_2] \alpha_2 - c_2 \geq 0$$

$$\alpha_2 \geq \frac{c_2}{[1 - \lambda_2]} \quad (3.6)$$

and

$$[1 - \lambda_2] \alpha_2 - c_2 \geq [1 - \lambda_2] \alpha_3 - c_3$$

$$\alpha_2 - \alpha_3 \geq \frac{c_2 - c_3}{1 - \lambda_2} \quad (3.7)$$

when the incumbent chose to designate an officer to the post in  $t_0$ , where the only

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<sup>11</sup>It is important to note that though a designated officer also allows for the blame shifting mechanism, an elected officer is assumed to have a higher legitimacy in the eyes of the society, and therefore  $i_1 < i_2 < i_3$ . On the other hand, since the power loss is higher in case of an elected officer, the consolidation of power decreases when elections are allowed, therefore the loss of power also increases,  $k_1 < k_2 < k_3$ .

### 3.1 Formal Analysis

difference from the previous case is that the costs are normalized by the probability of success against a designated officer,  $1 - \lambda_2$ .

Finally, for the society would choose to revolt against the regime when the incumbent decided to preserve the existing system as it is in  $t_0$  if and only if

$$[1 - \lambda_1] \alpha_3 - c_3 \geq 0$$

$$\alpha_3 \geq \frac{c_3}{[1 - \lambda_1]} \quad (3.8)$$

meaning that the cost of revolting against the regime should be lesser or equal to the expected benefit of the action.

#### 3.1.2 Incumbent - Election

Given these requirements for the mentioned preferences of the society are met, namely choosing to revolt against the office instead of the regime when the incumbent decided to assign an appointed officer or to allow the elections to be held for this purpose, and to revolt against the regime if the incumbent decides to preserve the status quo in period  $t_0$ , the incumbent would prefer to implement the necessary institutions for an officer to be elected with the incentive of creating a blame shifting if and when an external crisis takes place knowing that the society will choose to revolt against the office if and only if the following requirements are fulfilled.

Designated vs. Elected:

$$p \beta_2 + (1 - p) [\lambda_2 \beta_2 + (1 - \lambda_2) \sigma_2] \leq p \beta_3 + (1 - p) [\lambda_3 \beta_3 + (1 - \lambda_3) \sigma_3]$$

$$(\beta_2 - \beta_3) \leq \frac{(1 - p) [\lambda_3 (\beta_3 - \sigma_3) - \lambda_2 (\beta_2 - \sigma_2) - (\sigma_3 - \sigma_2)]}{p} \quad (3.9)$$

which means that the expected difference of utilities of the case where there is no crisis,  $(\beta_2 - \beta_3)$ , should be lesser or equal to the expected benefit of creating an office that will be revolted against and be taken down with respective probabilities instead of a possible revolt against the regime itself and risking the regime to be overthrown if a crisis actualizes,  $[\lambda_3 (\beta_3 - \sigma_3) - \lambda_2 (\beta_2 - \sigma_2)]$ , minus the difference of the utility the incumbent would get from getting away with an officer change instead of a possible regime breakdown under the alternatives of a designated officer and an elected officer,  $(\sigma_3 - \sigma_2)$ .

### 3.1 Formal Analysis

None vs. Elected:

$$p \beta_1 + (1 - p) (\lambda_1 \beta_1) \leq p \beta_3 + (1 - p) [\lambda_3 \beta_3 + (1 - \lambda_3) \sigma_3]$$

$$\lambda_3 \beta_3 - \lambda_1 \beta_1 \geq \sigma_3 (1 - \lambda_3) (p + 1) - p [\beta_3 (1 - \lambda_3) - \beta_1 (1 - \lambda_1)]$$

$$\lambda_3 \beta_3 - \lambda_1 \beta_1 \geq \sigma_3 - \sigma_3 \lambda_3 + p \sigma_3 (1 - \lambda_3) - p [\beta_3 (1 - \lambda_3) - \beta_1 (1 - \lambda_1)]$$

$$(\lambda_3 \beta_3 - \lambda_1 \beta_1) \geq \sigma_3 (1 - \lambda_3) - p [(1 - \lambda_3) (\beta_3 - \sigma_3) - \beta_1 (1 - \lambda_1)] \quad (3.10)$$

which means that the difference between the utilities that the incumbent would get under an unsuccessful revolt for the cases in which the incumbent chose to allow for elections to be hold and the incumbent preserved the status quo in period  $t_0$ ,  $(\lambda_3 \beta_3 - \lambda_1 \beta_1)$ , should be bigger or equal to the utility the incumbent would get from the scenario in which the society successfully changes the elected officer,  $[\sigma_3 (1 - \lambda_3)]$ , minus the the difference between the extra utility loss if the society succeeds in revolting against the regime instead of the office when elections are allowed,  $[(1 - \lambda_3) (\beta_3 - \sigma_3)]$ , and the utility loss from a successful revolt against the regime when no institution is implemented,  $[\beta_1 (1 - \lambda_1)]$ , in period  $t_0$  for the incumbent if and when an external crisis occurs.

#### 3.1.3 Incumbent - Designated

Given the same requirements for the mentioned preferences of the society are met, the incumbent would prefer to assign a designated officer instead of allowing an election of one, if and only if the following criteria is met.

Designated vs. Elected:

$$p \beta_2 + (1 - p) [\lambda_2 \beta_2 + (1 - \lambda_2) \sigma_2] \geq p \beta_3 + (1 - p) [\lambda_3 \beta_3 + (1 - \lambda_3) \sigma_3]$$

$$(\beta_2 - \beta_3) \geq \frac{(1 - p) [\lambda_3 (\beta_3 - \sigma_3) - \lambda_2 (\beta_2 - \sigma_2) - (\sigma_3 - \sigma_2)]}{p} \quad (3.11)$$

which frankly gives us the cases in which the requirements explained for the first case (3.9) under the criteria for the incumbent to choose to allow elections does not hold.

None vs. Designated:

$$p \beta_1 + (1 - p) (\lambda_1 \beta_1) \leq p \beta_2 + (1 - p) [\lambda_2 \beta_2 + (1 - \lambda_2) \sigma_2]$$

$$(\lambda_2 \beta_2 - \lambda_1 \beta_1) \geq \sigma_2 (1 - \lambda_2) - p [(\beta_2 - \sigma_2) (1 - \lambda_2) - \beta_1 (1 - \lambda_1)] \quad (3.12)$$

### 3.2 Theorems

which means that for the incumbent to choose to create the necessary institutions to assign an officer, considering that she will have a blame shifting mechanism in period  $t_3$  if an external crisis takes place in period  $t_2$ , the requirements specified in (3.10) for the incumbent to have the incentive to allow for elections for the officer to be chosen by the constituents have to hold this time with the regarding parameters of the alternative *designate*.

### 3.2 Theorems

**Theorem 1** If the inequalities specified in (3.4), (3.5), (3.6), (3.7), (3.8), (3.9) and (3.10) holds, then the following strategies constitute a Subgame Perfect Nash Equilibrium:

$$S_I(\epsilon) = \{ Election \}$$

$$S_S(h) = \begin{cases} Office & \text{when } h = \{Election, Designated\} \\ Regime & \text{when } h = \{None\} \end{cases}$$

In this equilibrium, the incumbent chooses to allow for the elections to be hold for the selection of the officer, knowing that the society will choose to revolt against the office if and when an external crisis occurs. In other words, if the incumbent knows that the blame shifting mechanism would work, given the possibility of a crisis taking place, she prefers to share her power with the office through elections.

**Theorem 2** If the inequalities specified in (3.4), (3.5), (3.6), (3.7), (3.8), (3.11) and (3.12) holds, then the following strategies constitute a Subgame Perfect Nash Equilibrium:

$$S_I(\epsilon) = \{ Designated \}$$

$$S_S(h) = \begin{cases} Office & \text{when } h = \{Election, Designated\} \\ Regime & \text{when } h = \{None\} \end{cases}$$

In this equilibrium, the incumbent chooses to assign a designated officer, knowing that the society will choose to revolt against the office if and when an external crisis occurs. Therefore, similar to the equilibrium presented in *Theorem 1*, the incumbent, aware of the society's preferences due to perfect information assumption, have an incentive to create a blame-shifting mechanism, but since the inequality in (3.10) does

### 3.3 Comparative Statics

not hold, she prefers to assign the officer instead of allowing for the constituents to elect their candidate into the office.

Theorems 1 and 2 show us that given the necessary conditions, the incumbent of an authoritarian regime has the incentive to create seemingly more democratic institutions regardless of the other possible explanations provided by the previous research. Moreover, the significant contrast between Theorem 1 and 2 provides the necessary theoretical framework for further exploration of why some autocrats choose to assign the officers whereas others hold authoritarian elections.

### 3.3 Comparative Statics

Due to the number of parameters required to model the strategic interaction between the incumbent and the society in this context, visualizing the equilibria presented in the previous chapter is not a trivial matter. Therefore, this section will present how the incumbent's preferences are effected by the change in some of the crucial parameters to explain the dynamics of the model more clearly.

In Figure 4.1, the shadowed areas show the values of  $p$  for which the incumbent would prefer to hold elections instead of preserving the *status quo* in which no such institution exists.

Similarly, in Figure 4.2, the shadowed areas show the values of  $p$  for which the incumbent would prefer to hold elections instead of creating an institution in which the incumbent herself would designate an officer to create the blame shifting opportunity in case of a future external crisis.

Both Figure 4.1 and 4.2 show us that as the probability of an external crisis increases, the incentives of the incumbent to hold elections increases. This result is inline with the argument presented in this paper, underlying that the blame shifting mechanism can be used by incumbents who predicts things to go bad in the future even though it means trading off a portion of their power in return.

Finally, in Figure 4.3 and Figure 4.4, the shadowed areas show the values of  $\lambda_2$  and  $\lambda_3$ , respectively, for which the incumbent would prefer to hold elections instead of creating an institution in which the incumbent herself would designate an officer.

### 3.3 *Comparative Statics*

The incentives for the incumbent to hold elections decrease as the probability of the society failing on their revolt against the regime when the incumbent creates the institution in which she designates the officer increases in contrast to the case in which the probability of failure against the regime when the incumbent allows for the election of the officer. Both results are inline with the expectations of the argument since keeping the other parameters constant, increasing the success rate of one alternative implicitly increases the incentive of the agent to choose that alternative, and evident from the equilibrium conditions, the incumbent chooses to hold elections if and only if the payoffs from this alternative supersedes the cost of not choosing all the other alternatives.

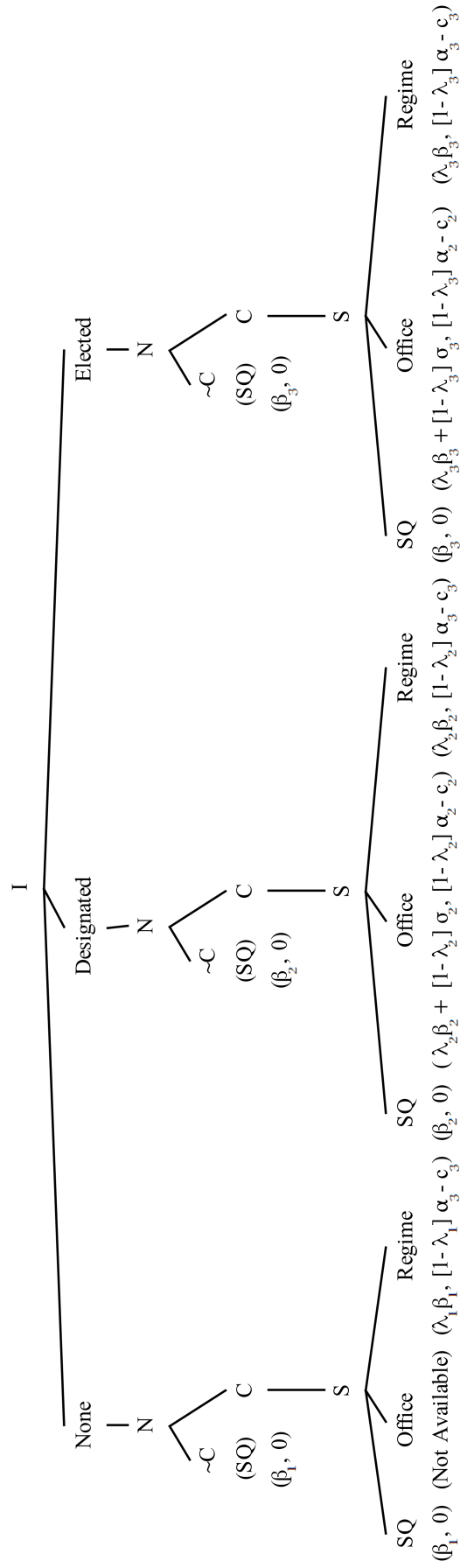


Figure 3.2: Game Tree

3.3 Comparative Statics

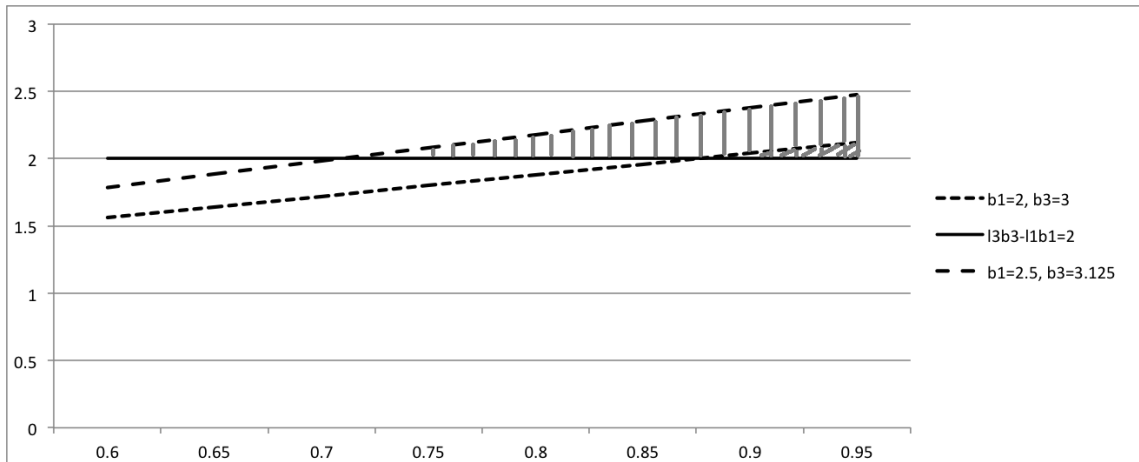


Figure 3.3: Incumbent's preferences for *elections* vs. *none* dependent on  $p$

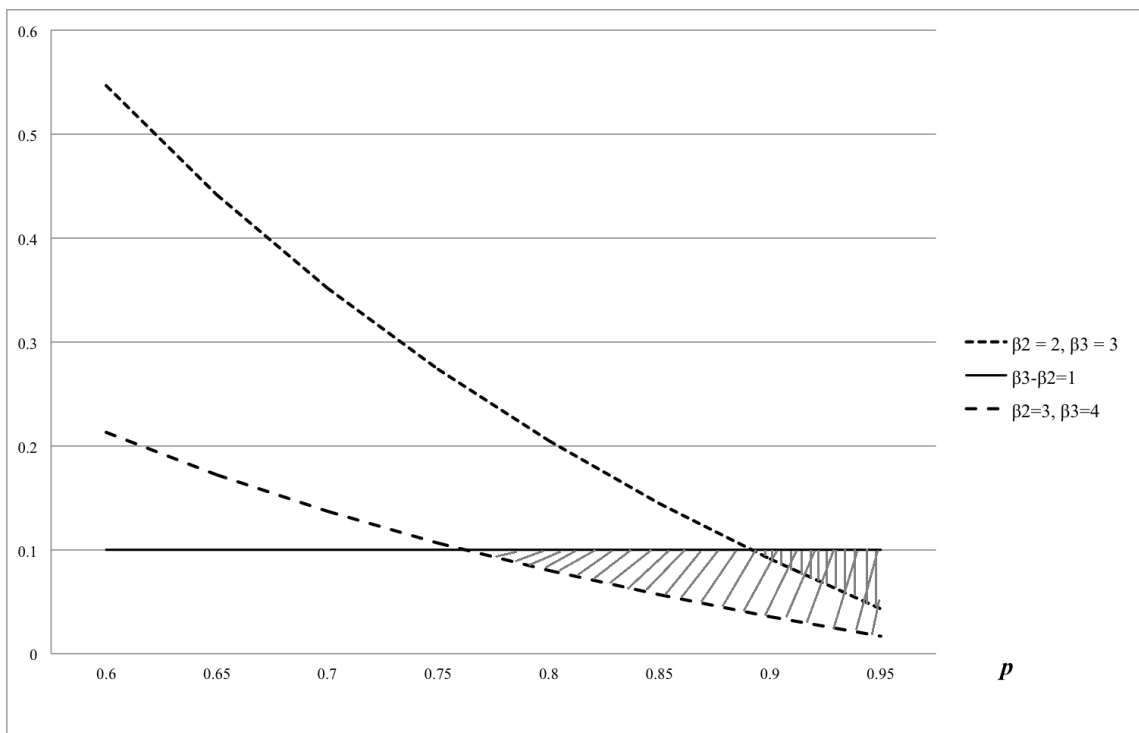


Figure 3.4: Incumbent's preferences for *elections* vs. *designated* dependent on  $p$



3.3 Comparative Statics

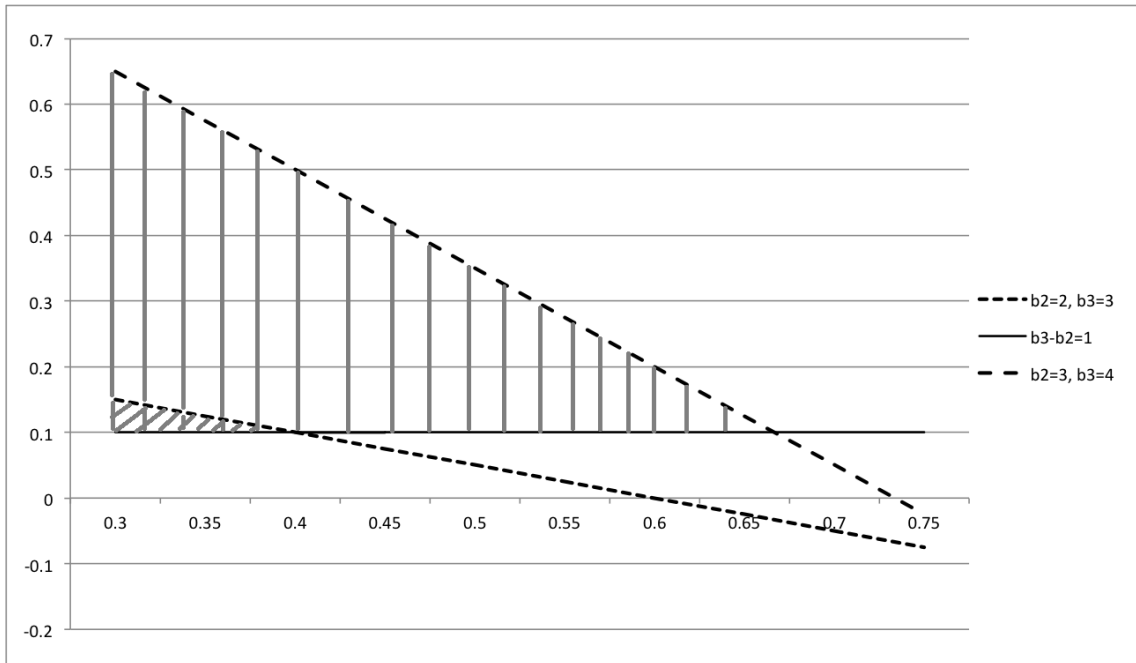


Figure 3.5: Incumbent's preferences for *elections* vs. *designated* dependent on  $\lambda_2$

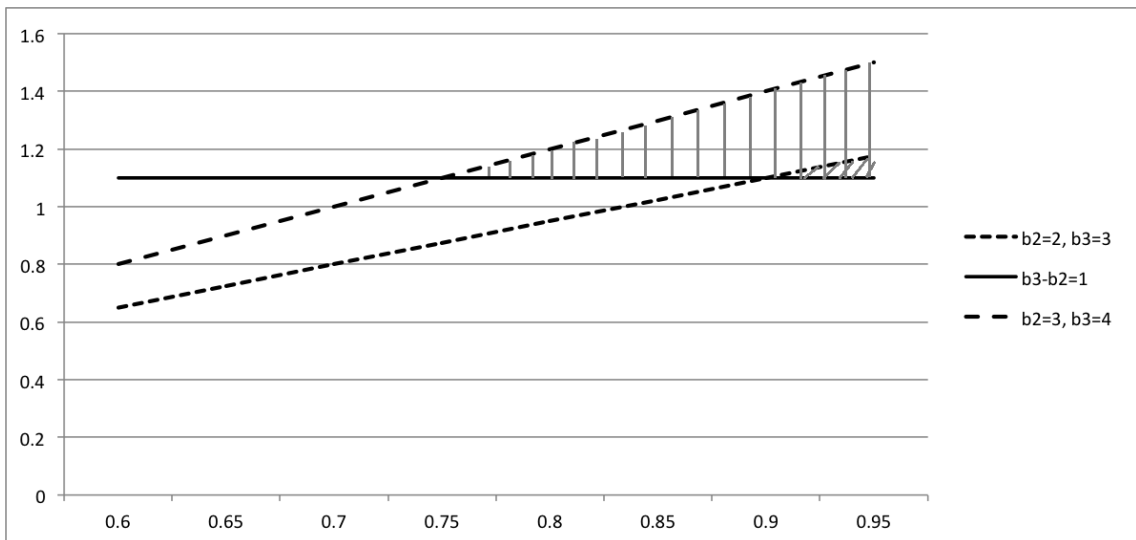


Figure 3.6: Incumbent's preferences for *elections* vs. *designated* dependent on  $\lambda_3$

#### 4 Case Studies

Chanting, the "people want the fall of the government" and calling for the departure of Prime Minister Abdelilah Benkirane, the activists marched through the colonial-era streets of downtown Rabat in a light rain.<sup>12</sup>

On October 6th, Los Angeles Times among many other news sources published a piece on the widespread demonstrations in Jordan. The article argued that the demonstrators, led by the Muslim Brotherhood, demanded democratic reforms and asked for a more representative legislature, yet "they pointedly did not demand the end of the monarchy, which retains considerable support here."<sup>13</sup> Similarly, Morocco, the next door neighbor of the Arab Spring's ground zero, managed to survive without encountering a major revolt against its regime. Some argue that the reason for King Mohammed VI's survival was also due to his quick response in terms of reform, a new constitution, and his call for early elections.<sup>14</sup>

Although regimes in Morocco and Jordan survived the turmoil of the Arab Spring relatively unharmed, several countries across the MENA region were not as lucky as they were. Starting with the self-immolation of Muhammed al-Bou'azizi in Tunisia in December 2010, rulers in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen have been forced from power to date and the regime in Syria is still battling a fierce civil war against the public opposition.

Consequently, facing this differentiation in the survival abilities of Arab states, the key question becomes why some authoritarian countries have higher resilience when tested with public uprisings whereas some countries do not? In other words, is there an institutional mechanism that enables some countries to sail relatively smoothly through the turmoil?

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<sup>12</sup>By Paul Schemm, Associated Press, March 31, 2013

<sup>13</sup><http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-jordan-protest-20121006,0,281838.story>

<sup>14</sup><http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2012/jul/05/how-morocco-dodged-arab-spring/>

#### 4.1 Case Selection

To show that there exists such a mechanism, based on the results derived from the formal model presented in the previous section, we will now turn to four cases of Arab Spring, via which the existence as well as the real policy effectiveness of the blame shifting mechanism will be demonstrated.

What should be kept in mind throughout these case studies is the fact that what is attempted is not to follow the decision making processes that is presented in the formal model in empirical cases. On the contrary, the aim of these case studies is to demonstrate that blame-shifting do in fact help authoritarian regimes to survive. Therefore, at least in the span of this M.A. thesis, I do not discuss the incentives of the autocrats to create these institutions in the first place, I merely aim to show that, once these institutions are created, they work.

#### 4.1 Case Selection

The popular uprisings starting in late December 2010, namely the Arab Spring, in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region affected a large number of polities around the globe directly or indirectly. But most of all, the uprisings showed us that a region that have been thought to be condemned to autocracies for the foreseeable future<sup>15</sup> are also prone to change.

Nevertheless, the change we observed during and after the Arab Spring is homogenous neither in nature nor in timing across the region. If anything, the occurrence of the revolutions that we aggregately name as Arab Spring were similar to a tide that has been felt differently in different shores depending on the structure of the shore itself. What has started as a protest in the less-developed interior region of Tunisia, has also presented itself as massive demonstrations in the capital of Egypt.<sup>16</sup>

Despite these disparities between cases, a pattern can also be recognized within the whole picture. In other words, the very fact that some countries experienced a relatively easier period in contrast to countries such as Libya, Tunisia and Egypt that went through a intense turmoil, present us with a puzzle of pattern. More specifically put, we need to answer the questions why do some of the regimes in MENA region experienced a less destructive process and is there a theoretical explanation behind this empirical

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<sup>15</sup>Miller et al. (2012), p. 35

<sup>16</sup>Miller et al. (2012), p. 71

#### 4.1 Case Selection

observation?

Since, due to the unfortunate inability of social sciences to create experiments, we cannot observe the same country with different values of a given parameter *ceteris paribus*, we need to find the cases where the initial conditions are similar as much as possible except our independent variable. For this purpose, the cases chosen, Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco and Jordan, to demonstrate the equilibria under different parameters are all non-oil exporters and all four of them are founded as independent countries after an era of colonialism.

It is important for these countries to be non-rentier states, because natural resources, and the wealth that they bring, under the command of the incumbent may alter the incentives of both the societies and the autocrats of the countries.<sup>17</sup> We can see an example of such alteration in the attempt of Muammar Gaddafi to distribute a large amount of money to each citizen in order to stop the protests. But more important than this direct redistribution of wealth in times of crisis, there is also the possibility of such a crisis never occurring in the first place due to some mechanism, like in the Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates, other than the one explained in this thesis.

Secondly, colonialism with all its effects on the socio-cultural as well as economic structure of the colonial state, it is important that all of the cases that are examined here are founded around the same time and all experienced the change that has been brought by Western colonialism. In that respect, it is true that not all cases were ruled by the same colonial power, henceforth there maybe differences in the organizational structures of their both economy and societies, but the limitations of the somewhat quasi-experiment of Arab Spring dictates us to allow for such differentiation. Regardless, the creation of the nation myth, the foundation of the state organization and probably the incentives of the elites are shaped by this common experience and therefore the history of colonization levels the points of origin for each of these modern states.

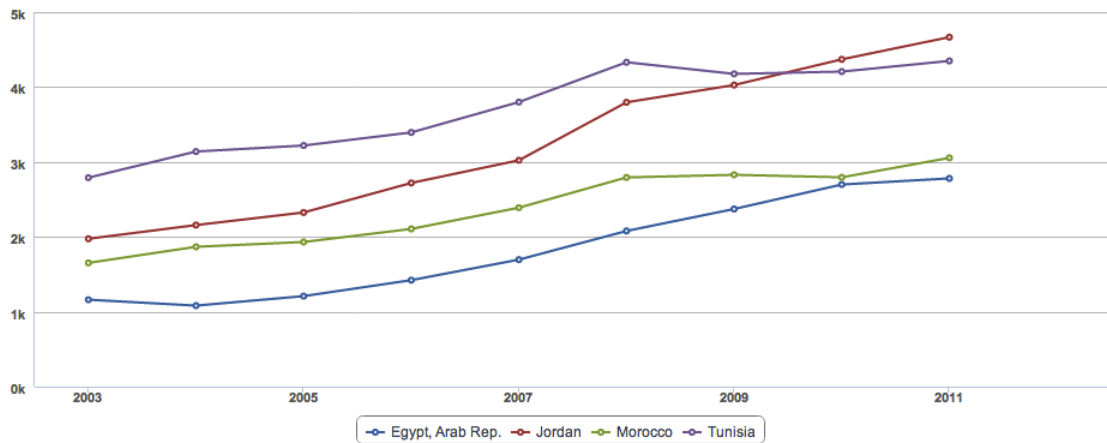
Another important factor for these countries to have a similar baseline is their economic performance in the near past. Since the model is derived to see the affect of an external crisis, hence most probably an internationally effective economic one, it is important, if not crucial, for these countries to have a similar economic trend when such a crisis struck their economy.

As it can be seen in Figure 3.1, the trends in Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt and Jordan are

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<sup>17</sup>Anderson (2011), p. 7

## 4.1 Case Selection



Source: World Development Indicators

Figure 4.1: GDP *per capita* of Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt and Jordan

quite similar up until the protests in 2010.<sup>18</sup> Only after 2010, Egyptian and Tunisian economies take a downturn relative to the economies of Morocco and Jordan. In this regard, it can be said that, for the period prior to the Arab Spring, the economic performances of the chosen countries are relatively similar, hence they were also paralleled in this dimension, too.

In the rest of the paper, first the short history of the countries before the Arab Spring will be presented with special attention on the evolution of their regimes throughout time. Secondly, an analysis of the mentioned features of these regimes will be connected with the conclusions derived from the model and an attempt at a possible explanation for the diversity of outcomes will be derived.

### 4.1.1 Tunisia

"Had Ben Ali been intelligent, he would have today been a hero in Tunisia. All he had to do was to win no more than 70 per cent of the vote."<sup>19</sup>

"I do not support him. I vote for him; that is different. The other day ... one of my friends went to the bank to apply for a loan. He was asked for his voting card; and you want us to have [political] choice."<sup>20</sup>

Tunisia was not the most likely ground zero for public protests that will trigger a domino effect through out the MENA region. It performed strongly on economic front, it had a

<sup>18</sup><http://databank.worldbank.org/data/views/reports/tableview.aspx?isshared=true&ispopular=seriespid=2>

<sup>19</sup>Al-Ghannushi's interview with the author, London, 20 November 1999.(Anderson (1999))

<sup>20</sup>(Anderson (1999), p.14)

#### 4.1 Case Selection

large middle class and it was not ruled by extremist ideologies - it was a secular rule. Yet, through the events that started with the self-immolation of Mohammed al-Bou'azizi, the 23 years rule of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali ended in only 29 days. A rule that has been constructed through patronage networks, internal security forces and a regime that is window-dressed as a presidential democracy throughout the 50 years since Tunisia's independence could not even last a month.

Most of the literature that has been produced after the Arab Spring have focused on how the protest started, where and why they started. Nevertheless, in relation to the central hypothesis of this paper, here, it would be beneficial to examine the regime *before* the Spring and how it evolved through the years that lead to the self-immolation of Mohammed al-Bou'azizi.

Tunisia, since it's independence, had only two presidents: Habib Bourguiba and Zine El Abidine Ben Ali who took the power from Bourguiba with a bloodless coup in 1987. Bourguiba, who has been seen as the founding father of the modern state of Tunisia was replaced with Ben Ali who promised a better economic performance as well as a much more liberal rule.<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately, even though Tunisia performed well economically despite of its lack of natural resources, the liberalization - or the democratization - of the regime never happened. In fact, the ruling party in Tunisia, *Constitutional Democratic Rally* - RCD, under the presidency of Ben Ali, shaped the electoral rules to enhance the control of their rule. The most obvious of these alterations in the already not so democratic regime in Tunisia was the removal of the term limits for the presidency and the extension of the age limit for the office holders under Ben Ali.<sup>22</sup> Examples include, but not limited to, the Constitutional Law of 27 October 1997 by which the president seized the ultimate power to rule by decree via Article 53, blurring the lines between the domains of legislative and executive branches; the Constitutional Law of 1 June 2002 by which the presidency for life is *de facto* re-established instead of total of three terms via Article 39.

Ben Ali did not implemented policies that would enable him to be the president of Tunisia for a longer period only, RCD also *reformed* the constitution to "institutionalize a controlled pluralism that could not challenge the survival of the authoritarian regime."<sup>23</sup> In addition to concentrating the ultimate authority in himself, Ben Ali also made it impossible for the opposition to pose any real challenge even though there were supposedly *democratic* elections in Tunisia.

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<sup>21</sup>Miller et al. (2012), p. 60

<sup>22</sup>al Nour (2011)

<sup>23</sup>Gobe (2009)

4.1 Case Selection

By the Paragraph 3 of the Article 40 of the Tunisian constitution, the presidential candidates are required to obtain the sponsorship of 30 elected officers, a condition that could not be fulfilled by no opposition candidate since the independence of the Tunisia, since there existed a quota for the opposition and no opposition party ever managed to win a city council, the municipal elections in 2000 can be given as an example in which RCD won 195 out of 257 municipalities and shared the power in the remaining 62.<sup>24</sup>

Even before Ben Ali changed the constitution to lengthen his rule as the president in 2002, Nazih Ayubi argued that:

"Given Ben Ali's *rigid singularity*, it is not out of place to speculate that the trappings of power may tempt him not to give up high office as he is supposed to in 2004."<sup>25</sup>

emphasizing how Ben Ali had already been seen as the only authority in Tunisia, a feature that he was not likely to let go to something short than a full-blown public uprising.

Year	Type of Election	Winner	% of Votes Garnered	Seats Subject to Direct Election	Seats Won by RCD	Seats Reserved for Opposition
2010	Municipal	RCD	96	4478	4060	418
2009	Presidential	Ben 'Ali	90	NA	NA	NA
2009	Parliamentary	RCD	85	161	161	53
2005	Municipal	RCD	94	4366	4098	268
2004	Presidential	Ben 'Ali	94	NA	NA	NA
2004	Parliamentary	RCD	87	152	152	37
2000	Municipal	RCD	unknown	4128	3885	243
1999	Presidential	Ben 'Ali	99	NA	NA	NA
1999	Parliamentary	RCD	92	148	148	35

Figure 4.2: Tunisian Election Results, 1999 - 2010<sup>26</sup>

All in all, especially with the creation of the Chambre des Deputes and even with the increase in the number of seats *allocated* to the opposition from 7% to 19%, caused the opposition to become a practical joke. Ben Ali winning 99% of the votes in the

<sup>24</sup>Anderson (1999), p.4

<sup>25</sup>Ayubi (1995)

<sup>26</sup>Miller et al. (2012), p. 67

#### 4.1 Case Selection

presidential elections in 1999 against the two opposition candidates, in addition to the RCD's absolute dominance in the legislative branch of the state, not to mention the president's already dictatorial powers even without the support of the legislature created an excessively singular rule in which no one except Ben Ali could decide or at least approve every single policy on every possible sphere of politics in Tunisia.

##### 4.1.2 Egypt

"In Mubarak's Egypt, the political system *appeared* to have all the devices for a constitutional and democratic system. In practice, all lines of authority ultimately led back to the president."<sup>27</sup>

Hosni Mubarak, the President of Egypt for the last 30 years, ousted from power after only 18 days into the protests as the second Arab ruler forced to cede power after Ben Ali of Tunisia.

Unlike Tunisia, representative institutions and civic organizations had been a part of the Egyptian political life since the 1923 Constitution. Egypt was a constitutional monarchy from 1923 to the Free Officers Revolution in 1952. During that period, even though the king had the ultimate authority, the elected parliament as a decision-making institution was one of the earliest in the region. Since the military coup in 1952, Egypt had four presidents all of whom came from the officer corps. But especially from 1970s onwards Anwar al-Sadat began to liberalize the system. He allowed the opposition to have a presence in parliament and civil society as long as NDP - National Democratic Party - held 2/3 majority, hence the real power. Even though, Mubarak followed the same path in his initial years as the President, especially since 2006, his regime became more and more restrictive on opposition presence in political sphere.<sup>28</sup>

In the parliamentary elections in 2010, out of the 518 seats total, 10 were directly appointed by the President, while 64 seats were reserved for women. Out of the remaining 444 ordinary seats that are contested nation-wide, NDP won 420, reaching a majority of 95%.<sup>30</sup>

Moreover, with his son, Gamal, being prepared for succeeding Mubarak<sup>31</sup> and in his last major round of governor appointments in 2008, 20/28 of the governors having military, intern security or intelligence background, the illusion of democracy is fractured

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<sup>27</sup>Brown and Shahin (2010)

<sup>28</sup>Shehata (2011)

<sup>29</sup>Presidential elections in 2005 are the first contested presidential regimes during Mubarak's rule. Prior elections were in fact referendum on parliament's appointment.

<sup>30</sup>Shehata (2011)

<sup>31</sup><http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/10/10/AR2007101002436.html>



#### 4.1 Case Selection

Year	Election	NDP
1987	Parliamentary	69.9 %
1987	Presidential	97.1%
1990	Parliamentary	76.7%
1993	Presidential	96.3%
1995	Parliamentary	70%
1999	Presidential	93.8%
2000	Parliamentary	77.8%
2005	Presidential	88.6%
2005	Parliamentary	69.5%

Figure 4.3: Egyptian Elections Results, 1987 - 2005<sup>29</sup>

and the society started to view the whole system as a facade in which the opposition parties as collaborators of the ruling party as they are somehow legitimizing the regime by participating to these elections.

Therefore, in a nutshell, it can be said that, especially towards the end of the Mubarak's rule, once relatively liberal regime in Egypt has turned into a machine in which every decision is made by or with the permission of the President and both the opposition parties and the civil society organizations are incorporated into this system. What is also crucial is the fact that society is also aware that both the executive and the legislative branches of the state is absolutely controlled by the Mubarak and NDP<sup>32</sup>, hence the results are seen as nothing but an extension of the decisions made by the President and his party.

#### 4.1.3 Jordan

"Faithful to its irreversible choice to build a democratic State based on the rule of law, the Kingdom of Morocco resolutely continues the process of consolidating and reinforcing the institutions of a modern State, the fundamentals of which are the principles of participation, pluralism and good governance."<sup>33</sup>

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is founded as a British mandate after the World War I, like many states in the region. Country has been handed over to the Hashemites in

<sup>32</sup>"Republics are nominal democracies, presidents will necessarily 'pretend that people have a voice' by holding elections, whereas with monarchy no one's pretending there's a democracy." It can be said that once a state is a democracy even if for the name's sake, people start to have different expectations from the regime, and they take some rights as given relative to monarchies, in which every small step towards a more liberal regime is seen as an improvements instead of what had to be there in the first place. (Mark Landler and Helene Cooper, NY Times, 24 February 2011 - <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/25/world/middleeast/25diplomacy.html?pagewanted=all>)

<sup>33</sup>The beginning of the introductory part of the new constitution of Morocco. (Benchemsi (2012), p.60)

#### 4.1 Case Selection

1920s. Although the Transjordan area is multi-ethnic region, citizens of the modern Jordan state generally call themselves as Jordanian.<sup>34</sup>

Monarchy in Jordan has only been challenged twice; during mid-50s, Nasserist revolution and during early-70s, Black September, a Palestinian fedayeen backed by Syrian invasion.<sup>35</sup> Since early-70s, the state is governed mainly by *original* Jordanians, while the economy is dominated by the Palestinians, whom total up to half or more of the population. Hence, Jordanians, depending more on the state support, suffered more when the Jordan state had to decrease its support on citizens. In this regard, the protests that are connected to the Arab Spring mainly concentrated on the neoliberal economic policies implemented by the government.<sup>36</sup>

King Abdullah II, as a response to the protests, first approved an aid package to remedy the effects of the policies that are contested by the public. But, the public discontent could not be settled by an aid package, therefore, on February 1st, the King replaced the Prime Minister Rifa'i with Marouf Bakhit, who is well known by the society as a former major general and ambassador to Israel. Moreover, King Abdullah II reformed the the constitution which stated that the parliament to be elected via open contestation and it can override the King's veto with a 2/3 majority - though the King still has the executive authority and appoint the cabinet - to allow for more transparent and fair elections.<sup>37</sup>

##### 4.1.4 Morocco

In Morocco, the ruling family has been recruited and installed to power by the colonial rule.<sup>38</sup> The Alovite dynasty was present in Morocco region since 1666, providing the Moroccan kings a similar legitimacy with the Saudi Arabia royalty. Due to this historic connection of the royal family to the land, it can be argued that for the majority of the population Morocco can not be imagined without its royal family.<sup>39</sup>

When the protests started in other countries in MENA region, King Mohammed IV of Morocco chose to implement constitutional reforms to settle any possible uprisings

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<sup>34</sup>Keyman (2011)

<sup>35</sup>"In parliamentary elections in 1989, the opposition won more than half of the seats in parliament. As a response, the King changed the law to one-man, one-vote system with newly formed electoral districts that benefit the monarchy royalists." In this regard, we can argue that public expressed their discontent for monarchy loyalist governments before but in the absence of an *external crisis*, the King was strong enough to suppress this discontent for almost 15 years. - ([http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/04/13/the\\_implications\\_of\\_jordans\\_new\\_electoral\\_law](http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/04/13/the_implications_of_jordans_new_electoral_law))

<sup>36</sup>Susser (2011)

<sup>37</sup>Miller et al. (2012)

<sup>38</sup>Lucas (2004), p.106

<sup>39</sup>Keyman (2011)

#### 4.2 Analysis on Regime Survival

in his country. In June 2011, he announced constitutional reforms that would transfer some of the executive authority that by then resided in the monarch to the Prime Minister, whom from then on will be selected from the majority party in the parliament. In July 2011, one month after the announcement, reforms were put to referendum and accepted with majority.

Although these reforms seemingly helped to achieve the goal of settling any possible major uprisings, we should not make the mistake to think that Mohammed IV actually transferred his powers to the elected officers. Instead, the King of Morocco still has the power to control the military, security and religious spheres. Moreover, he can still create laws or block the ones that has been passed from the parliament by the *royal decree*.<sup>40</sup>

"As long as the King gives parties a minimum consultive role in the present formation of policy and as long as he is able to keep alive their future hopes of governing, their interests as pressure groups are better served by playing the game than by changing the system."<sup>41</sup>

All in all, it can be said that with their position relatively secured via their role as the foundation of the modern state in the public opinion as well as their religious/divine claims<sup>42</sup>, it was easier for the Kings of Jordan and Morocco to at least look like they agreed to share their authority with other institutions inside the regime mechanism, and they seem to sail rather smoothly, relative to the Presidents of Egypt and Tunisia, through the Arab Spring, perhaps, thanks to this flexibility of their regime.

#### 4.2 Analysis on Regime Survival

"The survival of monarchical regimes is contingent on their institutional flexibility in attentive management of the regime's coalition of supporters and society at large."<sup>43</sup>

"Kings are less frightened than presidents to open political liberalization in the Middle East because the mobilization ... can be accommodated under the existing political system with minimal discontinuities."<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Benchemsı (2012), pp. 58-62

<sup>41</sup>Zartman (1967), p.582

<sup>42</sup>"Both the royal families of Jordan and Morocco claim to be descendants of the Prophet Mohammed."  
(Keyman (2011))

<sup>43</sup>Lucas (2004), p.117

<sup>44</sup>Lucas (2004), p. 113

## 4.2 Analysis on Regime Survival

Personalist regimes evolved slowly from single party governments in Tunisia and Egypt, which allows us to articulate that the personalistic leaders of both countries gained more power and control over all executive, legislative and judicial aspects of the state throughout time. During this process, it is important to note that the leaders of these single parties, running a tight ship both against the rivalries within the party and the potential opponents that may rise to challenge the ruling party, may have been facing a higher cost for dividing their power with another executive body than the kings of Morocco or Jordan.

In this regard, one way of looking at the process of non-liberalization for Egypt and Tunisia<sup>45</sup> is the necessity of being ever more powerful and in control of the state organization on the Mubarak's and Ben Ali's parts. Absence of a relatively legitimate ground for a dictatorship, unlike the myth of divine authority bestowed upon the Mohammed of Morocco and Abdullah II of Jordan, must have it's effect on the strategic calculations of these two autocrats.

More specifically, in the language of the model presented in the previous chapter,  $\beta_1$ , or the utility of retaining the whole power of the dictatorship in himself may outweigh the expected value of creating an institution that can be used to shift the blame in case of a crisis by sharing the power the incumbent has. Therefore, it can be said that the circumstances that has been realized by the structural features of these one-party regimes violated the necessary and sufficient conditions that are required for the game to reach the equilibria derived in the previous chapter.

It is important to emphasize that these countries, Tunisia and Egypt, according to the assumptions made in the model, did not experienced a regime breakdown not because the autocrats in those countries did not know that they have an option to create such a mechanism and use it once the protests started. On the contrary, the incumbents of the regimes in Egypt and Tunisia, unlike the kings of Morocco and Jordan, did not preferred to create those institutions given *the ratio of the expected utilities of each possible action* and the *probability of a crisis taking place*.

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<sup>45</sup>Tunisia and Egypt are classified as *sultanistic* regimes in some of the previous literature, in the context that a sultanistic regime arise "when a national leader expands his personal power at the expense of formal institutions." (<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67694/jack-a-goldstone/understanding-the-revolutions-of-2011>)

## 4.2 Analysis on Regime Survival

"The cautious, muted nature of the protests and movements in the MENA monarchies is telling. In Jordan, protestors have called for some reforms, but not the overthrow of King Abdullah's regime. In Morocco, discontent has been channeled into a political movement based on "transformation without violence" and a new constitution, approved by a public referendum, which may augur greater liberalization."<sup>46</sup>

On the other hand, the kings of Morocco and Jordan, again in the language of the model presented, faced different values for these parameters. The placement of the *king* in the structure of the state organization allowed these autocrats to appear more impartial relative to the personalistic incumbents in Egypt and Tunisia. Whereas Ben Ali and Mubarak had to face, and moreover silence, the dissidence caused by their hold on power, King Mohammed and King Abdullah II could allow the mentioned institutions to be established without neither loss of face nor real power.<sup>47</sup>

Their position in the state structure as a higher authority, in contrast to incumbents' struggle with daily politics in Egypt and Tunisia, provided them the luxury to implement policies that would allow them to utilize the blame shifting mechanism in times of crisis by decreasing the gap between the utility of being in power alone and sharing the power with an officer that is either designated or elected as a part of the executive branch of the state.

The important distinction, then, is the affect of the position of the incumbent relative to the overall internal political system of a given country and the degree that the incumbent is flexible to share, or appear to be sharing, a portion of her power. In that respect, it can be argued that the kings in Morocco and Jordan were able to allow for such an institution to be created because it was feasible for them to choose these actions, considering the response of the society and the probability of an external crisis, whereas for the incumbents in Egypt and Tunisia, the power relations in their own political systems deterred them from resorting to this mechanism in the first place by altering the payoffs of equilibrium paths relative to the ones faced by the Morocco and Jordan's kings.

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<sup>46</sup>Menaldo (2012), p. 708

<sup>47</sup>"...whereas monarchies tend to be 'part of their country's DNA.'" (Alan Greenblatt, NPR) - <http://www.npr.org/2011/11/10/142218146/in-arab-states-its-good-to-be-the-king>

## 5 Conclusion

The self-immolation of Mohammed al-Bou'azizi set events into motion that affected millions of people, directly in MENA region and indirectly in other parts of the world. What is important in all this turmoil, for this paper's purpose, is the fact that the regime type that believed to be permanent in that region showed a major weakness in the face of public dissent.

One problem with scholarly work on authoritarian institutions is, as a scholar who normatively believe in the merits of democracy, the threat of producing a guideline for autocratic survival. As Gandhi and Lust-Okar (2009) also argued, this paper is not written to guide autocratic leaders to make their rule more resilient. On the contrary, I strongly believe political science literature should focus more on authoritarian tactics for survival to understand what makes these regimes persist not only in the Middle East and North Africa region but also in the rest of the world.

It is important to note that the model presented here does not claim to be the ultimate theory on regime survival, instead it creates an analytical framework via the formal model to better understand a mechanism that may be seen quite intuitive to some social scientist. To explain the mechanism that is depicted in the model more clearly, and therefore draw a better picture, four cases has been chosen.

The main point, that is supported via these four cases, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan and Morocco, is that an authoritarian regime can survive public discontent even if it's a movement strong enough to affect multiple countries through a short span of time, if the regime has the institutions that are required to shift the blame of the conditions that led to the uprisings to another officer, in my cases a prime minister.

The model shows us that there exists conditions that provide the necessary incentives to the incumbent (*authoritarian ruler*) to implement such a mechanism as well as the society to uprising against that institution instead of the regime itself, therefore to validate the choice made by the incumbent.

Empirically, in this paper we have shown that whereas in Egypt and Tunisia, the incumbents, due to the conditions that affected their incentives chose not to utilize this strategy, whereas in Morocco and Jordan, the kings were faced with different values for the parameters, hence they ended up in a more beneficial equilibrium for their regime. My explanation for this differentiation in end-game results is the difference in the ratio of parameters for the utility the incumbent get when they keep the power intact and be the only authority and for the utility they get when they share the power, either through designation or election.

As it is argued in section 4.2, this difference does not result from the incumbents' inability to see the alternatives. On the contrary, by assumption, each authoritarian leader knows such a possibility exists. The fact that leads to some incumbents to not be able to utilize this mechanism is the fact that they are better off, given the probability of the crisis, the utility they lose if they get overthrown, the utility they get if they share the power and the utility if they remain the sole authority, by not initializing such a mechanism due to the innate structure of their regimes.

One point for the political science scholars may be further inquiry on these innate structures. If we can understand how these features that lead to more resilient authoritarian regimes through this mechanism are sustained, we can have a better understanding of the factors that still allow for autocracies to exist in today's world.

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