

Executive Summary

This report focuses on the relationship between social networks and electoral politics, emphasizing that the organization of social networks plays a large role in shaping electoral behavior. Instead of viewing elections as one-to-one exchanges of votes (present or future) for goods, we must understand them as one of many exchanges made within a web of relationships determined by social networks and communal social obligations. Development specialists and policymakers too often emphasize the role of *political* actors and institutions when it comes to programming across the electoral cycle, overlooking the fact that social networks influence the process. Social and political spheres are intricately linked.

This report explores how social networks influence political competition across the electoral cycle primarily through evaluating electoral process in the Arab world (emphasis on Egypt, Jordan, Libya, and Tunisia) under authoritarian and transitional regimes. As social networks shape elections, elections subsequently influence social arrangements. Although this report draws examples from the Arab world, the confluence of political and social realms is also prevalent in Western countries.

Societal Organization and Social Networks

Social networks may be based on kith-and-kin relations (family and tribe), religious connections, geographical localities as well as economic ties. Organization of social networks can be defined based on three characteristics: breadth, the number of connects an individual may have; density, the extent to which individuals engage with others; and hierarchy, the role that authority plays in these connections. The nature of networks shapes the relationship between individuals and political elites, and ultimately combines with political institutions to influence electoral behavior. Individuals' assessments of candidates are shaped by the obligation to choose a member of their own community, and the political candidate also holds an expectation of support from members of their social network.

Stakes of Elections in the Arab World

In order to understand how social networks shape elections, this report looks at the stakes involved in elections in the Arab world. In looking at both the supply side constraints as well as the demand side incentives, the report finds that legislatures are generally weak in the Arab world under both authoritarian and transitional regimes and that state resources is the most important stake in the legislative elections. As a result, legislators do not make major decisions affecting economic growth, foreign policy or major social conditions as they generally use their positions to provide services (selective goods), as well as provide constituents privileged access to state resources. Through distributing state resources, representatives take into account social relations as well as political

support. As individuals are more inclined to respond to friends, family and others in their social network than they are to strangers, as well as value the maintenance of social status of one's own network, social networks play a major role in determining who runs in elections and how candidates campaign

Shaping Electoral Institutions

Social networks influence the design and strength of political parties and electoral rules. Political elites have little incentive to develop political parties when they can rely on mobilizing support from their social networks. Public support for and trust in political parties is weak as a result of authoritarianism and its connection to personal and social relations. Political elites recognize that strong social networks result in political support and hence, they seek electoral rules that magnify their strength. For instance, elites in areas with strong social networks prefer independent constituencies and majoritarian electoral rules, whereas elites in areas with weak social networks seek PR rules, party lists and large districts. The result is in areas with diverse social networks there is competition over electoral rules and strong incentives for mixed or parallel systems.

Who Runs and How/Who Votes and Why

Access to resources and prestige are major incentives for candidates to run in elections, especially in both authoritarian and transitional regimes. Policymaking is less of an incentive, as much of the public focuses on services and identity. Citizens vote for candidates based on the extent of their social connection to them, as well as to what extent they will meet their needs. There is a sense of obligation and duty to vote for a candidate if they are in one's social network or if they represent one's group identity. As a result, citizens are generally uninformed about the political platforms, and political candidates have few incentives to develop and provide such information. In areas where social ties are weak, candidates have a difficult time mobilizing voters, because ties between citizens and representatives are weak, whereas in areas where social ties are strong, candidates are more able to mobilize voters through ties within the community. Furthermore, social networks influence who wins elections and the variation in margins of victory. Generally, large margins of victory are possible in areas where social networks are strong, and narrow margins of victory often lead to post-election violence.

This yields three overarching conclusions: First, elections are not always simply 'political' contests over resources and policies. When engaging in elections, people may be engaging in a social act with political implications as well as just a political decision informed by social circumstances. Second, political institutions are not the only structures shaping electoral behavior, as social interactions and networks play a large role in shaping electoral behavior. Finally, elections have 'multiple meanings', and citizens in the same country engage in very different exercises depending on local social arrangements. For development specialists, they raise a number of new questions and challenges. Programming aimed at countering the negative impact of ethnic politics or clientelistic practices, party strengthening and campaigning, electoral law assistance, and intended to promote the representation of women and youth must recognize that differences in social organization –both across countries and localities – impacts the challenges at hand and usefulness of potential interventions.

Social Networks and Elections in the Arab World

Ellen Lust¹

Political actors and institutions take center stage in programming across the electoral cycle. Attention is focused on political parties, platforms, and electoral laws, with much less consideration placed on social organizations and almost none on institutions that structure social relations. Indeed, citizens' engagement in political and social spheres is viewed as distinct—with elections understood as a “political” act between individual voters and candidates. Yet, the organization of social networks influences the development and outcomes of elections much more than these perspectives give credit. Indeed, social networks shape electoral behavior and institutions; and in turn, elections shape social arrangements.²

This report focuses on how social networks influence electoral behavior from a supply-and-demand side framework, focusing on the Arab world. It considers how social networks have influenced voters and candidates across electoral cycles—from the development of the institutions that shape elections (e.g., political parties, election laws, etc.) to candidate entry and voters' choices. The analysis rests heavily on studies of elections in Egypt, Jordan, Libya, and Tunisia,³ while also drawing on examples from other parts of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

1. I gratefully acknowledge constructive comments and input from my collaborators, colleagues, seminar participants and assistants. The list of debts is too long to list in full, but special mention should be made of Lindsay Benstead, Mine Eder, Amaney Jamal, Hala Hatamleh, Sami Hourani, Lilia Labidi, Dhafer Malouche, Tarek Masoud, Mohammad Al-Momani, Gamal Soltan, Jakob Wichmann and, for their excellent research assistance, Nafez Al-Dakkak, Tabitha Decker, Mehdi Lazrak, and Emma Quail.

2. The impact of societal organization on the development of political institutions is likely to be stronger and more immediate than the influence of political institutions on the organization of society.

3. Except where otherwise noted, the study draws upon evidence from surveys and campaign studies conducted by the author and her collaborators. These include: 1) an Egyptian Election Survey conducted by Ellen Lust (Yale University) and Tarek Masoud (Harvard University), a nationally representative, household survey of 2100 Egyptian respondents chosen through probability sampling implemented November 2011-January 2012, with surveys conducted in each electoral zone in the weeks before the election, by the Egyptian Research and Training Center (ERTC); 2) a Tunisian Post-Election survey, a household survey conducted October 8-November 30, 2012 by Lindsay Benstead (Portland State University), Ellen Lust (Yale University) and Dhafer Malouche (ESSAI), with support from the National Science Foundation, Portland State University, Princeton University and Yale University, in which probability proportional to size (PPS); 3) a public intercept survey of nearly 2000 respondents conducted during first round of the 2010 Egyptian parliamentary election campaigns conducted in collaboration with Tarek Masoud and Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies; 4) a small survey of 248 attendees at campaign events in Tunisian Assembly Elections of October-November 2011 in collaboration with AbdelWahab Ben Hafeidh (University of Tunis); 5) a smaller public intercept survey of 180 non-attendees conducted during the 2010 Jordanian Parliamentary Elections in collaboration with Mohammad Al-Momani (Jordan Media Center) and Sami Hourani (Leaders of Tomorrow); and 6) survey of 1080 attendees at Egyptian campaign events during 2011-2012 elections, implemented by ERTC. Except where otherwise noted, research was funded by the National Science Foundation and Yale University.

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The report finds that electoral behavior should not be understood as a one-to-one political exchange in which citizens and candidates exchange goods (present or future) for votes, but rather as one of many exchanges in a web of relationships determined by competing social networks. The social networks within which citizens are embedded determine not only how much voters believe that different candidates are willing to distribute goods to them or their district, but also networks help define the set of exchanges that individuals need to uphold. The extent to which these exchanges drive electoral behavior often depends on the density of social networks and the nature of political institutions. This has important implications for programs aimed at political parties and civil society, electoral management bodies, youth, women and other marginalized groups.

The report proceeds as follows. First, it considers the diversity and importance of social networks, noting cross-national and sub-national variation. Next, it reviews the stakes of elections in the Arab world, looking at elections under both authoritarian and transitional regimes. The third section examines how social organization shapes the electoral environment, influencing preferences over electoral laws. The fourth considers who runs and how; the fifth examines who votes and why; and the sixth focuses on who wins. The report concludes with lessons for policymakers programming across the electoral cycle.

1. Societal Organization and Social Networks

Social networks affect individuals' expectations about the outcome of elections, and consequently their preferences over electoral institutions, decisions over whether to enter the race or head to the polls, and choice of candidates. Networks matter because individuals in the Arab world (and elsewhere) do not make a sharp distinction between social and political spheres. As we shall see, personal relations enter into citizens' assessments of candidates, and social ties also inform would-be candidates' estimations of their chances for success and their choice of campaign strategies. These choices in the political sphere—choosing to run in the election, helping in a campaign, or supporting a candidate at the polls—also shape future social relations. Whether or not one supports a candidate can make or break future social relations between the two parties. In short, social and political spheres are intricately linked.

Differences in social networks are thus important, mattering at both the individual level and the local level. That is, we need to consider not only which individuals are closely tied to others, but also differences in the constellation of social networks at a local or district level. Thus, this section begins by defining societal networks and organization, and distinguishing between the analysis presented here and that found in literature on ethnic politics, clientelism and democratization.

There are three key dimensions in social networks and organization:⁴

4. Delineating these components of networks is important, and likely differences in these components across networks affects electoral politics. In this report, however, I generally focus on the overall impact of “strong” and “weak” networks.

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1. Breadth. Breadth refers to the number of connections that individuals have with others in the community. In considering elections, it is ties with others in the locality or district that matters.
2. Density. Density refers to the extent to which individuals engage with others through a number of different ties. That is, do they engage with friends, family and neighbors in providing childcare, aiding the sick, etc., or do they nod and say ‘hello,’ but otherwise mind their own business?
3. Hierarchy. Hierarchy refers to the extent to which authority is embedded in the social ties. Is there a clear authority (e.g., family patriarch/matriarch, tribal sheikh, religious authority) that can shape decision-making in the community? Such authorities may be collective or individual, and have more or less established institutional structures; however, in all cases, they should be distinguished from horizontal communities in which individuals have relatively equal influence.

A range of relationships can form the foundation for such networks. Much is made of kith-and-kin relations, especially family and tribes. But, social networks—and especially dense, multifaceted ones—can also be made of religious groups (whose very language—‘brotherhood’ and ‘sisterhood’—evokes family relations) and geographical localities (e.g., villages or neighborhoods). Networks can also revolve around economic ties, such as long-standing ties between businessmen, or between factory owners and employees.

Each type of network can vary in the breadth, density and hierarchy of ties. Families can have broad, dense networks with hierarchical order – the stereotypical patriarchy in which the grandfather strongly influences the social, economic and political activities of his many, inter-connected family members. Conversely, families can be weak, narrow and non-hierarchical whereby members communicate on a one-to-one basis and have little interaction except when coming together to organize weddings, plan funerals, and deal with estates. Similarly, economic, religious or geographical networks can take a range of forms.

Of course, to some extent, these three dimensions of networks correspond to other types of social distinctions we instinctively view as important. For example, there is a relationship between density and breadth of social ties and rural versus urban communities. Individuals living in rural areas are more likely to have denser social networks than those living in urban areas, as shown in Figure 1. There is also a relationship between social hierarchy and tribes,⁵ where tribes—at least stereotypically—are associated with structured hierarchy. Not surprisingly, there is

5. The term ‘tribe’ is highly debated, in part because entities called ‘tribes’ can vary significantly in the extent to which they are institutionalized, their members’ engage with each other and the group identity is significant. They also differ in the extent to which they are determined by blood relations. Most critiques of literature on tribes rightly point out that tribes are constructed and malleable. This is true. However, they also have meaning and can play important roles during elections.

often reference to urban or rural areas, or more or less ‘tribal’ countries (e.g., Yemen, Jordan, and Libya vs. Tunisia and Egypt).

Figure 1 about here

Yet, there is also a great deal of variation in the density of ties in rural and urban areas; there is also subnational variation in the degree of hierarchy. Focusing on the essence of the networks rather than focusing simply on urban/rural, or tribal/non-tribal, communities can help to avoid mistakenly grouping apparently similar (but very different) districts together. It can also help to recognize when these networks and districts undergo change.

Focusing on the density, breadth and hierarchy of social networks also lends insight into the role of ethnic identities. Scholars have long recognized that ethnicity—so broadly defined as to warrant simply ‘shared, social identities’—affects electoral behavior.⁶ Yet, much of the work done to understand why and how this is the case focuses on how ethnicity can be a signal of responsiveness between individual voters and candidates, and when and how elections become an ‘ethnic census.’ For instance, in his path-breaking analysis, Daniel Posner argues that the distribution of populations helps to determine which become politically salient.⁷ There is little attention paid to the variation in the social networks of these groups. Yet, as Dominika Koter argues, there is wide variation in the social organization underlying different groups.⁸ And this matters. For her, the existence of hierarchical social organizations (notably Brotherhoods) creates conditions in which intermediaries support, and their clients in turn vote for, non-co-ethnic candidates. This helps explain the absence of ‘ethnic voting’ in some ethnically divided societies. Indeed, this is an important step in recognizing the variation in social organization of different groups and incorporating it into electoral studies.

The large literature on clientelism also suggests that this focus is warranted. Examining elections in relatively new democracies in Latin America, South East Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa emphasizes the role that social networks play in facilitating patron-client relations. In particular, political party leaders can use social networks to obtain information, monitor or mobilize voters.⁹ For instance, Susan Stokes points to how, in

6. Benn Eifert, Edward Miguel, Daniel Posner, "Political Competition and Ethnic Identification in Africa," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 54: 2 (April 2010): 494-510; Daniel Posner, *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Kanchan Chandra, *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Kanchan Chandra, "Why Voters in Patronage-Democracies Split Their Tickets: Strategic Voting for Ethnic Parties in Patronage-Democracies," *Electoral Studies* (2009).

7. Daniel Posner, *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

8. Dominika Koter, "Ties and Votes: Social Structure and Electoral Politics in Africa" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2010); Dominika Koter "King Makers: Local Leaders and Ethnic Politics in Africa," *World Politics*, Vol. 65: 2 (forthcoming April 2013).

9. Koter (2010, 2013); Herbert Kitchelt and Steven Wilkinson, Eds., *Patrons, Clients or Politics: Patterns of Political Accountability and Competition*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Madhav Ellen Lust, *Social Networks and Elections*

tightly knit societies, intermediaries could “look voters in the eyes” and know whether or not they cast their ballot for the ‘right’ candidate.¹⁰ Such accounts are instructive as they focus on how social networks can help to solve the problems of monitoring voters or can influence the intermediary’s candidate choice. The voters and their intermediaries are viewed as engaging in one-to-one exchange within the ‘political’ realm.

Finally, looking more closely at social networks may prompt us to reassess assumptions about the role of associational life. This scholarly literature, and related policies, is built on primarily negative assumptions about the role that ‘strong societies’ can play. ‘Good’ social relations are made through civil society associations, in ‘informal’ institutions that are independent from political society and outside of exclusionary and kith-and-kin social organization. The goal is to break such ties, replacing them with social capital and trust that presumably promote democracy.

In part, the prejudices regarding ‘good society’, and the approaches taken to understand the role of ethnicity and clientelism, reflect a widespread bias toward viewing elections as individual, voter-candidate relations in a “political” sphere. In these views, social relations and interactions matter, but they do so insofar as they affect individuals’ engagement in political sphere. They endow individuals with resources or shape their attitudes towards others as they fight over political resources. But, in this view, that fight is distinct from their everyday, social life. Voting is an individual, political act, disconnected from the upholding of norms and obligations in the social sphere.

Key Conclusions and Implications:

- Electoral behavior should be understood as both a political and social act.
- Social obligations to privilege those in one’s own community shape both individuals’ assessments of different candidates, and political entrepreneurs’ expectations of support.
- Social networks and organization affect the extent to which individuals’ can aggregate their efforts and achieve both political and social outcomes.
- Distinctions of electoral behavior in urban and rural areas, or ethnic and non-ethnic societies, is better understood as variations in social networks. Urban/rural and ethnically diverse societies often exhibit more variation in social networks than such broad-stroke comparisons suggest.
- Practitioners should distinguish between areas and countries based as much on social organization and institutions as on political ones, and adjust programming accordingly.

Joshi and T. David Mason, “Peasants, Patrons and Parties: The Tension between Clientelism and Democracy in Nepal,” *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 55: 1 (March 2011): 151-175; Nicolas Van de Walle, “Meet the New Boss, Same as the Old Boss? The Evolution of Political Clientelism in Africa,” in Herbert Kitschelt and Steven Wilkins, eds., *Patrons or Policies? Patterns of Democratic Accountability and Political Competition*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 50-67; Susan Stokes, “Perverse Accountability: A Formal Model of Machine Politics with Evidence from Argentina,” *American Political Science Review*, 99:3 (August, 2005): 315-325.

10. Stokes (2005)

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2. The Stakes of Elections in the Arab World¹¹

Before examining how social networks shape elections, it is important to recognize what is at stake. Stakes are determined on the supply side by what parliaments do, and on the demand side, by what citizens want and expect. The stakes have changed after 2011, especially in countries that saw the downfall of long-standing dictators. Nevertheless, parliaments remain weak and constituents' demands often remain the same. There are important differences between elections in authoritarian and transitional regimes, but they are not as dramatic as one may expect.

Supply-Side Constraints: Parliaments in the Arab World. Legislatures in the Arab world are weak institutions. Under authoritarian regimes, strong executives packed the assemblies with supporters, easily dismissed unruly parliaments when they arose, or subjected them to constraints through emergency law. Even in transitional regimes, legislatures have remained notably weak—most obviously with the Supreme Council of the Armed Force's dismissal of the Egyptian parliament in June 2012.

Authoritarian Regimes. Elections under seemingly stable authoritarian regimes are thus best understood as competitions over the ability to provide constituents privileged access to state resources, or “competitive clientelism.” Except in periods of crisis, legislative elections are not about obtaining the highest positions of power,¹² or policymaking—particularly over critical issues, or establishing democratic legitimacy. There has been some variation in the strength of these bodies across the region, but in general, legislators do not make major decisions affecting economic growth, foreign policy, or major social conditions.¹³

The primary stake in elections under authoritarian regimes is access to a pool of state resources. “Legislators” may not make laws, but they can use their position and influence to pressure ministers and bureaucrats into giving jobs, licenses, and other state resources to their constituents. They sometimes use their access to the legislative

11. This section draws heavily from Ellen Lust, “Competitive Clientelism in the Middle East,” *Journal of Democracy* 20: 3 (2009).

12. Even in ‘parliamentary’ monarchies in Jordan and Morocco, the distribution of seats in the parliament for decades was entirely divorced from the appointment of the prime minister and the cabinet. One of the constitutional changes in the wake of the Arab uprisings was that the position of prime minister in Morocco be determined by the parliament. Even now, though, the king retains the authority to dismiss parliament at will.

13. The Fish and Kroenig Parliamentary Powers Index Scores reflect parliaments' weakness. On a scale of 0-1 (where 1 is strong parliament), they rank: Parliament of Algeria 0.25; National Assembly of Bahrain 0.19; People's Assembly of Egypt 0.28; Council of Representatives of Iraq 0.63; National Assembly of Jordan 0.22; National Assembly of Kuwait 0.38; General People's Congress of Libya 0.13; Parliament of Morocco 0.31; Council of Oman 0.16; Consultative Council of Saudi Arabia 0.09; People's Assembly of Syria 0.31; National Parliament of Tunisia 0.28; Federal National Council of the United Arab Emirates 0.06; Parliament of Yemen 0.44. M. Steven Fish and Matthew Kroenig, *The Handbook of National Legislatures: A Global Survey*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), <http://polisci.berkeley.edu/people/faculty/FishM/PPIScores.pdf>.

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debate and media to arm-twist officials, threatening to call their performance into question if they do not respond to requests. Consequently, many parliamentarians become known for providing services, rather than legislation or executive oversight, leading them to be termed *na'ib khidma* (or “service deputy”).

In the Arab world, service often means the provision of selective goods, not public goods. Discretion and local budgets have been limited, and for the most part, the building of new roads, better schools or medical clinics requires the largesse of the central authorities.

Transition Periods. The stakes change dramatically in transitional elections. Suddenly, policies—indeed, the very nature of the state—are at stake, the highest political positions in flux. In the Arab world, where transitions take place with former dictators having fled the country, sitting behind bars, or dead, the possibility of real change seems enormous.

Citizens display a great deal of optimism toward the future legislative powers at the time of transitional elections. The Egyptian Electoral Survey conducted in November–December 2011 (just before the parliamentary elections) found that more than 90 percent of respondents believed that parliament would play a role in formulating foreign policy, regulating the economy and controlling political rights and freedoms, and more than 50 percent of respondents felt it would have great influence. This contrasted sharply with views on the Mubarak-era assembly, where less than one-quarter of respondents believed the legislature played a somewhat or great role in regulating major policies.

Demand-Side Incentives: Services, Identities and Policies. Three goals drive citizens’ engagement in legislative elections: 1) provision of services, both selective and public goods; 2) social influence gained by representation of their group/identity; and 3) policymaking.

Service Provision. Service provision is a primary demand for many citizens engaging in elections. This is particularly true in authoritarian regimes, where policy positions are not on the table; then, voters simply want representatives who can appeal effectively to authorities for resources. (Generally, this means having good relations with the regime.) Even in transitional regimes, the demands for service delivery remain high. In part, this is because people are conditioned to demand services. Many also believe that problems of low transparency and bureaucratic inefficiency have not ended. Because one still often needs to resort to *wasta* to enroll their child in school, find a hospital bed, obtain a license to build or to open a business, such services are enormously important.¹⁴

14. In a 2006 survey conducted in collaboration with Lindsay Benstead (Portland State University), we found only 59 percent of respondents would first take an issue to the government agency if they wanted to resolve a dispute with the government, and only 24 percent believed this approach would succeed. Moreover, only 39 percent said that they would turn first to approach a government agency in seeking public sector employment, and less than 20 percent believed this would be effective. Similarly, 2000 and 2005 surveys conducted in Jordan found the majority of respondents see *wasta* as important in order to successfully conduct business with government agencies or obtain public-sector employment. From Ellen Lust, “Competitive Clientelism in the Middle East,” *Journal of Democracy* 20:3 (2009). The Egyptian Ellen Lust, *Social Networks and Elections*

These demands are reflected in surveys conducted in both authoritarian and transitional regimes. The survey conducted during Egypt's 2011-2012 elections, when optimism about the assembly's policymaking prerogatives was high, found that over one-third of respondents stated that their representatives' primary duty was to provide services to the constituents in the district, while another third believed that their goal should be to raise funds for public works in the district. Moreover, as shown in Figure 2, individuals who live in areas with dense social networks --- where residents know each other and interact with a wide range of people -- are more likely to demand services.

Figure 2 about here.

Identity. Voters also care about the extent to which their group can be represented -- that is, that local or subnational groups that represent them have a place at the table. This is not unique to the Arab world, or to authoritarian or transitional regimes; representation of local group identities helps explain why we often pay a great deal of attention to the race and gender of candidates. In the Arab world, as we shall see, many of the identities that matter are localized-- kith-and-kin, or local village networks.

Policies. Finally, voters care about policies, particularly in transitional elections. More than one-third of Egyptians responded that legislation was parliamentarians' primary task. Interviews with citizens in Tunisia and Egypt suggest that the tasks of constituent assemblies and constitutional committees are beyond the imagination--and certainly the interest--of most people. So, too, are the details of most legislation. (This is not unique to the Arab world, or to transitioning states or new democracies.) Nevertheless, the transitions see an increased citizen demand for 'legislation,' as long as they believe parliaments can perform this role.

Key Conclusions and Implications:

- Elections can be competitions over access to a pool of state resources, social status and/or policies. In the Arab world, access to state resources is generally the most important stake in the legislative elections.
- In distributing state resources, representatives (and other political elites) take into account social relations as well as political support.
- This is due to an understanding of social obligations: first, widespread social norms dictate that individuals are more obligated to respond to friends, family and others in their social networks than they are to strangers, and second, the same

Election survey found that more than 40% of respondents believed it was essential or very useful to have *wasta* if one wanted to obtain a building permit, a government job, a driver's license or resolve a problem in the health or education sector, while only about 40% believed it was not useful. (The remaining found it somewhat or a little useful, or did not know). In Tunisia, 45% believed *wasta* was essential or very useful in navigating government bureaucracy, and 47% believed it to be essential or very useful for obtaining a government job. Only 25% and 26%, see *wasta* as not useful for navigating bureaucracy or obtaining a public sector job, respectively.

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collective importance of maintaining the social status of one's own network, mean that social networks play a major role in determining who runs in elections and how candidates campaign.

- Practitioners must recognize that electoral behavior is driven by social incentives and relations that are not captured in conceptions of elections as a political process. Those engaged in this process are likely to see maintaining these relations as at least as important as obtaining political outcomes in terms of policies and ideologies. They are also likely to focus on these relations as at least as important as, if not more important than, more typical mechanisms of mobilizing support (e.g., political platforms, campaign strategies, etc.)

3. *Shaping Electoral Institutions*¹⁵

Social networks and the stakes of elections shape the design of electoral institutions. In both transitional and authoritarian regimes, social networks shape elites' preferences over institutions. However, the ultimate design depends as well on the relative power of different actors. Therefore, new electoral rules often emerge following transitions, when many previously excluded actors can now enter the negotiations.

Political Parties. Authoritarian regimes and parliaments with little policymaking capacity stymied the development of political parties in the Arab world. Political parties remained weak in the region, even after ruling elites eased restrictions on them in the early 1990s. This limited not just the capabilities of, but also the demand for political parties, even in transitional settings.

Supply-Side Constraints: Authoritarian regimes constrained the formation of parties, prohibiting many elites from establishing parties and co-opting leading members of those they permitted. Parties, or party-like institutions, were not entirely absent; indeed, they were a core institution in single- or dominant-party regimes, such as Algeria, Egypt, Syria, and Tunisia.¹⁶ But, even in these cases, elites used social networks to mobilize support, and in many cases, political parties were founded upon and recognized by these networks and their leading personalities.

Indeed, political elites have little incentive to develop political parties when they can count on social networks to mobilize support. Jordan provides an excellent example. There, tribes often act as political parties— with everything from political primaries to get out the vote efforts. Some tribal elites established official political parties because—as one once told me—“That’s how modern politics is played”.¹⁷ However, most see no need for political parties. The fact that relatively small districts often coincide closely with

15. Social networks also appear to influence demands for voting rights, both in terms of citizenship and rights and also districting. For example, Jordanians' ability to vote in their ancestral homeland both responds to tribal interests and reinforces the tribe.

16. They were also important in some other Arab regimes, most notably in Morocco.

17. See Ellen Lust, “The Decline of Jordanian Political Parties: Myth or Reality?” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 33: 4 (November 2001): 545-570.

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tribal homelands, combined with an electoral system that allows independent candidates, makes political parties dispensable.

Kuwait further illustrates these incentives. Political parties are illegal, although there are identifiable political ‘tendencies’ in the Kuwaiti political system. Rather, like Jordanians, Kuwaitis relied on tribes and other social networks (including business networks) to mobilize, using *diwans* as a forum for political debate and tribal primaries as a venue for selecting candidates. Elites appeared satisfied with this arrangement; although Kuwait is one of the most politically active and contentious societies in the Gulf, they generally did not rally for the right to form political parties. On the other hand, when the Emir unexpectedly began to enforce a decade-old law prohibiting tribal primaries in 2008, Kuwaitis were enraged. Banning political parties was one thing, but eliminating tribal primaries- completely unacceptable.¹⁸

In short, authoritarian regimes and toothless parliaments weakened political parties. This prompted political elites to appeal to local social ties as the basis of political competition, rather than to invest in strong parties. This occurred even where the state elites officially emphasized national unity and denigrated local ties (witness Tunisia).¹⁹ The extent to which elites demand the right to form political parties depends in part on the societal organization; such demands are notably absent in countries such as Jordan and Kuwait, where tribes often fulfill the same role.²⁰

Demand-Side Factors: Citizens’ (Dis)interest in Parties. Authoritarianism weakened citizens’ demand for political parties. Citizens came to see political parties as venues through which well-meaning citizens could be repressed, and corrupt politicians co-opted.²¹ Disinterest and distrust of political parties carries into the transition period.

Citizens often see little need to invest time and effort in distinguishing ostensible differences between platforms of various parties. This was particularly true under authoritarianism, when often-vague party platforms had negligible impact on policy. It remains the case in transitional periods, where surveys in Tunisia and Egypt have both

18. See Mary Ann Tétreault, “Political Activism in Kuwait: Reform in Fits and Starts,” in Lina Khatib and Ellen Lust, eds., *Taking to the Streets: Activism and the Arab Uprising* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, forthcoming.)

19. For decades Bourguiba and then Ben Ali sought to undermine local allegiances, focusing on Tunisian nationalism. Nevertheless, the period following the 2011 revolution has witnessed the resurgence of local identities, leading at times to violent clashes. Many argue that this shows both the strength of these ties and the ways in which—mobilized under the radar screen in the absence of effect parties—they may actually have been reinforced during the authoritarian period.

20. The demand for, and development of, political parties also depends on other political institutions. Party list systems, large districts, and single- or dominant- party regimes can promote political parties. Even then, however, these parties often act primarily as an umbrella organization for candidates who rely primarily on independent, local social networks for support.

21. Negative reactions are particularly notable in Libya, where Gadhafi used Quranic verses and harsh punishments (sentencing even those who knew of political parties and failed to inform on them) to convince many Libyans that party members were traitors.

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shown that the public has little understanding of the preferences of political parties and presidential candidates over economic policy, foreign policy and the speed of reform.²²

To the extent that citizens pay attention to or know political parties, they often do so in terms of their leading personalities, or the areas and families they are from and whom they are most likely to support. Islamist parties provide some exception to this, but their strength is drawn from their relationship with religious and social service organizations and the extent to which being a member of the religious family—a “brother” or “sister”—creates obligations of mutual support.

Not surprisingly, citizens also do not join political parties. Party membership remained low even in dominant party regimes, where party membership was seen as a sign of allegiance to the regime and was often associated with special treatment. Citizens viewed parties as ineffective, divorced from the people, and simply aimed at serving their leaders’ interest.²³ They did not see them as meaningful venues for mobilizing citizen demands.

This remains true in transitional periods. Despite the explosion of new parties, citizens’ interest in joining political parties remains low. They perceive the majority of political parties as divorced from the people, engaged in their own political machinations, and ineffective in solving the problems facing citizens.²⁴

Electoral Rules. Social networks influence debates over electoral rules. These debates are generally a hotly contested, elite struggle,²⁵ yet it is one in which elites’ preferences take into account their social relations with local constituents.²⁶ How these preferences

22. On Egypt, see “Secularism, Islamism and Democracy,” joint work of Ellen Lust, Gamal Soltan and Jakob Wichmann presented at the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Copenhagen, Denmark, Oct. 29, 2012 and Ellen Lust and Jakob Wichmann, “Three Myths about the Arab Uprisings,” *YaleGlobal*, July 24, 2012 available at <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/three-myths-about-arab-uprisings>. On Tunisia, see Lindsay Benstead, Ellen Lust, Dhafer Malouche, “Tunisians Frustrated and Engaged,” *Foreign Policy*, Dec. 11, 2012.

23. A survey conducted in collaboration with Lindsay Benstead (PSU) in Algeria in 2006 found that less than 20 percent of respondents believed that political parties served the people’s interests, in contrast to 79 percent who believed they served the leaders’ interests. Similarly, a 2007 CSS survey in Jordan found that less than 10 percent believed parties represented the people’s interests. In Tunisia, we find respondents see En-Nahda as most responsive to citizens’ needs, with 36% believing they are responsive; only 3-6% of respondents viewed other parties as responding to citizens’ needs.

24. According to a 2011-12 survey conducted by the Danish Egyptian Dialogue Institute, 71% of Egyptians surveyed said they were not interested in political parties, 5% said they support a number of parties depending on the political situation, 20% said they were not a member but a supporter of a political party, 1% said they were a member of a political party but not active, and 1% said they were an active member in a political party. The Tunisian Post-Election Survey finds that 1.5% of Tunisians are active party members, 1.1% are (inactive) party members, 22.3% support a particular political party, 44.6% support parties depending on the situation, 24.7% don’t know and 5.9% refused to answer.

25. In fact, two Jordanian parliamentarians reportedly literally came to blows during a parliamentary session over the 2012 electoral law revisions. See Kristen Kao, “Jordan’s Ongoing Election Law Battle,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, (July 5, 2012), available at <http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/07/05/jordan-s-ongoing-election-law-battle/ck59>.

26. The dynamics and interests outlined here are not entirely different from those that fostered by the development of electoral systems in the West and elsewhere.

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aggregate to influence electoral rules depends partly on actors' relative power, the nature of the regime, and the legislative process, whether electoral laws are written in the absence of parliament and with heavy influence of security forces (e.g., Jordan) or as the result of a process opened to public comment (e.g., post-Gadhafi Libya). In all cases, social networks create identifiable patterns of preferences over the rules being negotiated.

Elites in Strong Social Networks Prefer Majoritarianism. Elites embedded in areas with broad, densely connected networks tend to prefer majoritarian electoral systems. When representatives are viewed primarily as a service provider, and when many believe this service provision is directed more by the obligations of family, friend and neighbor than constituent-candidate relations, voters prefer to back a candidate from their network. First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) rules in single party districts, or Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) rules and low district magnitudes give these elites an edge. They allow candidates to win the majority of seats with a plurality of votes.

Jordan provides an excellent illustration. In 1993, the palace changed the electoral law in order to weaken the Islamic Action Front, along with other parties that would oppose the upcoming peace treaty with Israel. To achieve this goal, they instituted a new electoral law, moving from a multi-member (MMD)/multi-vote system to one with MMD/single, non-transferable vote (SNTV).

This fundamentally altered the election outcomes. Individuals previously cast one vote for their tribal leader (who represented their identity and delivered the goods) and a second vote for the party candidate (who represented their ideological preferences); in 1993, they cast their votes for their tribal leader only. Islamists' (not all of whom were IAF) saw their share of seats fall from 33 of 80 seats in the 1989 parliamentary elections to 16 seats in the 1993 elections. Their presence in parliament was further reduced through their boycott of the 1997 and 2010 elections.²⁷ In contrast, 75 independents gained seats in the 1997 elections, including 68 tribal chiefs;²⁸ and in 2010, Jordanian representatives of Palestinian origin declined to just 12 percent,²⁹ while more than 90 tribes were represented.³⁰

It was the alignment of social networks, authoritarian politics and electoral rules that produced these outcomes. The limited parliamentary powers meant that programmatic parties such as the IAF whose supporters are widely dispersed throughout the country

27. Their representation returned to (somewhat less than) the 1993 levels only in 2003 elections, when the 17 IAF members and 6 sympathizers won 23 of the parliament's 110 seats. After the largely pro-regime parliament passed the 2010 electoral law, providing a two-tier electoral system with PR-list seats but with fewer such seats than demanded, the IAF is again calling for a boycott.

28. MEDEA, Jordan: Elections and Parliament, <http://www.medeas.be/?page=2&lang=en&doc=253> (accessed 4/22/04).

29. "Jordan Loyalists Sweep Election," *AlJazeera*, Nov. 10, 2012, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2010/11/2010111011597439770.html>.

30. Ammar Hanandah, "Al-asha'ir al-urdunniya alati methalat fi majalis al-nuab fi 63 'aaman," ("The Jordanian Tribes that are represented in National Assemblies over 63 years."), *Al-Madina*, Dec. 19, 2010, <http://almadinahnews.com/newss/news.php?c=532&id=64992>.

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took second place to tribal elites, who acted as centers of patron-client networks in more geographically concentrated areas. Voters knew that to achieve their most immediate needs (e.g., access to jobs and government favors), they should cast their votes for the candidates most likely to deliver. And these were tribal candidates.³¹

Elite's expectations that these same dynamics exist has shaped preferences over rules governing transitional elections as well. In Libya, the precise story of the formation of the General National Congress (GNC) electoral law is yet to be written. But it is clear that Libyan elites had different preferences over electoral rules, depending in part on their assessments of the social structure and their place within it. For instance, many, although certainly not all, elites returning from abroad (with little domestic basis) and the Muslim Brotherhood (the largest party) generally favored party-based, proportional representation, while local elites—especially in areas with dense social networks—were keen on more majoritarian rules. Moreover, some areas had deep divisions between neighboring villages—sometimes divided by Arab-Amazigh splits, historical tensions, or other differences—which would make it difficult to find a representative who could adequately represent the various identities and interests. In the aim to avoid exacerbating differences and instigating conflict, these areas were often divided into small, single-member districts.

The result was a law that attempted to respond to these varied interests, aimed at assuring social stability. Libya's 2012 electoral law provides for election of the 200-seat assembly through a mixed system, with three types of races: 80 closed-list PR seats in multi-member districts, and 120 individual constituencies (IC), including both SNTV seats in multimember districts and FPTP seats in single-member districts, where candidates are prohibited from running on a party label.

The unequal distribution of seats decided through majoritarian FPTP races and PR lists is striking. As shown in Figure 3, it ranges from Tripoli, which has a narrow majority of seats decided through PR lists, to Gheryan, which has all 17 seats decided through majoritarian races and no PR seats. The difference partly reflects the fact that Tripoli has a larger number of residents from other regions of the country, returnees from abroad, and a relatively atomized social structure, which favored PR list seats. In contrast, Gheryan, a hotbed of conflict in the post-Gadhafi era, has strong local strongmen and tribal identities, which pushed for majoritarianism. In 50 of the 73 districts, constituencies have parallel voting (e.g., voting for both PR and IC seats), while in 19 districts they vote only for IC seats and in 4 districts vote only for PR seats. Put simply, it is a hodge-podge system, reflecting compromises between elites and concerns of the electoral commission that potential conflicts be avoided.³²

31. Two notes are in order here: first, Islamists and tribal elites are not mutually exclusive, and many IAF members returned to parliament were also tribal elite. However, as David Patel has argued, the support base of IAF has increasingly been Jordanians of Palestinian origin. (See "From Islamic to Ethnic Politics in Jordan," working paper.) Second, the dispute between the IAF and the regime continues, reflecting the same preferences and fault lines.

32. David Jandura, *Ahwa Talk blog*, (<http://ahwatalk.com/2012/07/04/libyas-electoral-system>); Christopher Blanchard, "Libya: Transition and U.S. Policy," *Congressional Research Service*, (March 28, 2012), (<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33142.pdf>).

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Figure 3 about here.

Expectations that candidates can use their social networks to garner electoral support in majoritarian or SNTV districts led to fierce debates over electoral laws in post-Mubarak Egypt as well. The Muslim Brothers and other political parties rallied for PR seats, fearing that the *feloul* (old regime elites) would be able to take advantage of their resources and established local strongholds to return to power. Returns from the first parliamentary elections—in which 332 party list and 166 individual constituent seats were contested—proved them wrong. The Democratic Alliance—led by the Muslim Brotherhood’s Freedom and Justice Party (FJP)—was able to capitalize on its religious authority and established local linkages to win 166 IC seats (65% of IC seats) in comparison to 127 PR seats (only 38.3% of PR seats.) Perhaps not surprisingly, as parties begin to debate the laws that will govern the next elections, the FJP favors majoritarianism, while smaller parties seek PR.³³

Elites in Strong Social Networks Prefer Small Districts and Representation. Social networks also affect demands for districting and (over-)representation. Elites who believe they have geographically-concentrated support, often through dense and extensive social networks, prefer small districts that coincide with their areas of strength, while others are better off with large districts that dilute such advantages. At the same time, social identities can play an important role in making the case regarding both districting and representation. The contention, not at all unique to the Arab world, is that unequal representation is sometimes necessary to protect ‘minority’ rights. The ways in which such ‘minorities’ are defined often derives from identities that underlie and cement local networks. Whether or not those making these cases ultimately succeed depends in part on the nature of the regime and broader political context, but the impact on their preferences is unmistakable.

Jordan again provides a useful case in point. Since 1993 the Jordanian regime has undertaken successive redistricting efforts, responding to demands by those with strong local networks (and often also close ties to Jordanian intelligence services), for redrawing the lines. The result has been the eventual emergence of a two-part system: one of multi-member, SNTV seats in the largely Palestinian-origin cities, and the second of predominantly one-party seats in the East Bank/Transjordanian rural areas. The electoral law has changed to increase the number of seats in parliament, but it has maintained over-representation of predominantly Transjordanian, rural areas. Many Jordanians from these areas justify this over-representation on terms that the rural areas are under-developed and need representation, despite their low population density. Opponents argue that both districting and apportionment reflect the regime’s bias

33. “Constituent Assembly divided over parliamentary election system,” *Al-Masry Al-Youm*, Oct. 3, 2012. (<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/constituent-assembly-divided-over-parliamentary-election-system>).

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toward East Bankers, which have until very recently been seen as steady supporters of the regime.

Districting and representation also reflect major differences in the social structures of Palestinian and East Bank society. Many Jordanians of Palestinian descent readily recognize that Palestinians' place of origin (for instance, from Beit Jala, Ramallah, Jenin, or Haifa) is a social solidarity marker. However, Palestinian Jordanians do not have social networks that are as strong as those of East Bank Jordanians, nor are they as geographically concentrated. The two-tiered system reflects not only the different relationship between the groups and the regime,³⁴ but also the differences in the social networks of these two social groups.

Gender Quotas. Social networks do not appear to play a large role in the initial decision to institute quotas. In authoritarian regimes of the Arab world, that decision was apparently made in response to external pressure. (Indeed, as Table 1 suggests, regimes that had fewer resources and were more vulnerable to external pressures instituted gender quotas.) Yet, once decisions were made to institute quotas, they were implemented in a manner that strengthened the regime. The specifics of how this was done, and the consequences of doing so, depended on the nature of the regime and the organization of society.

Table 1 about here.

Jordan illustrates this point well.³⁵ Jordan first instituted gender quotas in 2003, when it set aside 6 seats for women, and subsequently increased the number of seats to 12 in 2010 and 15 in 2012. The quota remained a small part of the parliament, but what bothered feminists and opposition elites most was that implementation shifted these seats to pro-monarchy constituencies. The mechanism was simple. Rather than run in special 'women's districts', women contested seats alongside men in regular, and highly malapportioned, districts. It distributed the seats according to the percentage of votes that women obtained in the district (rather than the total number of votes obtained.)

34. Virtual sub-districts employed in 2010, arguably Jordan's most creative 'fix' to date, are a clear indication of the regime using districting to manipulate the elections. The 2010 electoral law divided electoral districts into multiple, virtual sub-districts. Candidates chose which district they ran in (allowing for regime interference and privileging of some candidates over others, as well as for coordination between some candidates.) Voters could choose to vote in any sub-district. Many voters did not know which sub-district they voted in or who the competing candidates in the sub-district were.

35. Egypt chose to implement the gender quote very differently, but in a way that also reinforced the regime. In this case, large districts were established specifically for women candidates. The fact that these districts were large, disadvantaged candidates with concentrated, local support and favored those who had sufficient logistical and financial resources. The latter tended to be those close to the NDP, who could count on the ruling party to bolster their campaign. As a result, 62 of 64 women candidates elected in 2010 were NDP candidates.

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Not surprisingly, as Table 2 shows, the majority of seats went to women in small, rural, East-Bank dominated districts, many winning with relatively few votes.³⁶ Women in these districts often held “non-progressive” policy positions with regard to women (as viewed from a Western-perspective). More importantly, for our purposes, they often succeeded because men in the area supported their candidacy and campaign. Concentrating support for local women in the campaign became a way that smaller tribes—which had little chance in winning seats against more powerful tribes in the district—could gain a seat in parliament. As a result of using the largest proportion of district votes to distribute the seats, the regime benefited from seats that went to generally pro-regime candidates and smaller tribes enjoyed additional representation. That is, while the decision to institute a gender quota appears to have been prompted by external forces, the implementation and outcomes were closely linked to the organization of social networks.

Table 2 about here.

In sum, social networks and organization play an important role in the formation of electoral institutions. They shape elites’ preferences over electoral rules, district boundaries, and the implementation of gender quotas. The ultimate form that such rules take is determined by the distribution of power among these actors.

Key Conclusions and Implications.

- Authoritarianism combined with a strong role in personal and social relations undermined public support for and trust in political parties.
- Political elites recognize that strong social networks are a major source of political support. Consequently, they seek electoral rules that magnify their strengths:
 - Elites from areas with concentrated, strong social networks prefer independent constituencies, representation, majoritarian electoral rules and small districts.
 - Elites who lack a concentrated, strong social network seek PR rules, party lists and large districts.
- States with very diverse social networks (e.g., Libya, Jordan) face particular challenges in instituting electoral laws. Very different social networks increase elites’ competition over electoral rules.
- Especially in transitional elections, these divergent preferences may combine with uncertainty and a more equal distribution of power that fosters compromise. Such compromises may lead to oddly ‘mixed’ or ‘parallel’ systems (e.g., Libya) that may be better described as ‘dual.’ These systems may ease tensions in the short

³⁶ For instance, 5 of the 12 women winning seats in the 2010 elections did so with fewer than 1000 votes. These included the representatives from Tafileh (939 votes), Balqa (936 votes), Aqaba (675 votes), Mafraq (846 votes), and Ajloun (517 votes.)

- term, however; they may also make it difficult for parties and candidates to coordinate, and for parties to become stronger, in the long term.
- This raises important questions in programming:
 - Should international organizations help discourage compromises that create unwieldy, potentially counterproductive electoral institutions, or recognize the short-term trade-offs and consider a wider-range of electoral systems than typically advocated?
 - Where dual systems emerge, how can they be implemented most effectively? What implications do they have for voter education programs?

4. *Who Runs and How?*

Three goals generally prompt candidates to run in elections: 1) to make policy and wield political power, 2) to obtain access to state resources, and 3) to gain prestige. The importance of these motivations varies, in part as the legislature's policymaking role rises and falls. Yet, in both authoritarian and transitional regimes, access to resources and prestige are major incentives. Even when policymaking returns to the agenda, policy platforms remain unformed, and much of the public continues to focus on services and identity.

Candidates' Incentives. Access to resources and social prestige motivate candidates at both the individual and group level. That is, it affects both the demand side as well as the supply side of candidate entry and campaigning.

Demand Side: Service Delivery and Recognition. Citizens want representatives who can help them meet their everyday needs, easing their way through a maze of sluggish, unresponsive bureaucracy. Some also want to access ministries that dole out public contracts or special privileges or exemptions from legal constraints. Importantly, most citizens believe that representatives are more likely to respond to them if they have a personal tie. Indeed, Egyptians believe expect representatives give preferential treatment to kith-and-kin,³⁷ and the Tunisian Post-Election finds that nearly 37 percent of respondents strongly agree, and another 29 percent agree, that representatives favor those they know.

Many citizens also want legislators who represent their group identity – as a fellow believer, a tribal or family member, village or neighborhood resident. Members of strong social groups often support one of their own as a candidate, even when they know their group is dwarfed by others in the district and their chances of winning negligible.

They explain this decision in terms of dignity and recognition. Even if the candidate does not win, a decent showing at the polls signals to the regime that the group exists. (In many ways, the logic parallels the agenda-setting goals of small, third party

37. When asked to rate how much representatives respond more to friends and families than others on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all and 10 is entirely, Egyptian respondents' average was 7.

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candidates.) And, if the candidate does win, the prestige that it brings to the group in apparently non-political, social settings is important. Supporting candidates thus not only helps establish the individuals' prestige, but enhances the community's stature as well.

The pressures for candidates to enter the elections are often high, and the barriers to entry—both in terms of resources and political conditions—can be surprisingly low. Political parties are weak and play little or no role in coordinating electoral contests and preventing would-be candidates from entering. The government also generally approves candidacies; in authoritarian regimes, only the most determined, vociferous and potentially successful opposition candidates are usually prohibited from running in authoritarian regimes, while in the transitional elections, the most obvious, die-hard supporters of the old regime barred from participating.³⁸ Candidates can win their seats having gained as little as 2 percent of the popular vote, the margin of votes between last winner and first loser is often in double-digits, and the percentage of wasted votes reach as high as 2/3 of the total votes. This leaves would-be candidates in upcoming elections sufficient reason to believe they have a chance of winning, even with relatively few resources.

Supply Side: Lucrative Investments and Prestige. Would-be candidates often have their own incentives for entering elections as they can personally benefit from the prestige and access to resources that these seats afford. For instance, a factory owner may use his connections with the ministries to bypass import duties or to win large public contracts worth significant sums of money.³⁹ Legislative seats can be quite lucrative, and often for the representative as well as (or even more than) constituents.

Understanding elections as a potential business investment helps explain why some elites choose to enter the race. Most candidates in the Arab world finance their own campaigns, sometimes at huge expense. For example, Egyptian candidates under Mubarak would spend millions of pounds to run in elections, despite a legal campaign limit of 70,000 LE (approximately \$12,300 US dollars) in a country where the average GNP per capita is less than 9,000 LE per year (approximately \$1,500 US dollars).⁴⁰ Similarly, in Jordan and Syria candidates generally financed their own campaigns, often drawing extensively on their own personal funds, at sums that both candidates and observers agree are many times the average annual income.

38. For more discussion of the differences in these processes and implications with regard to Egypt and Tunisia, see Ellen Lust, "Voting for Change: The Pitfalls and Possibilities of First Elections," *Brookings Doha Center* – Stanford Project on Arab Transitions Working Paper No 2, (May 2012), available at <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2012/5/09%20arab%20democracies%20lust/09%20arab%20democracies%20lust%20english.pdf>. On Libya, see POMED, "POMED Backgrounder: Previewing Libya's Elections," (July 5, 2012), available at <http://pomed.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Previewing-Libyas-Elections.pdf>.

39. See also discussion on this in Samer Shehata, "Egyptian Parliamentary Campaigns," in Ellen Lust-Okar and Saloua Zerhouni (Eds.), *Political Participation in the Middle East and North Africa* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008): 100-101.

40. Ibid.

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Entry. Social networks play a critical role in determining which candidates enter the fray. Where social networks are strong, such groups often directly nominate and/or mobilize support for the candidate. Would-be candidates also take the possibilities of such support into account when determining whether and where to run.

Tribal primaries⁴¹ and less publicized family caucuses and local gatherings (some mobilized through mosques) determine support for candidates.⁴² In countries like Kuwait and Jordan, these primaries and caucuses are often formalized and as hotly contested as the national elections themselves— even subject to charges of fraud and interference. This is not surprising. The stakes are high, as such public endorsements can play a major role in individuals' decisions over whom to support. (See section 4 below.)

In contrast, political party elites and government officials are often less important for determining who enters the race. In Jordan, for instance, the public distrusts political parties, and thus candidates who are members of parties often run as independents, downplaying their party affiliation. Even in countries with dominant parties, like Egypt under Mubarak's National Democratic Party, candidates could run as independents with great success. In fact, in 2000 and 2005, candidates who did not receive the NDP nomination ran successfully as independents, often beating official NDP candidates.⁴³ This demonstrated both the primacy of personal networks and the weakness of the ruling party.

Of course, not all elites are embedded in strong social networks. In authoritarian regimes, where political positions alone are unlikely to mobilize voters, most of whom are without strong networks choose not to run. Notable exceptions are businessmen— particularly ambitious up-and-comers—who sometimes rely on exorbitant spending to woo the voters. In transitional elections, when public policies are at stake and programmatic parties emerge, candidates may enter who lack strong social networks. Even in these cases, however, they have difficulty winning seats if they run in districts where strong social networks exist.

41. For instance, an elite survey conducted in Jordan found that candidates enter the race at the encouragement of family, friends, and the tribe. Interviews that a team of Jordanian researchers conducted with 60 candidates and campaign managers during the 2010 elections also found that candidates often began their campaigns after contacting, or being contacted by, family members. Ellen Lust, Sami Hourani and Mohammad Al-Momani, "Jordan Votes: Election or Selection?" *Journal of Democracy*, 22, 2 (April 2011), 119-129.

42. For discussion of the use of mosques to mobilize support in Tunisia, see Nébil Belaam, "The Case of Tunisian Elections Following the Arab Spring," *ESOMAR*, (September 2012). Importantly, in a campaign study conducted during Egypt's 2011-2012 elections, campaign attendees reported that they had attended an iftar with the candidate more frequently than they reported any other personal connection with the candidate.

43 Michele Dunne and Amr Hamzawy explain: "In 2000, only 145 NDP party candidates won seats, compared to the 166 members who quit the party to run as independents, defeated the NDP candidates, and then rejoined. In 2005, the same scene was repeated, with 170 NDP candidates winning versus 218 independents, all of whom rejoined the party." See "Will NDP independents win the elections again?" *Carnegie Commentary* (November 3, 2010), available at <http://egyptelections.carnegieendowment.org/2010/11/03/will-ndp-independents-win-the-elections-again>.

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Running the Race. Candidates' campaign strategies also depend on whether they are part of strong social networks, and how many such networks exist in their district. In both authoritarian and transitional regimes, there are striking differences between campaigns in areas where social ties are weak and those in which they are strong.

Candidates have a difficult time mobilizing voters in districts with weak social ties, particularly in authoritarian regimes. Citizens overwhelmingly believe that representatives are more likely to respond to one who is from their family or friends than one who is not. Where ties are weak, even though citizens may need a representatives' assistance to access resources, they have little confidence that the elected official would respond to them if he or she wins. And, when parties are weak, representatives' offices lightly staffed, and resources tight, citizens have little incentive to vote, especially under authoritarian regimes, where important national policies are generally not even at stake.

Candidates campaigning in these areas sometimes turn to short-term incentives to garner support. Providing dinners, foodstuffs, or monetary gifts can be a way to mobilize citizens who are otherwise disinterested in the electoral process.⁴⁴ Particularly when elections follow Ramadan, many candidates also take advantage of the holiday season to distribute goods, aiming in part to foster support in the upcoming elections.

Campaigns are quite different in areas with strong social ties. There, even candidates who are interested more in public policy and legislation than service provision know that their success in the election depends on demonstrating their commitment to the area. They often invest time and energy in strengthening their ties with the community long before elections begin, attending weddings and wakes, building clinics and community centers, to demonstrate their often heartfelt commitment to the people in the area. Others—often, but not exclusively, Islamists—invest in the service provision long before they entertain the idea of entering politics.

Campaign events are often aimed primarily at mobilizing the network of social support. For the most part, people attend events because they know and support the candidate; many are family, friends, and neighbors or attend religious events together. They come not to hear speeches or judge character, but to show support for their candidate and reinforce social ties.⁴⁵ The campaigns themselves are often quite festive events. Many at

44. The Egyptian survey found that 2% said they or someone they knew were offered monetary compensation in return for their vote in the last parliamentary elections, and 1% were offered gifts. In Tunisia, we find that 12% say they know someone who was offered food, gifts or money in return for their vote, while only 2% claimed to have been personally offered these incentives in return for their vote. A much higher percent claimed to have been offered a gift or money in the last elections, with 14% of Egyptians having been offered money and 13% offered gifts in the 2010 Parliamentary elections.

45. The Egyptian 2011 campaign study finds that people generally have a personal relationship with one of the candidates in the district. Nearly 1/3 of attendees have had the candidate in their house or a relatives' house for dinner, about 1/3 of attendees received personal help from the candidate, and even more attended iftar together. Of 1080 campaign attendees surveyed during the 2011-12 parliamentary elections, respondents frequently noted that they had personal relations with the candidate—friends (170), same

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first appear to be no more than a gathering of friends and family, accompanied by tea and sweets, videos or music. Rallying cries and political slogans, yet alone detailed presentations of political platforms, are largely absent.

The events are public, but where competing, tightly knit networks exist, they can border on exclusivity. Indeed, in the campaign study conducted during the 2010 Jordanian elections, one researcher was asked to leave a campaign tent because he was from another local family, and thus suspected of being a ‘spy.’ The candidate and his entourage did not believe the event could be used to sway the man’s vote. In districts with weak social networks, campaigns are more ‘open’ events aimed at mobilizing ‘swing’ voters, at times through the distribution of goods in exchange for votes.⁴⁶ Not surprisingly, surveys of individuals in the Jordanian and Egyptian 2010 campaigns found that a large percentage of respondents saw campaign events as “closed.”⁴⁷ Even in Tunisia’s 2011 campaign, twenty percent of individuals attending campaign events said that they viewed such events as exclusive.⁴⁸

Key Conclusions and Implications:

- Candidates’ entry in elections depends heavily on the encouragement and resources of family, friends and others in their social network.
- The importance of social networks, combined with relatively traditional notions of authority, may make it particularly difficult for women and youth to be nominated or run successfully for parliament.
- Especially where social networks are strong, campaigning focuses more on reinforcing social relations than providing strong policy platforms and information.
- Where social networks are strong and parties weak, a cyclical process makes development of programmatic politics difficult, even in transitioning regimes. Barriers to entry for candidates are low, which yields an overwhelming number of candidates. This further diminishes voters’ abilities to become informed about the political platforms at hand, which, in turn, reduces candidates’ incentives to develop and provide such information.
- In areas where social ties are weak, candidates have a difficult time mobilizing voters because ties between citizens and representatives are weak, whereas in

village, town or clan (418), family (127), friend of a friend (50), friend of a relative (79) and a neighbor (96)—far more frequently than they mentioned that they were from the same party (68) or from a party they like (97).

46. Ellen Lust, Sami Hourani, Mohammad Al-Momani, “Jordan Votes: Election or Selection?” *Journal of Democracy* 22: 2 (April 2011): 119-129.

47. In Egypt, a public intercept survey of nearly 2000 respondents conducted during the 2010 election campaigns found that 68 percent of individuals surveyed while they attended a campaign event said that they believed campaign events were open to all, 28 percent said they were not and 4 percent did not know; while of those surveyed through public intercept outside of events (about half of whom had attended an event previously), 53 percent said that the events were open to all, 39 percent believed they were not, and 8 percent did not know. A smaller public intercept survey of 180 non-attendees in Jordan found that 1/3 of those surveyed felt the events were not open to all.

48. The survey included 248 attendees at campaign events in October-November 2011.

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- areas where social ties are strong, it is easier for candidates to mobilize voters through their personal ties to the community.
- This creates special challenges for electoral programming:
 - Programs aimed at getting candidates to develop effective platforms and campaign strategies are unlikely to succeed in areas where candidates believe (often correctly) that strong social networks drive voting. Such programming is likely better focused on districts with weak networks and/or parties that are not tied into these networks.
 - As discussed below, programming may better focus on fostering demands for accountability even among those in one's social network.

5. *Who Votes and Why?*

Social ties influence whether citizens turn out to vote and which candidates they support. As discussed above, people believe that representatives respond to citizens' needs based on personal ties to individuals, not simply based on membership in their constituency or even support in previous elections. Whether or not they live in areas with strong social networks, citizens believe that appeals to a representative who is a member of the same family, tribe, village or neighborhood, or who attends the same mosque is more likely to be successful.

Candidate Choice. Thus, voters often cast their ballot for candidates not because their vote will ensure that the candidate will respond directly to their needs once elected, but rather because the candidate from their network will be better placed to meet their needs. Strong social ties also mean that voters often closely identify with the representative in parliament; having a member of one's social network in parliament is more than a material good, it is also the symbolic benefit of representation of one's tribe, family or network. As one Jordanian explained, "We need someone to represent the tribe in the parliament", or, another, "Everyone in [Jordan] needs a VIP to solve his problems."⁴⁹ Social ties, not just ballots cast, determine a legislator's responsiveness.

The same social ties that obligate the candidate to give special priority to the voter often also oblige the voter to support the candidate. Social obligation motivates even those who do not expect to need support in the future, or who expect their candidate will not win, to support a candidate close to them. Thus, for example, the 20-something shopkeeper in a *sha'abi* (popular) neighborhood in Cairo, when asked whom he voted for in Egypt's 2011-12 parliamentary elections, said he cast one vote for the Muslim Brotherhood (FJP) candidate because he thought they were the only 'real' party, and the other vote for his cousin. No explanation was necessary. So, too, well-off Jordanians see the only real choice of candidates as being between different members

49. Twenty-six year old Jordanian at one of the candidates tents in district three in Amman, November 7, 2010 (two days before the elections), cited in Ellen Lust, Sami Hourani, Mohammad El-Momani, "Jordan Votes: Election or Selection?" *Journal of Democracy* 22: 2 (April 2011).

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of their tribe; no others are considered. As Kristin Kao put it, “tribal voters are honor-bound to support family members in elections...”⁵⁰

This obligation does not exist equally across all social networks, nor does it impact all members of these networks equally. Some tribes, families, religious or business network have a greater influence than others, and the level of influence exerted over different members can vary. Different members of these networks may also be more or less influenced by the groups. For instance, Nebil Belaam reports that male relatives of the same family or tribe influence women’s decision-making more than they do other men, and that this influence is particularly important in Tunisia’s interior.⁵¹ So, too, educated, urban Jordanian tribal members sometimes report being less concerned about their tribal sheikh’s preferences. The point is not that social networks bind members equally, but rather that they play an important role.

Given this, it is not surprising that citizens tend to support those with whom they have close social ties. A CSS poll conducted in Jordan after the 2010 elections found that where tribal candidates were announced, 70% adhered to the consensus, and 48% said that it strengthened their participation. (Eighty-five percent of the population stated that tribes played a role in the elections.⁵²) When some form of personal tie—through family, tribe, personal relationship, or from the area—is taken into account, nearly 87% of respondents cast a personal vote. Similarly, a post-election survey conducted in Tunisia during September-October 2012 found that personal relations play an important role. When asked whether or not it was a factor taken into account in determining their vote, nearly one-third of respondents stated that family and friends’ support of the candidate (29%), endorsement by tribe or family (34%), personal connections with the candidate (31%) and candidates from their village or neighborhood (32%) played an important role. Social relationships count far more than policies, or even political skills.

Consequently, citizens spend little time during the campaign period seeking information about candidates or their positions. The vast majority (86%) of Jordanians decide whom they will support within a week of the official announcement of candidacy. Similarly, in Tunisia, the 2012 post-election survey found that nearly half (47%) made their decision at the beginning of the campaign, and another 19% had decide whom they would support by the middle of the campaign period. Even in transitional elections, when the number of candidates exploded and new issues were on the table, citizens did not take long to make their decision. They simply need to look at the slate to know which candidate was closest to their social network. Detailed assessments of candidates’ qualities and platforms are not necessary.

50. See Kristen Kao, “Jordan’s Ongoing Election Law Battle,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, (July 5, 2012), available at <http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/07/05/jordan-s-ongoing-election-law-battle/ck59>.

51. Belaam (2012)

52. “Public Opinion poll on Participation in Elections and Expectations around the 16th Parliament,” *Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan* (CSS), nd.

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In part, this is because parties and candidates generally still do not clearly articulate political platforms, even when major policy shifts are at stake. Most are inexperienced in formulating and presenting policy agendas; the rhetoric of elections often remains at the level of vague platitudes. In addition, the incredible number of parties and candidates—reaching 11,618 candidates running on 1,662 lists in Tunisia, 130 party lists and 2,500 independent candidates in Libya and 590 lists and 6,591 independent candidates in Egypt in 2011-12—leave citizens bewildered. Thus, when asked to identify the positions on economic and foreign policy of the major parties in Egypt and Tunisia, and including presidential candidates in Egypt’s summer 2012 elections, a large percentage of respondents stated they did not know. Those who did know chose a wide range of positions for parties, again suggesting that the parties were not communicating their policies effectively. Only on the issue of the role of religion in politics were voters more able to place party positions consistently.⁵³

In addition, although the pool of candidates has expanded, the basis for voting is little changed, especially in areas where social networks are strong. Individuals who previously had little chance of running—either because the former regime would have disqualified or harassed them, or because they would have been overshadowed by local strongmen who, having made peace with the regime, were able to distribute resources—now run (and sometimes win) in elections. Voting continues to rely on social networks, but the range of networks that are mobilized multiplies.

Turnout. Social networks also influence individuals’ decision to go to the polls. Here, there is an important distinction between elections under authoritarian and transitional regimes. Under authoritarian regimes, there is markedly higher turnout in areas where networks are strong than it is where they are weak. In transitional regimes, the gap in turnout between these areas narrows, as people who have never voted before are now more motivated to go to the polls.⁵⁴ The reasons that they do so, however, often vary depending on the nature of the district.

Under authoritarianism, citizens generally abstain from voting if they believe either that their representative will not seek to serve their selective interests or enhance their social prestige. In areas where social networks are strong (often rural districts), individuals are more likely to have personal relations with candidates and thus turn out to vote. In contrast, in urban areas, citizens do not believe any of the candidates would serve as a *wasta* for them, and they choose to stay home. Voting is higher in low income areas than middle- and upper-income areas, but for very different reasons: atomized individuals may not vote with the expectation of future services, but as elections near, their votes can be bought and, in poor areas, cheaply as well.

Consequently, voter turnout varies across countries and also within them, between areas that have more or less dense social networks. For instance, in Jordan we find that official

53. See Lindsay Benstead, Ellen Lust, Dhafer Malouche, Gamal Soltan, and Jakob Wichmann, “Institutions or Islam: What Really Threatens Democracy in Egypt and Tunisia?” (under review)

54. Voter turnout rises dramatically in the first elections of transitions. In Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, turnout was 46.42% in Egypt’s first round and 51% in the second round. 51.7% in Tunisia and 62% in Libya.

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figures reach 80 percent turnout in rural, tribal areas while turnout in Amman, where social networks are weak, was as low as 34 percent.⁵⁵ Much of Jordan's turnout is due to tribal mobilization. In Egypt, where social networks are generally weaker, turnout was about half that of Jordan, and there, too, rural areas had higher turnout than urban ones.⁵⁶

Differences in the number, size and authority of social networks also leads to differences in turnout across countries. This is illustrated by comparison of voting in Egypt and Jordan. In both countries, rural areas have dense social ties, but in Egypt, the social groups—primarily families—are much smaller than in Jordan where tribes dominate. And, we find very different behavior. In rural Egypt, Tarek Masoud and I have found that the larger the number of candidates, the higher the voter turnout. There, more candidates meant the activation of more small networks, and more votes. The opposite was true in rural Jordan. There, higher voter turnout was found in districts with fewer candidates because the tribes that were cohesive enough to hold tribal primaries and coordinate on candidates were also good at mobilizing voters.⁵⁷

People can interpret much of what is often seen as vote-buying or gift-giving quite differently, depending on the social relations. It is hard to know how much vote buying takes place in the Arab world. Many believe that vote brokers play some role in getting voters to the polls, particularly in areas where voters are otherwise uninterested in the outcomes, and there is certainly evidence that this takes place.⁵⁸ Yet, while some see non-monetary gifts as 'vote-buying', others, especially those in areas where campaigns are primarily mobilizing social networks, see it as basic hospitality.⁵⁹ It is to be expected: a social ritual that cements mutual bonds.

Key Conclusions and Implications.

- Social networks affect citizens' expectations over elections. Citizens, especially in districts with strong social networks, often focus on the delivery of services and

55. Turnout available at Ministry of Interior website: MOI.GOV.JO (Arabic)

56. I thank Lisa Anderson for pointing out that size also likely plays a role. It is one thing for the Hashemite Kingdom to mobilize voters among its six million people (the action of most it can safely predict) than for Egypt to encourage voters with a population of more than 80 million.

57. Ellen Lust and Tarek Masoud, "Cash or Kinship? Voting and Social Ties in the Developing World," unpublished manuscript.

58. In Jordan 2010 poll, 23% said that they personally knew someone who had sold their vote. See also footnote 44.

59. Asked whether gift-giving was the same as vote-buying, surveys of 977 campaign attendees during Egypt's 2010 elections found that 34 percent thought gift-giving and vote-buying were equivalent, 30 percent believed they were not, and 36 percent did not know or refused to answer. A public intercept survey of 558 non-participants during the same elections found that 47 percent believed that they were equivalent, 19 percent did not think they were the same, and 34 percent did not know or refused to answer. However, the general population may see the situation differently, largely equating vote-buying and gift-giving. According to our survey conducted in Egypt 2011-12, found that 23% of respondents believed they were obligated to give their vote to the candidate from which they received money, and 22% said they were obligated to give their vote to the candidate from which they received gifts or food. The Tunisian Post-Election Survey found that 23% of Tunisians felt obligated to support a candidate whether they received money or gifts. That is, the majority of Tunisians did not report obligation regardless of whether they were given gifts or food, but the percentage who view this as obligatory is the same for both incentives.

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- social prestige. Potential voters in areas with weak networks concentrate on the delivery of short-term benefits (especially in low-income areas) or policies.
- Particularly in areas of strong networks, citizens exert little effort in searching for information about candidates. When they attend elections, they do so to demonstrate support and maintain social relations, not to gain information.
 - Programming on citizen education—especially in transitioning regimes—should concentrate on demanding accountability, even from those within one’s social network. It should also concentrate on the role of parliament (e.g., policy-making and public good provision vs. selective service delivery).
 - Anti-corruption and rule-of-law programming, as well as programs aimed at shoring up bureaucratic transparency and efficiency (e.g., undermining the need for *wasta*) should also be conceived of as part of electoral programming.

6. *Who Wins, and with What Consequence?*

The influence of social networks has important implications on electoral outcomes. It impacts 1) who wins, 2) how they do so, and 3) the consequences in terms of post-electoral violence and parliamentary incentives.

Who Wins. The exact nature of the influence depends to some extent on whether elections are under authoritarian or transitional regimes, for legislatures or presidents, and in different electoral systems. In each case, however, it is useful to distinguish between areas according to their social networks.

Districts with Strong Social Ties. Here, candidates focused on their commitment to serving local development as a whole, or at least the individuals within the area, and they demonstrate their commitment through strong social ties. Those who can claim to be the ‘*ibn al-balad*’, tribal candidate, or others with broad networks are more likely to win seats.

Where electoral rules allow candidates to run as independents—as in Jordan or Egypt under Mubarak, these candidates stand a good chance of winning in these districts. Indeed, in Egypt, NDP members who did not win the party nomination but decided to run independently could win seats in these districts under the Mubarak period.⁶⁰ Moreover, the majority of votes that went to candidates came from their home-area.⁶¹ In transitional Tunisia, winning lists in such areas were often composed of local elites not running on the major party labels.

Weak Social Ties, but Lower Income Areas. Social ties may not be as strong, broad or hierarchical in these areas, but candidates can garner support through temporal bonds of support, often through exchange of material resources. Sometimes, they can also garner support through mobilizing smaller, local intermediaries, although even in these cases,

60. Michele Dunne and Amr Hamzawy (2010)

61. Tarek Masoud, “Why Islam Wins: Electoral Ecologies and Economies of Political Islam in Contemporary Egypt,” (PhD diss., Yale University, 2008).

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goods often change hands to cement support. Well-endowed candidates or parties that have greater mobilization capacity are more likely to win seats in these areas.

Weak Social Ties, Middle and Upper-Income Areas. The third type of area is the urban, middle- to upper-class areas in which candidates programmatic politics and candidates' charisma is more important than service provision. In these areas, there is less need for representatives that provide *wasta* and greater interest in national-level politics. In authoritarian regimes, when policies do not matter, voter turnout tends to be low in these districts, although it is here that opposition parties may more frequently garner votes. In developing democracies, these tend to be areas that vote for opposition candidates. Again, voters are willing to vote for candidates that are not necessarily well-connected to state resources, and they are frequently frustrated with what they see as incompetence and corruption in the state.

Margins of Victory. The multitude of candidates entering the race means that the margins of victory tend to be quite small. The distribution of votes across candidates depends not only (or perhaps even as much) on their political positions as it does on societal organization in the district. Where there is a large network, and particularly one capable of coordinating on candidates, large margins of victory are possible. Where such networks are absent, or where competing networks exist, margins of victory are often narrow.⁶²

This is the case in both authoritarian and transitional regimes. In Jordan's 2010 parliamentary elections, 12 seats (10 percent of the total) were decided with less than 100 votes separating winners and losers.⁶³ In Libya's 2012 GNC elections, 36 of the 120 independent candidates won their seats with less than 10 percent of the votes, and in 25 of the races, the last winner and first loser were separated by fewer than 300 votes.

Of course, electoral laws influence the extent to which candidates can coordinate and margins of victory are small. For instance, as NDI notes, in Jordan's 2010 elections, the margins of victory were greatest in areas where virtual sub-districting allowed candidates to pick districts. Candidates could coordinate, allowing for landslide victories as well as the most votes for women, who also strategically chose not to compete against each other.⁶⁴

Election Violence. Elections also foster violence, in part because they are not only contests between competing political platforms and services, but also between competing identity groups. Attention often focuses on tribal violence, but it is important to recognize that similar violence between competing social networks takes place where tribal structures are absent.

62. Exceptions are political entrepreneurs who can mobilize support through short-term benefits (e.g., votes and gifts) or charismatic leadership and populist promises.

63. "Final International Election Observation Report on the Jordanian Parliamentary Elections," *National Democratic Institute*, (Nov. 9, 2010), available at <http://www.ndi.org/files/Jordan-International-Election-Report-2010-ENG.pdf>.

64. Ibid.

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Yemen and Jordan provide useful examples, partly because tribes' roles in politics are easily discerned. For instance, a Carnegie report finds that "Unfair political competition has triggered violent clashes among tribes during previous election cycles. In Radaa, for instance, a 2006 clash that started because of competition among local council candidates resulted in a tribal conflict in which at least 47 people were killed. Election-related violence has been reported in tribal al-Jawf, Marib, Amran, Dhamar, and other areas as well."⁶⁵ A similar assessment comes from Jordan, where post-election violence in the Jordan Valley, Balqa, Mafraq, and Zarqa was attributed to inter- and intra-tribal competition.⁶⁶

Electoral violence does not just affect relations between competing social groups, but it also plays an important role in tribe-state relations. As the report notes, the violence is also aimed at gaining the state's attention: "In some cases, families complained that the government could have helped their candidates but chose to help others, a complaint that highlights the extent to which they believe elections are not transparent. Others suggested that the violence would signal tribal strength, making the state fear, respect and therefore reward them."⁶⁷

Incumbent Turnover. As noted previously, large numbers of entrants, low margins of victory in past elections and weak political institutions result from and promote high turnover in parliamentary seats.

Turnover has been high in authoritarian regimes across the region. For example, in 2010, Jordan saw nearly 2/3 turnover in parliamentary seats,⁶⁸ and in 2007, 3/4 of the representatives entered for the first time.⁶⁹ Similarly, in Egypt under Mubarak, reelection rates remained low as well; incumbency rates dropped from a high of 42 percent in 1984 to 19 percent in 2005.⁷⁰

High turnover is likely to persist in transitional regimes as well. In Tunisia and Libya, there is loud grumbling on the streets over frustration with representatives, and in Egypt, anger at the dissolution of parliament was muted somewhat due to anger about how the parliament itself had acted. Not surprisingly, in surveys of Egyptians and Tunisians we

65. Nadwa Al-Dawsari, "Tribal Governance and Stability in Yemen," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, (April 2012), available at

http://carnegieendowment.org/files/yemen_tribal_governance.pdf

66. "Final International Election Observation Report on the Jordanian Parliamentary Elections," *National Democratic Institute*, (Nov. 9, 2010), available at <http://www.ndi.org/files/Jordan-International-Election-Report-2010-ENG.pdf>.

67. *Ibid.*, 72.

68. "Jordan Loyalists Sweep Election", *AlJazeera*, Nov. 10, 2010, (<http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2010/11/2010111011597439770.html>).

69. Arab Election Watch, "Jordan and Municipal and Parliamentary Elections," (<http://www.intekhabat.org/look/en-article.tpl?IdLanguage=1&IdPublication=1&NrArticle=4320&NrIssue=2&NrSection=1>)

70. Lisa Blaydes, *Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak's Egypt* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 57-58.

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find that about 1/3 of respondents in each country would not vote for the same candidate as they did in the past election, and another 1/3 are undecided.

Key Conclusions and Implications:

- Social networks influence who wins elections and how. Independent candidates with strong social networks are likely to be more successful in IC seats.
- Margins of victory vary according to electoral institutions and social networks. Large margins of victory are possible where social networks are strong and the district boundary closely matches the community.
- Narrow margins of victory accompanying competing networks often lead to post-election violence.
- Programming aimed at mitigating post-electoral violence should be targeted to areas with strong social networks.
- Programming in the post-election period should concentrate on parliament strengthening, anticipating the high percentage of new representatives in the body.

7. Conclusion

Focusing on the relationship between social networks and electoral politics, this report draws three broad conclusions:

1. *Elections are not always simply “political” contests over resources and policies.* The conventional view of elections suggests that social ties and organization matters only to the extent to which they influence individuals’ attitudes toward candidates, their ability to engage in elections, etc. This is sometimes the case; however, social and political spheres are often intertwined. In engaging in elections, people may not simply be making a political decision informed by social circumstances, but are instead engaging in a social act with political implications. *What is social is political, but also a political move is social.*

The point is not that political choices are also always social in all cases, but that they are in some circumstances. When political choices have social implications,, elections should not simply be viewed as one-to-one exchanges of votes for goods (whether present or future, policies or material incentives) between citizens and candidates, but rather as part of long-term, often mutual, communal social obligations.

2. *Political institutions are not the only structures shaping electoral behavior.* . But, variations in social organization, both at local and national levels, influence preferences over political institutions (e.g., electoral laws, district boundaries, etc) and their impact.
3. *Elections have ‘multiple meanings.’* Citizens in the same country, the same year engage in very different exercises depending on more local social arrangements. Differences in societal organization affects the questions of what is at

stake/driving electoral behavior, and these organizations vary within countries as well as between them, then it follows that even within the same political regime or set of electoral institutions, elections mean different things to different voters. It is not just that some people vote on economic policy while others vote on foreign policy, but that some vote to register policy concerns while others are engaged in maintaining strong social ties. This may help to explain differences in voting patterns— both in terms of turnout and voter choice.

At issue is not simply that voters take different factors into consideration, but that the process in which they are engaged differs based on social ties and organization. This should influence programming:

- Programming aimed at countering the negative impact of ethnic politics or clientelistic practices should consider how variations in social networks/organization underlying these networks may make seemingly-similar processes distinct.
- Programming aimed at party strengthening and campaigning should take into account that candidate and voters take social relations and obligations into consideration in addition to political preferences and resources. The extent to which these factors matter depends on the nature of social organization in the district. As a result, campaign training, party strengthening and other programs must take into account both social and political structures, recognizing how ‘appropriate’ strategies may differ significantly, both across countries and within them.
- Electoral law assistance must recognize the ways in which societal organization shapes elites’ incentives over electoral laws. Important trade-offs may exist between conventional, tractable arrangements (purely PR or majoritarian systems) that promote citizen education, conflict adjudication, and party strategizing, and attempts to mitigate domestic conflict.
- Programming intended to promote the representation of women and youth must recognize that the social organization not only often limits the possibility of these groups attaining seats without assistance, but also influences which members of these groups are likely to win seats. Such factors should be taken into account in training and empowerment programs, as well as in providing advice on institutional arrangements intended to address these problems.

Figure 1: Rural/Urban Areas and Social Network Density in Egypt, 2011

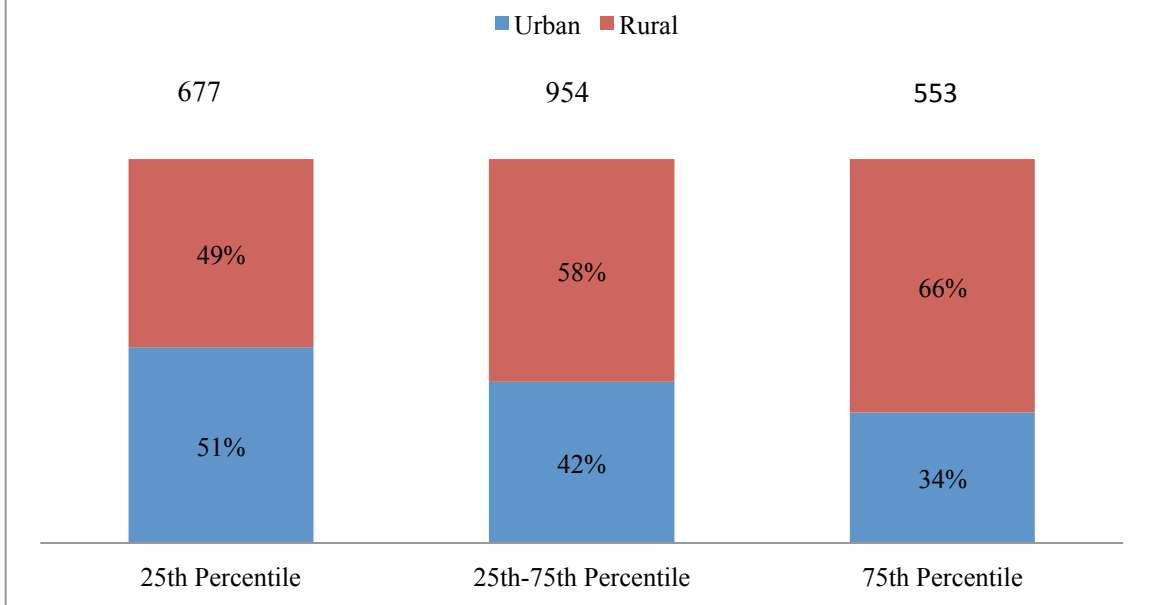


Figure 2: Locality Level Social Networks and Views on What Parliamentarians Should Devote Time on in Egypt

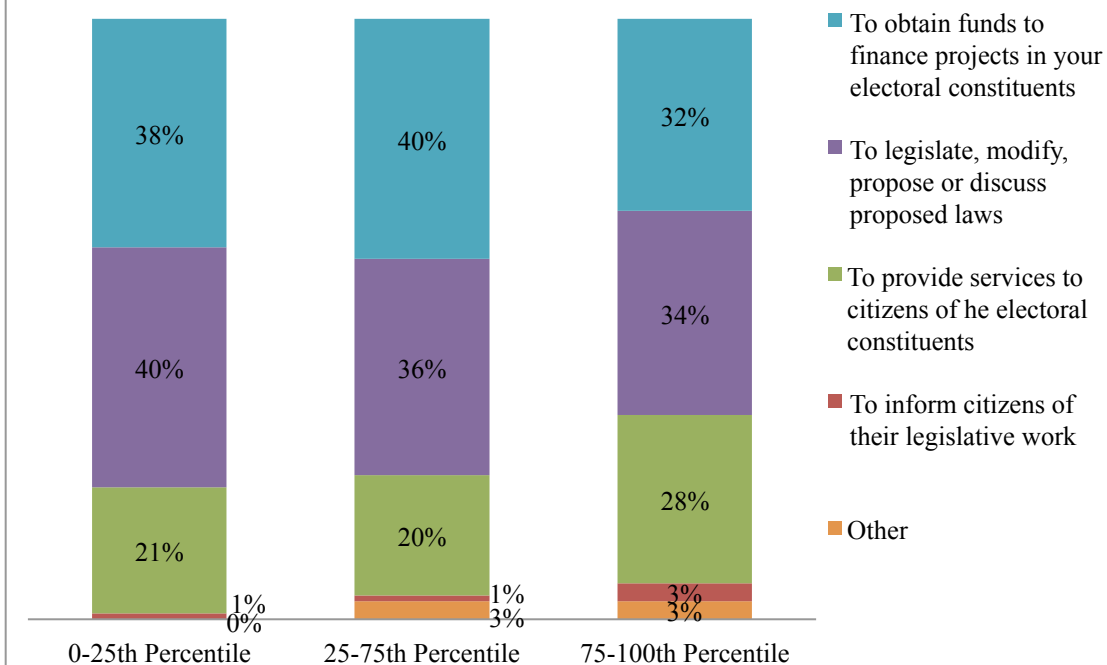
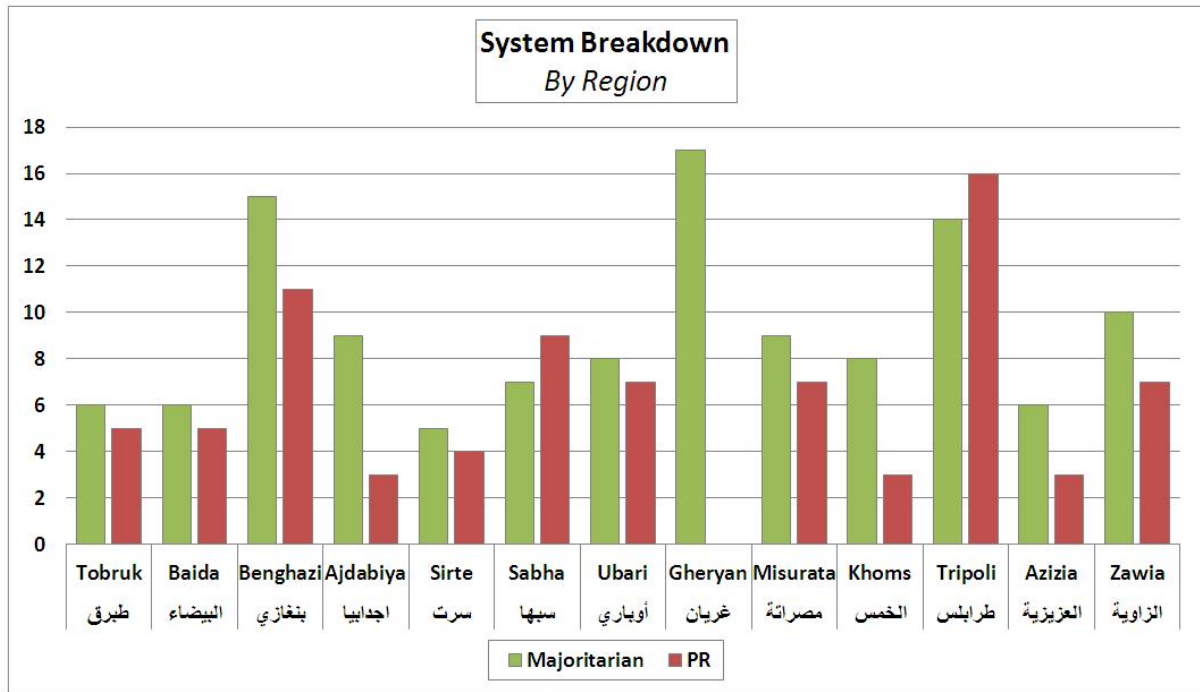


Figure 3: Distribution of Seats in Districts, Libya 2012 GNC Elections



Source: David Jandura, *Ahwa Talk blog*, (July 4, 2012) available at <http://ahwataalk.com/2012/07/04/libyas-electoral-system/>.

Table 1 Women's Legislative Representation of Use of Quotas in the Middle East and North Africa

Country	Lower or single House % Women	Upper House % Women	Quota/Appointed Seats
Algeria	31.60%	5.10%	A 2012 quota law stipulates that any party list of candidates for legislative elections or elections to wilayas and communal assemblies must include a one-third proportion of women candidates.
Bahrain	10.00%	27.50%	Women appointed to upper chamber
Egypt	2.00%	2.8%	2011 election law: one woman should be included on each party list.
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	3.10%	---	
Iraq	25.20%	---	Quota Law: one out of first three candidates on a list must be woman
Israel	20.00%		Voluntary party quotas: Israel Labor Party 25% quota with no placement stipulation; Meretz-Yachad, women should make up 40% of party lists, Likud: at least one woman among to 10 after primaries.
Jordan	10.80%	11.70%	Reserved seats: Cabinet adopted a new 'temporary' election law (2010), raising the number of

			reserved seats for women from 6 to 12
Kuwait	6.30%	---	
Lebanon	3.10%	---	
Libya	17.00%	---	Article 15, Law on the Election of the National General Congress, May 2012, provides for the mandatory alternation of male and female candidates on the list of candidates submitted by parties for the proportional contest.
Morocco	17.00%	2.20%	Reserved seats: Voluntary Party quota, The Socialist Union of Popular Forces has 20% quota for party lists
Oman	1.20%	18.10%	Both men and women are appointed to the upper house
Saudi Arabia	0%		
Sudan	24.61%	17.90%	Reserved seats: 25%
Syrian Arab Republic	12.00%		
Tunisia	26.70%	---	According to 2011 quota law on parity at least half of party list is made up of women, alternating between men and women throughout the list
Turkey	14.20%	---	
United Arab Emirates	17.50%	---	1 woman elected, 7 appointed
Yemen	0.30%	1.80%	Both men and women are appointed to the upper house

Aili Tripp presentation to 5th Session of Working Group on Discrimination Against Women in Law and in Practice, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Geneva, October 3, 2012.

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Table 2. Women's Legislative Representation in Jordan

	Election 1989	Election 1993	Election 1997	Election 2003	Election 2007	Election 2010
Women elected	0	1	-	6	7	12
Governorates	-		-	Zarqa, Madaba, Irbid, Tafileh, Kerak, Tafila	Madaba, Tafileh, Karak, Zarqa, Irbid, Balqa	Tafileh, Amman, Ma'an, Balqaa, Zarqa, Karak, Aqaba, Mafrq, Irbid, Jerash, Northern Badia, Ajloun
Female candidates	12	3	17	54	199	134
Name of the candidates		Toujan Faisal		Dr. Hayat Husayn Ali al-Musaymi, Falak Suleiman Mubarak Jumani, Nariman Zuhayr Ahmad Rusan, Insaf Ahmad Salama al-Khawalida, Zakiya Muhammed Suleiman al-Shamayila, Adab Mubarak Salih al-Sa'ud	Insaf Khawaldeh, Hamdieh Nawwaf Qweider, Reem Abdul Razzaq, Tharwat Salameh Amr, Nariman Rousan, Amneh Gharaghir, Falak al-Jam'ani	Dr. Amal Al Rouf'a, Abba Abu Olba, Asma Rawathyeh, Huda Abu Ruman, Rodaina Al-Atti, Kholoud Al-Marahleh, Tamam Al-Reyati, Dr. Samia Olimat, Nariman Al-Rousan, Wafa Bani Moustafa, Myassar Al-Sardiyah, Salma Al-Rabadi

Sources: Building Democracy in Jordan – Women's Political Participation, Political Party Life and Democratic Elections by IDEA and ANND

http://www.idea.int/publications/dem_jordan/upload/Jordan_country_report_English.pdf;

[http://www.electionguide.org/country-](http://www.electionguide.org/country-news.php?ID=110)

[news.php?ID=110http://www.uam.es/otroscentros/TEIM/election_watch/Jordan/electoral_news_Jordan.htm](http://www.uam.es/otroscentros/TEIM/election_watch/Jordan/electoral_news_Jordan.htm)