AVOIDING THE ARAB SPRING? THE POLITICS OF LEGITIMACY IN KING

MOHAMMED VI'S MOROCCO

by

MARGARET J. ABNEY

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Student: Margaret J. Abney

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This thesis has been accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in the Department of Political Science by:

Craig Parsons   Chairperson
Karrie Koesel   Member
Tuong Vu   Member

and

Kimberly Andrews Espy   Vice President for Research and Innovation;
                         Dean of the Graduate School

Original approval signatures are on file with the University of Oregon Graduate School.

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THESIS ABSTRACT

Margaret J. Abney

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    Morocco

During the 2011 Arab Spring protests, the Presidents of Egypt and Tunisia lost their seats as a result of popular protests. While protests occurred in Morocco during the same time, King Mohammed VI maintained his throne. I argue that the Moroccan king was able to maintain his power because of factors that he has because he is a king. These benefits, including dual religious and political legitimacy, additional control over the military, and a political situation that make King Mohammed the center of the Moroccan political sphere, are not available to the region's presidents.

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Margaret J. Abney

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

    University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon
    Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa

DEGREES AWARDED:

    Master of Arts, Political Science, 2013, University of Oregon
    Bachelor of Arts, Politics, 2009, Drake University

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

    Teaching Assistant, Department of Political Science, University of Oregon,
        Eugene, OR, 2010-2012

    Foreign English Teacher, Handan Foreign Language School, Handan, Hebei
        Province, China, 2009-2010

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إلى أساتذتي اللغة العربية، بنات الثورة المصرية:

"المكتوب على الجبين لازم تشوفه العين."

To my Arabic professors, daughters of the Egyptian revolution:

"One's destiny is to be seen by the eye."

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Ahead of the 2010 beginnings of the Arab Spring protests, Morocco faced many of the same political and economic conditions as other countries in the Middle East and North Africa. However, the presence of similar conditions did not lead Morocco to have similar results – namely, a popular uprising that led to the stepping down of the country's ruler – that was observed in countries such as Egypt and Tunisia. The puzzle of the Moroccan king's staying power leads to three questions about this outcome as of late-2011, at which point it had become clear that the king survived the Arab Spring unscathed. 1) What structural conditions were present in Morocco that made it more or less likely that the king would maintain power? 2) What, if any, distinctive strategies did King Mohammed VI use to stay in power? 3) What are the most important features of the Moroccan regime that help to maintain monarchical control?

The questions posed in this study are top-down, in that they focus on the ways in which the king of Morocco had an impact on the political situation in his country during the Arab Spring protests. There are reasons to think that, at least for an initial focus, a top-down approach seems justified in this case. In comparison to other regional countries in which regime change did occur because of the protests, there are not obvious reasons to think that Moroccan society was more splintered or less able to mobilize than those societies that overthrew their leaders during the Arab Spring that these variables were the main reasons the protests failed to induce regime change. While research about the strategies and shortcomings of the February 20th Movement – the group of Moroccan protestors active during the spring of 2011 – is necessary for a fuller understanding of the

events of Morocco's Arab Spring, this study will focus primarily on the role of the king and the conditions present in the monarchy to answer the above questions. This approach is supported by literatures on the relative weakness of and divisions within both political parties[1] and Islamist opposition groups (some of whom do not necessarily advocate for democratic political change),[2] as well as those literatures that focus on the centrality of the king within the Moroccan political sphere.[3] A central theme of these literatures is that the political system and civil society are set up in such ways that make large-scale political change in Morocco very dependent upon the king's participation; that is to say, if the king objects to a political change, his position and resources make it likely that he will be able to manipulate events so that change does not occur.

While there is value in studying the reasons for the splintered nature of Moroccan politics and the tactical choices made by the Moroccan protestors, and to have a complete understanding of the events that occurred, both issues must be taken into account, the scope of this project means that choices must be made about which group to study. Focusing on the strength of the king vis-à-vis society and the policies he made to head off the effects of the protests is one of several viable avenues for understanding the events of the Arab Spring in Morocco. I chose to focus this study on the king because of his documented centrality in the political system – in terms of the protests, this means that the king had an impact on how the protestors acted (by limiting their calls to those for a constitutional monarchy rather than for full regime change) as well as the outcomes of the protest. Without rejecting the fact that a larger study would develop a more complete

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[1] See Benchemsi 2012b; Hammoudi 1997; D. Maghraoui 2008; Cavatorta and Durac 2010

[2] See Bellin 2005; Ottaway and Riley 2008; Joffé 2011; Cavatorta and Durac 2010

[3] See Molina 2011; Brumberg 2002; Korany 1998; Herb 2004; Hammoudi 1997

picture of the events using several of these avenues, as matter of feasibility, focusing on the regime and its strategies and characteristics, rather than on the strategies and characteristics of the protestors, is a reasonable option.

In the next sections of this paper, I will provide a brief overview of the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco. I will then explore the literature on authoritarian resilience, in order to determine what conditions, features, and strategies of regimes should be prevalent in a regime that withstands popular protest. Then, I will take each of these groups of factors and apply them more specifically to the 2011 Moroccan context to determine how or whether Morocco differs from other regional countries on these factors. Finally, I will use these differences or similarities to test hypotheses about why the king of Morocco was able to stay in power while other regional rulers lost their positions because of the Arab Spring protests. I will argue that King Mohammed VI was able to make use of features of his regime – namely, the religious and political legitimacy bestowed upon him because he is a monarch, not an elected president as in Tunisia and Egypt – to maintain his power during and after the Arab Spring protests in his country.

CHAPTER II

THE ARAB SPRING

1. The Arab Spring: A Brief Summary

On 17 December 2010, a college-educated fruit vendor, Mohammed Bouazizi, set himself on fire in his hometown of Sidi Bouzi – located in central Tunisia – to protest mistreatment by the police and the lack of opportunity in his country.[4] For the next few weeks, protests spread throughout the country with the organizing help of the Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT),[5] eventually arriving in the capital city of Tunis on 12 January 2011.[6] The Tunisian protestors called for the ouster of President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, who had been in power since 1987, and the ending of corrupt practices by his close associates.[7] Once the protests reached the capital, Ben Ali attempted to end the demonstrations by offering a series of political reforms, which were seen as too little, too late, and by calling on the army, unsuccessfully, to use force to quiet the population.[8] Two days later, on 14 January, the president stepped down and fled to Saudi Arabia.[9] The next day, the Tunisian prime minister resigned his position and new elections as well as a constitutional reform process were scheduled.[10]

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[4] Noueihed and Warren 2012, 74

[5] Lynch 2012, 77

[6] Kirkpatrick 2011c

[7] Noueihed and Warren 2012, 76

[8] Lynch 2012, 79

[9] Kirkpatrick 2011d

[10] Kirkpatrick 2011b

On 25 January, inspired by the protests in Tunisia, thousands of Egyptians took the streets – most notably in Cairo's Tahrir Square – to demand the end of the nearly 30-year rule of President Hosni Mubarak.[11] As the protests continued into February, the Muslim Brotherhood, which had been banned from active participation in the political process since 2005, joined in the protests.[12] In an attempt to stay in power, the president went on television on 10 February to announce that he would step down at the end of his term.[13] This move angered protestors, nearly one million of whom flooded the streets of Cairo demanding his immediate resignation. The next day, Mubarak fled the capital for his home in Sharm el-Sheik, and left his vice president to give a statement saying that temporary power had been handed over to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces to manage the country's affairs until a new constitution could be written and elections could be held.[14]

From 17 January until 19 February 2011, riots occurred in Tangier, Morocco, over high unemployment rates and increases in utility prices.[15] Young activists used social media and other technologies to call for protests in the style of those that had occurred in Tunisia and Egypt; their Twitter hashtag (#Feb20) became the name of their movement: February 20 Movement.[16] These activists began planning the protests in

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[11] Fahim and El-Naggar 2011

[12] Shane 2011

[13] Fahim and Cambanis 2011

[14] Kirkpatrick 2011a

[15] Joffé 2011, 510

[16] Lawrence 2011

January 2011, inspired by the fall of Tunisia's President Ben Ali.[17] Ahead of the large, planned protest, however, the official news agency of Morocco released a statement, claiming that the demonstrations had been cancelled, seemingly a ploy to limit turnout at these protests.[18] This wave of protests did not have the effect the demonstrators had hoped for, and in fact, the February 20 protests were largely seen as a failure in their attempt to spark a nation-wide protest in the way that Egyptians and Tunisians had turned out across their countries in such large numbers.[19]

After the protests had continued for a few weeks, on 9 March, King Mohammed gave a rare televised speech in which he appointed a committee to explore the possibilities of constitutional reform.[20] He promised such changes as "the rule of law," an "independent judiciary" and an "elected government that reflects the will of the people."[21] Of significance, however, is the fact that he failed to make any reference to the protestors; one scholar speculates that "he wanted to give the reforms a top-down character and insinuate that a monarch acts freely and does not bow to popular protests."[22] He also failed to mention the concept of a parliamentary monarchy (which some of the protestors had called for), but rather, he remarked, "new reforms will shore up the current process, thus reflecting the deep, mutual understanding and cohesion

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[17] Rahman 2011

[18] Lalami 2011a

[19] Lynch 2012, 141

[20] Lynch 2012, 141

[21] Benchemsi 2012b, 58

[22] Gallala-Arndt 2012, 142

between the throne and the loyal Moroccan people."[23] The next day, the king appointed

an 18-member constitutional commission to follow through with the examination of

possible changes promised in his speech.[24]

As the constitutional reform process continued, so did the protests. At the

beginning of 2011, the protests had mostly been centered in the major cities in the

country, such as Casablanca, Tangier and Rabat, and the protestors had been

predominately middle class students.[25] During March and April, however, the protests

spread to more than 60 cities throughout Morocco and attracted a more diverse group of

people.[26]

At the end of April, however, the protests nearly stopped altogether, after

terrorists attacked a popular restaurant in Marrakesh, killing over a dozen people.[27]

Regime security forces took advantage of the situation of the violence and "call[ed] for a

return to public order in the name of security."[28] Some members of the opposition

accused the government of using these attacks to justify cracking down on dissent

throughout the country; some others believed that the attacks meant that the protestors

would not be able to push for as many reforms as they would have been able to before the

act of terrorism.[29] While the terror attacks halted the protests for a time, by the end of

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[23] Lalami 2011a

[24] Traub 2012

[25] Lazare 2011

[26] El-Din Haseeb 2011, 114

[27] Lynch 2012, 141

[28] Lynch 2012, 141

[29] Alami 2011a

May, protesters were marching throughout the country in the largest demonstrations seen thus far. These protests were violently broken up by police using clubs; activists estimate that dozens of people were injured in the city of Casablanca alone.[30] To counter these protests, the king announced a snap referendum on the set of constitutional reforms.[31]

The new constitution was released to the public on 17 June.[32] At this time, the king gave a speech encouraging his citizens to vote 'yes' on the changes; in this speech, he implied that the vote would help create a solution to the conflict in Western Sahara and used Koranic scriptures to suggest that supporting the referendum was a religious duty.[33] The king's decision to endorse publicly the new constitution was seen by some in the opposition that the king was unwilling to surrender any of his power, because he was trying to use his popularity to influence the outcome of the election.[34] The February 20 Movement, joined by banned political parties of various political ideologies, encouraged their supporters to boycott the vote, as the amendment process had been tainted because "the suggested draft [was] not made up by an elected commission, but rather by people nominated by the king."[35] On the other hand, the country's major political parties – the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP), the conservative Istiqlal Party, and the Islamist Party of Justice and Development (PJD) urged their supporters to vote 'yes' on the referendum. Two weeks later on 1 July, the referendum to approve the document was

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[30] Sharma 2011

[31] Lynch 2012, 142

[32] Traub 2012

[33] Almiraat 2011

[34] Alami 2011a

[35] Russeau 2011

held; the vote passed with 98.5percent approval and 72 percent turnout, though outside observers note that these officially released numbers are likely highly inflated.[36] The rush to the referendum was "meant to take full advantage of the monarchy's new momentum" by leaving opponents little time to organize against it.[37]

On 25 November, the first parliamentary elections under the new constitution were held; turnout was 45 percent, higher than the historically low rate of 37 percent that was observed in the 2007 elections.[38] The Party of Justice and Development won a plurality of the seats (27 percent); their leader Abdelilah Benkirane was chosen as prime minister.[39] Despite a constitutional amendment process and parliamentary elections, very little had changed in Morocco because of the Arab Spring protests. The king retained – in fact, if not on paper – much of his power, unlike the presidents of Tunisia and Egypt.

2. Literature Review

The sub-sections below will examine three broad categories of arguments that may help to explain why the king of Morocco was able to maintain his power, while other leaders in the region fell to the Arab Spring protests. These broad categories are structural conditions, regime features, and regime strategies and actions. I demonstrate that, while it may be true that the king succeeded in holding off the effects of the protests observed in other countries because his regime was constructed in more robust ways, an understanding of the structural conditions, such as unemployment rates and a 'youth bulge' in population, will help to show that the difference in outcome in Morocco is

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[36] Traub 2012

[37] Benchemsi 2012b, 58

[38] McCurdy 2011

[39] McCurdy 2011

likely not caused by underlying structural condition. Though the empirical subject of this paper is the events in Morocco, I will examine literature that discusses regime strategies and regime features that not just focuses on Morocco, but also on accounts that display regime strengths and weaknesses that come from elsewhere in the Arab world and the authoritarianism literature in general.

a. Structural Conditions

Scholars have pointed to several region-wide conditions that could explain the outbreak of the Arab Spring protests. These factors set the conditions to which the leaders of these countries were reacting. Among these are unemployment (particularly among youth), demographic challenges, fallout from economic liberalization policies, and government corruption. These conditions were not confined just to one country; rather they were prolific across the region. Table 2.1 below highlights some of the conditions facing regional countries – Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia – ahead of the beginning of the 2010 protests. Of the three countries listed, two – Egypt and Tunisia – overthrew their presidents because of the Arab Spring protests. In contrast, the Jordanian king, a pre-Arab Spring monarch, maintained his throne. The section below examines the broad structural conditions that scholars have noted as being present and pertinent ahead of the uprisings in many countries across the Middle East and North Africa. In chapter III, I will examine the same structural conditions as they pertain to the Moroccan context in more detail, and the actions the king took in reaction to them.

Table 2.1 – Structural Conditions in Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia

	Egypt	Jordan	Tunisia
Youth			
Median Age [a]	24	21	29
% of Population under 24 [b]	53	53	40
% of Unemployed Young Men [c]	17	23	31
% of Unemployed Young Women [d]	48	46	29
Economics			
GDP per Capita [e]	$2,698	$4,666	$4,194
Gini Coefficient [f] (0= most equal)	34.4 ('05)	39.7 ('07)	40.0 ('01)
Transparency Intl [g] (10 = most clean)	3.1	4.7	4.3
Development			
HDI (2009) (1.0 = most developed)	0.638[h]	0.694[i]	0.692[j]
Internet Users (per 100 persons)[k]	35.6	35.7	38.8
Cell Phone Subscriptions (per 100 persons)[l]	87	107	106

Data is from 2010, unless otherwise noted.

[a] Youth Unemployment in MENA, 5

[b] Mirkin 2010

[c] Youth Unemployment in MENA, 11

[d] Youth Unemployment in MENA, 11

[e] World Bank 2013a

[f] Central Intelligence Agency 2012

[g] Transparency International 2010

[h] UNDP 2011a

[i] UNDP 2011b

[j] UNDP2011d

[k] World Bank 2013b

[l] World Bank 2013c

As detailed in the table above, these countries have young populations, with the median age of these populations being between 21-29 years old as of 2010. Although there are noted discrepancies between the official unemployment rates and those published by non-governmental agencies (NGOs), unemployment is high for young people across the region, as countries struggle to deal with the results of the youth bulge, which included the need for more jobs than their economies were producing; strains put on the educational system by larger numbers of pupils; and brain drain, as educated young people who were frustrated with the lack of jobs in their home country migrated to Europe or the Gulf States.[40] In Tunisia, for instance, more than four percent of the population lives in these foreign regions.[41]

In the years preceding the Arab Spring, the countries of the Middle East and Northern Africa faced a youth bulge – the share of the region's population comprised of youth aged 15 to 24 grew to more than 20 percent by 2010.[42] During the same period, youth across the Middle East and North Africa faced unemployment rates that averaged 25 percent.[43] Having a college education, moreover, was not a guarantee of employment; in many countries throughout the region, university graduates were more likely to be unemployed than their lesser-educated peers.[44]

In the years before 2010, some Arab countries cut funding for social safety net programs, particularly those focusing on worker training and creating jobs for new

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[40] Mirkin 2010, 12

[41] Rivlin 2007, 205

[42] Mirkin 2010, 32

[43] International Labour Organization 2012

[44] Boudarbat and Ajbilou 2007, 17; Dhillon et al 2009, 10

university graduates, in favor of reducing expenditures.[45] While unemployment was

generally high across the Middle East and North Africa in the years leading up to the

Arab Spring, college-educated youth faced particular hardships when it came to finding

jobs. For instance, in the years leading up to the protest, the Tunisian economy created

only enough jobs to employ half of the university graduates who entered the labor

force.[46] This led to high levels of dissatisfaction within the country – according to a 2010

Gallup poll, 40 percent of Tunisian youth wanted to move abroad to find work.[47]

      The economies of Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia faced relatively large amounts of

inequality and corruption. On Transparency International's 1-10 scale, with 10 being the

least corrupt, all three of these countries fall below the halfway point of the rankings.[48]

This data is supported by documents from the American government, leaked by the

website WikiLeaks, which take note of widespread corruption and the difficulties of

completing business transactions in these countries.[49] The corruption of government

officials had been a concern of Arab publics across the region. In 2008, WikiLeaks

confirmed what many Tunisians already knew: that Ben Ali's regime had become, in

essence, a kleptocracy,[50] and that these policies were stifling investment and job creation

within the government.[51] The Gini coefficient, which measures the income inequality

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[45] Goldstone 2011

[46] Noueihed and Warren 2012, 38

[47] Khouri 2012, 8

[48] Transparency International 2010

[49] Benchemsi 2012b, 66; Lynch 2012, 73

[50] Lynch 2012, 73

[51] Goldstone 2011

within a country by comparing the shares of the country's income held by each quintile of the country's population, was relatively similar for Jordan and Tunisia, with Egypt only being a slight outlier.

Another broad trend that many accounts have seen as feeding into the Arab Spring was economic liberalization. A tenet of economic liberalization policies was an emphasis on reducing government spending. In Arab states not blessed with large oil incomes, this meant cutting funding for social safety net programs, such as Tunisia's National Employment Fund, which trained workers and created jobs, and an Egyptian policy that guaranteed jobs for college graduates.[52] While these reforms allowed more foreign investment to flow into the countries because they were seen as being committed to Washington Consensus-style economic liberalization policies, the benefits of this growth mostly flowed to the upper classes and exacerbated inequalities between the haves and have-nots.[53] Despite the unequal rise in income, economic liberalization also brought with it technologies that citizens across the region began to adopt. These three countries had high rates of cell phone usage, and internet usage grew quickly in the years preceding the Arab Spring, particularly among the young, the well-educated, and the urban populations.

This section has reviewed literature and statistics to show that, while there was some variation on the indicators used above – opportunities for youth, economic performance, and development – the differences in outcomes in Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia suggest that the shared structural conditions probably do not strongly explain what happened, as the leaders had a similar group of problems against which they were

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[52] Goldstone 2011

[53] Game 2011

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working. Unemployment (particularly for youth and the well-educated), economic inequality, a highly controlled press, and the limitation of democratic rights were prevalent across the countries in the region. In order to find the reason for the differences in outcome, that is, why some of the region's leaders lost power while the king of Morocco maintained his throne, I will focus primarily on differences in the regime structure and the regime's actions to determine why the king of Morocco was able to hold onto his power when other leaders in the region were not.

b. Regime Features

The literature reviewed in this section will suggest that regime features explain how a country is able to withstand protests. Among these regime features are the presence or lack of international support for the regime, some state control over key parts of the economy, whether or not the army is well-funded and professionalized (as in, whether it sees itself as having separate interests from the ruler), a revolutionary tradition or strong ideology (in some cases, this is manifested as a religious ideology in support of the king), and having some degree of openness in the political system for complaints to be dealt with first by societal actors before bubbling up to crisis levels.

A factor that has been seen as supporting the resilience of authoritarian political systems is their connection to other powerful regional or international actors, such as Saudi Arabia. While the Saudi Arabian ruling family has an interest in seeing monarchies be able to withstand the popular protests, particularly the Sunni king of Shia-majority Bahrain, this interest did not seem to extend much beyond the Gulf monarchies.[54] A lack of international intervention on behalf of the government, or at

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[54] Kühnhardt 2012

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least a less-strong defense of the government, is important for the success of the protestors.[55]

The relative strength of the autocrat vis-à-vis those challenging him, particularly along three structural pillars of strength, determines whether the incumbent will be able to maintain power when tested, Lucan Way claims in *Resistance to Contagion: Sources of Authoritarian Stability in the Former Soviet Union*. These pillars of strength can include 1) a highly institutionalized ruling party backed by a "non-material source of cohesion" such as a revolutionary tradition or a strong ideology; 2) an extensive, and well-funded, coercive apparatus; and 3) state control over the economy, either from reliance on "easily captured energy revenues", or a lack of privatization of key sectors of the economy.[56] Echoing Way's second pillar, Steven Heydeman writes, in *Social Pacts and Authoritarianism*, that the capacity for autocrats to stay in power comes from the creation and consolidation of a "national-populist social pact," which includes not only formal institutions such as forms of governance and channels of resource allocation but also informal institutions as well.[57] The inclusion of informal institutions gives the autocrat a degree of "bounded adaptiveness" – when a problem cannot be solved within the existing formal political sphere, the parties involved can use informal institutions to solve the issue without challenging the political status quo too much.[58]

The strength and institutionalization of the coercive apparatus, Eva Bellin argues in *Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from*

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[55] Goldstone 2011, 1

[56] Way 2010, 230

[57] Heydemann 2007, 22

[58] Heydemann 2007, 26-7

the Arab Spring, was one of the most important factors in determining whether a regime fell during the Arab Spring protests.[59] When the members of the security apparatus are personally invested in the survival of the regime, they will be more likely to defend their leader against popular protests.[60] Autocrats also appoint close associates or members of their families to ensure that enough discipline is maintained that, if protests do erupt, the security forces will not back them against the regime.[61] For this reason, James Quinlivan, author of *Coup-Proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East*, claims that authoritarian leaders hold much higher loyalty standards for leaders of the security forces than they do for similarly-ranked positions elsewhere in the government.[62]

Bellin also contends that in Morocco, the higher ranks within the security forces and the army are filled with relatives and allies of the king – a move that not only attempts to prevent military rebellion, but also gives members of these institutions stronger incentives to back the king or the government against the demands of the protestors, as she writes in *The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective*.[63] Morocco is not unique in the region for adopting this policy; both Saudi Arabia and Iraq under Saddam Hussein use or used similar tactics to ensure the loyalty of their security forces.[64] In the Tunisian case, on the other hand, President Ben Ali and his predecessor Habib Bourguiba deliberately kept

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[59] Bellin 2012, 129-30

[60] Bellin 2012, 132

[61] Bellin 2004, 149

[62] Quinlivan 1999, 133

[63] Bellin 2004, 149

[64] Quinlivan 1999, 134

their military small and underequipped, out of fear that a "politically indispensable military might turn against them."[65]

Bellin further suggests that the most important factor in whether a regime fell because of the Arab Spring protests is the degree to which the coercive apparatus was willing to suppress the protestors.[66] Similar to the situations seen during the Color Revolution in Eastern Europe,[67] when the military is highly institutionalized – and when its members have little stake in the survival of the regime for their continued employment – it is more likely to stand behind the protestors,[68] or at least it will be "more willing… to disengage from power and allow political reform to proceed."[69] Despite the fact that "everyday repression" in Middle Eastern autocracies is carried out by the police or security agencies, these actors often do not have enough manpower or resources to end mass uprisings the scale of which was seen during the Arab Spring; therefore, the army can become the ruler's "repressive agent of last resort," Milan Svolik argues in *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*.[70] However, that dynamic does not always occur: in the Tunisian case, the army was willing to stand between the protestors and the (much less institutionalized) police force.[71] In both Egypt and Tunisia, however, there was a belief among officers that they would be able to play more of a role under a new regime, which

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[65] Svolik 2012, 124; Nelson 1986, 288-291

[66] Bellin 2012, 129-30

[67] Bunce and Wolchick 2011

[68] Bellin 2012, 133-4

[69] Bellin 2004, 145

[70] Svolik 2012, 200

[71] Bellin 2012, 137

helped provide another incentive for them to back the protestors, particularly after it was clear that the protests were growing and claimed backing from many facets of society.[72]

Another set of arguments concern the relative advantages that are present in monarchies. David Brumberg, author of *The Trap of Liberalized Autocracy*, acknowledges the king's position as allowing him to have "more institutional and symbolic room to improvise reforms than do Arab presidents," which can buy the monarch more time just on the promise of reform.[73] In *Political Authority in Crisis: Mohammed VI's Morocco,* Moroccan political scientist Abdelslam Maghraoui notes that the region's kings are able to use three "sacred institutions" – Islam, the nation, and the monarchy – as fallback points when the debates about corruption or changing certain laws become too sensitive. Protecting "sacred institutions" has become an excuse for avoiding sensitive debates and for insulating influential officials, private interests and powerful institutions from criticism."[74]

There are also elements particular to the Moroccan monarchy that made the likelihood of protestors demanding the overthrow of the king less likely. Boukhars shows how the king's positions as Commander of the Faithful and as a descendent of the Prophet Mohammed, alongside his duties as the ruling monarch of the country, combine the sacred and the profane in such a way as to require the opposition to frame their objections in specific ways, so as not to fall into sacrilege.[75] In Jordan, where the Hashemite dynasty has a similar familial connection to the Prophet, protestors against

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[72] Game 2011

[73] Brumberg 2002, 63

[74] A. Maghraoui 2001b, 15

[75] Boukhars 2010, 40

King Abdullah II have employed similar tactics. Abdelbaki Hermassi takes this belief another step further to note that the military finds it difficult object to a king's authority when he is acting as the country's religious leader, a dynamic that can be seen in many Middle Eastern monarchies, as he writes in *Socioeconomic Change and Political Implications: The Maghreb*.[76] In January 2011, the Tunisian military, on the other hand, chose to side with the protestors and to protect them from the abuses from other organizations within the security apparatus, in part because the professionalized Tunisian military owed little political and no religious allegiance to President Ben Ali.[77]

In general, kings may also better resist charges of corruption than presidents may be able to. Before the Arab Spring protests, accusations of government corruption and clientelism were widespread in both Tunisia and Morocco. Marc Lynch writes in *The Arab Uprising: The Unfinished Revolutions of the New Middle East* that "the regime of President Ben Ali had degenerated into a typical, if extreme, family kleptocracy."[78] While similar types of corruption were occurring in Morocco as well, "protestors focused tightly on calls for democracy, accountability, and the rule of law, and carefully avoided direct challenges to the king," in part because of the belief that the changes that needed to be made could not occur without the consent of the king. [79] Roger Owen, author of *The Rise and Fall of Arab Presidents for Life*, believes that Arab monarchs are better protected from accusations of corruption because they have maintained the traditional loyalties that come from being a member of a dynasty; these traditions can result in a

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[76] Hermassi 1994, 234

[77] Bellin 2012, 133-4; Lynch 2012, 79

[78] Lynch 2012, 73

[79] Lynch 2012, 114

belief that some of the king's fortunes and connections were inherited, not merely due to scheming and corruption.[80]

Kings are given a set of tools to which they can refer to keep the people on their side. Jack Goldstone writes in *Understanding the Revolutions of 2011* that one method that monarchs used during the Arab Spring to stay in power was to make direct appeals to nationalism and royal tradition as reasons for the king to retain his crown.[81] These appeals, argues Owen Kirby in *Want Democracy? Get a King*, are based on traditional values, such as religious and cultural identities, that members of the society have agreed are beneficial; this is a perk, he believes, that republican leaders in the Middle East cannot draw upon because they do not have generations of tradition to support them.[82]

Having a regime in which some degree of openness in the political system is allowed can also help an autocrat to maintain power. Daniel Brumberg argues in *The Trap of Liberalized Autocracy* that three factors resulting from some degree of openness have sustained autocracies: 1) not being tied down to a particular ideology creates distance between the state and society leaves room for dissonant politics, which helps to "short-circuit the growth of counterhegemonic… movements;" 2) being non-hegemonic, which allows for some diversity of views to compete for the attention of members of the public; and 3) being economically developed enough to be free from exclusively concerning itself with the fate of one industry or resource.[83] Authoritarian leaders allow this space within the public sphere because, while organizations are able to address the

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[80] Owen 2012, 126

[81] Goldstone 2011, 1

[82] Kirby 2000, 10

[83] Brumberg 2002, 61

social concerns of the people, the regime holds the ultimate control over the public sphere and can take power away from these groups if their complaints become too noisy or they demand too much.[84]

Autocrats can use their centrality in the political system to bring into power groups that support their agenda, while at the same time, excluding those that do not. The creation of an in-group/out-group dynamic allows the king to keep the loyalty of the groups that have been allowed into Parliament; during times of economic crises, Ellen Lust-Okar argues earlier in *Divided They Rule: The Management and Manipulation of Political Opposition*, the leaders "creates incentives for loyalists to refrain from promoting a conflict that excluded opponents could exploit."[85] These incentives keep the 'friendly' opposition from attempting to mobilize the masses against their ruler or his government, even if their demands have not been met, out of fear that their movement may be hijacked by the more radical elements within society.[86]

Because of the king's activity in the political sphere, by managing which groups are allowed into power in Parliament, he has been able to manufacture a "politics of consensus" that makes challenging his authority more difficult.[87] Though this model of consensual politics requires time-to-time modifications, it should be considered a feature of the regime because previous kings took the underlying actions and its basic form greatly informs modern political activities. Ahmed Benchemsi argues in *Morocco: Outfoxing the Opposition*, that this system set itself up for divide-and-rule tactics that

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[84] Joffé 2011, 514

[85] Lust-Okar 2004, 162

[86] Lust-Okar 2004, 161

[87] D. Maghraoui 2011, 684

keep the king in the center of the country's political sphere.[88] Other authors agree with Benchemsi, stating that kings, in fact, encourage a certain amount of pluralism because the king is able to serve as the "linchpin of the political system"[89] and that he is able to "balance, manipulate, and control societies characterized by… vertical cleavages."[90] Another factor is that the king is the head of the country constitutionally, religiously, and symbolically – the king is able to manipulate not only the political realm, but also religious doctrine to make challenges to his authority less legitimate in the eyes of many of his subjects.

To summarize, the literature discussed above suggests that whether regimes were overthrown (or not) during the Arab Spring, protests are due to regime features. These regime features include whether or not the army is professionalized (and therefore whether it sees itself as being separate from the ruler) and well-funded, the presence or lack of international support for the regime, a revolutionary tradition or strong ideology, some state control over key parts of the economy, and having some openness in the political system. At first glance, these explanations seem to be more promising to account for the Moroccan regime's durability than the structural conditions, since its regime differs from its neighbors in these matters. Thus, a survey of the authoritarian literature suggests that an initial, top-down focus makes sense, and indicates that focus should be placed on the variables of the regime's relationship with its security sector and the religious support for the king's ability to rule.

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[88] Benchemsi 2012b, 59-60

[89] Lucas 2004, 107

[90] Anderson 2000, 60

c. Regime Strategies and Actions

There are strategic variables that explain why authoritarian leaders stay in power, despite rebellions and protests. While regime features include those attributes of the government and society that existed prior to the Arab Spring protests, strategic choices that leaders made in response to the protests within their countries. These choices can include choosing to isolate the country from outside influences; marginalizing the opposition; "buying off" members of the opposition, perhaps by giving them part of what they want; repressing or dividing the opposition so it cannot work as effectively; or persuading the people of the country either that the opposition is somehow "wrong" or that the government is "right." In this literature, there is not much difference in the actions that can be taken by kings or by presidents; in fact, all authoritarian leaders can learn which strategies are best to be used from each other, whether they consciously decide to model this behavior or not.

When they face challenges to their regimes, authoritarian leaders can utilize a variety of strategies or policies to ensure that they remain in power – choices which can be labeled as "pre-emptive authoritarianism."[91] These strategies fall under three broad categories, as defined by Vitali Silitski, author of *Contagion Deterred: Preemptive Authoritarianism in the Former Soviet Union (the Case of Belarus)*: these include 1) tactical pre-emption, or attacks on the opposition and its infrastructure; 2) institutional pre-emption, which changes the rules of the political game to make it more difficult for members of the opposition to gain access to the halls of power; and 3) cultural pre-

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[91] Silitski 2010, 276

emption, which includes using policies and propaganda to install fear of regime change or democracy into the minds of the public.[92]

Under the first strategy, tactical pre-emption, the regime could make decisions to repress the opposition, either by making their organizations illegal or imprisoning their leaders.[93] They can also choose to distribute goods in such a way that it "buys off" parts of the opposition, a strategy that may work best when the opposition is comprised of a coalition of groups with disparate demands.[94] This strategy is also a useful way for leaders to make sure that parts of their own coalition do not defect to join the opposition. In *Management of Opposition in Egypt, Jordan, and Morocco*, Ellen Lust-Okar writes that incumbents can use one of two strategies, depending upon the structure of contestation, to balance the strength of opposition against the regime. The first strategy, fragmenting political groups in order to create two or more opposing, but moderate, political demands, tends to be used by regimes that have unified structures of contestation,[95] that is when members of the opposition are included or excluded in a uniform fashion.[96] The second strategy, available to rulers who have divided structures of opposition (which includes some groups of the opposition in the parliament or public

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[92] Silitski 2010, 276

[93] Finkel and Brundy 2012, 6

[94] Finkel and Brundy 2012, 6

[95] Lust-Okar 2007, 48

[96] Lust-Okar 2007, 40

sphere but excludes others),[97] involves strengthening "ideologically radical political opponents to create a threat to the moderates."[98]

The second category of pre-emptive actions a regime can take, institutional pre-emption, can involve such policies as marginalizing the opposition by changing the electoral rules.[99] Examples of these policies are changing the date of the election so that the opposition does not have enough time to effectively campaign, or giving government-backed groups more time or resources to campaign than is granted to opposition groups. Particularly in states where the media is controlled by the government, the regime can also shut out opposition members from having any (positive) coverage on the television or radio.[100]

The final category of actions is cultural pre-emption, in which the government attempts to either block the idea of democracy or reform from reaching its citizens or, once those ideas become public, attempt to block their spread or support the idea that democracy is somehow 'dangerous' or 'foreign.'[101] The regime could take actions such as isolating the country from perceived external threats, examples of which are foreign media or NGOs or so-called subversive websites, or persuading its citizens that the opposition is somehow 'wrong' or that the government is 'right' on these issues.[102] These tactics show that authoritarian leaders not only take reactive steps in an attempt to

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[97] Lust-Okar 2007, 40

[98] Lust-Okar 2007, 48

[99] Finkel and Brundy 2010, 6

[100] Finkel and Brundy 2010, 6

[101] Finkel and Brundy 2010, 6

[102] Finkel and Brundy 2010, 6

change the behavior of those who are involved in protesting the regime, but that they also make proactive choices to change the beliefs of the general public.[103]

Having an opposing view available in the public sphere, paradoxically, has helped authoritarian leaders to maintain their power; therefore, some of these rulers explicitly pursue policies that create or exploit divisions between societal groups or political parties.[104] They have explicitly pursued policies that bring opposing views into the government to counter the power of the governing coalition. Driss Maghraoui, author of *Constitutional Reforms in Morocco: Between Consensus and Subaltern Politics*, argues that rulers have "made use of this political pluralism as a tool to divide and fragment the political parties in order for the monarch to act as the main arbitrator of the political scene."[105] Since the ruler injects himself into the political sphere so frequently, a palace-dominated "politics of consensus" has emerged.[106] Since the autocrat and his entourage are so dominant in the government, often times the political parties fail to offer alternative visions of their country's future to counter the consensus.[107] Sean Yom, in *Understanding the Resilience of Monarchy during the Arab Spring,* credits statecraft, or the monarch's constitutional ability to stay above the political fray and act as a caretaker, for the monarch's ability to withstand the protests during this period.[108] The king may be

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[103] Finkel and Brundy 2010, 2

[104] D. Maghraoui 2011, 683

[105] D. Maghraoui 2011, 683

[106] D. Maghraoui 2011, 684

[107] D. Maghraoui 2011, 684

[108] Yom 2011

seen as an (relatively) impartial arbitrator between groups that, if the reforms go too far, may actually end up out of power.

Another strategy that authoritarian rulers can use to keep themselves in power, once protests have started, is to grant some democratic/liberalizing concessions, or at least the appearance of some concessions, to the protestors, often called "democratic decorations."[109] Jennifer Gandhi and Adam Przeworski argue in *Authoritarian Institutions and the Survival of Autocrats* that one of the tactics autocrats use is the investing of more authority in pseudo-democratic institutions.[110] These institutions, in particular partisan legislatures, "incorporate potential opposition forces, investing them with a stake in the ruler's survival."[111] Unlike in some European countries, however, the investiture of power into these institutions did not lead to the permanent relinquishing of power, Gandhi argues in *Political Institutions under Dictatorship*, because Middle Eastern monarchs (in particular) had the brute strength to ensure that this would not happen.[112] Rather, legislatures serve as a "controlled institutionalized channel through which outside groups can make their demands and incumbents can make concessions without appearing to cave to popular protest."[113] Opening up the political field can also give the autocrat the ability to select his partners from a more diverse set of options. This choice can help to recalibrate the balance of power in response to changes in demographics or power within the society, Russell E. Lucas states in *Monarchical*

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[109] Bunce and Wolchick 2011, 153

[110] Gandhi and Przeworski 2007, 1280

[111] Gandhi and Przeworski 2007, 1280

[112] Gandhi 2008, 22

[113] Gandhi 2008, 181

Authoritarianism: Survival and Political Liberalization in a Middle Eastern Regime Type.[114]

The authors above write that the autocrat's choices determine if he will stay in power once protests against him start. These choices can include choosing to isolate the country from outside influences; marginalizing the opposition; buying off parts of the opposition, perhaps by giving them part of what they want; repressing or dividing the opposition so it cannot work as effectively; or persuading the people of the country that the opposition will lead the country down the wrong track. Indeed, during the 2011 protests, King Mohammed VI used many of these tactics to end the protests without having to give up his power, including pursuing policies to divide the opposition, buying off segments of society both monetarily and by giving the protestors some of what they were demanding (at least on paper).

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[114] Lucas 2004, 113

CHAPTER III

STRUCTURAL CONDITIONS

1. Introduction

This chapter seeks to answer two questions. 1) How, if at all, did Morocco differ from other regional countries in terms of economic or political variables that could explain why there were popular demonstrations in 2010-2011? 2) Were these differences substantial enough to explain why the protests led to the overthrow of some leaders, but not of King Mohammed VI of Morocco?

Across the Arab world, many similar conditions were present that could help to explain the outbreak of the Arab Spring protests. Among these conditions were a "youth bulge," or a larger-than-normal cohort of young people, which created an unmet need for more economic opportunities; government policies that failed to protect citizens from the effects of economic downturns; and an economic system that benefited those in power, not the average citizen. However, while these conditions can help tell the story of why the protests erupted, they do less to explain why some leaders fell while others stood firm. In Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia – countries which tend to fall in the middle of the Arab countries in terms of economic development – the indicators are not so different as to offer a compelling explanation why the king of Jordan and Morocco maintained their power while the presidents of Egypt and Tunisia lost power.

2. The "Youth Bulge"

Across the Middle East and North Africa ahead of the Arab Spring protests, states were dealing with the effects of large youth cohorts. In Morocco, the average age of the population was 26 years old, as noted in Table 3.1 below.[115] The youth population of Morocco was also quickly growing – over the course of one generation, from 1980 to 2010, this population grew from just over 4 million in 1980 to approximately 6.3 million in 2010, a 55 percent increase in 30 years.[116]

Table 3.1 – Youth Statistics in Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia

	Morocco	Egypt	Jordan	Tunisia
Median Age [a]	26	24	21	29
% of Population under 24 [b]	47	53	53	40
% of Unemployed Young Men [c]	23	17	23	31
% of Unemployed Young Women [d]	19	48	46	29

Data is from 2010

[a] Youth Unemployment in MENA, 5   [c] Youth Unemployment in MENA, 11

[b] Mirkin 2010, 32   [d] Youth Unemployment in MENA, 11

The fact that the population was so young created a set of specific challenges, including the need to create ever more jobs to keep up with the growing population, which governments in the region were unable to meet.[117] Youth aged 15-24 constituted

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[115] Youth Unemployment in MENA, 5

[116] Roudi 2011

[117] Assaad 2011

35.7 percent of all unemployed workers, despite only making up 25.1 percent of the potential labor force.[118] A 2003 report noted that it would take years of substantial growth for the Moroccan economy to develop enough that the annual increase in population would not "place a burden on social services, the housing market, and ultimately, the labor market."[119] This problem, moreover, was not new; as early as the mid-1980s, government agencies were noting that the Moroccan economy was not producing enough jobs to employ its growing population.[120]

Having a degree, however, did not offer a guarantee of employment; in fact, while the unemployment rate for workers in Morocco who had not completed any formal education was 7.7 percent, the rate jumped to 61.2 percent for those workers with a high school diploma or higher.[121] Because of the lack of employment opportunities, particularly for recent university graduates, 70 percent of Arab youth "want[ed] to migrate out of the region," an Arab League official noted at a 2011 conference on population policy.[122] This is in addition to over 4 percent of the Moroccan population that had already moved abroad to search for economic opportunities in Europe and the Gulf states.[123]

For those young Moroccans who had found a job, the quality of the work was often poor. A World Bank report notes that 88 percent of employed youth work in the

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[118] Boudarbat and Ajbilou 2007, 6

[119] Rivlin 2007, 197

[120] Sabagh 1993, 31

[121] Boudarbat and Ajbilou 2007, 7

[122] Hoffman and Jamal 2012, 170

[123] Rivlin 2007, 205

informal economy, without the job security or benefits that having a contract can bring.[124]

Part of the problem is an educational system that has not kept up with changes in technology and the economy: education systems have been "primarily geared toward preparing students to serve in the public sector, which used to be – but no longer is – the primary employer of new graduates."[125] While there is high demand for vocational training, these programs often have limited coverage, particularly in the rural areas of the country, are understaffed, and do not offer enough training in new skills such as internet technologies.[126]

Having a large, youthful population can be a benefit to economic development if the government can tap into it. However, these demographic trends can cause challenges and instability if the governments fail to create policies that give economic and educational opportunities to youth in particular.[127] While an argument can be made that having such a large population of youth, particularly of unemployed youth, can lead to protests, there is no clear connection between these demographic challenges and the overthrow of the regime's leader. In Jordan, for example, the population is younger and less employed than in Morocco, yet King Abdullah was also able to keep his throne.[128] Therefore, the presence of a youthful, yet unemployed population, cannot fully explain why King Mohammed VI of Morocco maintained his position of power while other

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[124] La Cava et al 2012

[125] Roudi 2011

[126] La Cava et al 2012

[127] National Intelligence Council 2012, vii

[128] Youth Unemployment in MENA, 11

regional leaders, who faced similar demographic challenges, were made to leave their offices.

3. Economics and Development

The February 20 Movement tapped into sources of popular anger about the state of the economy when its members called for the end of corruption and the reform of an economic system that benefitted only those who were well connected.[129] Similarly, in Tunisia, protestors initially took up Mohammed Bouazizi's cause, calling for a fair and equal system in which earn a living.[130] The economic liberalization policies adopted in the 1990s after pressure from international organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund did not necessarily increase the well-being of the average Moroccan citizen; conversely, these policies may have made people more insecure, as the government cut social services in favor of balancing its budget.[131]

Table 3.2 takes note of indicators about economic inequality and corruption. The Gini Coefficient measures the percent of a country's income that is held by each segment of the population and then aggregates these percentages into an indicator on which the most income-equal societies have the lowest scores. In 2007, Morocco's coefficient was 40.9, and had been on the rise over the previous decade.[132] Using Transparency International's 1-10 scale on the prevalence of corruption, with 10 being the least corrupt,

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[129] D. Maghraoui 2011, 688

[130] Noueihed and Warren 2012, 74

[131] Goldstone 2011

[132] Central Intelligence Agency 2012

Morocco falls around the halfway point of the scale, ranking 85th out of 178 countries with a score of 3.4.[133]

Table 3.2 – Economic and Development Indicators in Morocco, Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia

	Morocco	**Egypt**	**Jordan**	**Tunisia**
GDP per Capita [a]	$2,975	$2,698	$4,666	$4,194
Gini Coefficient [b] (0= most equal)	40.9 (2007)	34.4 (2001)	39.7 (2007)	40.0 (2005)
Transparency Intl [c] (10 = most clean)	3.4	3.1	4.7	4.3

Data is from 2010, unless otherwise noted.   [b] Central Intelligence Agency 2012

[a] World Bank 2013a   [c] Transparency International 2010

Economic development and liberalization policies adopted in Morocco, as well as in other regional countries did little to minimize the vulnerability the average citizen felt about joblessness or poverty.[134] During 2007-8 in Morocco, for example, approximately one out of every seven individuals lived on an income that was less than the equivalent of US $2 per day.[135] The official national poverty rate was 9.0 percent in 2008,[136] however, NGOs contest that figure as being manipulated for political reasons – a World Bank study

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[133] Transparency International 2010

[134] Joffé 2011, 509

[135] World Bank 2013e

[136] World Bank 2013d

reports that 49 percent of Moroccan young people – who make up 30 percent of the population – are not working or in school, a figure that the World Bank believes points to a much higher unemployment rate.[137] During the second half of 2010, there was a worldwide spike in food and energy prices that made living at, or below, the poverty level that much more difficult. According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, for instance, from July 2010 to the end of the year, the price of wheat went up by 84 percent while cooking oils and fats increased by 57 percent.[138] Overall, food prices increased by 32 percent in 2010 alone.[139] The threat of protest appeared to make the government take notice of these increases in prices, because on February 15, 2011, the king doubled subsidies on cooking oil, flour and sugar.[140]

Another impact of the so-called "Great Recession" was a decrease in the amount of money coming into North African states from their citizens living abroad. Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt have among the highest inflows of per capita remittances in the world. Ahead of the economic downturn, each Moroccan emigrant sent an average of $100 back to his home country per month, accounting for 8 percent of GDP.[141] The downturn in the global economy in 2008 caused decreases in the amount of remittances sent by expatriates to their home countries by a measure of 10.3 percent in Egypt and 17.0 percent in Morocco.[142] While not a result of any actions taken by the Moroccan

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[137] McManus 2012

[138] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations 2011

[139] Goldstone 2011

[140] Lalami 2011b

[141] Achy 2010, 9

[142] International Bank of Reconstruction and Development 2010, 4

government, this decline in remittances affected many families' economic bottom line in negative ways, and contributed to the sense that, overall, the economy was worsening for the average Moroccan family.

The "Great Recession" of 2008 did not create Morocco's economic problems. Rather, there are systemic problems within the economy that have been present for decades, the first of which is the country's heavy reliance on agriculture. During the 1980s and 1990s, the concentration of investments in export-oriented farming at the cost of developing more tradition forms of agriculture, which employs 90 percent of Moroccan peasants, "led to a massive exodus from rural areas, a dramatic expansion of urban shantytowns, and an increasing dependence on imported grain."[143] Despite growth in other sectors of the economy, reliance on agriculture (and its highly variable amounts of production due to rainfall totals) meant large changes in the amount of year-to-year GDP growth; for instance, the Morocco's GDP grew by 12.2 percent in 1996, but because of drought conditions, the economy contracted by 2.2 percent during the next year.[144] This swing meant that more food had to be imported,[145] and an increase in the number of people living in poverty; scholars attribute 84 percent of the increase in poverty during the 1990s to a slowdown in the economy.[146]

In addition to the inability to keep up with population growth and a heavy reliance on good weather for agriculture to buoy economic growth, scholars note that mismanagement of the economic liberalization process has also had a negative impact on

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[143] A. Maghroui 2001a, 77

[144] Maddy-Weitzman and Zisenwine 2007, 200

[145] Maddy-Weitzman and Zisenwine 2007, 202

[146] Maddy-Weitzman and Zisenwine 2007, 203

growth.[147] Researchers take note of local councils that had been given the legal

competency to decide on land use and economic development policies; however, many of

these councils were not granted the authority to tax. This set up a system in which the

councils must ask for revenue from state or national officials to implement the

development policies they had been given competency to create.[148] When these local

councils had been given funds, mechanisms of transparency and accountability had not

been put into place to ensure that the money is not mismanaged.[149]

Perceptions of corruption and economic inequality also made their way onto the

protestors' signs. Members of the February 20 movement called for the firing of corrupt

officials and "sunshine" policies that would make corruption much less easy to get away

with.[150] Policies such as the ones proposed by the protestors meshed with the regime's

unfulfilled promises. Ottaway and Riley note in *Morocco: Top-Down Reform without*

Democratic Transition that, despite the Moroccan regime's rhetoric about investigating

and ending corruption, the actual policies have not gone far, in part because the

investigation would implicate members of the *makhzen*, the palace establishment.[151] In

particular, senior members of the armed forces and the security agencies "continue to use

their political connections to deny others the chance to compete with them on a level

playing field," and are often "not held accountable for engaging in corrupt behavior."[152]

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[147] Cherkaoui and Ben Ali 2007, 742; Sekkat 2004

[148] Achy 2010, 16

[149] Achy 2010, 16-17

[150] D. Maghraoui 2011, 688

[151] Ottaway and Riley 2008, 172

[152] Denoeux 2007, 136

A 2010 US embassy cable, leaked by the site WikiLeaks, alleges that "the major institutions and processes of the Moroccan state are being used by the Palace to coerce and solicit bribes in the country's real estate sector…;" the cable goes on to say that "while corrupt practices existed during the reign of King Hassan II… they have become much more institutionalized with King Mohammed VI."[153]

Other scholars have taken notice of this trend as well, stating that "rather than labor, personal capability or merit, it is the personal contact to political decision makers able to allocate resources (and thus build clientele networks) which secures social status and material well-being for the individual."[154] The World Bank has insisted that "over-centralized… stagnant, and corrupt" official bureaucracies need to be reformed, because they "hamper national development."[155] In a survey conducted by the same organization, Moroccan business leaders claimed that the "behavior of the administration" was the most significant constraint on private-sector development within the country.[156] Corruption was a way of life for individuals as well; a 2008 Transparency International field study found that 60 percent of Moroccan families had been compelled to give bribes in order to go about their day-to-day lives.[157] While Global Integrity, an anti-corruption monitoring organization, gives Morocco the highest marks for its anti-corruption laws, it

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[153] Black 2010

[154] Schlumberger 2000

[155] Bendourou 1996, 118

[156] Denoeux 2000, 176

[157] Transparency International 2008

gives the country a dismal score (9 out of a possible 100) on the application of these laws

when it comes to combating corruption within the executive branch of government.[158]

In particular, Global Integrity notes that the executive leadership – meaning the

king and members of his inner circle – cannot be held accountable for their actions

through criminal proceedings; these individuals also are not required to disclose their

financial information, personally or for the offices they run.[159] In 2007, for instance,

Forbes magazine featured the king as one of the richest royals in the world, noting that

the royal entourage has a $960,000 operating cost, which is spent "mostly on gasoline

and clothes."[160] The royal investment firm, Société National d'investissement (SNI),

which holds a near monopoly on some sectors of the economy, reported a 50 percent

increase in profit in 2011, despite the economic downturn.[161]

In addition to their frustrations about corruption, the protestors took notice of the

increasing inequality between the haves and have-nots in Moroccan society; from 1999 to

2007, Morocco's Gini coefficient grew from 39.5 to 40.7.[162] While this is not a large

change overall, the numbers hide a distribution of wealth that increasingly favors those

living in fast-growing urban areas such as Casablanca and Rabat, while disfavoring those

who live in rural areas or less dynamic urban areas such as Fez.[163] One obstacle to rural

growth is the high rates of illiteracy among both the male and female populations – in

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[158] Global Integrity 2010

[159] Global Integrity 2010

[160] Pendleton and Serafin 2007

[161] McManus 2012

[162] Central Intelligence Agency 2012

[163] United States Agency for International Development 2008, 8

2008, 63 percent of the rural population over the age of 15 was unable to read and write.[164] In particular, the lack of schools in rural villages and the cost of sending children to them make receiving an education difficult for rural families. [165]

Despite the "common thread" of economic problems across the region, these structural variables act as a necessary, but not sufficient, explanation as to why the protests broke out in 2011.[166] Across the region, protestors called for the end of corruption, more jobs, and government policies to end the inflation of prices on necessities. However, these variables have little explanatory weight when trying to decipher why the king of Morocco was able to keep his throne while the Tunisian and Egyptian presidents were forced from power.

4. Conclusion

This chapter sought to answer the two questions of: 1) How, if at all, did Morocco differ from other regional countries in terms of economic or political variables that could explain why there were popular demonstrations in 2010-11? 2) Were these differences substantial enough to explain why the protests led to the overthrow of some leaders, but not of King Mohammed VI of Morocco? I argue that rulers across Northern Africa were dealing fairly similar structural conditions ahead of the outbreak of the protests; therefore, these differences are not significant enough to explain why the King of Morocco maintained his power while other regional leaders were forced to resign because of the protests.

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[164] Achy 2010, 10

[165] Achy 2010, 11

[166] Dalacoura 2011, 66-7

Morocco shares with most of its neighbors the "indicators of poverty and social polarization, demographic hypertrophy of youth and blockage of its social mobility, the perception of pervasive corruption and disaffections with the political system," Irene Fernández Molina writes in *The Monarchy vs. the 20 February Movement: Who Holds the Reins of Political Change in Morocco.*[167] While there are some differences between countries where the regimes fell during the Arab Spring protests – Egypt and Tunisia – and regimes where the ruler kept his power despite the protests – Jordan and Morocco – these variations are not enough, in and of themselves, to explain why. Morocco is similar to other regional countries in terms of youth demographics, particularly youth unemployment, having problems of unequal economic growth and corruption, and a disconnect between promises of action and actual solutions. Having these dynamics might make protests more likely, and mean that the ruler will have to take action in some way to maintain his power, but they fail to account for differences in outcomes because of the protests.

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[167] Molina 2011, 436

CHAPTER IV

REGIME STRATEGIES

1. Introduction

This chapter will discuss whether the strategies used by King Mohammed VI of Morocco to diffuse the protests are different from the strategies used by other leaders in the region that ultimately lost their positions. There are multiple avenues of policy choices available to presidents and kings alike – including isolating the country from outside influences, marginalizing the opposition, "buying off" members of the opposition, repressing or dividing the opposition, and persuading the country's citizens that the actions proposed by the opposition will be detrimental to the country.[168] These policy choices are divided into three main categories, which include 1) tactical pre-emption, or attacks on the opposition and its infrastructure; 2) institutional pre-emption, which changes the rules of the political system to keep the opposition out of power; and 3) cultural pre-emption, which includes using policies and propaganda to instill fear of democratization into the minds of the public, or to reinforce the popularity and legitimacy of the leader.[169]

Any of these categories of choices weaken the opposition by drying up their sources of support within the society, by causing internal divisions within the movement, or by making it seem less likely that the opposition will achieve its goals. Some scholars note that the use of these tactics – which Sean Yom labels as "statecraft" – is the reason

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[168] Finkel and Brundy 2012, 6

[169] Silitski 2010, 276

why kings maintained their power during the Arab Spring protests.[170] However, this chapter will seek to show that, while kings may have pursued certain strategies, their use is not necessarily exclusive to monarchs.

2. Tactical Preemption: Weakening and Dividing the Opposition

Tactical preemption includes attacking the opposition and its infrastructure in such a way that it becomes more difficult for the opposition to operate effectively.[171] In the Moroccan case, the king used pre-emptive measures to keep certain societal groups, such as public workers, or political parties from joining the protests with the members of the February 20 Movement. After the constitutional amendment process was over, the king also used tactics to secure the votes of individual voters, to keep their vote on the 'yes' side.

In the weeks between the fall of Tunisian president Ben Ali in late January and the February 20 protests, hundreds of Moroccans rioted in the city of Tangier over the high unemployment rate and increases in the price of utilities.[172] While these riots occurred before the February 20 protests, the planning for and execution of the two events were separate – the riots in Tangier were provoked when a French company was awarded a contract to provide the region's utility services, a move that many local residents believed would result in higher utility prices.[173]

In response to the protests in Tangier, the king of Morocco began to take actions that were designed to neutralize the citizens' mobilization by offering a package of socio-

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[170] Yom 2011

[171] Silitski 2010, 276

[172] Joffé 2011, 510-11

[173] Williams 2011

economic measures: increased subsidies for food and fuel, the establishment of an

unemployment subsidy program, and the expansion of free health care provision.[174] This

package also involved a large amount of spending aimed at workers: the minimum wage

was raised by 15 percent, 3400 unemployed graduates were given civil service jobs, and

public employees were granted the highest raise in Moroccan history – up to 35 percent

in some sectors of the government.[175]

The palace also used outright tactics to buy the support of individual voters or to

scare them away from voting against the amendments. During the Eid al-Adha holiday in

November 2011, the government handed out sheep to supporters in rural areas.[176]

Though reports of violence did not make it onto Western media outlets as they did in

Egypt and Tunisia, Moroccan protestors also were harassed by the government and

groups of "pro-monarchy thugs known as *baltaja*."[177] According to Human Rights

Watch, nearly 100 people affiliated with the February 20 Movement were brought into

police stations for questioning regarding their involvement with the protests.[178]

The reforms announced by the king granted many of the demands being made by

the protestors and human rights organizations, at least on paper. However, these reforms

also "bought off" other important groups in society, namely the political parties

(including those that were based on Islamism). By including the major political parties in

the reform process, the king was able to keep them from joining with the protestors and

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[174] Molina 2011, 438

[175] Benchemsi 2012b, 68

[176] Lewis 2011

[177] Lewis 2011

[178] Human Rights Watch 2012

on board with constitutional amendments. A constitutional reform process directed by

the February 20 Movement would have had large consequences for the way in which

power was distributed in the Moroccan government, moves that might have left the

political parties without a seat at the table. While the reforms offered by the king were

incremental, and more on paper than in fact, they meant that politicians in Parliament

would retain their power. Strong ties between the *makhzen* and the main political parties

made it unlikely that those parties would join in with the protestors, as doing so likely

would have caused those parties to lose their place of privilege.[179] Pseudo-democratic

institutions, namely the legislature, invested political parties in the survival of the regime

and the regime's ruler.[180] In exchange for being allowed into power, the political parties

are asked not to demand much more of the ruler than he is willing to give.[181]

3. Institutional Preemption: The Constitutional Amendment Process

One of the main tactics the king used to maintain his power despite the protest

movement was the creation of a constitutional reform process that would address the

demands of the people. In this way, the challenges to the government were funneled into

an institutionalized process. Constitutional reforms, however, also gave the king the

opportunity to change the rules of the political game in such a way that allowed himself

and his allies to maintain their power.

During late January and early February, as the protests were occurring, the king

also decided to make some reforms in the human rights arena – reforms that had been

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[179] D. Maghraoui 2011, 684

[180] Gandhi and Przeworski 2007, 1280

[181] Gandhi and Przeworski 2007, 1280

called for by some of the protestors. In late February, the king created the National

Human Rights Council (known by its French acronym, CNDH), and endowed it with a

greater scope of action than any government-sponsored human rights organization had

been granted in the past.[182] Among the expanded powers granted to the CNDH were the

ability to hear cases that had been brought to the Council by individuals and to

investigate claims that been made during these hearings.[183] At the same time, he also

empowered the Court of Auditors and the Central Commission for the Prevention of

Corruption to enforce fair competition, as well as transparency and accountability.[184] It

should be noted, however, that while power was given to these institutions, they remain

accountable to the king alone, who can decide whether to implement their

recommendations.[185]

On March 9, 2011, the king made a rare televised address to the people of

Morocco, in which he announced that he would be creating a committee to explore

possible constitutional reforms.[186] While King Mohammed noted that he would likely

give up some power, this concession was couched in terms of responding to "legitimate

complaints," which gave the king the ability to select which of the protestors' demands

he would actually support.[187] Also of note was the fact that the king did not make any

reference to the protestors when he made this announcement; the reforms were, at this

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[182] Boukhars 2011

[183] Boukhars 2011

[184] Boukhars 2011

[185] Boukhars 2011

[186] Lynch 2012, 141

[187] Lynch 2012, 141

point, given a top-down character, in which the people respond to the king, not the other way around.[188] The king's announcement split the February 20 Movement from the vast majority of the population, many of whom were asking for practical, not radical, reforms.[189] These 'ordinary people' "began praising the king for being a visionary who anticipated everything the youth wanted" – for keeping the political status quo while making the economic changes that needed to be made – while members of the February 20 Movement "pointed out that the constitutional reform process was fundamentally undemocratic."[190] The protestors noted that the members of the constitutional commission were appointed by, and solely responsible to, the king, not the people of the country.[191]

Despite the appearance (and existence) of a top-down character to the constitutional amendment process, the reforms broadly echoed the demands made on the protestors' signs.[192] The palace promised such things as 'comprehensive constitutional change,' featuring 'the rule of law,' an 'independent judiciary,' and an 'elected government that reflects the will of the people, through the ballot box.'[193] Specifically, the king would give up his power to appoint the prime minister and other cabinet members; rather, the king would be required to choose the head of the winning party to

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[188] Gallala-Arndt 2012, 142

[189] Lalami 2011b

[190] Lalami 2011b

[191] Lalami 2011b

[192] King 2011

[193] Benchemsi 2012b, 58

be the prime minister, who would then form his government independently.[194] A commission appointed by the king would work with the political parties, trade unions, and civil society groups to complete the additional constitutional reforms.[195]

The rush to the vote was designed in such a way that the opposition had little time to organize against it or offer fully developed alternatives to the amendments.[196] The regime and its allies dominated the period leading up to the vote: state-controlled television and radio stations "sang the new constitution's praises" and the Friday before the vote, a Ministry of Islamic Affairs approved sermon was distributed to mosques across the country, in which imams would proclaim their support for the amendments from the pulpit.[197] The palace also used companies and business groups to promote their agenda: companies placed banners around major cities and paid for television and radio ads to say that the management and employees of that establishment would be voting in favor of the constitutional amendments.[198] This practice was used to a wide extent throughout the campaign: according to a report released by the Haute Autorité de la Communication Audiovisuelle, the 'yes' campaign received as much as 89.6 percent of the total airtime devoted to the constitutional amendment process.[199] Those who publicly campaigned for a 'no' vote faced penalties – when Jalal Makhifi, the Morocco

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[194] King 2011

[195] King 2011

[196] Benchemsi 2012b, 58

[197] Benchemsi 2012b, 58

[198] Lalami 2011b

[199] Haute Autorité de la Communication Audiovisuelle 2011

correspondent for Dubai TV, mentioned the 'no' campaign in his reporting, associates of the king had Makhifi and his editor fired.[200]

4. Cultural Preemption: The King as a Source of Stability vs. February 20 Movement as a Source of Chaos

The king also used cultural tactics in an attempt to maintain his throne once the protests had started. The king used his office to promote himself as the country's source of stability against the chaotic demands of the February 20 Movement. Because of this image as source of stability, the king received praise for keeping the calm and maintaining an orderly process.

Despite the king's announcement of a constitutional reform package, the February 20 Movement-backed protests grew larger and reached more cities than ever.[201] Violent clashes between regime-backed counterdemonstrators and members of the February 20 Movement ensued when the counterdemonstrators showed up with stones and clubs.[202] In May, in order to pre-empt the "violence-mobilization cycle" that had been seen in Tunisia and Egypt – in which the protests would grow larger, more violent, and more demanding in response to police or government-backed brutality against the protestors – the king announced a snap referendum on the constitutional reforms that would be held on 1 July.[203] Particularly after the April 29 terrorist bombing in Marrakesh, people were reminded of the threat of Islamist violence – one Morocco-watcher noted that the response to the attack reinforced a prevailing narrative about Morocco: "the king

[200] Lalami 2011b

[201] El-Din Haseeb 2011, 114

[202] Benchemsi 2012b, 58

[203] Lynch 2012, 142

represents stability, while the Islamists (and, by implication, those who associate with them) represent chaos."[204]

        One of the differences between the Moroccan protests and those that occurred in other Arab states is the way in which the main groups of protestors have been framed by both the government and the media. In the international media, Egyptian and Tunisian protestors were portrayed as "secular, tech-savvy leftists" while in Syria and Libya, the protestors were shown as "heroic freedom fighters."[205] However, protestors in the monarchies across the region were more or less painted as "anti-democratic fundamentalists."[206] Despite the fact that the February 20 Movement was, in fact, more in favor of democracy than the legal political parties, the palace was able to frame the protestors as being out of touch with the needs and desires of the average Moroccan citizen. Among the key democratic demands made by the groups that comprised the February 20 Movement were the dissolution of the existing parliament; the release of political prisoners; the formation of an independent transitional government, leading to new elections; a new constitution that would limit the king's power and assets; and judicial proceedings to investigate known cases of corruption and human rights violations.[207]

        Similar pro-monarchy rhetoric is found in Western media reports from the period around the beginning of the reform process, with scholars and journalists making statements such as "King Muhammad VI (sic) anticipated demonstrations by forming a

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[204] Lalami 2011b

[205] al-Gharbi and McNeil 2012

[206] al-Gharbi and McNeil 2012

[207] A. Maghraoui 2011

constitutional review committee to increase the powers of the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers, in addition to other matters for the purpose of diminishing the present nature of the 'absolute monarchy' and moving towards a 'constitutional monarchy.'"[208] While the scenes from Tunisia and Egypt projected onto the American and European nightly news appeared violent, the Moroccan government was protected by the 'relativity effect,' in which the country's comparatively mild management of the protests seemed to be "a model of reasonableness," and drew praise from Western governments.[209] Unlike in Egypt, where the response of the Mubarak regime was seen to be unnecessarily violent, the publics in the United States and Europe were generally in favor of the king and his reform package.[210]

5. Conclusion

Once protests erupted in early 2011, King Mohammed VI made strategic choices that increased the likelihood that he would stay in power. Among these choices were ones that kept the political parties from joining the opposition, ones that made it difficult for the February 20 Movement to attract followers, and ones that damaged the image of the Movement with the Moroccan people. However, the tactics used by the palace are not only available to kings. Both Presidents Mubarak and Ben Ali attempted, albeit unsuccessfully, to paint the protestors as promoting dangerous ideas or to change the political structure in such a way as to give the moderates within the protest movement part of what they wanted without having to give up their seats of power. The difference

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[208] El-Din Haseeb 2011, 114

[209] Benchemsi 2012b, 57

[210]Lalami 2011b

in outcomes, when it comes to regime strategies, seems to come more from what the protestors were demanding, rather than the fact that they were demanding it in the first place.

CHAPTER V

REGIME FEATURES

1. Introduction

Three questions will be discussed in this chapter. The first seeks to understand how political institutions and processes differed between Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt; did the degree of political openness in Morocco allow King Mohammed VI to maintain his throne despite the Arab Spring protests? The second concerns the sources of legitimacy the leaders of these countries are able to draw upon and how these legitimacies impacted the leaders' likelihood of retaining their power once the protests started. Finally, I will examine whether being a monarchy offers the ruler a better chance of maintaining his position, and what could cause these better odds.

Morocco appears, on the surface, to mirror its North African neighbors by having formally democratic institutions that do not produce democratic outcomes. The parliamentary opposition does not offer a distinct set of political options, resulting in a public that is apathetic about parliamentary politics. The Islamist Party of Justice and Development (PJD), in particular, has pledged itself to the king's agenda in order to be allowed into government at all. Freedom House has noted the trend of increasing concentration of political power in the hands of the (already) powerful over the past few years. [211]

However, Morocco differs from its neighbors in terms of the basis of the ruler's legitimacy. King Mohammed VI has a legitimacy that comes from his dual positions as

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[211] Freedom House 2010c

the country's political and religious leader.[212] In addition to the legitimacy that comes

from these positions, the king also has some additional legitimacy that comes from being

a monarch, regardless of the king's religious standing.[213] During the Arab Spring

protests, the king's legitimacy allowed him to offer changes to the constitution that would

not result in his loss of political power. Presidents Ben Ali and Mubarak, because they

have only a secular authority, did not have this legitimacy to use to offer political

reforms. Furthermore, given that the king is the religious leader of his country, the king

holds a special authority over the military that ties it to his person, unlike in Tunisia and

Egypt, where the professionalized military backed the protestors over their president.

2. Democratic Institutions and Practices in an Authoritarian Regime

Although the Constitution of Morocco creates democratic institutions, such as a

bicameral Parliament and multi-party elections, the practice of democracy in Morocco is

flawed. In part, this is because of a mismatch between institutional design in the

constitution and institutional practice in daily life. However, Morocco's political

institutions are also heavily beholden to the king, a relationship that is codified, as well as

merely being practiced. The king's position at the center of the Moroccan political

sphere meant (and continues to mean) that any political changes that are necessary

needed to be made through negotiations with the king or his close associates. However,

the fact that there is some more openness within the country's democratic institutions

than in the institutions of some of its neighbors, which appears to make the opposition

more moderate.

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[212] Gallala-Arndt 2012, 141

[213] Kirby 2000, 10

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According to Freedom House, Morocco was ranked at 4.5 on a scale of 2-7 (with 7 being the least free), or 'partially free,' in 2010.[214] Though it was ranked in the middle of the survey's three categories, the country's trend was marked as moving toward becoming 'not free,' and therefore more like its neighboring countries as noted in Table 5.1 below, given that more political influence was being concentrated in the hands of those already in power.[215] The media environment – a composite score of press freedoms in the legal, political and economic environments – in which an independent press could operate was ranked as 'not free', similar to other countries in the region in which the ability of journalists and citizens to criticize the government was curtailed, and official publications were edited by the heavy hand of the government. Individuals felt the effects of these policies, as can be seen when protestors made complaints about the "role of regime-controlled media in circulating propaganda and stifling opposition voices."[216]

Table 5.1 – Democracy and Press Freedom Indicators in Morocco, Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia

	Morocco	Egypt	Jordan	Tunisia
Freedom House (2 = most free)	4.5	5.5	5.5	6.0
Freedom of the Press (0 = most free)	66	60	63	85

Data is from Freedom House's 2010 Freedom in the World report

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[214] Freedom House 2010c

[215] Freedom House 2010c

[216] Karlekar 2011

Scholars write that the February 20 Movement showed the growing disparity between "the public's dreams and aspirations for the establishment of a real democracy" and "the political parties and ruling elites' politics of consensus" that gradual reforms were needed to maintain the country's stability.[217] This is similar to the Tunisian protestors' unmet demands for reform during 2008 and other previous periods of protest.[218] Protestors felt discouraged at the growing disconnect between having legislatures and political parties, while having little say in the political decisions being made.

The 1996 Moroccan Constitution – the version in use before the Arab Spring protests – declared Morocco to be a "constitutional monarchy" (Article 1) in which "sovereignty shall be that of the People" (Article 2) and "political parties, unions, district councils and trade chambers shall participate in the organization and representation of the citizens" (Article 3).[219] At the same time, however, the king was granted special powers over the conduct of political life within the country. For instance, the king was made "sacred and inviolable" (Article 23) and was given the power to appoint the Prime Minister (Article 24) and rule by royal decree on a wide range of issues (Article 29).[220] These issues included those that fell under the purview of the so-called ministries of sovereignty, which formally included the Ministries of Interior, Islamic Affairs, and Foreign Affairs.[221]

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[217] D. Maghraoui 2011, 696

[218] Mabrouk 2011, 634

[219] Constitution of Morocco 1996

[220] Constitution of Morocco 1996

[221] Boukhars 2010, 55

The problem of Moroccan democracy, therefore, is not that elections and political parties are absent, but rather that they are ineffective in making real change because of their relative powerlessness vis-à-vis the king and the *makhzen*.[222] Proof of this power imbalance can be found in the budgets of various government offices: the prime minister has to work with a budget that is roughly four percent of that of the royal court.[223] Because little real authority has been given to the parliament or other elected officials, the political parties, which could act as the people's voice in government, are alienated from the people.[224] Pro-democracy elites in Morocco note that the multiparty system is mostly used as a "mechanism to select, control, and reproduce a docile, corruptible, and dependent political elite," not to promote actual democratic outcomes.[225]

Another problem with the democratic institutions established in Morocco is that the people do not trust these institutions, in part because the Constitution and practice have taken competency for some key issues from the Parliament and given them to the king. In the last parliamentary elections before the Arab Spring protests, the turnout was a historic low, with only 37 percent of registered voters casting a ballot.[226] The first parliamentary elections after the constitutional amendment process, held in November 2011, yielded a 45 percent turnout of registered voters, though the number of registrations decreased by 2 million in between the two elections.[227] Even the vote on the

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[222] Boukhars 2010, 2

[223] Boukhars 2010, 59

[224] A. Maghraoui 2001b, 12

[225] A. Maghraoui 2001b, 13-4

[226] McCurdy 2011

[227] McCurdy 2011

constitutional amendments was met with low enthusiasm: the February 20 Movement and some Islamist groups boycotted the vote and the percentage of spoiled ballots was as high as one-third by some estimates.[228]

One reason that turnout is so low is that the political parties do not offer much in the way of ideological distinction.[229] The opposition, at least those groups that are in Parliament, do not differentiate themselves much from the parties that have formed the government, and because of this, they have difficulty in "mobilizing mass constituencies."[230] Multi-party elections, it is believed, are mostly "a spectacle staged for the benefit of the Western media," because they are "designed to make sure that the opposition wins enough seats to remain part of the system but never enough to really change or challenge it."[231] For instance, the Islamist Party of Justice and Development (PJD), the second-largest party in Parliament and the lead member of the parliamentary opposition, quickly acquiesced to the constitutional amendments put forth by the reform committee, in part because it has a desire to "continue and complete the process of integration of the Islamists in the legal political process."[232] In order to become more palatable to the regime, the PJD distanced itself from the extralegal Islamist opposition group al Adl wal Ihssan (Justice and Charity) to even be brought into the government,

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[228] Spiegel 2011

[229] Tessler 1982, 72

[230] Boukhars 2010, 2

[231] Munson 1999, 273-4

[232] Ottaway 2011

and has accepted a very limited role, in which the party cannot propose legislation independently.[233]

According to the pro-February 20 Movement website Mamfakinch ("we will not take it" in the Moroccan Arabic dialect), of the 34 political parties that operate legally in the country, 30 parties "abide by the Mazhken's rules and do not challenge – or even dare to question – the king's absolute supremacy."[234] Three of the four remaining parties – parties of the political left that call for full parliamentary monarchy in which running of the government would be completely in the hands of an elected parliament – ran as a block in the 2007 elections, yet they only managed to receive 1 percent of the seats[235] (22 of 325) in the Chamber of Representatives – the lower house of the Parliament that is directly elected.[236] However, this result appears to be more attributable to infighting and ideological differences within the coalition than to any action taken by the king or members of his entourage.[237]

While the institutional set-up differs slightly in Morocco from those arrangements in Egypt or Tunisia, the fact remains that the dynamics of power between elected parliaments and the countries' rulers led to situations where parliaments had power on paper only. As such, these institutions did not work in a manner that seemed to be bringing any real change to the people they served. Therefore, in many cases, the Arab

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[233] A. Maghraoui 2012

[234] Benchemsi 2012a

[235] Benchemsi 2012a

[236] Silverstein 2011

[237]Estito 2011

public saw street protests as the only legitimate way to voice their discontent in a system in which a single leader dominated politics.[238]

In Morocco, several conditions at least appear to offer slightly more freedom. While it is debatable how real this freedom is, it is less debatable that the appearance of freedom convinced protestors to moderate their demands. Unlike in Tunisia, for instance, where opposition parties were outlawed, alternations in power between coalitions was a common occurrence.[239] In particular, Islamist opposition, in the form of the PJD, was allowed to participate in the government, whereas the main Tunisian Islamist group Al-Nahdha was in exile and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood was not allowed to contest elections.[240] In addition to more political openness, reforms in the human rights realm initiated by Mohammed VI upon his ascension to the throne in 1999, bought him goodwill within his country and abroad as a liberalizing figure.[241] "In Morocco, recent popular memories of political reform in the 1990s, a generally more liberal political atmosphere and a relatively new head of state… served to dilute popular rage against the regime. As one of the leaders of the 20 February protest movement that emerged in Morocco ruefully remarked, 'If Morocco had been a little less liberal and we had had a Ben Ali in power, we would be achieving so much more."[242]

On the surface, there appears to be much in common between Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco in terms of the presence or lack of democratic procedures and outcomes,

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[238] Lynch 2012, 64-5

[239] A. Maghroui 2001, 15

[240] Lynch 2012, 75

[241] Ottaway and Riley 2008, 170-1

[242] Willis 2012, 337

particularly in terms of the supremacy of the ruler and his entourage and the lack of a well-organized (and legal) opposition movement within the Parliament. However, the variations in political openness between the Moroccan monarchy and the Egyptian and Tunisian presidencies point to an underlying difference between these countries, which will be discussed further in the next section of this chapter: the Moroccan monarch, by virtue of being a king and being endowed with legitimacy because of his position, was able to use his authority in such a way that he could create the space for political change in a way that the leaders of Tunisia and Egypt were not able to.

3. Religious and Monarchical Legitimacy

A main difference between the Moroccan regime and its counterparts in Egypt and Tunisia is the ability of King Mohammed to use religious legitimacy to justify his power over the country, while Presidents Ben Ali and Mubarak did not have similar legitimacies that they could use to justify a continuation in their positions. While the relationship between organized Islamic groups and the palace has points of contention, the fact remains that the king is able to use religious symbolism and rhetoric to reach out to his subjects – and by-pass the everyday political process – in a way that is not available to the region's presidents.

The Moroccan king comes from a family that is believed to be descendent from the Prophet Mohammed.[243] This lineage makes the king a *shorfa,* a term that conveys an honored religious status.[244] Because of this status, the king carries dual roles as ruler of the political state and as the highest religious authority in the country as *Amir al*

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[243] Gallala-Arndt 2012, 141

[244] Hammoudi 1997, 14

Mumineen, the Commander of the Faithful.[245] The holder of the title of Commander of

the Faithful assumes the function of the 'supreme arbitrator' – he is to arbitrate among

competing political and social issues.[246] Thus, the king brings together traditional Islamic

values, such as *sharia* (Islamic law), *'umma* (the community of believers), and *bay'a* (an

oath of loyalty) with modern institutions such as a constitution and political parties.[247]

Because of this foundation of values, the king is able to appeal to "ethical and legal

principles inspired by Islam" as a relief valve to quiet "grassroots movements that may

otherwise agitate for political change through insurgency and revolution."[248] The king

uses the Ministry of Islamic Affairs to create a monopoly over "the discourse of

preaching in mosques, the nature of the educational system of the imams, [and] religious

broadcasting in the radio and television," through which his legitimacy over the religious

establishment is reinforced.[249]

The king also used his position as the country's religious leader to promote the set

of constitutional reforms developed in response to the Arab Spring protests. His speech

in favor of the amendments implied that voting 'yes' in the referendum would help to

make progress in the Western Sahara conflict.[250] Furthermore, by ending his speech with

a verse from the Quran ("This is my way: I call on Allah with sure knowledge. I and

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[245] Korany 1998, 159

[246] Maghraoui 2001a, 83

[247] Korany 1998, 157-8

[248] Menaldo 2012, 711

[249] D. Maghroui 2009, 201

[250] Almiraat 2011

whosoever followeth me"), the king suggested that voting in favor of the constitutional amendments was a religious duty.[251]

Because the king comes from a dynasty that has led Morocco for generations, he was able to draw upon religious values that are tied to nationalism as reasons why he should maintain his throne.[252] Scholars write that, since these religious, cultural, and nationalist identities are tied to values that members of the society believe are beneficial, the appeals to them helped the king to maintain his power.[253] While Middle Eastern republican leaders can attempt to draw on these values, it is much harder for them to gain traction with these tactics, because the history behind them is seen as being 'invented' by the ruler, not 'authentic' to the country.[254]

Furthermore, the king has an additional level of legitimacy specifically over members of the military. Because of his dual role as political and religious leader of Morocco, disobeying an order from the king is both a civil and religious offense.[255] While this religious legitimacy comes from centuries of tradition and religious doctrine, the royal family is able to manipulate what compliance with this legitimacy looks like; in particular, the current king's father, King Hassan manipulated the religious side of the argument after two coup attempts in the 1970s.[256]

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[251] Almiraat 2011

[252] Goldstone 2011, 1

[253] Kirby 2000, 10

[254] Kirby 2000, 10

[255] Hermassi 1994, 234

[256] Tessler 1982, 36

Unlike in Tunisia and Egypt where the militaries were professionalized – meaning that the military had their own systems for choosing and promoting leaders without undue interference from political leaders[257] – the Moroccan military had great incentives to help the king to maintain his power. The higher ranks of both the security forces and the military are filled with relatives and allies of the king;[258] they are "personally invested in the regime's survival."[259] Tying these officers to the palace is a move that helped to prevent the military from joining in the protests against the king – there would be nothing for the officers to gain from this move.[260] This is in comparison to Tunisia, where, scholars have argued, an Army general issued the 'velvet shove' – in the form of refusing to shoot on peaceful protestors – that forced President Ben Ali to give up his seat and leave the country.[261]

The king of Morocco's position allows him to have "more institutional and symbolic room to improvise reforms" than do Arab presidents.[262] For a president, making reforms can open the office up to competition; a king can call for new parliamentary elections or create a prime ministership without necessarily diluting his own power.[263] Unlike an Arab president, who is nominally elected, the Moroccan king could work on the reform process without "any hint that they were placing their own

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[257] Lynch 2012, 79

[258] Bellin 2004, 149

[259] Bellin 2012, 132

[260] Bellin 2004, 143

[261] Bellin 2012, 133-4; Fakhro and Kokayem 2011, 27

[262] Brumberg 2002, 63

[263] Greenblatt 2011

positions in question."[264] Since the king is attached to a series of traditions, not all of which are necessarily religious in nature, he can make claims back upon these traditions to provide himself more time to make the reforms that the people are demanding.[265] Protecting so-called "sacred institutions" – which broadly includes the nation (which includes Western Sahara) and the monarchy, as well as Islam – was used as a reason that change must be small or incremental.[266]

In addition, the Moroccan protestors made different demands of their king than the Tunisians or Egyptians made of their presidents. Calling for the king to step down would have been a non-starter for protestors in Casablanca. While protestors in Tunis were calling for the overthrow of President Ben Ali,[267] the best the Moroccan protestors could do was to call for a parliamentary monarchy and for specific reforms dealing with corruption and other economic issues.[268] This careful avoidance of direct challenges to the king's power occurred, in part, because of the belief that, without the king's consent and involvement, the necessary reforms would not happen.[269]

Because of his centrality in the Moroccan political system, the king has been able to manage which groups are allowed into power in the Parliament.[270] Since the groups in power only serve at the pleasure of the king, he has been able to manufacture a politics of

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[264] Brynen, Moore, Salloukh, and Zahar 2012, 181

[265] Brumberg 2002, 63

[266] A. Maghraoui 2001b, 15

[267] Lynch 2012, 79

[268] Alami 2011a

[269] Lynch 2012, 114

[270] D. Maghraoui 2011, 684

consensus over time; this consensual style makes challenging the king's authority more difficult.[271] For instance, the ties between the king and the political parties meant that none of the major parties joined in with the February 20 Movement – to do so would have meant possibly jeopardizing their positions in Parliament.[272]

Furthermore, the king used his centrality in the Moroccan political system to make it appear that the king, not by the protestors, inspired the reforms. When announcing the constitutional reform process, King Mohammed highlighted the need to "revamp the economy, boost competitiveness, promote productive investment, and encourage public involvement," but not the protests or the February 20 Movement.[273] As one journalist observed during the speech: "tellingly… the words 'parliamentary monarchy' did not pass his lips."[274]

4. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the similarities and differences in between Morocco and its North African neighbors in terms of political institutions and basis for the rulers' legitimacy. In terms of political institutions and outcomes, Morocco looks similar to Tunisia and Egypt: power was increasingly placed in the hands of the powerful, the opposition did not offer much in the way of ideological distinction, and the publics were apathetic about the chance for political change through the normal political process.

The king had sources of support from both of the main threats encountered by these regimes during the Arab Spring protests: liberal, secular elites and religious groups.

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[271] D. Maghraoui 2011, 684

[272] Russeau 2011

[273] Lalami 2011a

[274] Lalami 2011a

Toward the former, the relatively liberal reputation of the regime helped. Toward the latter, the king has sources of religious legitimacy that are not available to the presidents of the North African republics.

The fact that Morocco is a monarchy, and not a republic, created a different source of political legitimacy. The king was able to use this legitimacy to offer reforms to the people, who would give him more time to propose and implement the constitutional changes. [275] The king also had dual sources of legitimacy over the armed forces – as the civil and religious leader of the country – which helped him to keep the army from defecting and siding with the protestors. Both of these helped to create a situation where the king was able to maintain his power.

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[275] Brumberg 2002, 63

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Mohammed VI of Morocco was able to draw upon the fact that he is a king to maintain his position after the Arab Spring protests began in his country, despite the fact that the king's neighbors, President Ben Ali of Tunisia and President Mubarak of Egypt lost their positions as a direct result of the protests. This difference in outcome cannot be understood as a result of differences in the underlying structural conditions faced by the countries during period leading up to the protests. All three countries had similarly high levels of un- and under-employment, particularly among the growing populations of young and well-educated citizens; increasing economic and social inequality, in part due to policies that cut social safety net provisions; and well-documented economic and political corruption, in which those with connections to the ruler and his family increased their control over access to the economy.

Furthermore, the difference in outcomes should not be understood as coming from variations in regime strategies. Both the Moroccan king and the Tunisian and Egyptian presidents used tactics such as "buying off" parts or all of the opposition, attempting to discredit the ideas that the opposition was advancing, and using their power to keep the opposition out of a place of institutional power. Despite the differences in political institutions between the countries, these three leaders used similar tactics and policies in attempts to maintain their seat of power.

However, being a king did grant King Mohammed VI with a source of legitimacy that was not available to the leaders of Tunisia and Egypt. First, the king is endowed with religious legitimacy because of his title of Commander of the Faithful and lineage

from the Prophet Mohammed – sources of legitimacy that are not available to the secular leader of the other North African states. The king's religious legitimacy also changed the ways in which the military interacted with him. Unlike the professionalized militaries of Egypt and Tunisia, which were not dependent upon their leader for their continued existence, the Moroccan military could not defy the king without being guilty of both treason and sacrilege.

The king was also able to use his legitimacy as a monarch to change the ways in which the protestors interacted with him. While the protestors in Tunis and Cairo made claims that "the people want to overthrow the regime,"[276] protestors in Casablanca and Rabat asked for a constitutional monarchy.[277] The king's central position in the government, and his involvement with the political and economic elites in the *makhzen* led many Moroccans to believe that constitutional change would be impossible without the leadership of the king.[278] Finally, given that the king is seen as a source of stability against the chaos that could come from outright regime change, he is able to make promises of constitutional reform that presidents cannot make without undermining their own base of power.[279] In the face of protestors demanding regime change, "neither Ben Ali nor Hosni Mubarak was able to frame an adequate defense of their right to rule," while the king was able to call on the stability and tradition of the monarchy to maintain his right to rule.[280]

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[276] Brynen, Moore, Salloukh, and Zahar 2012, 287

[277] El-Din Haseeb 2011, 114

[278] Kühnhardt 2012

[279] Brumberg 2002, 63

[280] Brynen, Moore, Salloukh, and Zahar 2012, 36-7

Across the Arab world, being a monarch helped leaders to maintain power. As of the spring of 2013, four Arab presidents – Muammar Qaddafi of Libya, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali of Tunisia, Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, and Ali Abdallah Sadeh of Yemen – lost their power.[281] Furthermore, the on-going civil war in Syria calls into questions whether President Bashar al-Assad will maintain his power.[282] On the other hand, the region's monarchs came through the protests relatively unscathed. In Jordan and Morocco, the kings used constitutional amendments to focus on immediate changes in the government. In oil-rich Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates, the monarchs proactively used petro-dollars to raise the salaries of public officials, increase spending on welfare policies, and to create employment opportunities. Large-scale protests did erupt in Bahrain – where a Sunni monarch rules over a largely Shia population – but were put down with the help of Saudi Arabian security forces.[283]

Scholars argue that the Gulf Cooperative Council (GCC), an intergovernmental organization formed by the Arabian Peninsula monarch, also played a role in helping monarchs to maintain their power.[284] The monarchs leading the GCC learned from the failures of leaders in Egypt and Tunisia, and decided to take action to prevent a wide-scale domino effect across the region.[285] Once protests were seen in Jordan, the GCC began to fast-track that country's application to the organization, and it extended an invitation for membership to Morocco. Both of these events also came with offers,

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[281] Dodge 2012, 64

[282] Dodge 2012, 67

[283] Alsharif 2011

[284] Kühnhardt 2012

[285] Kühnhardt 2012

specifically from the government of Saudi Arabia, for loans or reduced prices on oil imports.[286]

Whether the Moroccan outcomes can be seen as 'good' depends on one's perspective. From the perspective of the king, maintaining power while granting some constitutional reforms is a much better option that losing his power. The king retains both his political and religious standings as the head of the country and, while the wording is changed somewhat from previous versions, he remains "inviolable" (Article 46).[287] The king is credited with proposing changes to the Constitution before the "familiar violence-mobilization cycle could kick in," as it had in Egypt and Tunisia, which could have created more sympathy or support for the February 20 Movement.[288] Attempting to ignore the demands of the Movement, or acting too slowly to respond to them, would "only grant these movements a more conducive opportunity to expand and earn them a wider audience and more supporters."[289]

From the protestors' perspective, however, the constitutional changes made by the king in response to their agitation did not go nearly far enough – they declared that the new constitution was a "half-measure, heavy on inclusive rhetoric and light on actual reform."[290] In the years preceding the Arab Spring, not only was the palace "the heart of the country's political system, but… the king and his inner circle of family and friends were Morocco's most important economic actors," and the new constitution did little to

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[286] Alsharif 2011

[287] Silverstein 2011

[288] Lynch 2012, 142

[289] Belkeziz 2012, 33

[290] Silverstein 2011

change that fact.[291] Another charge laid against the constitutional changes is that they do nothing to constrain the king's power. King Mohammed VI still retains the power under the Constitution to act in ways that trump other sections of the Constitution,[292] particularly in issue areas that deal with the monarch and his family, the nation (generally taken to mean issues surrounding the 'territorial integrity' of the country – namely, Western Sahara), or Islam.[293]

In addition to the previously mentioned dimensions of the protestors vis-à-vis the king, the results of the Arab Spring protests in Morocco can be thought of in terms of their impact on the outside world, as well of in terms of their effects on the Moroccan population as a whole. In both of these instances, the events of 2011 led to a better outcome in Morocco than the ones experienced in Tunisia and Egypt. The monarchy-managed transition in Morocco meant that there was no gap in political power as there was in Egypt and Tunisia, when a transitional government held power, the country held elections, and a constitutional commission tried to write a new constitution, all during roughly the same time period.[294] While the protestors did not get everything they wanted, particularly in terms of issues surrounding corruption, the process taken meant that additional immediate changes could be attempted through the day-to-day politics of Parliament rather than through revolutionary action.

Morocco did not face the same problems with visitors entering the country as did its neighbors. The countries mentioned are heavily dependent upon revenue from foreign

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[291] Brynen, Moore, Salloukh, and Zahar 2012, 35

[292] Hammoudi 1997, 12-13

[293] Silverstein 2011

[294] al-Ali 2012

tourists. While tourism revenue dropped by 6 percent in Morocco during 2011, that figure is not nearly as bad as the 30 percent decrease experienced in Tunisia or the 60 percent decline in Egypt.[295] It should also be noted that it is unclear whether the decrease in tourism to Morocco is because of the Arab Spring protests or because of a general decrease in tourism amongst citizens of the European Union because of the Great Recession.[296]

Furthermore, because the king kept his power, Morocco missed some of the economic or political downfalls that Egypt and Tunisia experienced or that could be feared if the country became chaotic due to a political vacuum. Other than in Libya, a protest-driven refugee crisis never manifested itself in the long-term way feared by European leaders.[297] Because Morocco also is a center of transit for migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, stability in the kingdom also meant that the police and border control were as effective (or ineffective) as usual in preventing migrants from leaving Morocco for the European Union's shores.[298] Finally, had there been a protracted struggle between the protestors and the king, it is likely that the Polisario Front, the Western Saharan freedom fighters backed by Algeria and Mauritania, would have seized the opportunity to renew their fight for independence.[299]

While Islamists did come to power in Morocco, the PJD is relatively moderate in its views on politics and the role of Islam in the state. It was highly unlikely that radical

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[295] Ali 2011

[296] Ali 2011

[297] Fargues and Fandrich 2012

[298] Fargues and Fandrich 2012

[299] Agence France-Presse 2013

Islamist groups would have gained much power in Morocco, but there was a fear, particularly among liberals and women's rights activists, that the PJD's ascent would create a situation in which laws more heavily based on Quranic interpretations would be enacted.[300] These fears were similar to those held in Tunisia about al-Nahdha and in Egypt about the Muslim Brotherhood. However, the king's centrality in the political system and the traditional policy of alternation between political coalitions means that the Islamists will have incentives to stay more moderate, lest they risk moving too far away from the king's agenda.[301] Additionally, because the king maintains final control over the Moroccan political system, there is little worry among Western governments that the ruling coalition will change its stance on supporting the American-led "War on Terror," unlike the anxiety produced when protests arose in Bahrain and Egypt.[302]

All in all, the Moroccan king was able withstand the Arab Spring protests mainly because of his monarchical legitimacy. This legitimacy gave him more time to act than leaders in other North African countries were given – despite members of the February 20 Movement taking issue with the constitutional amendment process and the text of these amendments. In the two years since the proposal of the constitutional reforms, however, the country has returned to the status quo of King Mohammed VI and the *makhzen* has retained the majority of the country's political power.

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[300] Ottaway and Riley 2008, 171

[301] A. Maghroui 2001, 15

[302] Brumberg 2002, 65

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