Chapter 3

Parties and Party Systems Change

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1. Introduction

This chapter examines parties and party system change across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) since the eruption of the Arab Spring in December 2010. Hence, the discussion begins with an overview of the parties and party systems in the region on the eve of the Arab Spring, thereby providing a quick introduction to the cases as well as a benchmark against which to measure change, while also anchoring the analysis in the theoretical framework outlined previously in chapter 1.

The units of analysis are the region's parties and party systems and, more specifically, change to these units. That is, change within countries, the MENA as a region as well as MENA sub-regions and, finally, within groups of regimes. In short, the analysis is concerned with variance among and within countries, and the extent to which change has occurred, whether positive or negative.

Given the focus on change, it is, of course, necessary to define how change is understood and measured here. In line with the so-called classic studies of parties and party systems, such as Sartori (1976) and Mair (1989; 1997), party system change is determined via indicators such as the effective number of parties, electoral volatility and the entry of new parties into the system. The analysis of the indicators of party system change is coupled with a discussion about empirical data on the political environment at election time and in the immediate aftermath of the elections, including issues such as regime classification, rotation of power, coalition structures, prohibited parties, and societal cleavages.[1] Hence, the emphasis is on (in)stability and on the structure and nature of competition in 2015 compared to that of 2010. In short, what does party system change tell us about the prospects for democracy some five years after the outbreak of the Arab Spring?

With regard to the issue of party change, the analysis centres on a small handful of the region's political parties, namely (1) those that can be classified as traditionally dominant, and which have remained key operators on the scene (for example the National Liberation Front (FLN in the French acronym) in Algeria); (2) those that can be defined as new parties, whether internally or externally created,[2] which entered the party system post-2010 (*Tunisia'a al-Aridha* (PP) is one example); and (3) the (initially) victorious Islamist parties (such as the *Ennahda* in Tunisia and Egypt's Freedom and Justice Party (FJP). How have these specific parties responded to the political environment established with the advent of the Arab Spring within their respective countries? And how does the success of these particular parties impact upon the prospects for democracy in the MENA?

2. The importance of parties for democracy

Democracy and political parties go hand in hand. Political parties - defined here according to Sartori's (1976: 63) minimal principles as 'any political group identified by an official label that presents at elections, and is capable of placing through elections (free or non-free), candidates for public office' - are indispensable for democracy. Research shows that without them, democracy is not only unlikely to take hold, it is also unlikely to thrive and, therefore, survive (Schattschneider 1942; van Biezen 2003; Kuenzi and Lambright 2005; Norris 2005). Hence, the state of the key political parties in the MENA, as well as the nature of the region's party systems, say a lot about the prospects for democracy in the region in the wake of the

Arab Spring, which many hoped would usher in a new democratic era, and which has, in some ways, proved to be a profoundly transformative political event in a number of MENA countries.

Political parties have several functions, which can crudely be divided into two categories: firstly, representative and institutional/procedural, which are rather obvious, and secondly, a category that includes the recruitment of leaders and the organisation of parliament and government (Bartolini and Mair 2001). In other words, parties act as vehicles for citizen representation by uniting people with shared interests, structuring their voice, and therefore ultimately strengthening and empowering them. In a nutshell, it is easy for a regime to ignore the voice of a single individual, who feels s/he stands alone, but difficult to disregard the demands of a populous, organised force (Norris 2005). This rings true both outside parliament as well as within, that is, for members of the electorate as well as for the deputies serving in public office. And this is the crux of the matter. Parties are important. Parties are necessary. They cannot be replaced by ‘groupings’, ‘alliances’, ‘lists’ and the like. This is not simply a question of semantics, but one of representation and accountability. Without political parties, there is no democracy.

Similarly, democracy cannot be bent. Authoritarian approximations, regardless of what they are labelled, are still versions of authoritarianism; they are not subcategories of democracy. And in many cases, if not in most, authoritarian approximations do not constitute moves toward democracy, on the contrary. Usually, electoral authoritarianism, competitive authoritarianism, tutelary democracy, and illiberal democracy, along with their many siblings in the category of pluralist authoritarianism, have been introduced precisely to ensure the survival of authoritarian rule, and prevent the fostering of democracy.[3]

Consequently, the analysis that follows focuses on countries that allow some degree of contestation, but are not necessarily democratic. Referring back to the theoretical framework in chapter 1, the discussion spans regimes across the categories of full democracy, defective democracy, and pluralist authoritarianism, while closed authoritarian regimes have been left out except for in instances where they provide useful context. The objective is accordingly to assess whether party system change, and to some extent also party change, represent significant steps toward full democracy and, in the case of Israel (the only democracy in the region, even though it is defective due to its treatment of the country's Arab population), its continued survival. Consequently, the analysis deals mainly with those MENA countries where political parties are - and were - allowed, and where competitive elections took place both prior to and following the outbreak of the Arab Spring. In short, Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Morocco, Tunisia, Israel and Turkey are the cases - Arab and non-Arab - at the core of the discussion. That said, several other MENA countries - including Bahrain, Iran, Kuwait, Jordan, Lebanon, and Yemen - will also be considered, but less closely, and from a different perspective. Rather than assessing party and party system change, the focus in these cases is the nature and extent of competition allowed prior to and in the wake of the Arab Spring, and the issue of why parties continue to be prohibited, in many cases despite the holding of competitive elections with some level of organisation, whether in the form of alliances, blocs, lists, etc.

3. Benchmarking: the state of the MENA party systems in 2010

At the time of the outbreak of the Arab Spring in December 2010, and by the time it began to more rapidly spread across the MENA region in early 2011, none of the region's Arab regimes could be classified as democratic, although a handful did both allow for political parties and hold competitive elections at national level; on a theoretical level, at least.

3.1. Limited pluralism

The reality is that, regardless of the holding of somewhat competitive elections and a modicum of power-sharing, on the eve of the eruption of the Arab Spring, Yemen, Tunisia and Egypt effectively had one-party systems in place following legislative elections in 2003, 2009 and 2010 respectively. A hegemonic party - the National Democratic Party (NDP) in Egypt, the Democratic Constitutional Rally (RCD in the French acronym) in Tunisia, and the General People's Congress (GPC) in Yemen - sat firmly in power, because the legislative (and presidential) elections were so heavily manipulated that there seemed no prospects of any alternation (Blaydes 2010; Fuentes 2010; Gobe 2009; Phillips 2008). Furthermore, in the case of Yemen, legislative elections had effectively been abandoned with president Ali Abdullah Saleh postponing the scheduled 2009 elections by two years amid political tensions, which were, at times, extremely violent (Day 2012).

Somewhat more pluralist on the face of it, Turkey, Palestine and Syria all operated with two-party systems, the effective number of parties[4] (based on national election results from 2006 and 2007) amounting to 2.2 in Turkey, 2.3 in Palestine, and 2.5 in Syria. That said, in Syria competition was far from genuine, and the figure of 2.3 masks the fact that Syria was effectively another case of single-party hegemony. Prior to the 2007 elections, 163 seats had been set aside for the National Progressive Front (NPF) - an alliance formed by the Arab Socialist *Ba'ath* Party (which won 134 of the seats, having been allocated a minimum of 130 seats) and its various satellites and crony parties. 81 seats were reserved for so-called 'independents', although their distance from the regime was very limited (Ghadbian 2015). In contrast, in Palestine, competition between the two main parties, *HAMAS* and *Fatah*, was extremely fierce, and there was no questioning the nature of the party system, despite allegations of fraud and manipulation (Shikaki 2006; Roy 2011). In Turkey, competition was authentic too, and alternation of power a real possibility despite an electoral framework that clearly favoured the larger parties and encouraged the fielding of independent candidates due to the existence of a threshold of 10 per cent of the national vote for parties.[5] As in 2002, the 2007 elections saw the victory of the conservative Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP), but sizeable seat shares were also awarded to the two traditionally influential parties, the Republican People's Party (CHP) and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP). Hence, whereas Palestine was a genuine example of a two-party system, the nature of the party system in Turkey bordered on so-called 'moderate pluralism', with more than two actors standing a realistic chance of winning the elections, and competition being somewhat more centripetal.

3.2. Moderate and extreme pluralism

Moderate pluralism, defined as party systems in which the effective number of parties is in the region of 3 to 5 (Sartori 1976), was the order of the day in Algeria (5.5), while Israel (6.8), Iraq (7.1)[6], Lebanon (9.5), and Morocco (9.7) operated with party systems that could best be described as cases of 'polarised' or 'extreme' pluralism, with some being much more extreme than others. In fact, the so-called 'pluralist' party systems in place prior to the Arab Spring covered a wide variety of settings.

In Algeria, for example, the political situation was very stable. While the effective number of parties was 5.5., the party system was arguably still dominated by the two regime parties, the FLN and the National Rally for Democracy (RND), as it had been for decades. Smaller 'complacent parties', referred to as opposition parties, but effectively silent partners co-opted by the regime, were allowed the opportunity to gain a modicum of representation in parliament and some even a few seats in the cabinet, but never to an extent that these parties had any real say about how politics was conducted in the country (Volpi 2013; Willis 2014).

In neighbouring Morocco, the issue of the lack of an audible voice in politics was also a major issue for the political parties. But here it was an issue for all parties. It was the king who set the political agenda, and the king who had the ultimate say about every political decision of any significance. Morocco was an executive monarchy, in which the king not only ruled, but also governed (Boukhars 2010). With the monarchy firmly entrenched, the formation - and even mushrooming - of political parties was strongly encouraged by the regime. Toothless party pluralism was seen by the regime as a means of ensuring the monarchy's position at the centre of politics, creating a democratic veneer for the electorate and the international community, and a system of spoils for the local political elite. Hence, the large number of parties contesting the legislative elections and represented in parliament and also in the cabinet did not reflect the actual division of power. Power lay firmly in the hands of the monarchy, while a slowly expanding handful of traditionally dominant parties[7] continued to support the *status quo* in return for privilege (Lust 2014; Storm 2013).

Although the figures for the effective number of parties in Algeria, Morocco and (as shall become evident later) Israel indicated at a first glance the existence of moderate to extreme pluralist party systems, which upon further examination turned out to be much less pluralist than initially thought, the Lebanese party system was not only highly fragmented in terms of the effective number of parties score, which was approaching 10, the system was also borderline atomised if one takes a closer look at the environment behind the figures: some 21 parties and groups of independents - divided between four alliances or blocs - secured seats in parliament in the country's last pre-Arab Spring elections of 2009. Two of the blocs (March 8 and Change and Reform) won around 23 per cent of the contested seats each, while the largest alliance (March 14) took 46 per cent, and the smallest (composed of pro-government independents) just short of 8 per cent. Three parties - the Future Movement (FM), the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) and *Amal* - won in excess of 10 per cent of the seats, while the party spearheading the smallest alliance, the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), secured a seat share of 5.6 per cent, which was much closer to the seat share of the vast majority of successful parties, most of which won fewer than 4 per cent.

A similar scenario to that unfolding in Lebanon, where the new Hariri government could arguably best be characterised as a compromise, which saw inclusion triumph over coherence, and breadth over strength, given its oversized nature and broad ideological span, could be found in Israel at the time of the last pre-Arab Spring elections of 2009.[8] Following strong performances at the polls by the *Kadima,* the *Likud,* Labor and *Yisrael Beiteinu,* which all succeeded in obtaining a seat share in excess of 10 per cent, and the ultra-orthodox *Shas,* which secured 9.17 per cent of the contested seats, a broad and over-sized government coalition was formed in the wake of the elections.[9] Ironically, of the five largest parties, which together controlled 78.3 per cent of the seats in *Knesset,* only the *Kadima* did not enter the coalition, despite the party winning the elections with a seat share of 25.33 per cent to the *Likud's* 22.5 per cent.[10] The *Kadima's* origins, which began with a splinter from the *Likud* in 2005 and gained a number of *Labor* parliamentarians shortly after, partly explains why the party was not a member of the governing coalition. However, it also serves to illustrate that it would, in fact, have been theoretically possible to form a much smaller governing coalition around the *Kadima*; a coalition that would also have been much more ideologically coherent.

Most pluralist of them all, however, was Iraq. That is, if one can call the party system pluralist. The effective number of parties score of 7.1 at the time of the 2010 elections did not actually reflect parties but rather alliances. Within these alliances there were several parties, but the results of the individual components were never made public. Hence, while less than 10 alliances were awarded seats, there were around 40 parties within them. Of the alliances contesting the 2010 elections, four succeeded in winning more than 10 per cent of the contested seats, but two parties still clearly outperformed the others, namely the Iraqi National

Movement, which took 28 per cent of the seats, and the State of Law Coalition, which was awarded 27.38 per cent.

4. Party system development: the Arab Spring and other factors

In the wake of the outbreak of the Arab Spring in late 2010, and the subsequent eruption of political upheaval across the MENA region in early 2011, academics, practitioners and members of the general public have questioned its impact and importance (Willis 2014; Youngs 2014; Frosini and Biagi 2015; Kausch 2015; Sadiki 2014). Initially, many hoped and thought that the unprecedented levels of political unrest experienced in the region would result in democracy finally taking hold in the MENA countries, but as time passed the expectations were dashed. But what exactly happened in terms of democratic advancement? Looking at data relating to the character of the MENA party systems, particularly the Pedersen index of electoral volatility[11], the effective number of parties, the seat share of the top two parties,[12] and the seat share of new parties entering the party system, there is no denying that the region's party systems have undergone change, although some evidently more than others as illustrated in Table 3.1.

[Table 3.1 near here]

Table 3.1. Party system change: the effective number of parties and the Arab Spring

	1-party system	**2-party system**	**Moderate pluralism (3-5)**	**Extreme pluralism (6-8+)**
	Egypt	Palestine	Algeria	Iraq
	Tunisia	Syria		Israel
	Yemen	Turkey		Lebanon
				Morocco
Arab Spring				
		Turkey	Algeria	Iraq
		Turkey	Egypt ↑	Israel
			Libya ↑	Morocco
			Tunisia ↑	

Source: Prepared by the author

At first glance, two key observations can be made from Table 3.1. Firstly, a number of countries no longer figure as there have been no competitive legislative elections held since the Arab Spring (this is the case of Lebanon, Palestine, Syria and Yemen),[13] while Libya is a new entry as the country's first competitive legislative elections took place in 2012. Secondly, where significant party system change ocurred - measured solely on the basis of the effective number of parties and Sartori's corresponding party system categories - the trend has been in a more competitive direction. Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, the only countries witnessing such pronounced development, have all moved into the category of moderate pluralism: Egypt and Tunisia from a one-party system starting point, and Libya from a situation where free, fair competitive elections were denied and political parties prohibited.

The Pedersen index, a measure used to illustrate the level of electoral volatility in either votes or - as here - in seats, further supports the indication that the party systems in the MENA region have undergone considerable change following the Arab Spring, and while only a handful of cases have experienced significant party system change (in the sense of category leaps), most have witnessed substantial electoral volatility as voters have shifted allegiances and new parties have entered the party systems and old parties exited. While there are no precise rules stipulating what constitutes low, medium or high levels of electoral volatility, a Pedersen index above 10 is generally referred to in the literature as considerable, and scores above 40 as (very) high. If these cut-off points are used as a general guide, then all the MENA countries represented in Table 3.1 experienced medium to high levels of electoral volatility, that is, except for those cases that exited in the wake of the Arab Spring and the new entry of Libya (as the Pedersen index cannot be calculated for these). Nevertheless, whereas it is beyond doubt that changes to the party systems of the region have taken place, and in some cases great changes, the figures do not tell us *why* these changes occured, and whether they were, indeed, a product of the Arab Spring or some other factor(s). In order to determine the impact of the Arab Spring, it is therefore necessary to dig a little deeper and also take a look at the political environment, including issues such as regime classification, rotation of power, coalition structures, prohibited parties, and societal cleavages.

4.1. Egypt and Tunisia: regime overthrow and party system change

Rather unsurprisingly, electoral volatility was most pronounced in Egypt and Tunisia, with scores approaching 100, as the two countries experienced great political turmoil following the fall of long-lived authoritarian regimes in late 2010 and early 2011. In both countries, the desire to see a break with the past led to the dissolution of the old regime parties (the RCD in Tunisia, the NDP in Egypt), the swift licensing of a swathe of new parties, and subsequently the holding of legislative elections - all within the space of a year (Gana 2013; Korany and Rabab 2014). In Tunisia, the 2011 elections, in which 19 parties were elected (compared to 7 in 2009), saw the victory of the two main opposition forces to the Ben Ali regime: Rashid el-Ghannoushi's Islamist *Ennahda* and the liberal Congress for the Republic (CPR) under the leadership of Moncef Marzouki. While these two parties were new in the sense of contesting legislative elections, they had operated as clandestine entities during the Ben Ali regime, just as several of the other new entries into the party system had done (Perkins 2005; Storm 2013). In some cases, the so-called 'new' parties were, in fact, new constructions, but the key personalities within them were well known figures on the Tunisian political scene. Hence, although the effective number of parties went up from 1.7 in 2009 to 4.6 in 2011, and despite a Pedersen index of 99, the political landscape was not wholly unfamiliar to the electorate.

A few years later, at the end of 2014, Tunisian voters returned to the polls to elect a new legislature following the adoption of the country's first post-Ben Ali constitution. Plagued by political unrest and strong societal division between Islamists and anti-Islamists, electoral volatility remained very high (a Pedersen index of 73). Of the three newcomers (the *Ennahda,* the CPR and *al-Aridha* (PP), which had done very well in the country's first democratic elections in 2011, only the *Ennahda* remained a significant player. However, the Islamists were this time outperformed by the new entrant *Nidaa Tounes,* a party bringing together key figures and supporters of the old regime party under the leadership of Beji Caïd Essebsi (Boubekeur 2016; Brody-Barre 2013). Following presidential elections in November 2014, which were won by Essebsi, *Nidaa Tounes* formed a government under the leadership of prime minister Habib Essid together with a small supporting party, the Free Patriotic Union. Given *Nidaa Tounes*' and Essid's strong ties to Ben Ali's regime, the country appeared to have come full circle, returning to a situation where the old guard was governing, and power was effectively concentrated in the hands of one party, but with the important difference that in the post-Arab Spring era, this had happened via free, fair and competitive elections - legislative and presidential.

In Egypt, things returned much to 'normal' as well, although the path taken was very different to that in Tunisia. Following Mubarak's ousting by the military, which had always played a central role in Egyptian politics, a new constitution was swiftly adopted in preparation for the holding of legislative elections and the return to civilian rule. The elections were originally scheduled for September 2011, but were eventually postponed, officially with a view to giving new parties a better chance to establish themselves before the polls, although some observers were alleging that the decision to push the elections back a few months was instead due to the military firming up its exit guarantees (Brown and Stilt 2011; Moustafa 2012). With the former regime party dissolved, the way had undeniably been paved for party system change, and not surprisingly there was a pronounced increase in new parties readying themselves to compete in the elections. Hence, when the first free and competitive national elections in Egyptian history did eventually take place from November 2011 through to January 2012, the result was predictably a substantial growth in the party system (from 8 parties to 15), as well as the victory of new forces, as the previously repressed Muslim Brotherhood emerged as the winner under the banner of its recently licensed electoral outfit, the FJP. In second place came another Islamist party, the brand new and more conservative *al-Nour*. In unison, the FJP and the *al-Nour* party won some 64 per cent of the contested seats, which was a considerable achievement for two newcomers, and an enormous change in fortune for the country's Islamists.[14]

The Islamist wave of success continued into the presidential elections, which saw the leader of the FJP, Mohammed Morsi, emerge victorious following a run-off against the country's former prime minister and Mubarak confidante, Ahmed Shafiq. However, Morsi's attempts to concentrate power in his own hands not long after his ascendance to the presidency, coupled with the virtually unrivalled political strength of the country's Islamist parties as a group (despite their differences) led to a second military *coup d'état* within as many years (Rougier and Lacroix 2016). Initially the military made promises of returning to civilian rule as soon as possible. Nevertheless, it quickly became apparent that it had no genuine intention of doing so, amid surprisingly few complaints. It appeared that many

Egyptians - and large segments of the international community - preferred a stable Egypt under military rule to an Islamist government. The military's grip on power was eventually legitimised in spring 2014, when General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, the architect behind Morsi's removal, won the presidential elections against the activist Hamdeen Sabahi, who was an extreme outsider.[15]

At the time the 2015 legislative elections were held after nearly four years with no parliament *in situ*, Egypt remained under effective military rule. The elections were won by so-called independents, which had reserved 448 of the 596 seats in parliament, while party-affiliated candidates were awarded 120, and a further 28 members were appointed by President al-Sisi. The Egyptian parliament had once again been reduced to the president's rubber stamp, and parties of any substance - particularly liberal or Islamist - had been dissolved or marginalised to such an extent that they were no longer major players regardless of their individual performances in the elections, which several parties argued were heavily manipulated by the military (Democracy International 2014; Rougier and Lacroix 2016). From one authoritarian regime to another, but with similar set-ups, Egypt had, indeed, come full circle.

4.2. Libya: from a party vacuum to empty moderate pluralism

Whereas Tunisia and Egypt had both come full circle - Tunisia in the sense of voting back into office key personalities from the *ancien régime*, and Egypt returning to the comfort of more overt military rule - Libya did nothing of the like. In fact, Libya went from a tightly controlled political landscape devoid of political parties and free, fair and competitive elections to an over-crowded, fragmented, disjointed and ultimately anarchic political space with more than one parliament.

Political parties in the new Libya were only of peripheral importance, however. Parties were simply a matter of box-ticking. They were a means to appease the citizenry and placate the international community, whether at the time of the country's first democratic elections in the spring of 2012, in which no less than 21 parties proved successful or in the wake of the elections during the government-formation period and its aftermath. In Libya, instead, the currency was localism: specifically, tribal ties, religious extremism and brute force. The vast majority of the parties formed in the run-up to the 2012 elections - if not all - were effectively militia or tribes with local rather than national agendas. The newly established parties were lacking in political ideology and, consequently, in specific programmes. Their platforms were not based on policies aimed at building a new and united Libya or, indeed, a new and divided Libya (Tabib 2014; El Gomati 2015; Lesch 2014; Pargeter 2016). The parties were simply militia and tribal fronts - that were often also personalistic in nature - which put forward agendas based on blood and territory, as well as, of course, vehicles for the pitting of old regime forces against those it had repressed. However these groups had suddenly become the new overlords after al-Gaddafi's demise in autumn 2011. Predictably, the 2012 elections took place in an ambience of violence and protest.

The two main parties in 2012 were the National Forces Alliance (NFA) and the Justice and Construction Party (JCP), which won 70 per cent of the contested seats between them, and that were the only two parties to obtain a seat share above 5 per cent.[16] The NFA, formed in February 2012 and headed by Mahmoud Jibril[17], who had served as rebel prime minister during the early days of the Arab Spring uprisings, brought together a wide variety of organisations, NGOs and independent personalities under a loosely-defined liberal banner, calling for a democratic Libya governed by moderate Islam (St John 2015). In comparison to the NFA, the smaller JCP, which won 21.25 per cent of the seats reserved for party-affiliated candidates, can only be described as much more conservative in nature with a clear Islamist agenda given its point of origin within the Muslim Brotherhood. In the wake of the elections, the JCP strengthened its position *vis-à-vis* the much larger NFA by playing a clever political game of divide and rule supporting ethnic minority candidates (for example the *Amazigh*) or moderate Islamists against secular candidates fielded by the diverse and therefore deeply divided NFA for various high-ranking positions within the new political administration (Boduszynski and Pickard 2013; Pack and Cook 2015; St John 2015).

Regardless of the intense battle between the two top parties, there is no denying, however, that party politics remain insignificant in Libya, as do electoral politics. Most tellingly, the vast majority of the contested seats in 2012 were reserved for independent candidates, rather than those with party affiliation - a situation in sharp contrast to that in Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey, as well as Iraq to some extent, where independents have played a much less central role in post-2010 electoral politics. A few years later, in the summer of 2014, parties had been entirely dispensed with as the Libyan electorate headed to the polls yet again in national elections.[18] Hence, although parties were not prohibited, they had been pushed to the margins of the political system, and consequently very few now operate as anything more than empty shells (St John 2015).[19] This situation is in sharp contrast to that in Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Morocco, Tunisia, and Turkey, where independents have played a much less central role in post-Arab Spring electoral politics.

4.3. Algeria, Iraq, Israel, Morocco and Turkey: the stable party systems

In comparison to the North African cases of Egypt and Tunisia, which both experienced significant change at the party system level, whether related to the Arab Spring or as a consequence of other political events, Algeria, Iraq, Israel, Morocco and Turkey remained remarkably stable. Nonetheless, Algeria and Morocco did experience some political unrest linked to the regional unrest, and Iraq has remained in a state of turmoil since the 2003 invasion.

Morocco was perhaps the most strongly affected by the Arab Spring from this group, and was hit by large-scale political demonstrations in early 2011. The protests were chiefly organised under the banner of the *Mouvement du 20 Février,* a collective that brought together Islamists, Berber groups and the far-left in a call for political reforms (Fernández-Molina 2011; 2016). Given the disjointed nature of the *Mouvement du 20 Février,* the objectives of the group were somewhat unclear. Specifically the kind of political reform that was envisaged, and how it would be arrived at, was never fully explored and, consequently, the *Mouvement du 20 Février* remained weak when faced with a well-organised executive monarchy used to tackling dissent, and more importantly also equipped with the means to do so effectively (Desrues 2012).

In light of the protests taking place in the larger cities across Morocco, the monarchy brought forward the date of the legislative elections originally scheduled for the following year, while also overseeing the revision and adoption of a new constitution. Both measures won the monarchy considerable goodwill amongst the general population, as the king came across as efficient and responsive, although in reality the king's actions did nothing good for the country's democratisation process, seing as the monarch effectively by-passed the democratically elected politicians, and ensured the passing of a new constitution, which concentrated power further in his hands (Storm 2013; Benchemsi 2012). The legislative elections which were brought forward from 2012 to 2011 saw the Moroccan electorate punish the incumbent government, which ultimately was much less to blame for the country's difficulties than the monarchy given the distribution of power (Fernández-Molina 2016; Storm 2013).

However, that said, although the coalition government headed by Abbas el-Fassi from the *Parti Istiqlal* (PI) was replaced by a new government led by the Islamist Party of Justice and Development (PJD) under prime minister Abdelilah Benkirane, it did not alter the fact that the Moroccan party system remained much the same in the wake of the Arab Spring. Electoral volatility was reasonably low compared to much of the rest of the MENA region (Pedersen index of 28), and while the effective number of parties dropped considerably (from 9.7 to 6.6), as did the number of parties winning seats in parliament (from 23 to 18), ultimately the parties that traditionally dominated Moroccan politics continued to do so, and the PJD and the PI continued to be the top two performers, increasing their combined share of seats from 30.15 per cent in 2007 to 42.3 per cent in 2011 (Storm 2007; Storm 2013). Furthermore, the one new party to enter the country's party system in 2011, and that managed to secure more than 10 per cent of the seats, was not strictly speaking a new entity. The Party of Authenticity and Modernity (PAM), a party closely linked to the monarchy, had already contested the 2007 elections successfully as a list of so-called independents before morphing into the PAM in 2008 (Boussaid 2009).

When the unrest eventually spilled over from Tunisia and subsequently Morocco into neighbouring Algeria, it was much more muted in comparison. President Bouteflika, the long-term Algerian strong-man, had anticipated their arrival, and room for manoeuvre was strictly limited. Hence, most protests were small in size and local in focus, and posed no threat whatsoever to the regime (Volpi 2013; Roberts 2015). Therefore, in Algeria, there were no reforms initiated. Elections were not brought forward and neither was the constitution amended in light of the Arab Spring, and both the government and the regime remained the same. When legislative elections were eventually held as planned in 2012, electoral volatility was moderate (Pedersen index of 35) and the number of successful parties remained much the same, increasing slightly from 22 to 26, but with the effective number of parties dropping from 5.5 to 4.1 (Storm 2013). The FLN and the RND, the two regime parties, continued to be the dominant parties, securing 59.74 per cent of the contested seats between them, which gave them the green light to continue their coalition partnership. In the wake of the elections, a few noteworthy - but ultimately unimportant - changes were made to the coalition government and the cabinet as a result of the disastrous performance of the Islamist Movement of Society for Peace (MSP), which had joined forces with other minor Islamist parties (such as the Green Algeria Alliance (AAV)) and shifted its allegiance away from the regime in a highly miscalculated move just prior to the elections (Storm 2013). The prime minister, a largely impotent role, shifted from the RND's Ahmed Ouyahia to the FLN's Abdelmalek Sellal, not so much as a consequence of the election results as a reflection of the balance of power within the regime - a factor above and beyond the polls.

In Turkey, the top two parties also stayed the same, and the party system remained remarkably stable despite legislative elections being held no less than three times since the onset of the Arab Spring, namely in 2011 and twice in 2015. The 2011 elections took place in an atmosphere of peace and tranquility when compared to the situation elsewhere in the region. As in 2007, the Islamist AKP emerged as the winner of the elections with the conservative CHP coming a distant second. This pattern repeated itself in the June 2015 elections, which produced a hung parliament, and again in the November 2015 elections, with the AKP and CHP together securing between 70.91 and 84 per cent of the contested seats. Electoral volatility also remained relatively low (Pedersen index of 6, 19 and 11), and the effective number of parties varied between 2.3 and 3.1, translating into three successful parties in 2011, and four in both of the 2015 elections as the Kurdish newcomer *Halklarin Demokratik Partisi* (Peoples' Democratic Party; HDP) burst onto the scene.[20]

The relative stability of the Turkish party system did not imply that the country was not marred by political unrest in the post-2010 era. On the contrary. Particularly from 2013 onwards, Turkey has experienced severe political difficulties as violent clashes between the police and anti-government protesters have occurred in major cities throughout the country. It is important to underscore, however, that the protests were not inspired or fuelled by the events of the Arab Spring. Rather, the root of the conflict was domestic and more recent as initial protests began as a response to urban development plans in Istanbul, but grew to reflect a nation-wide concern with the Islamist government's position on secularism, allegations of political corruption, and fears that the government was also increasingly curbing the freedoms of speech and assembly (Taspinar 2014; Ozkirimli 2014).

In Iraq conflict was also very much on-going, and as in Turkey it was not inspired by the Arab Spring, but significantly predated the uprisings. The feud between the country's Shiite and Sunni communities, as well as the Kurdish power struggle, intensified in the wake of the 2003 US invasion, and while a number of elections have taken place since then, the institutionalised party and political system which was sought remain precariously fragile. There is no denying that the atomised party system is a strong contributing factor to this state of affairs, reflecting a desire by the many previously marginalised groups to grasp some segment of power in the post-Saddam era. Rather than form larger parties representing a wider group, but necessitating leadership and a willingness to sacrifice, political parties have mushroomed around individuals and groupings, who prefer to be lord of their own formations, but join forces in loose alliances at election time with a view to maximising gains (Spencer, Kinnimont and Sirri 2013; Mikail 2014; Wehler-Schök 2014). Consequently, at the time of the most recent elections in 2015, no less than 41 parties were awarded seats in the legislature, spread out across a number of alliances, most of which did rather poorly. The effective number of parties came to 8.6, and the Pedersen index - taking into account individual parties and shifting alliances in 2015 - was a high 73. The State of Law Coalition headed by prime minister Nouri al-Maliki and the Shiite Islamic *Da'wa* Party remained the country's main force with 28.05 per cent of the seats, while another Shiite alliance, the Sadrist Movement (which had contested the 2010 elections under the banner of the Independent Free Movement List) came a distant second with a seat share of 8.54 per cent. In an atomised and electorally volatile party system there was, after all, some stability to be found.

Finally, Israel - the only (defective) democratic, non-Arab state included in the sample - witnessed none of the tumult seen elsewhere in the region. Not because the country was not Arab - non-Arab Turkey also experienced political violence as just discussed - but more likely as a consequence of the fact that Israel was classified as a (defective) democracy at the time the Arab Spring erupted and spread across the region. The political environment in Israel was, in other words, entirely different to elsewhere in the MENA region. This is not to say that Israel evaded politically fanned bloodshed and violent protests as the Arab-Israeli conflict was still very much on-going, but rather that the political turmoil was not due to non-Arab Israeli citizens calling into question the legitimacy of the Israeli government. It was also not the case that there were no political differences within the Israeli political landscape, however these played out peacefully within the context of the electoral framework. Hence, the 2013 and 2015 legislative elections saw some electoral volatility (Pedersen index of 34 and 29 respectively), while the number of parties succeeding in winning seats in parliament came to 13 in both elections, corresponding to 7.3 effective parties in 2013 and a slightly lower 6.9 in 2015. In 2013, one newcomer managed to secure more than 10 per cent of the contested seats as the centrist *Yesh Atid* won a 15.83 per cent share, making it Israel's second largest party at the time, dwarfed only by the *Likud-Yisrael Beiteinu* alliance, which secured 25.83 per cent. In 2015, *Yesh Atid's* star had nevertheless faded, and *Likud,* the Zionist Union *(*Labor and *Hatnuah),* the Joint List *(Hadash, Balad* and United Arab List*)* all performed better, although *Yesh Atid* still managed to win a respectable 9.17 per cent of the contested seats. The country's top two parties - or electoral alliances - continued to have a combined seat share just above 40 per cent, as had also been the case in the 2009 elections.

5. Party profiles: the newcomers in perspective

The various elections held across the MENA region in the wake of the Arab Spring produced a number of significant newcomers. Some new arrivals were new in the sense of newly founded, while others were simply new in terms of contesting legislative elections. In some countries, these newcomers managed to win the elections and gain power, in others they merely took up a space in parliament. Rather surprisingly, however, given the call for change and the general dissatisfaction with the existing party landscape, successful and significant newcomers – defined as those winning a minimum of 10 per cent of the contested seats - were not common across the region. In several countries, those in power prior to the Arab Spring, whether parties or presidents, remained in power after new elections had been held and/or as the uprisings died down. This was, for instance, the case in Algeria where the FLN and the RND maintained their long-term partnership in office, in Turkey where the legislative elections effectively continued to be a contest between the AKP and the CHP, and in Morocco where the PI remained a government force, although it was deposed as the leader of the coalition.

In contrast to the old guard, which remained significant players within the party landscape, the newcomers – at least initially – gave some hope that change was arriving in the MENA region, and that some countries were perhaps embarking upon a genuine democratisation process. However, in most instances, this was not the case, partly because democracy was never the end destination of many of the protesters, but also as a consequence of the fact that the new arrivals were few and far between, and due to the reality that several of these newcomers were made up of seasoned politicians (that is, internally created), many of whom did not have democratisation as their main priority, but rather access to power.

Of the newcomers that succeeded in obtaining a minimum of 10 per cent of the contested seats, the largest group were Sunni Islamist parties with four out of 12 newcomers falling into that category: Tunisia's *Ennahda,* the FJP and *al-Nour* in Egypt, and the JCP in Libya. Other new parties, most notably the PAM in Morocco and *Nidaa Tounes* in Tunisia, defined themselves largely as anti-Islamist entities (whether overtly or not) or at least as a bulwark against conservative Islamist forces (an example is Libya's NFA), while other parties could best be defined as liberal (Tunisia's CPR and Israel's *Yesh Attid*), outright populist (the PP in Tunisia, which is now defunct), or ethnic – even if only covertly so – as in the case of the Kurdish HDP in Turkey.

There is no arguing against the fact that Islamist forces were the big winners in the legislative elections held in the wake of the Arab Spring, both in terms of the successful creation of large new parties and with regards to seizing power. Islamist parties were clearly the new powerhouses within the party system, a trend that had begun prior to the Arab Sping, but which certainly cemented itself following the uprisings. In Turkey, the AKP remained in power, capturing both the post of prime minister and the presidency. In Tunisia and Egypt, the newly licensed *Ennahda* and the FJP, which were both made up of experienced politicians, who had been prevented from contesting legislative and presidential elections on a party platform during the previous authoritarian regimes, emerged victorious from the national elections. Furthermore, in Egypt, the FJP's biggest rival in the electoral contest was the newly formed conservative Islamist party, *al-Nour.* In Morocco, the Islamist PJD, which had already established itself as a major player within the party system, won the largest share of seats and was afforded the right to form government (in the form of a coalition). This was not only the first time the PJD would be heading the government, but more importantly the first time a Moroccan government was headed by an Islamist party (Szmolka 2015).

While Islamist parties have emerged from the Arab Spring as the big winners on the party front, there is no reason to fear a so-called ‘Islamist Winter’, that is, Islamist parties seizing power in order to reverse the (limited) democratic gains made so far in the region, or halt the democratisation process in progress in some countries (Roy 2012; Cofman Wittes 2012; Benstead, Lust, Malouche and Solt 2013). Save for the *al-Nour,* the only Salafist newcomer, all the new Islamist parties of any size are moderate in outlook. Most are strongly inspired by Hassan al-Banna’s teachings, albeing to varying extents, and a number of parties have even originated from within the Muslim Brotherhood, by acting as the organisation’s political arm (the FJP in Egypt and the JCP in Libya). However, what these parties really have in common is their desire to win legislative and presidential elections, to form government, and to have effective power to govern. The objective of the AKP, the PJD*,* the FJP, the *Ennahda,* and the JCP was and is not to seize power with a view to turn their respective states into theocracies, which would effectively see an end to their (newly acquired) powerful position within national politics. These moderate Islamist newcomers, perhaps with the exception of the JCP, are run by well-established politicians with political ambition. These are not clergymen or religious dreamers and they do not seek virtue or, indeed, democracy, but power. Power within the framework of the existing political system.

6. Conclusion and perspectives: the Arab Spring - the arrival of a new democratic era?

With the eruption of the Arab Spring in late 2010, the MENA region experienced a level of political change not previously seen in the post-independence period. Presidents who had reigned for decades were suddenly deposed, constitutions which had previously been rare were now amended swiftly across the region, and wheareas popular consultations had been infrequent in the past, now the electorate was suddenly called to the polls repeatedly. Furthermore, the MENA region had long been known as hostile to democratic advances (Diamond 2010), but with uprisings spreading across the region, protesters, incumbent regimes, and aspiring political leaders all called for democratisation, albeit without defining in detail how democracy was to be understood. How democracy was to be arrived at, however, was quite clear. To the aspiring political leaders and the protesters, democracy equalled the end of the incumbent regime. The incumbent regime, on the other hand, argued that democracy could best be acheieved by gradually opening up the political system, but this could only be done safely by keeping the existing rulers in power as this was the only means to guarantee political stability.

6.1. Party developments

At the time, sceptics argued that this was just rhetoric and that the absence of substance was telling of the level of commitment to democracy, that is, that there was a lack of will to introduce genuine, substantial political change. Optimists, on the other hand, hoped that the fact that everyone in the region was suddenly talking about democracy, and the reality that people power had in some instances brought down long-lived regimes were an indication that the MENA region was embarking upon a process of democratisation, albeit over time. Today it is difficult not to agree with the sceptics, at least if developments on the party front are anything to go by. Despite popular uprisings and calls for democracy across the MENA region, and regardless of the fact that old regimes fell and elections were held, very few new significant actors have emerged. As discussed above, in a number of MENA countries, the traditionally dominant political parties stayed preeminent. This was the case with the RND and the FLN in Algeria, the MP, the RNI, the UC, the PJD, the PI and the USFP in Morocco, as well as the AKP and the CHP (and to some extent also the MHP) in Turkey. This holds equally true elsewhere. In Israel, the dominant parties on the scene also remain largely the same: the *Likud*, Labor and *Yisrael Beiteinu*. Furthermore, in Algeria, and Egypt, the military continues to be heavily involved in political life, underpinning the regime in Algeria, while outright calling the shots in Egypt. In Jordan, political parties are still obscure entities, which play an insignificant role at election time, where tribal allegiances are much more relevant, and where ultimate power still lies with the king (Beck and Huser 2015) as it also does in Morocco, although political parties perform a much more prominent role in the latter.

Because the incumbent regime was overthrown in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, most hopes were naturally pinned on these three cases. However, the new parties of any reasonable size that initially emerged in these countries largely disappeared within a few years. This was, for instance, the case with the populist PP in Tunisia,[21] which naturally fizzled out, as well as Egypt's FJP, which was shut down by the military regime following the coup of 2013. In Libya, none of the parties, not even those that performed well in the 2012 legislative elections, ever came close to resembling genuine political parties. They were not vehicles for citizen representation, but rather loose political alliances based on local interests and militia or tribal allegiances, often with a charismatic leader fronting the formation.

In fact, the Arab Spring only really produced a small handful of reasonably-sized parties that managed to survive for more than just a year or two. And very few of these were new entities as such, that is, hardly any were externally created. Tunisia's *Ennahda* and the CPR had both operated as clandestine parties during Ben Ali's regime, Morocco's PAM was already well represented in parliament, but had not contested legislative elections as a party prior to the Arab Spring, and Turkey's HDP had strong ties to previous Kurdish parties, which had ceased to exist. The genuine newcomers were Egypt's *al-Nour* and Israel's *Yesh Attid.* Of these two, *al-Nour* could hardly be said to be a beacon of democracy given its Salafist credentials. Hence, the only new (potential) vehicle for democracy, the only new party of any size to emerge and take hold in the MENA region, was Israel's *Yesh Attid,* but that party's formation was of course not related to the outbreak of the Arab Spring.

The reality that the Arab Spring did not produce a single new externally created party of any size that managed to survive for more than one legislative election does not bode well for democratic prospects in the MENA region. Parties are, after all, a cornerstone of democracy. One would have assumed that the domestic and international calls for democracy, the protest rallies, and the holding of several legislative elections in a region where the electorate had not frequently had much of a voice in the past would have led to the formation of at least one or two new reasonably-sized parties per country. However, it appears that political differences, tribal allegiances, and a weak commitment to democracy, coupled with a domestic and international desire for political stability (Kausch 2015; Youngs 2014) contributed to a very different outcome. However if the Arab Spring, with its unprecedented level of popular unrest across the MENA region could not produce those much needed political parties, if the Arab Spring could not act as a catalyst for democracy, then what will it take? And where does it leave the MENA countries? At present, the prospects look bleak. The arrival of another Arab Spring in the near future is not impossible, but it does seem unlikely.

6.2. The party-barren areas of the MENA region: responses to the Arab Spring and prospects for democracy

Although the Arab Spring swept across the MENA countries, triggering –or exacerbating- political unrest from Morocco in the west to Oman in the east, and Turkey in the north to Yemen in the south, not all of these countries were equally affected, nor were all incidents of civil disobedience equally rooted in this tidal wave as illustrated above by the case of, for example, Turkey. Furthermore, where Arab Spring related events did take place, these did not always involve political parties as in a number of the MENA countries, particularly in the Gulf region, these parties were prohibited.

In Iran, the Arab Spring reignited the flame of the country's Green Movement, which had flourished in the immediate aftermath of the 2009 presidential elections as angry youths, in particular, took to the streets demanding President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's departure (Nabavi 2012). As in 2009, the Green Movement proved that it was capable of mobilising large numbers of dissatisfied citizens. However, the protests were easily and mercilessly put down by the regime, and very few advances were made by the opposition (Furtig 2013). The same was the case in other countries across the Gulf region. In Oman, the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain, vocal – and sometimes violent – disaffected members of the public were swiftly and unambiguously dealt with, and the so-called 'pro-democracy movement', which in most cases did not constitute much of a movement, but rather *ad hoc* gatherings of angry citizens with various grievances, made very little gains (Matthiesen 2013). The varying goals of the protesters, some dissatisfied with the level of corruption, others unhappy with the way the spoils of the political system were divided, coupled with the lack of political parties as mobilising and unifying forces, made it easy for most of the incumbent regimes to largely ignore the demonstrations.[22]

That said, in most countries, token legislative elections were organised as a show of goodwill by the incumbent regime, but they were largely insignificant in terms of altering the balance of power. Iran held legislative elections in a parliament with very limited powers in 2012 under the watchful eye and meddling fingers of the Guardian Council. Again, no political parties took part in the contest, which was essentially a stand-off between supporters of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, with the former camp emerging victorious (Furtig 2013). A similar scenario unfolded in Oman in 2011 and 2015, as the electorate went to the polls to elect a toothless parliament in a contest between independent candidates from various alliances. In the UAE, the emir appointed half the members of the new consultative assembly in 2015, while electoral colleges of limited representative quality elected the other half from among 330 candidates.

The state of affairs was somewhat better in Bahrain and Kuwait, where some of the so-called 'political societies' were beginning to resemble political parties, and where the level of competition was also more intense than elsewhere in the Gulf. That said, despite clear instances of electoral engineering, heated boycotts, parliaments being dissolved, elections ruled unconstitutional, and further elections held, the intense political environment at election time, dividing the citizenry and candidates along religious and tribal lines in particular, did not alter the fact that real power lay elsewhere (Meijer and Danckaert 2015; Matthiesen 2013; Freer 2015).[23] In fact control lay with the emir and the ruling family, that is, with the al-Khalifas in Bahrain, and the al-Sabahs in Kuwait.

In contrast to the other Gulf states, Qatar and Saudi Arabia made little or no display of making concessions. In Saudi Arabia, where legislative elections had never taken place, no promises of any kind were made (Steinberg 2014), although municipal elections with universal suffrage and both male and female candidates were held for the first time in 2015 (Steinberg 2014). In Qatar, the emir initially declared that the country's electorate would be heading to the polls in legislative elections for the first time in Qatari history sometime in 2013 (BTI 2014; Ulrichsen 2014). As the date approached, however, the elections were further postponed, allegedly to 2016, although there are presently precious few signs that such elections are likely to take place in the near future.[24]

Following the Arab Spring, the Gulf region was the only area within the MENA area to prohibit political parties outright, while also making little effort to embark on a democratisation process. As discussed throughout this chapter, most other MENA states initiated some political reforms with a view to appease dissatisfied citizens, and simultaneously placate the international community. The extent of such reforms varied significantly from one country to another, with a number of states – such as for instance Algeria – hardly making any concessions at all. However, even in those countries where the scope of political reforms was minimal, competitive legislative elections were held. As had been the case for some time, many Arab states had come to use democratic processes as a means of ensuring authoritarian survival by creating a democratic veneer, thereby legitimating the regime. However, even when faced by civilian unrest inspired by the events of the Arab Spring further to the west, the Gulf states did not budge. Iran, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Oman, Bahrain and Kuwait remained ruled and governed in the same way as they had been prior to the Arab Spring. They did not take steps toward democracy, nor did they seek to incorporate measures that would make them qualify as defective democracies or even cases of quasi-competitive pluralist authoritarianism given the severe restrictions on organised (and formalised) contestation that remained in place even in those countries that allowed for legislative elections under full suffrage.

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[1] All election data is available online via Google. Direct references have not been given due to space restrictions.

[2] For more on internally/externally created parties, see Duverger (1954). In essence, internally created parties are formed by legislators, while externally created parties originate outside the established representative institutions.

[3] See also Schedler (2006; 2013).

[4] The effective number of parties is a measure that gives a weighted count of either electoral or parliamentary parties based on their relative strength (in vote or seat shares respectively). It is calculated as follows: $N=1/\sum_{i=1}^{n} p_i^2$, where N is the number of parties with at least one vote/seat and p_i^2 the square of each party's proportion of all votes/seats (Laakso and Taagepera 1979).

[5] For more on the election framework, please refer to IFES online at http://www.electionguide.org/elections/id/2748/ (accessed: 30 January 2016).

[6] In the case of Iraq at the time of the 2010 legislative elections, the effective number of parties records the 'effective number of alliances' rather than individual parties. Within these alliances votes/seats were cast/distributed among the various members, but this data was never released.

[7] The traditionally dominant parties were as follows: The Popular Movement (MP in the French acronym), the National Rally of Independents (RNI), the Constitutional Union (UC), the Istiqlal Party (PI), the Party of Justice and Development (PJD), and the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP).

[8] Hariri's so-called 'unity' cabinet encompassed ministers from the March 14 Alliance, the March 8 Alliance, and the bloc of pro-government independents as well as five independent ministers nominated by president Michel Suleiman (Najem 2012).

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[9] The cabinet (often referrred to as the ‘Second Netanyahu Government’) was the largest in Israeli history, originally encompassing no less than 30 ministers and nine deputy ministers. In addition to the above four parties, the coalition included The Jewish Home*,* a smaller Zionist party that won 2.5 per cent of the seats (Sandler, Gerstenfeld and Frisch 2011).

[10] Not surprisingly, the effective number of parties was 6.8 in 2009.

[11] The Pedersen index measures net volatility, that is, the change in seat or vote share for each party from one election to another. It is calculated as the sum of the absolute changes in seat or vote shares divided by two (Pedersen 1979).

[12] The performance of the top two parties is a measure frequently used in post-colonial states, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where elections have only been taking place for a relatively short period of time. See, among others, Kuenzi and Lambright (2001).

[13] Legislative elections took place in Syria in 2012 and 2016. However, these were neither free nor fair, and competition was strictly limited.

[14] The figure excludes the 10 seats appointed by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF). The Pedersen index was 95.04 for the 2011-12 elections.

[15] Sabahi finally only managed to win 4 per cent of the valid votes cast. It should be noted that several parties boycotted the presidential elections, protesting that they were not held in a truly competitive, free and fair spirit (Democracy International 2014).

[16] 80 seats were reserved for party-affiliated candidates, while the remaining 120 were set aside for so-called ‘independents’.

[17] Jibril belongs to the Warfalla tribe, which has often been described as having strong ties to the Qadhafi regime. However, several prominent Warfalla figures were in opposition to Qadhafi, including Jibril himself (Joffe 2013).

[18] The decision to only field independent candidates was allegedly made with a view to avoiding further political tension at a time when the country was gripped by civil war and had

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entered into a state of anarchy, being in effect ruled by various armed militias beyond the law and with even less interest in democratic politics than the political parties (Lefevre 2014).

[19] Please note that due to political disagreements, two parliaments existed until the signing of the Skhirat Peace Agreement on 17 December 2015, but only that based in Tobruk was popularly elected. The rival parliament was set up by the armed faction *Libya Dawn* in Tripoli in the summer of 2014.

[20] From 2014 onwards, the HDP incorporated the Kurdish *Peace and Democracy Party* (BDP), the successor to the Democratic Society Party (DTP), which had succeeded the Democratic People’s Party (DEHAP). DEHAP was a continuation of the banned People’s Democracy Party (HADEP). The HADEP, the DEHAP and the DTP had all been prohibited due to alleged ties to Abdullah Öcalan's banned Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK).

[21] It is important to highlight that *Nidaa Tounes* remained a key player, despite merging with a handful of other parties to create the Union for Tunisia (UPT) in 2013 and also participating in the National Salvation Front (NSF). The party contested the 2014 elections on its own slate.

[22] Democracy as such, was never at the forefront. The power struggle was more of a case of ‘us’ *versus* ‘them’. To give one example, in several countries, the Shiite were campaigning for better rights, but that did generally not extend any further than to better rights for the members of their own community (Matthiesen 2013).

[23] In Kuwait, all members of the legislature are elected in direct elections. In Bahrain, however, only the 40 members of the lower house are popularly elected. The 40 members of the upper house, which has greater powers than the lower house, are appointed by the emir.

[24] Two thirds of the members of parliament are to be directly elected, the final third to be appointed by the emir. Parties remain prohibited.