When do elections help autocrats? The plight of Palestinians under SNTV in Jordan[α]

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Abstract

Autocrats are often accused of manipulating electoral rules to favour pro-regime groups at the expense of the opposition. They select electoral systems, gerrymander districts, and engage in electoral fraud to ensure that elections do not challenge their rule. We investigate the extent to which incumbent rulers engage in such tactics by focusing on the case of Jordan. In particular we examine whether the Jordanian regime has 'tweaked' the single non-transferable vote system (SNTV) so that it systematically favours ethnic Jordanian tribes of nomadic descent, who form the bedrock of support for the monarchy and against ethnic Palestinian tribes, who are more supportive of opposition parties. SNTV is also notorious for causing coordination problems for parties – or tribes in this case – that offer candidates. Using data from municipal elections, we find that the regime does indeed advantage nomadic residents. Municipalities with a significant presence of these residents were assigned a greater number of council seats per unit of population and lower district magnitudes, facilitating electoral coordination. Nomadic tribes also performed better with regard to voter coordination but not in nominating the optimal number of candidates. Our findings demonstrate that clean elections in authoritarian countries if done "right" can perpetuate and bolster regime favourites while simultaneously disenfranchising their challengers.

Keywords: SNTV, electoral coordination, Jordan, tribes, authoritarian elections

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1 Introduction

When do elections keep dictators in power? Since the end of the Cold War, the number of dictatorships that hold regular, contested elections has jumped, so that electoral autocracy is now the modal type of autocracy (Lurhmann et al., 2018; Wahman, Teorell and Hadenius 2013). These regimes adopt the form of democracy but not the spirit, organizing elections to give the regime a veneer of legitimacy while attempting to preclude the possibility of opposition victory. Their prolonged survival has drawn increasing scrutiny from scholars, raising questions about when elections spark transitions to democracy, or instead help consolidate autocracy.

In recent years, scholarship has moved from assessing the effects of the presence or absence of elections on autocratic survival to differences in the role that elections play in these regimes (Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009). Scholars have suggested several different objectives that elections serve for autocrats. One purpose is to help rulers manage elites, by systematizing recruitment into the leadership, ensuring orderly promotion, inculcating support for the existing regime from powerful figures in society, and allocating patronage (Brownlee 2007; Blaydes 2011; Magaloni 2006; Gandhi 2008; Boix and Svolik 2013). Another is as a source of information about regime support: turnout and vote share are used to indicate to the regime itself the level of satisfaction with its rule, and to signal to potential opponents how strong the regime is (Schedler 2013; Miller 2015; Knutsen, Wygard and Wig 2017). A third is to entrap opposition in a system inherently biased against them, forcing them to choose between providing legitimacy to the regime by participating in elections, or by boycotting them completely and risking complete exclusion from regime policy-making and the spoils of power (Beaulieu 2014; Buttorff and Dion 2017; Lust 2005; Schedler 2002; Reuter and Robertson, 2015).

It is the third of these—entrapment of opposition—that is the focus of this paper. We seek to understand *how* elections work to fragment and weaken potential regime opposition. In the democratic context, a huge body of work has demonstrated how electoral institutions can shape key election outcomes, driving the number of parties represented in parliament up or down, admitting or excluding candidates with relatively extreme views, and fostering or inhibiting cross-party coordination (e.g. Herron, Pekkanen and Shugart 2018). But electoral system effects are less explored, and certainly less systematically theorized, in the authoritarian context. Case studies on different authoritarian regimes have suggested that very different kinds of electoral systems can work to a dictator's advantage. For example, the party bloc vote system used in Singapore is mentioned as a key part of the regime's institutional barriers to opposition parties in that city-state (Tan 2013; Ong 2018), the mixed-member electoral system for Congress adopted under the PRI in Mexico was designed to keep the opposition from forming pre-electoral coalitions (Diaz-Cayeros and Magaloni 2001), and the single non-transferable vote system (SNTV) used nationally until 2005 in Taiwan was cited as a hindrance to opposition coordination there (Cox 1997; Rigger 1999

In the Arab world, rulers strategically select electoral rules to consolidate power and to fractionalise opposition. Monarchs, because there is often no ruling party, prefer proportional representation systems to fractionalise power across a spectrum of political actors. One-party states tend to implement majoritarian systems to concentrate power in the hands of the dominant party (Lust-Okar and Jamal 2002; Posusney 2002). Rulers wishing to emphasize personalism, clientelism and the development of local ties adopt systems such as open-list PR or SNTV (Kao 2022; Karmel and Linfield 2021). But even within the same electoral system, a number of attributes such as district size, district shape, and seat formulas can be manipulated leading to variable outcomes (Ahmed 2011; Karmel and Linfield 2021; Lust-Okar 2005, 2006; Malesky 2005; Patel 2006). The impact of electoral rules is also

context-dependent and influenced by factors such as opposition strength, opposition unity, and societal divisions. Both Jordan and Palestine (West Bank and Gaza) employed multi-member districts with citizens selecting as many candidates as there were seats. In Palestine, Fatah, the dominant party, benefited from this system while in Jordan, it was the opposition (Posusney 2002). No electoral system is consistently favourable to autocrats; and it is no wonder rulers can get it spectacularly wrong with well-planned electoral rules generating unexpected opposition victories (Barwig 2012; Kaminski 1999; Navia 2003; Siavelis and Valenzuela 1996).

In this paper, we consider, whether Jordan, a case in the Middle East that stands out as a great survivor through the political upheaval of the Arab Spring, has employed an electoral system that consistently disadvantages the opposition there. The Jordanian regime includes a popularly elected but politically weak parliament; the government remains dominated by a powerful monarch. During the Arab Spring, King Abdullah deftly managed popular unrest, sacking his prime minister, appointing a new cabinet, and encouraging opposition participation in elections to parliament, while in fact ceding little of his own power. Despite expectations that he would have to make concessions, the regime has survived with few if any liberalizing reforms, and today it stands out as an island of relative stability in a region wracked by violent conflict.

Jordan is an interesting place to study this topic for at least three other reasons, as well. First, while it has a weak national parliament with little influence over the national government, it nevertheless features hotly contested elections at the municipal level. Thus, these elections offer potentially revealing insights into how and when the regime is able to fragment and divide opposition, and to create advantages for and reward its own core supporters. Examining municipal contests also permits us to assess whether national-level dynamics are present at the local level. Second, Jordanian society is organized into a

complicated set of tribal groups as well as a large bloc of ethnic Palestinians. In general, ethnic Palestinians tend to be less supportive of the regime, whereas the traditionally nomadic Bedouin tribes, tend to be core supporters. The regime thus faces a potentially hostile Palestinian majority that, if it were to vote en masse for a single party, would pose a serious challenge to the king's grasp on power.

Third, Jordan employed an unusual electoral system, the Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) system, to elect its municipal councils between 2007-2013 (Ryan 2015). Although it is not widely used around the world, SNTV has been the focus of considerable research in the very different context of East Asia, where it was used for many years in Japan and Taiwan to elect their national parliaments (Browne and Patterson 1999; Grofman et al. 1999)[1]. The Taiwanese case, in particular, provides some intriguing parallels to Jordan today. For nearly 40 years, Taiwan was under martial law, and elections at the national level were effectively off-limits, but local elections were nevertheless competitive and of significant interest to both the ruling party and its opponents. The general consensus among scholars of this period in Taiwan is that the SNTV electoral system provided an advantage to the regime in this context: it created strong incentives for intra-party competition, setting regime opponents against one another and making a coordinated campaign against the ruling party more difficult, even as the most high-profile opposition candidates were quite successful in these elections (Batto 2008; Cox 1997: 238-50; Cox and Niou 1994; Lin 2011; Tsai 2005). Thus, the fact that this system was used in Jordan offers an opportunity to evaluate some of these claims about SNTV in a very different political context. In what follows, we consider in more detail what determines victory in elections to municipal councils in Jordan. We seek to understand how, and to what degree, the electoral rules in use in Jordan serve the interests of

[1] Today SNTV is used in Puerto Rico, Japan (upper house, prefectural and municipal elections), Taiwan (local elections), Hong Kong, Libya, and Kuwait.

the monarchy, either by advantaging core regime supporters or by dividing and otherwise disadvantaging potential opponents. We build upon Gail Buttorf's (2015) work on Jordanian parliamentary elections where she finds evidence of coordination failure amongst tribes. To evaluate whether regime opponents and supporters are systematically disadvantaged or advantaged, we examine four different features of the electoral regime: degree of malapportionment between districts, variation in district magnitude, how well tribes nominate the optimal number of candidates, and coordinate votes amongst these candidates.

We find that malapportionment appears to have had the greatest practical consequence for representation of pro- versus anti-regime groups: areas where nomadic residents were a large percentage of the district had systematically greater number of seats per unit of population than areas where they were not abundant in significant numbers. Consistent with this finding is that district magnitude was systematically lower in nomadic-heavy municipalities, facilitating electoral coordination. Our results demonstrate that pro-regime groups such as nomadic tribes are also more skilled at voter coordination. Despite residing in districts of smaller magnitude, they do not, however, perform better with regard to nominating the correct number of candidates. Overall, these results suggest that the Jordanian electoral system provided pro-regime groups with two main advantages: first, by assigning more seats to pro-regime areas, and second by capitalizing on the superior electoral coordination abilities of these groups.

2 The Jordanian Context: Tribes as unofficial parties competing for office

In many important ways, the fundamental unit of political organization in Jordanian elections is the tribe, not the political party. Although parties exist in Jordan, they are weak due to political restrictions on their establishment and functioning. The most popular party,

the Islamic Action Front (IAF), often boycotts elections in protest against what they perceive as unfair electoral laws (Kao 2012; Shteiwi 2007). Even when they do offer candidates, parties like the IAF choose candidates not only for their Islamist credentials but also for their tribal connections (Langston 2005).

In both parliamentary and municipal elections, tribes usurp many of the key roles of political parties: deciding who runs for office, putting forward official tribal slates of candidates, and mobilizing their members to turn out at the polls to support the official tribal nominees. Winning elections in turn places tribal members in public office, where they have access to "spoils" such as government contracts and the ability to hire employees—influence and power that then can be used to help tribal members and advance the tribe's interests (Lust-Okar 2006).

What we call a "tribe" in Jordan is in effect a kinship network, or a "group of people distinguished from other groups by notions of shared descent, whether real or imagined" (Alon 2007, 8). The origins of Jordanian tribes vary: some share a common ancestor; others have adopted stories claiming singular descent or simply acknowledge that their tribe is a "mish-mash" of groups that through long tenures of historical alliance have developed a common identity (Shyrock 1997). Tribes vary in size and traditional occupations: the largest are confederations of formerly nomadic or semi-nomadic groups that once relied on grazing animals for their livelihood, while "peasant" tribes were sedentary and depended upon agriculture (Lewis 1987).

The other fundamental feature of Jordan's social structure is the divide between ethnic Palestinians and ethnic Jordanians. As the result of refugee settlement in the country after the 1948 war with Israel, approximately 60 percent of the Jordanian population is ethnically Palestinian—also known as West Bankers because they migrated from land west of the Jordan River. In general, tribal affiliations are weaker among ethnic Palestinians than

among ethnic Jordanians, and they are more likely to vote for political parties than along tribal lines. They are also widely viewed as being less supportive of, if not opposed to, the monarchy and the Jordanian regime[2].

Whether ethnic Jordanian or Palestinian, tribes historically provided protection for their members, and tribal leaders also often arranged marriages, distributed land, and negotiated settlements for intra- or inter-tribal disputes (Antoun 1977; Lancaster 1981). Most importantly, tribes continue to be major players in contemporary electoral contests. Some tribes follow an official nomination process such as a tribal primary or discussion between tribal leaders before candidates are selected while others do not. Once candidates have been chosen, members are mobilized to support nominees. Even those who live away from their original towns are encouraged to return home on election day to contribute their votes. The degree to which tribal candidates must rely on votes outside of the tribe depends upon tribal membership size. Voters without a tribal candidate are akin to "swing voters" as they do not owe their allegiance to anyone. Large tribes where members obey the directives of the leadership are especially powerful in elections.

Tribes in Jordan vary a great deal in their ability to regulate who runs for office, to select and publicly endorse slates of tribal candidates, and to mobilize tribal members to vote for those candidates. If pro-regime tribes are systematically better able to do these things than anti-regime tribes, then elections can still deliver majorities to allies of the monarchy, even though they make up far less than a majority of the population. Thus, differential tribal ability to coordinate in elections might be a key source of the Jordanian regime's resiliency. On this note, it is particularly interesting that the electoral system in use in these elections, the Single

[2] The exception are those ethnic Palestinian tribes that are or were formerly nomadic. Tribal affiliation seems to be strong amongst these tribes and they also seem to be as equally supportive as ethnic Jordanians of the Jordanian regime (Author 2012).

Non-Transferable Vote, makes these problems more difficult to mitigate than they would be under other system. It is to this issue that we turn next.

3 The Problems of Electoral Competition under SNTV

Elections to municipal councils in Jordan were held using the Single Non-Transferable Vote system between 2007-2013. Under SNTV, voters are limited to voting for a single candidate, but if district magnitude is greater than one, then multiple candidates can win seats in that district. For instance, if the district magnitude is five, then the top five candidates who received the highest votes are awarded seats. SNTV creates several problems for organized political groups such as parties or, in the Jordanian case, tribes seeking to maximize the number of seats they win. Unlike proportional representation systems, a group's share of the vote is not directly converted into an equivalent share of seats. Instead, the share of seats a group wins depends additionally on its ability to solve two coordination problems: one of *elites*, the other of *voters*.

The *elite coordination* challenge is to nominate the optimal number of candidates in each district—that is, the maximum number that can be elected given a group's share of the vote. In a district with a magnitude of one (one seat: M = 1), the optimal number of nominees is obvious: one. It *never* makes sense to nominate more than one candidate. But in any district with a magnitude of more than one, the optimal number is harder to calculate, as it depends on both the group's estimate of the total share of votes it can win and the total number of seats in the district.

Take, for instance, a district with five seats. If a group expects to win 60 percent of the vote in that district, then it can definitely win at least three seats, and so should nominate three candidates. If the group expects to win 40 percent, it should nominate two. And if it

expects to win less than 20 percent, then it should only nominate one candidate. Where things get tricky is when its estimated vote share is something like 30 percent: then the group's success will depend on what other groups do, too. Should it nominate two candidates and risk both losing, or nominate one and potentially waste a lot of votes? This is the nomination problem, and it gets harder the higher is the district magnitude and the more uncertain is the group's expected share of the vote.

The voter coordination problem occurs after groups have decided how many candidates to nominate, and it arises any time they try to win more than one seat. The problem is that votes for the group's multiple nominees are not pooled across them, as they would be under open-list PR, for instance. Instead, groups have to convince their supporters to distribute their votes as equally as possible across all nominees. From the group's perspective, the optimal vote distribution is for each of its candidates to win the same number of votes.

In a district with M=1, this coordination problem is simple: just vote for the group's official nominee. But in a district with M>1, the challenge becomes more difficult. A supporter who cares mostly about maximizing her party or tribe or clan's seat share is faced with a dilemma: which of the group's nominees should she vote for? The answer will depend on what other voters do. If one candidate is especially popular, then if group supporters vote sincerely, the most popular candidate will win in a landslide while the other nominees lose. For instance, take again our five-seat district example in which a party expects to capture 60 percent of the total vote, and so nominates three candidates. If 50 percent of the vote goes to one candidate, and five percent each goes to the two others, then the group could well win only 20 percent (1/5) of the seats, despite winning 60 percent of the vote! That is an especially bad outcome from the group's perspective, and it illustrates the voter coordination problem: maximizing seat share requires not only nominating the correct number of

candidates but also getting supporters to equalize their votes among all the nominees. Moreover, the higher the district magnitude and the greater the uncertainty about each candidate's popularity, the more difficult this problem is for groups to solve.

The Jordanian context features one additional twist on this system: it includes a women's quota of 20 percent of all elected seats.[3] Female candidates can win seats in two ways. They can, first of all, win outright simply because they won more votes than their competitors. Secondly, they can also win a quota seat. These seats are awarded to women who won the highest percentage of votes in their electoral districts. Unlike "regular" council seats which are allocated by electoral district, these seats are not; and it is possible for all of the women awarded quota seats to be from the same district.

4 Hypotheses

The literature on SNTV suggests a couple ways that this electoral system could be used to perpetuate advantages for a ruling party or pro-regime groups. The first way we discuss here is malapportionment—that is, the distribution of seats across districts in a way that is grossly unequal to population. Here we hypothesize that the Jordanian monarchy distributes seats in such a way as to favour its supporters (i.e. nomadic tribes) and to disenfranchise its critics (i.e. ethnic Palestinian tribes). The second method is electoral coordination and how well tribes fare with translating votes into seats. We discuss why we believe pro-regime tribes have an advantage in terms of electoral coordination as well.

4.1 Malapportionment

[3] Jordan and Taiwan also share this electoral feature: a similar gender quota was present in Taiwan for the national legislature before 2008, and still exists for SNTV elections at lower levels (Batto 2008).

Although malapportionment is by no means unique to SNTV systems, it has in practice been most common in elections to the Diet in Japan, where there was for many years a pronounced rural bias in the ratio of seats to population per district. In some cases it took three times as many votes to win a seat in an urban area as it did in the most overrepresented rural areas (Scheiner 2006). The most straightforward way for the regime in Jordan to create a systematic advantage for pro-regime groups would be to place more seats in areas where these groups such as nomadic tribes are concentrated and place less in Palestinian-majority areas. Buttorf (2015) found evidence of malapportionment across Jordanian parliamentary districts with the under-representation of urban areas with large Palestinian populations and the over-representation of rural, pro-regime areas with significant nomadic residents.

While the majority of ethnic Palestinians in Jordan are Jordanian by nationality, their political status is more tenuous. The historical circumstances of their arrival post-1948 and the possibility of returning to an autonomous Palestinian state reminds ethnic Jordanians that Jordan perhaps should not be the permanent home of ethnic Palestinians. This has left Palestinians in a position where they are technically Jordanian citizens but are not permitted or have chosen not to exercise their full range of political rights. In Jordan, ethnic Palestinians are less likely to run for office, vote, work in the public sector, join the army, or be awarded politically sensitive ministerial portfolios. Politically, ethnic Palestinians are more likely to support political parties than independent candidates. But as the regime is not keen for political parties to succeed, this is further reason to dampen the political influence of ethnic Palestinians.

In contrast to Palestinians, tribes of nomadic origins form the bedrock of support for the Hashemite monarchy. It was through the successful wooing of these tribes by King Abdullah I, the first monarch of then Trans-Jordan, that the Hashemite dynasty was established (Salibi 1993). Nomadic and previously nomadic tribes today continue to exert

disproportionate political influence with benefits such as affirmative action in university admissions, reserved seats in parliament, and the waiving of some taxes as many work for the public sector or serve in the armed forces (Zahran 2012).

Due to the tenuous position of ethnic Palestinians and the favoured status of nomadic tribes, we hypothesize that:

H1: Jordanian municipalities with large populations of ethnic Palestinian residents will be disadvantaged by malapportionment.

H2: Jordanian municipalities with large populations of nomadic residents will be advantaged by malapportionment.

District magnitude is one of the most important determinants of electoral coordination – the greater the district magnitude, the more likely parties are to offer multiple candidates, and the greater the challenge in coordinating votes across these candidates. We expect the Jordanian regime to gerrymander districts so that municipalities with a large presence of Palestinian residents have high district magnitude and areas with loyal supporters relatively low district magnitude. These expectations are in accordance with Buttorf's (2015) work: parliamentary districts with large ethnic Palestinian populations were associated with high district magnitude and pro-regime, rural, tribal areas with low magnitude. She argues this is a deliberate decision by the Jordanian regime to exacerbate electoral coordination for ethnic Palestinian candidates and to facilitate it for pro-regime candidates.

We therefore, hypothesize:

H3: Municipalities with large concentrations of ethnic Palestinian residents will have large district magnitude.

H4: Municipalities with large concentrations of nomadic residents will have low district magnitude.

4.2 Electoral Coordination

Because we believe ethnic Palestinians to reside in municipal electoral districts of high magnitude, we also expect that they will do a worse job in determining the optimal number of candidates to offer. Likewise, we believe that nomadic tribes, are more likely to reside in districts of low magnitude and therefore, will perform better with regard to electoral coordination. In other words:

H5: Ethnic Palestinian tribes will not perform well with regard to the optimal nomination of candidates.

H6: Nomadic tribes will perform well with regard to the optimal nomination of candidates.

Historically, members of nomadic tribes travelled together and relied on their own membership to provide security (Clark 2018). Extended periods away in the desert away from other tribes will have solidified their bonds to one another. In contemporary Jordan, they also reside in less populated, rural areas where interaction is more frequent, making it is easier for tribal leaders to monitor members' political behaviour. Unlike members of nomadic tribes, ethnic Palestinian tribes reside in urban areas where dense populations render this sort

of cooperation challenging (Ryan 2011). Palestinian tribes tend to be less politically active and to be peasant in origin, which can exhibit weaker tribal ties. For these reasons, we expect nomadic tribes to perform better with regard to voter coordination than ethnic Palestinian tribes.

The second story is about clientelism and its ability to mobilise voters and to attract their votes; if candidates from a tribe are not able to attract votes, then voter coordination will be low anyhow. Candidates from nomadic tribes are more credible in making clientelist appeals with promises of jobs in the municipalities or the facilitation in the provision of local services. As mentioned earlier, the regime's partiality to these tribes and their large membership means good connections and access to those in power. In contrast, ethnic Palestinian tribes are less credible in making these appeals. The majority of ethnic Palestinians do not work in the public sector, so their ability to provide these jobs is difficult (Ryan 2011). Clientelist appeals are also most attractive in poor, rural areas where few employment opportunities exist outside of the public sector. Once again, nomadic tribes tend to be situated in these types of areas[4]. Therefore, we hypothesize:

H6: Ethnic Palestinian tribes will exhibit poor voter coordination.

H7: Nomadic tribes will exhibit excellent voter coordination.

5 Data and Methods

[4] Anecdotal evidence suggests that the regime is probably aware that nomadic tribes are better able to coordinate votes. Turnout is higher in electoral districts with large nomadic populations, suggesting that these tribes are better at mobilising support (Jordan Times 2016). The regime is also likely to be aware that nomadic tribes, due to their widespread public sector employment, are better placed to use clientelistic benefits to motivate votes.

This paper uses data from the 2007 municipal elections as well as municipal-level indicators such as population, area, and unemployment levels. These data were collected for all of Jordan's municipalities by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, the Department of Statistics, and the Local Governance Development Program, a non-governmental organization focused on developing municipalities in Jordan (2007-2009). Each candidate's tribe was determined by first identifying the family name and then locating the relevant entry in tribal dictionaries[5]. For candidates where there was no match, locals or the candidate herself/himself was contacted for clarification.

It is unlikely for municipal council candidates to be members of political parties. Parties are weak in Jordan, especially at the local level, and they typically do not fare well in elections (Buttorf 2015; Wakeman 2009). In the 2020 parliamentary elections, parties won only 10 percent of the seats (Karmel and Linfield 2021). The most salient political party in Jordan, the Islamic Action Front, often boycotts elections, and withdrew from the 2007 elections, claiming electoral fraud (Al Jazeera 2007).

In 2007, there were 93 municipalities in Jordan. 86 percent of these municipalities were divided into multiple electoral districts. The highest number of electoral districts was 23 and the median municipality was comprised of 4 districts. The number of municipal council seats per electoral district varied between 1 and 8; the median councillor was elected from an electoral district with magnitude of 2. The number of council seats per municipality varied between 6 and 29 with the median municipality possessing 9 seats.

[5] All coding was done by AUTHOR and so there are no issues of inter-coder reliability. Tribal names can change over time and new tribes do emerge either as the result of branches splitting from the parent tribe or new groups merging together. Anecdotal evidence, however, suggests that this is a slow process. Reference books used to classify tribes span forty years but the majority of tribes mentioned in these texts are the same. The oldest reference used was Frederick Gerald Peake 1958 A history of Jordan and its tribes. Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press while the most recent was Abdel Rawaf Al Rawabdeh 2010 Qamus al-asha'ir fii Al-Urdun wa Al-Filastin (Dictionary of Tribes in Jordan and Palestine). Amman, Jordan: Sharuq House for Publishing and Distribution.

Below we describe our measures and analysis for malapportionment, representation, and electoral coordination. The electoral coordination analysis is estimated at the electoral district level, but due to the lack of data, the malapportionment and representation analyses are conducted at the municipal-level. All variables are described below and summary statistics can be found in Table 1.

Variable	*N*	Mean	Std Dev	Min	Max
Tribe Level Variables					
Under/Over Nomination	726	1.37	0.78	0.5	6
Voter Coordination	216	0.84	0.51	0	4
Palestinian tribe	726	0.25	0.43	0	1
Nomadic tribe	726	0.25	0.44	0	1
Small tribe	726	0.73	0.44	0	1
No. of female candidates	726	0.16	0.47	0	3
Electoral District Level Variables					
No. of voters	261	4,824	4,895	148	22,644
District magnitude	261	2.33	1.70	1	8
No. of tribes mobilized	261	4.56	3.49	0	14
Municipal-Level Variables					
Sig presence of Palestinians	93	0.22	0.41	0	1
Sig presence of nomadic residents	93	0.33	0.47	0	1
Malapportionment	93	2822	3,546	204	25,164
Malapportionment by voters	89	1237	869	141	3757
Malapportionment (excl 4 obs)	89	2220	1688	203	8872
Average district magnitude	93	3.44	2.16	1	8
No of electoral districts	93	3.76	2.97	1	23
Minorities	93	0.22	0.41	0	1
Unemployment	93	19.00	5.66	9	38.70
Population	93	31,471	63,315	1,427	414,760
No. of voters	89	11,080	9,418	1,026	54,667
Area	93	10,494	10,912	768	68,076
Density	93	2.82	2.09	0.17	11.49
Migration	93	0.17	0.11	0.04	0.51
Capital	93	0.11	0.32	0	1

Table 1: Summary Statistics. This table contains the summary statistics of the independent, dependent, and control variables used in regression estimations in this paper. Data source: Jordan's Ministry of Municipal Affairs, the Local Governance Development Program, and tribal dictionaries.

5.1 Malapportionment

The Jordanian regime has been accused of manipulating apportionment to favour ethnic Jordanians from rural parts of the country. If this is the case, then we should observe underrepresentation in Palestinian-heavy areas and overrepresentation where they are a minority (H1). As members of nomadic tribes are long-standing supporters of the regime, we expect them to be favoured by malapportionment (H2). To evaluate these propositions, we estimate a linear regression (model 1) with the following variables:

Dependent Variable The dependent variable (*malapportionment*) is calculated using the following formula: P_i/S_i where P is the population of municipality i and S is the number of council seats in the same municipality. The average municipality has 2,822 residents per council member.

Independent Variables To understand whether malapportionment varies according to the ethnic origin of Jordanians residing within the municipality, we include indicators for whether there is a significant presence of ethnic Palestinians (*sig presence of Palestinians*) as well as residents of nomadic origin (*sig presence of nomadic residents*) within the municipality. We expect that in areas heavily populated by Palestinians for malapportionment to be high and in areas with large numbers of residents of nomadic origins for it to be low.

To classify municipalities by whether they indeed possess a significant number of ethnic Palestinians, we first identified municipalities with a Palestinian refugee camp nearby. All of these municipalities were considered to have a significant presence of Palestinians. In addition, municipalities where candidates of Palestinian origin had received at least 10 percent of the votes cast in the 2007 municipal elections were also considered to have a significant presence. The number of votes cast per candidate can provide a “rough” indication

of the membership size of that candidate's tribe as she is likely to gain most of their support. A low threshold of 10 percent was selected because many ethnic Palestinians do not participate in elections and the percentage of votes received by Palestinian candidates is likely to underrepresent their actual numbers. Finally, this initial coding was reviewed by knowledgeable locals and adjusted when necessary. 22 percent of municipalities were classified as having a significant presence of Palestinians.

Municipalities where the percentage of votes received by candidates of nomadic origins was 60 percent or more were classified as having a significant presence of tribal members of nomadic descent. This threshold is much higher because unlike ethnic Palestinians, residents of nomadic descent tend to participate enthusiastically in elections. One additional municipality, Rweishd, was included as having a significance presence of residents of nomadic origins even though it did not achieve this 60 percent threshold because of local knowledge that most residents are of nomadic background. One-third of all municipalities were classified as having as having a significant presence of residents of nomadic origins. Only four municipalities were classified as having a significant presence of ethnic Palestinians as well as of residents of nomadic origins.

Control Variables The population (*population*), area (*area*), density (*density*), level of internal migration (*migration*), and the number of electoral districts of the municipality (*no. of electoral districts*) were included. We expect *malapportionment* to be high in municipalities with large populations, large numbers of internal migrants, small geographical areas, numerous electoral districts, and dense settlements. These are the characteristics of urban, Palestinian-heavy municipalities where previous study has evidenced malapportionment (Buttorf 2015). Population is measured by the number of residents living in the municipality in 2005; area by the number of dunums in the municipality in 2004 (1

dunum = 1000 m^2). Density was calculated using the following formula: P_i/A_i where P is the population of municipality i and A is its area.

The diversity of the municipality may also influence malapportionment as the regime may wish to place more seats in diverse areas to help minorities gain seats. Therefore, we incorporate a binary indicator for whether there is a significant presence of ethnic and religious minorities in the municipality (*minorities*). Locals were asked to identify municipalities where there are meaningful number of religious (Druze, Shia, Christian, or Baha'i) and ethnic (Ghorani, Circassian, Chechen, Turcomen, and Armenians) minorities, and these municipalities were coded as such.

Because elections in the Arab world are often contests of competitive clientelism, we include a measure of the socioeconomic level of the municipality: the percentage of residents who are unemployed (*unemployment*). We suspect that the Jordanian regime in an effort to steer elections away from policy debates have placed more council members, ceteris paribus, in municipalities with higher levels of unemployment, where residents are more vulnerable to clientelistic promises. Finally, we include a variable as to whether the municipality is a capital of a governorate (*capital*) as these municipalities may have a higher number of council seats due to their strategic importance.

5.2 District Magnitude

We expect the regime to apportion councillors so that municipalities with a significant presence of Palestinian residents have high district magnitude (H3) and municipalities with loyal supporters of the regime such as members of nomadic tribes, relatively low district magnitude (H4). To test these hypotheses, we estimate another linear regression where the dependent variable is the average district magnitude of the municipality (*average district magnitude*). We create an average district magnitude for each municipality based on the

number of districts and the district magnitude of each district. The independent variables (*sig presence of Palestinians* and *sig presence of nomadic* residents) are the same as described earlier, as are the control variables: *minorities*, *population*, *area*, *density, migration, unemployment*, and *capital*. In analyses for both malapportionment and representation/district magnitude, the link function is the identity function.

5.3 Electoral Coordination

Because ethnic Palestinian voters are more likely to reside in electoral districts of high magnitude, we expect for them to fare worse with regard to nominating the optimal number of candidates (H5) and nomadic tribes to fare better as they are likely to reside in districts of low magnitude (H6*)*. However, we expect nomadic tribes to be more skilled in distributing votes across their candidates (H7) and ethnic Palestinian tribes to find this challenging (H8). We explore these hypotheses by examining variation in under/over nomination (model 5), and voter coordination (model 6).

Dependent Variables *Under/over nomination* is measured as N_{ij}/O_{ij} where N_{ij} is the number of male candidates nominated by tribe i in electoral district j and O_{ij} is the number of seats male candidates of the tribe could have won. The number of male candidates who could have won was calculated in this way: percentage of votes won by male candidates of the tribe x total number of seats in the electoral district. Large values of the N_{ij}/O_{ij} ratio indicate over nomination while low values indicate the opposite.

Voter coordination is measured as W_{ij}/O_{ij}. W_{ij} is the number of male candidates from tribe i in electoral district j who won, and O_{ij} is the number of male candidates who could have won. The *voter coordination* measure was only created for tribes that offered more than one candidate, at least one of which must have been male. If there is only one candidate, the

tribe does not have to coordinate votes amongst its candidates. Due to the women's quota, female candidates, unlike male candidates, can win council seats even when they have won a very low percentage of votes. The women's quota is also not tied to a district which means that the coordination involved for female candidates to win seats is different from that of male candidates.

Under/over nomination and *voter coordination* are created at the level of tribe-electoral district, meaning that each tribe in each electoral district will have a unique value. For instance, the Beni Hassan tribe spans across electoral districts Aydoun and Barha but it will have differing *under/nomination* values in each district dependent upon how well it nominated candidates in each district. These dependent variables are calculated only for tribes that offered male candidates.

Independent Variables We include two binary variables as to whether the tribe is of nomadic origins *(nomadic tribe*) and whether it is ethnically Palestinian (*Palestinian tribe*). A tribe is considered ethnically Palestinian if the tribal dictionaries used for coding noted the tribe as such. Tribes coded as nomadic are those officially recognized by the Jordanian government as being able offer candidates in the special parliamentary districts: "Bedouin North", "Bedouin South", and "Bedouin Central" as well as a number of ethnic Palestinian tribes well-known as being nomadic.

Control Variables Control variables are included at the tribe level (*small tribe*), at the electoral district level (*number of voters, district magnitude, number of tribes mobilized, number of female candidates*), and at the municipality-level (*number of electoral districts, area, density, migration,* and *unemployment*).

Small tribes (*small tribe*) should fare better with regard to nominating the optimal number of candidates and coordinating votes. A small tribe is unlikely to nominate more than one candidate and therefore, no voter coordination is necessary. To determine if a tribe is small, we use data from CO-AUTHOR and AUTHOR (2017), who investigate whether small tribes are more likely to use the gender quota. In this dataset, tribes were coded as small if locals assessed the tribe as such. In most cases, the person contacted was an employee at the Princess Basma Centres for Development, a series of centres distributed across Jordan that work within local communities. Employees there are usually locals who have lived in the community for a long period of time and worked extensively with residents.

We expect *under/over nomination* and *voter coordination* to suffer in municipalities with high district magnitude and large numbers of voters. In districts with high magnitude, the optimum number of candidates a tribe should nominate will be higher, all else equal, and the voter coordination problem more challenging. Large numbers of voters will also render coordination difficult as ascertaining who they will support and monitoring their behaviour becomes challenging. *Number of voters* is measured by the number of voters who voted in a particular electoral district; and *district magnitude* by the number of seats allocated for that electoral district. *Number of tribes mobilized* refers to the number of tribes that offered male candidates. Determining the optimal number of candidates to offer and coordinating votes should be more difficult in municipalities where several tribes are offering candidates because it is unclear which candidates will do well and who voters will support.

Voter coordination is also more challenging for tribes nominating both female and male candidates in the same district. This involves not only coordinating votes across multiple candidates but with the added complication of directing votes toward female candidates who can win competitively or via the women's quota. *Number of female*

candidates is the number of female candidates from the same tribe that ran alongside its male candidates.

Municipalities that are dense (*density*), large in terms of geographical size (*area*), include multiple electoral districts (*no of electoral districts*) and which have high numbers of migrants (*migration*) should exacerbate optimal nomination and voter coordination problems. Tribal leaders will have to travel greater distances to mobilise supporters in large municipalities. Unlike tribal members who feel pressure to support their own candidates, migrants do not have the same obligation and can vote unpredictably. Traditional social structure in rural areas with small populations should facilitate voter coordination while modern, urban settings with atomized households, high numbers of migrants, and tribal members distributed across neighbourhoods should impede it. Internal *migration* is measured by the percentage of the population in 2004 that had migrated from another municipality.

Finally, we include the level of *unemployment* in the municipality to understand the role of clientelism with regard to voter coordination. Poor voters are easier to capture and more willing to follow the directives of tribal leaders and therefore, we expect to see better coordination in poor areas.

Estimation Technique Because tribe level, electoral district level, and municipal level variables affect *under/over nomination* and *voter coordination*, we estimate the regression using hierarchical linear modelling. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality and at the electoral district level in these analyses. These are random-intercept models where district and municipal-specific intercepts are random and set to follow Gaussian distributions. Once again, the link function is the identity function.

6 Findings

6.1 Malapportionment

To evaluate whether areas with a significant number of ethnic Palestinians suffer from malapportionment, we estimate a regression that includes indicators for whether there is a significant number of Palestinians and residents of nomadic origins (model 1). The results are displayed in Table 2. The significant presence of nomadic residents corresponds to a lower representation ratio (H2). In municipalities with a significant presence of nomadic residents, each council member is on average responsible for 580 fewer residents than those municipalities that do not have such a presence. There is also a positive relationship between the significant presence of Palestinians and malapportionment but this relationship is not significant at conventional levels (H1). For councillors in the median municipality in in terms of population[6], our results indicate that each council member is responsible for 1,935 residents. However, if this municipality harboured a significant presence of nomadic residents, each council member would be responsible for 1,355 residents, a decrease of 30 percent.

But could malapportionment just be a product of the lower number of ethnic Palestinians who register to vote? Ethnic Palestinians are less politically active and voting is not compulsory in Jordan. Perhaps malapportionment is not so terrible if seats were allocated in proportion to the number of registered voters as opposed to the municipality's population. In model 2 we create a new measure of malapportionment based on the number of voters in the municipality (*malapportionment by voters*), defined as V_i/S_i where V is the number of

[6] To determine the median municipality, we first removed all municipalities where there is a significant presence of Palestinians or a significant presence of nomadic residents. To understand how the significant presence of these populations affect malapportionment, we need to compare these municipalities with a baseline municipality, which is one where these groups are not present in a significant fashion. Once these municipalities have been removed, we chose the median municipality in terms of population.

registered voters in municipality i and S is the number of council seats in the same municipality. We estimate another regression with *malapportionment by voters* as the dependent variable (model 2). All controls are the same as in model 1 except the number of registered voters (*no. of voters)* is used in place of the municipality's population. Results are reported in Table 2.

Here we find that the significant population of nomadic voters is not associated with malapportionment but that the significant presence of Palestinian voters is. In municipalities where there is a significant presence of Palestinian voters, council members are responsible for a greater number of voters than in municipalities where they are not a significant presence (H1). Councillors in municipalities with a significant presence of Palestinians are associated with looking after an extra 254 extra voters than those in municipalities without such a presence.

Results from models 1 and 2 offer some confirmation of hypotheses 1 and 2. In model 1, we find that council members in municipalities with a significant presence of nomadic residents are responsible for a fewer number of residents than in non-nomadic municipalities (H2). In model 2 council members in municipalities with a significant presence of ethnic Palestinians are responsible for a greater number of voters than in non-Palestinian municipalities (H1).

Results from models 1 and 2, however, are also contradictory. Model 2 results do not replicate model 1 findings that a significant presence of nomadic residents is associated with positive malapportionment but the significant presence of Palestinians is *not* associated with negative malapportionment. In model 2, the opposite relationship is statistically significant: the significant presence of ethnic Palestinian voters is associated with negative malapportionment but the significant presence of nomadic voters is *not* associated with positive malapportionment.

As the default method across countries is to apportion seats according to population and not voters, model 1 and 2 results suggest that nomadic tribes are not disadvantaged and perhaps even advantaged by the Jordanian regime (Christensen 2005; Epstein and O'Hallaran 2014; Ricca et al. 2013). With regard to ethnic Palestinians, the malapportionment story is more difficult to disentangle. Model 2 offer some credence for hypothesis 1 and the possibility that the regime is disadvantaging municipalities with high numbers of Palestinian residents. It is unclear though why malapportionment is only evident when examining voters as opposed to the population.

One possibility is that model 2 results are a statistical fluke due to the data exclusion of four municipalities with the largest ethnic Palestinian populations in Jordan (Irbid, Madaba, Ruseifeh, and Zarqa), for which we lack data. Indeed if we re-estimate Model 1 but purposely exclude these four municipalities (model 3), we find results similar to model 2: municipalities with a significant presence of ethnic Palestinians are associated with negative malapportionment but a significant presence of nomadic tribes is not associated with positive discrimination. Model 3 results therefore, suggest that model 2 findings are a consequence of incomplete data.

This still leaves the puzzle of why evidence for negative malapportionment in Palestinian-heavy municipalities disappears when the four municipalities with the greatest number of Palestinians are included. Surely malapportionment should be the worst in these municipalities. Why wouldn't the regime skew results in these locations? Perhaps ethnic Palestinians do indeed suffer from malapportionment in these municipalities but this is observable only at the electoral district level. The majority of Jordanian municipalities are subdivided into multiple electoral districts. Perhaps Palestinian-heavy electoral districts do suffer from malapportionment but that other districts within the same municipality have a fair distribution of seats or even a greater number of seats to compensate. The four excluded

municipalities are large, urban areas harbouring diverse religious and ethnic minorities as well as significant ethnic Jordanian tribal populations. The regime will want to ensure that these groups receive good representation even if at the same time they discriminate against Palestinians. Unfortunately, we only have data at the municipal level and therefore cannot confirm this explanation.

What is also evident is that the regime does care a great deal about electoral outcomes in these four municipalities. In the 2007 election, the election from which we derive our data, voter fraud was alleged in three of these four municipalities: Zarqa, Irbid, and Madaba. This may be why we do not have registered voter data for them. Amongst other electoral irregularities across the country, the National Human Rights Centre in Jordan recorded that members of the army were bussed into these municipalities where they were not residents to vote (NCHR 2007).

6.2 District Magnitude

Municipalities with a significant presence of nomadic residents are associated with an average district magnitude that is smaller by 1 seat (model 4). The median Jordanian municipality in terms of population has five electoral districts and a predicted district magnitude per district of 3.44. But if this municipality's population included a large number of nomadic residents, its predicted district magnitude per district would decrease to only 2.40 seats. Across five electoral districts, this would mean a shrinkage of 4.79 or nearly five seats from the entire municipal council. This is in accordance with our expectations (H3) that the Jordanian regime will create districts of smaller magnitude in nomadic-heavy areas to facilitate their electoral coordination. The significant presence of Palestinian residents, however, does not affect district magnitude (H4).

Variable	Model 1 Malapportionment	Model 2 Malapportionment by Voters	Model 3 Malapportionment (Excluding 4 municipalities)	Model 4 Average District Magnitude
Sig Presence of Palestinians	252.16 (358.93)	254.27*** (96.98)	415.16** (176.49)	-1.04 (0.64)
Sig Presence of Nomadic Residents	-580.06*** (262.67)	-111.04 (77.76)	-96.46 (133.58)	-1.07** (0.47)
Unemployment	-18.55 (23.05)	-4.07 (6.24)	-5.60 (11.35)	0.018 (0.041)
Population	0.047*** (0.0042)		0.11*** (0.0070)	0.0000055 (0.0000076)
No. of voters		0.10*** (0.0075)		
Area	0.055** (0.027)	-0.011*** (0.0078)	-0.022 (0.015)	-0.000059 (0.000048)
Density	221.69*** (84.28)	5.07 (23.45)	9.28 (44.86)	-0.0093 (0.15)
Minorities	990.58*** (372.88)	101.01 (102.99)	163.04 (191.47)	-0.39 (0.67)
Migration	-836.47 (1358.13)	-1079.85*** (366.07)	-1768.31*** (681.55)	5.87** (2.43)
No. of Electoral Districts	-312.42*** (59.02)	-68.34*** (19.37)	-145.86*** (34.72)	-0.26*** (0.11)
Capital	-632.02 (479.74)	-535.62*** (139.09)	-1066.94*** (246.79)	1.45* (0.86)
N, municipalities	93	89	89	93

Table 2: Impact of the Significant Presence of Palestinians and Nomadic Residents on Malapportionment and District Magnitude. This table displays the regression results for models 1-4. *** denotes p<0.01, ** denotes p<0.05, and * denotes p<0.10

6.3 Electoral Coordination

To evaluate whether electoral coordination is better or worse for ethnic Palestinian and nomadic tribes, we estimated two regression where the dependent variables are *under/over nomination* (model 5) and *voter coordination* (model 6). The results are showcased in Table 3. Our results demonstrate that whether the tribe is Palestinian or not does not affect *under/over nomination* or *voter coordination*. The relationship between *nomadic tribe* and *under/over nomination* is positive; the relationship between *Palestinian tribe* and *under/over nomination* is negative but none of these relationships are significant at conventional levels.

We do find, however, that nomadic tribes perform better than non-nomadic tribes by 0.22 units with regard to voter coordination. For the median non-nomadic tribe, the *voter coordination* value is 0.59 while the median nomadic tribe has a *voter coordination* value of 0.81. As *voter coordination* is the ratio of the number of male candidates who won to the number of male candidates who could have won had votes been distributed optimally, values closer to 1 indicate better coordination. Our results show that nomadic tribes are superior in distributing votes across their candidates.

Variable	Model 5 Nomination	Model 6 Voter Coordination
Tribe Level Variables		
Palestinian tribe	-0.13	-0.13
	(0.085)	(0.14)
Nomadic tribe	0.16*	0.22***
	(0.085)	(0.083)
Small tribe	-0.44***	-0.041
	(0.082)	(0.078)
No. of female candidates	0.12*	0.046
	(0.069)	(0.054)
Electoral District Level Variables		
No. of Voters	0.0000096	0.000016
	(0.000012)	0.000017
District magnitude	0.00054	-0.0094
	(0.031)	0.033
No. of tribes mobilized	-0.035**	-0.047**
	(0.016)	(0.020)
Municipal-Level Variables		
No. of electoral districts	0.041*	0.0063
	(0.023)	(0.025)
Migration	-0.28	0.79**
	(0.40)	(0.41)
Unemployment	-0.0019	-0.0013
	(0.0084)	(0.0077)
Area	-0.0000032	-0.0000013
	(0.0000031)	(0.0000035)
Density	0.011	0.0052
	(0.018)	(0.017)
N, tribes	557	201
N, electoral districts	208	156
N, municipalities	64	63

Table 3: Impact of the Palestinian and Nomadic Tribes on Under/over Nomination of Candidates and Voter Coordination. This table displays the regression results for models 4-5. *** denotes p<0.01, ** denotes p<0.05, and * denotes p<0.10

7 Conclusion

The Jordanian regime has been accused of favouring "the traditional backbone of the Hashemite kingdom – conservative tribes from rural Transjordanian areas – to the detriment of the urban population and the Palestinians who constitute a majority in Jordan" (Bank and Sunik 2014). Our analysis shows evidence that electoral rules in Jordan do not disadvantage opponents so much but rather advantage regime supporters. Council members in municipalities with a significant presence of nomadic residents are responsible for fewer residents than in non-nomadic municipalities. We do find some evidence of malapportionment against ethnic Palestinians when we account for registered voters instead of municipal populations but this data excludes the four most Palestinian-populous municipalities.

We also find evidence that the regime has created electoral districts with smaller district magnitudes in nomadic -dense areas. While this should facilitate electoral coordination for nomadic tribes, it seems that they do not perform better with regard to the optimal nomination of candidates. Perhaps it is not surprising that all tribes, regardless of whether they are Palestinian or Jordanian, nomadic or not nomadic, suffer from nomination discipline. Buttorf (2015) notes that over-nomination is a perpetual problem in Jordan due to intra-tribal conflict, the erosion of tribal hierarchies, and regime interference to support certain tribal candidates against others. On the other hand, nomadic tribes are excellent at distributing votes across their candidates. Their hierarchical structure, shared history of traveling together, and collaborating for security has led to a modern-day group that continues to be directed by clear leadership and cohesive membership.

Is SNTV the most favourable system for the Jordanian regime? It has certainly produced more favourable results than permitting voters to vote for as many candidates as there were seats. This previous electoral system, employed prior to the adoption of SNTV in

2007 resulted in the election of a large number of Muslim Brotherhood and Islamist-affiliated candidates in 1989 (Posusney 2002). With multiple votes, Jordanians gave one vote to tribal favourites and additional votes to Muslim Brotherhood candidates. Adopted in 2016, the regime's PR open-list system for parliamentary elections also seems to serve the regime well. Under this system, voters can choose a list and then vote for specific candidates within the list. Most lists have been composed of independents with candidates either campaigning for themselves but not for the list as a whole or stuffing their list with weak candidates to ensure their own victory. Overall, this new system, like SNTV, continues to benefit independent candidates able to offer pork and patronage to constituents and does not encourage cooperation across party and tribal lines (Karmel and Linfield 2021). We suspect that like SNTV, nomadic candidates continue to fare better under this system than their Palestinian counterparts. Because of their cohesiveness, nomadic tribes are likely to be more adept at list management; their close government ties mean they are better able to provide patronage.

It is impossible to say that one particular electoral system is most favourable for the Jordanian regime. It is not just the overall system (i.e. SNTV, PR) that influences outcomes but numerous other factors, such as the seat formula, district size, and district homogeneity, matter a great deal as well. Rulers have also learned to simultaneously employ several different systems. In the 2013 Jordanian parliamentary elections, 18 seats were elected from 18 single-member districts, 90 seats from 27 multi-member districts (SNTV), 27 seats from a closed-list PR system where the country was treated as one national district, and 15 seats were allocated to women via the women's quota. In single-member and SNTV districts, quotas were also allocated to ethnic and religious minorities and Bedouin tribes (Carter Center 2013). While we cannot conclude that SNTV is the most favourable system for the Jordanian regime, our study has underlined some of the ways it has been beneficial to rulers.

Elections are now held in most countries in the world, regardless of whether they are democratic or authoritarian in nature. Why have authoritarian leaders been willing to adopt them? The answer appears to be that, if done "right" from the autocrat's perspective, elections are far less threatening to authoritarian rule than one might expect. They can be manipulated via electoral fraud; referendums can be held in place of multi-candidate elections; and repression employed to coerce citizens to support incumbents. But fraud can be difficult to employ in a manner unobtrusive to the public, requires information and coordination, and can lead to potentially explosive situations if publicly exposed. Referendums often lack domestic or international legitimacy and repression is financially costly. "Semi-democratic" or "hybrid" countries like Jordan offer an alternative model of electoral authoritarianism where elections are fairly open, election monitors are permitted, but where elections are controlled behind the scenes through the choice of electoral system and considerable gerrymandering to support regime stalwarts. As the Jordanian model has been widely adopted by authoritarian leaders, we need to understand how elections, even those free and fair, promote and sustain autocracy.

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