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Jordanian State's Policy Management: A Comparison with Egypt's Struggles in Policy Management

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Abstract:

This article seeks to compare how the Jordanian state has maintained political stability through a distinctive mode of policy management that combines adaptability, responsiveness, and institutional continuity. By comparing Jordan with Egypt, the article attempts to present how divergent approaches to governance and reform have produced contrasting outcomes in regime resilience. Drawing on Weber's concept of legitimacy and Andrew Nathan's framework on authoritarian resilience, the article also seeks to demonstrate how Jordan's monarchy transformed traditional authority into a rationalized system of controlled openness; conversely, Egypt's republican system remained reliant on coercive mechanisms that undermined public trust. In brief, the article argues that long-term stability, in authoritarian systems, depends less on formal democratization and more on the regime's ability to institutionalize responsiveness and to continuously reposition its social contract in favor of maintaining power.

Keywords: Egypt; Jordan; Monarchy; Authoritarian Resilience; Policymaking; Historical Legitimacy; State-Society Relations.

INTRODUCTION

This article explores how the Jordanian state has managed to stay politically stable by using a unique approach to policymaking-one that blends flexibility, responsiveness, and consistent institutional structures. To facilitate understanding of this claim, the article compares Jordan with Egypt by examining the dynamics in both countries across three dimensions: 1- Institutional conditions; 2- the mode of state control, and 3- adaptability and responsiveness to people's demands. The two ruling systems of Jordan and Egypt are structurally very different in multiple respects: Jordan has a monarchic system versus an Egyptian republic; each country has different population densities, geographic sizes, total population numbers and different characteristics in terms of how the sociopolitical environment operates within each of them. Therefore the comparison between both of them will be made as if these were very different systems; whereby one can isolate the impact of regime type on policy implementation and the level of system-resilience for both countries as it relates to authoritarian rule.

The three criteria for comparison are institutional structure, the manner in which the state controls its citizens and how responsive/adaptive each state is to citizen's needs/demands; these criteria will be used to examine both Jordan and Egypt as relevant data sources in relation to each regime's authoritarian post-Arab Spring MENA state structure and both Weberian & Nathanian legitimacy theories. The aforementioned differences between the two countries are included as part of the analysis of the two of them, as such they will be treated as explanatory variables: the monarchy's historically developed legitimacy has provided the monarch with the ability to layer institutions onto the same historical framework; conversely, Egypt's republican structure has led to episodic coercive adaptations, as well as producing ongoing legitimacy issues. Finally, the analysis will show that the different outcomes related to policy implementation are a result of each country's processing of similar regional pressures and therefore justifies the comparability of Egypt & Jordan in relation to their respective regimes. The general framework of this investigation is planned to be focused on policy and institutional architecture, but mainly the state control.

This article also touches on how to investigate how policy decisions are to some extent influenced by the geopolitical context and regional positioning of each state. Jordan's strategic location, bordered by the West Bank, Israel, Iraq,[1] and a post-2011 Syria, has created distinct challenges for its governance. The internal (governmental) and external (international) geopolitical context influences policy decisions made by Jordan and are therefore core components of

Jordan's management of state policy. Thus, Jordan's monarchy has the ability to adapt to external pressures (e.g., through borders, refugees, and donor relationships) and directly convert this adaptation into adaptive economic and institutional reforms, thereby maintaining the resilience of the regime. Precisely, in response, the Jordanian state has pursued a series of economic reforms aimed at stabilizing its financial situation. These reforms have included efforts to reduce foreign debt, address the budget deficit, and curb inflation,[2] thus positioning the regime to enter a new phase of economic and political development. This stability has, in turn, facilitated a focus on economic competitiveness and the pursuit of peace agreements, shaping the country's long-term political vision and saving the monarchy from declining.

Conversely, Egypt's location and its roles in conflicts in Libya, Israel-Gaza, and Sudan[3] have influenced its approach to state-building. In addition, while policy decisions based on Egypt's geopolitical position are similarly integrated into state policy management, as opposed to representing an analytical focal point, they have been converted into securitized and militarized responses by the republican system and, as a result, create episodic instability and lack of institutional continuity. In the early 1990s, Egypt sought to employ economic reforms that can align with global growing system of political economy (i.e., neoliberalism). However, the long-term results of these reforms were not the same as those achieved by the Jordanian regime. This again emphasizes the article's main claim: the comparison illustrates how Jordan's policy success can benefit Egypt's policymaking system.

Key Historical Scenarios and Examples from Jordan and Egypt

In 1989, under the rule of King Hussein,[4] the Jordanian regime implemented several economic reforms of policies that resulted in a new economic framework for the country.[5] This was followed by King Abdullah II's self-identification as a "reformer".[6] Though he didn't transition from "autocracy to democracy," his regime successfully managed to contain the spread of the Arab Spring,[7] which was rapidly expanding across the MENA Region. Whether through preserving a "political status quo" or employing methods, such as manipulation, the regime was able to navigate the pressures fostered by "external forces," mainly the West and "domestic pressure".[8] A distinctive feature of Jordanian policymaking is in its presentation as a sustaining-continuous process of political reform,[9] though it is, in fact, not necessarily that. For example, in the mid of 2021, a new royal decree established the "Royal Committee to Modernize the Political System," took

place.[10] Between 1989 and 2021, despite changes in the political scene, the regime change did not prevent the monarchy from maintaining its system. Additionally, it is possible that the Jordanians can be consistently divided on the potential benefits of reforms, with some optimistic and others skeptical. Nonetheless, the system persists, with many holding onto the hope for a better future, which is a key aspect of the political status quo.

In Jordan, the regime's approach can be referred to as a distillation policy: allowing certain changes while maintaining tight control over the society's political context. This distillation policy facilitates a level of participation in policymaking by specific groups or classes while the regime retains its power and effectivity. This argument applies to the activities and the events organized by foundations like "the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development, Queen Rania Foundation, Jordan River Foundation, and Royal Film Commission".[11] These organizations concentrate on training large numbers of youth people from cities such as Mafraq and Madaba for purposes of "youth empowerment, capacity-building, political participation".[12] On this basis, it is crucial to notice that, beside the examples mentioned above, these efforts may be seen as a response to demands for change, they also serve to prevent the natural erosion of the regime's historical legitimacy.

In Egypt, there are different societal dynamics, such as nature of the political system (republican rather than monarchy), the demographic factor, the radical—accelerated neo-liberalization (i.e., privatization, de-regulation, and established policies of free-market) and other factors, that make the case of Egypt slightly different, but this doesn't prevent any potential comparison with other cases, such as the Jordanian case.

It is hard to conduct this comparison by categorizing policies as either economic or political, as this approach does not account for the multiple regime changes that occurred since Mubarak's era and continued through to Sisi's rise to power. Each regime displayed distinct characteristics and governance strategies. While Mubarak, though he had a traditional political philosophy; apparently in belonging to a political party with a political ideology (National Democratic Party), he concentrated power in his hands for a while.[13] From the early1990s, Mubarak's regime was more focused on implementing economic reforms rather than political reforms. He once stated, "Nasser liberated Egypt; Sadat gave it peace; I wish to rebuild it".[14] However, the way he sees rebuilding is primarily linked to economic construction, which is what he presented by insisting that the

world is getting into an era of business-making,[15] seemingly underestimating the necessity of political reform.

Until 2007, Mubarak tried to pass several amendments through parliament and referendums, but these efforts failed to convince the public of their fruitful results in the future, leading it to face a "movement [of] boycott".[16] By 2011, the regime has collapsed, and Egyptians changed their governance system, electing democratically Mohamed Morsi, who started his service in office in 2012. However, Morsi soon faced a political crisis marked by massive polarization, complex and unstable socioeconomic conditions (e.g., unemployment and inflation). This situation led to the creation of a "coalition" of different political and intellectual groups, including groups of liberals and minorities, who opposed him.[17]

One must notice that the impact of Mubarak's regime continued to influence the political scene even after 2011.[18] These legacies can be clearer in the manner in which Sisi came to power. Kurtzer argues that "Mubarak allowed, and probably encouraged, the military to take on the character of a parastatal business conglomerate that enriched the officer corps while, paradoxically, leading to a significant decline in military professionalism".[19] This observation suggests that Mubarak's emphasis on maintaining power created significant challenges, particularly when he attempted to militarize the business sector, producing and reproducing militarization in society but not its professionalism.

In brief, while both Jordanian and Egyptian regimes followed different modes of governance, they underwent divergent political trajectories. More distinctly, in the Egyptian case, there were significant regime changes that affected the shaping of the political system there. In contrast, Jordan consistently managed to prevent the fall of its regime. Specifically, Mubarak's rule ended with a political uprising in 2011, while the Jordanian monarchy effectively managed the rapid changes sweeping the Arab region, either by demonstrating a strong commitment to altering the status quo or by implementing reforms from within.

In order to conduct any meaningful comparison of Jordan and Egypt, It is essential to contextualize them within the wider regional navigations of the post–Cold War and post–Arab Spring periods. Political survival in the Middle East can never be solely a domestic affair, but it can be also impacted by the regimes' ability to act as mediators between various global power interests, and external pressures.[20] Jordan's orientation toward Western donors and its extraordinary balancing act of relations with Israel and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has

long been a cornerstone of political stability for the regime.[21] Egypt, despite being the historical leader of Arab nationalism, has experienced instability and fluctuations of patronage relationships moving from Soviet alignment to U.S. dependency to more recently financial dependence on the Gulf.

This international dimension shapes the ability of both regimes to undertake domestic reform. As Brynen explains, Jordan maintains effective political management, resulting from sustained donor confidence, which provides a buffer for the monarchy during economic crises.[22] In contrast, Egypt's example showcases the reverse: episodic foreign resources can never substitute for local crises of legitimacy. In addition to that, the military coup that brought Sisi to power in 2013 illustrates how some external support can bolster short-term order while simultaneously underpinning longer-term structural fragility.[23]

Furthermore, regional conflict dynamics, from the Iraq War in 2003 to the ongoing Syrian crisis, have produced a refugee-hosting Jordan, forcing the country to be innovative in their emergency humanitarian and administrative policy response.[24] The broadened policy framework in which to respond has increased bureaucratic capacity and had the extra benefit of enhancing international legitimacy. Egypt's policy response, particularly to transnational pressures, has been and continues to be securitized policy,[25] advancing border control and counter-terrorism policies over institutional modernization.

In sum, Jordan and Egypt demonstrate two different types of state-society relations, though both operate via authoritarian parameters. Jordan's ability to develop and adapt to a policy framework is indicative of a strategic entrenchment in a transnational web of cooperation, while Egypt's model is largely represented through coercive sovereignty. This is important to outline in order to understand why Jordan's political system allows for a pragmatic monarchy to persist, whereas Egyptian republicanism wobbles between centralization and crisis.

In 2017, King Abdullah II talked in an interview about a border line called Turaibil, located between Jordan and Iraq, which is not that far from Syrian borders. Despite his expression of concerns due to the situation in Syria, ISIS, and other threats, he used it to explore how re-opening the Turaibil will increase levels of trade and investment.

> "We are hopeful that the pace and volume of the flow of goods and exports will increase and return to previous levels of bilateral trade, or even exceed them to higher levels, as we move forward with the implementation of the oil pipeline between the two countries, which will elevate cooperation and economic ties to a strategic level".[26]

He aimed to keep the possibilities open, presenting future scenarios grounded in past precedents, whereby the previous levels of bilateral cooperation may either be restored or further enhanced. In fact it seems that his position reflects a strategic balancing act between security concerns and economic aspirations. Additionally, his forward-looking indication suggests a pragmatic approach, leveraging infrastructure projects like the pipeline to reinforce regional ties; however, with a degree of cautiousness that refers to considering potential regional variables. And by referencing past trade levels, he frames future growth as a return to normalcy rather than a risky new venture.

State-Society Relations

This research article draws on some insights from Max Weber's perspectives juxtaposed with the State-Society Relations Theory, which allows a regime to maintain the key factors that allow either reinforce regime change or successful policy management, which allows a regime to maintain power and re-shape state-society relations through reforms without the political system collapsing. Max Weber's "Society and Economy" emphasizes the importance of institutions in creating a strong presence for the state within society.[27] It applies to the illustrated historical legitimacy of the Jordanian monarchy, and which is sought to be rooted and reproduced in interconnected components that gradually centralized the dynamism of political practices and institutional organizations in the hands of this monarchy system. More scholarly, Max Weber has discussed the matter of "bureaucracy" and "bureaucratic organization"[28] as mechanism for rationalizing authority, which he namely describes as "domination" that involves practices of "power" or "influence"[29] by the state over society's members.

However, for better supplement for the perception in this article, the article will benefit from Andrew Nathan's idea of authoritarian resilience, in which Nathan discusses, how sometimes, some authoritarian regimes succeed to continue ruling through several techniques, such as elitist unification, urgent but well-planned responsiveness to people's demands, institutional creativity. Moreover, all these techniques are employed to deal with political challenges and catastrophes.[30] This, in one way or another, aids these regimes to maintain a stable position in ruling societies, despite the fact that these regimes can change, from time to time, parliaments, leaders, and so on.

By reading this resilience, in the framework of the Jordanian case, one realizes there is a well-designed, though rare, balance between political openness (i.e., liberalization) and the re-cycling of the monarchical dominance. That is what

Yom and Gause would emphasize by reflecting on the importance of strategically respond to local community's requirement as well as global partners,[31] which would be interested to see changes on the ground. Both authors have referred to this as the "controlled openness," which also can be marked as cautious.

In this context, the Jordanian regime demonstrated greater responsiveness to people's demands, as exemplified in 2020 when King Abdullah II diffused the parliament to facilitate elections, indicating a possible change in the status quo. Similar dissolutions took place in 2012[32] and 2016[33] before that.

In the Egyptian context, privatization has consistently proceeded more rapidly over time and has also not been supported by conditions that would allow Egyptians to equitably meet their social demands (during either the Mubarak era or the Sisi era), nor has deregulation during President Sisi's administration met the needs of Egyptians. All these policies have been accompanied by their militarization with regard to not only policy execution but also economic execution. Differently, the Jordanian monarchy has exhibited sustained responsiveness through its ongoing successful implementation of policy. According to official Reform Matrix data (2018 – 2024), by the end of 2024 the Jordanian government will have fully completed approximately 77.7% (313 out of 403) of the actions prescribed in the Reform Matrix.[34] The levels of completion relative to public investment management (PIM), public-private partnership (PPP), and business-enabling reform are projected to increase further to approximately 82.0% (330 out of 403) by May 2025.[35]

These small but steady improvements reflect a practical approach to limiting the opening up while addressing the needs of society, resulting in progress by sector, such as 90% within fiscal policy and 91% within water and agriculture as noted by the Reform Secretariat.[36] Instability as well as indirect exclusion from the policies related to the military have created an environment that limits the stability of the middle-class population, which is key to overcoming the gap between the very rich and the very poor. That said, these changes resulted in a dependence on either militarization or securitization mechanisms in order for the regime to maintain its legitimacy, rather than through an inclusive policy that could help promote state-society relations.

Political channels have adapted as well; the September 2024 elections for parliament, held according to the new 2022 law on electoral practices & political parties, reflected this adaptability. In those elections 105 members of political parties, out of a total of 138 members of parliament represented on the lower house, constituted 75% of the parliament's seats. Within Jordan's political history

this is the greatest proportion of political party representation in parliament's history[37] Among the political parties, the largest represented in parliament was the Islamic Action Front (IAF). This party received 31 of 138 total seats within the parliament, for 31 of the 31 (22.5%) total seats that the ISTGB received, which indicates how opposition within Jordan has been channeled under pressure from regional conditions (e.g. the war in Gaza). Along with IAF the additional members of political parties pro-regime received were in total roughly 40 additional seats; however, turnout in the 2024 elections was 32%, which indicates a general lack of confidence regarding the depth of changes to the political system.[38] Thus, these outcomes show that the monarchy continues to exercise resilience through institutionalization of participation without relinquishing ultimate authority to other actors, whereas in Egypt a similar pattern has occurred more episodically and with coercive measures.

In contrast, Egypt's case can be described as an instance of authoritarian learning failure,[39] the authoritarian learning failure. This concept echoes some aspects of Heydemann's "The political ecology of authoritarian learning".[40] To some extent, that is applicable to the Egyptian political struggle to balance between the political willingness of the ruling class to maintain power and the emerging social needs that contributed to the creation of new social units/groups that would adopt these new social needs as demands in their programs.

Mubarak's last dissolution of the parliament occurred in 2011,[41] and the article presents this a step full of challenges and obstacles presented by the dissolution of parliament. However, the focus here is not on whether these actions were planned, but rather on the regime's attempt to demonstrate adaptability to policy change and responsiveness to public demands. One might argue that the frequent dissolution of the Jordanian Parliament has, in some sense, concentrated power and legitimacy in the king's hands, preventing the sharing of power with any passing parliament. This dynamic reinforces the historical legitimacy of the monarchy, making the secondary form of power (i.e., parliamentary authority) temporary, while the king's power is designed to be permanent.

Beyond institutional analysis, regime longevity also relies on the political psychology located within each state's governance culture. In Jordan, the monarchy communicates a symbolic narrative of national unity. The history and heritage of the Hashemite dynasty as being directly linked to the Prophet Muhammad provide the monarchy with a religious basis for authority to accompany bureaucratic legitimacy.[42] Accordingly, the state forms what Hudson

called political culture of legitimacy,[43] a belief system that employes different techniques to, first, achieve people's consent, then naturalize obedience in exchange for security to protect the state-society relations.

In terms of governance, Egyptian state has inherited historic republican paternalism grounded in Nasser's populist social contract. However, this paternalism has evolved into an increasingly coercive technocracy. The relationship of the citizenry to authority is expressed through fear and survival rather than loyalty.[44] Therefore, the administrative culture of Egypt struggles to produce any emotional legitimacy that a monarchy system can promulgate through symbols or other soft means of influence.

Cultural variables also shape reform trajectories. Jordan's leadership employs a rhetoric of inclusion, particularly toward the youth and women, to reframe modernization as national rejuvenation. Initiatives like Jordan 2025 Vision and Women's Empowerment Strategy 2020–2025 are part of this performative modernization.[45] These programs are less about democratic transformation than about manufacturing a shared sense of progress, what Edelman termed the politics of symbolic reassurance.[46]

In Egypt, however, reform discourse tends to be instrumental and securitized. As one can see in several cases, state rhetoric emphasizes stability and counterterrorism rather than citizenry participation. This has reinforced a culture of fear that undermines innovation and civic trust.[47] The contrast reveals that Jordan's success lies not only in policy design but in its psychological ability to transform authority into a relational, semi-familial construct that embeds loyalty within everyday governance.

Technique of Investigation

This article follows a qualitative research approach. It will employ what is to be named as socio-institutional analysis, aiming to understand the relationship between the state and society through institutional processes and policymaking, and the connection of these into the social circumstances. Before going through the empirical details of the inquiry, the article will establish a theoretical framework of the context by briefly following State-Society Relations Theory and with more focus on the conception of historical legitimacy inspired by central aspects Weber introduced. This is important to narrow the scope and the method of arguing how the Jordanian Monarchy went through a scenario that should inspire the political system in Egypt.

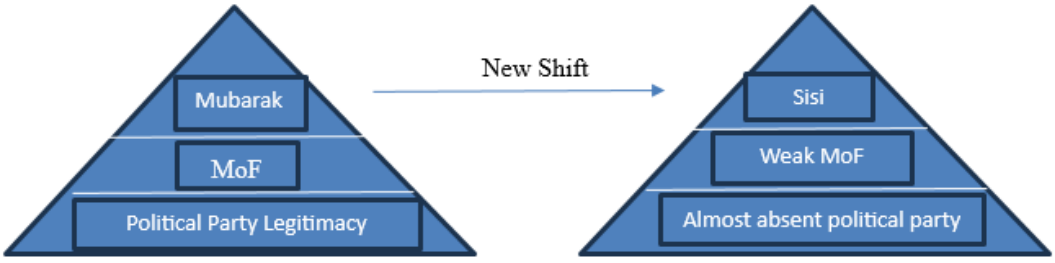
The article will use empirical examples to illustrate how historical legitimacy is preserved or eroded over time based on data collection from investigating

Jordanian and Egyptian contexts as cases of study. The article will be structured into two main sections. Part I, titled "Monarch or President? Towards Self-Preservation," will provide a comparative analysis of the Jordanian and Egyptian regimes. Part II, "Why Jordan?" will examine the results and potential factors supporting the main argument posed in the research question.

Part I: Monarch or President? Towards Self-Preservation

In many Arab states, if not in most of them, the institutional—political practices are complicated and political institutions are often perceived fragile, yet many of these wield significant power, enabling the regimes there to function in an authoritarian manner. This is applicable to the cases in both Jordan and Egypt, where people face daily struggles and whose lives are shaped by oppressive state mechanisms while regimes perceive their strength of "monopoly of legitimate use of physical force"[48] as well as a suppressive control of the citizenry daily life.

Under Mubarak's regime, Egypt's power structure was centered around three key elements: the presidency, the Ministry of the Interior (MoI), and the ruling political party.[49] In this system, one can view the situation as follows: Mubarak occupied the top of the pyramid, with the MoI functioning as the repressive arm to neutralize any threat to the regime, and the political party serving as a source of legitimacy. However, the general populace is entirely excluded from this power structure. In contrast, under Sisi's regime, the focus has shifted towards strengthening the presidency, while the MoI has become less dominant, and there is no clear political party to provide legitimacy (Panta 2020). This raises the question of how Sisi rationalized his authority and sustained his grip on power? The following shape should clarify the nature of the shift occurred during the times of Sisi and what meet that in the time of Mubarak.



Expanding on the Weberian and state-society approaches, one can also analyze the resilience of Jordan's regime through policy learning theory. As Hall states, policy learning is change in state goals, instruments, or contexts in

response to experience.[50] Although authoritarian regimes are often portrayed as rigid, they can engage in complex forms of learning that enable them to recalibrate coercion and consent.[51]

The Jordan's monarchy is an illustration of adaptive authoritarianism, a model that allows for consultation, selective liberalization, and technocratic modernization.[52] The monarchy has institutions, such as royal committees and consultative councils, which provide feedback loops that emanate participatory governance but still have a strictly hierarchical determination of authority. This process not only absorbs demands from society but converts these demands into modalities for state-led actions, transforming threats into means of absorbing sociopolitical unrest, reproducing it in a form of legitimacy.

In contrast, the Egyptian regimes exhibit episodic and reactive forms of learning. For instance, while Mubarak engaged in partial liberalization in the early 2000s, introducing multiparty competition and press reforms, neither pluralization produced sustainable pluralization, given the lack of institutional underpinning. Sisi's government has returned to a command-style regime in which learning is limited to security doctrines, not to the invention of policy[53] that considers people's demands and needs.

This distinction, of course, means that learning processes in authoritarian cases are not about democratization, but these processes also focus on practical efficiency and control. Similarly, Jordan's iterative reforms reflect what Grindle refers to as "good enough governance",[54] which also allows a ruler to preserve core power relations while considering incremental changes to capacity. From this perspective, learning becomes both strategy for survival and a rationality of governance-a typology of governance that often goes unnoticed in modern monarchies.

An essential, but not often considered, source of authoritarian durability is the state's ability to manipulate narratives. Both Jordan and Egypt pursue broad information techniques as part of their strategy, but the tactics and ramifications differ considerably. In Jordan, the media system operates in what Rugh refers to as a "loyalist" model,[55] whereby many journalists act as collaborators in national advancement rather than adversarial efforts. The monarchy's continuous messaging about reform, unity, and security creates a political imaginary that discourages polarization.[56] Even when criticism appears, typically in digital space, it sometimes gets employed to speak to the legitimacy of the king and demonstrate the limits of dissent that have become internalized in the Jordanian political environment.

Civil society in Jordan also exists in a semi-independent space, and this again supports that political environment. This is relevant to the Jordanian National Commission for Women and the King Abdullah II Fund for Development are examples of hybrid organizations that rely on civic activism, but are operationally connected to the monarchy.[57] This arrangement expands inclusion without directly undermining the regime's authority and is emblematic of authoritarian inclusion.[58]

The landscape of Egypt is strikingly different. Since 2013, the regime has implemented restrictive NGO legislation and increased surveillance capacity, which largely eliminates independent civic action.[59] Through its monopolization of television stations and online space, the state is able to promote a unified narrative of patriotism in constructing the military as the protector of stability. While these public communication practices do generate short-term order, they compromise the communicative legitimacy essential for enduring cohesion.

So far, Al-Sisi's current regime benefits from implementing radical societal changes and the passage of time, which have contributed to entrenching the system. This system feeds on the current situation with all of the difficulties. However, it remains uncertain whether Al-Sisi's approach, marked by militarization strategy and business-based pragmatism, will endure. Critics argue that this system involves "social engineering using the coercive power of the state, with devastating consequences" that influenced large segments of the population, particularly the lower classes.[60]

While King Abdullah of Jordan also relies on security forces to maintain power, he has managed to preserve the civil character of his institutions and the economic structure of society. In contrast, Sisi's regime has allowed the military to exert more influence over Egypt's economy.[61] King Abdullah's challenges are multifaceted, involving both internal and regional factors such as the refugee crisis, the Syrian case of political unrest, the rise of Islamist groups, and economic issues. These challenges present complex, contemporary dilemmas for his leadership. These challenges are to be classified as both regional and internal,[62] and they can be seen as contemporary.

On the other hand, in today's Egypt, despite the supposed "transformations"[63] under Sisi's regime, there are significant challenges that could threaten its stability. These include the socioeconomic consequences of the neoliberal restructuring of the Egyptian economy and the privatization of state assets. Some thinkers suggest that Al-Sisi's a "New Administrative Capital" reflects his

intention to create a modern surveillance state capable of quick "deployment of military and paramilitary forces"[64].

Despite that, Al-Sisi's regime's shift, according to a Human Rights Watch report, has led to growing dissent, and the regime's use of extreme repression to maintain control over protests and public discontent only highlights the fragile nature of its legitimacy[65] and this claim defines why the regime uses a massive degree of violence, threating its capabilities to present itself as a legitimate government.[66] Al-Sisi's regime faces people's objection and protests against the difficult economic circumstances with suppression and violating people's rights. Additionally, some studies elaborate that his regime, that claimed to be neo-liberalizing the Egyptian national economy while receiving "billions of dollars in generous support from his rich Saudi and UAE benefactors and large loans and technical assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and others"[67]; in actual, attempted and still attempting to intervene in economy and the market systems,[68] but in a new way that suits the system of militarizing and dominating over Egypt's political and economic spheres.

Weber's notion of domination[69] offers a new way through which one can analyze the Jordanian case in which legitimacy progresses from tradition to rationalization. In the case of Jordan, the legitimacy of the monarchy has historically derived itself from the traditional type of legitimacy, which has been rationalized over many years through bureaucratic and legalistic means. The existence of these forms of legitimacy can in part explain the apparent contradictory nature of citizens as they can simultaneously see the monarch in the roles of both a paternal figure and a constitutional authority.

Institutional adaptation has been key to maintaining these forms of legitimacy. The monarchy's establishment of consultative councils, the establishment of a pattern in terms of the dissolution of parliament, and the creation of technocratic cabinets all illustrate bounded innovation, or regulated change to existing institutions that accommodates unexpected challenges but does not prejudice the underlying power structure. Egypt's regimes following Nasser have regularly sought disruptive adaptation; on multiple occasions, they have suddenly sought to reform institutional processes on a mass scale but have not either strengthened bureaucratic capacity or brought accountability on the part of the ruling class.

Recent work on hybrid regimes calls attention to the fact that longevity can be attributed to adaptability rather than democratization.[70] In this regard, the Jordanian monarch has created an environment suitable for analytical dissection

by recent research by Mahoney and Thelen on "institutional layering,"[71] in which existing institutions are maintained but performed new functions. This step-wise change engendered a perception of reform while maintaining the continuity of elite control. This is an element of Jordan's political experience that has largely been absent in Egypt's experience since abrupt events push against both elites and citizens to separate from the old order.

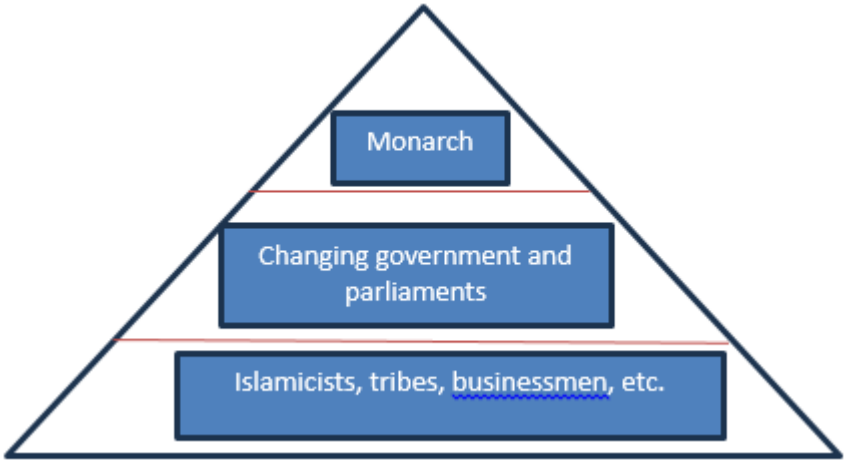
Part II: Why Jordan?

The Political Economy of Institutional and Political Stability

The political experiences of the regimes in Jordan and Egypt have demonstrated that the authority of the king remains intact beyond the collapse of a government or the dissolution of parliaments. In contrast, republican systems often lead to instability in certain cases of parliamentary dissolution, or at the very least, cause significant harm to the president's regime. This has allowed the king to occupy a position beyond the political changes that may affect the government, parliament, and similar political entities.

Again, what is particularly noteworthy about Jordan is that the Arab Spring stopped at the country's borders. Since 2011, King Abdullah has maintained absolute power, yet he continues to give significant weight to the parliament in the decision-making process.[72] This argument is supported by the fact that Abdullah II successfully integrated tribes, businessmen, and political parties, especially the Islamists, and has used these groups to drive society. Their support has strengthened the monarchy, even though certain classes, such as the lower class, face challenging economic conditions.

From this, one can conclude that Abdullah's historical legitimacy has enabled him to navigate changing political landscapes by altering the composition of parliaments, while still maintaining influence through channels unaffected by such changes. The involvement of diverse group-Islamists, tribes, business leaders, and even social initiatives and NGOs-acknowledges the presence and importance of these entities. These organizations often represent women and young people,[73] who can participate in different forms of power, including institutional, social, economic, and so on. The following shape should explain the hierarchy of those entities involving in the different forms of power, such as institutional, social, and moreover.



Responsiveness, Flexibility, and Adaptability to Rapid Changes and Serious Demands

Turning to the issue of reform, it demonstrates how responsive the regime is in addressing planned challenges across various sectors. The "Reform Matrix 2022 Progress Update," published by the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, highlights that reforms are being implemented across multiple sectors.[74] By the end of 2022, the government had achieved approximately 58% of its planned implementation goals.[75] This development is particularly relevant to the national economy, "climate responsive investments" (Secretariat 2022, 8), and other key sectors.

The varying nature between policy management under a monarchy ruling system and a presidential ruling system seems to be natural result of how presidency differs from monarchy. However, in the Arab context, just like how that is apparent in the case of Jordanian-Egyptian comparison, both ruling systems had a very solid political willingness to maintain power, utilizing different means to reserve power. Nonetheless, the political strategy in the Jordanian case, particularly through the state-citizen relations, was chronologically more complex. This is can be tracked by Jordan's compliance with the IMF-backed programs, integrating monarchy roles, non-monarchy, and quasi-monarchy roles in the process of ruling.

The particularly problematic issue in the Egyptian case is in how privatization was, each time (from Mubarak'era to Sisi's era) accelerated and unsustainable for social demands, and this is also applicable to the case of de-regulation in the time of Sisi. However, it is more problematic when these policies were aligned, in every time, with the militarization of both policy management and economic management. The instability and the indirect exclusion of people from those

policies, which are militarily focused, have made it struggling to stabilize the existence of the middle class in society, which is critical to cover the deep gap between the very upper class and the very lower class. In other words, that gradually made the regime's legitimacy dependent on mechanisms of militarization or securitization, rather than inclusionary policies that might state-society relations.

Militarization and securitization often, particularly in the cases of authoritarian ruling systems, increase the discourses that express concerns related to national security, claimed political fears, and so on. But to deal with this matter, the Jordanian monarchy system has covered this by introducing, like in many times, new reforms as national salvation mechanisms. Now, instead of consuming the discourses on national security, which became unclear and undefined, Kind Abdullah II has allowed his system to strategically reserve power by covering his political steps with the mixture of these national salvation mechanisms and the new reforms promotions.

Conclusion

This article outlines divergent capabilities of institutions and ways in managing policies in Jordan and Egypt. In Jordan, the monarchy has been able to navigate these obstacles with iterative reform such as the repeated dissolution of parliament and continuous ties with tribes, business elites, and parties; thus maintaining historical legitimacy despite significant change. In contrast, Egypt's different governance regimes (Mubarak and al-Sisi) consolidated power through centralized and often militarized means with urban and economic restructuring, ultimately risking broader legitimacy. There is one primary point to draw from this comparison, that is, the existence of historical legitimacy allows responsive governance to exist without the system being likely to collapse and as a result, creates an easier route for the citizen-state relationship.

From an empirical basis, it is evident that Jordan enjoys the comparative advantage of being more adaptable to the changes in the surrounding environment. By the end of 2024, the Reform Matrix will have reached 77.7% completion (313/403 actions), while by May 2025, this completion figure will reach 82%. The 2024 elections demonstrated institutional flexibility in that political parties received 75% (105/138) of the available seats and the Islamic Action Front received 31; however, 32% of the voters turned out for these elections and pointed to the practice of political engineering as evidence that reforms have been top-down, maintaining the status quo and absorbing demands

while limiting true pluralism. These two types of reform, those in Jordan and those in Egypt that are based on securitization, illustrate the contrast between using methods that will yield dissent despite external assistance.

Both Jordan and Egypt are expected to experience a future generational test of resilience. That is because the youth bulge in the Arab world, digitalization, and the accessibility of social media means that contemporary generations in both Jordan and Egypt expect better living conditions and better integration or political participation from their governments.[76] Young Jordanians no longer just want to be given opportunities in terms of employment and economic opportunity but, rather, they also expect transparency and to be offered opportunities based on merit and qualifications. That is why it is essential for the monarchy, in order to maintain legitimacy based on clearer means that really guarantee people's demands and needs, to transition from being the provider of stability to being the facilitator of inclusion. This will mean deeper administrative reform and addressing inequalities, both institutionally and spatially, between urban centers and marginal areas.[77]

On a regional basis, externally generated pressures, climate stress, water scarcity, and volatility in the global economy, are also imposing different ways of examining governance. To view both Jordan and Egypt based on the research conducted here, it is argued that Jordan's pragmatic foreign policy, combined with its tactical institutional evolution, may offer a foundation for adaptive policy, while Egypt's rigidity may limit that capacity for change. Still, therein lies an opportunity for both regimes: to again re-imagine resilience, not as resistance to change, but as the ability to create through continuity.

Ultimately, the comparative lesson is that resilience, without justice, creates stagnation. Jordan's monarchy remains a model of controlled adaptation, but this stability may in the future depend on whether reform becomes tangible rather than merely symbolic. Similarly, Egypt's durability may depend on structuring its extractive orientation and rebuilding the reciprocal trust between the rulers and the ruled, the essential element defining legitimate governance.

Beyond the type of leadership, rigid administrative systems in both countries have also contributed to the reproduction of regime stability. However, that occurs in different scales and levels, for instance, in the case of Jordan, the administrative classes act as a go-between the palace and the people and convert royal decrees/commands into technocratic policies.

Policy management within hybrid regimes seems more influenced by institutional flexibility and the perceived legitimacy by the public rather than the

type of political regime within Jordan's context. The Jordanian case illustrates the importance of incrementalism and participatory symbolism, steps that build resilience while sidestepping the actual democratic transition. Egypt's enduring lesson, in contrast, is the importance of institutionalizing responsive relations that go beyond the military's chain of command. The establishment of independent policy bodies and the devolution of decisions could address that the immense fragility positioned by centralism.

In addition, regional dynamics compel both states to reassess their governance models in light of the generational shift. Youth populations across the Arab world are placing greater value on economic inclusion and transparency over ideological alignment.[78] Sustainable stability will ultimately depend on whether regimes can adapt from distributive authoritarianism to developmental governance; moving from patronage to productivity. In this regard, the Jordanian model, which is not without its inconsistencies, shows a realistic avenue for managed reform in authoritarian contexts. And its prospective success will hinge in part on whether gradualism can respond to the rapidly rising demands of a digitally-informed and globally-connected citizenry requirements or expectations.

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