Comparative Electoral Systems & Electoral Engagement

National Democratic Institute
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Introduction: Ellen Lust

• Associate Professor of Political Science, Yale University and Visiting Fellow at the Straus Institute for the Advanced Study of Law and Justice, New York University Law School

• MA in Modern Middle East Studies, PhD in Political Science (University of Michigan)

• Research on Election Behaviour and Political Participation in the Arab World
  • Egypt
  • Jordan
  • Morocco
  • Syria
  • Tunisia
Content

1. Types of Election Systems and Conventional Wisdom
2. Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan
3. Rethinking Elections Systems
4. Workshop
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| **Proportional Representation (PR)** | • Voters cast ballots for lists of candidates in Multi-Member Districts (MMDs)  
• Seats obtained according to the proportion of votes received  
• Distribution of Remaining Seats based on various formulae, influence outcomes  
• Closed and Open List Systems | • Smaller parties have increased chances  
• Promotes inclusion of minority voices  
• Can create gridlock and dissolution of governments  
• Strengthens Political Parties |
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<td>• Different mixes of PR/Majoritarian districts</td>
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Quotas

- Representation of disadvantaged groups:
  - Gender, Ethnic or religious minorities

- Reserved Seats vs. Party Quotas (List or candidates)

- Representation vs. Reinforced Stereotypes
Other Considerations

• Voting registration – ability to vote in ancestral homelands, who picks up voting cards

• Districting and apportionment (e.g. population, development, social diversity, land area)

• Party Subsidies
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Jordan’s Mixed Electoral System, 2013

The Jordanian Lower House of Representatives
150 seats spread across 45 constituencies as well as one national constituency

108 seats from 45 constituencies using majoritarian rules

- 18 seats from 18 single-member districts using first-past-the-post
  
  Each seat is won by the candidate with the most votes, voters cast a single ballot.

- 90 seats from 27 multi-member districts using single non-transferable vote
  
  Seats are won by those candidates with the most votes in the district, voters cast a single ballot.

National Constituency
27 seats from one national constituency using closed-list proportional representation.

Seats are allocated between lists in accordance with the proportion of the vote total they have won.

Women’s Quota
15 seats according to the highest percentage of votes won in any district within each governorate, in addition to the three Badia districts.

Seats are allocated between each of the 12 governorates and three non-geographical districts for Bedouins.

In addition 12 seats are reserved for Christian and Circassian candidates.
Egypt’s Mixed Election System, 2011-2012

The People’s Assembly of Egypt
498 seats

166 individual seats from 83 constituencies
using majoritarian rules, run-offs

166 seats from 83 two-seat majoritarian constituencies
with an absolute majoritarian election of two
candidates from each constituency

Of the two seats one is to be won by a worker or
farmer making it necessary that voters cast two
votes.

332 party seats from 46 constituencies
using closed-list proportional representation
# Tunisia’s PR Election system, 2011

## The Tunisian National Constituent Assembly

**218 seats**

### 218 party seats from 27 domestic constituencies and 4 out-of-country constituencies

*using closed-list proportional representation*

Closed-list proportional representation system with a parity principle requiring that **half the list is filled by women**.

*Allocation of seats based on the largest remainder method. The number of valid votes is divided by the number of seats allocated to the constituency and where the quotient is not applicable, the remaining seats is allocated to the largest remainder.*
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Are Textbook Outcomes Forthcoming? Maybe Not…

• Parties and Parliaments weak
• *Many* Voters demand services, aid
• *Many* Trust personal relationships over political promises
→ Vote for one who may be effective, and whom they know
Does PR provide representation of other parties?

**Tunisia** – EnNahda won 41% of the seats with 37% of the votes and the PR system thus favored the major party rather than enabling broad representation.

**Egypt** – FJP won 38% of the PR seats with 37% of the votes and in Egypt PR system thus worked to create a more pluralistic parliament.
Does PR strengthen political parties vs. personal vote?

** Jordan ** – 61 lists, based on personalities/money

** Tunisia ** – personality-based voting prevalent

** Issue of Linking Lists to Parties **
Do FPTP and Run-Off systems tend to produce two parties?

**Egypt** -- FJP dominated the FPTP seats winning 65% of them (108 of 166 seats) which contributed 46% of FJP’s total seats in parliament despite FPTP seats only accounting for 1/3 of the total seats.

**Jordan** – continued fragmentation, 20 years after FPTP systems implemented.
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Workshop

• Divide into groups

• Discuss which system you would choose: Proportional or Majoritarian system

• Provide at least three arguments for why you are choosing the system