

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



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2 Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan

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Different Types of Election Systems

Election system type

Definition

First-past-the-post (FPTP) and Majoritarian Run-Off systems

- Candidate with the most votes wins (FPTP).
- Candidates with absolute majority of votes (50 percent+) win
- Run-off election between top 2 candidates if none meet threshold in first round

Conventional Wisdom

- Encourages voting for individuals, not candidates: “personal vote”; weakens parties
- Tends to produce a small number of major parties (2 parties, according to Duverger's Law)
- Minimizes representation of minority views but eases policymaking in government

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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

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Mixed/Parallel System

- Includes Majoritarian and PR
- Different mixes of PR/Majoritarian districts

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- Ideally, “best of both worlds”
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- Promotes Links between Voters and Candidates

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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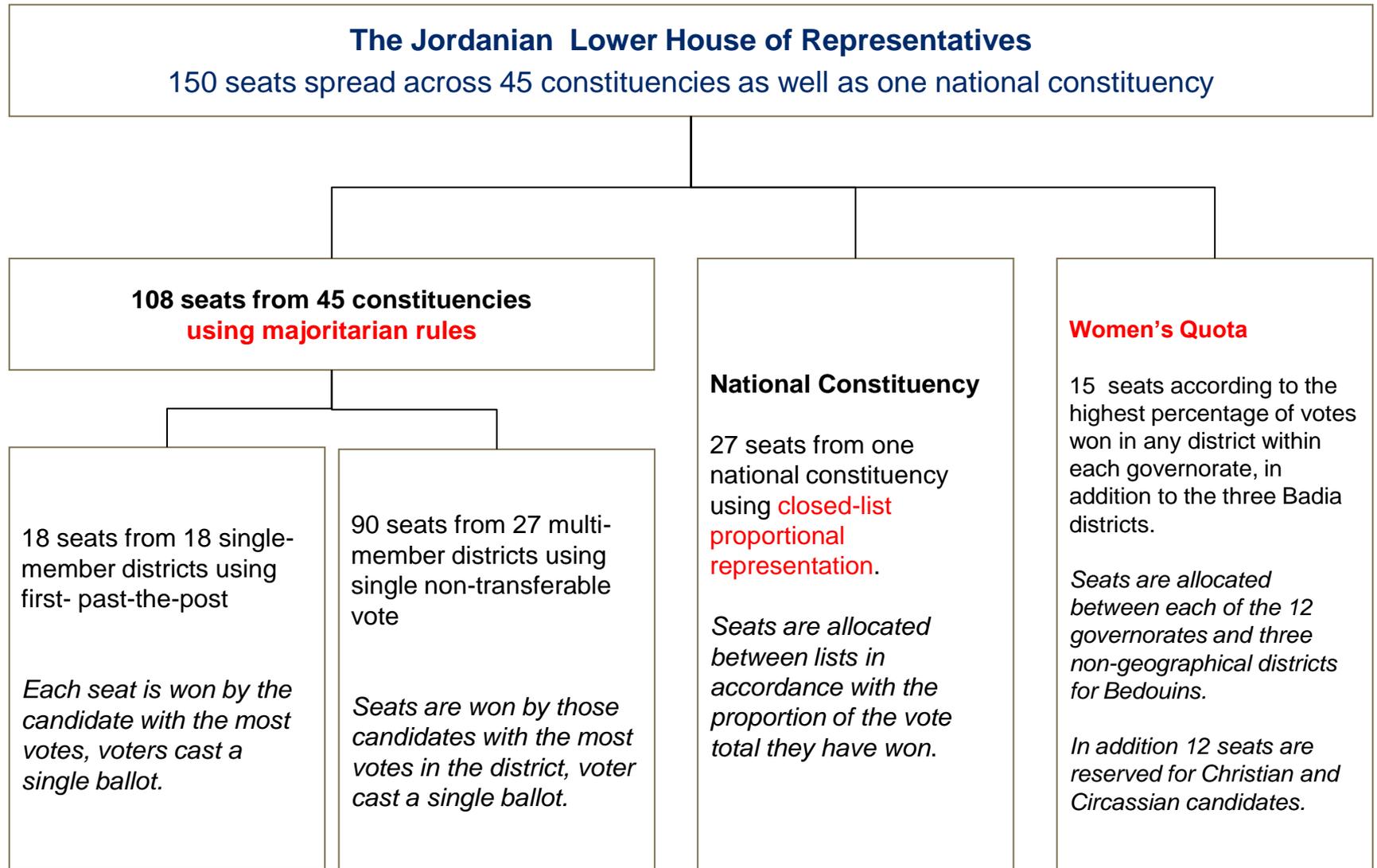
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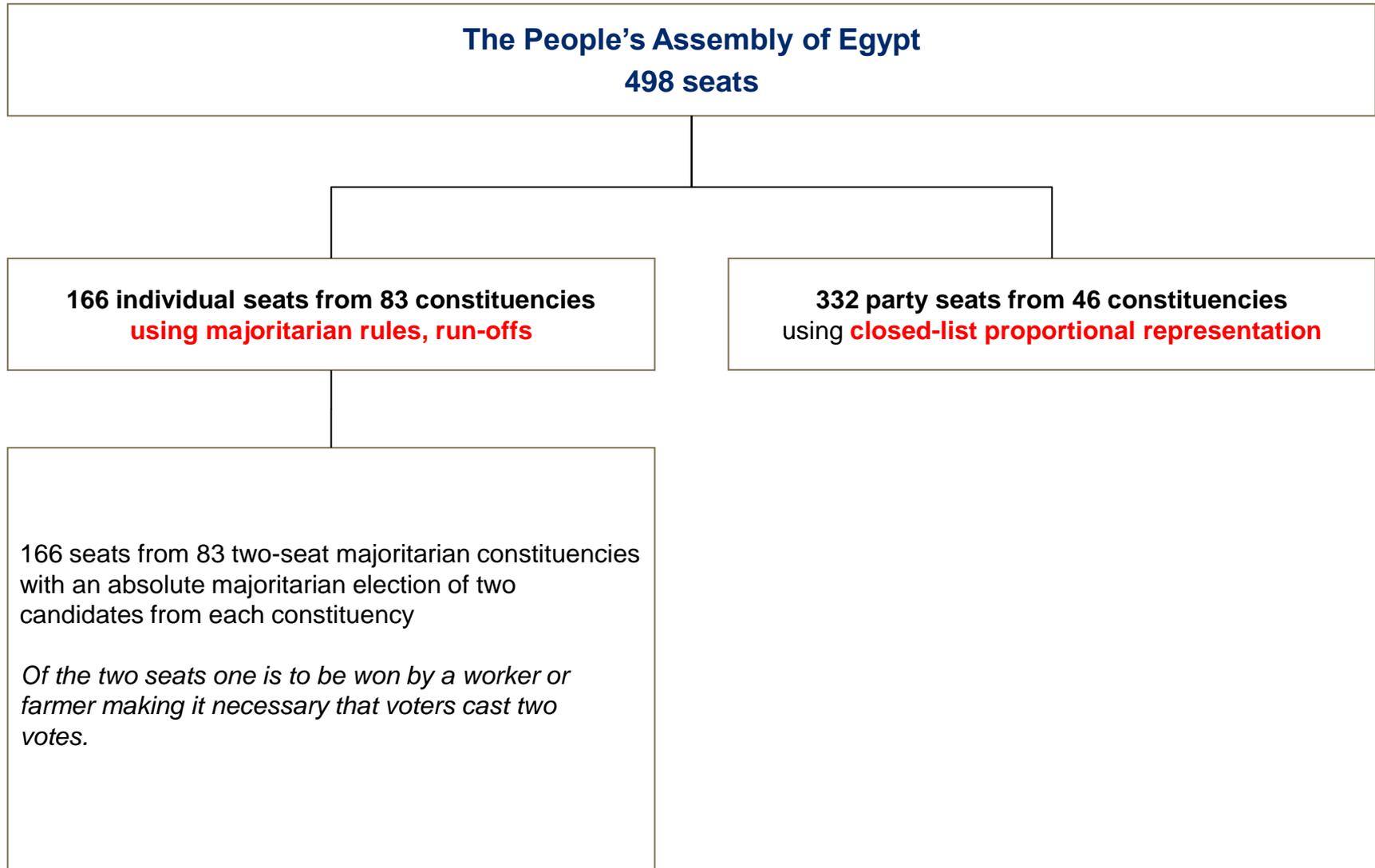
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Jordan's Mixed Electoral System, 2013



Egypt's Mixed Election System, 2011-2012



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 % 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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Reconsiderations

- Egypt: Dominances of Freedom and Justice Party and fragmentation of other parties.
- Jordan: Continued fragmentation, 20 years after FPTP systems implemented
- More candidates per seat in one person district 7.39 than in two person districts 6.36 and three person districts 5.58

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- **Tunisia: Dominance of EnNahda**
- **Jordan: Exploitation of lists by candidates with money; failure to promote parties**

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- Jordan: Continued fragmentation, 20 years after FPTP systems implemented
- Tunisia: Dominance of EnNahda
- Jordan: Exploitation of lists by candidates with money; failure to promote parties
- Difficulties of predicting outcomes, even for parties involved

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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**