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Houston Adair Dr. Robert Cunningham
Scholar Mentor

Explaining Jordanian Policy: An Institutional
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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

(Minimum 3 Required)

Name

Signature

Robert Cunningham

Iant Down

James C Gilchrist

[Signature]
[Signature]
[Signature]

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Explaining Jordanian Policy:
An Institutional Analysis of Political Liberalization in the Middle East

College Scholars Senior Project

By Houston Adair

Committee:

Dr. Robert Cunningham

Dr. Ian Down

Dr. James Gilchrist

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Abstract

In this study I examine Jordan's political liberalization following the late 1980's economic crisis and its subsequent reversal with the selectorate theory compared to the transition approach to democratization. I find that looking at these policies in light of selection institutions allows me to better understand the political incentives shaping them, the policies themselves, and their effects. Specifically, the selectorate theory explains Jordan's liberalization as a heavily regulated survival strategy furthering regime interests and actually inhibiting a genuine political opening. This theory surpasses the transition approach in its ability to account for the ironic strengthening of the king's position as liberalization progressed as well as why deliberalization was inevitable.

INTRODUCTION

During the last decade of King Hussein's life, Jordan witnessed a number of historic, controversial, and intriguing policy developments. Spectators in the West cheered an ostensibly genuine democratization process, economic structural reform, and a momentous peace treaty with Israel and troubled over Jordan's seeming support for Iraq during the Gulf War and the subsequent halt toward democratization. It seemed as if Jordan were caught in the middle of some multilateral game of tug-of-war, under pressure from numerous influences at opposition with each other.

In this study I address Jordan's shifts toward and away from political liberalization in light of Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph Siverson, and James Morrow's (2003) selectorate theory, comparing the theory's ability to explain these policies to that of the transition approach to democratization. Chapter one presents the liberalization and deliberalization policies in detail, why they have proved puzzling, and some of the existing explanations for them. Chapter two then provides an overview of both the selectorate theory as well as the transition approach. Chapter three examines the arrangement of selection institutions in Jordan before and throughout liberalization. Chapter four then uses the above theoretical approaches to explain Jordan's political liberalization and deliberalization.

CHAPTER ONE: POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION IN JORDAN

On November 8, 1989, Jordan held its first parliamentary elections in 22 years, marking the beginning of a much hailed political liberalization process that would ultimately be reversed in the mid-1990's. While it is generally agreed that liberalization was initiated in response to the political unrest surrounding the existing economic crisis, it is less clear why the process slowed when it did and what was responsible for its reversal.

The 1980's saw the end of a regional boom surrounding and supporting Jordan, spelling disaster for the externally dependent kingdom. Rather than adjust expenditure accordingly, Jordan actually increased spending from 1983 to 1988, borrowing \$225 million, \$150 million, and \$215 million in 1983, 1984, and 1985 for budgetary support with no prospect of timely repayment. The inevitable economic crisis hit hard in 1988 after Jordan's disengagement from the West Bank territories. Unemployment mounted, the Jordanian dinar lost around a third of its value, and the kingdom's external debt climbed to nearly double its GNP (Lucas 2005, 26; Robins 2004, 166). After some hesitation and with reluctance, Jordan agreed to a stabilization program with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), requiring steep price rises to cut the budget deficit.

On April 18, 1989, riots erupted in response to the removal of food and fuel subsidies, austerity measures implemented to cut the budget deficit. Beginning in the southern, pro-regime city of Ma'an, the riots soon spread to other traditionally pro-Hashemite towns, such as Kerak, Shubak, and Tafilah. To make matters worse for the regime, protests were not limited to economic conditions. Tribal, community, and

business leaders voiced grievances concerning widespread government corruption and the lack of political freedoms (Shlaim 2007, 474; Robins 2004, 170).

King Hussein responded quickly to the threat, sacking the corrupt and unpopular Prime Minister Zaid al-Rifa'i and establishing a transition government under his cousin, Sharif Zaid bin Shaker, with the charge of preparing for the first national parliamentary elections in over 20 years. The king continued by removing notoriously corrupt officials and announcing his plan for a National Charter to plot the way forward toward greater political liberalization.

Jordan's so-called democratization attracted great attention as it steadily progressed (for accounts expressing common hopes and fears for the nascent democratization see Amawi 1992; Geyelin 1989). A new government under Mudar Badran formed after the elections furthered liberalization. Including six Islamists from the opposition, Badran's government returned confiscated passports, released political prisoners, and began work on ending martial law and relaxing government control of the press. By this time a Royal Commission consisting of sixty members from across the political spectrum had begun work on the National Charter announced by the king. Ratified in June 1991, the Charter advanced political pluralism in Jordan, while confirming the legitimacy of the monarch.

One of the most noticeable instances of Jordan's seeming democratization was the small kingdom's stance during the Gulf War after Saddam Hussein's August 2, 1990 invasion of Kuwait and subsequent annexation of the small state. Eventually resulting in a UN-mandated full-scale war, Iraq's behavior posed a serious challenge to King

Hussein's Jordan.

Despite his close friendship with the Iraqi leader, Hussein seems to have been completely surprised by the invasion. As the current chairman of the new Arab Cooperation Council (ACC), an alliance including Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, and North Yemen, Hussein faced pressure to account for the actions of his ally. In addition to these diplomatic ties with Iraq, Jordan was economically dependent on the aggressive state. Iraq provided 95% of Jordan's oil and bought 45% of its exports (Shlaim 2007, 488). Nevertheless, Jordan had far more to lose by sticking with Iraq than joining the rest of the world in condemning it. Both the United States and Gulf countries made it clear that aid to Jordan would be cut if Hussein did not join in their opposition to the invasion, the effects of which promised to be more severe than the loss of Iraq as a trading partner, especially considering the Bush administration's suggestion of monetary rewards for Hussein's compliance (Shlaim 2007).

Despite repeated warnings and overwhelming international pressure, Hussein did not clearly condemn the invasion of Kuwait, opting instead for ambiguous language denying territory obtained by force. Jordan also delayed considerably in implementing the UN embargo against Iraq. Whether this behavior constitutes support for Iraq, as Jordan's critics maintained, or not, Hussein did make clear his lack of support for the U.S. coalition, accusing it of an "embargo on dialogue" and condemning its war to eject Iraq from Kuwait. As Philip Robins explains, the "prudent course of action for the king ought then to have been politically to keep his head down," rather than "making increasingly impassioned criticisms of the US-led war effort" (2004, 178-180). As

expected, Hussein's tacit support of Iraq and opposition to the U.S.-led coalition resulted in devastating economic consequences for Jordan. Foreign aid was cut as relations with both the West and Gulf countries deteriorated, refugees flooded the country, and trade with Iraq was damaged due to the sanctions imposed by Security Council Resolution 661. The overall cost of the crisis to Jordan has been estimated at \$3.6 billion in 1991, when Jordan's total GDP at that time stood only at \$4.7 billion (Shlaim 2007, 507).

Why did Hussein persist in defying the international community, a path that clearly led to economic and political disaster? It seems clear that the King's behavior can only be explained by the generally pro-Iraq domestic opinion within Jordan. Commentators in the West certainly noticed Hussein's rising popularity at home as he refused to clearly condemn his neighbor (Boustany 1990; Burns 1990; Milton-Edwards 1993). That Hussein valued domestic opinion over Jordan's economic well-being, international reputation, and relations with its allies seemed a cogent attestation of a new, liberal Jordan where citizens' opinions could help shape policy. More liberal developments would follow, including the legalization of political parties in 1992 and the Press and Publications Law of 1993, guaranteeing greater freedoms to a press which, until then, had been largely owned and controlled by the government (Lucas 2005).

By this time, however, the push toward liberalization had clearly slowed. Peace with Israel was looking more and more likely, and the regime was willing to suppress resistance. As early as the fall of 1991, security forces began cracking down on the vocal opposition of the peace process. In 1993, not long after the new press law delivered increased freedom to the media, King Hussein dissolved parliament and decreed

controversial amendments to the electoral law, disregarding demands that changes to the law pass through parliament. Aimed at reducing the opposition's presence in parliament, specifically that of the Islamists, the law would have its desired effect when elections that November solidified the pro-regime majority, delivering a 50% reduction in Islamist deputies (Brand 1999; Lucas 2005). This marked the first major reversal of political liberalization.

Examples of what has been called "deliberalization" became more frequent. The following year witnessed renewed press restrictions, the stifling of freedom of expression, and the targeted dissolution of predominantly Islamist municipal courts, as domestic opposition to the October 1994 peace with Israel mounted. When riots broke out in Kerak over bread prices in 1996, the regime responded with the termination of parliament's session and numerous human rights violations (Brand 1999). This trend of reverting to deliberalization would characterize the rest of King Hussein's rule. The press law would be revised in 1997 and again in 1998 to restrict press freedoms, and the government would ban demonstrations of opposition to its policy of distancing itself from Iraq.

What explains this complete reversal of policies? Why did the king choose political liberalization in response to the 1989 riots and the exact opposite after those in 1996? Various explanations have been given, but none completely answers these questions. While some attribute the shift to deliberalization to Hussein's "dwindling enthusiasm for democratic activity" (Robins 2004, 188) or to recent military welfare growth (Baylouny 2008, 278), most commentators seem to conclude that the peace

process with Israel is to blame for derailing what appeared to be a promising democratization process (Brand 1999). Those who hold this view generally maintain that Hussein was forced to offer liberalization as a *quid pro quo* for economic austerity in 1989 but later reversed the process to secure a successful peace with Israel. This account explains the regime's manipulation of the electoral law in 1993, to achieve a parliament capable of ratifying the coming peace treaty. It also explains a number of authoritarian measures to suppress opposition to the peace, such as press restrictions, the dissolution of Islamist municipal courts, and the routine denial of permits for rallies and demonstrations against normalization with Israel. Nevertheless, the idea that an unpopular peace with Israel was responsible for Jordan's deliberalization in the 1990's fails to stand up to close inspection.

First and most visibly, blaming the peace negotiations and treaty with Israel for Jordan's deliberalization fails to account for subsequent authoritarian measures enacted after the treaty, many of which were unrelated to the normalization process with Israel. Why exactly was the regime's response to the 1996 bread riots further deliberalization, the exact opposite course from that taken in 1989 under similar conditions? Why did the regime suppress opposition to its policy regarding Iraq in 1998 and use force against pro-Iraq demonstrators? These developments contribute to a general trend of deliberalization that peace with Israel cannot explain. Second, a close examination of the regime's own liberalization policies reveals the same authoritarian traits that emerged more noticeably as peace with Israel approached. This undermines what has been seen as an about-face of democratization in Jordan due to the peace process.

In the following chapters I will present Jordan's apparent democratization and its subsequent reversal in the light of changing selection institutions. This study exposes both liberalization and deliberalization policies as necessary survival strategies for the regime in the wake of threatened selection institutions and also as efforts to manipulate those very institutions. Glenn Robinson (1998) and Russell Lucas (2005) have also interpreted Jordan's liberalization as a necessary survival strategy, but these studies lack the framework of selectorate-induced political incentives, offered in the following chapter's presentation of the selectorate theory (Bueno de Mesquita, et al. 2003).

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL APPROACHES

Introduction

In the previous chapter I looked at the controversial and puzzling policies of Jordan's political liberalization and subsequent deliberalization. Examining a central theory of political selection institutions and their effect on leaders' policies allows a better understanding of the above developments. Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph Siverson, and James Morrow (2003) have pioneered an innovative framework treating political incentives as products of fundamental institutional arrangements. Their selectorate theory centers on the size and ratio of key political institutions and their effect on the production of public and private goods.

There are, of course, alternative methods for explaining the above developments in Jordan--most notably, the work of transition theorists within democratization literature. This study's analysis of the selectorate theory will benefit from a comparative perspective incorporating these scholars' work. This chapter thus presents an overview of the selectorate theory and the transition approach to democratization as well as the implications of both for Jordan .

The Selectorate Theory

The selectorate theory rests on the assumption that political leaders seek to gain and hold office, and it focuses on groups in society who determine whether they succeed or fail. Every leader answers to a *winning coalition*, or support base necessary to remain in power. A leader's winning coalition is drawn from a larger group of individuals, the

selectorate. While all members of the selectorate have at least a supposed say in selecting and replacing policymakers, a leader only needs to satisfy his winning coalition to maintain office. In democracies this coalition is comprised of voters who elect the leader; in autocracies it is “the set of people who control enough other instruments of power to keep the leader in office” (Bueno de Mesquita 2003, 8).

The size of the winning coalition affects the types of goods that leaders provide. While all leaders provide a mixture of public and private goods, they tailor that mix according to the size of their winning coalitions in an effort to satisfy their coalitions at minimal cost. Since private goods are only distributed to coalition members and “diminish in value to individual coalition members as the size of the group expands” (8), leaders tend to focus on providing public goods, benefiting all members of the state, as the coalition size increases. Thus large winning coalitions, such as those in many democracies, encourage the provision of public goods, while small coalitions, as are found in most autocracies, encourage the provision of private goods distributed only amongst the winning coalition.

Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003, chs. 4 and 5), consistently link large winning coalitions to what may be considered good governance. Large coalition states are repeatedly shown to favor the supplying of public goods such as civil liberties, political rights, transparency, education, health care, and peace. Governments dependent on a small coalition are conversely shown to engage in increased corruption and cronyism as a means of providing private goods to influential elites. One clear and often repeated conclusion is that, for small coalition leaders such as autocrats, “bad policy often is good

politics" (19).

The selectorate theory also emphasizes the relationship between the size of a leader's winning coalition, or W , and that of the selectorate, or S . Since a winning coalition is comprised of selectorate members, a large selectorate provides leaders with a large pool from which to select their coalition. Potential challengers to the current leader must persuade members of the leader's coalition to swap sides in order to defeat the incumbent. Coalition members do not risk much by supporting a challenger in large coalition systems where private goods can be insignificant and where they have a fair chance of ending up in the challenger's own winning coalition should he or she succeed. Of course the opposite is true in small coalition, large selectorate systems. Defecting coalition members in such systems risk much in private goods, having no guarantee they will be chosen for the challenger's winning coalition from the large selectorate should he gain office. This risk of exclusion is represented in the ratio W/S . As Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2002, 563) explain, "The smaller that W/S is, the greater the risk and cost associated with defecting to a challenger and, therefore, the stronger the loyalty to the incumbent." This loyalty norm represented by W/S is central to understanding the political incentives shaped by the institutions of winning coalition and selectorate.

Of course all individuals in a system have institutional preferences. The disenfranchised not included in the selectorate prefer a large coalition system; even though they are excluded from that coalition, they stand to benefit from the public goods generated for it. Members of the selectorate outside of the winning coalition also prefer a large coalition. While such a system would provide them with increased public goods as

well, it would also increase their chances of admission to the winning coalition. Leaders should naturally prefer a small winning coalition and large selectorate, as found in many rigged election systems. These conditions lead to a strong loyalty norm amongst coalition members, limiting the amount leaders must spend to satisfy them.

The preferences of coalition members are more complex. Depending on the current size of the coalition, members' welfare may increase by either enlarging or shrinking W . Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003) represent the welfare of coalition members as coalition size changes through a graphical curve resembling a swoosh or check mark with an x-axis of winning coalition size and a y-axis of coalition members' welfare. If the size of the winning coalition is already sufficiently small, members' welfare is best increased by shrinking W . The private goods already produced and distributed amongst a small coalition with a strong loyalty norm will be shared by fewer people as the size of the winning coalition gets even smaller. On the other hand, increasing the size of the winning coalition weakens the loyalty norm, encouraging incumbents to spend more to prevent coalition members from defecting. And if the coalition is sufficiently large, a shift to the provision of public goods would better benefit members than thinly spread private goods. The authors conclude that "the welfare of members of the coalition declines as the coalition gets bigger up to some turning point, after which further increases in coalition size lead to improvement in the members' welfare" (334-335). Thus the institutional preferences of members of the winning coalition are likely to depend on the current size of the coalition.

These are the core ideas comprising the selectorate theory. They have been

applied to issues as varied as political survival, taxation, successful economic development, and the democratic peace phenomenon. The theory has not, however, been widely used to address specific policy decisions. This is primarily due to crude indicators of winning coalition and selectorate size that, while permitting the testing of general cross-national trends predicted by the theory, are not fit to explain individual policy shifts. By focusing on specific case studies within Jordan, this study provides a more precise examination of selection institutions, thus allowing a novel application of the selectorate theory.

Alternative Approaches

The transition school within the democratization literature presents a capable alternative approach to political liberalization in Jordan. Transition theorists generally view political openings as results of the actions of individuals--usually political elites--and focus on the transition from authoritarian to democratic rule (Potter et al. 1997). This school of democratization finds its origin with Dankwart Rustow (1970), who devised four phases of the transition to democracy: a background condition of national unity, a preparatory phase marked by political struggle, a decision phase in which leaders "institutionalize some crucial aspect of democratic procedure" (355), and a final habituation phase where democracy is consolidated. Others have since proposed similar trajectories for liberalizing states (Kaufman 1986; Przeworski 1991).

Several trends emerge from these works. First, there is widespread recognition that states may not graduate from all of the requisite stages laid out by transition

theorists; in other words, liberalization may not lead to consolidated democracy.

Liberalization is thus aptly defined by Guillermo O'Donnell (1982, 235) as consisting of "measures which, although involving a significant opening of the previous bureaucratic-authoritarian regime (such as the effective judicial guarantees of certain individual rights or the implementation of parliamentary forms not based on free electoral competition), remain short of what we could call a political democracy." This recognition paves the way for a second common feature of transition theorists' work: an emphasis on authoritarian states initiating liberalization with no intention of full democratization.

Adam Przeworski (1991) is not alone in approaching liberalization in authoritarian states as a "controlled opening" usually designed to ease social tension, not to usher in democracy.

One final note concerning the transition approach is in order. It is worth considering the relative merits of the school's efforts to pinpoint regime type with those of the selectorate theory. While the selectorate theory presents a continuum for analyzing states according to selection institution arrangements, transition theorists are typically limited to classifying states according to broad denominations such as totalitarian, authoritarian, and democratic. This is not to say that they are unconcerned with distinguishing among states of varying regime types--Linz and Stepan (1996) actually take great pains to create a typology of states (post-totalitarian, authoritarian, sultanistic, etc.) capable of shedding light on how a state's prior regime type affects its transition to democracy--but merely that the selectorate theory allows for greater precision in analyzing the make-up of states (and how that affects policies such as liberalization).

The Theories and Jordan

How do these theoretical frameworks apply to Jordan? While the following chapters will investigate their applicability during the relevant periods of liberalization and deliberalization by identifying the winning coalition and selectorate in the kingdom and examining the details of Jordan's abortive liberal transition, some observations immediately stand out. In 1988, just before liberalization, the kingdom was clearly an authoritarian, small coalition system. The POLITY IV data collection (Marshall and Jaggers 2007), which includes measurements of states' degrees of democracy and autocracy for every country year, assigns a polity score of -9 to Jordan in 1988 on a scale from +10 (strongly democratic) to -10 (strongly autocratic). Furthermore, Jordan exemplified a number of characteristics associated with small winning coalitions such as "widespread corruption at all levels of the government" (Shlaim 2007, 474). The kingdom's finances were "notoriously untransparent," which enabled skimming on contracts (Robins 2004, 168). Poor governance in the form of abundant private goods to supporters was nothing new. Subsidies to important southern constituencies "had long been staples of Hashemite patronage" (Robinson 1998, 391) as well as cash allowances to pro-regime tribal leaders (Baylouny 2008, 288).

The following chapter will provide further exploration into the size and composition of the winning coalition and selectorate in Jordan before, during, and after political liberalization and deliberalization. This will allow a better understanding of the political incentives behind the policy shifts in Jordan selected above as well as their

effects. This study will of course continue to benefit from a comparative perspective incorporating the transition approach to democratization, specifically in the attempt to make sense of the policies in question in chapter four.

CHAPTER THREE: MEASURING INSTITUTIONS IN JORDAN

Jordan as a Rentier State

Any effort to identify fundamental institutional arrangements in Jordan from the 1980s and onward should begin with the concept of Arab rentierism. A considerable body of literature (Luciani 1990; Beblawi 1990; Anderson 1987) distinguishes certain developing economies often found in the Middle East from others for their dependence on external rents rather than domestic taxation. Rather than extract resources from their domestic economies, these *rentier states* tend to rely on external sources of revenue. Numerous major petroleum exporters, for example, function as rentier states by depending almost entirely on oil revenue instead of the productivity of their labor forces. Because external rents permit rentier states to essentially provide services for free to domestic populations, “neo-patrimonial networks” and patron-client relations between the government and domestic actors abound in such systems. Rex Brynen (1992, 74) explains the existence of a rentier social contract, as domestic populations accept political quiescence in exchange for state benefits and “political legitimacy is, in a very real sense, ‘purchased’ through economic rewards.”

Not a petroleum exporter, Jordan is considered a *semi-rentier* (Brynen 1992, 72) or a *non-oil rentier* (Baylouny 2008, 284) for its longtime dependence on foreign aid and workers’ remittances, which while technically not “rents,” function similarly enough to permit their inclusion. Initially reliant upon Western aid, foreign grants averaged 30 percent of government revenue from 1952 to 1966. With increasing levels of Arab aid following the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, though, foreign assistance would provide over 55

percent of revenue from 1967 to 1980 (Brynen 1992, 78-79). Additionally, the regional oil boom allowed an increasing number of Jordanians, generally of Palestinian descent, to work abroad in the Gulf. Philip Robins (2004, 143) estimates one-third of the Jordanian workforce was working abroad by the end of the 1970's, supporting the kingdom with workers' remittances. These external sources of revenue enabled Jordan to provide for segments of its population without excessive domestic taxation, conducting state-social relations typical of rentierism. As Brynen explains, "State expenditures allowed the state (in general) and the King (in particular) to distribute significant political and economic rewards to loyal--or at least quiescent--constituencies" (1992, 79).

These loyal--or at least quiescent--recipients of regime patronage tended to be of Jordanian, or East Bank, origin (as opposed to Palestinian). Rural, Jordanian-populated regions in the south received a clearly disproportionate amount of state spending on the provision of services and works projects (Brynen 1992, 82; Baylouny 2008, 288). Preferential treatment for East Bankers, though, was most visible in state employment, especially following the Jordanian-Palestinian clashes of the early 1970's. While not high-paying, public employment did provide a stable income and secure health care and educational benefits. Jordanians so dominated state positions in the military and bloated bureaucracy that commentators frequently refer to the "Jordanization" of the state (Baylouny 2008, 288-289). These examples of Hashemite patronage to a significant segment of the population are consistent with rentierism, since Jordanian expropriation through taxation "paled in comparison to state distribution through employment and social welfare programmes, enhancing regime legitimacy and undercutting

representational demands” (Brynen 1992, 83). These rentier arrangements would soon be disrupted by the economic crisis and subsequent IMF-mandated austerity measures, threatening long-established selection institutions in Jordan.

Selection Institutions in Jordan

Because the winning coalition and selectorate are dependent upon the state’s current leader, a thorough grasp of selection institutions first requires clarity regarding decision making and agenda setting. Despite the appearance of the monarch’s separation from day-to-day politics in Jordan, King Hussein effectively functioned as the principal policymaker in Jordan. As king he did not publicly serve in the government, but it is clear Hussein, like any Hashemite monarch, set “major policy decisions and trajectories” (Lucas 2005, 21). Rather than the architects of their own policies, Hussein’s prime ministers repeatedly found themselves serving as dispensable “shock absorbers” or “safeguards” for those of the king (Rath 1994, 542). As Avi Shlaim (2007, 75) explains, “Dumping a prime minister was a way of dissociating the king from a policy that had become unpopular and of appeasing the public.”

Russell Lucas (2005, 20-22) identifies five pillars of King Hussein’s regime coalition in the years leading up to 1989’s shift toward liberalization: East Bank tribes, ethnic and religious minorities, the state bureaucracy, the military, and Palestinian elites long-established in the Jordanian private sector. Selected by Lucas for their support for the monarch, these five groups are not synonymous with Hussein’s winning coalition as defined by the selectorate theory--they were not all necessary for his political survival

and did not all receive private goods. Nevertheless, these groups--especially the East Bank tribes--did supply most of the pro-regime elites close to King Hussein and necessary for his legitimacy.

Such elites effectively functioned as the king's winning coalition and enjoyed private goods from the regime such as influential government positions and material benefits (Robinson 1998; Baylouny 2008). As Abla Amawi (1992, 27) points out, "Top positions always went to the same old faces, families, and clans." And, as mentioned previously, payments were commonly distributed to important tribal leaders. Brynen (1992, 80) describes the relationship between coalition shaykhs and the crown as a "neo-patrimonial extension of the traditional practice of subsidizing allied tribal elites," arguing that it "served to reinforce the bases of a shaykh's social power at home whilst rendering him increasingly dependent on state resources."

The "Jordanization" of state employment noted above can also be viewed as a private good to coalition members. Like material benefits paid to tribal shaykhs, the regime's restriction of stable public employment to East Bankers helped coalition elites ensure the welfare of their constituencies. This is especially true in southern East Bank communities where jobs were scarce. While a reward to coalition members, though, preferential treatment for East Bankers also constituted a direct benefit to what could be considered Jordan's selectorate--the group from which the winning coalition is drawn.

Interviews with Jordanian officials and scholars confirm these institutional arrangements. Yaser Adwan, professor at German-Jordanian University and former director of social security in Jordan, identifies the East Bank tribes and military as King

Hussein's necessary support base leading up to 1989 (March 3, 2009). Since the officer corps in the Jordanian armed forces "have always been dominated by East Bankers" (Robinson 1998, 410), this account seems consistent with identifying Hussein's coalition as influential elites generally of East Bank descent. Amin Mashagbeh, professor of political science at Middle East University and former Jordanian minister of social development, agrees that the tribal and army leaders constituted Hussein's necessary support base and that these elites received private benefits such as "land, cars, health care, education, and money" (April 15, 2009).

The national parliamentary elections and shift toward political liberalization beginning in 1989 significantly altered these institutional arrangements, primarily through a change in the perception of Jordanian policymaking. As noted above, the king functioned as the ultimate policymaker despite his separation from Jordanian politics. The 1989 elections and broader move toward political liberalization, though, suggested that this arrangement had changed by giving the impression that any voter could help determine policymakers in Jordan, thus ostensibly increasing both the winning coalition and the electorate.

The electorate, or group of people with a supposed say in determining leaders, clearly grew. With the new, liberal perception of policymaking in Jordan, any nineteen-year-old citizen outside of the military and security forces had a nominal role in electing and replacing the decision makers in Jordan. As Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003, 336-7) point out, "Universal suffrage is a way of signaling that almost anyone could, with a very low probability, make it into a winning coalition." As such, the elections in Jordan were

a signal of a newly enlarged and represented selectorate.

The winning coalition in Jordan, however, did not mimic the selectorate's growth. Despite a change in the perception of policymaking, the king remained in control. Mashagbeh notes that even during the perceived democratization, "the king's power stayed the same" (April 15, 2009). He retained his powers to appoint new prime ministers and governments and to dissolve parliament. Regardless of the kingdom's apparent shift toward democracy, Jordanian voters could never replace the ultimate policymaker--the monarch. Thus, Hussein's winning coalition remained fairly constant despite political liberalization. As Glenn Robinson (1998, 405) observes, "the most powerful groups in Jordan prior to 1989 remain so today: the monarchy and its coterie, the army and security services, wealthy business elites, and East Bank tribal leaders."

These shifting selection institutions are crucial to a full understanding of Jordan's political liberalization and deliberalization. The next chapter will address how they shaped incentives behind these policies, the policies themselves, and their effects on Jordanian politics as a whole.

CHAPTER FOUR: EXPLAINING POLICY

Liberalization As a Survival Strategy

These institutional arrangements permit a clearer understanding of the policies detailed in chapter one, beginning with the context of crisis in which they were formed. It is both clear and logical that the April 1989 riots following the IMF austerity measures and prompting political liberalization centered around Jordan's selectorate. Beginning in pro-Hashemite towns in the south, the uprisings expressed a plain frustration on the part of East Bank tribal selectorate members. Such frustration is understandable, given the recent breakdown in Jordan's rentier arrangements. With declining opportunities for secure, public employment and a number of steep price rises throughout the kingdom, East Bankers long dependent on preferential treatment through economic security and "Jordanization" now found their welfare compromised. As Anne Marie Baylouny (2008, 281) explains, "What was initially a reward [was] fast becoming a curse under the new economic arrangements."

With this breakdown in Jordan's semi-rentier social contract trading political rights for economic security, it is not surprising that rioters also began to voice political frustrations. East Bankers demanded representation and condemned widespread corruption (Robins 2004, 170; Rath 1994, 535). Such responses are congruent with Jordan's decently sized selectorate and small winning coalition. Dissatisfied selectorate members stood little chance to enter Hussein's coalition and enjoy private goods from the regime. Educated Jordanians "resented the fact that they could not hope to break into the ruling elite on their own merits" (Amawi 1992, 27).

It was particularly significant that the selectorate rose against the regime, as opposed to the disenfranchised Palestinians as was perhaps expected (Baylouny 2008, 281). They were the historically pro-Hashemite constituents of coalition elites. While actual revolt against the throne was not an issue at the time, the mere possibility of a frustrated selectorate joining forces with marginalized groups such as Palestinians, leftists, and Arab-nationalists posed a clear threat to the monarch. An even larger looming threat was coalition discontent at dwindling private goods such as “development funds, subsidies and other economic resources from the state” (Brynen 1992, 89).

Kathrine Rath (1994) summarizes the three options available to the king in addressing these threats: reversal of unpopular economic reform, forceful implementation of the austerity program, or political compromise. An abolishment of the austerity measures would have “merely postponed the moment when the crisis had to be dealt with” (542). Dogged implementation of the program, however, would have involved increased authoritarianism, further alienating an increasingly dissatisfied selectorate and leaving the threat of discontented coalition members unresolved. Instead, Hussein decided on a compromise, offering political liberalization in exchange for economic austerity.

It is important to note the ironic nature of this compromise. As previously noted, the king’s initiation of political liberalization grew the kingdom’s selectorate at a faster rate than the winning coalition. In terms of the selectorate theory, W/S actually decreased, thus strengthening the loyalty norm amongst coalition members no longer assured of their selection from an expanded selectorate. Long-time elites “felt

threatened” (Milton-Edwards 1993, 194), realizing “that their past links with the regime may not assure their future political survival” (Amawi 1992, 29). This is best seen in the East Bank elites’ parliamentary fight for survival, specifically after a strong showing by the Islamist opposition in the 1989 elections. The “Constitutional Bloc” in parliament was comprised of coalition members now “threatened by political liberalization” (Brand 1999, 56) and eager to retain positions of influence. Thus through manipulating political institutions, the king managed to reduce the threat of a discontented winning coalition and the demand for greater private goods by strengthening the loyalty norm and, by extension, his coalition’s dependence on the throne. Meanwhile, the prospects of political reform and free elections pacified the politically-frustrated selectorate members mentioned above.

This manipulation of institutions is consistent with the behavior of leaders expected by the selectorate theory. Since increases in the selectorate size “decrease the chance that the leader will be removed” (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003, 288), leaders tend to strengthen the loyalty norm by lowering W/S when given the opportunity (400-402). The 1989 crisis in Jordan provided King Hussein with just such an opportunity.

Some scholars (Robinson 1998; Lucas 2005; Milton-Edwards 1993; Wicktorowicz 1999) have similarly concluded that Jordan’s democratization served the interests of the regime by maintaining the status quo. Glenn Robinson (1998) describes it as a “top-down process designed to maintain basic power relations in Jordan, not to significantly change them” (391). Quintan Wicktorowicz (1999) likewise sees liberalization as a “tactical” strategy not guided by democratic principles. While not

addressing the regime's manipulation of selection institutions, these studies do recognize that power was "left in the hands of the monarchy" (Milton-Edwards 1993, 194) by examining the heavy, and sometimes hidden, regulation of each act of political liberalization. The following sections detail such careful regime regulation of each step toward Jordan's much hailed democratization.

First Steps: Elections and the National Charter

Given the implications of the selectorate theory for Jordan's liberalization as no more than a necessary survival strategy, a more detailed look at the steps of liberalization is warranted. A close examination of the kingdom's 1989 elections and its progressive National Charter reveals significant, though subtle, regulations that seem decidedly less than liberal.

It is important to note certain shortcomings of the kingdom's "generally free and fair" (Robins 2004, 171) 1989 elections concerning malapportionment. The uneven distribution of parliamentary seats and constituencies in Jordan dates back to the original 1928 electoral law, granting overrepresentation to pro-regime minorities and establishing electoral constituencies according to geographical districts rather than population distribution. As Russell Lucas (2005, 28) explains, "Rural overrepresentation generally has helped traditional regime allies in gaining seats in the Parliament." The 1989 elections, functioning under the recently amended 1986 electoral law, clearly continued this intentional malapportionment. The southern, pro-Hashemite town of Kerak and Palestinian-dominated East Amman provide a palpable illustration of the skewed

distribution of seats. Kerak enjoyed nine parliamentary seats in 1989, four more than its population would merit under a proportional distribution; Eastern Amman, on the other hand, was granted three seats, seven less than its large population would hypothetically warrant (Lucas 2005, 29). Such targeted representational benefits toward pro-regime constituencies taint Jordan's liberalization from the outset, calling into question the throne's intentions in proposing a political opening.

There are, likewise, certain subtleties to be grasped concerning the National Charter designed to chart Jordan's liberal way forward. First, we should note the purpose of the charter. While the document did guarantee a new, pluralist Jordan, it also affirmed Hussein's legitimacy by requiring acceptance of the Hashemite monarchy (Brand 1999; Lucas 2005). Philip Robins (2004, 174) appropriately sees it as a "reflection of the renewed insecurities felt by the throne." A perhaps equally significant observation concerning the charter lies in the skewed composition of the "Royal Committee for Drafting the National Charter." While touted for covering the full spectrum of political opinion in the kingdom, the distribution easily listed in the direction of members supporting the regime. As Lucas (2005, 33) illustrates, the 80 member committee contained "16 conservatives, 15 liberals, 8 independents, 8 Islamists, 8 Arab nationalists, and 5 leftists." Such a composition enabled the committee to draft a document calling for a guarded and controlled liberalization in alignment with the regime's interests.

It is worth noting that these less-than-liberal shortcomings of the 1989 elections and National Charter did more to help Hussein than assisting him to control liberalization. They allowed him to grant influential positions to regime supporters--the

elections through overrepresentation of supportive districts and the charter through the composition of the drafting committee. Such positions of prestige and influence acted as private goods doled out to supporters. Thus, even in the midst of a perceived democratization process, Jordan continued to function as a small-coalition state according to the selectorate theory.

The Political Parties and Press Laws

The above steps of liberalization would soon be followed by others, such as the inclusion of opposition members in Prime Minister Badran's cabinet and the deference shown by Hussein to Jordanian public opinion during the Gulf Crisis. It is perhaps significant, though, that Badran's opposition cabinet members found themselves as ministers of justice, labor, health, social affairs, and state for government affairs. Laurie Brand (1999, 54) explains that while these are important posts, "the key portfolios of foreign affairs, the interior, finance, and energy and mineral resources remained unchanged from the previous government." As for Hussein's response to the Gulf Crisis, it should be noted that while he certainly stood with his people in opposing the U.S.-led coalition, the king can hardly be said to have sided with Iraq. Instead, the king carefully navigated his state through the crisis to protect the image of the kingdom's nascent liberalization. As Kathrine Rath (1994, 551) notes, a pro-Western position during the Gulf Crisis "could seriously have challenged the process of democratization." It seems likely that a blatant disregard for the Jordanian public's widespread enthusiasm in support of Iraq would have caused many to question the nature and extent of the kingdom's new

political opening. Instead, Hussein opposed the U.S.-led coalition while carefully distancing himself from Saddam Hussein with ambiguous language denying territory obtained by force. The king's careful, equivocal navigation through the crisis functioned similarly to the inclusion of opposition members in less-than-crucial corners of Badran's cabinet. Both furthered the perception of ongoing democratization without committing the state to a genuine transition.

Each of the above steps helped to pave the way for two subsequent legislative accomplishments marking the apogee of Jordan's liberalization -- the 1992 Political Parties Law and 1993 Press and Publications Law. Both following from the National Charter, these laws promised significant reform given the national ban on political parties since 1957 and the active press law still in effect since martial law in 1973. This promised reform was realized to a certain extent as political parties were legalized and increased freedoms granted to the press. As with the preceding examples of Jordan's political opening, though, the laws warrant closer inspection.

It is first appropriate to examine regime motives behind the government draft law legalizing political parties which managed to survive parliamentary debate reasonably well. Several scholars (Milton-Edwards 1993; Robinson 1998) have suggested that regime support for party legalization was an attempt by the throne to weaken the Islamist opposition which had fared surprisingly well in the 1989 elections. The Muslim Brotherhood had proved remarkably effective in mobilizing voter support for the social organization's candidates, and legalization of political parties might provide pro-regime party competition for the brotherhood in subsequent elections. Furthermore, party

regulations within the law proscribed outside financial and organizational ties. The law would thus provide legal justification for possible future regime actions against the Islamic Action Front, the Muslim Brotherhood's political wing, as well as Palestinian-oriented parties should they overly prosper under the new liberal arrangements (Robinson 1998, 395).

Like the Political Parties Law, the 1993 Press and Publications Law "helped institutionalize political liberalization in the kingdom" while simultaneously marking its limits (Lucas 2005, 67). While the law conceded greater freedoms to the press, it also demarcated numerous "red lines" not to be crossed. Such restrictions included: news offensive to the king or royal family, unsanctioned news of the armed forces, content contemptuous to religion, articles damaging national unity, news shaking confidence in the national currency, content contrary to public morals, and advertisements for unapproved medicines (63-64). The law thus effectively insulated the regime from press criticism while advancing the perception of democratization.

These developments marked the height of Jordan's liberalization, but they reveal the same authoritarian tendencies that would soon emerge more visibly through deliberalization. Each of the above examples of liberalization furthered the perception of political opening. They suggested a shift from Jordan's authoritarian past to a future at least partly determined by the kingdom's citizens. As we have seen, though, each development was carefully regulated to prevent the realization of a true democratic opening. These are the steps the regime took to achieve a larger selectorate while retaining its small -- though more loyal -- winning coalition.

Deliberalization

As described in chapter one, a comprehensive deliberalization soon followed Jordan's liberal dabblings. The first instance of this was the regime's controversial 1993 amendments to the electoral law benefiting its supporters -- "especially those with tribal support" (Lucas 2005, 72). Enacted through a provisional law after the king had dissolved parliament, the amendments set up a one-person, one-vote system that would succeed in devastating the Islamist parliamentary presence by preventing the affiliation-voting that enabled the success of Muslim Brotherhood candidates in 1989. Instances of deliberalization increased as opposition mounted against normalization with Israel. Examples include renewed press restrictions, the stifling of freedom of expression, and the targeted dissolution of predominantly Islamist municipal courts. The regime responded with the termination of parliament's session and numerous human rights violations to 1996 bread-price riots in Kerak (Brand 1999). This trend of reverting to deliberalization would characterize the rest of King Hussein's rule with further revisions to the press law in 1997 and 1998 as well as a 1998 ban on demonstrations of opposition to the regime's policy of distancing itself from Iraq.

This deliberalization is logical if we consider Jordan's institutional arrangements. It is important to remember that, despite its faux democratization, the kingdom remained a small-coalition state. It is not surprising, then, that Jordan should eventually exhibit common traits of such a system. Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003, 180-182) report a strong correlation between coalition size and the protection of civil liberties and political

rights. Further liberalization would certainly have tested regime control over the process. As Glenn Robinson (1998, 404) argues, Jordan's limited democratization could not "be deepened without threatening established elite interests." It is also clear that the urgency of 1989, which prompted policies that annealed the loyalty norm amongst Hussein's coalition, had passed. The regime had survived the crisis and was no longer confined to feigning a larger coalition. While elections would continue to suggest a larger selectorate and more democratic policymaking in Jordan, it is natural that the regime should return to acting completely according to its interests as determined by a small winning coalition.

The Transition Approach

Transition theories within the democratization literature are likewise capable of explaining Jordan's controlled and eventually reversed liberalization, and this study would benefit from examining such an approach.

It is clear that the prospect of Jordan's strategic dabbling in liberalization is not unfamiliar to transition theorists. Dankwart Rustow (1970) acknowledges that decision makers may engage in liberalization, represented here by his "decision" phase of democratization, as a means to an end. Alfred Stepan (1986, 75-76) likewise admits the existence of regimes with "reason to keep the liberalization process just short of democratization," identifying Brazil in 1981-1982 as a polity under such controlled liberalization. Adam Przeworski (1991, 57) actually presents all liberalization projects launched by authoritarian powers as "invariably intended as controlled openings of political space," not designed to lead to consolidated democracy. These accounts based

on the observation of other states initiating liberalization as a survival strategy are clearly relevant for Jordan in the early 1990's.

Transition accounts of democratization also present a fitting framework for addressing Jordan's deliberalization. Stepan (1986, 72) identifies the possibility of a reversal of regime-led liberalization if "the costs of toleration are much greater than the costs of repression." Kaufman (1986, 92) and Przeworski (1991, 62) each present a game outlining the stages of democratic transition with the final stage involving a decision made by elites to extend or roll back liberalization. Since these models' division of authoritarian-bloc decision makers into liberalizers and hardliners is not entirely applicable to the Jordanian monarchy, a similar game may be constructed using the same transitionist logic (Figure 4.1). In this model the authoritarian regime first faces the choice of whether to open politically. If it does not, the result is the status quo authoritarian system (SAUT). If it does, civil society then faces the choice of whether to seek autonomous mobilization or not. If it does not, the result is a broadened authoritarian system (BAUT); if it does, the regime then either represses this mobilization, attaching the probability r to successful repression leading to a narrower system (NAUT), or continues to reform, leading to genuine democratic transition.

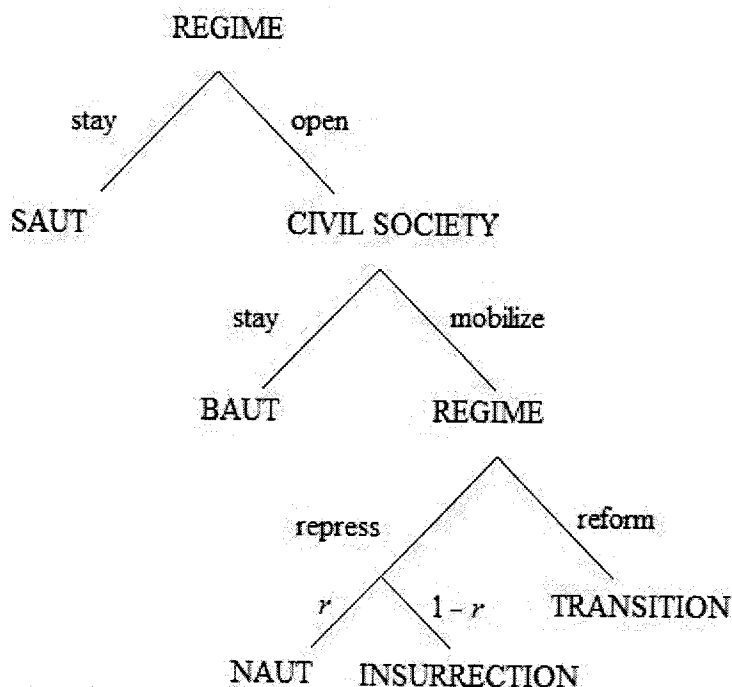


Figure 4.1

Given the context of crisis in which Jordan initiated liberalization, the regime clearly preferred a change guaranteeing survival to the status quo. Assume Hussein preferred $NAUT > BAUT > SAUT > TRANSITION > INSURRECTION$. The model, then, illustrates the regime's decision to open, preferring both BAUT and NAUT to SAUT. While the initial probability attached by Hussein to successful future repression (r) is not immediately clear, it is clear that opening provided an escape (if only temporary) from the uncertain survival prospects of SAUT.

As for civil society within Jordan, it is enough for us to recognize the preference of $TRANSITION > BAUT$. It should, of course, be noted that this is a game of incomplete information. The previously mentioned shift in the perception of policymaking surely distorted foresight concerning a regime response to mobilization.

An outcome of NAUT, then, seemed a less than likely response to civil society mobilization in the ostensibly democratizing state. Jordanian society thus took advantage of the political opening as opposition forces nearly won the majority in the 1989 elections despite intentional malapportionment and as Jordanian newspapers, especially the weekly editions, pressed the limits of increased press freedoms. As civil society mobilization began to culminate in opposition to the peace process with Israel, the regime responded. Perhaps by trusting the top-rate security forces in Jordan, the regime attached a probability of successful repression high enough to seek NAUT over genuine reform. This game thus illustrates a potential transition approach to explaining Jordan's political liberalization and deliberalization.

CONCLUSION

This study has found the selectorate theory capable of addressing Jordan's abortive political liberalization, matching and even exceeding a transition approach in explanatory power. Like the transition approach to democratization, the selectorate theory accounts for the kingdom's controlled liberalization as a state survival strategy never intended to lead to full democratization. The selectorate account, however, continues by shedding light on the ironic strengthening of the king's position as liberalization progressed. Only by examining Jordan's manipulated institutional arrangements and seeing how liberalization actually resulted in a smaller W/S ratio can we understand the strengthening of the loyalty norm amongst coalition members. Thus while both approaches present the kingdom's liberalization as a regime strategy to satisfy discontented constituencies, only the selectorate theory illustrates how the process actually increased coalition members' dependency on the king, shielding Hussein from the discontent of those who mattered most for his political survival -- his winning coalition.

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