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To Rig the Rules or To Break the Rules:
The Politics of Electoral Manipulation in Autocracies

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

by

Yuree Noh

2018

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

To Rig the Rules or To Break the Rules:
The Politics of Electoral Manipulation in Autocracies

by

Yuree Noh

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science
University of California, Los Angeles, 2018
Professor Barbara Geddes, Chair

Why do some authoritarian leaders use extensive fraud to control election results whereas others do not? In my dissertation, I identify the conditions under which dictators choose to resort to fraud or not. I argue the importance of social cohesion and citizen networks that facilitate the spread of information regarding rigged elections among citizens. Informed citizens are more likely to solve collective action problems and mobilize themselves against the regime. Incumbent elites fear triggering the kinds of popular uprisings that sometimes overthrow dictatorships. Consequently, they avoid using outright fraud in places where citizens are densely enmeshed in civil society associations. I test my argument using cross-national and subnational empirical evidence in addition to case studies of Algeria and Kuwait. My results also show that those autocrats who are especially dependent on foreign support rely on rule manipulation that is less visible. I demonstrate that fraud accounts are negatively correlated with election rule changes, suggesting that they operate as partial substitutes in the incumbent's toolkit.

The dissertation of Yuree Noh is approved.

Lisa Blaydes

Michael Thies

Barbara Geddes, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2018

To my mother.

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VITA

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Scholars increasingly have examined the post-Cold War prevalence of elections in authoritarian regimes (e.g. Diamond, 2002; Schedler, 2006; Levitsky and Way, 2010). Today, approximately 90% of dictatorships around the world hold regular, legislative elections. While it is often assumed that dictators rig the elections to their advantage (Schedler, 2002; Lehoucq, 2003; Simpser and Donno, 2012), we know little about (i) the actual extent of electoral fraud and (ii) the factors that influence the dictator’s decision to use or avoid fraud. Figure 1.1 shows the distributions of the levels of electoral integrity in all authoritarian, legislative elections from 1945 to 2015. Perhaps surprisingly, there exists a wide variation in the quality of elections across dictatorships. This project seeks to explain the variation in outright fraud across dictatorships: why is it that electoral fraud is more common in some places but not others?

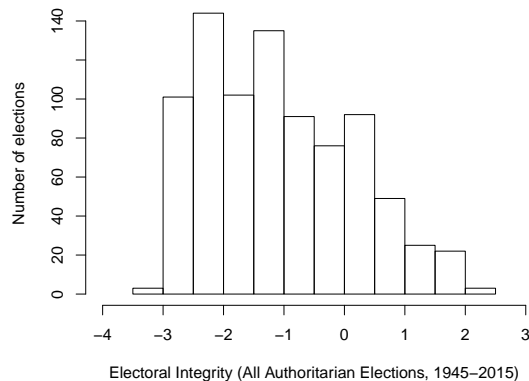


Figure 1.1: Variation in electoral integrity.

One of the key explanatory factors this dissertation focuses on is the citizens, their

networks, and their collective action potentials. I highlight the possible role of social cohesion in facilitating the flow of information about fraud among citizens and solving collective action problems to organize themselves against the regime. In turn, dense citizen networks discourage dictators from using outright fraud.

1.1 Summary of the Argument

This dissertation spells out the domestic conditions that discourage authoritarian leaders from using outright fraud in elections. I start my theory by addressing the scholarly puzzle that authoritarian leaders hold elections despite their costs and risks. To explain this phenomenon, scholars have argued that dictators often use elections to strengthen their rule (see Gandhi and Lust-Okar, 2009). For instance, elections can legitimize the dictator’s right to rule (e.g Waterbury, 1999; Lust-Okar and Jamal, 2002; Schedler, 2006) or distribute valuable spoils through elections to buy support (e.g Blaydes, 2010; Boix and Svolik, 2013; Masoud, 2014). Often, authoritarian elections produce large margins of victory for the incumbents and signal regime invincibility that deter dissenters (Geddes, 2006; Magaloni, 2006).

Dictators can of course make sure they “win” elections through using various strategies. Blatant fraud, such as ballot-box stuffing, dishonest counting, or multiple voting, can still let incumbents use elections to monitor local officials or distribute goods to supporters. However, such visible use of fraud makes it difficult to avoid international scrutiny or deter elite defections. Additionally, outright fraud can become a focal point for mass uprisings that can help overthrow incumbents. Thus, not all leaders resort to outright fraud; instead, they find more subtle ways to manipulate elections, i.e. changing election rules to their advantage. Rule manipulation, compared to outright fraud, is much less obvious to both international and domestic audiences. More importantly, it rarely serves as a focal point for popular protests that threaten regime stability.

Nonetheless, manipulation of electoral institutions also generates different risks and limitations. First, the “effectiveness” of rule changes cannot always be predicted accurately before the actual election happens. Second, it must be adopted early enough to be useful

because a dictator cannot change electoral systems after the election takes place. Autocratic incumbents, upon assessing their own vulnerabilities and resources, often rely on one rather than the other strategy. Because rule manipulation is less visible to the international community, regimes that are more dependent on foreign support tend to resort to manipulation rather than outright fraud.

Since the most serious risk associated with outright fraud is ouster by mass uprisings, dictators who rule citizens involved in a dense network of associations try to avoid it and instead rely more on manipulation. This is because citizens enmeshed in civil society organizations are better informed with information about fraud. They also solve collective action problems more easily to mobilize themselves in order to oust a dictator.

1.2 Outline of the Dissertation

This dissertation presents my theoretical framework, subsequent empirical tests, and case studies to explain why some leaders resort to blatant fraud whereas others do not. It is organized as follows. Chapter 2 describes my argument explaining the importance of social cohesion and citizen networks that facilitate the spread of information regarding rigged elections among citizens. When fraud becomes a common knowledge, these informed citizens are more likely to organize collectively into large demonstrations against the regime. My contention is that for the regime, the most serious risk associated with the obvious use of fraud is ouster by popular uprisings. In fact, blatant fraud can often serve as a focal point for the kind of mass demonstrations dictators fear. Consequently, they refrain from employing fraud in places where active citizen networks exist.

Citizen social cohesion is of course not the only factor deterring the use of fraud. I argue that, to regimes that rely on international support, it is important to uphold their electoral quality – or at least its appearance. In this case, they avoid using outright fraud because it is more visible to foreign actors. In places where leaders would like to avoid outright fraud, they instead resort to less obvious manipulation strategies, such as revising electoral institutions in their favor. In other words, I theorize that the level of outright fraud is

negatively correlated with accounts of rule manipulation; they operate as partial substitutes in the incumbent's toolkit.

Chapter 3 presents a theoretically grounded empirical analysis that is twofold. First, I test my argument using cross-national data of all authoritarian regimes from 1945 to 2015. In addition to compiling existing datasets, I collect original data on electoral system changes. I find strong evidence that citizens' involvement in civil society associations are negatively associated with the level of blatant fraud. Various robustness checks confirm the hypothesis. I also demonstrate that those regimes that receive more foreign aid and development assistance are associated with less fraud. Moreover, my results confirm that blatant fraud accounts are negatively correlated with election rule changes. Depending on their own vulnerabilities, dictatorial incumbents appear to rely on one strategy rather than the other to influence election results.

Second, I turn to a subnational analysis of Algeria to strengthen my findings. Figure 1.2 shows a screenshot of a clip showing Algerian government employees allegedly stuffing ballot boxes during the 2017 legislative elections. This video, along with multiple additional clips, provides a strong indication that fraud occurs in Algeria. However, it also highlights the challenges in measuring and studying fraud that is sensitive and secretive in nature.

In order to create measures of fraud, I conducted an original survey done in Algeria of 1,000 respondents across 39 provinces (wilayas) in Algeria. While abundant existing research relies on election monitoring reports to study fraud, such data are only available when authoritarian officials themselves invite international observers. While Algeria has invited selected international monitors to every election, they seem not to affect the regime's use of fraud. I demonstrate using surveys along with indirect assessment methods to measure the extent of fraud.

To test my hypotheses, I measured two types of fraud – election rigging and vote buying. First, to measure election rigging – which I define as all illegal activities committed to inflate regime vote counts between ballot submission and result announcement, including methods such as ballot stuffing, vote misrecording, turnout inflation, etc. – I take the differ-



Figure 1.2: Screenshot of a YouTube video.

Note: This video was posted by *al-Waaqi' al-Jazaair* (The Reality of Algeria). after the May 2017 elections that allegedly shows regime personnel stuffing ballot boxes.

ence between the official election results and the survey responses I collected through vote simulation. Second, to measure vote buying, I use an indirect survey method – randomized-response (RR) technique – to uncover unbiased estimates of such a sensitive phenomenon (Blair, Imai, and Zhou, 2015). This method aims to induce honest answers as well as to protect respondents. The estimates produced via the RR-technique are shown to be closer to actual rates of sensitive behaviors than direct survey methods (Rosenfeld, Imai, and Shapiro, 2016). Moreover, I implemented a list experiment to check the robustness of the revealed political preferences.

I analyze subnational variations in the fraudulent tactics and demonstrate a negative relationship between associational life and both types of electoral manipulation. For causal interpretation of the results, I address the potential endogeneity between election quality and civil society by using an exogenous predictor as an instrument – Algerian education during the French colonial period. Moreover, my findings report that low popularity – operationalized as the number of deaths per 1,000 people during the Algerian Civil War – reduces vote buying, but not election rigging. I suggest that whereas vote buying is perceived to be an effective strategy in areas where incumbents still have some support, it may not

guarantee votes in places where the dictator has no credibility, due to the residents having suffered extreme losses and trauma of the war. The result supports my theoretical framework that views dictators' electoral manipulation strategies as partial substitutes for each other. In other words, the regime employs a greater extent of certain fraudulent tactics that are perceived to be less costly or more efficient.

Chapter 4 illustrates the cases of Algeria and Kuwait to explain the authoritarian incentive to use (or not use) fraud in each country. This chapter rely on various qualitative sources – interviews, newspaper accounts of elections and election rule changes, and historical documents – to support my claims. Blatant fraud was once as common in Kuwait as in Algeria. However, the Kuwaiti regime has increasingly resorted to more subtle manipulation tactics such as election rule changes, early parliament dissolution, and candidate disqualification in recent years. This chapter explains how the thriving associational life in Kuwait, augmented by a traditional social institution called the *diwaniyya*, has contributed to the high levels of electoral integrity the country enjoys today. Additionally, I discuss how the levels of outright fraud decreased over time because of the regime's increasing need for international support.

Chapter 5 concludes by discussing the contributions and limitations of this study. In addition, it provides a brief discussion of how the recent crackdown on civil society, especially in the Middle East, will affect the future of Algeria and Kuwait. I also provide avenues for future research.

This dissertation will contribute to the growing literature on electoral malpractice in developing countries (e.g Birch, 2011; Hyde, 2011; Schedler, 2013; Simpser, 2013; Stokes et al., 2013). Unlike much of the existing work on electoral fraud (especially in autocracies), this dissertation documents and explains both cross-national and subnational variations in fraud. In doing so, I also add to the recent literature that theorizes about the relationship between different survival strategies of the dictator (Conrad, 2014; Frantz and Kendall-Taylor, 2014). Furthermore, my study demonstrates another way through which civil society, even in authoritarian contexts, can influence the quality of democratic experiences. It produces policy implications for policymakers and international organizations that spend hundreds of millions of dollars each year on promoting democracy.

CHAPTER 2

Social Cohesion, Foreign Support, and Electoral Fraud

The vast majority of authoritarian regimes currently hold executive and/or legislative elections. In particular, almost 90% of dictatorships today regularly schedule elections to elect their legislature as shown in Figure 2.1 (Cheng and Noh, 2017). Though political and electoral systems vary, the appetite for power is ubiquitous among all politicians. Therefore, they are always in search of ways to influence elections. This is not a modern phenomenon; electoral fraud was in existence even in the ancient times when democracy first started blossoming (Bauerle, 1990). It is especially common for dictators, who dominate power and resources, to rig elections in order to remain in office. The incentives to employ fraud are even greater for them because ousted autocrats often suffer costly fates such as exile, prosecution, imprisonment, or even death (Goemans, Gleditsch, and Chiozza, 2009; Geddes, Wright, and Frantz, forthcoming).

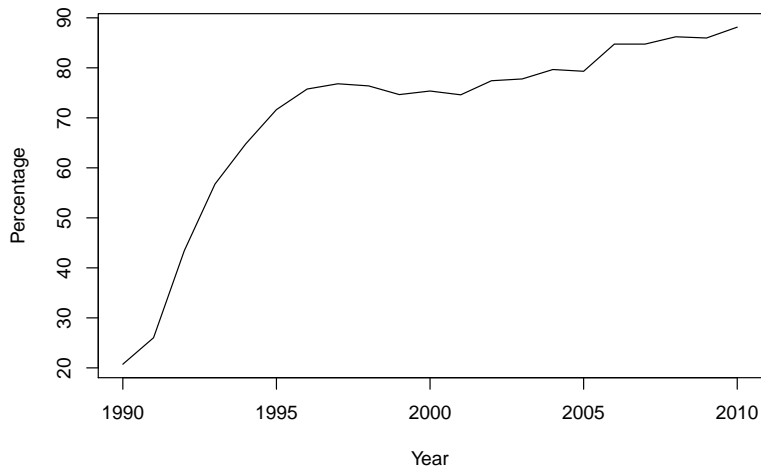


Figure 2.1: Dictatorships that elect their legislatures.

Why does the quality of elections vary across and within dictatorships? When do autocratic incumbents choose one manipulation strategy over another? This chapter begins by providing a brief overview of the literature on authoritarian elections and fraud. I then theorize the politics of electoral manipulation in autocracies to address the two questions. My theoretical framework spells out the domestic and international conditions that influence the rationale behind the authoritarian decision to rig elections – or to refrain from doing so.

I argue that there exist two key factors that lead to variations in fraud. First, fraud is less prevalent in areas where social cohesion is strong enough to facilitate information flows among citizens that incumbents cannot control. This is because the spread of such information, often damaging to the regime, can help citizens overcome collective action problems more easily. Consequently, it may produce uprisings that lead to the dictatorship’s overthrow. Thus, social cohesion helps citizens overcome collective action problems and organize themselves. Second, dictators who value foreign support invest in improving election quality, or at least its appearance. In this case, they are likely to avoid using blatant fraud that quickly exposes the regime’s democratic façade. However, I emphasize that the absence of electoral fraud does not mean that elections are free and fair. In places where leaders cannot employ outright fraud due to the aforementioned conditions, they instead choose less obvious manipulation strategies, such as revising election rules in their favor. In other words, fraud and rule changes operate as partial substitutes.

Throughout this chapter, I use the terms dictatorships, nondemocracies, autocracies, authoritarian regimes, and other near synonyms to indicate those with unfair processes, or no procedure at all, to choose their politicians and policies. I further discuss them in detail in Chapter 3. Similarly, I use autocrats, dictators, incumbents, etc. to refer to an individual or a group of people who hold power in nondemocracies. They range from kings, who inherit the position, to other personalist leaders, whose rule is unconstrained by other parties or groups within the regime (Geddes, 1999). A faction of military officers or a party that dominates resources and office may also be dictators.¹ These incumbents dominate

¹Defining which countries are authoritarian and which individuals constitute an authoritarian regime is difficult. I largely rely on various datasets, mainly the Autocratic Regimes Dataset created by Geddes,

most of the policy-making and decision-making processes such as deciding to hold elections. Most importantly, they are the main engineers of electoral fraud. Authoritarian leaders are certainly not the only ones who can manipulate elections, as local agents or regime opponents could also resort to fraud (Collier and Vicente, 2012; Rundlett and Svulik, 2016, e.g.). However, in authoritarian environments where resources are dominated by incumbent elites, it is plausible to assume that they are almost always the ones manipulating elections, or at least giving orders to do so. Buying votes, for instance, requires hefty financial resources. Additionally, changing electoral laws can only be carried out by incumbents. Thus, my theory considers the dictator to be the main actor manipulating elections.

This chapter is organized as follows. First, I introduce the existing explanations for why authoritarian leaders hold elections for their survival. I also highlight the research question that some dictators use extensive fraud whereas others do not. Second, I briefly discuss the definition and types of electoral fraud. Third, I provide a theory of the role of social cohesion in deterring fraud. I then explain how the need for international support also discourages leaders from rigging elections. Finally, I examine the link between different manipulation strategies.

2.1 Elections and Authoritarian Survival

Before delving into the analysis of electoral fraud, it is useful to review why dictators allow elections in the first place. Scholars have argued that elections serve to strengthen the regime (see Gandhi and Lust-Okar, 2009; Brancati, 2014a; Lagace and Gandhi, 2015, for comprehensive reviews).² Existing studies provide multiple mechanisms through which elections may benefit dictators.

First, authoritarian incumbents can co-opt different domestic groups through holding

Wright, and Frantz (2014). I further discuss their criteria in Chapters 3 and 4.

²Some studies claim the opposite – that authoritarian elections actually facilitate democratization or weaken the regime (Howard and Roessler, 2006; Brownlee, 2009; Donno, 2013; Little, Tucker, and Lagatta, 2015, e.g.).

elections. One possibility is using elections for patronage distribution in order to reward regime supporters and discourage elite defections (Geddes, 2006; Blaydes, 2010; Boix and Svolik, 2013, e.g.). Regularizing elections further increases elite cohesion by generating stable expectations with regard to the sharing of spoils (Svolik, 2012). Similarly, dictators also co-opt the opposition by distributing the spoils of office to those who participate in elections (Geddes, 2006; Magaloni, 2006). Choosing to divide-and-rule, incumbents sometimes include only some opposition parties in elections and undermine any united anti-regime alliance; as a result, those members of the opposition that take part become invested in maintaining the status quo (Lust-Okar, 2005). Furthermore, elections create a clientelistic network to provide benefits to the population in exchange for votes (Gandhi and Przeworski, 2006; Lust-Okar, 2009). Elections may additionally co-opt the masses by creating policy congruence between voters and politicians (Manion, 1996) or by providing some policy concessions to apportion groups in elected legislatures (Gandhi, 2008).

Second, authoritarian elections help legitimize the incumbent's right to rule. By allowing elections, even if not perfectly free and fair, the regime can signal to both the domestic and international communities that it receives at least some popular support (Schedler, 2006; Waterbury, 1999). In monarchies, even when royal family members do not directly run for elected positions, parliamentary elections help legitimize kings by emphasizing their role as a mediator in a divided society with multiple preferences, which become especially evident during the electoral process (Lust-Okar and Jamal, 2002). Furthermore, holding national elections has become an international norm for those governments that wish to gain the international support (Rich, 2001; Bjornlund, 2004). Most developing countries, many of which are nondemocracies, are now expected to invite international observers even if they still choose to rig elections (Hyde, 2011).

Once established, elections also reveal valuable information to the dictator in environments where gathering information is inherently difficult (Cox, 2009; Wintrobe, 1998) in part due to preference falsification of the citizenry under perceived social pressures (Kuran, 1991). Authoritarian leaders benefit from having information regarding their popularity as well as threats. Elections can help dictators by displaying geographic locations of regime

supporters and opposition strongholds (e.g. Brownlee, 2007; Malesky and Schuler, 2011). At the same time, votes against nondemocratic leaders, despite possible punishments, generate a strong signal of dissatisfaction with the current policies (Miller, 2015). Similarly, authoritarian legislatures, which are elected, provide a space in which the opposition can reveal their policy demands and negotiate with the regime without high costs (Gandhi and Przeworski, 2006). Moreover, holding elections informs authoritarian leaders of the (in)competency and (dis)loyalty of local cadres (Landry, 2009; Malesky and Schuler, 2010; Geddes, Wright, and Frantz, forthcoming). This way, elections sometimes serve a fire-alarm role for evaluating the regime agents' performance (McCubbins and Schwartz, 1984; Bernstein and Lu, 2008). Even if the elections involve fraud and in turn, distort certain types of information, such as the dictator's true popularity, leaders can still observe turnouts, campaigns, and oppositions during the process (Cox, 2009).

The key assumption in the aforementioned literature is that these dictators win the races before enjoying the wide range of benefits. Yet, holding elections entails risks. Most obviously, authoritarian elections open possibilities for the opposition to win electorally, even if the chances are slim (Bunce and Wolchik, 2010). Dictators, therefore, have ample incentives to use fraud to ensure victory. On the one hand, incumbents who are genuinely popular employ fraud. Magaloni (2006) claims that electoral fraud delivered super-majorities to strengthen the Institutional Revolutionary Party in Mexico through the 1970s. On the other hand, we have observed that some autocrats do not engage in enough fraud. This is evidenced by electoral turnovers, though infrequent: examples include Chile in 1988 (plebiscite), Mexico in 2000, Senegal in 2000, Gambia in 2016, all of which led to democratic transitions after incumbents lost the executive races. There also exist several opposition victories in legislative races such as Algeria in 1991 (first round), Zimbabwe in 2008, Kuwait in February 2012³, and Venezuela in 2015.

The Algerian, Zimbabwean, and Venezuelan examples highlight that electoral losses are costly for dictators even if they do not actually lose power in consequence. When the Islamist

³There were two parliamentary elections in Kuwait in 2012: February and December.

opposition won the first round of the 1991 legislative elections in Algeria, the military stepped in to cancel the second round. As a result, the country descended into a decade-long, bloody civil war. While the regime managed to win the war and remain in power to this day, the civil strife was extremely costly for the incumbent elites, not to mention the citizens. In another example, the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) lost the 2008 elections and had to begin sharing power with the opposition. Although the electoral verdict failed to drive out the ruling elites, the party and its leader, Robert Mugabe, were significantly weakened. The legislative loss of the ZANU-PF was paired with the defeat of Mugabe in the first round of the presidential elections the same year. Though Mugabe ultimately won the presidency through violence and repression, the elections hurt the party's stance and Mugabe's ambition to consolidate his power (Booyesen, 2009). Lastly, in the Venezuelan case, when the opposition took two-thirds of the parliamentary seats in 2015, President Nicolás Maduro and his party changed the constitution to eliminate the legislature; they continue to run the country thanks to their control of the judiciary and the support from the military. However, the election result in favor of the opposition has generated growing uncertainty of the regime's fate and popular demand for political rights (Alarcón, Álvarez, and Hidalgo, 2016). These examples illustrate how electoral defeats are associated with serious costs for autocrats even if they do not lose power altogether. In order to prevent such risks, dictators have good reasons to resort to electoral fraud to ensure their victory. However, not all incumbents use extensive fraud. Why don't we see more fraud in some places?

2.2 Electoral Fraud in Autocracies

Addressing the puzzle that not all dictators commit extensive fraud, Rundlett and Svulik (2016) attribute it to the principal-agent problem; namely, local agents sometimes fail to deliver exactly the right amount of fraud.⁴ Though my research also aims to answer the

⁴For more studies on locally committed fraud, see Lehoucq (2003), Cantu (2014), and Martinez-Bravo (2014).

question, it departs from their framework and focuses on the domestic conditions that shape the rationale of leaders at the center – rather than local cadres – to orchestrate manipulation.

There is little consensus on how to define electoral fraud. Birch (2011) has compiled the four different ways scholars have defined electoral malpractice. First, it can be defined legally as a violation of electoral law. Second, there exists a perceptual violation of norms regarding electoral malpractice. Third, electoral fraud could be characterized in accordance with international standards, set by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for example. Fourth, a violation of normative democratic practices could be classified as electoral malpractice. In my work, my definition of fraud is closest to Birch’s second category: I consider electoral fraud to be an illegal violation of electoral laws.

I use the term electoral manipulation to mean all strategies that influence electoral verdicts in favor of the leader – including electoral fraud. I view there to be two general categories of electoral manipulation: *illegal* and *legal*. Fraud indicates methods in the illegal category. On the one hand, illegal manipulation, or electoral fraud, is defined as all illegal activities that can sway election results. Illegal manipulation tends to be more direct and include methods such as ballot-box stuffing, voter impersonation, dishonest vote counting and dishonest reporting. On the other hand, legal manipulation refers to legal changes in the rules that govern the electoral processes. For instance, incumbents may modify electoral system, change constituency boundaries, adopt gender/ethnic quotas, or disqualify threatening candidates.⁵ I go beyond the existing research that considers fraud as the sole or the most effective way to influence election results.

2.3 Social Cohesion and Fraud Decisions

One way to explain the extent of electoral manipulation is examining the current domestic circumstances that play into the strategic calculation of the autocrat. Logically, dictators

⁵I understand that dictators can sway election results through a multitude of ways that are sometimes difficult to be classified as legal or illegal. Examples include canceling elections, restricting campaigns, using propaganda, and more (e.g Schedler, 2002; Levitsky and Way, 2010). I focus on the strategies that are more or less unequivocally placed in the legal/illegal categories in my analysis.

refrain from using fraud when doing so is likely to backfire and lead to their overthrow. In this section, I highlight the role of the citizenry in the autocrat's decision-making process.

When are authoritarian leaders threatened by the people – who are usually mere weak subjects? Popular protests and movements are frequently identified as the major factors that threaten regime stability. In a study of China, King, Pan, and Roberts (2013) showed that the regime has concentrated its internet censorship activities on stopping collective action rather than curtailing government criticism; their findings suggest that even resource-rich authoritarian leaders are sensitive to the prospect of collective action. Seeking to identify the elements that become focal in large-scale mobilization and opposition activities, scholars have often identified fraudulent elections (Kuntz and Thompson, 2009; Brancati, 2014b; Norris, 2014, e.g.). These mass protests, triggered by perceived electoral irregularities, have forced leaders to make institutional reforms and policy concessions demanded by the people or even give up power. For instance, the 1986 People Power Revolution in the Philippines was a series of demonstrations against President Ferdinand Marcos and the electoral misconduct of his regime; it successfully overthrew Marcos who had ruled the country for 20 years. Illustrating the color revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe, Tucker (2007) claims that fraud allegations help the opposition coordinate better and made individuals more likely to participate in protests by solving collective action problems. According to Thompson and Kuntz (2002), “stolen” elections weaken the regime in multiple ways: fragmenting elite cohesion, triggering mass protests, and increasing the perceived popularity of the opposition. Bunce and Wolchik (2010) similarly argue that the opposition is better able to unify in the presence of electoral fraud. Following a related logic, when leaders perceive the population to be more rebellious, they are more likely to stay away from carrying out fraud (Cox, 2009; Magaloi, 2010).⁶ These studies suggest that rigged elections could later become existential threats to authoritarian rulers.

However, not all rigged elections trigger popular demonstrations.⁷ Why don't citizens

⁶Such “rebellious” population could be understood as the proportion of the masses that may not accept the manipulated election results (Birch, 2011).

⁷Though this is a different research question, even if mobilization happens, it does not always bring down

organize to contest every fraudulent election? When are dictators, who would like to rig elections, threatened by the likelihood of triggering collective action?

Citizens living in an autocracy face potential costs when they choose to participate in a protest. I argue that the ability to overcome the well-known collective action problem is key to deterring electoral fraud, and the failure to do so is attributed to the lack of information accessible to the citizens in authoritarian environments.⁸ While the prospect of mass mobilization arguably makes autocrats more accountable and improves electoral quality, the existing literature does not explain the varying capacity of citizens for collective action in nondemocracies.

My contention is that social cohesion facilitates the flow of information among citizens. In turn, informed citizens are more likely to act collectively since they know that others are likely to join, as indicated by Tilly (1978). When citizens are aware that others also possess similar information, they are more likely to coordinate and overcome collective action problems (Chwe, 2001); the cost of participating becomes lower. Personalistic interactions and social cohesion, which act as means to transfer information among the people, are strengthened by citizen networks. Scholars have examined a variety of informal institutions as factors that help create social networks and generate political actions (Chandra, 2004; Lust-Okar, 2005; Stokes, 2005). My theory highlights the importance of citizen-to-citizen networks rather than a citizen-politician linkage (Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007) in producing collective action.

The spread of information through social networks is especially meaningful for decreasing electoral irregularities because citizen networks can circulate sensitive information, including topics like electoral fraud, leader (un)popularity, or other grievances. These citizens cannot rely on political parties to receive information and provide leadership, as in democratic countries, because parties are often repressed or co-opted by the regime, if not outlawed. Citizen networks are also advantageous because they are perceived by regime leaders to be

the regime. Rather than conceding to the demands of the protesters or stepping down, authoritarian leaders often choose to do the opposite and repress demonstrations that protest electoral irregularities: Iran in 2009, Belarus in 2010, and Venezuela in 2016 (regarding the December 2015 elections).

⁸While many studies on authoritarian politics have examined how dictators receive information critical for their survival, I here focus on the type of information that is valuable for the people.

less threatening than political parties or opposition politicians. Even when the presence of multiple parties is tolerated by the dictator, the mere claim of fraud by some opposition politician is not enough, though it happens quite often in both democracies and autocracies as an attempt to weaken the incumbent. Hyde (2011) illustrates an example of the Dominican Republic in 1966 when the opposition party accused the regime of manipulating ballot papers; this could not be proven nor did it lead to meaningful protests. In Algeria, opposition politicians have accused the government of orchestrating massive fraud after every presidential and parliamentary election in the last two decades. However, such allegations are insufficient to drive the citizens out to the streets. Even the claims of fraud from international election observer missions are not enough to trigger protests in most cases, even when they are invited to observe.⁹ Although Carothers (1997) and Bjornlund (2004) suggest that international observers can potentially deter electoral manipulation, Hyde (2011) has introduced the puzzle that many autocrats still employ fraud after deciding to invite foreign observers. When the governing party of Ethiopia claimed to have won 499 of 536 parliamentary seats, the EU observer mission backed the claim of the opposition that the elections were rigged (Tronvoll, 2011). However, no demonstrations occurred in protest. The fraud allegations coming from such international actors or opposition politicians seem insufficient to deter fraud without social cohesion that can disseminate information.

Relying on the traditional news source is also not an option for citizens living in autocracies, where leaders often monopolize the supply of information and control the media. Even if an international organization reports that a regime has orchestrated massive fraud to rig elections, it is not useful if the domestic audience has no access to such reports. These citizens also cannot always use the internet or social media to receive such information. Not only do incumbents often censor the internet as well (King, Pan, and Roberts, 2013; Guriev and Treisman, 2015, e.g.), in dictatorships, many of which are developing countries, the internet penetration rate may be still low. In the El Tarf province of Algeria, for instance, only 1.6% of the population was connected to the internet, according to the most recent official census conducted in 2008; according to unofficial estimates, the average internet penetration rate

⁹In addition, international observers often find it difficult to detect electoral manipulation.

in Algeria is still below 50% as of 2017. Even for the Egyptian case and its 2011 revolution that is often attributed to social media platforms, a survey of participants in the Tahrir Square protests show that they relied heavily on face-to-face conversation, contrary to the conventional wisdom that social media was the primary source of communication during the revolution (Vila, 2011). Even when citizens have access to the internet, it may be counterproductive since the dictator could also use it to manipulate information. For example, Kremlin has used internet trolls to spread disinformation (Pomerantsev, 2015).

As suggested above, incumbents in dictatorships enjoy an informational advantage over every other actor in the regime. Through media control and intelligence gathering, they seek to uncover and manipulate popular opinion and preferences. While non-incumbents are almost always in a weaker position, social networks can play an instrumental role in disseminating information. Through direct communication, citizens can inform each other about fraudulent elections that the regime would never broadcast. Unlike the other sources of news, information transmitted through local citizen networks is difficult for the regime to control.

Whereas my argument focuses on social cohesion and citizen networks, existing studies have examined civil society and social capital to claim that they are associated with favorable economic outcomes and good governance (Putnam, 2000; Narayan and Pritchett, 1997; Knack and Keefer, 1997, e.g). Guiso, Sapienza, and Zingales (2008) identify interpersonal trust and civic norms as forms of social capital that are positively associated with favorable economic indicators.¹⁰ Lindberg (2009, 324) lists “well-organized civil society” along with a strong middle class and the international community as the factors that increase the cost of repression in autocracies.¹¹ Birch (2011) also shows a positive association between electoral malpractice and strong civil society due to its ability to monitor and denounce electoral irregularities. Birch uses the term electoral malpractice to include all strategies used to in-

¹⁰However, they do not find correlations between such trust and group membership. I further discuss this in Chapter 3 as group membership is how I measure social cohesion. Guiso, Sapienza, and Zingales (2008) also report that membership is not associated with economic performance, contrary to the findings of Putnam (1993).

¹¹Lindberg, however, does not specify what well-organized civil society entails.

fluence elections; it consists of both legal and illegal methods. To measure civil society, she uses press freedom and protest capacity (existence of protests in the three years prior to the election).

On the other hand, others contend that civil society, even if it is strong, can be exploited by leaders. Studying local chiefs' authority in Sierra Leone, Acemoglu, Reed, and Robinson (2014) have claimed that civil society and social capital lead to stronger control by the chiefs. Satyanath, Voigtländer, and Voth (2017) report that civic associations and participation were linked a faster entry into the Nazi Party.

Unlike in the case of democracies, in autocracies, the associational life has been characterized by either its close tie to the regime or the repression from the state it has to endure. This is especially true the case in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) (Harik, 1994; Norton, 1996). Authoritarian MENA regimes often employ co-optation and coercion to control and restrain civil society (Langohr, 2004; Yom, 2015). Also observing the countries in the region, Bellin (2004) argues that weak civil society reduces the prospects of a democratic future by reducing citizen abilities to hold government accountable. Yet, sub-Saharan African countries with historically weak civic organizations have transitioned to democracies (Bratton and van de Walle, 1997; Herbst, 2001). Furthermore, mounting pressures from civil society in Latin America contributed to forcing out authoritarian leaders (Collier and Mahoney, 1997). This finding indicates that even in repressive regimes, civil organizations can place a check on authoritarian behaviors.

Similar to the strand of research that emphasizes the link between social capital and effective governance, my research also underscores another important role of citizen networks in improving electoral integrity. However, my argument is different from that of Putnam (1993, 89-90), for example, who claims that associations “instill in their members habits of cooperation, solidarity, and public-spiritedness” and as a result, led to efficient governance and favorable economic outcomes in northern Italy. While he argues that civic engagement increase the likelihood of collective action by lowering transaction costs and building social trust, my contention is that citizen networks expedite the flow of information that is key to collective action against dictatorships, *ceteris paribus*.

Though I have theorized that social cohesion deters using outright fraud by increasing the possibility of political collective action, citizen-to-citizen interaction itself need not be strictly political to play that role. I expect civic engagement, which could be either social or political, to lead to discussions regarding elections and policies when citizens gather together. Even if organizations normally serve social aims, such as playing soccer or organizing charity events, these interactions can regularly be used as means of information transfer, and in turn, encourage the people to take part in political actions. For example, my interview with a member of a charitable association in Algeria suggests that citizens can receive political information through such communication, even if they are not actively seeking to learn about politics:¹²

“I don’t really care about politics. I don’t vote. I don’t think it’s really important. I don’t think it will change anything... I don’t know who the Prime Minister is now. I know [President] Bouteflika is there, but I don’t know what’s really going on with him. My friend [in the organization] told me that Bouteflikas brother is in charge [of the country] now.”¹³

I further discuss the Algerian case in detail in the next two chapters, but this interview is worth noting here for highlighting the informational role of civic engagement. President Bouteflika has been in power since 1999 but due to his serious illness, his public appearance nowadays makes national headlines. My fieldwork in Algeria suggested that only certain experts such as politicians, journalists, and scholars were interested in finding out who is actually running the country instead of the ailing president; however, this interviewee, extremely apathetic toward politics, had heard from a friend that the president’s brother has taken up the executive role. In another interview, a youth group member expressed that his friends and colleagues generally feel that boycotting elections *as a group* is the most effective solution to deter electoral fraud that is widespread in the country.¹⁴ The youth group, which

¹²In Chapters 3 and 4, I further discuss the types of the associations and the contents of the interviews.

¹³Interview, charitable association organizer, August 2018.

¹⁴Interview, youth activist, August 2018.

carries out both political and social activities, seems to have created a social network capable of potential political collective action. It emphasizes the concept of collective abstention – that is invisible and safe – as a viable collective strategy against electoral malpractice in a repressive, authoritarian country. In addition, even citizens of various networks that usually serve purely social aims, such as dancing or playing soccer, mentioned that they, as groups, did not participate in the 2017 legislative elections.¹⁵ This suggests that even when citizens initially gather together for social purposes, their networks can lead to political collective action. In this way, my theory supports the findings of (Varshney, 2002, 4), who examines civic life in India to highlight that civil society is not “non-political” but “can cover both social and political activities.”

In sum, social cohesion in autocracies can decrease fraud by spreading information that is sensitive. For example, citizens can inform each other regarding ballot-box stuffing they witnessed or vote buying they have experienced. In other words, social networks can disseminate information that cannot be controlled by the incumbent. In turn, informed citizens – also aware that others possess similar knowledge – are more likely to engage in collective action against the regime. Furthermore, even social organizations can distribute political news and facilitate political collective action. Bunce and Wolchik (2010) were right to emphasize the importance in empowering civil society actors to potentially deter electoral fraud.

2.4 The Need for Foreign Support and Fraud Decisions

In addition to the bottom-up pressure from citizen networks, international actors and external conditions matter to the authoritarian decision-making process. There exist varying degrees for the need for international support across authoritarian regimes, and its level will depend on the two following factors. First, for those countries that interact more heavily with the global community to receive tangible rewards – such as military or economic benefits – their leaders place greater value on building international support. Such benefits include international investment, aid, and trade.

¹⁵Various interviews, August 2018.

The existing literature has considered democracy promotion and economic rewards/sanctions as key to the prevalence of authoritarian elections today (Carothers, 1999; Cox, Ikenberry, and Inoguchi, 2000; Youngs, 2004, e.g.). Advanced democracies in the West have increasingly emphasized their preference to have democratically-elected allies in addition to emphasizing the value of free and fair elections (Huntington, 1991; Bjornlund, 2004; Dunning, 2004; Beaulieu and Hyde, 2009). Hyde (2011) demonstrates that the threat to withdraw international aid is credible and thus, it is influential to the incentives of incumbent politicians. Furthermore, Western countries are more likely to promise and provide material goods for developing nations that are striving to transition to democracies (Dunning, 2004). Beyond foreign aid and development assistance, if their economies are more dependent on international trade or investment, leaders are more likely to invest in building a positive international reputation.

I claim that the need to gain legitimacy through elections is not necessarily associated with true levels of democracy. However, these countries in need of an international approval have more incentives to invest in making the electoral processes *appear* more democratic. The autocratic countries in the oil-rich Gulf region illustrate an appropriate example. Although the Gulf economies are heavily dependent on exporting oil to foreign countries, scholars have long observed the resistance to democratization in this region (Bellin, 2004; Herb, 2005; Ross, 2001). Yet, my fieldwork in Kuwait, elaborated in Chapter 4, shows that the monarchy is deeply sensitive to international scrutiny of its electoral processes. My contention is that while authoritarian regimes are not necessarily motivated to genuinely democratize themselves, they still benefit from appearing as if they are trying. In turn, it is costly for the regimes to hurt this appearance by conducting blatant fraudulent activities.

Hence, my argument differs from that of Bjornlund (2004) who argues that globalization increases actual electoral integrity because economically dependent regimes are more motivated to invite international election observers to create a better international image. In contrast, I posit that these countries are also more likely to spend resources in manipulation tactics that are less blatant than ballot-box stuffing and electoral violence, for instance. Instead, these incumbents devote their resources to other strategies that are less likely to be

detected by the observers. Yom (2015) notes that foreign aid to dictatorships often comes without stipulating specific conditions. Thus, it is logical to think that the receipt of democracy assistance and foreign aid does not guarantee a substantial improvement in election quality or other normative democratic standards. I argue that aid recipients resort to more subtle manipulation strategies that help them consolidate their power without losing international support. I further discuss these other strategies in the next section. In a nutshell, incumbents leading more globally integrated economies can be expected to care more about the *appearance* of the quality of elections.

Second, countries are more likely to seek international support through avoiding electoral irregularities if they are under external, often existential, threats. For instance, Palestinians first held their national elections in 1996 following the creation of the Palestinian National Authority because Yasir Arafat and Fatah sought legitimacy for their leadership over the occupied territories. For similar reasons, Fatah's rivals, including Hamas, boycotted the elections because they were afraid their participation in the elections would lead to legitimation of Fatah's rule. Arafat saw the elections as an opportunity to demonstrate its strong commitment to the democratic advancement and in turn, hoped that its acquired legitimacy from the elections would advance their position in future negotiations with Israel (Ghanem, 1996). In Chapter 4, I discuss in detail how post-independence Kuwait adopted its Constitution in 1962 and instituted national elections, following serious Iraqi threats that heightened its need for international support.

2.5 Partial Substitute

Authoritarian leaders, however, face a dilemma choosing to resort to electoral fraud because whereas rigging elections may deliver a victory, it does not help make elections appear (at least somewhat) "authentic." As discussed above, outright fraud and stolen elections are critical in organizing oppositions and bringing people to the streets. Thus, incumbents have incentives to simultaneously invest in other strategies of electoral manipulation. This way, my logic is similar to that of Wintrobe (1998) who theorized about the relationship between

repression and co-optation, the two key survival tools of autocrats.

I have hitherto argued that strong social cohesion and international dependency are the conditions that raise the costs of using fraud. Under such conditions that are deemed unfavorable for autocrats to rely on fraud, they instead resort to more subtle strategies of manipulation. One of the most common legal manipulations is election rule changes, which operate as a key substitute for electoral fraud. Birch (2011, 71) notes that altering electoral institutions has been one of the oldest manipulation tactics used by politicians, and authoritarian regimes especially often turned to modifying institutions when facing potential electoral defeats. For instance, Peru's dictatorship changed laws to disqualify the presidential candidate Ernesto Montagne from running in the 1950 election. Sudan's newly installed authoritarian regime banned political parties in 1989. At times, dictators get rid of institutions altogether, similarly to Algeria's cancellation of the second-round elections in 1992.

Though there is an extensive set of studies on the electoral systems and reforms in democracies (Rogowski, 1987; Magaloi, 1993; Lijphart, 1994; Boix, 1999, e.g.), there has been few attempts to apply their insights to the authoritarian contexts. This is because the aforementioned literature focuses on factors less prominent in nondemocracies such as interest groups or partisan incentives. For instance, Rokkan (1970) argues that incumbents in democracies adopt proportional representation (PR) rules when they want to avoid partisan bias as a result of majoritarian electoral systems. However, opposition parties in autocracies are generally too weak to be imminent threats to dictators (Levitsky and Way, 2010).

The literature on electoral institutions in authoritarian regimes is much less extensive yet valuable. Lust-Okar and Jamal (2002) claim that electoral institutions matter, even in dictatorships, by claiming that different institutions shape opposition capacities in diverging ways. Diaz-Cayeros and Magaloni (2004) have illustrated the case of Mexico to note that its ruling party changed the institutions on multiple occasions to have an upper hand in legislative elections. Higashijima and Chang (2015) compare electoral systems to conclude that autocrats using plurality and majoritarian systems, as opposed to proportional representation (PR), have more incentives to mobilize voter turnout to demonstrate overwhelming

regime dominance. Cheng and Noh (2017) argue that PR-rule elections help dictators to target supporters and opponents more effectively, and thus, reduce the need for broad-based repression. The existing studies, however, largely consider institutional changes to be outside of the domain of electoral malpractice. Among the few who examine legal and illegal manipulation methods within the same framework, Schedler (2002) includes institutional changes in the typologies of electoral manipulation. Similarly, Birch (2011) compares legal and illegal tactics to suggest that legal methods are less risky strategies that help leaders stay in power:

“Elites can be expected to employ the manipulation of rules and institutions where possible, as this strategy carries a relatively low level of risk. Rules can be altered through legal means, and though international legal standards have been developed in this sphere, state actors nevertheless enjoy considerable leeway in the interpretation of international norms. Crucially, it is difficult for international observers to label the manipulation of rules ‘corrupt’ or ‘fraudulent’; leaders who employ this strategy as their principal form of manipulation can therefore expect to be spared condemnation on the grounds that their elections were ‘stolen’. Furthermore, manipulation of rules is most cost-effective than the alternatives (Birch, 2011, 60-61).

I posit that different fraudulent tactics operate as partial substitutes. While incumbents may adopt a variety of strategies, given that resources are limited, it is natural for them to direct more efforts to certain manipulation methods over others. Autocrats take into account their weaknesses and vulnerability in order to invest in less costly strategies at which they are more efficient. For instance, my theory suggests that incumbents facing strong social cohesion and coveting international support are less likely to employ outright fraud.¹⁶

Of course, if incumbents believe that they will win without manipulation, both legal and illegal, they may run cleaner elections. In this case, all else equal, they are less likely to com-

¹⁶According to Birch (2011), states with weak formal institutions are less likely to manipulate election rules in order to influence elections. Birch also notes that fraud occurrences are associated with the degree of risk involved; in other words, riskier strategies will happen less frequently.

promise the perceived quality of elections by resorting to fraud either directly or indirectly. In an authoritarian context, the chance of victory, as perceived by the incumbent, will be generally close to their genuine popularity. As dictators often operate secret intelligence and dominate the media outlets, they are also likely to possess good quality information. Moreover, true popularity could be deduced from strong loyalist presence, generous distribution of public goods, or favorable economic conditions. For instance, oil-rich autocrats who are able to distribute lavish benefits to the population are more likely to be genuinely popular among the citizens. Naturally, they anticipate a favorable electoral outcome without having to meddle. In other words, authoritarian leaders usually have a good idea whether they will win the election comfortably or not.

2.6 Conclusion

Scholars have argued that authoritarian elections serve some purpose – ranging from attaining legitimacy to rewarding loyalists – that strengthen the regime. While we know the quality of these elections vary greatly, it is unclear why. I have argued that authoritarian incentives to rig elections and how much depend on two factors. First, in countries where citizen networks are stronger, incumbent politicians limit the use of blatant fraud. Interaction among the people facilitates social cohesion and information transfer; in turn, they increase the cost of using fraud because informed citizens are more likely to participate in collective action. Second, authoritarian regimes that value international support are more likely to invest in the façade of their electoral integrity. When countries depend more heavily on international aid and trade, the cost of visibly rigging elections is higher as they opt for less obvious manipulation.

If using electoral fraud poses substantial costs for some dictators, they have two options: to risk losing the race or to find other ways to win. Since electoral defeats are also costly, we can expect incumbents to resort to different methods. My contention is that they then rely on other manipulation strategies that are less blatant. In the next chapters, I present evidence using large-N, cross-national data to test my hypotheses. I then illustrate cases

of Algeria and Kuwait that have adopted a wide range of tactics to survive as electoral autocracies.

CHAPTER 3

When Do Leaders Use Fraud? Quantitative Analysis

In Chapter 2, I argued that outright fraud and less obvious election manipulation tactics carry different risks and costs. Depending on their own vulnerabilities, dictators tend to rely more heavily on one tactic rather than the other. Because blatant fraud is more visible to the international community than other manipulation tactics, dictatorships that are especially dependent on foreign support tend to resort to manipulation rather than fraud. Moreover, leaders avoid using blatant fraud when there exist dense social networks. This is because such networks can help citizens more easily solve collective action problems in order to mobilize themselves; social cohesion also facilitates the spread of information about fraud among citizens. Thus, using outright fraud is costly for dictators because it is likely to trigger popular uprisings and consequently lead to the regime's ouster. Consequently, dictators who rule citizens involved in a dense network avoid outright fraud and instead rely on other manipulation tactics.

This chapter outlines the hypotheses generated from my theory and conduct empirical tests using two approaches. First, in a cross-national examination of all authoritarian regimes from 1945 to 2015, I show that strong citizen networks can reduce electoral fraud. In addition to social cohesion, the need for international support is also correlated with election quality. Where dictators refrain from using fraud, they have other ways of manipulating elections. I show that fraud accounts are negatively correlated with election rule changes, suggesting that they operate as partial substitutes in the incumbent's toolkit.

Second, in a subnational analysis of Algeria, I use data from an original survey (N=1,000) done in Algeria to measure the extent of two fraudulent strategies – election rigging and vote buying – in different parts of the country. This chapter explores ways of measuring fraud

through incorporating a randomized-response technique and a list experiment in surveys. I show that dictatorial officials are less likely to use fraud when there exist extensive local associations. Addressing endogeneity concerns, I employ an exogenous instrument for local associations – namely, the extent of Algerian education during the French colonial era – to disentangle the relationship between social cohesion and fraud. I further show that regime unpopularity, operationalized as civil war deaths, decreases vote buying, but not election rigging. I suggest that incumbents perceive vote buying as an effective strategy in areas where they still have some popular support, but it does not guarantee election victories in places where popularity is low.

3.1 Testing the Argument

Chapter 2 discussed how elections can be *costly* – as they require resources for pre-election campaigns and post-election distributions – and *risky* – because the incumbent can lose the race. Dictators, however, have paid these costs and exposed themselves to the risks because elections bring them benefits such as deterring elite defection, monitoring local officials, distributing goods to supporters, attracting international support, etc.

Dictators can of course reduce the risks by using outright fraud, such as ballot stuffing and dishonest counting. Outright fraud can still help the regime monitor local cadres and maintain a clientelistic network, but it hinders the use of elections to deter elite defectors and attract foreign support due to its visibility. The nature of outright fraud can also become a focal point for mass demonstrations that sometimes overthrow dictatorships.

Due to such disadvantages involved with blatant fraud, many dictators resort to less obvious manipulation strategies, namely election rule changes. Rule manipulation is less visible to foreigners as well as ordinary citizens. More importantly, it rarely provides a focal point for demonstrations.

Rule manipulation carries its own risks and limitations, however. First, the consequences of rule changes cannot always be predicted accurately. Second, rule changes cannot be used at the last minute, when incumbents are surprised to find that they are losing an election.

Thus, rule manipulation must be initiated early to be useful for the dictator. Outright fraud and election rule manipulation carry different risks and costs. Thus, regimes rely on one rather than the other, depending on their own vulnerabilities.

H1: Outright fraud and election rule change operate as partial substitutes.

The key outcome variable throughout my dissertation is the level of outright fraud. The most serious risk associated with outright fraud is ouster by uprising. I have argued that citizens enmeshed in civil society associations can more easily mobilize themselves to protest against a dictatorship. Consequently, dictators who rule citizens involved in dense citizen networks try to avoid outright fraud. Therefore, the overall level of fraud will be inversely correlated with the density of social cohesion.

H2: Authoritarian leaders are less likely to use electoral fraud in the presence of stronger citizen networks.

Citizen social cohesion is of course not the only force influencing the dictator's decision to use fraud. Because outright fraud is often visible to foreigners, dictators that are especially dependent on foreign support tend to care about their democratic appearance. Therefore, these leaders prefer other methods of manipulation than outright fraud.

H3: Authoritarian leaders are less likely to use electoral fraud if they are more dependent on foreign support.

3.2 Cross-Country Analysis: Dictatorships 1945-2015

3.2.1 Data and Variables

In order to define a universe of cases for a cross-national time-series data set, I build on the Autocratic Regimes data set version 1.2 that defines autocratic regimes in which an executive achieves power through undemocratic means, which are defined as means other than reasonably fair and competitive elections. The coding rules also take into consideration criteria such as banned opposition parties, repression on the opposition, significant electoral fraud, etc. to code a transition from democracy back to autocracy (Geddes, Wright, and

Frantz, 2014). While the dataset covers countries from 1945 to 2010, I use their coding rules to extend the dataset to 2015. My unit of analysis is election-year in the autocratic regimes.

3.2.1.1 Dependent Variables

As the main dependent variable, I use the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) measure of *electoral integrity* that closely follows how I define blatant fraud (Coppedge et al., 2016). This measure is constructed by asking country experts: “In this national election, was there evidence of other intentional irregularities by incumbent and/or opposition parties, and/or vote fraud? Clarification: Examples include use of double IDs, intentional lack of voting materials, ballot-stuffing, misreporting of votes, and false collation of votes.”¹ The participants respond on an ordinal scale that ranges from 0 to 4, and the higher number indicates fewer irregularities – or better election quality. The final coding is produced through the Bayesian item response theory measurement model to account and adjust for differences in how experts apply ordinal scales to cases and random errors. As shown below in Figure 3.2.1.1, there exists a large variation in the quality of elections even across dictatorships for both executive and legislative elections. Figure 3.2 suggests that there has not been a clear upward trend of electoral integrity since 1945.

Moreover, I employ two additional variables to check the robustness of the V-Dem measure of blatant fraud. First, I incorporate the Free and Fair Elections (FFE) data set that provides ten dummy variables of election quality such as measures of the legal framework, electoral rights, ballot access, campaign process, media access, and counting of the votes (Bishop and Hoeffler, 2016). Among the ten measures of free and fair elections, I use a variable closely measuring outright fraud: *counting of votes*, coded as 0 there were flaws in the counting process.² Second, I refer to the National Elections Across Democracy and Autocracy Dataset (NELDA) variable that is coded as “yes” if Western election monitors reported

¹The instruction also adds, “This question does not refer to lack of access to registration, harassment of opposition parties, manipulations of the voter registry or vote-buying (dealt with in previous questions).”

²More specifically, criteria included tracking of vote tabulation, observation of counting process by more than one group, and no evidence of tampering with the ballot boxes, etc. (Bishop and Hoeffler, 2016, 613)

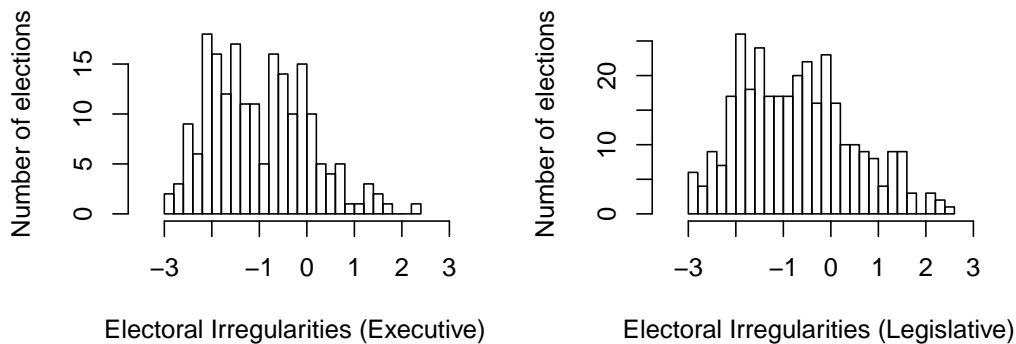
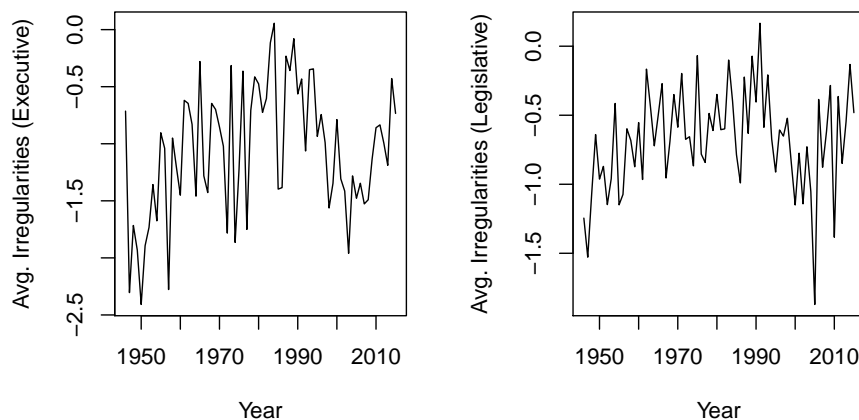


Figure 3.1: Distribution of Dependent Variable: Electoral Integrity in Dictatorships, 1945-2015.

Note: The figure includes all post-Cold War, authoritarian legislative elections to show the cross-national variation in election quality. The data comes from the “election irregularities” variable (`v2elirreg_leg`) in the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Dataset, Version 6 (Coppedge et al., 2016). Dictatorships were defined as specified by the Autocratic Regimes Dataset Version 1.2 (Geddes, Wright, and Frantz, 2014).

Figure 3.2: Yearly Average of Electoral Integrity in Dictatorships, 1945-2015.



the existence of “significant vote-fraud,” though this measure is narrower than the other two measures of outright fraud (Hyde and Marinov, 2011). I inversely code the NELDA variable so that for all measures of fraud, lower values signal more fraud, and higher values indicate

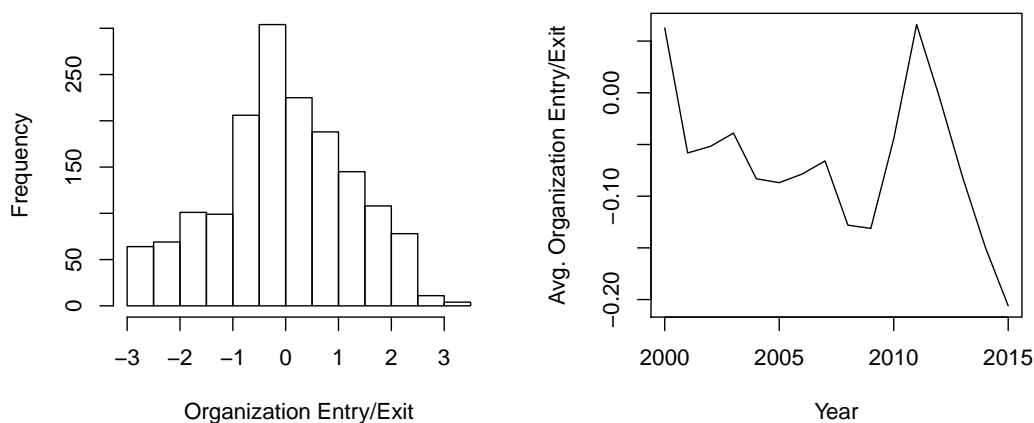
better election quality.

3.2.1.2 Explanatory Variables

My analysis uses three main explanatory variables to test my three hypotheses. The first variable is *civil society organization (CSO) participatory environment* from V-Dem that gathers expert responses by asking questions on people’s involvement in CSOs. (Coppedge et al., 2016). The value of the variable ranges from 0 if the response is “most associations are state-sponsored” to 4 if the response is that “there are many diverse CSOs and it is considered normal for people to be at least occasionally active in at least one of them.” Figure 3.3 shows both the distribution of the variable and its yearly average since 2000. Again, there is no clear upward or downward trend in terms of CSO participatory environment across authoritarian regimes on average. My hypotheses predicts the CSO variable to be positively associated with the dependent variable (and inversely correlated with blatant fraud).

Figure 3.3: Distribution and Yearly Average of CSO participatory environment in Dictatorships, 2000-2015.

The data I collect last from 1945-2015, but here I show the trend for this century for better visual presentation.



The second explanatory variable indicates inflows of *foreign aid and official development assistance (ODA)* as % of GDP. The aid and ODA data were downloaded from the World

Bank Open Data. This variable too is expected to be positively associated with measures of electoral integrity.

The third variable of significance is a binary indicator that takes a value of 1 if there is an election *rule change*. Conceptually, I categorize "election rule change" into several different types. One most obvious rule change I record is any changes in the electoral system, i.e. transition from proportional representation to plurality rule and vice versa. Other rule changes include adopting gender quota for parliamentary seats, changing district magnitude, changing number of votes per voter, and more. For the data analysis of this dissertation, I use electoral system changes.³ I created this variable using various sources such as the the Data Handbooks by (Nohlen, Krennerich, and Thibaut, 1999; Nohlen, Grotz, and Hartmann, 2001; Nohlen, 2005; Nohlen and Stover, 2010), IPU PARLINE database, and International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) Election Guide that record details of electoral systems around the world. According to my hypothesis, both variables should be positively associated with the dependent variable. All explanatory variables are lagged by one year in order to alleviate endogeneity problems.

3.2.1.3 Control Variables

To account for various confounders, I control for several economic and demographic conditions. First, I include *GDP per capita*. I do this to address the modernization theory that more developed countries should be more democratic and perhaps less fraudulent. On a different note, wealthier dictatorial regimes, often endowed with natural resources, can afford to buy off citizens to acquire incumbency advantage and alleviate any anti-regime sentiments (Smith, 2006; Mahdavi, 2015). In this case, autocrats may have less need to employ fraud in order to change the election results in their favor. In line with this view, I also include *fuel exports* as % GDP from Ross (2012). Second, I control for *logged population* because I suspect that incumbents may find it harder to use fraud when the population size is smaller

³I am in the process of collecting more comprehensive data on other types of rule changes and hope to incorporate them in my future research.

because citizens are naturally more likely to be well-connected to each other.⁴ Third, I include the ethnolinguistic fractionalization index (ELF) from the Ethnic Power Relations dataset (Cederman, Wimmer, and Min, 2010). This variable controls for the possibility that countries with more diverse population may have a wide range of interests and in turn, more resistance against the dictator’s rule and preferences. On the contrary, it is also possible that as the number of ethnic groups increase and the size of each ethnic group becomes smaller, authoritarian leaders find it more difficult to distribute patronage through ethnic networks (Fearon, 1999; Chandra, 2004). I also include export and FDI data to control for additional needs for the international community.

In addition to the economic and demographic control variables, I also include dummy variables that indicate different types of authoritarian regimes: *party*, *military*, and *monarchy* regimes. The baseline category is personalist regime.⁵ Prior studies suggest that authoritarian regimes differ in terms of their organizational ability to control and co-opt opposition (e.g. Fjelde, 2010). In line with Svobik (2012) who question using regime types as explanatory variables, I choose to use them as controls. Lastly, I include dummy variables indicating whether domestic and international *election observers* were present. Using the V-Dem variables, I create one dummy that indicates whether any observers are present at national elections. This is to account for monitoring of elections that has become nearly universal in non-democracies (Hyde, 2011; Kelley, 2008). Past research on election monitoring show that the presence of monitors decrease the fraud levels (e.g. Donno, 2008); however, some regimes who invite monitoring still cheat (Kelley, 2008; Hyde, 2011). All control variables are lagged by one year. Table 3.1 provides the summary statistics of all variables defined above.

3.2.2 Main Analysis

The baseline model is specified as following:

⁴Anecdotal evidence indicates that in Kuwait, with population of less than 1.5 million, it is easier for the people to observe ballot stations and assess the transparency of the electoral process, as discussed in the next chapter.

⁵For the additional analyses on executive elections, I exclude the monarchy variable as monarchies generally do not hold executive elections; therefore, they are not in the dataset.

Table 3.1: Summary statistics.

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Election irregularity (V-Dem)	898	-0.653	1.244	-2.918	2.494
CSO participatory environment	900	-0.508	1.184	-3.450	2.636
Aid & ODA	652	558,962,791.000	848,572,260.000	0.00001	8,961,930,000.000
Rule Change	265	0.053	0.224	0	1
Export (% GDP)	592	33.456	28.048	0.009	230.106
FDI (% GDP)	485	2.400	5.083	-28.624	46.494
Mil. Spending (% GDP)	527	3.240	5.508	0.143	102.898
GDP per cap.	603	3,566.972	6,535.419	158.830	52,244.590
Oil export (% Export)	439	20.644	30.539	0.00001	99.404
Population	722	21,896,780.000	32,335,534.000	379,891	208,612,556
Hegemonic party	900	0.530	0.499	0	1
Military	900	0.129	0.335	0	1
Monarchy	900	0.102	0.303	0	1

$$y_{i,t} = \alpha + \beta_1(\text{CSO participatory environment})_{i,t-1} + \beta_2(\text{Aid and ODA})_{i,t-1} + \beta_3(\text{Rule Change})_{i,t-1} + \mathbf{X}_i\gamma + \epsilon_{i,t}. \quad (3.1)$$

Here, $y_{i,t}$ refers to electoral integrity observed in country i and year t . \mathbf{X}_i is the vector of control variables, including the year-fixed effects to address time-varying unobserved effects. My main estimator is the ordinal least squares (OLS), with cluster-robust standard errors at the country level that address heteroscedasticity issues. In other tests, I replace the V-Dem dependent variable with the FFE and NELDA fraud measures. Missing variables were imputed using the Amelia II package in **R**, though results remain consistent even without imputations.

Table 3.2 presents the estimated effects of explanatory variables – CSO participatory environment, foreign support, and electoral system change – on the quality of elections. Model (1) is a simple model that includes the three explanatory variables only. In Models (1) through (3), the coefficients of *CSO participatory environment* are positive and statistically significant at $p < 0.01$. This suggests that dictators that are ruling citizens enmeshed in civil society organizations are on average associated with less blatant fraud. The *Aid & ODA* variable also appears positive and statistically significant. The coefficients of the *Rule Change* variable are also largely consistent with the hypothesis that outright fraud and subtle manipulation operate as partial substitutes; in other words, if dictators adopt more outright fraudulent strategies such as double voting, ballot-stuffing, misreporting of votes, and false counting of votes, then they are less likely to also change the electoral system.

It is also interesting to note that compared to personalist dictatorships, both party regimes and monarchies are less likely to rely on outright fraud. It is logical to think that monarchs gain more from holding clean legislative elections and claiming democratic advancement. I further elaborate the case of a monarchy by illustrating Kuwait in the next chapter. For party regimes, to which deterring elite defection is more important as the size of its ruling coalition is larger, perhaps using outright fraud is associated with more risks

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Electoral Integrity (V-Dem, Legislative)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
CSO Participatory Environment	0.269*** (0.060)	0.432*** (0.107)	0.457*** (0.104)
Aid & ODA (% GDP)	0.059*** (0.019)	0.039* (0.021)	0.044** (0.021)
Rule Change	-0.646** (0.307)	-0.351* (0.145)	-0.108 (0.151)
Export (% GDP)		0.002 (0.005)	0.001 (0.004)
FDI (% GDP)		-0.018 (0.021)	-0.009 (0.021)
Mil. Spending (% GDP)		0.264*** (0.055)	0.196*** (0.066)
Log(GDP per cap.)		0.150 (0.118)	0.053 (0.118)
Oil export (% Export)		-0.007* (0.004)	-0.004 (0.004)
Log(Population)		0.045 (0.080)	0.013 (0.084)
Internet		-0.051 (0.082)	-0.063 (0.079)
Hegemonic party			0.673*** (0.227)
Military			0.269 (0.374)
Monarchy			1.078** (0.438)
Constant	0.289 (0.367)	-2.666 (1.682)	-1.643 (1.670)
Observations	900	900	900

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 3.2: Determinants of Electoral Integrity (Legislative Elections, 1945-2015).

Note: robust standard errors are presented, clustered by country.

than benefits.

3.2.3 Robustness Checks

To evaluate the robustness of the main model, I conduct three additional tests. First, I use data from executive authoritarian elections (1945-2015) to present results in Table 3.3. Here, I cannot test H1 that outright fraud and rule manipulation are substitutes because my data measuring rule manipulation only includes legislative electoral system changes. Consistent with H2, coefficients of *CSO participatory environment* are again positive and statistically significant at $p < 0.01$. However, this model is not consistent with H3 that countries that rely more on foreign support tend to use less fraud.

Second, I use NELDA and FFE's fraud measures as dependent variables, respectively, in Table 3.4 and Table 3.5. The two dependent variables each captures slightly different aspects of fraud, as noted the previous section. However, they both measure portions of the concept I illustrate as outright, visible fraud. Note that for all dependent variables, the higher values indicate less fraud and higher electoral integrity. Table 3.4 once again confirms my hypothesis that citizen networks are negatively correlated with the use of fraud. The three models also confirm H1 that rule change and blatant fraud are partial substitutes. For H3, while Model (1) is consistent with the hypothesis that the need for foreign support is associated with electoral integrity, the coefficients for *Aid & ODA* are not significant in Models (2) and (3). Note that the positive, significant coefficient for party regime is consistent with the previous models.

According to Table 3.5, *CSO participatory environment* is again statistically significant and positively correlated with electoral integrity. However, I do not find evidence for the other two hypotheses. One interesting factor to note is the sign of the coefficient for *Military Spending* that is negative and significant because in Table 3.2, the signs were opposite. My future research agenda includes cultivating a more fine-grained understanding of fraud types their interaction with various factors in addition to the key explanatory variables in my research.

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Electoral Integrity (V-Dem, Executive)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
CSO Participatory Environment	0.243*** (0.050)	0.602*** (0.104)	0.623*** (0.099)
Aid & ODA (% GDP)	0.003 (0.021)	0.010 (0.021)	0.009 (0.020)
Export (% GDP)		0.003 (0.006)	0.002 (0.006)
FDI (% GDP)		-0.007 (0.014)	-0.012 (0.014)
Mil. Spending (% GDP)		0.063 (0.066)	0.061 (0.063)
Log(GDP per cap.)		0.199* (0.119)	0.133 (0.112)
Oil export (% Export)		-0.005 (0.004)	0.001 (0.004)
Log(Population)		0.231** (0.098)	0.146 (0.096)
Internet		-0.135 (0.089)	-0.111 (0.083)
Hegemonic party			0.687*** (0.184)
Military			-0.212 (0.385)
Constant	-0.938** (0.402)	-6.839*** (1.864)	-5.279*** (1.810)
Observations	462	462	462

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 3.3: Determinants of Electoral Integrity (Executive Elections, 1945-2015).

Robust standard errors are presented, clustered by country.

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Electoral Integrity (NELDA)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
CSO participatory environment	0.089** (0.041)	0.440** (0.194)	0.730** (0.359)
Aid & ODA (% GDP)	0.400*** (0.150)	-0.191 (0.329)	-0.296 (0.395)
Rule Change	-1.957*** (0.606)	-2.073*** (0.781)	-1.783* (0.945)
Export (% GDP)		0.001 (0.013)	-0.004 (0.014)
FDI (% GDP)		-0.063 (0.071)	-0.058 (0.081)
Mil. Spending (% GDP)		0.117 (0.172)	-0.104 (0.238)
Log(GDP per cap.)		0.243 (0.312)	0.064 (0.357)
Oil export (% Export)		-0.004 (0.009)	0.009 (0.011)
Log(Population)		-0.207 (0.289)	-0.451 (0.372)
Internet		0.101 (0.201)	0.118 (0.216)
Hegemonic party			1.971*** (0.682)
Military			1.056 (0.967)
Monarchy			1.878 (1.867)
Constant	9.387*** (2.981)	6.453 (5.756)	13.146* (6.759)
Observations	839	839	839

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 3.4: Determinants of Electoral Integrity, Using NELDA Variables (Legislative Elections, 1945-2012).

Robust standard errors are presented, clustered by country.

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Electoral Integrity (FFE)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
CSO participatory environment	0.613*** (0.200)	1.700*** (0.616)	1.782** (0.692)
Aid & ODA (% GDP)	-0.038 (0.042)	-0.008 (0.062)	-0.015 (0.068)
Rule Change	-1.333 (1.857)	-1.492 (1.759)	-1.618 (1.745)
Export (% GDP)		0.010 (0.017)	0.012 (0.019)
FDI (% GDP)		0.144 (0.153)	0.131 (0.156)
Mil. Spending (% GDP)		-0.981** (0.454)	-0.947* (0.497)
Log(GDP per cap.)		-0.353 (0.440)	-0.387 (0.456)
Oil export (% Export)		-0.032 (0.026)	-0.030 (0.027)
Log(Population)		0.170 (0.411)	0.284 (0.536)
Internet		0.094 (0.354)	0.113 (0.360)
Hegemonic party			-0.166 (0.990)
Military			-0.698 (1.993)
Monarchy			
Constant	0.149 (0.843)	0.196 (7.995)	-1.325 (9.267)
Observations	309	309	309

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 3.5: Determinants of Electoral Integrity, Using FFE Variables (Legislative Elections, 1975-2011).

Note: robust standard errors are presented, clustered by country.

The various OLS analyses and robustness checks continuously provided evidence for a strong negative connection between citizen network and outright fraud. These tests, however, cannot establish a causal relationship. In order to alleviate the issues of potential endogeneity between citizen networks and electoral fraud, I turn to an instrumental variables approach in the next section.

3.3 Subnational Analysis of Algeria

Examining patterns across subnational units within a single country can strengthen my results because it allows holding constant various factors that are difficult to do in cross-national comparisons, such as culture and history. To address this issue, I conduct a subnational analysis of Algeria to strengthen my findings. Algeria is a useful case to study in order to examine the patterns of electoral integrity because its elections are often associated with outright fraud. Additionally, the strength of its citizen networks varies widely across the region due to colonial legacy and geographical factors.

3.3.1 Local Associations in Algeria

Algeria has a long tradition of local groups engaging in community activism that is exogenous to current political conditions. Civil society today has its roots in the colonial traditions and the struggle for independence against the French. To examine the Algerian civil society, we must first note the origins of the French settler population and their dissatisfaction with the French governance. Many of the early settlers were exiled to Algeria as a result of the February Revolution of 1848 and the coup d'état by Napoleon III in 1851 (Barbançon, 2003). Settler grievances grew further as the French Army gained greater control over the population. Settlers continued to lobby the French parliament for greater autonomy throughout the 19th century. One way these settlers expressed their resentful feelings towards Metropolitan France was through being in professional associations (Barclay, Chopin, and Evans, 2017). In the early 20th century, civic organizations contributed to growing Algerian nationalism. The Association of the Etoile Nord Africain (ENA) fought against the French government

in the 1920s and 1930 and was subsequently outlawed. The ENA formed the roots of the FLN. Such characteristics of early organizations – its freedom to operate independently – undoubtedly shaped the nature of indigenous civil associations.

In the more recent periods, Algeria has witnessed an explosion of local associations since the introduction of the first law granting freedom of association in 1987. Today, there exist more than 100,000 local associations according to the Ministry of Interior, making Algeria one of the most civic-dense Arab countries.⁶ Figure 3.4 shows a compilation of photos I took during my fieldwork in Algeria. It was extremely common to find various associations in different parts of Algeria, and especially in its capital Algiers. The local associations, however, often suffer from government interference, intimidation, and selective funding (Achy, 2013). Additionally, the most robust social organizations are under the sponsorship of the FLN party (Hamadouche and Zoubir, 2009). However, they generally operate as an outlet for the Algerian public to express their grievances to some extent (Liverani, 2008). However, my interviews with members of local associations suggest that these organizations still provide a space for the citizens to share information that is not manipulated by the state. “We boycotted the elections last May,” said to me a member of a dance group.⁷ The associations, even if their goal is not political, seem to facilitate political discussions.

3.3.2 Data and Measurement

3.3.2.1 Sampling of Provinces and Respondents

The data for this section were obtained from a face-to-face survey of 1,000 respondents in Algeria from April 1 to April 9, 2017, approximately one month prior to the May 4 legislative elections. To select respondents into a nationally representative survey, the sampling frame was created based on the results of the most recent census done in Algeria in 2008 by the

⁶In terms of numbers and growth, Algeria has surpassed other Middle Eastern countries like Egypt or Morocco with longer histories of civil society Liverani (2008).

⁷Interview, August 2017.



Figure 3.4: Pictures of Various Associations in Algeria.

National Office of Statistics.⁸ A multi-stage, stratified, clustered sampling approach was used. The 48 provinces (wilayas) were divided into 3 major geographical areas (North, South, and Highland) and then into urban/rural. The survey covered 39 out of the 48 provinces. Figure 3.5 displays a map of the 39 provinces covered by the survey.⁹

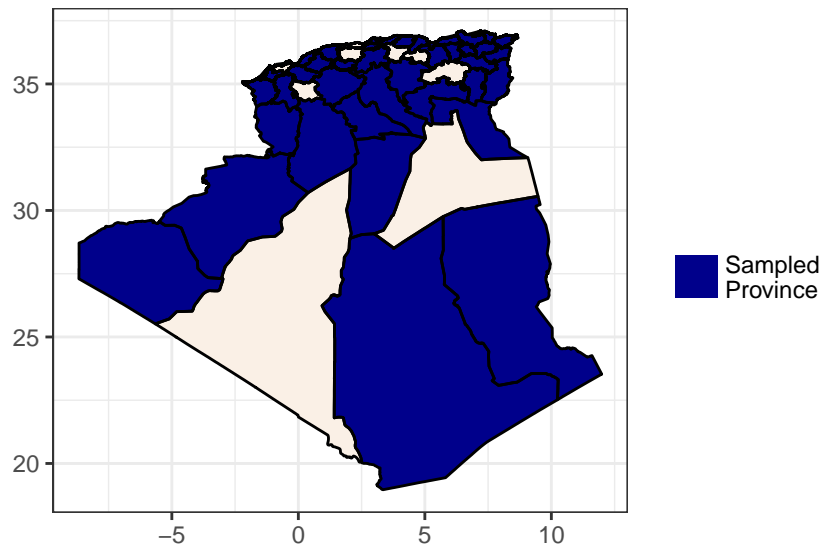


Figure 3.5: Location of 39 sampled provinces.

The typical survey respondents were 38 years old with a reported monthly income of 262 USD or 28562 Algerian Dinar (DZD)¹⁰ The majority of the respondents were Arab and Muslim.¹¹ Half of the respondents were male and the other half female. The majority of

⁸The official census is conducted every ten years. The last update of census results was done by the National Office of Statistics in July 2014.

⁹More than 90% of the Algerian population lives along the Mediterranean coast in the North. There are three types of administrative subdivisions: provinces (wilayas), circles (dairas), and communes (baladiyahs). There exist 1,541 communes, which are the smallest administrative units. The survey covered 102 communes in total, with a minimum of 8 respondents from each commune.

¹⁰Officially, average monthly income in Algeria is 319 USD. 23% of the respondents classified themselves as “poor” or “lower class,” 17% as “working class”, 42% as “middle class,” and 7% as “upper class” or “rich.” 97% of the participants responded that they were Muslim.

¹¹Around 20% to 30% of the population in Algeria are ethnically Berbers although official statistics do not exist. In the survey, I ask the respondents “what is your ethnic community, cultural group, or tribe?” and instructed the enumerators to code from response. The options were Arab, Chaoui, Kabyle, Mouzabit, and Tergui because these terms are more often used in Algeria. The latter four were coded as “Berber.” 23% of the respondents identified themselves as Berbers.

respondents had not received a secondary school diploma.¹² Figure 3.6 displays demographic characteristics for the respondents in the sample. Table 3.12 in the Appendix compares the demographics of the survey respondents to those of the official reports.

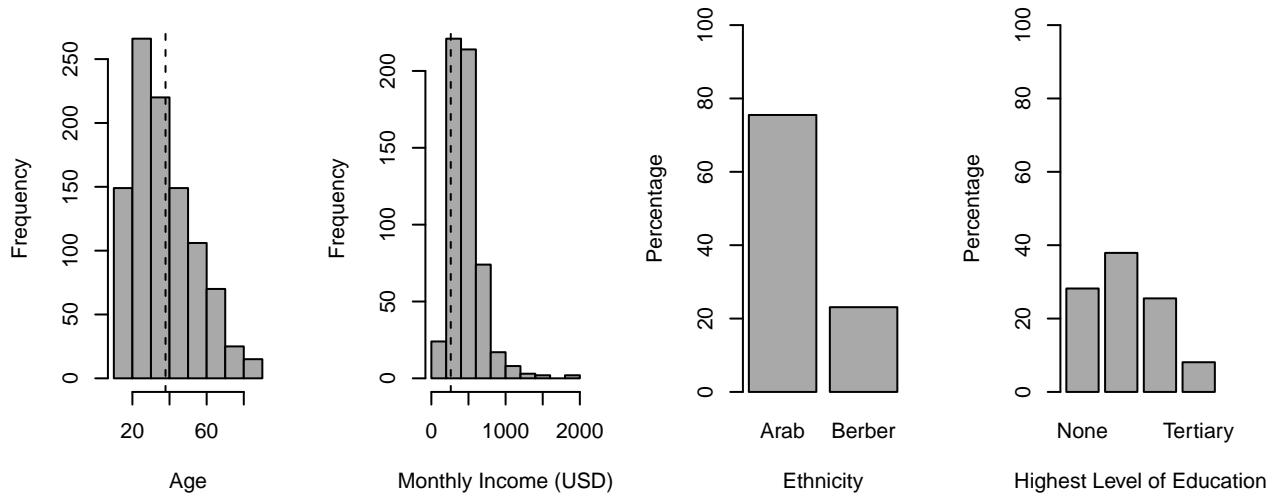


Figure 3.6: Distribution of demographic characteristics of survey respondents.

The dashed lines on the first and second plots display the mean age and income, respectively.

3.3.2.2 Who votes for the regime parties?

In the survey, I simulate voting as it is done in Algeria by asking: “Which party do you intend to vote for during the upcoming May legislative elections?” The survey respondents, if they had expressed their intention to vote in the upcoming election in a previous question, are asked to place a ballot inside an envelope after the enumerators turn their back. The respondents are instructed to seal the envelope; the envelope is not opened in front of the participant and instead, later matched back to the survey data using an identification number. I do so to predict election outcomes as closely as possible. The results are striking: among those who were registered voters and expressed their intentions to vote, only 18%

¹²17% of the participants had received no formal education, 11% some informal or primary education, 38% primary education or some secondary education, 14% secondary school diploma, 11% some post-secondary education, 6% university degree, and 2% graduate education.

of the respondents had answered that they would vote for the regime parties, the FLN and the RND. Officially, the two parties won 40% of the total votes and the majority of the seats in the May elections.¹³ Respondents expressed intentions to vote for 29 other parties and various independents, and only 1% refused to provide an answer. Considering possible response biases, it is logical to think that the answers are biased upward since citizens living in dictatorships are likely to falsify their true preferences by providing “correct” answers the authorities may prefer.

Before constructing measures of fraud to explore the determinants of electoral manipulation, I conduct descriptive analyses of the survey and the official election results published by the regime. According to the scholarly literature and news articles, the traditional supporters of the Algerian regime parties are the elderly, the military, civil servants, and rural residents. I constructed a *regime vote share (survey)* variable that takes a value of 1 if respondents expressed intentions to vote for the two regime parties. As shown from the multivariate logistic regression results in Table 3.6, the survey data shows no evidence of the conventional wisdom about who votes for the regime. In fact, no variables appeared statistically significant.

I conduct another logistic regression analyses using the province level observations of election results and the 2008 census data.¹⁴ Table 3.7 also shows no evidence that provinces with more rural or elderly population are more likely to vote for the regime.¹⁵ However, Models (3) and (4) provide interesting insights that higher turnout rates and population are correlated with more regime vote shares. Under the assumption that electoral fraud is widespread in Algeria, the results suggest that the authorities may be stuffing ballot boxes or merely inflating purports of turnout and vote shares in order to manipulate the election

¹³As described in the previous section, the two parties are considered as the ruling coalition and have won a majority in every legislative elections since 1997.

¹⁴The government does not publish more detailed election data beyond the provincial level.

¹⁵Since the census data does not provide age demographics per province, I use the percentage of retired personnel per province to test whether the elderly are more likely to vote for the regime. The census data also does not include income levels per province; thus, I use occupants per room and internet connectivity to control for the economic conditions.

<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
Regime Vote Share (Survey)	
Rural	0.286 (0.303)
Arab	0.476 (0.372)
Log(age)	0.489 (0.575)
Civil Servants	0.309 (0.659)
Education	-0.029 (0.074)
Log(income)	0.312 (0.377)
Religiosity	-0.075 (0.077)
Constant	-7.410 (4.870)
Observations	553

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 3.6: Voters for the regime parties – survey results.

Note: all variables were constructed based on the self-reported survey responses. Rural, Arab, and Civil Servants are binary variables that are coded as 1 if the respondent lives in a rural area, is Arab, or a civil servant, respectively. Education and Religiosity are categorical variables that take higher values if a respondent is more educated or more religious.

results.

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Regime Vote Share (official)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Rural	0.046 (0.295)	0.027 (0.296)	0.169 (0.242)	0.207 (0.257)
Retired	3.010 (2.272)	2.254 (2.404)	1.656 (2.559)	1.473 (2.611)
Secondary Education	-0.729 (0.939)	-0.045 (1.176)	1.073 (1.014)	1.292 (1.116)
Occupants per Room	8.771 (12.637)	7.771 (12.689)	-1.904 (10.608)	-2.324 (10.748)
Internet		-2.284 (2.362)	-3.168 (2.336)	-3.513 (2.460)
Turnout			1.065*** (0.201)	1.118*** (0.229)
Valid Votes			-0.011 (0.219)	0.031 (0.237)
Active Workforce			0.218 (0.783)	0.404 (0.875)
Log(population)			12.557*** (3.713)	12.447*** (3.757)
FLN vote share (1991)				-8.249 (16.625)
Constant	24.409 (35.193)	20.663 (35.433)	-198.586** (85.687)	-212.321** (90.869)
Observations	48	48	48	48

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 3.7: Voters of the regime parties – official results.

Note: all variables were constructed based on the 2008 census data except for turnout, valid votes, and FLN vote share in 1991, which are from the official election reports issued by the government published journal.

3.3.3 Variables

3.3.3.1 Dependent Variable

Electoral fraud and manipulation are difficult to measure due to their illegal, secretive nature. Every data collection method has advantages and disadvantages in terms of reliability. The advantage of getting data from citizens directly is that I am able to compare the citizen responses to the official election results. In countries with a reliable election monitoring process, scholars can use these data to gauge the quality of elections. However, subnational data on electoral quality often do not exist. More importantly, in the case of an authoritarian regime like Algeria, incumbents first have to invite the international election observers or allow creation of domestic election monitoring agency. Prominent American election observers such as the Carter Center or the National Democratic Institute did not participate in monitoring the 2017 legislative elections.¹⁶ Additionally, while the High Independent Authority for Election Monitoring (HIISE) was created before the 2017 elections, it operates under strict government control, making it unreliable.¹⁷ Election forensics is not an effective method for fraud detection in the case of Algeria because the country does not publish detailed election results. The disadvantage of surveying citizens is that they may misreport their political preferences. Fear of reporting their intentions to vote for a non-regime party or admitting selling of votes could stem from a concern that the government will punish them if they find out. Additionally, respondents may not report selling votes from their desire not to admit to socially undesirable acts to enumerators.

To mitigate these concerns, I adopted various strategies to solicit truthful answers. First, the surveys were conducted a month before the May 4 legislative elections to minimize any survey response effects due to timing of the survey¹⁸ As I mentioned above, I created an environment that simulates the true voting process, using ballots and envelopes. The

¹⁶The regime did invite electoral observers from the European Union and the African Union.

¹⁷Interview with activist, July 2017

¹⁸I had originally intended to conduct the survey two weeks prior to the elections, but I had concerns that the government would ban all surveys close to the elections, as it had done in the past.

results are striking. Only 14.5% of the respondents who indicated their intention to vote answered that they would vote for the regime parties – the FLN and the RND. According to the post-election official results, however, 41% of the votes were captured by the regime parties, allocating the majority of the parliamentary seats for the two parties. Furthermore, I had asked the enumerators to record whether they felt the respondents were (1) friendly or hostile, (2) at ease or suspicious, and (3) honest or misleading.

Using the data I collect from the survey, I first measure fraud by aggregating the individual-level survey responses into province-level variables of fraud. I construct two measures of fraud – election rigging and vote buying. I define election rigging as all fraudulent strategies employed by the regime between ballot submission and result announcement, including methods such as turnout inflation, ballot stuffing, vote misrecording, ballot tampering, voter impersonation, double voting, etc. Election rigging is measured as the difference between the official province-level vote share of the regime parties and the survey results on intentions to vote for the regime parties. Individual responses in the survey were aggregated to create a province-level regime party vote share. In brief, my first dependent variable is:

$$\widehat{\text{fraud}} = \text{official regime vote share} - \text{survey (intended) regime vote share}$$

For example, eighteen people in the province of El Oued answered that they are registered voters and would vote. Among those, only one person answered that he/she would vote for the regime parties; thus, the regime vote share was 1/18 or 6% for El Oued. I subtract 6% from the reported 54.88% regime party vote share in Alger to create a fraud measure of 48.88 for El Oued. Figure 3.7 presents the scatterplot between the intended votes for the regime and the official regime votes reported following the May elections. The line is a 45 degree line with a slope of 1, indicating that the regime vote shares from the survey and the official results are the same. Lying above the line means that the reported regime vote shares were higher than intended votes collected by the survey. As indicated in the figure, with the exception of three provinces, all had noticeably higher official vote shares compared to the survey results.

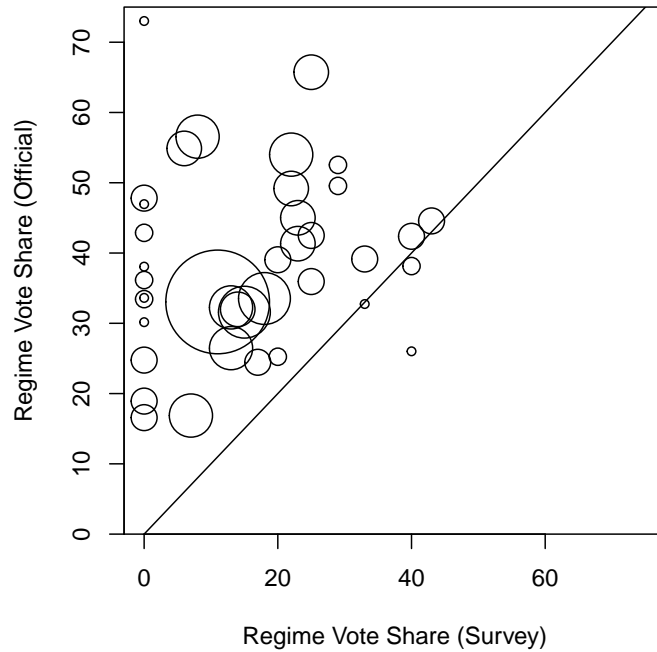


Figure 3.7: Scatterplot of intended votes for the regime and official regime votes.

Note: point sizes correspond to the sample size.

Additionally, to help reveal true political preferences, I administered a list experiment. A list experiment has been used by other scholars to help reveal truthful answers of fearful voters in studies of electoral manipulation (e.g Bratton et al., 2016).¹⁹ Assuming that the fear of potential regime surveillance leads respondents to hide their voting intentions, I incorporated a list experiment in which the participants are asked to say how many of the items apply. The respondents are randomly placed in a control or a treatment group. The control group is provided with three non-sensitive items; in addition to the same three items, the treatment group gets another item. This item, as shown in Table 3.8, is a sensitive item that helps reveal whether participants are masking their political preferences. The difference in the mean counts of the control and the treatment group measures the extent to which the sensitive item applies. About a quarter of the respondents (24%) responded that they

¹⁹According to the Afrobarometer survey conducted in Algeria in 2014,

had discussed voting for a certain party for which they will probably not vote. Moreover, I ask the enumerators to record whether they felt that the respondents were (1) friendly or hostile, (2) at ease or suspicious, and (3) honest or misleading to strengthen the robustness of the responses. I use these results to check the robustness of the dependent variables.

Control	Treatment
(1) General political news	(1) General political news
(2) Russian influence in the region	(2) Russian influence in the region
	(3) Voting for a certain party that I probably will not vote for
(3) The Syrian conflict	(4) The Syrian conflict

Table 3.8: Design of the list experiment.

This table displays the items in the control and treatment lists. The sensitive item is in bold font (this was not the case in the actual experiment). The enumerator read the following question for the respondents (in Arabic): *We are interested in what political issues people talk about with their friends and neighbors. We are not interested in what you talk about, only HOW MANY of the following you do.*

In addition to election rigging, I construct a measure of vote buying. Buying or selling of votes is an illegal act and thus, such behavior is difficult to measure. To mitigate these challenges, I implement an indirect survey method – randomized-response (RR) survey technique – to uncover unbiased estimates of such sensitive phenomenon Blair, Imai, and Zhou (2015). This method aims to induce honest answers and protect respondents. The estimates derived via the RR-techniques are shown to be far closer to actual rates of sensitive behaviors than direct survey methods (Rosenfeld, Imai, and Shapiro, 2016). To employ this method, enumerators were instructed to use an Algerian coin as a randomization device.²⁰ Figure 3.8 presents pictures of ordinary Algerian coins I took during my fieldwork.

An ordinary Algerian coin with *kitabeh* on one side and *wajeh* on the other side was used to determine whether respondents should give an honest answer instead of predetermined or forced response. The enumerators were trained not to observe how the respondent flips the coin. Each respondent was told the following in Arabic: “When you toss the coin, if *wajeh*

²⁰I used a coin instead of other popular tools of randomization such as a die because a die is considered *haram* or forbidden for religious Muslims who associate it with an act of gambling. After reading primary sources and interviewing Algerians, I determined that a coin was appropriate as it is widely used and familiar for all Algerians.



Figure 3.8: Pictures of Algerian coins.

shows on the coin, tell me yes no matter what. If wajeh does not show, tell me your truthful answer. Again, the coin toss is to offer you protection. I am unable to know if your “yes response is because of the coin toss or because it is your honest answer. Do you understand how the coin offers you protection?”²¹

Then binary responses were coded as “Yes” or “No” to the following question: “For the upcoming legislative elections in May, did someone offer you a bribe, gift or service in exchange for your vote for a certain party/politician?” I specifically refrain from asking whether the respondent took a bribe in order to solicit more honest responses. Instead, I ask whether the person was *offered* a bribe.

Once I collected the data, I used the following equations to recover the province-level proportion of respondents reporting vote buying. Let $Z_{i,j}$ represent the latent response to the vote buying question for a respondent i in province j . The observed response represents the actual answers $Y_{i,j}$ (1 for “Yes” and 0 for “No”). Let R_i represent a latent random variable that takes a value of 1 if i is forced to answer “Yes” and 0 of providing an honest answer Z_i . The design produces the following:

²¹The enumerator was additionally trained to explain again how the coin offers them protection if the respondent looked confused.

$$Pr(Y_{ij} = 1) = p + Pr(Z_{ij} = 1)(1 - p) \quad (3.2)$$

where p is the probability of a forced “Yes” answer, which is 0.5. Rearranging equation 1, the following equation allows us to derive the probability that a respondent truthfully answers “Yes” to the question regarding vote buying:

$$Pr(Z_{ij} = 1) = \frac{Pr(Y_{ij} = 1) - p}{(1 - p)} \quad (3.3)$$

Equation 2 shows that for the entire sample, 20.5% of the respondents were offered a bribe in exchange for their votes. Table 3.15 presents the two constructed fraud measures on the provincial level.

3.3.3.2 Explanatory variables

I argue that strong civil society discourages authoritarian leaders from committing fraud. Many Algerian civil society organizations – humanitarian, youth, human rights, women’s, and more – have alleged that the government deliberately uses fraud and abstained as a group in protest. “Fraud in Algeria happens at the central level, and boycotting as a group is the most effective solution,” said a member of a youth group.²²

To test my hypothesis empirically, I collect data on the local associations that are published by the Ministry of Interior. There exists a wide variation in numbers of local associations across provinces. For instance, as of 2016, in the Alger province operates 12,000 registered local association whereas the Tindouf province only has 316. The groups range from professional and religious groups to environmental and women’s organizations. Using this data, I created a variable that indicates the number of local associations per 1,000 people per province. Initially, at the promulgation of the 1990 law on associative freedom, the members of the liberal professions, academics, and lawyers, etc., were at the center of the civil society groups coordinating new social and political demands (Entelis, 1996). However, in

²²Interview; August 2017.

Algeria, the local associations have gradually become dominated by regime supporters such as trade unions (Harik, 1994) or other public sector employees in the civil service, education, or the health sector that receive generous state funding for the associations (Liverani, 2008). Following these concerns, I do not include associations related to the public sector in the explanatory variable.

I also argue that the more need for popularity reduces the extent of electoral fraud. I operationalize (un)popularity using civil war deaths per 1,000 residents. I collect the data on deaths and massacres from various news sources and use the 1988 census data for the number of residents per province. The logic is that in those provinces that suffered extensive massacres and trauma, it would be more important for the incumbents to boost their popularity in such areas by demonstrating strong election results. In other words, fraud levels will be higher in areas with lower regime popularity.

3.3.4 Main Results: Determinants of Fraud

In this section, I examine when incumbents are most likely to engage in fraudulent activities, using province-level observations. First, I test my hypothesis that election rigging and vote buying are negatively associated with the number of local associations. Second, I test whether the deaths during the Algerian Civil War have affected incumbent fraud decisions. I conduct multivariate ordinary least square (OLS) regression.

I control for factors that may influence both civil society and fraud decisions and thus could possibly confound the analysis. Such variables include rate of urbanization, internet connectivity, and average occupants per room in a home. The last variable is a measure of poverty. First, higher urbanization rate (percentage of population living in urban areas) arguably provides the regime with more incentives to rig the elections because urban populations tend to be more anti-regime in Algeria. Additionally, urbanization could either strengthen social cohesion because citizens are geographically closer together or weaken civic engagement due to the “lonely” aspects of city life. Second, higher levels of internet connectivity likely decreases the government’s incentives to use electoral fraud because they

fear information spread and collective action that could be facilitated through the internet – similarly to how civil society can reduce the use of fraud. The internet, additionally, can help foster local associations; in Algeria, many youth organizations communicate via Facebook. At the same time, being connected through the web may reduce the need to join local associations. Third, poverty can arguably increase the fraud levels, as the poor may be more easily bought by the regime; poverty may also work as a barrier for the population to establish or even join local associations. I additionally control for reported turnout and reported vote shares for valid ballots. I also test whether the two fraud types are substitutes and thus negatively correlated by controlling for each in the model explaining the other.

Table 3.9 shows my main results. As predicted by H1, as the number of associations per 1,000 citizens increase, the dictators were more likely to refrain from both election rigging and vote buying. However, I only find partial support for H2. The results suggest that more civil war deaths – a proxy for low popularity – are correlated with less vote buying, as hypothesized, but with more election rigging. An alternative explanation is that in areas where the residents suffered extreme trauma during the civil war, the grievances towards the regime or political apathy is too deep to be reversed through providing bribes or money. As a result, paying residents in exchange for votes will only be effective in areas where the antipathy towards the regime is moderate. This logic is similar to the “turnout buying” model of Nichter (2008) who theorizes that parties offer rewards to mobilize their supporters rather than to buy off non-supporters.

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	Election Rigging	Vote Buying
	(1)	(2)
Association	-17.396** (8.889)	-13.638** (6.926)
Civil War Deaths	26.705* (13.460)	-15.568*** (3.599)
Valid Votes	1.664*** (0.525)	-0.189 (0.718)
Turnout	1.330*** (0.398)	0.302 (0.551)
Log(population)	3.515 (7.790)	8.137 (9.013)
Urbanization	-0.840** (0.352)	0.581 (0.439)
Literacy	1.066 (0.709)	-0.402 (0.860)
Internet	3.488 (3.963)	-5.729 (4.571)
Occupants per Room	-24.880 (17.886)	-24.932 (21.122)
Vote Buying	-0.022 (0.164)	
Election Rigging		-0.030 (0.225)
Constant	-189.949 (147.657)	-26.390 (177.874)
Observations	39	39

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 3.9: Correlates of electoral fraud for the May 2017 legislative elections in Algeria.

While the results do not provide statistically significant support for H3 (election rigging and vote buying being substitutes), the coefficients are negative, indicating a possible negative correlation between the two types of fraud measures. In other words, it is likely that autocrats decide on which strategy they concentrate their resources. As suggested by the partial support for H2, in areas where vote buying is not efficient, incumbents can resort to election rigging.

It is interesting to find the lack of result for internet connectivity as I have argued about the importance of uncontrolled communication in deterring fraud. I posit that it is because the access to internet is generally low in Algeria, with a penetration rate around 40%. In El Tarf Province, the rate was only 1.6% according to the 2008 census. According to the 2015 Afrobarometer survey, only 45% of the population answered that they use the internet more than a few times a month. Thus, it is logical to find that physical associations are much more important, at least in Algeria.

3.3.5 Causal Inference Using Instrumental Variable Strategy

My main quantity of interest is the effect of civil society on electoral fraud. One of the concerns of interpreting the coefficient for my main explanatory variable – local association – as causal is that civil society may not be exogenous to the political meddling of the regime. In particular, authoritarian desires to consolidate power may influence both the extents of citizen networks and electoral fraud. This concern derives from a large theoretical and empirical literature that notes the many ways that those with dictatorial power can exert control over the society. Accurately determining the direction of the causal arrow, as with the study of authoritarian politics more broadly, is challenging.

Recognizing the multiple causal arrows that muddle the link between civil society and political outcomes, I use education in Algeria during the French colonial era as an instrument for current civil society. Under 132 years of French rule, although the separation of colonizer and colonized was pronounced, Algerians were heavily influenced by French notions of civil liberty (Entelis, 1996). Although Algerian society was endowed with independence from the

state long before the colonial period, the modern form of associational life flourished under French rule and the subsequent enactment of the law on freedom of association in 1901.²³

Indigenous Algerians took substantial part of certain organizations established by the settlers, especially in the South, towards the mid-20th century. For instance, there exists evidence that the indigenous population joined the Catholic, sports associations headed by the White Fathers (Perés Blancs, the Missionaries of Africa); in the southern territory of Laghouat, in the Union sportive et de préparation militaire de Laghouat (Sports and Military Training Union of Laghouat), four of the twelve members of the board of directors were Muslims (Fates, 2004).

While it was rare for Algerians to be part of French settlers' associations, Entelis (1996, p.55) highlights that "politicized Algerian civil society owes its origins to the pre-revolutionary period, when it absorbed much from the French notions of associational life and state-society relations." The discussion suggests that education during the time of French colonization is a plausible instrument.

To operationalize colonial education, I collected data on Muslim students in public primary schools published by the colonial authorities (Sous-Direction des Statistiques) in 1960, two years prior to the Algerian independence.²⁴ I construct the instrument by dividing the number of Muslim students by the number of total indigenous Algerians per province.²⁵

As in the case with many instruments, it is difficult to rule out all possible channels by which the instrument may affect the outcome variable. Recognizing this caveat, I still am unable to find plausible scenarios whereby past education (almost seven decades ago) is linked to factors that may potentially affect the dependent variable in my analysis. The outcome of interest – electoral fraud – seems to be driven primarily by current domestic conditions. In an attempt to diagnose possible violations of the exogeneity empirically and

²³Before independence, autonomous organizations existed in forms of religious lodges (zaouias), brotherhoods (turuq) or village assemblies (jama'at) (Liverani, 2008).

²⁴Discuss colonial education.

²⁵There were 15 administrative units during this era. Using maps and primary sources on district changes published by the Algerian government, I match the data to the current administrative units.

systematically, I run a regression analysis of the instrument on each of the control variables to check whether there is any sign of correlation between the instrument and observable factors that may potentially affect the dependent variables. Table 3.10 presents the results. I report no violation of the exclusion restriction. The exclusion restriction implied by my instrumental variable regression is that, conditional on the controls included in the regression, the percentage of indigenous Algerian students during the colonial era has no effect on fraud today, other than their effect through civil society development.

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>							
	Muslim Students							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Civil War Deaths	0.011 (0.010)							
Valid Votes		-0.002 (0.002)						
Turnout			0.0001 (0.001)					
Log(population)				0.003 (0.014)				
Urbanization					0.001 (0.002)			
Literacy						0.002 (0.003)		
Internet							0.007 (0.005)	
Occupants per Room								-0.048 (0.031)
Observations	39	39	39	39	39	39	39	39

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 3.10: (Non)Correlates of the instrument.

The equation below indicates the baseline equation:

$$y_j = \alpha_j + \beta \cdot \text{association}_j + \mathbf{X}_j\gamma + \epsilon_j, \quad (3.4)$$

where y_j refers to fraud levels observed in province i . The vector \mathbf{X}_j includes the rest of the independent variables. I estimate the first stage equation below:

$$\text{association}_j = \alpha_j + \theta_j(\text{colonial education}_j \cdot \mathbf{X}_j\gamma) + \eta_j, \quad (3.5)$$

where η is the idiosyncratic error term. This instrument, *education*, is a strong predictor of association. The increasing magnitude of the estimates supports the notion that colonial education contributed to the present day citizen networks.

I then use the instrumental values of *association* to estimate the second stage equation:

$$y_j = \alpha_j + \beta \cdot \widehat{\text{association}}_j + \mathbf{X}_j\gamma + \epsilon_j, \quad (3.6)$$

where y_j are still the fraud levels and $\widehat{\text{association}}$ are the predicted values from the first stage. I estimate the system of equations using two-stage least squares.

Under specific assumptions, β can be interpreted as the causal effect of civil society organizations on fraud levels. In particular, it is necessary to assume (i) exclusion (exogeneity of the instrument to ϵ), (ii) the Stable Unit Treatment Value Assumption (SUTVA), and (iii) monotonicity. Education during the colonial period, nearly 6 decades ago, is external to current political meddling in the elections. Moreover, conceptually, I argue that colonial education influenced electoral fraud only through its effect on civil society.

Table 3.11 reports the results of from the IV regressions. I include control variables following the patterns in the OLS specifications from the main results, as indicated in 3.9. I report the first-stage coefficient on the instrument variable, colonial education, and then the F-statistics of the excluded instrument. I report that the coefficient on the instrument is significant with the expected sign along with large F-statistics. Additionally, I include inverse variance weights ($\frac{1}{\sqrt{n}}$) to account for the different number of observations I have per province. The number of observations per province range from 8 to 96 because I aimed to create a nationally representative sample. In other words, smaller states have less observations, leading to concerns of larger standard errors.

3.4 Conclusion

While electoral fraud is often considered to be a key survival strategy for incumbents in electoral autocracies, detecting and measuring it remains challenging. In this chapter, I ex-

	<i>Election Rigging</i>	
	(1)	(2)
	OLS	IV
Association	-17.396** (8.889)	-33.321** (15.973)
Control Variables	✓	✓
Observations	39	39

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 3.11: Instrumental variables approach.

Note: Model 1 is estimated using OLS, Model 2 by two-stage least squares.

amined the conditions under which authoritarian incumbents are likely to engage in fraudulent activities. Both the cross-national analysis and the subnational examination of Algeria support my claims that dictators are more likely to avoid outright fraud when they rule citizens enmeshed in a dense network of associations. I also find partial support for my other hypotheses that the need for international support is associated with less outright fraud. Additionally, autocrats seem to rely on either visible fraud or election manipulation as they each carry different risks and costs.

Using an original survey of 1,000 respondents in Algeria and data on colonial education as an instrument, I am able to make causal claims on the effects of civil society on reducing fraud. As my theory additionally implies, I report that in provinces that suffered more civil war deaths, the level of vote buying is lower. However, surprisingly, more deaths are associated with more election rigging. I posit that manipulation strategies operate as substitutes and reflect diverging efficiency and incentives of the dictators. In other words, unlike election rigging, vote buying does not guarantee electoral victories in places where popularity is too low.

My findings highlight the critical question of the effect of civil society on the electoral experience. Overall, the results suggest that greater levels of social cohesion is associated with increase election quality in authoritarian regimes. My interviews with members of various civil society organizations in Algeria suggest that even non-political groups discuss political

events. Indeed, in countries where it is difficult to obtain news free of state manipulation, social networks can facilitate the flow of information. Even if these groups face certain limits on their freedom, they can potentially coordinate political actions by simply providing a space for information-sharing. In future research, I hope to test the mechanism by conducting a lab experiment, in which I will manipulate topics discussed among citizens and observe their actions.

3.4.1 Supplementary Materials on Algeria

3.4.2 Descriptive Statistics

	Survey	Official
Male	50%	50.6%
Female	50%	50.4%
Urban	65.6%	66.3%
Rural	34.4%	33.7%
Literacy Rate	83.1%	80.2%
Tertiary Education	8.1%	7.9%
Average Income	28562 DZD	34860 DZD
Arab Population	76.6%	67.5%-77.5%
Age*	37.8	27.8
Registered Voters*	79.2%	57.7%

Table 3.12: Comparison of the mean demographics.

Note: All official statistics comes from the 2008 census data and the Ministry of Interior except for that of Arab Population. The survey only covers those above the age of 18 whereas the official figures for Age and Registered Voters include all Algerians.

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Association (per 1,000)	48	0.19	0.23	0.02	1.34
Civil War Deaths (per 1,000)	48	0.30	0.60	0.02	3.16
Valid Votes (%)	48	78.63	7.34	59.03	91.02
Turnout (%)	48	40.36	10.93	17.43	69.77
Population	48	710,000.60	468,005.10	49,149	2,988,145
Urbanization (%)	48	70.37	12.44	45.87	97.92
Literacy (%)	48	76.48	5.56	63.80	87.70
Internet (%)	48	3.00	1.12	1.60	8.00
Occupants (per room)	48	2.26	0.19	1.90	2.60
Colonial Era Muslim Students (%)	48	6.92	3.90	2.65	16.10

Table 3.13: Summary statistics.

Note that the unit of analysis is providence.

3.4.3 Dependent Variables

Province	Regime Vote Share - survey	Regime Vote Share - official
Adrar		48.63
Chlef	0.00	38.06
Laghouat		35.32
Oum El Bouaghi	20.00	39.04
Batna	22.00	54.00
Bejaia	0.00	18.93
Biskra	0.00	33.62
Bechar		36.93
Blida	8.00	56.56
Bouira	0.00	46.96
Tamenghasset		28.15
Tebessa		44.35
Tlemcen	29.00	49.55
Tiaret	23.00	41.33
Tizi Ouzou	0.00	24.76
Alger	11.00	33.04
Djelfa	33.00	39.15
Jijel	20.00	25.24
Setif	14.00	31.99
Saida	0.00	30.16
Skikda	22.00	49.18
Sidi Bel Abbes	29.00	52.54
Annaba	0.00	47.81
Guelma	33.00	32.74
Constantine	40.00	26.01
Medea	18.00	33.53
Mostaganem	23.00	45.01
M'sila	40.00	38.14
Mascara	25.00	42.50
Ouargla	7.00	16.87
Oran	25.00	65.73
El Bayadh		33.83
Illizi		31.84
B.B. Arrerjdj	15.00	31.58
Boumerdes	17.00	24.45
El Tarf	0.00	42.87
Tindouf		30.22
Tissemsilt	0.00	73.02
El Oued	6.00	54.88
Kenchela	13.00	26.47
Souk Ahras	25.00	35.94
Tipaza	0.00	36.15
Mila	40.00	42.38
Ain Defla	13.00	32.26
Naama		38.48
Ain Temouchent	0.00	33.44
Ghardaia	0.00	16.57
Relizane	43.00	44.57

Table 3.14: Comparison of the vote intentions from the survey and the official regime vote share.

Province	Election Rigging	Vote Buying
Adrar		
Chlef	38.06	0.00
Laghouat		
Oum El Bouaghi	19.04	25.00
Batna	32.00	45.00
Bejaia	18.93	33.33
Biskra	33.62	0.00
Bechar		
Blida	48.56	20.00
Bouira	46.96	0.00
Tamenghasset		
Tebessa		
Tlemcen	20.55	37.50
Tiaret	18.33	31.25
Tizi Ouzou	24.76	8.33
Alger	22.04	10.42
Djelfa	6.15	25.00
Jijel	5.24	37.50
Setif	17.99	0.00
Saida	30.16	0.00
Skikda	27.18	25.00
Sidi Bel Abbes	23.54	25.00
Annaba	47.81	0.00
Guelma	-0.26	75.00
Constantine	-13.99	20.00
Medea	15.53	4.17
Mostaganem	22.01	0.00
M'sila	-1.86	0.00
Mascara	17.50	25.00
Ouargla	9.87	5.00
Oran	40.73	37.50
El Bayadh		
Illizi		
B.B. Arrerjdj	16.58	0.00
Boumerdes	7.45	0.00
El Tarf	42.87	25.00
Tindouf		
Tissemsilt	73.02	50.00
El Oued	48.88	0.00
Kenchela	13.47	15.00
Souk Ahras	10.94	0.00
Tipaza	36.15	0.00
Mila	2.38	25.00
Ain Defla	19.26	25.00
Naama		
Ain Temouchent	33.44	25.00
Ghardaia	16.57	16.67
Relizane	1.57	0.00

Table 3.15: Dependent variables: constructed measures of election rigging and vote buying.

CHAPTER 4

Algeria and Kuwait

The empirical results provided in Chapter 3 are consistent with my hypotheses, but with some limitations. First, the quantitative findings do not provide the detailed mechanisms through which social cohesion is deterring the use of fraud. Second, the relationships – between (i) fraud and social cohesion and between (ii) the use of electoral fraud and dependency on foreign support – could be spurious since there may be another undetected, confounding factors, even after adopting an instrumental variable approach. Third, social cohesion, a key concept, could be operationalized using measures other than local associations. Case studies are useful in confirming the robustness of my findings through process tracing.

This chapter presents a comparison of two authoritarian regimes – Algeria and Kuwait – to strengthen my causal claims that (1) social cohesion and (2) the need for international support influence authoritarian fraud decisions. I examine why there exist diverging trends in the two countries' electoral experiences – namely, why the fraud levels are high in Algeria and low in Kuwait. I focus on the political and social conditions shape the incentives and behavior of the regime elites. The case studies here are utilized to test the plausibility of my argument for explaining broad trends in fraud decisions across national and subnational contexts.

Algeria and Kuwait make appropriate cases for the study of electoral manipulation for several reasons. First, though most countries located in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region are authoritarian regimes and hold elections, existing studies on electoral fraud have largely overlooked these countries, often due to the difficulty in accessing them. Thus, examining authoritarian, electoral politics in Algeria and Kuwait is useful for theoretical advancement. Second, while leaders of these countries face different incentives and

costs with regard to the use of fraud, their contexts allow me to hold constant a few key confounding factors, at least to a degree. Both regimes have resisted democratization and stood firm as autocracies, even after witnessing a surge of anti-government protests especially during the 2011 Arab uprisings.¹ They share other commonalities such as their Sunni- and Arab-majority populations though with sizable minorities (such as Shias in Kuwait and Berbers in Algeria) and history under colonial rules followed by dictatorial regimes. The elites in both countries have also benefited from oil wealth that has helped them buy political support and consolidate their rule.² Nonetheless, the two countries' electoral experiences diverge dramatically. I argue that the difference is mainly attributed to the different social contexts and the diverging needs for international support.

There are alternative explanations for the different electoral qualities in Kuwait and Algeria, such as variations in the repressiveness of the regimes. Bellin (2004) argues that the capacity and the will to repress have generated the exceptional robustness of authoritarianism in the MENA region. However, it is difficult to assess the levels of repression for the two countries because most existing datasets combine multiple aspects of repressiveness and freedom to generate the index. Nonetheless, they often assign similar scores to the two countries. For instance, the Freedom House in 2017 assigned 5.5 to Kuwait for 'Freedom Rating' and 36 for 'Aggregate Score' whereas Algeria received 5 and 35, respectively.³ In terms of military expenditures, which could be a proxy for the capacity to coerce, Algeria and Kuwait each spent 6.4% and 5.9%, respectively, according to the 2016 World Bank reports. The data suggest that the willingness and abilities to repress are similar for the two dictatorships.

Another plausible explanation of the high fraud is the patrimonial nature of the military,

¹The Autocratic Regimes Dataset codes Algeria as a party-military dictatorship (1963-1992) and a military dictatorship (1992-present); Kuwait is classified as a monarchy (1961-present) (Geddes, Wright, and Frantz, 2014).

²In terms of per capita GDP, Kuwait was at 28,975,40 USD as of 2015 (a significant decline from 51,264.07 USD in 2012), and Algeria was at 3,843.75 USD (a decline from 5,564.83 USD in 2012). The World Bank classify Kuwait as a high-income country and Algeria as an upper middle income-country.

³The scores have not changed much over the years for Kuwait as well as for Algeria, since the end of the Algerian civil war.

again suggested by Bellin (2004). Kuwait and Algeria both maintain relatively small active military personnel, though Algeria relies more on its police forces. A Kuwaiti politician I interviewed said that the military and the security forces in Kuwait tend not to be patrimonial; he suggested that the regime cannot use fraud and suppress ensuing protests by force because “the soldiers will never shoot at [the people] – who are their brothers and friends.”⁴ Although the Algerian security forces are larger in proportion, it is still difficult to picture them indiscriminately shooting at protesters in the post-civil war period, as it was also revealed by my interviewees. Yet, Algeria experiences high levels of fraud.

My analyses of Algeria and Kuwait are based on primary and secondary sources including governmental publications and news articles, in addition to 88 interviews from my fieldwork in Algeria and Kuwait, 2016-2017. The interviews ranged from thirty minutes to three hours, with an average length of an hour. In addition to identifying and reaching out to key individuals, organizations, parties, and newspapers, I also used a snowball method of sampling to seek out more interviewees. In both countries, I conducted interviews with present and former members of the parliament (MPs), government officials, journalists, activists, and scholars. These individuals, often with first-hand knowledge of elections and politics, consisted of both male and female; pro-government and opposition; tribal and non-tribal; secular and Islamist; Sunni and Shia (Kuwait); Arab and Berber (Algeria); and conservative and liberal.⁵ I do not identify the names of the interviewees here since our discussions involved various sensitive topics, such as electoral fraud.

The interviews, which are key parts of my case studies, are especially important for understanding the local dynamics of electoral fraud and citizen cohesion. They were also useful in validating existing narratives regarding fraud. While fraud is difficult to measure precisely, historical and anecdotal evidence provides strong indications as to whether fraud occurred (and how much fraud) in both nations. It was striking that all interviewees in Kuwait agreed that the regime did not sponsor systematic fraud, such as ballot stuffing,

⁴Interview, Islamist politician, October 2016.

⁵Though individuals often define themselves as liberals or conservatives, note that the standards are not as clear as they are in the United States.

voter impersonation, or intimidation and violence. It was equally surprising that most Algerians were aware of the widespread use of government-sponsored fraud. I take advantage of such accounts along with other sources to claim that whereas Algerian incumbents have employed extensive, blatant electoral fraud, Kuwaiti rulers have refrained from relying on fraud to manipulate election results. Instead, in line with my hypothesis, Kuwaiti leadership has resorted to making legal changes in electoral institutions to influence election outcomes. I additionally illustrate how the Kuwaiti population enjoys more avenues for personal contact and sharing information than the Algerian public. My theory predicts that without dense citizen networks or dependency on international support, outright fraud is widespread. I specifically examine the following observable implications. First, is there a space for citizens to build personal networks and facilitate the flow of information? Second, when do regime elites benefit from securing foreign support? Third, does the government adopt other strategies of manipulation when they shy away from using outright fraud? I address each question for each case in this chapter.

4.1 Kuwait, Social Cohesion, and Electoral Progress

In Kuwait, the progress towards free and fair elections has been meaningful. “We are proud to have real, clean elections,” said a member of a Kuwaiti opposition movement in an interview.⁶ All interviewees, loyalists or opposition, agreed that the regime had not orchestrated fraud.⁷ There has been some minor complaints regarding the ballot counting process (Herb, 2014) and a widespread knowledge regarding vote-buying activities that were common from 1980 to early 2000s. Most of vote buying, however, was not necessarily carried out by the regime but often by rich candidates themselves, both pro-government and opposition.⁸ I do not

⁶Interview, opposition block member, September 2016.

⁷The one exception is the 1967 election regarding which the opposition members accused the government of election rigging; I further discuss this incident below.

⁸Candidates run as independents in Kuwait because the Constitution of Kuwait does not allow the existence of political parties. However, political groups have served as de facto parties by calling themselves “blocs,” “alliances,” “forums,” and “movements.” Many candidates identify themselves to belong to one of the groups, and voters are also aware of their affiliation. The groups are generally free to operate and engage

explore these activities in depth because my theoretical framework focuses on electoral fraud that is systematically sponsored by the regime, not individual candidates or local agents.

Many interviewees claimed that the government *cannot* rig the elections because “it would be impossible”⁹ and “everyone would find out.”¹⁰ Kuwaitis take great pride in the quality and transparency in their electoral processes. For instance, in all recent elections, the ballots were counted multiple times in an open space in the presence of representatives from different candidates and committee members.¹¹ Kuwaitis also enjoy high levels of freedom of speech, association, and press. Opposition members and ordinary citizens freely gather to discuss political strategies or anti-government sentiments, though one exception to the broadly accepted freedom of speech is direct criticism of the ruling elites – the king and the royal family.¹² During my fieldwork, only one interviewee asked to remain anonymous. Most interviewees were not afraid to criticize the regime, its corruption, or policy inefficiency, even as they told me I should record the interviews. I claim that this freedom of association was built over time due to Kuwait’s unique social institution, *diwaniyya*, that facilitated citizen interaction and information transfer. Its social cohesion were also strengthened by the indigenous tribal, family-oriented dynamics. These dense networks help solve collective action problems in order to mobilize themselves into demonstrations large and long enough to oust a dictator; thus, the Kuwaiti regime has avoided using blatant fraud.

Nonetheless, social cohesiveness did not stop the regime from trying to manipulate elections in other ways. Most notably, the country has undergone three major and numerous minor election rule changes. Shortly post-independence, from 1962 to 1975, Kuwait was divided into 10 districts in which each voter was required to vote for five different candidates. The first major rule change came in 1980 when the royal decree stipulated redistricting and divided the country into 25 constituencies, instead of 10, and the voters were given two

in organized political activities.

⁹Interview, former MP, September 2016.

¹⁰Interview, activist, September 2016.

¹¹Interview, representative of a tribe, September 2016; government official, September 2016.

¹²Increasingly, criticizing other Gulf monarchs has also produced grave consequences.

votes. This system lasted until 2006, when the new electoral law divided the country into 5 districts. Each voter was then allowed to vote for four candidates. Most recently, in 2012, the electoral system was changed to single non-transferable vote (SNTV) by reducing the number of votes from four to one. I argue that Kuwait has resorted to rule changes, that are less visible to foreigners than outright fraud, because of its need for international support to shield itself from multiple Iraqi threats since independence.

From its foundation, Kuwait's journey toward democracy has set itself apart from that of other countries in the region. In 1752, the chiefs and elites of the tribes who had settled in the region selected Sabah bin Jaber (Sabah I) of the Al-Sabah family to become the first *emir*, or ruler, of Kuwait (Rush, 1987). He was to handle any major affairs in the community upon consulting other notables in exchange for their financial support.¹³ Thus existed a sense of interdependence within the society between the ruling Al-Sabah family and the rest of the settlers from the very beginning (Alnajjar, 2000).

Another important stage of the democratic development took place in 1921, when the first Shura Council, or Consultative Council, was established, bringing together twelve leading notables who demanded their rights to advise the emir's ruling of the society. Although the Council only lasted for two months due to internal disagreements, it had cultivated an enduring network of prominent merchants (Crystal, 1990). The 1921 Council marks an important milestone and demonstrates that the interdependent relationship between the ruler and the ruled continued to exist. Other elected municipality and education councils followed in 1932 and 1936, respectively, and contributed to the establishment of an elected legislature in post-independence Kuwait.

The aforementioned Councils that contributed to the development of political infrastructure along with public pressure triggered by economic crises and external factors led the emir Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (Ahmad I) to allow the first elected, fourteen-member Legislative Council in 1938.¹⁴ The Council was elected on the basis of a limited franchise given only to

¹³The local notables at the time were successful merchants who had gained wealth from pearling and trading (Crystal, 1990).

¹⁴The external factors included the rise of Arab Nationalism in the 1930s. Additionally, the Egyptian,

wealthy, educated men. However, its major contribution towards democratic advancement was that it published a document consisting of five articles that laid the foundation of the post-independence Constitution. This document, approved by the emir, emphasized the need for an elected assembly, which was to legislate national matters such as the budget, security, and justice and to approve any international treaties. The document was aimed at the British and the oil companies that had started expressing their interests in Kuwait's oil deposits (Baaklini, 1982). When the Council attempted to take control of oil from the ruling family, it was suspended by Ahmad I (Yom, 2015).

Even until the late 1930s, the emir's chief source of revenues remained the taxes collected from trading, for which the merchants were responsible (Crystal, 1990). However, an exponential growth in oil revenues that provided the Al-Sabah family with new wealth changed the internal balance of Kuwaiti politics in the early 1950s. The emir no longer needed to depend on the wealthy merchants for financial patronage. Naturally, the ruler's political leverage increased.

The most crucial step towards democratic development was implemented after Kuwait's independence in 1961 and more importantly, after a series of political crises. Following Britain's departure from the country, Iraq attempted to exploit the power vacuum by moving troops to the Iraqi-Kuwaiti borders and demanded annexation of Kuwait. Additionally, the Soviet Union had vetoed the Kuwaiti bid for the United Nations membership. The Kuwaiti leadership was in dire need of domestic support and international legitimacy that it was indeed a sovereign state. Such external threats prompted the emir to seek international recognition by showing the world that the Kuwaiti people had a political voice (Herb, 2014). As a result, in June 1961, the emir Adullah Al-Salim Al-Sabah (Abdullah III) announced his intentions to draft a constitution and create inclusive political institutions.

A year later in 1962, the Kuwaiti Constitution was formally ratified by an elected, twenty-member Constitutional Assembly with full support of Abdullah III. The deliberations within

Iraqi, and Syrian newspapers and radio stations at the time covered Kuwait extensively and often sided with the Kuwaiti opposition; the press coverage ultimately helped the opposition realize their goals of setting up an elected assembly (Al-Rumaihi, 1985).

the Assembly to finalize the Constitution involved careful negotiations between the Assembly members and representatives from the ruling family.¹⁵ This process was important for both sides as the Constitution were to institutionalize the relationship between the emir and the “citizens” of Kuwait.¹⁶

4.1.1 1963-1976: Ten Districts, Five Votes

The new Electoral Law divided the country into ten constituencies with a district magnitude of five to elect a fifty-member, unicameral *Majlis Al-Umma*, or the National Assembly.¹⁷ From 1963 to 1976, the ten-constituencies, five-votes rule was used.¹⁸ Every male citizen over the age of 21 was given the right to vote. The parliament also consisted of ministers appointed by the emir, but the number could not exceed sixteen, or one third of the elected members, as specified by Article 56 of the Constitution. The Kuwaiti legislature was also endowed with the power to override the emir’s veto and remove confidence in ministers with the majority vote.

The first elections to the National Assembly were held on January 29, 1963. In these elections, 85% of the eligible voters turned out to vote, and 205 candidates participated in the race. This electoral system performed well and produced a competent Assembly that passed a series of legislation crucial for the newly independent country. However, in 1965, Abdullah III died and Kuwait faced the first major political crisis since independence. Whereas Abdullah III had strongly supported the Constitution and the elected National Assembly, his successor, Sabah Al-Salim Al-Sabah (Sabah III), had a different outlook on how he should rule the country. The 1967 parliamentary elections resulted in the largest

¹⁵Members of the Council of Ministers also participated in the deliberations but did not vote in the constitution-making process.

¹⁶*Majalat al-Huquq*, Kuwait University, 1999.

¹⁷It is noteworthy that the debates on electoral rules existed in Kuwait from the beginning. The Constitutional Assembly received one proposal from the ruling family that there should be a single constituency and another proposal from the notables that there should be 20 constituencies. The Assembly drew the line in between and decided on ten districts (Alnajjar, 1994).

¹⁸The system remained consistent throughout the period aside from a few revisions to the district boundaries in 1971 and 1972.

fraud allegation in Kuwait's history. The opposition accused the government of forging the election results. Some politicians even refused their seats in the National Assembly (Herb, 2014).¹⁹ Jerkhi (1984) writes that although the Article 36 of the Electoral Law specifies that the ballot boxes must be locked and votes counted in the presence of the Principal Committee, armed men took the ballot boxes before they had been locked and did not allow any committee members to accompany them. This was the only instance in Kuwait's history in which the authorities had used outright electoral fraud. The emir soon found out that engineering electoral fraud would be more costly than beneficial as it had generated high levels of political instability. However, it was only the beginning of a cycle of attempts by the authorities to shape politics through various manipulation tactics besides blatant fraud.

After heated debates within the Assembly regarding the use of fraud, six prominent MPs resigned in protest when it was evident the falsified results would not be investigated (Alnajjar, 1994). Over the next decade, the tensions continued to grow between the legislators and the government, the Assembly was dissolved unconstitutionally in 1976 and suspended four articles of the Constitution with regard to political and civil rights. They were not restored until Sabah III's death in 1980 and the ruling family eventually realized that Kuwait could not be ruled solely by decrees of the emir.

4.1.2 1980-2006: Twenty-Five Districts, Two Votes

Following the dissolution of the parliament in 1976, popular pressure mounted and called for restoring of the Constitution and the National Assembly. The most visible factor that contributed to the spread of citizen voice was the tradition of diwaniyyas to which the Kuwaitis resorted in the absence of the Assembly (Hicks and al Najjar, 1995). Diwaniyyas, unique to Kuwait, are places of social gatherings where men sit together, enjoy food and drinks, and discuss diverse issues ranging from politics and economy to culture and society.²⁰

¹⁹The fraud committed in the 1967 elections is a common knowledge in the Kuwaiti society according to my interviews.

²⁰Women increasingly gather separately in their own diwaniyyas, though much less common. Mixed-gender diwaniyyas also started appearing.

Diwaniyya also refers to the practice of gathering itself. One interviewee referred to it as “part of everyday life” in Kuwait.²¹ The diwaniyyas’ social functions, whose origins can be traced back to tribal customs, have withstood the effects of modernization and oil wealth to continue to this day (Chay, 2016). In fact, many houses are built so that they include a space specifically for diwaniyyas, with a separate entrance for guest entry.²²

No longer able to withstand the growing social pressure, the new Emir Jaber Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (Jaber III) reinstated the suspended articles of the Constitution along with the National Assembly in August 1980. He also passed a decree No.99/1980 establishing twenty-five constituencies that elect two MPs each.²³ This was the first instance in which a major change was made to the electoral system to advantage the incumbent after realizing that using fraud bore more costs than benefits.

The new system had several consequences on weakening the opposition and strengthening the authorities. Most importantly, the new, much smaller constituencies fragmented the opposition because winning a seat now required much fewer votes. Thus, candidates could win a seat without necessarily forming a coalition. This was likely an intended result of the election rule change. Additionally, it facilitated corruption and vote buying. Some of the newly-formed districts had so few people that some candidates could win a legislative seat with less than 1,000 votes.²⁴ As a result, buying votes became extremely cheap, especially for the richer candidates. The new system also led to the rise of “service MPs” or *naib khidma*, who sought to garner votes from constituents by offering jobs and promotions as well as governmental transactions ranging from waiving parking tickets to issuing licenses. They often did so by exploiting their connections, referred to as *wasta*. These connections

²¹Interview, activist, October 2016

²²Interview, representative of a tribe, September 2016.

²³This was in breach of Article 81 of the Constitution that gives the National Assembly the right to determine electoral constituencies. The emir resorted to use Article 71, his power to pass decrees in times of emergency though there was no reason to define this as the times of emergency (Al-Remaidhi and Watt, 2012).

²⁴The votes were distributed unevenly across districts. For instance, there were only about 1,000 eligible voters in the 25th District of Umm Al-Hayman whereas some other districts had more than 8,000 voters (Al-Remaidhi and Watt, 2012).

were often personal, and the entire process of “offering service” thus led to inefficiency and corruption. The government colluded in this process by cooperating with loyalist candidates to provide more “service.” Although this exchanging of votes for service is “not as important as it used to be,” according to a current MP I interviewed, “all those who want to get elected still have to offer some service to get re-elected.” During the one hour I was interviewing the MP, he received about eight phone calls that he claimed were calling to ask for his service.²⁵

As a result of the new electoral system, the resulting parliament during this period was weak and often ended with dissolution. Many politicians were committed to winning favors, collecting wealth, and strengthening personal power rather than monitoring the government or pursuing a national, ideological agenda.²⁶ The Kuwaiti parliament was suspended for the second time in 1986 midst escalating political instability due to an intense legislative gridlock as well as regional concerns with regards to the Iran-Iraq war. This electoral system continued to be used for twenty-six years despite continuous calling for its revision.

It was an existential external threat that eventually put Kuwait back in the track of electoral advancement in order to strengthen its democratic façade. Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, and the ruling family was again in a dire need of international support. Facing existential threats from Iraq, bolstering its democratic appearance was the most effective solution for the Kuwaiti regime that lacked military means to counter such external threats. At the 1990 Jidda Conference in Saudi Arabia that was held during the Iraqi occupation, the Kuwaiti incumbent was pressured to reassure its commitment to democracy.²⁷ After the liberation of Kuwait in 1991, the authorities organized legislative elections in accordance with the Electoral Law to keep its words.

In 1999, the eighth Parliament was again dissolved and candidates had to prepare themselves for another election. The popular pressure on the government increased as the candidates publicly accused the government of funding pro-government candidates (Alnajjar,

²⁵Interview, current MP, September 2016.

²⁶Interview, former MP, September 2016.

²⁷*Sawt al-Kuwait*, October 21, 1990.

2000). In the midst of a political crisis, the emir attempted another institutional manipulation to remedy the crisis: he announced his intentions to grant suffrage to women. As the emir likely intended, the Kuwaiti society turned its attention to the issue of woman's political rights. Islamist and conservative groups heavily opposed granting female suffrage and denounced it as anti-Islamic and unconstitutional. In fact, my interviews indicate that the majority of Kuwaitis, including most women and liberal groups, opposed this decision at the time.²⁸ A former female MP specifically attributed the increase in woman's political rights to the good will of the emir:

“We had no support from the society of Kuwait. No one was with us. Not even all women were supporting us, especially in the beginning. Without the emir's help and will, the women of Kuwait would never have achieved the rights we enjoy now.”²⁹

This indicates that it is unlikely the emiri decision had been influenced by public demands from the citizens or women's organizations. Rather, it was a strategic move of the incumbent to get past the political crisis. Though the new Assembly elected in 1999 subsequently rejected the emiri decree on granting women political rights, women did eventually win the rights in 2006.

4.1.3 2006-2012: Five Districts, Four Votes

In January 2006, the new emir, Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (Sabah IV) was sworn in after conflicts within the ruling family over succession. The reign of the new emir again coincided with political instability in which a broad-based movement with tens of thousands of participants emerged to protest corruption and demand redistricting. It came to be known as the “Orange Movement” as the protesters wore orange shirts and waved orange flags. They chanted, “we want five (constituencies)!” The movement became the key topic

²⁸Interviews, former opposition MP, September 2016; activist, September 2016.

²⁹Interview, former MP, October 2016.

in diwaniyyas where citizens shared opinions and strategies.³⁰ Another striking feature of this movement was that it was organized by youth activists. New technology undoubtedly helped. “We texted all our friends who texted all their friends to get the people on the street,” said one of the youth organizers of the Movement in an interview when I asked how they were able to gather an unprecedented number of participants.³¹ Twenty-nine MPs joined the Movement to demand electoral redistricting in the parliament. The political and social tensions again led to another dissolution of parliament in May 2006 and snap elections scheduled for June. MPs who sided with the Orange Movement were overwhelmingly elected to the new National Assembly and again pushed for the five-constituencies plan even more strongly (Diwan, 2011). On August 1, 2006, Act No.42/2006 was passed and redefined Kuwait into five districts with ten MPs allotted to each constituency and four votes granted per voter.

This system reduced most problems of the previous electoral system. Most notably, vote buying dramatically because as the constituencies became larger, buying votes was less cost-effective. It also diminished the influence of the service MPs, who could not win enough votes by providing service alone.³² This led to the rise of politicians with national, ideological programs, rather than personal agenda. Perhaps because the new election rules elected candidates with systematic political goals, the country witnessed even more intense disputes between the government and the opposition MPs during this period. The 2008 and the 2009 Assemblies were dissolved as a result.

However, the government again had added changes to the election rules that might benefit pro-regime candidates. A key component of the new system was that each voter could cast four votes. Unlike the five districts, the number of votes was not included in the demands during the Orange Movement. Many were puzzled by the arbitrary number of votes set by the government. The opposition members in particular considered it as another “trial-and-

³⁰Interview, activist, September 2016.

³¹Interview, activist, September 2016.

³²*Shafafiya*, Societys Report on the Parliamentary Elections of 2008; Aalam Al-Youm newspaper, October 9, 2008.

error” move of the government to test which system would advantage itself.³³

In 2011, the Arab uprisings inspired another mass anti-government movement – composed of tens of thousands of Kuwaitis including opposition MPs, youth organizations, Islamists, and secular groups – that came together to combat corruption and to remove the prime minister Sheikh Nasser Mohammed Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah, who had occupied the position since 2006. The prime minister, for the first time in Kuwait’s history, resigned on November 28 due to popular pressure (Ghabra, 2009). The parliament was dissolved in December 2011 and the new elections were scheduled for February 2012.

In February 2012, the elections resulted in the first-ever opposition majority, winning 35 out of 50 seats in the parliament. The opposition now formed a majority even after taking into account the 15 appointed cabinet members who could vote in the parliament. Note that this is another strong indication that the regime does not rig election outcomes, as it would not have allowed such a clear opposition victory if they had implemented fraudulent tactics, especially since many had predicted opposition victory. Instead, the emir resorted to legal ways, as specified by the Constitution, to nullify the parliament. On the surface, it was the Constitutional Court that declared the new Assembly unconstitutional in July 2012 on the basis that the dissolution of the previous parliament in December 2011 was unconstitutional and as a result, the following elections in February 2012 were unconstitutional (Albloshi, 2016). According to my interviews, there exist rumors that the government that had asked the Constitutional Court to review the constitutionality of the February 2012 elections in order to nullify the opposition-dominated parliament.³⁴ Nonetheless, this episode demonstrates how the Kuwaiti ruling regime has taken advantage of the “legal” means to influence the election results.

³³Interviews, opposition members and MPs, September-October 2016. In addition, the new division of constituencies again was criticized for the variance across district size. In 2016, Constituency One had 78,643 voters; Constituency Two had 55,376 voters; Constituency Three had 86,247 voters; Constituency Four had 127,408 voters; and Constituency Five 135,512 voters.

³⁴Interviews, activist, September 2016; professor, September 2016; opposition bloc member, September 2016; tribal representative, September 2016.

4.1.4 2012-Present: Five Districts, One Vote

One of the reasons why the opposition won the majority of the seats in the February 2012 election was that different opposition groups had learned to work together and exploit the four-vote system since 2008 when the system was first implemented. For instance, an Islamist group and a Salafist group could cooperate to have their supporters vote for two Islamist candidates and two Salafist candidates.³⁵ In order to stop another opposition domination, in October 2012, the emir again invoked Article 71, one of his legal rights to issue a decree at times of “emergency.” Article 71 allowed him to make unilateral changes to the electoral system that reduced the number of votes from four to one. This change to a single non-transferable vote system (SNTV) was indeed an attempt to curtail voting based on political alignment and weaken the opposition Herb (2014). On the surface, the rule change was to benefit minority groups by limiting the domination of parliamentary seats by a few large blocs. However, by doing so, the regime has also successfully divided opposition and limited the rise of a anti-incumbent coalition that is large enough to threaten its rule.

Many of my interviewees, even those part of the opposition, were themselves divided on whether this rule change had negatively affected the country as a whole. Some opposition members did allege that the new one-vote rule in the absence of party lists fragments opposition votes as a candidate in a district of 120,000 voters could win a seat with approximately 3,000 votes or less, somewhat resembling the electoral environment during the 1980-2006 period that operated under twenty five districts.³⁶ However, others argue that women and minorities, not part of large blocs or tribes, now have better chances of winning a seat under the one-vote rule.³⁷ Although women were unable to win more than one seat in both the 2013 and 2016 elections, some minority members did prevail. In the 2016 elections, a candidate from a small tribe won a seat for the first time; previously, this tribe had chosen to form an alliance with other large tribes because its member had “no chance of winning” the

³⁵Interview, professor, September 2016; Islamist group member, September 2016.

³⁶Interview, opposition bloc member, September 2016; Islamist group member, September 2016.

³⁷Interviews, tribal members, September-October 2016; former female MP, October 2016.

elections.³⁸ Regardless of the debates on whether the new election rules are good for ordinary citizens, the new system ultimately resulted in Assemblies that consists of regime-loyalists majorities in both 2013 and 2016 elections.

4.1.5 Concluding Remarks

The Kuwaiti authorities have long exploited legal manipulation strategies – most notably, changing election rules – that proved to be less costly than employing electoral fraud. On the surface, it appears that the Kuwaiti regime is resilient and often successful at filling the majority of the parliament with their supporters. More importantly, they do so without election rigging, common in many other authoritarian nations. However, as illustrated above, the government frequently manipulated electoral institutions and maximized its power within the existing legal framework. I focused on the district changes in this chapter, but other legal manipulations have also occurred at multiple occasions. Among the total of seventeen National Assemblies since independence, only six finished its term without being dissolved by an emiri decree. Additionally, the emir has avoided appointing elected members as the ministers in the government to maximize his leverage in the Assembly; the majority vote can override his veto and remove confidence in ministers. Technically, his strategy is not illegal because the Constitution specifies that only one minister has to be an elected MP.

Why have the Kuwaiti authorities refrained from using blatant fraud and instead tried to manipulate elections using rule changes? I have posited that two factors have been instrumental to provide the government with incentives to create an inclusive political institutions and maintain high-quality elections: (i) its need for international support during its independence and the 1990-91 Iraqi invasion and (ii) its dense social cohesion facilitated by diwaniyyas and tribal networks.

Facing existential threats from Iraq, setting up institutions to appear democratic was the most effective solution for the regime’s survival, especially when the country lacked military means to resist Iraq. In addition to the external threats, the internal, social dynamics were

³⁸Interview, tribal member, October 2016.

crucial in restraining the government from using extensive fraud to manipulate elections. The traditional forms of a civil society in Kuwait is weak, due to the Law of Public Benefit Societies that gives the government the full authority to regulate any society along with the Law of Assembly that imposes certain restrictions on assembly (Alnajjar, 2000). However, from the early 1900s, public groups have continued to emerge so that citizens could voice their political concerns. For instance, in 1920, reformers in Kuwait established *al-Nadi Al-Adabi* or the Literary Club that was created to provide literary and scientific lectures and discussions (Al-Adsani, 1947). The group's political taste grew stronger, and the members of this Club went on to take part in the 1921 Council. Subsequently, the ruling family who felt threatened by the group's political leaning closed it (al Mdaires, 2010).

Most crucially, the diwaniyyas, exempt from the Law of Assembly, have always acted as a strong social institution that brought together the citizens by providing avenues for association and discussion. Tetreault notes the diwaniyyas encourage informal political participation through enabling discussion and association in an environment that is both in the public and the private realms (T  trault, 1993, 2000). During my fieldwork in Kuwait, I had a chance to visit the diwaniyya of *Al-Minbar* or the Kuwait Democratic Forum, a liberal opposition bloc, in which the members were discussing the future of the youth in Kuwait. Not only were the participants discussing the social issues challenging the young Kuwaitis but they also were freely criticizing the government regarding their policies affecting the youth. "The government cannot stop these meetings because then they would have to stop thousands of meetings," said a participant when I asked whether the authorities could interfere. The diwaniyyas also play a valuable role in election campaigning as candidates often hold diwaniyyas or participate in those in their constituency to garner political support. Any electoral campaign is likely to start at the diwaniyya in the presence of the candidate's extended families for acquiring their approval first followed by other community diwaniyyas.³⁹ Once elected, MPs visit diwaniyyas to hear from the constituents and to fulfill political duties.⁴⁰

The diwaniyya culture has facilitated the flow of information within the already small,

³⁹Interviews, candidates, September 2016; former MP, September 2016.

⁴⁰Interview, current MP, September 2016.

family- and tribal-oriented, Kuwaiti society. Additionally, together with the growth of the youth population – currently 70% under the age of 30 – globalization and technology have contributed to increased civic awareness (Ghabra, 2009). The falling oil prices, the subsequent economic challenges, and the regional crises ranging from the rise of the Islamist group and proliferation of wars in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen will likely increase the regime’s need for international support. Thus, it is difficult to imagine any future Kuwaiti leaders attempting to bring back fraudulent activities. However, the ruling family will continue to take advantage of the divided opposition who is yet to present clear leadership, and they are likely to maintain their political leverage through exploiting the legal frameworks.

4.2 Algeria and the “Democratization” Attempts

Every presidential and legislative election post-1991 in Algeria has featured intense accusations of extensive, systematic fraud sponsored by the regime. It is an open secret that Algerian elections are far from being free and fair. All Algerians I interviewed, with the exception of a few pro-regime politicians, corroborated that the levels of electoral fraud are high. Why is it that the Algerian leadership, unlike the Kuwaiti counterpart, does not find it costly to employ extensive fraud?

The Algerian culture and society were profoundly affected by 132 years of the French colonial rule and the subsequent struggles for independence. Unlike Kuwait that had to win over international support through engineering inclusive political institutions and improving electoral integrity, the Algerian War of Independence was sufficient in establishing incumbent legitimacy internally and externally. Historian John Ruedy writes about how the revolutionary leaders in Algeria gained legitimacy over the course of the war:

“Of the several violent independence struggles that accompanied the decolonization process in the years after the World War II, that of the Algerians stands out as the longest, the costliest, and arguably the most poignant in terms of the human issues it juxtaposed. On November 12, 1954, twelve days after the rebellion broke out, Prime Minister Pierre Mendés-France assured France, Algeria, and the

world at large that the Algerian départements were irrevocably French, that no secession from the rest of France was possible, and that no French government of any political leaning would ever yield on this fundamental principle. Yet, against all reasonable odds, the profoundly disadvantaged Algerians, in eight years of determined struggle, wore down a people immensely more numerous, wealthy and powerful than themselves, extracting at the end unqualified recognition of their independence. This stunning accomplishment provided the young Algerian nation with a self-confidence and sense of moral purpose that legitimized the radical campaign for national reconstruction that lay ahead and establish it both as a model and a persuasive advocate for peoples still struggling for liberation...The task of the revolutionary leadership was...to create structures through which...the people could begin to express its nationhood.” (Ruedy, 2005, 156-157)

The National Liberation Front (*Front de Libération Nationale* or FLN), which runs Algeria today, was created as a revolutionary movement prior to the independence war.⁴¹ The FLN was instrumental not only in leading the revolution but also in convincing the Algerian public that independence was necessary and possible. The FLN also successfully made the Algerian struggle an international issue to put pressure on France and played off the Cold War rivalries. While the FLN lobbied Western countries and the United Nations General Assembly to consider the Algerian issue every year, it also sent delegations to communist nations like China and the Soviet Union (Ruedy, 2005). Its representatives also took part in the 1955 Bandung Conference, a meeting of newly independent states. The FLN had discredited France, a superpower known for its quest for liberty, by letting the world know that it had used indiscriminate violence on Algerians (Cohen, 2000). The FLN eventually achieved a victory against France. Note that how the FLN leadership played an active role in international politics is fundamentally different from how Kuwait sought international support in a more passive manner.

It is obvious, then, how the FLN had already garnered a large, diverse group of loyal

⁴¹The FLN succeeded the Revolutionary Committee of Unity and Action (CRUA) which had been comprised of young men fighting against the French colonial rule.

supporters within the country towards the end of the war. The revolutionary leaders had shown the domestic population and the international audience that they had led a successful campaign against France to achieve independence. For instance, Brand (2014, p.132) illustrates how Houari Boumediene, the chief of staff of the National Liberation Army (ALN), the FLN's military wing during the war, proclaimed "revolutionary legitimacy" that those who fought in the independence struggles had the rights to hold power in post-independence Algeria. By the end of the war, most political institutions were fragile; however, Boumediene's ALN was disciplined and powerful (Ruedy, 2005). Eventually, Boumediene leads a coup against President Ben Bella in 1965 and again emphasizes his right to rule due to his contribution during the revolution. Unlike the case of Kuwait, the Algerian incumbent party was also endowed with large military and security forces that had sustained the FLN rule since the very beginning, again largely thanks to its revolutionary origins.

Elections held during this period from 1962 to early 1980s were little more than a formality to signal the dominance of the FLN regime as it was the only party allowed to participate. As only FLN agents competed, these elections were meant to reward party cadres and distribute the spoils among themselves, rather than to bolster legitimacy.⁴² Despite numerous internal struggles within the FLN since independence, the power – or *pouvoir* as referred to by Algerians – still remains in the hands of the party leaders. Today, it is shared between an opaque group of military, political, and business elites who have formed an alliance vital for regime survival. The role of the military in this alliance became evident in 1991 when the military stepped in to cancel the elections in which the Islamist opposition was expected to win. The army replaced the government with its own High State Council and imposed a repressive intelligence apparatus, or *mukhabarat*. Other measures to regain control followed; the press was censored, civil society was repressed, and Islamists were sent to prison. Eventually, a bloody decade-long civil strife broke out to last for a decade.

In such an environment, Algerian citizens had lost space to communicate and engage with

⁴²Throughout the history of modern Algeria, internal conflicts within the FLN is one of the most visible political dynamics. When more "regime parties" are created in the 1990s, the elections continue serve as a distributive tool to share power within the regime coalition. I further elaborate this point below.

each other. While the country now has approximately 100,000 registered local associations, they are often constrained by the state and vary greatly in their ability to produce true civic engagement. This section explores how during the first three decades in independent Algeria, the revolutionary leaders had no incentive to improve the electoral quality. Even after the institution of regularly held multiparty elections, the Algerian leadership still makes sure that they “win” elections through fraud. The regime has employed strategies such as ballot stuffing, dishonest counting, and vote buying, because using outright fraud does not involve serious risks and costs for the regime. I posit that this is because the lack of dense civil networks prevents the citizens from solving collective action problems to mobilize themselves into demonstrations big enough to threaten the regime. Additionally, the memory of the civil war makes collective action more costly. Moreover, Algeria’s position in the international community has strengthened once again since 2001 as it became a key partner of the US in counterterrorism operations in North Africa. Thus, its use of outright fraud and the lack of democratic advancement are overlooked by international actors.

4.2.1 1980s-1991: The Pre-War Period and the Multiparty Elections

Until the 1980s, the FLN faced no sizable threats to its rule. Using the massive wealth from oil and gas reserves in the 1970s, it was able to provide extremely generous social services and subsidies to its population. The government was sponsoring large industrialization projects and dominated corporations such as SONATRACH, responsible for oil and gas, as well as other steel and machinery companies. It also provide more than 60% of total jobs. The oil money was crucial in buying off the population and limiting demands for political rights. The Algerian military became heavily corrupt and was governed by cronyism rather than meritocracy. As the socio-economic standing of the general public was worsening, reverence for the FLN was fading into the memories.

After the death of President Boumediene in 1978, political environment began to further destabilize under the presidency of Chadli Bendjedid. Not only did the 1979 Iranian revolution and the Soviet-Afghan War introduced Islamic militancy in the country, but a

sharp fall in oil revenues during the 1980s also led to unforeseen economic challenges as the hydrocarbon exports had been responsible for more than one-third of the country's GDP. The unemployment rate rose over 25%, and young Algerians were especially vulnerable. The consequences were not only economic but also political. The regime could no longer buy off political reticence of the population that had more than doubled since independence. Starting in 1982, the authorities were challenged by demonstrations, strikes, and riots. The growing grievances peaked in 1988 and triggered popular uprisings all over the country, or what many Algerians refer to as its own Arab Spring. Tens of thousands took to the streets, including various citizen networks, including labor unions and religious associations. The October Riots, or the "Black October," led by Algerian youth was particularly deadly; 500 men were killed and thousands were injured.

To save the regime from the political crisis, Bendjedid to promise the public to initiate economic reforms and liberalize political institutions towards a multiparty system.⁴³ Following a plebiscite in 1988 to appoint the first Prime Minister, the 1976 Constitution was amended in June 1989. The new Constitution dropped all references to socialism and included policies to encourage a more inclusive parliament by guaranteeing freedoms of expression and organization (Brumberg, 1991). The Ministry of Interior started recognizing religious, ethnic, and regional parties such as the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), the Socialist Forces Front (FFS) and the Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD).⁴⁴

4.2.2 1992-2002: The Black Decade

The hopes of the regime elites to continue maintaining their dominance were crushed when in the first round of the elections to elect *Al-Majlis Al-Chaabi Al-Watani*, or the National People's Assembly in December 1991, the FIS again won 188 seats, just 28 short of obtaining a parliamentary majority. There was little doubt that the FIS would win the majority and even the two-thirds of the seats needed to amend the Constitution, in the second round of

⁴³Until then, all legislative candidates came from the FLN.

⁴⁴The FFS and RCD are based in Kabylie, the Berber-populated region.

the elections scheduled for January 1992 (Bouandel, 1993). However, the army intervened to nullify the elections and forced Bendjedid to resign. The FIS was declared illegal, and a state of emergency was imposed. A new figurehead president and a former opposition figure, Mohamed Boudiaf, was assassinated in June 1992, the country descended into that civil war that would last for a decade until 2002, known as the ‘Black Decade’ to Algerians. The war took more than 150,000 lives which mostly consisted of innocent civilians.⁴⁵

The regime’s trial and error of democratization attempts followed by the civil war taught the Algerian leadership that it could never hold another free and fair elections. Without rigging the results, the multiparty elections would again result in Islamist, opposition victory. Thus, such elections, free of fraud, were never again to be held in Algeria to this day. The war had also shifted the mindset of the Algerian masses who were initially excited about the possibility of democratization; they grew extremely wary of the war and the Islamist violence. According to an activist I interviewed, the citizens, during the war, realized that “peace was by far better than democracy.”⁴⁶ The war had also created a sense of widespread political indifference across Algerian communities.⁴⁷ The Algerian citizens often were the targets of the armed Islamist groups that had accused the civilians being loyal to the government during the civil conflict. According to an Algerian human rights activist, almost everyone she knows has lost a civilian family member or a friend due to Islamist violence during the 1990s.⁴⁸ Moreover, the civil war had also produced moderate Islamist groups that distanced themselves from the banned FIS. These organizations accepted the regime’s rules of the game by agreeing to participate in the elections that were reinstated during the 1990s.

Years before the end of the Civil War in 2002 when the Islamic Armed Group (GIA) was defeated by the Algerian military, the incumbents had attempted to put the democratic process back on track to stabilize the country. In 1994, the army appointed a retired general

⁴⁵Amnesty International, “Algeria: 10 Years of State of Emergency, 10 Years of Grave Human Rights Abuses,” AI Index: MDE 28/003/2002. The figures are disputed.

⁴⁶Interview, activist, March 2017.

⁴⁷Interview, opposition party member, November 2016.

⁴⁸Interview, activist, March 2017.

and a former member of the ALN, Liamine Zeroual as the president. He attempted to end the crisis through dialogues with different forces including the imprisoned leaders of the FIS.(Bouandel and Zoubir, 1998). In 1995, he organized the country's first pluralist presidential election, in which Zeroual achieved a comfortable victory. Although it is not clear whether the election was indeed free and fair, it nonetheless provided Zeroual with legitimacy, internally and externally, to carry out reforms (Bouandel, 1997).

Under Zeroual, the Constitution, amended and approved in 1996, guaranteed the rights of political parties to exist.⁴⁹ The new electoral law was issued in which closed-list proportional representation (PR) system was adopted. The country was divided into 48 constituencies that coincided with the administrative units; the number of seats is proportional to its population, with a minimum of four seats per district. On the surface, it was to ensure a more inclusive political system and encouraged cooperation between parties to form a government; however, it was also another tool to prevent the rise of parties similar to the FIS by encouraging fragmentation of the opposition. Additionally, Zeroual and his supporters created the National Democratic Rally (RND) that were to consolidate Zeroual's power. However, the RND soon became just another regime party and remains a close ally of the FLN to this day. They divide important posts within the government and support policies that are indistinguishable from each other. A security force member suggested that many Algerians are aware that the FLN and the RND are basically the "same party" and said: "the regime conveniently created two of each. Now we have two ruling parties, two Berber parties, and two Islamist parties."⁵⁰

In 1997, Zeroual also brought back local as well as national legislative elections in which all legal parties participated. As the three-month party of the president, RND, won more than 40% of the seats in the legislative elections along with evidence of other questionable irregularities, many opposition figures accused the regime of rigging the election (Bouandel

⁴⁹Aimed at the FIS or the potential emergence of a party like the FIS, the existence of any party based on religion, ethnicity, and regionalism was prohibited.

⁵⁰Interview, security force member, August 2017. The traditional supporters of the Algerian regime parties are the elderly, civil servants, rural residents, and security forces.

and Zoubir, 1998).

After three years into his presidential term in 1998, Zeroual announced an early exit and called for a presidential election. Many scholars and activists suspected that he had been pressured to leave as he failed to end the war even after implementing major democratic reforms.⁵¹ In the 1999 presidential election, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, won with almost 74% of the votes. The results were not surprising as Bouteflika was allegedly supported by the army as well as government parties such as the FLN and the RND. Again, this election was accused of being rigged (Evans and Phillips, 2007). The Civil War eventually came to an end in 2002 when the GIA and its leaders were eliminated.

4.2.3 Post-Civil War Elections and Electoral Fraud

Since the 1997 legislative elections held under the auspices of Zeroual, Algeria has held four additional legislative elections under the closed-PR system at regular five-year intervals – in 2002, 2007, 2012, and 2017. In addition, the presidential elections were also held every five years in 1999, 2004, 2009, and 2014. However, Bouteflika has been elected all four times, and the coalition of the regime parties – mainly the FLN and the RND – has managed to form a majority in every Assembly. Virtually all the presidential and legislative elections have featured intense accusations of extensive fraud sponsored by the regime. However, such excessive use of fraud has not damaged the leadership.

The first legislative election held after the Civil War in 2002 was marked by extreme levels of violence across the country. The regime actively repressed the opposition candidates and activists by employing harassment, violence, and even execution (Bouandel, 2002). The FLN won a majority as they took 199 out of 389 seats; additionally, other regime parties such as the RND and Movement for a Peaceful Society (MSP) performed well. As a result, election results were thought to have been rigged.⁵²

In the next consecutive election in 2007, the accusations of electoral fraud were not as

⁵¹Interview with professor of political science, March 25, 2017.

⁵²Interview, journalist, March 2017; opposition party member, March 2017.

intense because unlike the previous election, no single party achieved an outright majority although the regime parties together took more than 50% of the seats. However, Said Bouchair, the president of the National Electoral Commission, reported that ballots were stuffed to benefit the FLN and the RND; additionally, representatives from parties were not allowed to observe the vote count.⁵³

Electoral fraud again shadowed the 2012 legislative elections in which the incumbent coalition won a majority of seats. Besides the aforementioned accounts electoral violence and ballot stuffing, the Algerian regime seems to carry out multiple types of fraud activities. A journalist told me that in 2012, he stood for a half a day outside a polling station in the capital Algiers and only saw three people enter.⁵⁴ Another activist claimed that Algerians are apathetic to politics since the Civil War and that “no one” votes in any election, especially in the urban areas.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, the final reported turnout was 43.14%, which many believe was heavily inflated. I also collected several stories of government-sponsored vote buying in conversations with Algerians.

On the contrary to the Kuwaiti experience, all Algerians I interviewed except for those affiliated with a regime party expressed strongly that all electoral processes in Algeria were fraudulent. Even some regime party members would hesitate to assert that fraud did not exist in Algeria. When I asked a high-ranking official of a regime party whether he thought the elections in Algeria were fair, he laughed and acknowledged the faults in the the electoral process: “Democracy does not come easy, and you cannot bring it overnight. You have to take it step-by-step. What we have is not perfect, but we are bringing security.”⁵⁶ Nevertheless, again in sharp contrast to Kuwait, electoral rules have remained consistent since 1997, with the exception of adopting the 2012 gender quota law that now guarantees 30% of the seats for female MPs.

Moreover, unlike Kuwaitis, Algerians lack social institutions like *diwaniyyas* that would

⁵³*Al-Khabar*, May 19, 2007; *Al-Ahram Weekly*, May 24-30, 2007.

⁵⁴March 22, 2016.

⁵⁵March 22, 2016.

⁵⁶Interview, regime party official, August 2017.

allow open political discussions. On the surface, there exist over 100,000 civil society associations in Algeria; however, they often suffer from government interference, intimidation, and selective funding.(Achy, 2013) In fact, the most robust social organizations are extensions of the FLN party (Hamadouche and Zoubir, 2009). During my fieldwork, I discovered that local associations in Algeria vary widely in terms of their leadership, organization, and resources. Certain groups, especially a few womens' organization and religious groups, are well-organized with traced back to the pre-independence period. It is plausible that before the late-1980s, the FLN did not consider the public to be a serious threat, as they operated together during the revolutionary struggles. However, the regime's views of the citizens and their networks change during the civil war. It is evident from the fact that many of these associations increasingly face difficulties that did not exist in the pre-war era. In particular, compared to the regime-affiliated groups, they encounter more administrative restraints and hurdles to even re-register their association.⁵⁷ In turn, the general Algerian public is losing space to share anti-government sentiments and try to solve collective action problems in order to mobilize themselves.

It is unlikely that citizen networks in Algeria will become stronger in the near future, as the regime has adopted various measures to restrain its civil society. Though Bouteflika enacted various reforms to address popular discontent during the 2011 Arab uprisings, they did not make any meaningful progress to grant political freedom. Rather, the new Association Law adopted in 2012 (No. 12-06) created more limitations to freedom of association by granting the government more power to interfere with associational activities. For instance, the law allows the government to block registration or dissolve existing associations; the government also restricts foreign funding and imposes heavy penalties for associations that violate the regulations.⁵⁸ Additionally, the new Information Law, also enacted in 2012, created many obstacles for associations to distribute independent publications. During my fieldwork in 2017, I was told that the government was working on additional laws and con-

⁵⁷Interviews with members of various associations, August 2018.

⁵⁸Jarida Rasmia (Government Gazette), Number 02, 2012, published by the General Secretariat of Government.

stitutional amendments to further restrict press freedom and right of association. Thus, the future of civil society is dim in Algeria.

4.2.4 International Community and Algeria

Algeria's economy heavily operates within a nationalist, socialist model developed during the Boumedienne-era. Despite the liberalization attempts beginning in the 1980s, the state still dominates the economy, and privatization attempts have not made any substantial progress due to intra-elite conflicts over the distribution of rents in addition to the civil war (Werenfels, 2002).⁵⁹ Though Algeria has made moves to attract more foreign direct investment (FDI) towards its transportation and infrastructure, its bureaucratic inefficiency, complex tax law, and local partner requirements have presented obstacles to increasing FDI inflows.⁶⁰ Thus, Algeria remains a challenging market for many foreign businesses; it was ranked 166th out of 190 in a recent World Bank report.⁶¹

Petroleum and natural gas revenues still account for about a third of its GDP, and other industries remain neglected. Thus, while international trade is significant for the economy, most of its profits come from hydrocarbon exports. The country remains protectionist and imposes heavy tariffs on imported goods. During my fieldwork, I rarely encountered international brand names in Algeria. The country does not have a McDonald's or a Pizza Hut, for example, but instead have countless local "fast food" restaurants that sell burgers, fries, and pizza.

In terms of foreign aid, Algeria has received generous assistance and low-interest loans for decades. During the civil war-era, the support was meant to help stabilize the country. Shortly after September 11, 2001, Algeria was quick to condemn terrorism; President Bouteflika visited the US twice that year, and US-Algeria relations strengthened as they became

⁵⁹Though the regime gradually withdrew from many of the sectors due to an agreement with the IMF, like in Egypt, many affiliated with the military took over key roles in controlling the newly "privatized" economy.

⁶⁰*Algeria Country Commercial Guide 2016*, International Trade Administration, US Department of Commerce

⁶¹See *Doing Business 2018*, the World Bank Group

partners in counterterrorism operations. As a result, US military assistance to Algeria substantially grew to help the country fight extremist groups such as al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and Da'esh. Such inflows of aid do not stipulate conditions for genuine political or economic reforms. Thus, it is plausible to think that foreign assistance in the case of Algeria generate any incentive for the incumbent to invest in its democratic appearance for gaining international support.

4.2.5 Concluding Remarks

Algeria, at first glance, seems to have successfully stabilized the country after the civil war and safely bypassed the 2011 Arab uprisings that swept the MENA autocracies. It has also held regular, multiparty presidential and legislative elections since the mid-1990s. However, when we look deeper, the political institutions are little more than a façade in which Bouteflika has been the president since 1999 and the regime parties have always occupied a majority in the People's National Assembly. Additionally, the ruling elites have successfully kept the opposition groups weak and fragmented. No opposition in Algeria today has the capacity mobilize their supporters in a meaningful scale. Supported by the armed forces and free of public pressure, the regime will continue to face little cost for its use of extensive fraud. Consequently, it is doubtful that the opposition has any realistic chance of obtaining an electoral victory in the near future.

Many scholars, journalists, and policymakers have mentioned that the lasting memories of the bloody civil war have discouraged the citizens from organizing collectively. However, it does not explain how protests remain extremely common in Algeria today. The riot police makes about 100,000 interventions annually. "Local protests happen every week and it's extremely common," said one of my interviewees. "Some people decide to go home after the government distributes some extra bread. But at the same time, the police forces are also more cautious to handle demonstrations with violence."⁶² While the post-civil war stability is valuable for Algerians, it evidently has not discouraged the population from turning out

⁶²Interview, professor, August 2017.

in the streets. Rather, it is the lack of citizen interaction and information sharing that have stopped Algerians from solving collective action problems and organizing a demonstration large and long enough to oust the regime.

4.3 Conclusion

I have presented the cases of Kuwait and Algeria to support my claims. On the one hand, the Kuwaiti ruler has avoided relying on fraud to influence elections due to the institutional arrangements that were set up to counter the country's existential crisis produced by neighboring Iraq. Subsequently, the regime has largely stayed away from rigging elections because the leadership is aware that the Kuwaiti citizens may overcome collective action problems through engaging in the tradition of diwaniyyas enable information flows within the public. Instead, the authorities have resorted to changing election rules. On the other hand, the Algerian regime did not require international support to consolidate its rule from the beginning; the FLN's role in the independence struggles, in addition to the backing of the military, was sufficient for them to hold onto their power for the first three decades. Though the civil war was costly for the regime, by restricting freedom of association and partnering with the international community in the counterterrorism activities, the Algerian authorities continue to face low costs when using outright fraud. As a result, the regime continues to blatantly rig elections without generating political instability enough to be ousted.

In sum, the Algerian and the Kuwaiti cases help confirm the quantitative analyses of electoral fraud, presented in Chapter 3. First, a high degree of social cohesion discourages the government's use of fraud. Second, the need for the international community's support influences the regime to invest in electoral integrity. Third, in countries where the cost of using fraud is high, incumbents may resort to other strategies that are more subtle yet still manipulative. In particular, social cohesion seems to be key in limiting fraud. Kuwait offers an appropriate account of how strong citizen networks help promote electoral integrity. Though there exists a sizable demand for improving election quality in Algeria, it is not large enough to influence the incentives of leaders to make any substantial changes to the current

electoral process.

Kuwait and Algeria have both relied on their petroleum reserves to redistribute spoils to their citizens. Until the oil prices fall enough to change such dynamics, I do not expect to observe significant changes in the strategies of the two countries anytime soon.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

While electoral fraud is often considered the most important survival strategy to incumbents of electoral autocracies, why some employ fraud but not others remains poorly understood. I have developed a theory to explain the strategic decision of the dictator to use fraud or not.

I have argued that outright fraud and rule manipulation generate different risks and costs. Dictators, knowing their own vulnerabilities, tend to rely more heavily on one tactic rather than the other in order to influence election results. Because blatant fraud, such as stuffing ballot boxes and fabricating vote count, is much more visible to foreign actors, autocrats that are especially dependent on foreign support tend to resort to other subtle strategies. Furthermore, dictators avoid using blatant fraud when they rule societies with dense social networks. This is because such networks can help citizens overcome collective action problems and facilitate mass demonstrations against the regime. Social cohesion also help citizens become more informed about the existence of fraud as it facilitates the flow of information. Using outright fraud can be especially costly for dictators because it can become a focal point for popular uprisings. Consequently, dictators who are more vulnerable to citizen collective action instead resort to tactics of rule manipulation.

While the literature on electoral fraud is vast, I provided one of the few systematic empirical evidence explaining the extent of fraud. My key finding is that strong citizen networks can stop dictators from using blatant fraud. In the rest of this chapter, I review the findings of this dissertation and discuss their implications. Before suggesting avenues for future research, I also briefly discuss possible future of civil society in Algeria and Kuwait.

5.1 Summary of Findings

Upon discussing the conditions needed to generate empirical tests of electoral fraud in the second chapter, Chapter 3 of this dissertation examined the conditions under which authoritarian incumbents are likely to engage in fraudulent activities. First, I presented the cross-national analysis of all authoritarian regimes from 1945 to 2015 and reported that dictators are more likely to avoid outright fraud when they rule citizens who participate more in civil society organizations. I also showed partial support for my other hypotheses that the need for international support is associated with less outright fraud. Additionally, autocrats seem to rely on either visible fraud or election manipulation as they each carry different risks and costs.

The most interesting findings of this section was that outright fraud is not always the go-to tactic of dictators. In fact, I showed that as leaders resort to other strategies of manipulation, they instead decrease the use of outright fraud. This confirmed that depending on their own risk assessment, dictatorships indeed carry diverging costs and risks associated with different ways to rig elections.

The second part of Chapter 3 relied on an original survey of 1,000 respondents in Algeria. While the cross-national analysis confirmed strong correlations, I could not draw out definitive causality arrows. However, in the analysis of Algeria, I was able to exploit data on colonial education as an instrument to make causal claims on the effects of citizen associations on reducing fraud. In addition to confirming this key finding, I was able to uncover another interesting finding. I found that in provinces that suffered more civil war deaths, the level of vote buying is lower. However, surprisingly, more deaths are associated with more election rigging. I posited that manipulation strategies operate as substitutes and reflect diverging efficiency and incentives of the dictators. In other words, unlike election rigging, vote buying does not guarantee electoral victories in places where popularity is too low.

In Chapter 4, I illustrated the cases of Kuwait and Algeria to further support my claims through process tracing. This chapter presented a comparison of two authoritarian Arab regimes to strengthen my causal claims that (1) social cohesion and (2) the need for interna-

tional support influence authoritarian fraud decisions. I examined why there exist diverging trends in the two countries' electoral experiences: why the fraud levels are distinctively higher in Algeria. I described the diverging political and social conditions that shaped the behavior of regime elites.

On the one hand, the Kuwaiti monarchs have avoided the use of electoral fraud due to the dire need for international support, facing existential threats from neighboring Iraq at numerous times in the post-independence history. In addition, the Kuwaiti leadership is aware that the Kuwaiti citizens are in a unique position to overcome collective action problems due to the country's tradition of diwaniyyas that enable information flows among citizens. However, that did not mean that the emirs gave up on trying to control election results. Instead, they have resorted to more subtle tactics of manipulating election rules.

On the other hand, the Algerian dictatorship was endowed with legitimacy to rule the country from the country's independence in 1962. The incumbent party leaders' role in the War of Independence, in addition to the backing of the military, was sufficient for them to consolidate their rule. Unlike the widespread Kuwaiti tradition to share political opinions without government interference, the Algerian public was heavily limited in ways to express its grievances due to its colonial history and geographical disadvantages. As a result, the regime has gotten away with using outright fraud in every election without producing visible political instability.

Throughout the dissertation, my key finding is that strong citizen networks can reduce election fraud. I have also demonstrated that international support is often meaningful to dictators. The key policy implication emerging from my findings is that democratic assistance should focus on strengthening civil society organizations. This is especially true of the goal of international organizations and policymakers is to foster long-term democratization in authoritarian countries. Even short-term, providing citizens in authoritarian countries avenues for direct communication with each other should prove to be fruitful for reducing outright fraud.

5.2 Future of Civil Society in Algeria and Kuwait

In this section, I briefly discuss the possible future of civil society associations in Algeria and Kuwait. While I have illustrated that citizen networks can deter the use of fraud, it is also true that authoritarian governments have much say in the future of citizen networks. For instance, they can directly repress citizen organizations or unevenly fund loyalist networks to create an uneven playing field. There exists evidence that two regimes do realize the potential threats social cohesion can impose on their rule.

In Kuwait, while the unique institution of *diwaniya*s has facilitated social cohesion in the country, the country lacks formal, legal guarantees for freedom of association. As mentioned in Chapter 4, official formations of political parties are banned in Kuwait. During my fieldwork, I have heard of several draft laws to provide the existing *de facto* groups with legal protection; however, they have not been formally discussed in the national assembly. Additionally, the government tightly controls the formation of organizations and clubs. Moreover, the authorities also oversee activities and finances of the organizations, once formed. For instance, associations must obtain official permission to raise funds. During my fieldwork, I was also surprised that the law also required NGOs to obtain permission in order to interact with international organizations. I had a long interview with a former organizer of an international NGO that has long operated in Kuwait. His association could not review the permission to operate using the name of the NGO. Moreover, even *diwaniya*s can also be used by the ruling family to their advantage. It is true that a number of *diwaniya*s are often identified as ‘loyal to the emir and his family’. The “ready-made” nature of *diwaniya*s may appear tempting to Kuwaiti incumbents.

It is unlikely that citizen networks in Algeria will become stronger in the near future, as the regime has adopted various measures to restrain its civil society. Though Bouteflika enacted various reforms to address popular discontent during the 2011 Arab uprisings, they did not make any meaningful progress to grant political freedom. Rather, the new Association Law adopted in 2012 (No. 12-06) created more limitations to freedom of association by granting the government more power to interfere with associational activities. For in-

stance, the law allows the government to block registration or dissolve existing associations; the government also restricts foreign funding and imposes heavy penalties for associations that violate the regulations.¹ Additionally, the new Information Law, also enacted in 2012, created many obstacles for associations to distribute independent publications. During my fieldwork in 2017, I was told that the government was working on additional laws and constitutional amendments to further restrict press freedom and right of association. Thus, the future of civil society is dim in Algeria.

5.3 Contribution and Future Research

This research was motivated by the puzzle of why some dictators resort to blatant fraud whereas others do not. It seeks to make several contributions. First and foremost, it adds to the literature that has not paid enough attention to the significance of electoral institutions in autocracies. Secondly, this research attempts to integrate disparate yet related researches on authoritarian elections, electoral institutions, and electoral fraud to investigate how dictators make strategic decisions about elections to improve their durability. Lastly, it highlights the complexity of politics in dictatorships and that authoritarian elections should not be viewed as a sign of democratization even if they are “open” for all parties. My paper suggests that the seemingly “democratic” institutions themselves can consolidate authoritarian rule. Rather, scholars and policy makers should pay more attention to the rules that govern elections. In particular, assessing the quality of the elections should be accompanied by evaluating the electoral institutions in addition to evidence gathered during the electoral processes.

My dissertation has sought to improve our understanding of electoral fraud in dictatorships. However, there is much work needed to understand how the use of other manipulative strategies interact with the abuse of outright fraud. Although my research so far has focused on electoral system change as a substitute tactic for outright fraud, there are a myriad of ways to manipulate elections. Future research could expand the data collection efforts on

¹Jarida Rasmia (Government Gazette), Number 02, 2012, published by the General Secretariat of Government.

cross-national measures of more manipulation strategies. This would expand our ability to understand other key factors influencing electoral integrity.

Another part of this dissertation that deserves deeper examination is the use of electoral manipulation in the Arab world. It has been more than seven years after the Tunisian street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire, triggering the Arab uprisings. However, the situation in most of the Arab countries remain grim. Many Arab citizens have expressed that their lives have not changed from a decade ago prior to the Arab Spring, when scholars were writing about the robustness of authoritarianism in the Middle East. However, I have shown variations and a glimpse of hope for improvement in certain parts of the region in my study. A further examination of electoral autocracies in the MENA will improve our ability to understand the understudied part of the world.

5.4 Conclusion

Scholars and policymakers increasingly have examined the prevalence of elections in authoritarian regimes, 90% of which now hold legislative elections. Compared to the pre-Cold War era before elections started proliferating, it is striking how it has now become the norm to hold elections. However, we still know little about whether elections alone have helped improving lives of the people across nondemocracies. This project have attempted to answer the question: why is it that electoral fraud is more common in some places but not others? Being able to answer this question will put us one step closer to improving the welfare of the citizens living under authoritarian leaders in a more practical way.

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