

Politics and Elite Change in the Arab World

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Regime change and the quality of governance in various Arab countries have come to the fore as major topics in the international policy debate, particularly so in the United States under the administration of George W. Bush. There is little doubt that leadership personnel and the manner in which Arab leaders rule their states and societies also have an impact on how these countries fare in an increasingly globalized world. Why, however, should one study elites or the changes in and among elites in Arab states? Do "elite" and "elite change" denote a particular normative or political background? Why should the focus be on the particular group of countries that constitute the Arab world? Is it relevant to study the change of elites in that region in the first place? If so, which theoretical assumptions should guide such research?

A comparative study of the Arab world focusing on its elites—or more precisely in this case, on its politically relevant elites—and on change among them necessarily proceeds from general underlying assumptions. First, one must assume that there are enough similarities and interdependencies among the Arab states that will lend themselves to useful insights from a comparative perspective. Second, one must assume that change among elites is actually taking place or will occur at some point at roughly concurrent times. It is obvious that in the Arab world a generation of leaders—not just a couple of septuagenarian prime decisionmakers—is gradually disappearing, and a new political elite is emerging.

It is also assumed that this "changing of the guard" will affect political dynamics in the region. This assumption implies that national politics are important. Political outcomes, in other words, are to a large extent shaped by the agendas and strategies of political actors in addition to being influenced by global and regional structures and developments, and by constraints that limit the capabilities of individual states. This study thus takes an actor-oriented approach, assuming that political elites indeed matter. The

state remains the primary framework for social and political action, but, as Charles Tripp notes, it must not be divorced "from the individuals and groups which in fact hold the power of decision."¹

Elites are a sociopolitical reality. They are the people, as Harold Lasswell has put it, "who get most of what there is to get."² That goes for politics as much as for the economy and other areas of social life; in many cases, they take the most in every instance. There is nothing normative in this statement or in the critical analytic approach taken here: the elite are not necessarily the best or the brightest nor are they always those who should rule or should have certain privileges. Such elitist notions, with theoretical foundations in Plato's *Republic* and Pareto's sociology, too easily lend themselves to authoritarian or even totalitarian systems and rulers. Our approach is also not normative in the sense of proposing what elites should do in their respective states: One may wish, for example, that Arab leaders would move their countries toward democracy, pluralism, or social equality. This research, however, is about the agendas and political projects of these leaders, as well as other members of the elite, in regard to the socioeconomic and political challenges their countries face. Finally, studies of elites should not be normative or even ideological in the sense of claiming that the ruling or politically relevant elites have gained their positions as a result of some equitable and pluralist form of competition. For most of the Arab world, this is certainly not the case.

Elite studies experienced something of a renaissance in the mid-1980s and into the 1990s, to a great extent because of the transformation processes of authoritarian systems in Latin America and, even more so, in the former socialist countries. The crucial role of political elites in democratic transitions is commonly acknowledged by those researchers interested in transition processes as such,³ and it has become a focal point of elite studies.⁴ There has been more than one attempt to find common ground between studies that focus on elites and those that focus on the masses or class actors in order to better understand the interaction of leaders and the masses that shaped the democratization processes in Latin America and Eastern Europe. Mass action has often been a driving force in elite policies.⁵ Michael Burton, John Higley, and others have explored the relationship between certain types of elites—consensual, fragmented, or divided—and regime types, as well as the chances of transition from one regime type to another. They conclude that the emergence of consolidated democracies requires "unity in diversity"—that is, a situation in which the groups comprising the elite agree on the rules of the game.⁶ In regard to some of the former socialist countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, it has recently been noted that some of the elite who ruled these countries under socialism have survived the breakdown of those regimes and managed to retain their political elite status.⁷

Political failure evidently does not directly or necessarily lead to a loss of status.

Contrary to the claim that in this renaissance of elite studies "hardly any country . . . has not been the site of at least one recent elite study,"⁸ the fact is that the Arab world has largely been ignored. Most studies of elites and emerging elites in the Arab states were done in the 1960s and 1970s, some even in the early 1980s. Little wonder that most of this work is heavily influenced by the modernization paradigm, which was dominant at that time. These studies—focusing mostly on the formation of a broad range of young elites, their social and professional backgrounds, socialization, political alignments, and worldviews—reflect the more or less revolutionary political and socioeconomic transformations that the region underwent beginning in the mid-1950s.⁹ Frequently they are analytical, but tend to be more apologetic than critical, particularly in regard to the military. They generally stress the role of the new salaried middle classes as a social stratum promoting technological change and social modernization, and some even hail the civil and military functionaries who constituted this stratum as "the principal revolutionary and stabilizing force."¹⁰ The optimism surrounding the role of the man on horseback receded considerably, practically as well as theoretically, with the unfolding of the long and often agonizing experiences with Arab rulers of military origin and army-backed regimes.

Because of the longevity of Arab regimes, academic interest in the political elites of the Arab world began to decline at the end of the 1970s. Thereafter students of political sociology occasionally took a look at new or reemerging elite segments, particularly the entrepreneurial elite and professional groups, or at emerging social alliances between these strata and state bureaucracies or state bourgeoisie.¹¹ Such interest in the role of Arab political elites usually surfaced in the context of studies concerning economic and political adjustment or liberalization processes, for which transition and "third-wave" (of democratization) literature often provided the conceptual framework. In a sense, however, everyone took for granted the continuity of the existing regimes and the ruling strata. Studies from the 1970s, or with respect to that period, remained largely valid in their characterization of the ruling elite up to the late 1990s. At present, these studies offer a basis for comparison of this older elite with the younger elite who have emerged or are positioning themselves for substantive political roles.

Despite the recent interest in elite studies, no general theory of elites and political change exists on which this book could rely, and it is not going to fill that gap. At best, the essays here furnish elements of a theory of limited reach that helps in explaining the relationship between elite change and political and socioeconomic changes in Arab countries. They may, nonetheless, be useful to students of other regions.

The Focus on Elite Change in the Arab World

It took the deaths in 1999 and 2000 of four Arab heads of state—King Hussein of Jordan, King Hassan II of Morocco, Amir Isa of Bahrain, and President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria—to make outside observers alert to the prospect of a wide-ranging change of leadership in the Arab world. By 2009 the leadership map of the region will differ substantially from the one a decade prior, and the difference will be considerably greater than that between the maps of 1999 and 1989 and even of 1979. Arab regimes have been extremely stable over the past three last decades or so: In 1999, the average term in office of prime decisionmakers was more than twenty years. Change at the leadership level will hence be regionwide, and the effects of such parallel change on domestic developments and on the regional and international relations of individual Arab states are well worth studying.

Academic and media observers have tended to focus on who will follow the top decisionmakers in individual states; in some cases, due to the longevity of some leaders, such questions have been studied for more than a decade.¹² Other studies have dealt with the problems of succession,¹³ or with successful succession processes, and, consequently, with the personalities of new leaders.¹⁴ The upcoming changes of the guard will go much deeper, however. Mainly because of the autocratic and personalized nature of many Arab regimes, there has been little change in the second and third circles of decisionmaking elites. Long-standing leaders have retained trusted advisors and ministers or commanded a pool of trusted aides whom they rotate in and out of government positions. Also, from the 1970s (and sometimes 1960s) to the late 1990s in Egypt, Syria, Morocco, and within the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), there was about as much change at the top of tolerated opposition parties and factions as at the top of the respective regimes.¹⁵ Accordingly, a real generation gap has emerged between the political elite and the majority of the population in most Arab countries. Consider that up to three-fourths of the population in Arab states is less than twenty-five years of age. In 2003 the majority of Libyans, Egyptians, Iraqis, and Saudis, among others, had no active memory of a regime other than the one in power. Also, the historical events and symbols frequently invoked in public discourse by many of these regimes mean little to younger generations. Future changes at the top and within the wider elite are likely to reduce that gap and be reflected in new (or renewed) discourses and symbols closer to the experiences of the younger generations.

In some country studies, scholars have addressed such issues as the social and professional backgrounds of future leadership elites.¹⁶ The effects of multiple parallel successions in the region, however, and ques-

tions pertaining to the development of a broader political elite have not yet been systematically examined.

The Politically Relevant Elite

The subject of the research presented here is the politically relevant elite (PRE). This stratum comprises those people in a given country who wield political influence and power in that they make strategic decisions or participate in decisionmaking on a national level, contribute to defining political norms and values (including the definition of "national interests"), and directly influence political discourse on strategic issues. The PRE thus encompasses the political elite, defined as those top government, administrative, and political leaders "who actually exercise political power"¹⁷ or "persons whose strategic position in large and powerful organizations and movements enable them to influence political decisionmaking directly, substantially, and regularly."¹⁸ The PRE reaches, however, beyond the political elite to include groups and segments that contribute to political processes or influence them from various sidelines. "Temporary elites"¹⁹—people who gain a position of political relevance but do not maintain elite status once their job is done—should not be conceptually excluded from this group. The same applies to ad hoc leaders of mass movements—the aroch in Algeria, for example—who, as John Peeler has argued in the case of Latin America, become elites the moment they lead.²⁰

The concept of politically relevant elites also extends beyond today's common understanding of "political class"—those, in Tom Bottomore's words, who "exercise political power or influence, and are directly engaged in struggles for political leadership."²¹ The PRE encompasses such functional segments as government, administration, and the military and may include individuals or groups who are not competing for political leadership, but rather use their influence to set or influence political agendas and define the themes of national discourse. These latter are opinionmakers rather than decisionmakers, advisors and *éminences grises* or lobbyists. Top businessmen, members of the media, and religious leaders, among others, are not so considered part of the PRE; they are only included if their contribution to political processes is considered relevant. Generalizations are difficult, as relevance depends on the political structures as well as on the political culture of the different Arab states. Although religious leaders are certainly part of the PRE in Saudi Arabia or, for completely different reasons, in Lebanon—defining the legal framework in the former and, often enough, community interests in the latter—they cannot be considered politically relevant in Tunisia. Prominent journalists may have real influence on political agenda setting in Lebanon and, perhaps, in Kuwait and

Egypt, but for the time being they do not in Iraq and Syria. Similarly, the political relevance of deputies and members of shura councils, party functionaries, military officers, and government ministries is not the same from country to country. Which groups are considered part of the PRE must be established through a structural analysis of the political systems in each state.

The PRE concept includes opposition or dissenting voices once they are relevant to political processes. It is not necessary to theoretically juxtapose a "ruling elite" and a "counterelite," which would create a sometimes problematic and rather artificial distinction between those who are "in" and those who are "out." The criterion is relevance, as defined above, not membership in a ruling coalition or appointment to a formal office. Position alone does not guarantee a person political relevance; sometimes even position coupled with wealth do not translate into political power or influence. On the other hand, a full-fledged parliamentary democracy is not required for political forces that oppose a given government or differ with its agenda to gain a voice or some measure of influence on political processes. These forces might be competitors who play by the rules of the game or challengers who do not accept these rules or are not allowed to play the game in the first place. Take for example Lebanon, where members of the political oligarchy, even if they strongly oppose the president or the prime minister, still compete for political and material resources and are never actually "out." Even in some of the Arab monarchies rulers or parts of the ruling elite try to accommodate or integrate dissenters in one way or another. In these and other cases, even opposition leaders based outside the country may have real influence on decisions and discourses within the country. Algeria's Hocine Ait-Ahmed is an example of an influential challenger; it would be difficult to defend the claim that this veteran party leader has lost relevance in Algerian politics by being in exile. He is certainly not, however, among the core decisionmakers.

A model of three concentric circles highlights the different degrees of influence within the PRE (see Figures 2.1, 5.1, and 7.1 as exemplary illustrations).²² The first (or inner) circle comprises the core elite—those who make decisions on strategic issues. In the second circle one finds an intermediate elite—groups and individuals who exert considerable influence on or make decisions of lesser political importance, but do not have the power to make decisions on strategic issues unless these are delegated to them. The third circle comprises what may be referred to as the subelite—less influential elites capable of indirectly influencing strategic decisions or contributing to national agenda setting and national discourses through their position in the government and administration, interest organizations and lobbies, the media, or other means. The boundaries between the circles are not hard and fast or hermetically sealed: Political elites have always

been "somewhat elastic formations with unclear boundaries."²³ Movement into and out of the PRE, and between its circles, is indeed a major feature of social mobility and political change, and it is as such the center of interest here.

Issues and Approaches

This comparative look at politically relevant elites in the Arab countries focuses, where possible, on emerging or new elites. The dominant theme of change concerns change within elites and of elite settings as well as changes in the domestic and external environments that affect or are affected in some way by change on the elite level. Change includes everything from minor modifications of existing constellations to major, systemic transformations.

The case studies in this book deal with three related clusters of questions or issues that also denote three different levels of analysis: the human actor, the regional or international environments, and the nation-state. The first cluster pertains to the structure and composition of Arab PRE *per se*, which concerns identifying the politically relevant individuals and groups and those who have emerged or are about to emerge as part of this elite. The focus here is on the circulation of elites—the exchange of personnel—and on their attitudes and behavior. Given the longevity of regime elites in the Arab world, the question of what characterizes "new" or "emerging" is of particular importance: What is the scope of the changes taking place?²⁴ Can one speak of broad change in the sense that large numbers of positions in the first, second, and third circles change hands, or are these changes rather narrowly restricted to the most prominent or some of the more prominent elite members? How deep is such change? Is change within an elite purely generational, that is, is the new or emerging elite a mere reproduction or a younger version of the incumbent elite? Is that change structural—involving new political forces or new social strata or segments, and shifts in class or ethnic composition—or a new political or social balance of power? Further, can one detect changes in the dominant attitudes and values of a country's PRE, and what kind of effects do such changes have on that elite's behavior?

The second cluster of issues considers the interrelation between elite change and developments in the regional and international environment of the states in question. Elite change does not take place in a void. The political elites of the Arab world must deal with new regional and international structures—such as the World Trade Organization and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership—that tend to penalize noncooperation more than the international system did when the outgoing generation of leaders

came to power. In some cases, external players have explicitly demanded that incumbent political elites change or be exchanged.

Evolving regional and global circumstances do not act as absolute constraints on what the PRE of a given country can do in terms of regional and international relations, but they have to be taken into consideration. Analytical caution should prevail, however. There is no reason to assume that new elites will necessarily promote more peaceful solutions to interstate conflicts, take regional cooperation more seriously, or allow a higher degree of direct foreign interference in personnel and policy decisions simply because, when compared to their predecessors, they have a more civilian background, more exposure to the West, greater appreciation of the means and effects of globalization, and can count the Madrid and Oslo processes as part of their formative experience.

The third cluster of questions focuses on the relationships between the formation of new elites and socioeconomic as well as structural political changes. One should not presume that the emerging elites of the Arab world will necessarily follow a liberal economic agenda, let alone a liberal political one. Generation change on the elite level could, however, speed reforms: There is little doubt that the longevity of some regimes, such as that of Hafiz al-Asad in Syria or of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, and the ossification of the Syrian and Egyptian elites explain to some extent the resistance to reform seen in both countries in the 1990s.²⁵ To the extent that reforms are enacted by a core elite, and structural changes occur, there arises a need for new qualifications within the broader elite. That is, reform and structural change will create pressures that may expedite further generation change and most certainly have an impact on recruitment patterns and elite composition, particularly in the second and third elite circles.

Identifying the PRE

A comparative project of this kind must allow for academic pluralism in the various contributions that form its whole. Consequently, for example, some authors stress the sociological aspects of elite change more than others, while some approach it from a political economy perspective or pay special attention to the relevance of external factors. Putting such foci aside, however, the study of each country involves identifying its politically relevant elite.

For a critical analytic perspective, one cannot be content with a purely institutional or positional approach that defines the political elite as the group of people whose members occupy the ten, twenty, or fifty or so top executive or representative positions in the official or constitutional structure of a given polity in a certain period. In a study of the Palestinians, one author included within the "political elite" the president of Palestine, any-

body who held at some point a position in the council of ministers, the president of the Palestinian Legislative Council, the heads of committees in the parliament, the heads of parties, and the leaders of major public institutions.²⁶ Obviously, a major portion of those called the politically relevant elite here will be found in such official positions. One must consider, however, that many ministers in Arab (and other) countries do not participate in strategic decisions and have only limited influence on dominant discourses. Thus, to avoid being deceived by rank and formal position, it is necessary to examine the structure and workings of the political system, including where and how strategic decisions are made, in order to pinpoint possible positions and persons of influence outside the official framework. Key decisions may be made in formal or informal bodies that do not actually have constitutional or even legal bases.

To overcome the shortcomings of approaches that concentrate on formal position alone, structural analysis of political systems and decision-making processes is essential. Generalizations should be avoided: While most of the governments of the Arab states can be characterized as autocratic, decisionmaking structures, even at the highest (or core-elite) level, are not all the same. A few countries—among them Egypt, Tunisia, and Syria under the rule of Hafiz al-Asad—look like "presidential monarchies," where strategic questions rest firmly in the hands of the prime decision-maker. Even in such authoritarian countries, however, presidents do not make their decisions alone. Corporatist institutions often play a role; ruling parties or security apparatuses might have a say in decisions.

In some countries, decisionmaking structures are more consultative and consensus oriented, sometimes explicitly so: Consider the Lebanese constitution, which sets out three presidencies designed to share and balance decisionmaking powers between the three main confessional groups, or the family councils in the Gulf monarchies. In still other cases there exist more or less informal bodies that are consulted on strategic decisions, hold veto power over such decisions, or actually make them collectively. Examples include the Saudi Royal Council, or Algeria's self-recruiting military junta, which forms a collective leadership with more power than the president or the government.²⁷ Similarly, the so-called *qiyada filastiniyya* (Palestinian leadership), a group of ministers, political and military cadres, and advisors surrounding the Palestinian Authority leader Yasser Arafat, is consulted on strategic issues, but it does not, as a body, have veto power.²⁸

Even more variance exists with respect to structures comprising the second and third circles of the PRE. In Egypt or Syria, to give but two examples, the ruling party has a role to play in decisionmaking. In Jordan opposition party leaders, including Islamists, are also part of the PRE, and they have a voice even if parliament is suspended. In Lebanon, and to some extent in Egypt and Morocco, the media (and individual journalists) have

course.³⁰ In Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, and Syria, administration, particularly being in the position of a *wali* or a *muhafiz* (regional governor), is an important training and recruitment site for ministerial careers. The military remains a pool for future leaders in most countries, with the notable exception of the Gulf monarchies. Some leading families in Jordan, Lebanon, or Saudi Arabia have provided PRE members over two, three, or more generations.

Modernizing young leaders are likely to look for elite incubators outside the established structures of state, party, and leading families. Consider the role of the Economic Consultative Council in Jordan or the Syrian Computer Society in Syria in the modernization efforts of Abdallah II or Bashar al-Asad, respectively.³¹ Also, in countries that undergo economic reform and adjustment processes, nationals who have made a career in international organizations stand a good chance of parachuting into key government positions. In general, the contributors to this book follow qualitative rather than quantitative analysis. All contributions are based on extensive fieldwork, particularly on semistructured or informal interviews with members of the PRE and other resource persons. The object of analysis defines the researcher's method to quite some extent. Members of political elites are less easily accessible than members of broader societal elites; and one can hardly expect the political leadership of a country to fill in the questionnaire of some curious researcher. While the ability to grasp changing realities through quantitative analyses must not be overestimated in the first place, sociobiographical data, even of a sample of incumbent PRE members and young recruits to the second and third circles, can help discern patterns of elite formation and their modification over time. Saloun Zerhouni's examination of Morocco provides a particularly useful example.³²

Some of the chapters also present portraits of individuals, biographies of incumbents and emergent elites, or sketches of proto- or ideal-type PRE members. Such analysis helped the authors organize their ideas, and it may help others understand the politico-cultural environment of the politics in question. Future developments will determine whether a researcher was able to skillfully sift through the available information to plausibly judge whose lives make representative biographies, who is a promising young leader, or where the line should be drawn between the first, second, and third circles of the PRE.

Identifying Agendas and Strategic Themes

A study on elite change must be concerned with the agendas of new and emerging PRE. Agendas, or political projects, should be understood as the concretized and prioritized interests of actors within a given temporal and

some influence on agenda setting and public discourse. Religious leaders have a say in policy debates in countries as different as Egypt, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia, but virtually no input in Algeria or Tunisia. Business associations have gained weight in several countries; trade unions have lost clout in most.

While a body of reliable literature exists on the political structures of Arab states, actual decisionmaking processes often remain opaque. Theoretically, a researcher would have to trace the processes that lead to decisions on relevant issues; identify the groups and institutions that try to influence and succeed in influencing debates on particular issues; and establish at what level disputes are solved, compromises are sought, or conflictual outcomes are determined. Practically, such research will only be possible to a limited extent. At times one will only be able to note that powerful networks have an influence on key decisions, but it will be too difficult to ascertain their structures or members.

Beyond political systems analysis, identifying the PRE requires relying on expert opinion, or the so-called reputational approach, which is an indispensable tool.²⁹ This may mean asking a group of knowledgeable observers from inside and outside the country who, according to their judgment, plays a relevant role with regard to strategic decisions. Method clearly meets content here, as people, even in systems with little transparency, tend to "know" who is in charge, who is influential, or who or which institutions and bodies can largely be disregarded. Such knowledge is of practical importance to citizens trying to solve individual or collective problems vis-à-vis the state but which cannot for whatever reason be solved through official, institutional channels; this knowledge is generally built on experience. A reputation of being influential, powerful, close to a top decisionmaker, an *émittance grise*, and so on is more than having a whiff of fame; it can be a real asset that facilitates access to material and symbolic resources and, thereby, increases political weight, or "capital." It is one feature among others that distinguish the elite from the masses.

Identifying emerging elites requires examining career and recruitment patterns. Elites are never, even in revolutionary situations, totally exchanged. In most of the Arab states, incumbent elites significantly influence the formation of the new elite that will replace them. Although recruitment patterns change over time, such as to meet new economic, foreign policy, or other challenges, it is usually possible to identify the incubators, as it were, where emerging elites are trained or prepare themselves for political careers. Parliament, as Rola el-Husseini and Gamal Abdelnasser point out, is a place to hone one's political skills in Lebanon and in Egypt. The Moroccan parliament, the shura council in Saudi Arabia, and some other legislative bodies may attain such a role in the future, or at least become places in which to vet ideas and thus influence political dis-

spatial framework. Although incumbent elites can be judged by their track record, such evaluation of emerging or young elites will necessarily be limited. One therefore must rely, to a large extent, on discourse analysis—critical examination of “speech acts” that reflect the opinions and attitudes of emergent as well as incumbent members of the elite. Discourse is not merely a reflection of attitudes, however. It is also practice—it is an essential part of agenda setting; it helps one recognize friend and foe; and it can redefine norms and institutions, challenge existing political configurations, or shield those in power against the claims of contenders.³³ To discern elite discourses, the contributors to this book have relied on personal interviews and discussions, published and unpublished statements, speeches, publications, and other materials.

Political culture had to be taken into account in identifying and selecting relevant materials. For example, in a country such as Lebanon, with a media-oriented culture, members of incumbent and emerging elites generally make efforts to publish books or articles. In Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, oral communication remains essential; for example, Crown Prince Abdullah and other Saudi leaders set agendas by publishing their addresses to select gatherings. Emerging elite members in the Gulf are more likely to rely on their word being spread through formal meetings or informal gatherings, such as the *dhiwaniyyas* of Kuwait. Here, even researchers may have to rely more on what they can hear than on what they can read.

In order to focus their analysis, the authors generally identified a limited number of relevant, strategic themes concerning their country of study. The assumption here is that impending elite change will be reflected in the political debates and discussions about these strategic themes and thus in elite discourse. The strategic themes are those of national importance, so they vary from country to country. European Union (EU) association, for example, and the liberalization measures that are to go along with association would certainly be considered strategic themes in countries that are about to negotiate agreements with the Europeans. They are contested within the PRE in Egypt and Syria, but not in Lebanon or Tunisia. In Lebanon, relevant themes include relations with Syria and the future of the confessionalist system. In Jordan, the questions of “normalization” of relations with Israel and of domestic relations between Palestinian Jordanians and Transjordanians are disputed and highly relevant. In the major oil-producing countries, questions of rent distribution, subsidies and taxes, and adjustment because of decreasing oil income may have similar relevance.

One should keep in mind that political science and other social sciences are not exact sciences. This book does not, therefore, offer irrefutable prophecies, statistics, or comprehensive quantitative data. A researcher may easily determine statistically that the emerging elites in a given country are

better educated, more urban, or more civilian than their predecessors, or that more of them are women. The value of such findings is, however, rather limited unless it can be translated into judgments and hypotheses about future political developments. In more than a few cases, such hypotheses can be based on anecdotal evidence rather than statistical or sociobiographical material.

Comparative Observations and Prospective Hypotheses

Political systems of Arab states vary, and comparative studies help to identify their differences. What these systems share, however—and this, again, underscores the relevance of studying elites and elite change in the region—is the elitist nature of political participation: Royal councils, shura councils, the Lebanese parliament with its confessionalist representation (indeed, the assemblies of most Arab countries), the Economic Consultative Council in Jordan, and other bodies are explicit means for integrating a wider, politically relevant elite into decisionmaking processes. In the past, republican regimes, like those in Syria, Egypt, Algeria, and elsewhere, have tried to hide their elitism behind a populist facade. Practically, however, by treating their population as “the masses,” rather than as citizens, they never left any doubt that decisionmaking powers were concentrated and should remain in the hands of a narrow, self-recruiting elite.

Elite Structure and Composition

The social and professional profile, as well as the historical experiences, of the new and emerging Arab leaders as of 2003 was considerably different from those of the political elites that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s (or even earlier in some of the monarchies). According to Manfred Halpern, these earlier elites were “a core of salaried civilian and military politicians, organizers, administrators, and experts,”³⁴ that is, technocrats from either the military or the bureaucracy. The old commercial and land-owning bourgeoisie were no longer considered part of the political elite, and an entrepreneurial class had yet to emerge.

The breadth and depth of elite change in the Arab world has and will continue to vary by country. In Jordan, Morocco, and Syria, where prime decisionmakers have relatively recently been replaced by their sons, a large percentage of people within the first, second, and third circles of the PRE have been exchanged. Except in Morocco, where some Islamists have moved into the third elite circle, these changes were not necessarily structural or deep in the sense that new political forces or new social segments entered the scene. In Jordan King Abdallah II’s recruitment of members of

to Egypt, for instance, it has been noted that younger officers tend to be less antidemocratic, less suspicious of the outside world, and more open to participating in public policy debates than the elder generation, which was used to the military being secluded from civil society.³⁸

Managers and politicians. Relatively speaking, the country studies in this volume indicate that there are fewer military personnel, medical doctors, and teachers among the new elites than was the case in earlier times. Engineers, who formed an important element of the incumbent Arab political elites, are still to be found in large numbers among the newcomers, but their professional experience is increasingly in the private rather than the public sector. There is also a growing number of representatives of the liberal professions, and more people with management and business backgrounds. Overall, the new PRE of most Arab countries are or will be largely of urban middle-class origin.

One can no longer speak of emerging political elites in Arab states without a reference to private business and its more traditional and new entrepreneurial sectors. In some countries, expatriates who are prepared to invest their skills and their capital in their homeland have entered or may enter the fold. Observers have noted that since the late 1980s, the offspring of the bureaucratic and military classes, or state bourgeoisie, of Arab states with more or less statist development courses have turned into new entrepreneurs or joined the business class.³⁹ Egyptian Gamal Mubarak is representative of this trend, which is also evident among the sons of Algerian, Libyan, Saudi, and Syrian policymakers and generals. As possible contenders for political influence and power, these young men must be taken as seriously as members of the reinvigorated and more self-confident "traditional" business classes that have reestablished themselves in the course of economic liberalization.

During the last three decades or so, the pattern in the Arab republics and monarchies has been to attain political influence, which could then be used to acquire wealth or establish a business, not the reverse. Cases such as Lebanon's Rafiq al-Hariri, a businessman who gained political power, remain impressive exceptions to the rule. More of these may lie in the future, but such a pattern would presuppose the emergence of more competitive political systems.

One can therefore assume that the number of true politicians—who in the Weberian sense live for politics, rather than from politics⁴⁰—and their relevance in the political lives of Arab countries, will increase, if only slowly. In contrast to the rather apolitical type of technocratic functionary simply occupying a government position, such a politician would act as a power broker, stand for a political program, and even act as and be perceived as the representative of a particular constituency or of social or eco-

the business elite into leading political functions has brought more depth to postsuccession elite change, at least in the first and second circles, than that witnessed in Syria.

Algeria has experienced wide-ranging change, particularly in the third circle, and Isabelle Werenfels notes that its core elite has seen the replacement of "one generation of the revolution by a younger generation of the revolution."³⁵ These changes were partially structural, as the elite became more civilian. In Lebanon, many of the prewar and war elites have left the scene, and there has also been structural change: there are now fewer notables in the PRE, more businesspeople, and, at least in the third circle, more civil society actors than before. Also, most of the war elite militia leaders have been removed in one way or another, and some of the politicians who owe their positions solely to Syria may well experience the same fate if Syria's dominance in Lebanon fades. In Tunisia, the pre-Ben Ali elite has been totally replaced, but the new elite is basically a reproduction of the old in terms of socioprofessional composition and basic political philosophy. In Egypt, wide-ranging change can be expected once a successor to President Hosni Mubarak comes to office, and it is likely to be at least partly structural—more civilian and probably with a strong business component. In Iraq, the war launched in 2003 by the United States and Britain was the driving force engineering wide-ranging elite change, from abroad. In the Palestinian territories, change is likely to be more constrained, even after the death or removal of Yasser Arafat, not least so because not everybody in the political elite derives his (or, in some cases, her) power directly from the president. Structural change will largely depend on Israeli-Palestinian developments. In Saudi Arabia, changes in the third circle have been relatively broad, including the co-optation of members of hitherto unrepresented social segments. Change in the first and second circles may come in doses. The death of a leader will lead to changes of position, but not necessarily to wide-ranging replacements of members of the PRE.

In general, as Arab societies have become more complex and diversified, the socioprofessional profile of new and emerging PRE has broadened, and PRE members have increased in number. Military officers are likely to be less dominant than they were in the final decades of the twentieth century. Even in Algeria, where the military firmly holds on to power, the president is now a civilian, and the institution of the presidency has been strengthened.³⁶ Overall, there will still be a military element in most PRE. Today's military officers, however, differ in many respects from the officer generation of largely rural origin that graduated from the military academies in the 1950s and 1960s and had a social revolutionary agenda.³⁷ Arab military officers in the early twenty-first century can generally be seen as a stability-oriented element. At the same time, their interactions with the political leadership and with the public have changed: With respect

nomic interests. This latter type has always existed in Lebanon. As Husseini illustrates in her contribution, since the end of the civil war there has been an increase in politicians who do not come from the traditional bourgeoisie and who are attempting to push themselves into the foreground of the political stage via entrepreneurial success or civil society activities. In Morocco, former prime minister Abd al-Rahman Youssoufi represents an ideal-type politician. Most of his life, he opposed the monarchical regime that eventually co-opted him to form a government of alternation. Zerhouni explains how his appointment, which preceded the death of Hassan II and the accession of Mohammed VI, represented a partial political opening of the system. While the number of politicians in the PRE increased, bureaucratic and technocratic cadres remained dominant. It is noteworthy that Youssoufi's successor, Driss Jettou, is a technocrat, though one with a private sector background.

Politicians—in the "true" sense—are also to be found in the political elites of Algeria, Egypt, and Jordan. Even with agendas out of step with their government's, they can occasionally influence or determine public discourse. So far, however, they have not entered the inner circle of the PRE. In Saudi Arabia, as Iris Glosemeyer explains, the Consultative Council has become a forum for the emergence of a group of politically relevant "bourgeois"—that is, nonprincely—politicians. In Syria, a group of independent politicians and civil society actors stepped forward after the accession of Bashar al-Asad. Once they threatened to become a politically relevant factor, their movement was quickly cut down to size. Steffen Erdle argues that in Tunisia under Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali, politicians have disappeared from the politically relevant elite. In these cases and others, it is safe to infer that an increase in the number or weight of "politicians" within a country's PRE usually attests to the movement of the political system toward plurality and competitiveness.

The knowledge factor. In general, the percentage of PRE members with undergraduate degrees or doctorates, many of them from universities in Europe or the United States, is on the rise. In the 1970s and 1980s a number of universities were established in Arab countries. These schools provide opportunities for upward social mobility, and their graduates are now competing for jobs and positions with graduates who studied abroad. Upward mobility through national universities, however, may have its limits. In all likelihood, persons with "foreign" degrees will continue to have better chances of being recruited into the technocratic segments of the PRE, and incumbent elites will continue to send their sons and daughters to universities abroad or to universities with Western curricula within their countries as a means of reproducing themselves—that is, passing on their elite status to their offspring.⁴¹

In the republican systems, membership in the regime party may still be indispensable for recruitment into the first or even the second circle of influence. Party membership—or membership in the royal family in a country like Saudi Arabia—is no longer sufficient in and of itself for gaining a position of political relevance. What counts beyond loyalty or membership are qualifications and knowledge—a degree that certifies technocratic competence, training, or professional experience abroad, or, generally, skills that correspond (functionally or at least symbolically) to the challenges of the globalized flow of information and goods. Thus, among the newer recruits into the PRE of Arab countries, one finds increasing numbers of jurists (such as Algerian prime minister Ali Benflis), economists with experience in international financial institutions (such as Palestinian finance minister Salam Fayad, Lebanese economy minister Bassel Fuleihan, or Syria's minister of economy and trade Ghassan al-Rifa'i), or managers (such as Moroccan prime minister Driss Jettou and Jordanian prime minister Ali Abu Raghieb). In contrast to some expectations that the new elites of Arab states would, among other things, also be more female,⁴² the proportion of women within positions of political relevance has not substantially increased.

Generation matters. When speaking of new or emerging elites, one should keep in mind that the concept of "youth" varies in the different Arab countries. Incumbent elites have begun to or are about to give way to a younger generation in most Arab states, but this does not mean that the new PRE represent the same generation throughout the entire Arab world. In Bahrain, Jordan, Morocco, and Syria, the death of the long-standing head of state precipitated a far-reaching exchange of leaders in their sixties and seventies with persons in their thirties and forties. In Saudi Arabia one can expect that positions currently held by septuagenarians and octogenarians will be taken over by "younger" princes in their fifties and sixties once the incapacitated monarch passes away.

At any rate, the historical experience of emerging PRE differs from that of the incumbent generation, and the fact that it is closer to that of the majority of the population may be of considerable importance given the relative youth of Arab societies. More often than not, generations can be defined clearly in relation to historical moments; the members of the generation may also perceive themselves as being marked by shared historical experience: they would then, to borrow a concept from Marxist class theory, constitute a generation "for itself" rather than only "in itself."⁴³

This may have been the case for the generation that ruled Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt in the years following their independence, and it certainly holds for the so-called generation of the revolution in Algeria, defined by participation in the struggle against French colonialism. This

generation, which includes, to date, the president of the republic and most leading military officers, has long managed to successfully exclude members of postrevolutionary generations from positions of real power. At the same time, they have worked to transfer their revolutionary legitimacy to their offspring, sometimes literally, as by establishing the Organisation Nationale des Enfants des Chouhada (National Organization of the Children of Martyrs).⁴⁴

In Egypt and Syria, politicians of largely the same age group have tried to define themselves by the 1973 Arab-Israeli war. Egyptian president Mubarak and other military officers and former military officers who had a leading role in that war are generally referred to as *jil ukhtubir* (the October generation).⁴⁵ For many of their age group and of their somewhat younger cohorts, however, in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, and Palestine this generation has remained what Palestinian author Saïd Aburish (himself born in 1935) has called the "generation of despair"⁴⁶—a generation that never recovered from the psychological wounds of the 1967 war. In many respects, this is a pan-Arab generation that generally—to the extent that generalizations are possible—has sought and hoped for a strong Arab leadership that would create "parity" with Israel. Many of its members, from the Gulf to North Africa, perceived the Arab world as part of the anti-imperialist camp, believed (for some time at least) in socialist development models, and did not view democracy or civil rights as political priorities. Iraqi political scientist Isam al-Khafaji has aptly characterized the basic attitudes of political activists from that generation: "The belief that imperialism would try to forestall any attempt to overcome underdevelopment, whether through direct intervention or through local agents . . . reinforced the perception that a strong state with a strong army was an essential prerequisite for genuine development. Hence the easiness with which liberal and even reformist ideas were dismissed or discredited among the populace."⁴⁷

In the 1970s increasing direct or indirect oil rents allowed for an enormous expansion of the state and public sectors throughout the region and for rapid social mobility for great numbers. Many who had entered professional life by that time, among them a substantial number of left-leaning *soixante-huitards* (adherents to the ideals of the worldwide 1968 student protests), remember the era as their golden years. In Egypt, pupils and university students at the time of the 1973 October War and those who served as conscripts have alternatively been dubbed *jil al-wasat* (the generation of the middle) and *jil al-sahwa al-islamiyya* (the generation of the Islamic awakening). The older members of this age group benefited from the oil boom. For the somewhat younger members, who graduated and entered professional life in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the bust of oil prices and the economic crises of the 1980s and 1990s were decisive in determining

their future and their outlook. Although benefiting from the expansion of secondary and university education, many of them found career opportunities blocked by members of the preceding generation clinging to power and positions of influence. By the late 1990s, few of this generation had made it into the first or second circle of political relevance. A substantial part of those politically active sought Islamic alternatives to the regimes in power.

In most Arab countries, political developments in the next two or three decades will likely not be determined by the generation of the middle, which in many respects is a generation between two dominant others. It is no coincidence that Egypt's al-Wasat party—whose name references not only a centrist course between moderate Islamist and liberal approaches, but also the generation of its founders—has not been licensed to participate in politics. One should rather expect the generation of Bashar al-Asad, Abdallah of Jordan, Mohammed VI, and Marwan Barghouti to take the lead. The historical experience of this elite generation differs considerably from that of the outgoing PRE. It is, generally speaking, not the experience of the East-West conflict, of the great Arab-Israeli wars, of experiments with socialism, or of the oil boom. It is instead one of the end of bipolarity, U.S. hegemony, protracted recession, debate about globalization, the post-1991 Arab-Israeli peace process, and civil war in Algeria. In many Arab countries, this generation could be called the generation of sons—the offspring of those who shaped the history of the Arab world during the last quarter or more of the twentieth century. In the case of the Palestinians, these emerging leaders represent the intifada generation, certainly a generation in and for itself, whose members generally share the experience of violent conflict with the Israeli army and struggles for power and influence with the incumbent Palestinian leadership around Arafat—*al-khityar* (the old man), as he is so often referred to in the Palestinian territories.⁴⁸

Regional and International Factors

Much of the historical experience that defines Arab elite generations is related to external factors. The relationship between elite change on the one hand and the regional and international relations of Arab states on the other has crosscutting effects: Elite change affects these relations, and external factors affect the composition and behavior of local elites.

For starters, change at the top can trigger shifts in bilateral relations; often a change of the guard helps to improve such relations. This has definitely been the case for Bahrain and Qatar, where new leaders found a way to settle a long-standing territorial dispute by simply accepting the decision of the International Court of Justice. In the case of Jordan and Syria, the accession of two young leaders at roughly the same time also helped improve bilateral relations. These cases primarily reflect the personal

nature of Arab regimes and, consequently, of inter-Arab relations. Jordan's case is telling: The death of King Hussein allowed his successor, Abdallah, to turn a new page with Syria, where he found a like-minded young leader in Bashar al-Asad, who was then still in training to succeed his father. Abdallah's ascension also cleared the way for better relations with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, whose leaders decided to bury their animosity toward Jordan with the death of Hussein, the man responsible for Jordan's pro-Iraqi neutrality during the Gulf War.

What these situations illustrate is a change in personnel, not a change in pattern. There is, in other words, no guarantee that a personal falling out or a conflict over issues of regional policy between, say, the Jordanian and the Syrian leaders, would not seriously disrupt bilateral contacts and relations. To institute structural change in inter-Arab relations, the new leaders and their teams would have to depersonalize their countries' bilateral relations, insulating state institutions that deal with day-to-day foreign relations from the power games at the leadership level. Such a move would allow functional cooperation to stand on its own administrative and economic feet. Authoritarian and highly centralized regimes may not necessarily be less peaceful or more aggressive than democracies or pluralistic systems, as is sometimes claimed in a vulgarized form of the "democratic-peace" theorem,⁴⁹ but they are definitely less able to cooperate. Sustainable regional and international cooperation, particularly in multilateral frameworks, needs the broader participation of societal actors and necessitates the delegation of decisionmaking powers to lower-level officials. It cannot be guaranteed through a mere change at the top of the hierarchy.⁵⁰

In speaking of the regional relations of Arab states, one should not forget that the leadership generation that dominated Arab and Middle Eastern policies throughout the last quarter of the twentieth century did manage to introduce some continuity into regional politics. Although these elites failed to foster stable cooperative relations, settle the dominant regional conflict, or implement a system of cooperative security, they did prove capable of containing the civil wars of Algeria, Lebanon, Sudan, and Yemen, preventing these crises from turning into regional wars. Also, Arab-Israeli wars have been shorter and less destructive than might have been expected considering the depth of enmity and the longevity of the conflict.

The new generation of leaders obviously lacks similar experience in conflict administration. Regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict, there is little reason to expect that the replacement of one leadership generation by another will by itself make it easier to civilize the conflict, or help resolve issues of contention. In Israel, the change from the generation of Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres to Benjamin Netanyahu's postindependence generation did not at all make Israel more peaceful or cooperative. In a similar vein, some Israelis are likely deceiving themselves (and others) when they

claim that all that is needed to settle the conflict with the Palestinians is the exit of Arafat and the accession of a younger generation.⁵¹

The new leaders of Jordan, Morocco, Syria, and Bahrain have all enjoyed something of a honeymoon in terms of the regional environment, and in most cases future new leaders are likely to experience a similar beginning. National interests usually dictate greeting a new team in a neighboring country with high hopes of good relations. One cannot, however, exclude the possibility that significant changes within the PRE of a country might negatively affect regional relations. This is most likely to happen in the case of nonconstitutional or revolutionary change or in the case of weak and inexperienced leaders coming to power. To build and broaden their domestic base, they might engage in hypernationalistic discourses or in activities that their neighbors or relevant international players find provocative, or that challenge the regional balance. The same might occur when regional players try to take advantage of the assumed or de facto weaknesses of a newcomer.⁵²

Perhaps a more daunting prospect for the new and emerging Arab elites will be dealing with the changing external challenges summed up under the heading "globalization": speedier flows of information and finance, increased competition based on global standards, and a premium on openness and the ability to cooperate regionally and internationally. Those who miss the globalization train will pay the high costs ensuing from the lack of economic efficiency. Although all Arab political elites will have to face these challenges, they have the option of responding to them in different ways. The Syrian leadership, to give but one example, could decide to go slow in negotiating an association agreement with the European Union, or even do without such an association. This would probably be done at a loss, however, passing up access to European resources and risking a further relative decline of competitiveness in comparison to regional neighbors.

In general, the new and emerging elites of the Arab world are more prepared to deal with the challenges of globalization and economic openness than their predecessors were. Many of them see cooperation with Europe as a strategic choice. At the same time, these young elites do not want to relinquish what they perceive as national or regime interests. The Maghreb states in particular, because of their dependence on the EU, have tried to strengthen cooperative relations with the United States in an attempt to limit the influence of Europe over and within them.

In the regional geopolitical context, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the peace process continue to be of great relevance for the young elites in Palestine—where Israeli occupation and the struggle over how to deal with it dominate all other political issues—and also for those young elites in the countries neighboring Israel and in the Gulf. In Algeria, by contrast,

"Palestine" is a nonissue for most political groups, with the exception of the Islamists. Rather, domestic policy and relations with Europe and the West in general carry much more weight. In Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, however, the intifada and the Arab-Israeli conflict are consistently topics of domestic debate and conflict. Abdelnasser even argues that the course of Arab-Israeli events will be the main determinant for the type and political outlook of Egypt's post-Mubarak PRE. In Jordan contesting elements of the PRE have garnered substantial public support under the banner of fighting normalization with Israel. In Lebanon, the military tension that Hizballah tries to sustain along the Lebanese-Syrian-Israeli border area is a major point of contention between the supporters of the liberal economic course set out by Hariri and Syria's men within the country's political elite.

In Syria, the leadership elite around Bashar al-Asad are more aware than their predecessors of the economic necessity of settling the conflict with Israel; at the same time, they use conflict to bolster the popularity of the young president. Bashar al-Asad, without discarding his father's realpolitik approach, has developed a more provocative, hard-line discourse when speaking of Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict. This has disturbed foreign observers, but it appeals to many of the younger generation, not only in Syria but also in other Arab countries. With respect to Israel and the future of the peace process, the general attitude of the emerging PRE across the Middle East seems to be to legitimize radical methods while remaining pragmatic about the substance of an acceptable settlement.

Changing regional relations and new forms of integration into the regional and international environments are factors in elite change that should not be overlooked. Thus, in the countries that share a front or a border with Israel, recent heightened tensions with Israel have affected the balance of forces within the core elite, generally to the advantage of less reform-oriented elements. At the same time, any decision to launch a cooperative scheme—Euro-Mediterranean, Arab, or other—is a strategic choice that will influence the recruitment of leadership personnel, at least on the technocratic level, and thus the composition of emerging PRE. In Egypt, for instance, the decision to enter into negotiations over an association agreement with the EU led to the installation of a revamped foreign and economic policy team, much as occurred in an earlier era concerning the decision to wage peace with Israel.

Peace between Israel and the Palestinians and Palestinian statehood would no doubt precipitate major changes within the Palestinian PRE. Confrontations with Israel, the first agreements between the PLO and Israel, and the establishment of proto-state structures had a decisive impact on elite formation. By the end of the first intifada (1987–1993), a relatively young local elite had emerged that could not be ignored once the Oslo

process was on track. With the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, this largely secretive, underground elite stepped forward, and diaspora leaders returned. A new national (not just local) political and economic elite emerged with the creation of ministries and other public bodies and the election of representatives to the legislative council. The elites associated with these institutions had interests in trade and investment policies and relations with Israel.⁵³

Arafat, as Hans-Joachim Rabe points out in this volume, was able to dominate elite structures thanks to the agreements with Israel and financial aid from abroad. By the fall of 2000, the failure of Arafat and his team to bring about a withdrawal of the Israeli army from at least most of the occupied territories encouraged a young guard of newly emerging local leaders and leaders of the first intifada to launch the al-Aqsa intifada. This second uprising was not only an attempt at ending the Israeli occupation, it also aimed to "weaken and eventually displace" the Palestinian old guard, the historic leadership around Arafat.⁵⁴

Since George W. Bush became president of the United States, and particularly since the events of 11 September 2001, the question of forced regime change or elite change from abroad has become a major topic in regard to Palestine and, of course, in regard to Iraq. In the Palestinian case, major external forces agreed to press for reforms that implicitly or explicitly included the demand for the prime decisionmaker, Yasser Arafat, to leave the scene or agree to being relegated to a position of much less importance. Parts of the emerging Palestinian elite obviously desire a change at the top, but they have no interest in becoming or being perceived as an instrument of a U.S. or an Israeli agenda. Repeated Israeli sieges of Arafat's headquarters have served to strengthen his legitimacy and abort attempts to initiate reforms from within Palestinian institutions. The U.S. mission to Iraq has not only removed Saddam Hussein and his clique from power. The ensuing "de-Baathization" was in fact an attempt to enforce a wide-ranging exchange of the political elite. By the time this book was finalized, a post-war PRE was emerging in still undecided struggles for power and positions, and for the soul of Iraq.

Leaders and commentators in other Arab countries began to ask which country's leadership would "be next on the list," after the Bush administration succeeded in replacing the regime in Baghdad. Maybe they need not fear too much. Among other things, the Palestinian and Iraqi cases demonstrate the limits of direct external pressure. Policy shifts are often externally induced, which may speed or otherwise affect elite change. Short of an inappropriate degree of force or outright war, however, such pressure will likely not succeed in bringing about a change in the political leadership of any country in the region. Western policymakers should realize that even a

forced removal of local elites would not necessarily yield more open or more efficient political and economic systems.

Modernity First: The New Elites and Their Domestic Agendas

Decisions concerning economic reform that are in one way or other induced by external factors can indeed have wide-ranging effects on elite settings. Even half-hearted starts in that direction can lead to significant changes among top political personnel. In Egypt's case, the reform efforts of the early 2000s brought a new prime minister to power who symbolized that new departure: someone with a managerial background rather than a loyal party functionary. Within the last decade or so, the governments of Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Tunisia have all placed emphasis on securing the skills and knowledge of technocrats with economic expertise or have at least tried to incorporate businesspeople and private sector representatives into formal decisionmaking or consultative structures. In most Arab countries, however, business elites have gained influence mainly or only in the realm of economic policy decisionmaking. With the notable exceptions of Lebanese prime minister Rafiq al-Hariri and Moroccan prime minister Driss Jettou, few businesspeople have acquired leading government positions. If and when economic liberalization proceeds, Arab governments will need the expertise of increasing numbers of people qualified in business management, banking, and international trade law.

New business elites have benefited from changing economic policies or have been able to take advantage of such opportunities as, for example, the sanctions against Iraq, the emergence of new technologies, particularly in the information sector, or the space that has gradually been opened for private institutes of higher education in most of the countries studied here. Thus far, business elites have not asked for any real share in political power nor have they been encouraged to do so. The Arab regimes have allowed these groups wealth and a certain economic power, but they have also seen to it that they remain in the outer circles of political relevance.

Overall, the emerging leadership generation in the Arab world is clearly more business friendly than the outgoing generation. Not all of this generation will make the emergence and success of private business as much a priority as Jordan's young king and his team apparently seek to do, but on the other hand few of them share the enthusiasm for etatism and public sector dominance that the outgoing elites possess. In a sense, the pressures of globalization and the orientations of the newcomers reinforce each other. At the same time, a larger presence of business-oriented technocrats within the PRE may increase the confidence of local, expatriate, and foreign investors

and thus propel them forward through initially slow and gradual moves toward economic liberalization.

The emerging elites' historical backgrounds and the era in which they were socialized make many of them less apprehensive of political pluralism than the dominant elites of the last thirty years have been. To many of them, single-party states and streamlined media are somewhat outmoded. The denial of competing groups' interests can no longer be pursued once economic liberalization and privatization become issues of public debate. Expectations about the depth of reforms and the structural political changes associated with the emergence of new regime elites should, however, remain guarded. Bahrain, on which there is no chapter in this book, may serve as an example of a new ruler's attempt to renegotiate a political pact with the people. The cases of Jordan, Morocco, and Syria, however, demonstrate that generational change at the top will not automatically lead to far-reaching political reform. Also, as the Tunisian case, among others, underlines, modern discourses and the willingness of a Western-oriented regime elite to embrace technical modernization and economic opening need not be accompanied by political liberalization.

Some of the young leaders have reminded Western audiences and domestic critics that they are not willing to "apply the democracy of others upon ourselves," as Syria's Bashar al-Asad put it. "We have to have our [own] democratic experience," he continued, "which is special to us, which stems from our history, culture, civilization and which is a response to the needs of our society and the requirements of our reality."⁵⁵ Morocco's young king Mohammed had a similar message for those who expected him to rapidly democratize his country. "My rhythm is the one of Morocco. . . . It is not necessarily the same rhythm certain observers, with arrogance and ignorance, wish to impose upon us."⁵⁶

Most of the new leadership elites are likely to use the authoritarian instruments of the states they inherit or take over in order to firmly establish themselves. Their priority is clearly economic reform and technical modernization. Jordan, Morocco, and Syria, with largely new PRE, and Algeria with its "nationalist reformers," are indicative in this respect. At least in the first and second circles, their discourses with regard to democracy or political reform are similar. Some argue that democracy, or democratization, cannot be a priority as long as they must fend off resistance—from bureaucracies or from interest groups—to any reform they seek to implement. Others make use of classical modernization theory propositions concerning what degree of prosperity or literacy must be achieved before one actually could, or should, speak of democratization.⁵⁷ Still others argue that their respective societies are simply not ripe for democracy: "Wouldn't the Islamists be the winners under the circumstances?"

Given these outlooks, when new elite teams take charge in other coun-

tries of the region, rapid democratic transformations should not be expected. More probable is a gradual and cautious process of pluralization. This would likely include more liberal and open debates, fewer restrictions on the media and the use of information systems, a greater variance of political views and agendas within legislatures and assemblies, and more elections involving representative bodies. Pluralization would stop, however, at elections for the highest decisionmaking positions or measures with the potential of bringing about a change of regime or a substantial recomposition of the PRE through the ballot box.

In most Arab countries, regime elites have shown a remarkable ability to control the pace and scope of political change. Steps toward economic and political reform have been taken from above, basically system maintenance operations, rather than by societal forces applying pressure on the regime.⁵⁸ Little seems to have changed in this respect with changes at the top in some countries. The relatively wide-ranging reforms introduced to the political system in Bahrain have been as much a regime affair—or, more concretely, a process designed by the new amir and the crown prince—as have the more gradualist paths embarked on by Bashar al-Asad in Syria or Mohammed VI in Morocco.⁵⁹

Given that change within the Arab PRE continues to be fostered mainly through recruitment and co-optation from above, rather than through elections, it is not surprising that many second-circle PRE see things largely the same as their countries' prime decisionmakers and core elites see them. Zerhouni, observing Morocco's "neo-makhzanian" officials, notes that many of them have little to say about political reform. In Algeria, to give another example, only "radical democrats" and "Islamist reformers"—according to Werenfels's characterization—put political reform high on their agenda; none of them has made it into the first circle of influence. In a number of countries, explicit prodemocracy activists have had no chance thus far to enter even the third circle.

As a matter of fact, democracy is not high on the agenda of any group of actors that otherwise are forces pushing for change. Businesspeople in most Arab countries have become vocal in demanding economic reform and liberalization. As mentioned, however, they have in most cases abstained from openly calling for political liberalization, let alone democratization. A study of Egyptian businessmen found that they have been "either unconcerned with, or not particularly averse to, the kind of moderate political authoritarianism" that the regime of Hosni Mubarak represents.⁶⁰ Similar judgments have been elicited from Palestinian and North African business elites.⁶¹

Even the new generation of businesspeople in the Arab world does not seem to count democracy among their primary interests. A small survey conducted in 2001 at a regional meeting of young entrepreneurs and man-

agers from eight Arab countries clearly revealed the political priorities of this stratum: economic liberalization first, followed by reform of the training and education systems of their countries. Democracy and political liberalization would be appreciated, but they only came in third or even fourth place among participants from countries neighboring Israel, where higher priority was given to the Arab-Israeli conflict.⁶² In some countries, individual representatives of the business class who have a more far-reaching agenda have been warned to keep their political ambitions within limits. The arrest and subsequent trial in the summer of 2001 of two Syrian deputies, both with business backgrounds, was a case in point. Both had clearly transgressed the mandate that they, according to the view of the regime leadership, were supposed to fulfill as deputies and representatives of the entrepreneurial stratum.

Most of the countries examined here have societal forces that have been calling or campaigning for such political reforms as more transparency, respect for human rights, and a transformation to democracy. With few exceptions (the Palestinian territories being one) such voices are either to be found within the third circle of the PRE or outside it entirely. Foreign observers who (legitimately) pay much attention to those who seek more substantive changes than the incumbent elites do should be cautious not to overrate the influence of these groups and individuals.

It is striking, in a sense, that neither the clamp-downs on prodemocracy or human rights activists in Egypt, Syria, Tunisia, and other states nor the repeated postponement of elections in Jordan have led to protests of any consequence or threat to the regimes in power. Certainly, none of them led to popular reactions as strong as those triggered in most of these countries by the continued Israeli occupation and policies in the Palestinian territories. Algeria and Lebanon digress from this picture somewhat. Both are countries with highly differentiated, partly fragmented political elites; in both cases, there is no single, patrimonial leader; and radical prodemocracy movements have been able to influence strategic discourses and thereby contribute to national agenda setting to an extent. The overall state of affairs in the Arab countries may be partly explained by repression, but one must not overlook the fact that the constituency for substantial political reform within and around the PRE is still quite limited.

There is as yet also little external pressure on Arab states to embark on thoroughgoing political reforms. While the "elites appear to be modern but not democratic," writes Lisa Anderson, "the masses are angry." There is no guarantee that democratizing Arab countries would remain friendly. Rather, democratization processes could unleash new nationalisms, ethnic conflicts, or anti-American and anti-Western political ideologies.⁶³ Most probably, therefore, the United States as well as the European Union will be content if new, friendly Arab regimes and regime

elites do exactly what they have placed at the top of their agenda—modernize their economies and their administrations while refraining from risking domestic and regime stability and well-established international relations by putting themselves and the systems as such to a sudden democratic test of popularity. In fact, many governments, while often deploring the lack of democracy in Arab countries, have appreciated the continuity inspired by authoritarianism in the Arab world.⁶⁴ This appreciation of what one might call a “lid-on stability” may actually contribute to the ills that the same Western governments are deploring in the Arab world and the Middle East: the lack of accountability and good governance; the lack of regional cooperation; and, of course, the anger of much of the young generation.

This book, in the chapters that follow, presents case studies of nine Arab countries.⁶⁵ Following the comparative approach that was outlined above, the authors identify the respective politically relevant elite, scan changes within the structure and composition of that elite, examine the elite's agenda, and analyze the interrelation between elite change, policies, and, where applicable, external influences. The first three chapters deal with Arab states where changes at the top have recently taken place, and relatively young leaderships are now in power. Bank and Schlumberger in their article on Jordan demonstrate how the renewal of the PRE has supported a new ruler's changing policy priorities: Jordan has become more business oriented, and new, hand-picked elite members represent the king's technocratic and business-minded orientation. Zerhouni shows that the succession from Hassan II to Mohammed VI has not led to broader power sharing. The new leadership has been able to adapt to new discourses on, among other things, democracy and human rights, but neither the mode of recruitment into the PRE nor the attitudes of most of the first-circle PRE have undergone significant change. In the Syrian case, the renewal of the wider political elite, which the new president and his team have brought about, seems to have been of major importance for the gradual strengthening of the power of an heir. The fact that the reproduction of Syria's elite was largely conducted from the center, however, may well account for the limits of political change.

The two chapters that follow deal with countries where a succession at the top will occur in a not too distant future and where the succession question occupies much of the interest of the domestic public and international partners. In his contribution on Egypt, Abdelnasser makes a case to revise the prevalent picture of a stagnant elite that does not allow for change. He also shows that the outcome of the succession process will largely depend on the regional situation, not the least of which is the state of the Arab-Israeli conflict and peace process. Analyzing the case of Saudi Arabia, Glosemeyer also rejects the image of stagnancy, demonstrating that the

combination of actors that form the PRE is up for changes and that no segment of the incumbent or emerging elite is able to escape the impact of globalization.

Algeria and Tunisia provide two cases of countries where elite change, economic transformation, and political systems continuity seem to reinforce each other. Werentfels, in her contribution on Algeria, demonstrates the attempt of the incumbent PRE to extend the revolutionary legitimacy it claims to its offspring. She also argues that a substantial increase in the number of relevant political players has actually fragmented the elite, made alliances of new elite segments improbable and, hence, political change less likely. In the Tunisian case, as Erdle makes clear, the authoritarian system is relying on, and has quite successfully co-opted, social actors who usually would be seen as agents of change, namely the educated middle classes, reform-minded technocrats, and young business elites. Thus, by presenting itself as a facilitator of development and modernization, and as a protector against both globalization and Islamism, the regime elite has been able to reassert its control over society.

The last two case studies deal with elite change under foreign domination. Hussein, dealing with Lebanon, demonstrates how a new, partly recycled political elite has consolidated itself since the end of the civil war, and how it has managed, so far, to block the way for emerging elite aspirants. To the observer, elite politics in today's Lebanon seem very much like a replay of patterns that marked the development of that country after independence and before the first breakdown of the system in 1958. The main difference seems to be Syria's dominance, and the emergence of an elite segment that owes its political capital solely to its ties with the Syrian leadership. Rabe, in his chapter on Palestine, shows how a national elite has tried to informally expand the limited field of action opened to it with the Oslo Accords and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority. He also demonstrates how the breakdown of the peace process has contributed to multipolarization of the elite, and how Arafat's attempt to establish and maintain a centralized system has largely failed.

The book closes with a short conclusion that highlights some of the comparative evidence from the country studies, particularly the remarkable correspondence in most of these cases of elite change and reproduction on the one hand, and systems maintenance on the other.

Notes

1. Tripp, “States, Elites and the ‘Management of Change.’”
2. Lasswell, *Politics*, p. 13.
3. See, among others, O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*; Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market*; Bos, “Die Rolle

- von Eliten"; Gill, *Dynamics of Democratization*; McFaul, "The Fourth Wave of Democracy and Dictatorship."
4. See Higley and Burton, "The Elite Variable in Democratic Transitions"; Higley and Moore, "Political Elite Studies at the Year 2000"; Peeler, "Elites, Structures, and Political Action."
5. See, for example, Etzioni-Halevy, "Elites and the Working Class"; Peeler, "Elites, Structures, and Political Action," p. 242.
6. Fields, Higley, and Burton, "A New Elite Framework"; Burton and Higley, "The Study of Political Elite Transformations"; Higley and Lengyel, "Elite Configuration After State Socialism."
7. See, among others, Adam and Tomšič, "Elite (Re)configuration"; Higley and Lengyel, "Elite Configuration After State Socialism." Both titles deal with Russia, Eastern Europe, and the Balkans. On political transition processes and the elites in the former Soviet republics of Central Asia and the Caucasus, see Tismaneanu, *Political Culture and Civil Society*.
8. Higley and Moore, "Political Elite Studies at the Year 2000," p. 176.
9. See, among others, Lenczowski, *Political Elites in the Middle East*; Tachau, *Political Elites and Political Development in the Middle East*; Heradstveit, *Arab and Israeli Elite Perceptions*; Zartman, *Political Elites in Arab North Africa*.
10. Halpern, *The Politics of Social Change*; Hurewitz, *Middle East Politics*.
11. See Bahout, *Les entrepreneurs syriens*; Blin, "Les entrepreneurs palestiniens"; Gotowicki, "The Military in Egyptian Society"; Longuenesse, "Ingenieurs et médecins dans le changement social"; Perthes, "Bourgeoisie and the Ba'th"; Picard, "Arab Military in Politics"; Springsborg, "The Arab Bourgeoisie"; Zaki, *Egyptian Business Elites*.
12. See, among others, Drysdale, "The Succession Question in Syria"; Henderson, *After King Fahd*; Legrain, "Les 1001 successions de Yasser Arafat"; Peterson, "Succession in the States of the Gulf Cooperation Council"; Abdul Aziz and Youssef Hussein, "The President, the Son, and the Military."
13. See Faath, *Konfliktpotential politischer Nachfolger*; Cantori, "Political Succession in the Middle East."
14. See, for example, Taheri, "Les états d'Abdallah"; Willis, "After Hassan"; Ghabdian, "The New Asad"; Khalaf, "The New Amir of Bahrain."
15. This, of course, is also largely a reflection of the authoritarian nature of the regimes, or the dominant political culture, in the entire political scene. As a rule, when conflicts have erupted within these parties and organizations, the groups have split rather than change leaderships.
16. See Waterbury, "Whence Will Come Egypt's Future Leadership?"
17. Bottomore, *Elites and Society*, p. 7.
18. Higley and Moore, "Political Elite Studies at the Year 2000," p. 176.
19. See Obeidi, "Elitenstruktur in Libyen."
20. Peeler, "Elites, Structures, and Political Action," p. 242.
21. *Ibid.*
22. This is not the first and will not be the last time this model is used for such purposes. For an earlier (1975) use, see Bill, "The Patterns of Elite Politics in Iran."
23. Burton and Higley, "The Study of Political Elite Transformations," p. 182.
24. On the scope, width, and depth of elite change, see Higley and Lengyel, "Elite Configuration After State Socialism."
25. On Egypt, see Kienle, *A Grand Delusion*; on Syria, see Perthes, *The Political Economy of Syria*.
26. See Hilal, *Takuin al-nukhba al-filasitiniyya*.

27. See Isabelle Werenfels's chapter on Algeria in this volume.
28. See Hans-Joachim Rabe's chapter on Palestine in this volume.
29. See in general Moyser and Wägstaffe, *Research Methods for Elite Studies*.
30. See Saloua Zerhouni's chapter on Morocco and Iris Glosemeyer's chapter on Saudi Arabia in this volume. On the changing function of parliaments in the Arab world, see Baaklini, Denooux, and Springsborg, *Legislative Politics in the Arab World*.
31. See André Bank and Oliver Schlumberger's chapter on Jordan and Volker Perthes's chapter on Syria in this volume.
32. See Saloua Zerhouni's chapter on Morocco in this volume.
33. Asbach, "Von der Geschichte politischer Ideen."
34. Halpern, *The Politics of Social Change*, p. 52.
35. See Isabelle Werenfels's chapter on Algeria in this volume.
36. *Ibid.*
37. See, among others, Bataat, "The Egyptian, Syrian and Iraqi Revolutions."
38. See Soltan, "The Military and Foreign Policy."
39. See, among others, Perthes, "Bourgeoisie and the Ba'th"; Waterbury, "Twilight of the State Bourgeoisie?"
40. Weber, "Politics as a Vocation."
41. It is noteworthy that the number of foreign (European, Euro-Arab, U.S.) private universities in the Arab world has substantially increased since the mid-1990s. Traditionally, there have been the American University in Cairo and the American University of Beirut. Additional "American universities" of various origins and quality are to be found in Dubai, Jordan, Lebanon, and at least two places in the United Arab Emirates. In Syria, a Euro-Arab private university is about to be established.
42. In a report on the Middle East Institute's 1999 annual conference, "Leadership for a New Century," Elizabeth Fernea was quoted as stating, "Future leaders will be those who focus on poverty, unemployment, corruption, and health care, and will be drawn from both sexes since the perception of women's place in society has changed." *Middle East Institute Newsletter*, November 1999.
43. According to Mannheim, there is indeed an analogy between the phenomena of class and generation. Belonging to the same class or to the same "generation unit" means sharing a common location in social and historical processes, and it limits the members of that group "to a specific range of political experience." Mannheim, "The Problem of Generation," p. 291.
44. See Isabelle Werenfels's chapter on Algeria in this volume.
45. See Gamal Abdelnasser's chapter on Egypt in this volume.
46. Aburish, *Saddam Hussein*, p. 139.
47. Khafaji, "War as a Vehicle."
48. See Hans-Joachim Rabe's chapter on Palestine in this volume; see also Shikaki, "Palestinians Divided."
49. The still debated democratic peace theorem holds that democracies do not fight each other, not that they are per se more peaceful than others. See Brown, Lynn-Jones, and Miller, *Debating the Democratic Peace*.
50. For a more detailed argument, see Perthes, *Vom Krieg zur Konkurrenz*.
51. Ehud Barak, after being voted out of office, became an early proponent of this after-Arafat view. See his editorial, "It Seems Israel Has to Wait for a New Palestinian Leadership," *International Herald Tribune*, 31 July 2001.
52. The accession of Hamad bin Khalifa in Qatar is a case in point. First, Hamad accelerated the constitutional process of succession by overthrowing his

father—an act certainly not appreciated by the aging rulers of other Gulf monarchies. Second, along with Hamad came a new ruling elite that nurtured ambitious foreign policy and media projects, such as simultaneously cultivating good relations with Iraq and Israel, and establishing an uncensored satellite news channel that aggressively covered other Gulf countries. Hamad and his new team also made it clear that they would not be patronized by Saudi Arabia. In the judgment of many of their neighbors, they tried to grab more regional and international weight than Qatar deserved. Their actions upset the ruling elites of the other states of the Gulf Cooperation Council, with relations bottoming when Qatar accused Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates of having lent support to a counter coup attempt by Hamad's deposed father. The accusation, it seems, was not totally baseless.

53. See Hilal, *Takwin al-nukhba al-filasitiniyya*, pp. 59–63.

54. See Shikaki, "Palestinians Divided."

55. Inaugural speech, as quoted in *Syria Times*, 18 July 2000.

56. Interview, *Le Figaro*, 4 September 2001.

57. See Saloua Zerhouni's chapter on Morocco, André Bank and Oliver Schlumberger's chapter on Jordan, and Volker Perthes's chapter on Syria in this volume.

58. See, among others, Krämer, "Liberalization and Democracy in the Arab World"; Perthes, "The Private Sector, Economic Liberalization and the Prospects of Democratization"; al-Najjar, "Waqi' wa-mustaqbal al-awda' al-siyasiyya."

59. See Khalaf, "The New Amir of Bahrain."

60. Zaki, *Egyptian Business Elites*, p. 226. The picture does not seem to differ much for the businesspeople of other Arab countries.

61. See Hilal, *Takwin al-nukhba al-filasitiniyya*; Dillman, "Facing the Market in North Africa."

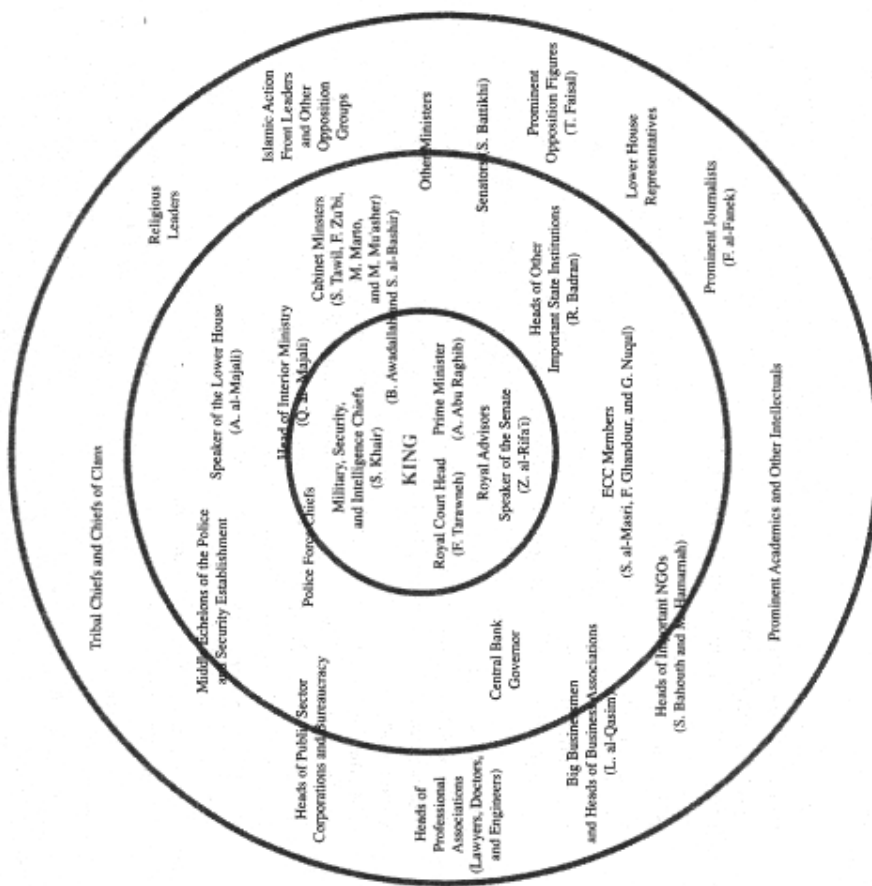
62. See Perthes and Spapperi, "The Young Entrepreneurs of the Arab World."

63. Anderson, "Friendly Arab Democracy: Dismal Prospects," *World Policy Journal* 18, no. 3 (Fall 2001) (Internet edition).

64. See also Dunn, "The Coming Era of Leadership Change."

65. This is not a "handbook" on the Arab world or its leadership personnel, and it was therefore never supposed to give a comprehensive picture of all Arab countries. Comparative evidence can be drawn even from a limited sample. Regrettably, however, there is no article on Iraq, which doubtless forms an important case: Fieldwork in Iraq on such a highly political issue as the elite was seen as too difficult, or even dangerous; and we did not want to depart from our common approach—studies based on extensive fieldwork, that is—and make do with a contribution that would solely rely on secondary sources.

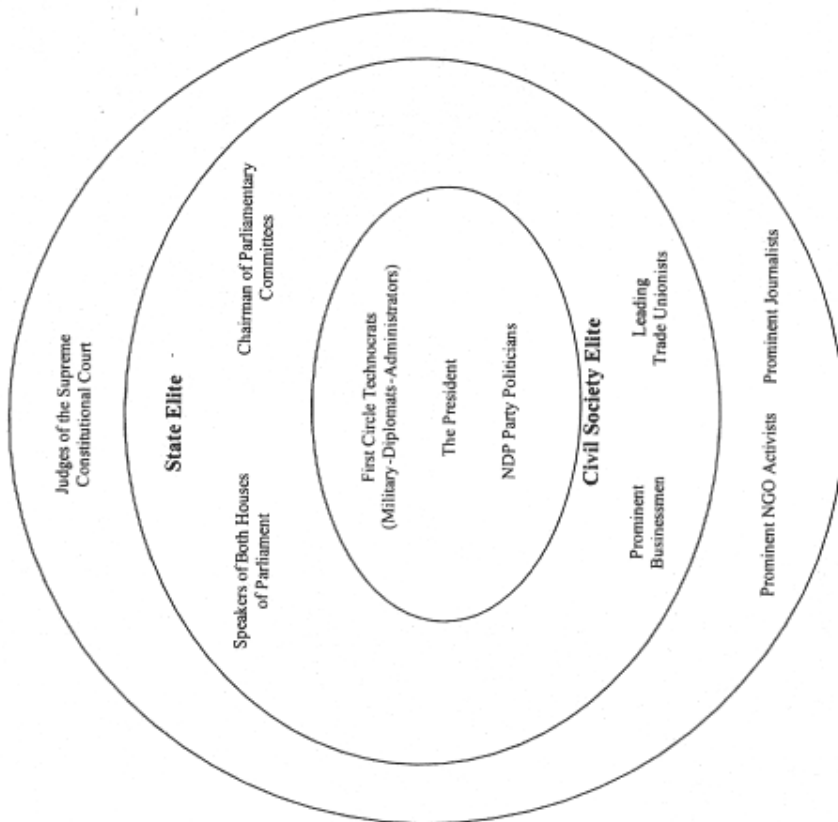
Figure 2.1 Mapping Power: Jordanian Politically Relevant Elites, 2002



Notes: The idea of mapping elites in concentric circles was first suggested by James A. Bill. "The Patterns of Elite Politics," p. 23, and was further developed by Peter Pawelka, *Herrschaft und Entwicklung*. Political relevance in Jordan depends on the personal standing of an incumbent elite rather than on the formal institutional post he or she occupies. Thus in mapping the Jordanian PRE, the model has been modified to include individual incumbent elites rather than formal institutions only.

Incumbents and their positions are as follows: *Bassem Awadallah*, planning minister; *Rim Badran*, director general, Jordan Investment Board; *Sima Bahouth*, director, Queen Noor Foundation; *Salah al-Bashir*, trade and industry minister; *Toujan Faisal*, former deputy, House of Representatives, prominent opposition figure; *Fahid al-Fatek*, journalist for the *Jordan Times* and the *Daily Star*; *Fadi Ghandour*, ECC member and CEO of Aramek; *Mustafa Hamarnah*, director of the Center of Strategic Studies and board member, media privatization council; *Sa'd Khair*, head of the General Intelligence Department; *Qafan al-Majali*, interior minister; *Michel Maro*, finance minister; *Sabih al-Masri*, ECC member with diverse business interests domestically and internationally; *Marwan Mu'asher*, foreign affairs minister; *Ghassan Nuqul*, ECC member and vice-chairman of the Nuqul Group; *Laili al-Qasbi*, head of the Young Entrepreneurs Association of Jordan; *Zaid al-Rifa'i*, Speaker of the Senate; *Samir Tawil*, national economy minister; and *Fawaz Zu'bi*, information and communications technology minister.

Figure 5.1 Egypt's Politically Relevant Elite, 2002



Although military and security officers and diplomats do not have the active or passive right to vote, and therefore do not participate in formal politics, they highly influence strategic decisionmaking. Some observers argue that the role of the military in Egyptian politics is diminishing, but it does not mean that its members are being excluded from the first PRE circle.⁷ The possibility of terrorist attacks has strengthened the political weight of the security apparatus.⁸ But demilitarization is still the underlying matrix for politics today: "Whereas the military supplied one-third of the ministerial elite and filled 40 percent of ministerial positions under Nasser, in Sadat's post-1973 'infiah government,' military representation dropped to about 10 percent, and it remained limited under Mubarak."⁹

Algeria: System Continuity Through Elite Change

Isabelle Werenfels

In contrast to many Arab countries, Algeria has not been ruled by the same leader for two or more decades. Nevertheless, it has been governed by the same forces since its independence from France in 1962. A small number of military leaders and party functionaries who emerged during the War of Independence erected a bureaucratic authoritarian system with the army as its backbone. For decades they monopolized the key positions in state institutions. New recruits came primarily from the pool of "old comrades." Loyalties and networks established during the war prevailed after independence, and different "clans" of revolutionaries as well as clans based on regional and other allegiances within the elite competed over rents, power, and posts. At times these elites reached uneasy informal arrangements (as during the era of Houari Boumediene, 1965 to 1978), at other times they engaged in fierce struggles over distribution of these "spoils" (as during Chadli Bendjedid's reign in the 1980s).¹ This relative continuity in elites seemed to end with the political opening in 1989 that promised radical system and elite change.² The military's coup d'état in 1992—following the triumph of the Front Islamique du Salut (FIS) in the first round of Algeria's first pluralistic and free parliamentary elections—put an end to this process and reestablished the power of incumbent elites.

Ten years after the abrupt end of that democratic experiment, two developments within the Algerian elite were apparent: first, there had been a sharp increase in the number of individual and collective actors constituting the politically relevant elite, that is, those who exert influence on decisions concerning strategic issues of national relevance, such as market and education sector reforms and democratization; and second, old guard "revolutionaries" were being replaced by two younger generations in many elite segments. Domestic and international factors had driven these changes: the civil war, which broke out after the 1992 coup and led not only to the bloody repression, but also to the co-optation and fragmentation of the

Islamist opposition,³ the army's attempt to give its authoritarian rule a constitutional and democratic façade through presidential elections (in 1995 and 1999) and parliamentary elections (in 1997 and 2002); and an International Monetary Fund structural adjustment program and debt rescheduling, both of which not only brought new actors onto the political stage but also opened for incumbent and emerging elites rent-seeking avenues beyond hydrocarbon-related revenues. Although political and economic liberalization affected only marginally the rules of domination, they were enough to allow for new and, in many cases, young actors with a wide spectrum of agendas to enter the political stage.

Algeria in the early 2000s, according to the criteria used in much of the transition literature, was not an unlikely candidate for a shift from an authoritarian to a (somewhat) democratic regime.⁴ Cracks had been increasing in the regime, including splits among the elite. Softliners (reformers) had contested hardliners throughout the 1990s, and in the early 2000s freedom of expression was remarkable, and popular sentiment appeared to be in favor of democracy.⁵ The constitution gave the president substantial power, but not enough to principally preclude democracy. Moreover, the regime had experienced economic shocks and external pressure for extensive economic liberalization. Yet, the military prevailed over the political, and democratic tendencies remained confined to small nuclei of activists throughout the 1990s.

This analysis shares the assumption of Michael Burton and John Higley that "political elite transformations are the fulcrums for fundamental political change"⁶ and argues that any attempt to understand the stickiness of Algerian authoritarianism needs to focus on the dynamics and recruitment patterns within the Algerian PRE as well as on the ways in which the politically relevant elite were shaped and constrained by domestic, international, social, and economic forces. Earlier studies of Algerian elites,⁷ while excellent in many respects, were strongly conditioned by the modernization paradigm. They tended to neglect the embeddedness of elites in specific "traditional" and "modern" social structures and in the Algerian rentier economy and, hence, largely ignored the resulting interests, constraints, and conflicts.

The approach here combines an actor-oriented microsociological analysis with a more structure- and macro-oriented analysis in order to shed light on three issues: the nature of the changes within the Algerian political-relevant elite in the decade after the coup d'état, the implications of these changes for the prospects of system change, and the factors external to the elites that played into the relationship between elite change and system change.⁸ The main argument is the following: The changes and dynamics in the outer circles of the Algerian elite in the second half of the 1990s narrowed the core elite's margin of action. Also, in the early 2000s the core

elite was less unified than it had been immediately following the 1992 coup. These phenomena, however, were system stabilizing rather than destabilizing for reasons linked to core elite strategies and structural factors:

- The divides and vertical networks within the PRE prevented broad coalition building by contesting elites. This fragmentation was not just a result of the linguistic, ethnic, and regional cleavages within Algerian society, but also of the core elite's successful management of these cleavages using a threefold strategy of repression, co-optation, and encouragement of excessive (and often fake) competition by creating parallel structures.
- Recruitment into the PRE was, with few exceptions, limited to social segments that had been represented in the PRE for decades. This largely resulted from two mechanisms of exclusion: the Arabization policy and the claim to historical legitimacy, not only by incumbent elites and their clients but also by their offspring.
- A generational change in the elite reinforced an elite type, the nationalist reformer, who advocated substantial economic and administrative reforms but not system change.⁹ Representatives of this type, thus, were paralyzed by a dilemma: the reforms they proposed would undo the social, political, and economic structures that had produced their elite status.¹⁰
- Given the above factors, changes in the elite could translate into system change if they coincide with a number of external and internal factors that in the past have affected the Algerian system: economic shock, widespread popular uprisings, and the types of external pressures that accompany acceptance of international agreements. When change comes to Algeria, it is unlikely to be Western-style democracy: The rentier nature of the Algerian economy and the country's existing social structures (shaped as they are, partly by the current elites) might simply produce similar political elites and structures.

The Algerian Elite

Between 1962 and 1989, Algeria was ruled by elites from three state institutions: the party, the army, and the bureaucracy (or public administration). Elites with a revolutionary past *and* an army career were found in the party and the bureaucracy and tended to constitute the decisionmaking center.¹¹ With the army-instigated demise of Chadli in January 1992, the military component in the core elite became more obvious. Throughout the 1990s little more than a handful of generals (in office or retired) made all strategic decisions. They either chose the president from their ranks (Liamine Zeroual in 1994), designated someone belonging to the old revolutionary

guard (Mohamed Boudiaf in 1992, Ali Kafi in 1992), or in elections put all their weight behind a candidate from within the army (Zeroual in 1995) or without (Abdelaziz Bouteflika in 1999). To conclude from this that the core elite, with the exception of changes in presidents, remained static in composition, distribution of individual power, or strategies since 1992 would, however, be wrong. There were three developments in these areas after the late 1990s: (1) the emergence of the president, respectively the presidency as a (somewhat) separate power center,¹² causing conflict among the core elite and gridlock in decisionmaking; (2) the complete replacement of one generation of the revolution by a younger generation of the revolution; and (3) the efforts by the army to convey the notion of a new strategy vis-à-vis politics.

The First Circle: The Core Elite, Last Bastion of the Revolutionary Generation

In 1999, at the time of Bouteflika's election, Algeria's prime decisionmakers, or core elite—*les décideurs*, or *le pouvoir (réel)*¹³—were without exception generals: the head of the army's general command since 1993, Mohamed Lamari; the head of army intelligence since 1990, Mohamed "Tewfik" Mediene; the president's advisor for defense issues and unofficial spokesman of the generals, Mohamed Touati; and two retired generals, Larbi Belkheir and Khaled Nezzar, a former minister of defense. Belkheir was the strongman during Chadli's rule and in 2000 returned to the presidency as the powerful director of the presidential cabinet, an appointment putting him at the interface between the army and the presidency and one imposed on Bouteflika by the military. Finally, a number of other generals could also be considered to belong to the décideurs, notably Smail Lamari, the number two man in army intelligence since 1992, and commanders of the six military regions. With no clearly discernible *primus inter pares* (first among equals), decisions were taken in opaque, informal, and consensus-oriented processes, which were often lengthy because of diverging interests and struggles between factions.¹⁴

Virtually all of these generals belonged to the same generation. They were born in the late 1930s, received their secondary education in French, and in the mid-1950s embarked on careers in the French military but later deserted to the national liberation army.¹⁵ After independence they received military training at prestigious institutions, such as the Ecole Supérieure de Guerre in Paris and the Frunze Military Academy in Moscow, and they continued to communicate primarily in French.¹⁶ As of 1988 these revolutionaries began to push aside their "older brothers," those who had fought the revolution from the start, who had not received professional military training, and who had kept their "younger brothers" from moving into key posi-

tions for years. The younger brothers continued this practice by blocking their successors, here referred to as the second generation. Only in the late 1990s did the first officers who lacked "revolutionary legitimacy" receive promotions to the rank of general,¹⁷ and only in 2002 did the first generals from the second generation become *général-major*.¹⁸ While an overwhelming majority of the revolutionary generation had come from the east—Batna, Tebessa, Souk Ahras—and had promoted young officers according to regional affiliations, the second generation, though still the product of a slight regional bias, represented a wider regional spectrum.

With the ascendancy of Bouteflika, a civilian with a long diplomatic career and excellent ties to the West and the Gulf states, the presidency began to emerge as a power center within the core elite. According to Mohamed Lamari, Bouteflika was "le choix le moins mauvais" (the least bad choice),¹⁹ but was, nonetheless, the army's choice; the other six presidential candidates dropped out of the race because of unfair campaigning conditions. Though Bouteflika had been the army's candidate, he soon found himself in a tug-of-war with the general command, which, along with part of the Algerian political establishment, was wary of his own authoritarian ambitions. Conflicts erupted over strategic appointments, such as Bouteflika's nominee for defense minister, a row that after several months ended with the president conceding and instead keeping the portfolio himself (as his predecessors had done). In another conflict, over the nomination for secretary general of the Defense Ministry, Bouteflika prevailed.²⁰ Another major point of contention was the president's reconciliatory policy toward radical Islamists that was formalized in the Concordat Civile²¹ and included a controversial amnesty for demobilized combatants. The principal reason for Bouteflika's emergence as a powerful and (some-what) independent actor and a décideur was his foreign policy success, which relieved Algeria of the international isolation that developed during its civil war. Bouteflika concluded an association agreement with the European Union in 2001, and in the wake of September 11 he established close ties with the United States, based on the "war against terrorism," and managed to obtain weapons that the United States had withheld. The army thus found it difficult to dispose of him. Bouteflika's domestic record was, however, meager: vast economic and administrative reforms he had promised did not pass the stage of proposals. His power struggles with the generals and others with vested interests in these decisions were responsible in part for gridlock on the decisionmaking level.²²

Rumors of conflicts between the top echelon of the army and Bouteflika (and much of his entourage) became so widespread that in summer 2002 Mohamed Lamari publicly denied the allegations and reiterated the president's decisionmaking power. A few weeks after Lamari's statement, however, General Nezzar belied the alleged harmony and accused

Bouteflika of having orchestrated a campaign (notably in the foreign media) against the generals. Such contradictory messages from décideurs pointed to conflicts not only between the president and the generals but also between factions within the army.

The points of contention were political—dealing with the uprisings in Kabylia and with the (legal and outlawed) Islamist parties—as well as economic: the ability to control the hydrocarbon sector, the generator of 97 percent of exports and 77 percent of state revenues in 2000.²³ To determine the destination of hydrocarbon rents had been a main, if not the main source of core elite power since Boumediene. Economic reform thus threatened the vital interests of core elite members, who commanded patronage networks built on the allocation of privileges such as import and distribution licenses.²⁴ The involvement of current and retired military officers in the private and the informal sectors of the economy had been increasing since the 1980s and was indirectly encouraged by an early retirement regulation for civil servants. Not surprisingly, many members of the core elite, for example Belkheir and Mohamed Lamari, placed family members in privileged positions in the private sector and were reputed to have made fortunes. Conflicts with Bouteflika could also be seen in the light of economic struggles, with the president trying to privilege his clients, as seemed to have been the case with the allocation of the first private mobile phone license.²⁵

After a decade of controlling the state, the army in 2002 went to great lengths to publicly distance itself from politics and to create a new, “clean” image for itself. In July 2002, for the first time in the history of independent Algeria the head of the general command, Mohamed Lamari, faced uncensored questions in a press conference that lasted several hours. While journalists covered wide-ranging issues—from Lamari’s salary to the release of FIS leaders and alleged army involvement in massacres of civilians—the not-so-hidden agenda of the army was to play down its role in politics and to counter allegations that it had been involved in mass killings. The army admitted that it had called the shots on matters of national importance from 1992 to 1999—in its eyes, to “save the republic” from what it called “Islamist theocracy”—but insisted that its political involvement had stopped with the election of Bouteflika.²⁶

An optimistic interpretation of these statements would suggest the development of a more transparent relationship and a stronger demarcation between the army and the executive, as is the case in Turkey. More likely, however, they were merely produced for the international community as part of an effort to better sell the politics of repression. In other words, the generals were not “going Turkish,” but simply “pretending to go Turkish.” A real retreat from politics, after all, would involve relinquishing influence over the hydrocarbon rent, an unlikely scenario. An increasingly virulent

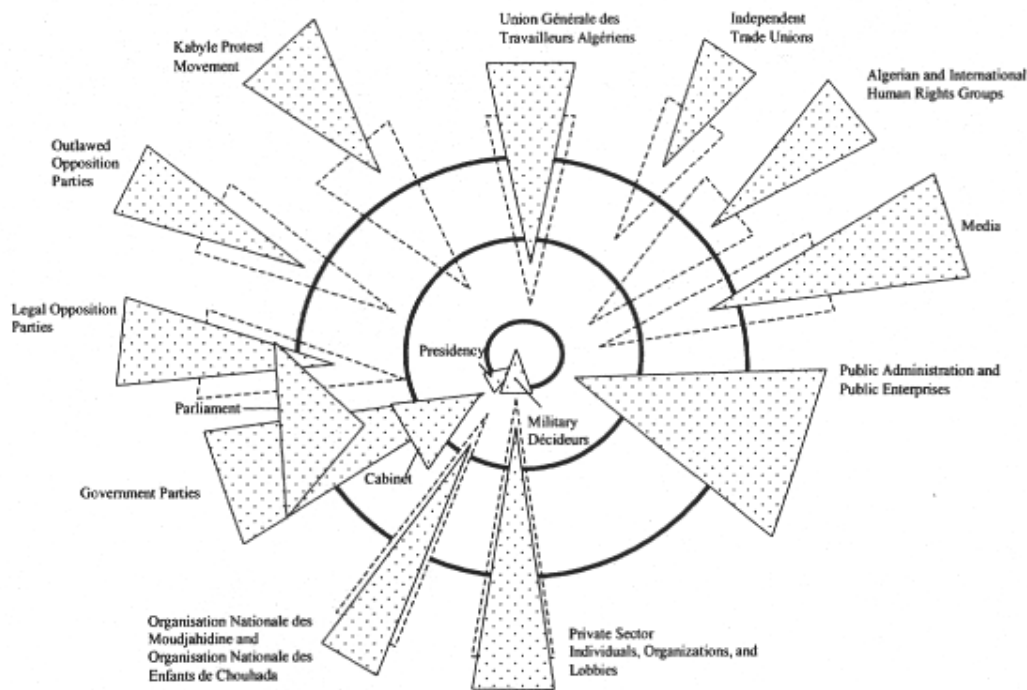
anti-Bouteflika campaign in the run-up to the 2004 presidential elections in privately owned Algerian newspapers, reputedly under the influence of certain generals and accusing the president of being in collusion with Islamists,²⁷ seemed an indication that the army was gearing up for the presidential race and, contrary to its claim, was not yet ready to retire from kingmaking. Either way, the army was reacting to the changing international climate: Human rights campaigns and Algeria’s growing ties with the EU and NATO—Algeria joined the Mediterranean Dialog in 2000—contributed to these developments.

The Second Circle: Clients of the Core Elite

It would be incorrect to think that the décideurs were able to or wanted to (completely) monopolize decisionmaking. In economic issues the commerce minister, who headed the negotiations for World Trade Organization membership, and the energy and mines minister, who also oversaw the state’s hydrocarbon empire, Sonatrach, had a say. Depending on the issue in question, a number of other people were being consulted—these included Ali Benflis who became prime minister in 2000, and in 2001 general secretary of the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN), the party that ruled Algeria as a single party for twenty-seven years), and who was a main reason for the FLN being the top vote getter in the 2002 elections.²⁸ Others with advisory power were the presidents of the two parliamentary chambers,²⁹ certain presidential advisors (most of whom come from the president’s region),³⁰ party leaders, or high functionaries. However, in most cases these individuals were, at best, the clients of core elite patrons. Along with the core elite, they constituted the ruling elite. Since they had strong advisory power but limited or sectoral decisionmaking capacities, they belonged to the second, or middle, circle of elites rather than to the inner, or first, circle. The latter in 2002 consisted of less than a dozen people, among them no clearly discernible prime decisionmaker (see Figure 7.1).

The second circle of elites was primarily a pool of important core elite clients from various state institutions and the cabinet (the cabinet being the most important collective actor in the second circle), drawn as well from the public economic sector, the private sector, and from among regime-supporting civil society groups. In rare instances one also found contesting elites, such as opposition figures, leaders of the Kabyle protest movement, and so on in this circle; but their presence was usually only temporary, resulting from a passing political constellation during which they were able to mobilize public opinion to an extent that made them as influential as a minister, albeit in a different way. Some second-circle elites had high profiles and exercised official functions. Others, such as Bouteflika’s closest advisors, a number of retired generals, and the country’s most important

Figure 7.1 Segments of the Algerian Politically Relevant Elite



Notes: This figure shows dynamics within the PRE, indicating the range of movement of elite segments into and out of certain circles of influence, depending on political conjunctures. Members of the PRE are divided into three circles of influence. Actors in the first, or inner, circle have decisionmaking power on strategic issues; those in the second, or middle, circle have primarily advisory power on these issues; and those in the third, or outer circle, have either weak advisory power or, in most cases, veto or nuisance power. The triangles indicate the range of mobility. The influence of state institutions remains more constant than that of nonstate institutions and organizations. Leaders of the Kabyle protest movement, for instance, are at times outside the PRE, but at other times their activities allow them access to the third or even the second circles. This figure does not reflect the fact that members of one segment of the PRE (e.g., parliament) may also be members of other segments of the PRE (e.g., the private sector).

Table 7.1 Third Generation Ideal Types in Algeria

| | Political Socialization | Common Formative Experiences | Role Models | Family Background | Primary Language | Perception of Urgent Problems | Sector or Field |
|----------------------|---|--|---|---|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Neodinosaur | FLN and its satellites, regime-supporting NGOs | Death of Boumedienne, Islamist terrorism | Houari Boumedienne, Gamal Abdel Nasser | Revolutionary, <i>ulama</i> , nomenclature, tribal elites, local notables | French or Arabic | Unemployment, terrorism/security situation, national unity | Army, cabinet, parliament, public administration, FLN and its satellites |
| Nationalist Reformer | Regime-supporting NGOs, FLN and its satellites | 1988 uprisings, return of Boudiaf, Islamist terrorism | Charles de Gaulle, Mohamed Boudiaf, Houari Boumedienne, Gandhi | Revolutionary, <i>ulama</i> , nomenclature, tribal, private sector elites, local notables | Mainly French but some Arabic | Economic reforms, terrorism/security situation | Army, cabinet, parliament, public administration, FLN and its satellites, private sector, NGOs |
| Islamist Reformer | Mosque, clandestine student movements, Islamic NGOs | 1988 uprisings, democratic opening, 1992 coup, violence of the 1990s | Hassan al-Banna, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Nelson Mandela, Gandhi | Revolutionary, <i>ulama</i> , tribal, private sector elites, local, religious notables, and lesser privileged rural and urban | Arabic or French | Economic reforms, fight against corruption, national reconciliation, rule of law, democratization | Cabinet, parliament, public administration, private sector, religious charities, print media |
| Radical Democrat | (Clandestine) student movements; for Kabyles: family, high school, regime-critical NGOs | 1980 Berber spring, 1988 uprisings, democratic opening, 1990 coup, civil war | Nelson Mandela, Olof Palme, Gandhi, Hocine Ait-Ahmed, Martin Luther King Jr., Che Guevara | Revolutionary, local notables, <i>marabout</i> families, and lesser privileged urban | French or Kabyle but some Arabic | Democratization, national reconciliation, rule of law, human rights, education sector reforms | Parliament, independent unions, print media, independent NGOs, Kabyle citizens' movement |

Notes: This table shows the main elite types, or ideal types, born after 1960 and found among the Algerian PRE as of the second half of the 1990s. The balance of power among these types favors the nationalist reformer, with the neodinosaur a strong second. A fifth elite type, the rejectionist, is not included in this table because he is found in the PRE only temporarily. "Islamist terrorism," "violence of the 1990s," and "civil war" refer to the same events but reflect different perspectives on these events. While different ideal types may share perceptions of urgent problems, they differ regarding the means for solving these problems.

businesspeople, kept a low profile, acting behind the scenes. Virtually all of them had direct access to one or more décideurs and were able to influence decisions or give advice on matters of strategic interest, such as economic and education sector reforms and democratization. It was possible to discern at least five dynamics interacting in this circle:

- Its members had suffered a high degree of turnover. Algeria had eighteen governments between 1988 and 2002 (including major reshufflings), seven of them between 1998 and 2002 alone, a period that also produced four prime ministers.
- The older and younger brothers of the generation of the revolution were being replaced by the second generation (for example, Benflis) in virtually all elite segments, partly because of biological factors—the youngest members of the revolutionary generation were around sixty and approaching retirement in the late 1990s—but also as a result of a deliberate core elite strategy of rejuvenation.
- Private sector elites as well as elites with backgrounds in economics had gained influence, not least as a result of IMF-induced market reforms.
- Civil society elites were being co-opted into this circle.
- An increasing number of elites in the second circle could be described as nationalist reformers in the sense that they advocated substantial structural reforms in the economy and the administration with goals of efficiency, accountability, and the rule of law, but not a system change.

The second Benflis government, formed after the 2002 parliamentary elections, was a good example of these tendencies. It consisted of three parties: the FLN, the Rassemblement National Démocratique (RND, an FLN spin-off founded by core and second-circle elites in 1997), and the Mouvement de la Société pour la Paix (MSP, formerly Hamas, a moderate Islamist party co-opted into the government in 1994).³¹ Roughly half of the government's thirty-nine ministers did not belong to a party, and the overwhelming majority could be described as technocrats; politicians in the Weberian sense remained rare. Most cabinet members came from the state bureaucracy, the public economic sector, the universities, or international organizations and institutions. One also found a civil society activist (for women's rights) and several members of the private sector. Entry into the circle for these people was paved by the Conseil Consultatif National and later by the Conseil National de Transition, the quasi-parliamentary bodies installed between 1992 and 1997 after the interruption of the elections and which included as wide a spectrum of regime-supporting groups as possible.

The Benflis government looked significantly different from governments of the early and mid-1990s: 50 percent of the ministers had never sat

in a cabinet before; there were five women; only seven of the thirty-nine ministers belonged to the revolutionary generation (while in the early 1990s almost two-thirds had such a past); only one cabinet member came from an army background; and there had been an increasing tendency to recruit members from parliament. The recycling of political figures through cabinet posts, a decades-old practice, appeared to be in decline.

As to clientelist affiliations, ministers from the 2002 cabinet fell into four (partially overlapping) categories:³² the president's men, the military's men, the prime minister's men and women, and people co-opted for the sake of social stability. The president's men tended to be the oldest ministers,³³ came from the west (in four cases from Ncdroma),³⁴ were reform-oriented technocrats, sat in the more important ministries, and usually had (international) experience and high competence in their respective fields. In addition to "regional capital" and "capital of competence," several of these ministers also had "historical capital," that is, they had participated in the revolution and belonged to a network, such as the Ministère de l'Armement et des Liaisons Générales (MALG).³⁵ The prime minister's people tended to occupy less important ministries, came from the FLN, and reflected that party's new desirable profile: young, with university degrees (and, ideally, academic careers), and speaking the language of reform. Despite their relatively young age—most were in their forties—several of these ministers had historical capital qua inheritance, as children or relatives of prominent revolutionaries, martyrs, or *ulama* leaders.³⁶ Although a number of these ministers were elected to parliament in 2002, few had experience in party, local, or national politics. Many only joined the FLN or became active in it for the 2002 campaign; a lack of politicization appeared to have been an asset for upward mobility in this case. The military's men, roughly half a dozen ministers, had little in common except that they were reputed or confirmed to have *un parrain*, a godfather, in the first circle, in the army. Most of them occupied strategically important ministries, such as justice. Finally, there were the three ministers of the co-opted Islamist MSP. Without a godfather in the first circle, their influence was limited and, similar to some of the prime minister's men and women, they belonged to the third, or outer, circle of influence rather than the second circle.

Apart from the more powerful ministers, top cadres of the Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens (UGTA), the powerful union under the single-party system, and top business elites also had clout in decisions on economic reforms. The UGTA was powerful both because it had access to the first circle, and because it had strong veto and nuisance power.³⁷ By rallying public opinion and political elites, it forced Bouteflika to shelve a new hydrocarbon bill that he had proposed.³⁸ Abdelmajid Sidi Said, the secretary general of the UGTA, and Omar Ramdane, president of the Forum des Chefs d'Entreprise (FCE), a lobby of more than sixty of the

largest entrepreneurs, could not be ignored when it came to economic decisions. Both were invited to accompany the commerce minister to the fourth round of WTO membership negotiations in November 2002. The FCE also somewhat successfully advocated for regulations to weaken the Algerian import lobby and favor producers over traders. The import lobby, reputed to be close to certain army clans but not formally organized, for its part, fought to keep its privileges.³⁹ Finally, the wealthiest businessmen, usually with blood or familial ties to the army or politics, informally and individually tried to influence economic decisionmaking; a prominent example was Issad Rebrab, one of the country's biggest industrialists. Algeria's most prominent businessman, Rafik al-Khalifa, whose empire was on the verge of collapse in early 2003,⁴⁰ was unlikely to have wielded much political influence, as he was reputed to be a figurehead financed by generals or by Gulf countries (depending on the source of the allegation).

A further category of actors that could be part of the second circle was top cadres of state-sponsored but formally independent organizations, namely those that fell under the umbrella of the *famille révolutionnaire*⁴¹ and could mobilize hundreds of thousands of Algerians in elections. This was true primarily of the Organisation Nationale des Moudjahidine (ONM), a veterans group whose secretary general in 2002 became minister of moudjahidine and who defended the material benefits and interests of veterans,⁴² as well as the Organisation Nationale des Enfants de Chouhada (Children of Martyrs). The fact that these organizations were political instruments and had political weight was reflected in the state's allocation of funds to them: in the 2003 budget proposal the moudjahidine item was the fourth largest, receiving only one-third less than defense and more than higher education and the entire health sector. This situation also helped explain the apparently large number of *faux moudjahidine*—the number of officially acknowledged veterans rose from 24,000 in 1962 to 420,000 in 1999⁴³—and the intense efforts to make hereditary the historical capital of veterans through organizations such as the Organisation Nationale des Enfants de Moudjahidine (Children of Veterans), founded in 1993. Being a cadre in one of these organizations or in an association of “victims of terrorism” was an excellent stepping stone for entering the politically relevant elite. The fictional and mythical *famille révolutionnaire* thus constituted what Olivier Roy calls a “modern *asabiyya*” (kinship-based solidarity).⁴⁴

The Third Circle: The Subelites—Clients and Contesters

The third circle of the politically relevant elite was the most dynamic circle. The early 1990s, before the aborted elections, witnessed the mushrooming of the number of collective actors with indirect but substantial

political influence through advising, lobbying, or possessing the power to effectively veto decisions or be a nuisance. Many of these actors managed to retain some of their influence beyond the coup. Furthermore, in the late 1990s new politically relevant actors emerged, for example, the Kabyle protest movement. This not only led to a sharp increase in the number of actors that were able to temporarily, as opposed to permanently, move into the third circle, but also led to a fragmentation of third-circle elites. Another tendency in this circle was the increasing dominance of young actors born after the revolution. These developments in the third circle, in conjunction with the recruitment and co-optation mechanisms used to sustain the second circle, were a primary reason for system continuity and relative stability in Algeria.

Two categories of actors informed this circle: clients and contesting elites. The clients had been “lifted” into the PRE by patrons from above, had good chances of moving into the second circle, and were found primarily in the RND and the FLN and its satellites (for example, in the Union Nationale de la Jeunesse Algérienne [UNJA], and the UGTA), in regime-friendly NGOs,⁴⁵ and in the two chambers of parliament. The Senate, or upper house, one-third of whose members were nominated by the president, could be seen as a parking lot for aging former top functionaries with historical capital or, for its younger members, a waiting room for entry into the executive or diplomatic corps. The lower chamber of parliament, the Assemblée Populaire Nationale (APN)—as of 1997 a multiparty chamber—while not a powerful institution in the constitutional sense, developed into a platform for controversial debates and agenda setting with the first-time appearance of two opposition parties⁴⁶ and three “semi-opposition” parties.

The APN, dominated by the RND in 1997, and by an absolute majority of the FLN in 2002, became a sphere of frequent elite turnover (more than 80 percent of 1997 MPs were not reelected in 2002) and of elite rejuvenation. In 1997, 11 percent belonged to the generation born after independence; in 2002 this number more than doubled, to 25 percent, and, conversely, the number of the revolutionary generation declined, from 16 percent to 5 percent. Both developments were engineered by party leaders. In 2002, moreover, a phenomenon previously witnessed in most Arab countries reached Algeria: the entry into politics of private sector elites. At the end of the single-party era in 1989, only 1 to 2 percent of MPs had a private sector background; in 2002 this figure had climbed to 10 percent. Finally, many of the regime-supporting MPs formed a clientelist link between local and national levels, between mass organizations (for example, the ONM, the victims of terrorism, the scouts) and between the first and second-circle elites who used these organizations and numerous smaller NGOs to broad-

en the power base of the regime. Hachemaoui pertinently termed such MPs *entrepreneurs de la médiation clientélaire* (entrepreneurs of clientelist mediation).⁴⁷

The contesting elites, who wanted to alter or completely change the political system, comprised two large groups: Islamists and leftists. Although most contesting elites had imposed themselves or had been pushed into the PRE from below by such social forces as the Kabyle protest movement, their co-optation and movement into the second circle was not uncommon, as evidenced by the fortunes of some MSP and UGTA cadres and some media elites. As a result of their elevation, their positions softened, and they lost popular appeal because of their cooperation with the regime, as happened to the MSP. Though the MSP only received minor ministries, it could still be said to have obtained a certain veto power, because the government needed an Islamist party fig leaf to claim legitimacy through pluralism.

The most powerful Islamist actor was arguably the opposition Mouvement pour la Réforme Nationale (MRN, or al-Islah, which split from al-Nahda in 1999). It was the third most influential political force within the formal political system and had attracted former FIS activists and voters. The power of Islah laid less in its agenda of social justice than in its ability to hamper reforms in the education sector and other areas by presenting such measures as an "occidentalization" of society, thus mobilizing conservative opinion. It had informal nuisance power but limited formal veto power, because it remained a minority in parliament and on many issues had no allies. The electoral power of other contesting Islamist forces—such as the outlawed FIS and moderate Islamist, or Arabo-nationalist, Wafa, headed by Ahmed Taleb Ibrahim, Boumediène's long-time minister and a former revolutionary—was hard to evaluate because these groups could not operate openly. Ibrahim, the most hopeful opposition candidate in the 1999 presidential race, had been accused of trying to create an FIS successor organization even though Wafa was by no means more radical or more Islamist than Islah. The fact that it had not been legalized spoke of its potential electoral power and the fear it aroused among the core and second-circle elites.

The FIS elite were physically eliminated, imprisoned, or deprived of their political rights throughout the 1990s. Nevertheless, the party's number one and two, Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj, who were supposed to be released from prison in July 2003, could not be ignored by the regime. The support of the FIS leadership for holding presidential elections in 1999 and for the Concorde Civile was crucial to incumbent elites, because it offered them broad legitimacy and allowed for the integration of parts of the FIS electorate into the formal political process. With some FIS elites and part of its electorate co-opted, and with persistent quarrels between and within the

leadership in Algeria and in exile, it appeared unlikely that the party (even if legalized) would regain the influence it held in the early 1990s, when its leaders were about to move from the second to the first circle. Finally, the remaining armed Islamist groups, Groupement Islamique Armés (GIA) and Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat, were able to muster indirect influence on certain strategic decisions in that they provided justification for the army not lifting the state of emergency and keeping up its repression. The GIA, especially, through massacres, played into the hands of the army, which in turn led to persistent and plausible rumors of army infiltration of these groups.⁴⁸

Elites on the political left—from members of political parties to the Kabyle protest movement and human rights activists—formed another important opposition force. Their organization, however, exemplified the problems hampering opposition forces from uniting and becoming a real force of change. The most important parties on the left, the Trotskyite Parti des Travailleurs (PT), led by Louisa Hanoune, and the social democratic and Berberophone Front des Forces Socialistes (FFS), led by Hocine Aï Ahmed, one of the nine principal leaders of the revolution, had advocated regime and system change for decades from within and without the political system. Though both of these parties shared a goal of democratization and national reconciliation that includes the FIS, they had fallen out over tactical issues, such as whether to participate in elections. Moreover, the FFS, which had strong regional roots and historical legitimacy, lost part of its constituency to the Kabyle citizens movement, or Arouch, a protest movement born in April 2001 following the killing of a young Berber in a police station.⁴⁹

The Kabyle movement was formally organized into several committees, the largest being the Coordination des Arouch, des Dairas et des Communes (CADC).⁵⁰ Its leadership represented a new force in the third circle of elites and at the same time contributed to the fragmentation of the more established contesting elites. This movement, although not homogeneous or well structured, was able to take credit for the state finally accepting the Berber language, Tamazight, as a national language in April 2002.⁵¹ Moreover, it succeeded largely at preventing—not least through violent means—the holding of local and national elections in Kabilya in 2002. It also substantially weakened the Berber FFS and Rassemblement pour la Culture et la Démocratie (RCD), which was forced to leave government as a result of the uprisings. These parties, as well as the government, tried to repress, split, and control the movement; and several movement leaders were arrested in late 2002. The Arouch, however, remained adamant that without the fulfillment of their political and social demands as stated in the so-called Platform of El Kseur,⁵² they would neither negotiate nor cooperate with state agencies. While such maximalist demands threatened to drive

the Arouch into a political dead end, the movement was not likely to simply disappear, since it was, among other things, an expression of a generational conflict, deriving much of its strength from the increasing number of young Berbers, who were completely alienated from (national) political life.⁵³

The fact that the government was not able to repress the Kabyle protest movement the way that it had repressed the FIS⁵⁴ could be attributed to the presence of two politically relevant actors with strong nuisance power: the nongovernmental Arabophone and Francophone press, which were remarkably, but not entirely, free,⁵⁵ and national and international human rights activists. The press reported not only every move against the Arouch, but continuously uncovered scandals involving core and second-circle elites. In 1998, for example, a press campaign pushed General Mohamed Betchine, a strong and utterly corrupt Zeroual man, to resign.⁵⁶ The private press's vigilance, moreover, contributed to preventing the wide-scale manipulation of elections. Human rights activists, for their part, developed a nuisance power that moved them into the second circle, that is, until the events of September 11 internationally "legitimized" the Algerian use of force against Islamists retrospectively. From the mid-1990s onward Algerian and foreign human rights activists contributed to the isolation of the Algerian core elite by raising the question "Qui tue qui?" (Who kills whom?) in the French press, insinuating that the army had committed atrocities in order to discredit the Islamists and to justify the regime's repressive policies. In 2001 complaints of torture forced General Nezzar to flee from France overnight. Moreover, in 2002 a French court after long hearings dismissed a lawsuit in which Nezzar had accused former army officer Habib Souaidia of defamation. The latter had—in the media as well as in a highly publicized book—blamed the *décideurs* for the systematic and willful perpetration of atrocities.⁵⁷

In view of these pressures, the army's public relations campaign could also be seen as a response to the globalization of justice and the fear of a Milosevic-like fate for *décideurs*. Other regime counterstrategies included trying to split the media and human rights groups. Several editors, columnists, and caricaturists had been co-opted (sometimes into the second circle) and were being used to attack regime foes and for agenda setting, while also being given leeway to criticize the regime.⁵⁸ As for human rights activists, those from truly independent organizations continued to suffer from clampdowns, while several regime-backed organizations, defending the human rights of some people but not of others, sprung up.⁵⁹ What ultimately prevented most contesting elites in the third circle from becoming stronger was the wildly fluctuating nature of their influence, which depended on the national and international climate. After September 11, for instance, independent human rights activists for a while disappeared almost completely from the PRE.

Continuity Through Change

The above analysis has shown that dynamics within the Algerian politically relevant elite, particularly the increase in the number of actors in the second half of the 1990s, led to a substantially reduced range of action for the core elite. Members of the core elite, in an effort to broaden their power base and to institutionalize controllable valves, responded to popular pressure by liberalizing the political system, albeit selectively. This allowed for young and less powerful third-circle elites (or subelites) to emerge and to at times successfully press for certain concessions or block core elite strategies. Such actions were made possible not least by changes abroad, such as the end of the Eastern European socialist paradigm, which resulted among other things in transitions to market economies worldwide, globalization of justice, and international treaties—putting pressure on a core elite exhibiting increasing disunity in vision and strategy. The core elite fragmentation opened spaces in which contesting elites could act. The result of these developments, however, was not system reform or system instability but, on the contrary, system continuity. The increasing fragmentation of the PRE, the recruitment mechanisms into the politically relevant elite (for example, core elites co-opting nonpoliticized young elites), and the nature of the channels of social mobility (for example, clientelist networks based on regional, familial, and historical capital) preserved the existing political structures. Underlying this situation were components external to Algeria's elite: The elites' fragmentation reflected longstanding and deep divisions in Algerian society as a whole—the core elite "merely" managed these divisions successfully. Recruitment mechanisms and channels for upward mobility embodied the vertical, primordial (familial, tribal, regional), and modern (revolutionary, rentier) networks as well as the informal (personalized) modes of negotiation and exchange found throughout Algerian society. This explained why, despite a common "enemy," contesting elites only once—in 1995 in Rom in a mediation of the Sant'Egidio Catholic community—agreed on a common political platform of national reconciliation that included the FIS.⁶⁰

The personalized networks and the modes of exchange resulted in part from the rentier character of the Algerian economy.⁶¹ This aspect of the economy was a principal obstacle to elite transformation and system change, because it helped the core elite to finance a costly divide and conquer strategy, consisting of repression (for example, of the FIS), co-optation (for example, of the Islamist MSP), and encouragement of real and fake competition through the creation of parallel structures. A classic example of this last mechanism was the creation of new parties to weaken existing ones by having the newer parties espouse similar agendas and address similar electorates to those of the established parties. Cases in point were

the Berberophone RCD (to oppose the Berberophone FFS) in 1989 and the RND (to oppose the FLN, temporarily in opposition) in 1997. Also, businessmen, former politicians, and generals founded or supported a plethora of private Francophone daily newspapers. In 2002 these numbered more than a dozen and served to weaken the effect that any individual newspaper might have, thus rendering the (Francophone) press less threatening. Finally, of the 57,000 associations in 2002,⁶² only a few were truly independent. Many were regime satellites (for example, the victims of terrorism associations) or instruments for distributing benefits to regime supporters, for weakening independent and opposition NGOs, and, last but not least, for integrating emerging young elites into the fold.⁶³ Examination of these young elites and the mechanisms of generational change in Algerian politics offered additional clues into why, despite the dynamic nature of the third elite circle, shifts in the second circle, and changes in the balance of power in the first circle, the Algerian system remained remarkably resistant to change.

Grandchildren of the Revolution

It seems superfluous, but it is nevertheless important to stress that a different generational experience produces a different "generation entelechy."⁶⁴ Obviously, a common experience does not lead to homogeneity among an entire generation, and elite rejuvenation does not necessarily mean wholesale changes in attitudes, strategies, or policies. What an actual generational change and an approach focusing on it offer are a chance to pinpoint areas of change. Equally important, they highlight continuity, for one must remain aware that focusing on elite transformations "risks underestimating the persistence and exaggerating the change."⁶⁵ By using common historical and common formal educational experiences to delineate different generations, it was possible to discern three generations among the Algerian politically relevant elite in the early 2000s: the revolutionary generation, the second generation (coming of age after independence), and the third generation (born around or after independence). The elites of the revolutionary generation, whether opposition or regime elites, were marked by the war of independence, by the rivalries and rifts the war generated among Algerians, and by what Mohammed Harbi terms an "esprit de secret, de suspicion et de rivalité" (a spirit of secrecy, of suspicion, and of rivalry).⁶⁶

The second generation, born between the mid-1940s and the late 1950s, had memories of the war but had also been significantly marked by an era of hope: the euphoria of independence and "the golden years of Boumedienne" involving state building, ambitious industrialization projects, and high oil prices. It had enjoyed generous state scholarships to France, Eastern Europe, the Arabic- and English-speaking worlds;⁶⁷ job

opportunities had been abundant and social mobility fairly high. The educational system—although geared toward mass education and slowly beginning to be Arabized—had still featured private schools and "showed an imbalance in favor of those whose families already [held] wealth, status and power."⁶⁸ Nevertheless, upward mobility had been widespread in this generation: The step-by-step Arabization of the official sphere turned command of Modern Standard Arabic, rarely found in the revolutionary generation, into an asset during the 1970s and opened channels for ambitious young people with non-Francophone rural or less privileged backgrounds. Among the institutions producing elites were technical and engineering schools, the *École Nationale d'Administration*, the *Faculté de Droit* in Algiers, and the army academies. Networks based on familial, regional, and revolutionary affiliations as well as mass organizations, such as the UGTA, the UNJA, and the *Union Nationale des Femmes Algériennes* (UNFA), were channels of upward mobility. These FLN satellites helped form an elitist, socialist, collectivist, and nationalist identity. This "ideology of the state," together with the opportunities offered to the second generation, had inspired a sentiment among this generation that they could never give back to the state what it had given to them. Hence, it was not surprising that the second generation of elites had turned out to be obedient rather than rebellious and had remained in the shadow of its heroic fathers, particularly of one strong man: Boumedienne. Hardly any representatives of this generation had ascended to key positions in the FLN or the administration until the early 1990s, none made it to the top echelons of the army until the late 1990s, and none occupied the presidency.

The main socializing experiences of the third generation of elites were, in contrast, a chain of primarily discouraging or violent developments: the economic decline during the Chadli years that accelerated socioeconomic problems; the bloodily repressed riots of 1988 that led to three short years of democratic opening, accompanied by the euphoria of a political spring but also increased social tensions linked to the ascendance of the Islamist FIS; the military coup after the FIS election victory; the assassination of President Boudiaf, who had represented a ray of hope;⁶⁹ the outbreak of the civil war; and, throughout the 1990s, rampant unemployment, low social mobility, and the emigration of more than 400,000 Algerians with higher diplomas.⁷⁰ This elite generation, moreover, suffered from a decline in the school system, which had been completely (but poorly) Arabized by the early 1980s (with the exception of the natural sciences at the university level) and produced what many Algerians refer to as "illiterates in two languages." With state scholarships to foreign countries becoming scarce, this generation of elites was educated almost exclusively in Algeria, mainly at the Sciences Po and the *Faculté de Droit* of Algiers University. Army elites constituted the sole exception: they continued to be sent abroad for train-

ing. At military academies, English was pushed as of the mid-1980s. In terms of elite training and international exposure, the army was, therefore, far ahead of the civilian sector.

While this third generation of elites was (not yet) found in the first circle, and while its members were only slowly moving into cabinet positions—two in 2002—they had in the army attained the rank of colonel and were increasingly found in ever-higher positions in the general command. They were also moving into top positions in the private and public economic sectors, in the state administration, and in parties. More than half of the top cadres of the FFS in 2002 were born after the revolution, and even the FLN's *bureau politique*, the eternal stronghold of the so-called dinosaurs, had one member under forty years of age. The executives of the Islamist parties from their beginnings included members of the third generation, adding a generational component to the confrontation between the regime and the Islamists. With the regime excluding the younger generations from power, the FIS in the early 1990s became the primary forum for their political voice. It appeared that the Arouch, at least for the Kabyles, took on this function in the early 2000s.

The most striking common feature of the third generation of elites was the fact that it had been recruited almost exclusively from certain privileged layers of society, in many cases from within the PRE: from well-known revolutionary families⁷¹ or from the larger (and largely imaginary) *famille révolutionnaire*, from the nomenklatura (administrative and FLN cadres and military elites), locally important families (including postrevolutionary "notables," such as local party functionaries), families of religious notables (*ulama* and religious brotherhoods), prominent tribes, and the private sector. Remarkable still was that almost none of the core elite's offspring could be found in top positions in state institutions. Most of them were educated abroad (in France, the United States, or Britain) and either stayed there or returned and went into the private sector. A few were found in the army, but not (yet) in its top echelons.

A principal reason for "elite reproduction" was the Arabization of the school system, which hampered the social mobility of Algerians who did not grow up in a privileged French-speaking household, in a Francophone urban milieu, or attend schools in France. The army's general command as well as the cabinet communicated primarily in French. Ministers, generals, and directors of enterprises made it clear that French was a prerequisite for promotions into the upper spheres of the Algerian system. Even in Islamist parties, mastering French seemed, judging from the high number of top cadres that spoke it beautifully, a plus for one's career, even if party leaders refused to speak it publicly for ideological reasons. To a limited extent, the only space open to actors from backgrounds other than those above were independent unions.⁷² Independent NGOs, the Arabophone press, and

Islamist parties. Thus, as Pierre Bourdieu notes, the educational system contributed to reproducing the existing order.⁷³

A second reason for the reproduction of the current elite and for existing social hierarchies was the monopolization of historical legitimacy by incumbent elites. A link, no matter how remote, to the fictitious *famille révolutionnaire* was a key asset for entering the PRE. It was no coincidence that when Leila Boutillis, one of the female members in the second Benflis cabinet, was presented to the media, her being an offspring of a famous "martyr" was mentioned more prominently as a merit than her being a well-known professor of cardiology. Historical legitimacy as a criterion for recruitment thus experienced a renaissance. According to John Entellis, it had become less important in the late 1970s;⁷⁴ in the wake of the regime's fight against Islamism in the 1990s, however, historical legitimacy regained importance and was extended to organizations fighting terrorism. The fact that the PRE, despite its still strong egalitarian and populist rhetoric, recruited mainly from within and from the same privileged societal segments, did not, however, preclude newly recruited young elites from developing attitudes that differed from their older predecessors.

The Faces of the Young Elite

As Mannheim stresses, an "actual generation," composed of those with common historical experiences, is divided into "differentiated, antagonistic generation units" because common historical experiences are dealt with in different ways.⁷⁵ In the Algerian case, the domestic and foreign media have tended to reduce these units to binary categories, such as *éradicateurs/réc- onciliateurs* (eradicators/reconcilers) or Arabophone/Francophone or Arabophone/Franco-Berberophone or Islamist/democratic, and so on. Such dualities, usually relying on one variable only—for example, language or attitude toward Islamists—have overlooked complex crosscutting of political, ethnic, linguistic, and regional cleavages and neglected additional dimensions, such as outlooks on economic reforms. Their explanatory power for elite change as well as for system change has been limited. The inclusion of a wider spectrum of variables⁷⁶ allows for the construction of five different "ideal types" in the third generation: the neodinosaure, the nationalist reformer, the Islamist reformer, the radical democrat, and the rejectionist (see Table 7.1).⁷⁷ The balance of power in the third generation favored the nationalist reformer, while in the second generation the dinosaur prevailed.

The neodinosaure—found in the army, cabinet, and parliament, as well as in public administration, and often an FLN, or in some cases, an RND member—was the most reform averse of the ideal types. He had been socialized in a family belonging to the nomenklatura or in organizations

such as the UNJA that have also functioned as channels for upward mobilization.⁷⁸ He was a populist nationalist in the tradition of Boumediennists and saw himself as the true inheritor of the revolutionaries. His motto was *continuité* (continuity), and his political program was to slow reforms in the administrative, education, and economic sectors on the one hand while demanding state programs to alleviate socioeconomic misery on the other. Democracy was seen as having arrived with the demise of the single-party system in 1997; it now only needed some consolidation.

The rejectionist was the opposite of the neodinosaur. His principal goal was a change of what he viewed as a completely corrupt and murderous regime and elite. He was not interested in reforms, rejected negotiations, and was ready to flirt with violence to achieve his goals, arguing that (violent) uprisings, rather than negotiations, had been the motor of change in the Algerian past. In the 1990s he was found primarily among the more radical FIS cadres, whose visions of post-FLN Algeria revolved around an Islamic social order and the Islamic values of the revolution that were betrayed after independence. As of 2001, the most influential rejectionists were leaders of the Berber protest movement. They saw themselves as revolutionaries in the tradition of a Che Guevara or Algerians such as Abane Ramdane, who had been killed by revolutionaries who later took over the state. At the same time, paradoxically, the leaders of the protest movement, in accordance with dominant sociocultural practices, excluded women almost completely and included a revitalized concept of an archaic organizational structure, the Arouch, in their movement. Few rejectionists were found in the PRE, and they had no chance of advancing in the existing system because they refused co-optation.

The radical democrat—found in small numbers in parliament but mainly in independent unions, NGOs, and newspapers and in the FFS, PT, and occasionally RCD—was also rooting for regime change, but through nonviolent means and often from within the system. He tended to be Berberophone or Francophone and his goal was a secular, social democratic system that allowed space for the FIS. For him, too, the revolutionaries—with the exception of figures such as Ait-Ahmed—betrayed the main goal of the revolution: the establishment of a democracy. His main concerns were democratization, human rights, a functioning judiciary, and a fairer distribution of state resources. He was, hence, blocking some reforms (for example, privatization) while pushing other (political, educational, and administrative) reforms. In contrast to the neodinosaur, he was neither a functionary nor a bureaucrat but a true politician in the Weberian sense. His upward mobility, however, was usually limited to the third circle of elites.

The Islamist reformer—found in the MSP, to some extent in the Islah, in the cabinet and parliament, and the Arabophone press—was usually an Arabophone and could also be described as a democrat. He shared many of

the concerns of the radical democrat—rule of law, human rights, the fight against corruption—except his vision of society was shaped more by Islamic than by universalist values; yet he tolerated other political and social visions. He blamed the postrevolutionary elite for having betrayed the Arab-Islamic pillars of the revolution and for having subscribed to authoritarian, socialist, and Francophone values instead. Like the conservative neodinosaur, he opposed education sector reforms—namely, the early introduction of French—but advocated a market economy, transparency, and accountability. He, too, tended to be a politician in the Weberian sense, and his influence could reach into the second circle by agreeing to limited deals with the regime and by utilizing his nuisance power.

The nationalist reformer—found in the FLN and the RND, in government, parliament, the public administration, the public and private economic sectors, and many NGOs—exemplified why the Algerian system remained virtually unchanged, despite much talk of reforms. He had one foot in politics (parliament), one foot in business, and at the same time was a cadre in a (large) NGO. While his background was similar to that of the neodinosaur, he differed in outlook and behavior. He communicated openly and critically about the country's problems and was convinced that substantial structural reforms in the administration, the economy, the judiciary, and the educational system were the only way out of the political, social, and economic crisis that Algeria had suffered for more than a decade. Political reforms, however, were not a priority, and he had internalized the modernization paradigm in that he saw economic and social development as a prerequisite for democracy. The nationalist reformer viewed economic and administrative reforms as means to ease tensions and satisfy interest groups in order to postpone or avoid political concessions and prevent system change.⁷⁹

With nationalist reformers from the third and the second generation moving into key positions (in most ministries and, arguably, the presidency), why were the economic, administrative, and education sector reforms advocated by them not implemented? The answer is found not only in the opposition of groups with vested interests (for example, importers in the case of privatization) or with different visions of society (for example, Islamists in the case of education reforms based on universalist values), but because the reforms were slowed by the nationalist reformer himself: The reforms he advocated, namely transparency, accountability, and the rule of law (eventually leading to strong state institutions), would have undermined the very structures (of informal networks based on primordial ties and personalized relations) that "made" him. He thus was likely to make choices that did not threaten these structures. In other words, attitudes were not primarily what guided his decisions, rather it was the personalized and clientelist relations with individual elites that shaped and constrained him.

The personal trajectory of a third generation nationalist reformer illustrates this point.

X was a private sector consultant from a family in western Algeria with links to the ulama (and thus had historical legitimacy). In high school he dated a general's daughter, was introduced to several *décideurs*, and began doing (vaguely defined) "favors" for them. In 2002, he advised several ministers informally, had close ties to the country's most important business leaders as well as to several generals; and was among those who advised the generals of the need to change the army's image. At the same time he mediated between international governmental, nongovernmental, and multilateral organizations and the Algerian ruling elite. His business relationships with Algerians were highly informal, and when called upon to solve a problem, he often succeeded with one phone call to a highly placed person. He openly talked about the importance of giving and taking in informal exchanges of favors that did not necessarily need to be of a material nature.⁸⁰ X's analysis of Algeria's problems and shortcomings in no way differed from those of the World Bank or foreign diplomats, and he organized workshops on corruption, transparency, accountability, and lobbying. Yet, X's activities were geared toward improving Algeria's image rather than toward real structural changes, and they were conditioned by his efforts to satisfy those who protected him rather than by advocacy for the reforms he deemed necessary. When Bouteflika was in good standing with the army, he publicly backed him; when the president fell from favor, he criticized him in the media, even though Bouteflika and his entourage were arguing for reforms that X thought important. As all nationalist reformers, X had great respect not necessarily for the *décideurs*, but for the army as an institution, which he perceived as functioning better and more according to merit than all other institutions.

X did not hold a formal political position and may have been unique in what he did professionally, but the way in which he operated within the system and subordinated his reformist agenda to the needs of negotiating and renegotiating his personal ties with various patrons did not differ much from the ways in which nationalist reformers in the second circle, including prime ministers, negotiated with core elites, except that the members of the second circle spoke about it less openly. X's example, moreover, showed that patron-client networks were highly dynamic and subject to constant negotiating and renegotiating.

Elite Change and System Transformation: The Impact of Sociocultural and Economic Factors

Patrick Chabal pointedly states about Africa that politics are not "functionally differentiated, or separated, from the sociocultural considerations

which govern everyday life."⁸¹ This also held true, even if to a lesser extent, for Algeria during the period examined, and is an issue completely overlooked by actor-oriented transition models that try to reach general (universal) conclusions about possible transition trajectories.⁸² Even if an elite ideal type, such as the radical democrat, moved through a pact into the second or even the first circle and participated in decisionmaking, it remains questionable whether such movement would ultimately lead to democracy. For even in Algerian parties that had a Western-style democratic agenda, internal politics and personnel decisions remained guided by sociocultural and primordial considerations more than political ones. The FFS for instance was run by a charismatic patriarch, who, coming from a *marabout*⁸³ family, possessed religious capital and placed family members in strategic positions. No Algerian party leader allowed a strong rival to rise within his party. Dissent within parties, moreover, quickly led to schisms (for example, *Islah* from *Nahda*). If the charismatic leader disappeared or left the party, the party more or less vanished (as happened to *Nahda* after its leader, *Djaballah*, left the party and founded *Islah*). Even those political figures who saw themselves as the new revolutionaries or praised "modern" values of citizenship, such as the leaders of the Kabyle movement, had a discourse deeply shaped by sociocultural practices in that they spoke of the movement's *code d'honneur* (code of honor), thus resorting to a central concept of "traditional" Kabyle social organization.⁸⁴ Also, they excused the complete absence of women in the movement as in the "arouch's tradition."

What Harbi stated about the inner life of the FLN in 1954 still held for Algerian party politics five decades later: "What one finds here are relations of power and influence in which personal relations and family and regional ties fuse. It is less a matter of pure political relations than of community relations expressed in a modern language."⁸⁵ In Algerian politics, even in the early 2000s, one did not find figures such as Lebanese prime minister Rafik al-Hariri or former Polish presidential candidate Stanislaw Tyminski or former Estonian foreign minister Tom Ilves—men who had made their careers or their fortunes outside their country and could at least initially operate outside traditional social and economic networks. Ministers who earlier had an impressive career in international organizations—for example, Hamid Temmar, privatization minister, and Chakib Khalil, energy and mines minister—and a clear and radical reform vision were immediately initiated into "clans," in these cases, *Bouteflika's*, which made them targets of his foes and subject to his maneuvering and efforts to duck reforms.

In view of the importance of patronage networks and informal structures for the stability of formal political structures in Algeria, it can be argued that the nature of the country's economy was a prime reason for sys-

tem continuity. The Algerian economy in the early 2000s remained one of rent distribution and informal exchange rather than of production: 97 percent of export revenues came from the hydrocarbon sector, imports offered a prime opportunity for quick and big money, and the informal economy (consisting also primarily of import and distribution) constituted up to 30 percent of the country's GDP.⁸⁶ The hydrocarbon rent allowed the ruling elite to sustain distribution networks⁸⁷ and to buy allegiances and loyalty from a substantial number of Algerians.⁸⁸ The hydrocarbon rent, moreover, helped to finance military repression of insurgencies, to "penetrate civil society" (as one young RND cadre and head of a large regime-founded NGO bluntly put it), and to alleviate the most potentially explosive social misery. Oil (or gas) thus could be said to have turned control of the state into a zero-sum struggle.⁸⁹ This raised the stakes for incumbents as well as for contesting elites and was not likely to allow for "a negotiated compromise under which actors agree to forgo or underutilize their capacity to harm each others' corporate autonomies or vital interests."⁹⁰

Perspectives for Change

Analysis of the Algerian politically relevant elite in the decade after the 1992 coup d'état leads to the conclusion that dynamics and changes within it did not translate into policy shifts indicative of a system change. Instead, change guaranteed systemic continuity; the same patterns of domination persisted despite the surfacing of a number of actors with substantial veto and nuisance power, generational change giving rise to a young reform-oriented elite type, and increasing disunity within the core elite. Core elite strategies, recruitment policies, as well as structural factors external to these elites explained this dynamic.

First, changes among the elite linked to political and economic liberalization created a release, allowing contesting elites some influence and giving potentially frustrated young elites hope for long-awaited upward mobility through co-optation. Obviously, the ruling elite was not able to fully control the dynamics arising from its liberalization policies; the Berber movement, the press, and the Islamist *Islah* became stronger and more independent than (presumably) expected, but core elite policies largely succeeded in preventing the formation of a broad coalition of contesting elites by successfully playing on regional and tribal divides, historic rivalries, ethnic sentiments, linguistic rifts, and religious-secular divides in the PRE. Second, though generational changes within the PRE gave rise to young elites, the ruling elite only enabled a few unrepresented or underrepresented social segments and groups to enter. Most young members of the elite were the offspring of the *nomenklatura* and the privileged, a phenomenon

that resulted from the Arabization policy as well as the monopolization of historical legitimacy by incumbent elites and the conversion of this legitimacy into an inheritable symbolic capital. Even though many of these young elites had a clear vision of the country's structural problems and a reform agenda, they were not willing to push such a program if it entailed jeopardizing the social and economic networks and clientelist structures of which they were a part. Finally, sociocultural practices, the hydrocarbon rent, and market reforms benefited the current ruling elites and their clients.⁹¹ They allowed the highly personalized networks and blurred boundaries between the military, political, bureaucratic, and economic spheres as well as between formal and informal institutions to be sustained.

The situation, however, was not static. Constant struggles shifted the balance of power between factions within the PRE, and the elites were vulnerable to external influence and pressures. As discussed above, Algeria's joining NATO's Mediterranean Dialog and international human rights campaigns had an effect on elite strategies. In an era in which the United States considers outside intervention for regime change legitimate and in which the arm of international justice seems to reach into more and more areas of the world, Algerian core elites thus are likely to be forced to make more political concessions in the future. It can, moreover, be expected that pressures arising from the association agreement with the European Union and membership negotiations with the WTO will push Algeria's elites to implement the reforms nationalist reformers thought necessary but hesitated to push through because of resistance and fear of losing out—namely those involving transparency, accountability, rule of law, demopolitization of the economy, and protection of civil liberties. Most likely, substantial political and economic changes in the short and medium term will come about only if pressure coincides with further core elite disunity (leading to implosion), a fall in hydrocarbon revenues (making it difficult to maintain the distributive networks), and popular uprisings that extend beyond one region and shake the whole country.⁹² In 1988, when oil prices and unrest came into play, the government decided to push ahead with reforms. A confluence of all the factors above, resulting in such a push in the future, is, however, unlikely.

Even when Algeria's system is shaken, it is questionable whether the outcome will be more democratic. The rentier structures, the fractionalized nature of Algerian society, the dominance of personalized vertical networks preventing the development of a horizontal (class) conscience, and the absence of strong state institutions that are insulated in a Weberian sense might perpetuate the current pattern of simply reproducing similar political elites and structures. Moreover, as long as most formal institutions work according to informal (personalized) rules and remain weak, and as long as civil unrest and low-level (Islamist) violence prevail, the army as the most

cohesive and well structured institution will be able to present itself as the indispensable backbone of the state and use the prospect of internal disorder to justify its presence in state affairs.⁹³ It is, hence, likely that what may appear to be a transition from authoritarianism will merely lead from one variant of authoritarianism to another, and possibly a more competitive one.

Notes

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1. For an excellent analysis of the elite of the war and the early years of independence, see Quandt, *Revolution and Political Leadership*; for elites under Boumedienne, see Zartman, "Algeria: A Post-Revolutionary Elite"; under Boumedienne and Chadli, see Entelis, "Algeria: Technocratic Rule, Military Power." For general postindependence developments as well as elite struggles over competing projects, see also Hidouci, *Algérie: la libération inachevée*.

2. In October 1988 Algeria witnessed uprisings in many parts of the country. The army responded with a brutal crackdown, leaving hundreds dead. These events propelled Chadli and the reformers around him to push political reforms. In 1989 a new constitution was adopted in a referendum, ending single-party rule, permitting the formation of associations of a political nature, and allowing freedom of expression and of assembly. These reforms marked the beginning of a democratization process.

3. For an excellent account of the war, see Martinez, *La guerre civile*.

4. For example, O'Donnell et al., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*; Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market*.

5. Quandt, "Algeria's Uneasy Peace," p. 19.

6. Burton and Higley, "The Study of Political Elite Transformations," p. 182.

7. Quandt, *Revolution and Political Leadership*; Entelis, "Algeria: Technocratic Rule, Military Power"; Zartman, "Algeria: A Post-Revolutionary Elite."

8. The sources on which this analysis is based are three: (1) in-depth structured interviews conducted in Algeria in 2001 and 2002 with ninety-two members of the PRE, including retired generals, Prime Minister Ali Benflis, former prime ministers and current ministers, party leaders, MPs, administrative cadres, and party, union, business, media, and NGO representatives; (2) data on the career trajectories of individual elites from questionnaires handed out to interview partners and from the print media; and (3) analysis of decisionmaking processes based on data from interviews and print media on positions and strategies of key players vis-à-vis the strategic issues of economic reform, education sector reform, and democratization.

9. The term "system change" is used here in the sense of the transition literature, that is, it refers to the transition from one type of polity (authoritarianism) to a different type of polity (democracy). System reform, as used in this chapter, means adaptations within the existing system.

10. With no existing or accessible polling data on this generation, the primary bases for analysis were fifty-two interviews with elites born after 1960 that focused on socioeconomic and educational background, political socialization, career patterns, networks, positions on strategic issues, and perceptions of the country's biggest problems as well as solutions for these problems.

11. Zartman, "The Algerian Army in Politics"; Yefsah, "L'armée et le pouvoir en Algérie."

12. The presidency is used here as a collective, including not only the president but also his closest and most powerful advisors.

13. Since *le pouvoir* is also used to describe a system of domination, *les décideurs* shall be used here for the primary decisionmakers.

14. The choice of Bouteflika, for instance, entailed drawn out, heated negotiations among the decisionmakers.

15. For short biographies of many of the elites discussed in this chapter, see Cheurfi, "La classe politique algérienne."

16. Many of them were not literate in Arabic. General Mohamed Lamari, at his first press conference in July 2002, switched to French after half a sentence even when the questions asked were in Arabic.

17. While there were statutes governing retirement (*statut de retraite*) for army officers, the regulations did not apply to generals, who could stay in office as long as they wanted. Hence, widespread rumors seemed credible that a wave of frustrated colonels in their late forties and early fifties took early retirement in 2001 and 2002 because they saw no prospects for advancement.

18. General-major ranks above a general and is the second highest rank in Algeria. The highest is general of the army corps, a rank awarded only to Mohamed Lamari.

19. *Le Matin*, 14 December 2002.

20. The army said it objected to the president trying to build a network based on regional affiliations. Both candidates for defense came from the town of Nedroma in Tiemcen, the province from which Bouteflika's family hailed.

21. The Concorde Civile is a law ratified in a 1999 referendum. It foresaw a treaty with armed groups that put down their weapons and amnesty, probation, or mild punishment for members of these groups (depending on their individual actions).

22. A case in point is the privatization of state-owned industries, where intraelite struggles presented a major obstacle to this process. See Werenfels, "Obstacles to Privatization."

23. In April 2001 the brutal killing of a young Kabyle in a gendarmerie station in Kabyle sparked uprisings and riots in the entire region. More than one hundred Kabyle youth were shot dead by security forces. These events led to the emergence of a protest movement with coherent political demands. Demonstrations, riots, and sit-ins were still taking place in Kabyle as of early 2003.

24. Karabadjji, "L'économie algérienne"; Temceni, *Etat, bazar et globalisation*.

25. *Le Matin*, 7 September 2002, and 14 December 2002.

26. Another part of the army's public relations campaign was an October 2002 international symposium on terrorism at which several generals for the first time talked publicly about the confrontations with the Islamists, trying to justify army policies.

27. See *Le Matin*, 22 December 2002.

28. Benflis's relations with the most politically relevant generals were reputed to be better than Bouteflika's relations with them, making Benflis a possible army candidate and Bouteflika competitor in the 2004 presidential race. This was rumored to have caused friction between Bouteflika and Benflis.

29. These were the Senate, installed in 1997, and the Assemblée Populaire Nationale.

30. Bouteflika surrounded himself with close to thirty advisors, most formally appointed, several, including his two brothers, brought in informally, with a majori-

ty coming from western Algeria. With the formally nominated advisors having status equal to that of ministers, it could be argued that Bouteflika formed a shadow cabinet, based on primordial (familial, tribal, or regional) ties and consisting of some of his advisors and some members of the official cabinet.

31. For more on the co-optation of MSP, see Hamladji, "Cooptation, Repression and an Authoritarian Regime's Survival."

32. Elite profiles and recruitment dynamics in the upper echelons of the public administration did not differ much from those in the government. The transition from the revolutionary generation to the second generation was ongoing, and recruitment similarly personalized. Historic, regional, and family capital as well as competence was also important.

33. There were also women—for example, Khalida Messaoudi, information and culture minister and government spokesperson—but they represented exceptions to the rule.

34. Nedroma has been producing national elites for decades (see Gilbert Grandguillaume, *Nédroma: l'évolution d'une médina*), but after the arrival of Bouteflika it was possible to speak of a powerful "Nedroma clan."

35. The MALG was the predecessor of the Sécurité Militaire and continued to constitute an important network. Of the roughly 500 "Malgache" alive in 2002, six were generals, three ministers, a number were ambassadors, and one was the powerful governor of Algiers.

36. L'association des Ulamas d'Algérie, a force during the early days of the independence struggle, lost political importance after independence but remained an important solidarity network. See M. Haddab, "Pour une approche structurale du champ des élites en Algérie" (unpublished paper, University of Algiers, 2000).

37. Nuisance power refers to the ability to be a thorn in the side of the core elite and thus influence certain of their decisions.

38. It involved allowing foreign companies to become majority stockholders in hydrocarbon exploitation, something hitherto reserved for the state company, Sonatrach.

39. The first draft of the proposed 2003 finance law heavily favored large importers.

40. See *Le Monde*, 1 March 2003 and 21 March 2003. This son of a former minister and Malgache moved within seven years from owner of a pharmacy to head of Algeria's largest business empire, which included a private bank and an airline. See *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 18 July 2002.

41. The term *famille révolutionnaire* was coined by Zeroual in the mid-1990s in an effort to rally all non-Islamist forces under an umbrella of nationalism and homage to the revolution.

42. Among these privileges were a yearly pension of between 92,000 DA (\$1,196) and 620,000 DA (\$8,065), a right to a duty-free car import, and, until the 1990s, the right to a taxi license.

43. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 20 April 2002.

44. Roy, "Patronage and Solidarity Groups."

45. Many of the large Algerian NGOs fell into what Sheila Carapico calls GO-NGOs, or government-organized NGOs. See Carapico, "NGOs, INGOs, GO-NGOs and DO-NGOs."

46. These parties, for instance, forced onto the agenda the sensitive issue of the missing (Islamists) of the civil war.

47. Hachemaoui, "La représentation politique en Algérie," presents an excellent analysis of what he terms "jeu social," that is, the logics of identification, solidarity ties, strategies, and modes of representation of actors.

48. See, for instance, François Gèze, "Algérie, la violence d'état reste aux commandes," *Politix*, 20 December 2001.

49. *Arouch* means "tribes" in Maghrebi Arabic and is used also to refer to specific traditional forms of social organization at the local level.

50. The CADC was an umbrella organization consisting of different local and regional committees, including revitalized (or reinvented) traditional village committees as well as newer urban neighborhood and administrative district committees.

51. Had the state refused to do so, it would have further reduced the ruling elites' legitimacy and raised (repression) costs for the state.

52. This platform, made public in June 2001, consisted of fifteen demands—some political, some economic, some cultural—which, if applied in their entirety, would have implied a change in the rules of domination.

53. Many young Berbers viewed someone like the thirty-something Belaid Aбрика, one of the CADC's imprisoned leaders, as more capable at enunciating their socioeconomic and political discontent and championing their identity claims than such political players as the twice-as-old FFS leader Hocine Ait-Ahmed, who lived in Switzerland in exile and was considered to belong to the political establishment.

54. FIS's demands in some respects, such as those concerning the departure of incumbent elites and socioeconomic justice, were similar to those of the CADC.

55. Until the late 1990s journalists were killed (by whom is not always clear) and after that regularly harassed and jailed. Investigating embezzlement and links between business and terrorism, especially on the local level, was extremely dangerous (see *Liberté*, 23 July 2002). Also, there was indirect intervention in advertising by state enterprises. Moreover, many newspapers were "private" rather than "independent," because their owners had ties to décideurs, and each paper ran relentless campaigns against the foes of its patrons.

56. It is, however, highly unlikely that the press was acting entirely on its own. Rather, it was used by Betchine's foes to dispose of him.

57. Souaïdia, *La sale guerre*. For a décideur's account of the violence in the 1990s and the court case, see Nezzar and Maarifa, *Un procès pour la vérité*.

58. This is obvious from long-term analysis of the media and was confirmed in interviews with journalists in this situation.

59. One example was the RND-backed Association Algérienne pour la Promotion de la Citoyenneté et les Droits de l'Homme (founded in 2002), which had no interest in defending Islamists.

60. The Algerian décideurs dismissed the mediation as outside intervention.

61. For a definition of rentier states and mechanisms of distribution, see Luciani, "Allocation vs. Production States."

62. *Le Matin*, 25 and 26 January 2002.

63. The increasing involvement of such international governmental and non-governmental institutions as the National Democracy Institute (in Washington, D.C.) and German political foundations supporting regime and opposition forces tended to enforce rather than counter core elite policies and is worth being studied in depth.

64. Mannheim, *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, p. 309.

65. Burton and Higley, "The Study of Political Elite Transformations."

66. Harbi, *Une vie déboulé*, p. 328. See also *ibid.*, and Quandt, *Revolution and Political Leadership*, for political socialization, trajectories, and ideal types in the different (age) groups within what are here somewhat crudely referred to as the generation of the revolution and the older and younger brothers.

67. Because scholarships were given by various ministries as well as enter-

prises, such as Sonatrach, it was difficult to obtain absolute numbers. Entelis, "Technocratic Rule, Military Power," p. 104, speaks of 2,500 Algerian students in 1977-1978 at U.S. colleges alone, most of whom can be assumed to have had state scholarships.

68. Zartman, "Algeria: A Post-Revolutionary Elite," p. 279.

69. Boudiaf was killed by one of his security guards. An official inquiry concluded that the killer had acted alone on behalf of Islamists. Boudiaf's family claimed (and most Algerians believed) that he was killed by "the generals," among other things because of his inquiries into their corruption networks.

70. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 17 December 2002.

71. As Harbi, *Une vie debout*, and others have noted, many of the revolution's leaders came from privileged families, that is, social elites under colonialism.

72. Cadres of independent unions, for example, the Syndicat Autonome des Personnels de l'Administration Publique (SNAPAP), were only temporarily able to enter the politically relevant elite. Even though these unions were barred from certain sectors, including the state economic sector, and though the UGTA remained the government's prime and often sole interlocutor, their membership rolls and popular support continued to rise, and their young, dynamic cadres managed to put issues neglected by the UGTA and its organizations on the public agenda.

73. Bourdieu, *La reproduction*.

74. Entelis, "Algeria: Technocratic Rule, Military Power," p. 111.

75. Mannheim, *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, pp. 305-312.

76. These included political socialization, perceptions of the country's problems, attitudes vis-à-vis the above-mentioned three strategic issues—market and education sector reforms as well as democratization—as well as economic, social, and cultural factors that shaped elite behavior.

77. Based on interviews with members of the PRE born after 1960.

78. By October 2002, of three members of the UNJA executive interviewed in April 2002, one was an advisor to a minister, one was president of the council for a large Algiers neighborhood, and one had managed to get reelected to parliament even though more than 80 percent of former MPs were not reelected.

79. Several nationalist reformers interviewed showed great respect for such authoritarian leaders as South Korea's Gen. Park Chung Hee and Tunisia's Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali, who managed to push through economic reforms and lead their countries to (relative) prosperity.

80. Hachemaoui, "La représentation politique en Algérie," offers an outstanding account of such giving and taking, based on a microanalysis of transactions between individual actors, party apparatuses, intermediaries, formal and informal, local and central authorities during election campaigns.

81. Chabal and Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument*, p. 148.

82. See *ibid.*, note 4, and Higley and Gunther, *Elites and Democratic Consolidation*.

83. A marabout is a local religious leader to whom supernatural powers are ascribed.

84. For the centrality of the sentiment of honor in Kabyle social organization, see Bourdieu, "The Sentiment of Honour."

85. "On y trouve des rapports de pouvoir et d'influence où se mêlent relations personnelles, liens familiaux et régionaux. Il s'agit moins de rapports purement politiques que de rapports communautaires exprimés dans un langage moderne." Harbi, *Une vie debout*, p. 207.

86. *North Africa Journal*, 2 December 2002.

87. When these networks were in danger of collapsing because of low oil prices, IMF intervention and debt rescheduling in 1994 rescued the system and allowed continued distribution to regime-supporting segments of society.

88. According to "Algeria's Economy: The Vicious Circle of Oil and Violence," *ICG Africa Report*, October 2001, up to 800,000 Algerians were estimated to profit from patronage systems (though not all necessarily are linked to the oil). Algerian scholars and elites interviewed by this author, however, estimated these figures to be much higher.

89. M. R. Lowi, "Algeria, 1992-2002: Toward a Political Economy of Violence" (manuscript on file, 2002), convincingly argues that oil has raised the stakes of fighting between incumbent elites and Islamist insurgents and has thus contributed to prolonging the civil war.

90. O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead, eds. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, pp. 37-38.

91. For ways in which market reforms have done this, see Werenfels, "Obstacles to Privatization."

92. Most members of the young elite seemed convinced that violence in the form of popular uprisings rather than negotiations would lead to system change.

93. Quandt, "Algeria's Uneasy Peace," p. 20.

Elite Change and Systems Maintenance

Volker Perthes

Elites matter. They certainly factor into the political and social developments that the Arab world will undergo in the coming decades. This may not be a particularly surprising conclusion—one would hardly expect a study focusing on elites to come to a different one—but it should be kept in mind theoretically and practically in regard to international cooperation with Arab countries. Although actors and their behavior cannot be examined in a meaningful way devoid of structural and institutional contexts, these “factors constitute at most constraints to that which is possible under a concrete historical situation.”¹ Put somewhat differently, “institutional mechanisms do much to pattern the channels and ways in which elites compete and are recruited,” but elites also “play a seminal role in shaping institutional designs.”²

The structural and institutional contexts in most of the Arab world, as the case studies in this volume underline, are shaped by the prevalence of autocratic rule. This refers not so much to the more or less authoritarian constitutions, as to the underlying structures of dominance embodied in what is often referred to as the “security state,” the political economy particular to the Arab world, regional structures (especially the prevalence of the Arab-Israeli conflict and other territorial conflicts), as well as, of course, the changing international environment (not the least of which currently involves the forces of economic globalization).

The availability of oil rents remains the most salient feature of the regional political economy; despite decreasing oil prices, oil revenues still amounted to between 48 percent and 59 percent of the cumulated budgets of *all* Arab states during 1995 to 2000.³ Rent income enables core elites to establish clientelistic relationships with elites in the second or third circles, to buy-off contesting elites, and to maintain substantial autonomy from business and labor. Although the relation between rent income and political competitiveness is neither direct nor mechanical, it cannot be ignored: No

one should be surprised that Bahrain (on which there is no case study in this book), the Gulf monarchy the least dependent on oil income, has advanced the furthest in pluralizing its system. The political opening in Algeria at the end of the 1980s was also linked to a steep decrease in oil income, and Saudi Arabia's gradual reforms are linked to the realization that the "days of abundant oil revenues are over and will not return," as Crown Prince Abdallah has stated.⁴ A relative decline in oil income provides independent elites, primarily in the third circle, with the opportunity to make their voices heard, but it does not determine the balance of power within a given country's politically relevant elite.

Within these contexts, elites undergo change in their composition as well as in how they present themselves and in what actions they take. As noted, change has spread wider or deeper in some countries than in others. Young leaders who inherited their power have tended to liberate themselves from the influence of many of those people their fathers relied on while retaining some as long as they feel that they need their experience. In all of the Arab states examined, structural change has mainly occurred and—we suggest—will continue to occur primarily in the third circle, where members of political factions or social groups previously without representation in the PRE establish footholds. This is to be expected considering the rather gradual and controlled mode of elite circulation among Arab PRE at this stage. Here, in the third circle of influence, those who are co-opted by the core and those who try to force themselves on the incumbent elite through participation in elections, civil society activities, protest, or lobbying, meet. Here also, in most of the countries, one finds contesting elites and politicians, rather than technocrats or those politicians who "live from politics."

An increasing proportion of politicians in the PRE can generally be taken as a sign that a system is becoming more competitive. While this is not the case in most of the countries studied here, recruitment from parliament has increased in many cases. Given the debates in not a few countries about the importance of parliaments or consultative councils, such assemblies appear likely to increasingly become more important as elite incubators.

In all of the Arab countries, a large number of PRE newcomers bring with them new qualifications. In general, wherever changing economic, technical, or even political parameters, such as the spread of new communications technologies or the privatization of public services, open new fields of activity, doors are also opened to emerging elites. Economic elites will gain in importance as the countries of the Middle East and North Africa prepare to join the WTO, enter into association agreements with the European Union, and otherwise simply fulfill the need to encourage export-oriented industries in order to provide jobs to youthful majorities, fill state coffers with tax income, and obtain foreign exchange for imports.

Economic necessity thus becomes a major factor in elite change. In most of these countries, business elites currently coexist with the regime elites, rather than, for the time being at least, entering into struggles for political power. Gradually, however, they will become indispensable, so it seems, and will be asked to enter the fold rather than interjecting themselves into it.

At the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century, gradualism and, for the most part, peacefulness were and remain the prevalent modes of elite change in the Arab world. Certainly, the civil wars in Lebanon and Algeria contributed to sociopolitical changes in these two countries. In Lebanon, however, where the war ended more than a decade ago, most of the war elite—militia leaders recycled as politicians—have been quietly sidelined in the postwar transition period.⁵ In Algeria, core and second-circle elites were rejuvenated, but not exchanged during the civil war. At any rate, although there are exceptions to the general mode of gradual and peaceful elite change in the Arab countries—the obvious case being that of regime-change-by-invasion in Iraq—this trend contrasts sharply with the historical experiences of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, when revolutionary or putschist takeovers led to wide-ranging and structural changes of the core elite and its associated circles in so many Arab countries.

Gradualism, here, indicates that change, where it occurs, is steered and largely controlled from the core. In this respect, there is little difference between the republics and the monarchies of the Arab world. Rather, one could speak of signs of convergence: While the monarchies are broadening their societal base and their PRE through the establishment of parliaments or assemblies, not a few of the republican systems have tried to develop a hereditary legitimacy rooted, partly at least, in the blood relationship between would-be successors and long-standing leaders. This phenomenon has arisen at a time when the historical achievements of these regimes, or what has been celebrated as such over years and decades—Algeria's liberation, the 1952 revolution and others, the October War, and various "corrective" movements—have faded and fail to motivate the younger generations.

In the future, even where change at the top and in the core elite is mainly a matter of rejuvenation or generation change, new patterns of behavior and style are likely to emerge. Morocco, Jordan, and Syria all provide examples of top officials displaying more openness and transparency in dealing with the media and the public. These include such occurrences as the unprecedented public presentation of the wife of the Moroccan king or, somewhat ironically perhaps, the announcement by Syria's state news agency of the arrest of opposition figures. Socialized with satellite television and the Internet, younger members of these countries' political elite seem not to share the secretiveness of their predecessors with regard to issues of public interest. One can assume that such lim-

ited and symbolic steps toward transparency will create expectations for more openness.

Also, as noted, the biological rejuvenation of leadership elites has led to policy changes, particularly in the economic realm, and to a partial exchange of elite segments with others. Similar processes are likely to take place in countries on the verge of change at the level of the top decision-maker.

What one should not expect is that succession at the top—so much the focus of media attention concerning Egypt, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and other states—will lead to system change. In many cases, successions in Arab countries will bring about new *regimes*, but not a different regime type. Iraq under foreign occupation might take a different path, but the German or Japanese post-World War II model of a U.S.-led system transformation is not, in this author's judgment, the most likely scenario. A post-Arafat and independent Palestinian state may become a more democratic model than the one developed under the Oslo Accords because of the combination of external influences and changing balances within the domestic elite.

Most regime elites have so far managed to retain control of the mechanisms of domination established in the last three decades or so of the twentieth century. Through these the core maintains regime stability in part by orchestrating elite change—or, more precisely, the circulation and rejuvenation of the wider PRE. Thus co-optation prevails over competitive modes of elite recruitment. As a result, the political elites of most Arab states have become more representative; but what we are seeing emerge is a form of representation without (or with only limited and controlled) competition.

The co-optation and integration of aspirants to positions of (greater) responsibility and of some contestants may actually reduce or neutralize demands for more competition. Co-optation—in contrast to negotiated pacts, as in ideal-type democratic transitions—is of individuals, not of segments or entire networks that could establish themselves as alternatives to incumbents. Co-opted individuals are more easily integrated into the system and may thereby be neutralized as challengers.

Some regimes also resort to “fake competition,”⁶ which is based around core-created or core-sponsored alternative parties or networks that give the impression of a competitive political system. This allows for a broadening of the PRE and the recruitment of new talent without threatening core elite control.

Almost all regimes will continue to seek new rent income in order to buy the allegiance or at least the consent of a silent majority (or maybe the silence of that majority). Although new and future regime elites must take into consideration somewhat heightened international sensitivities toward violence against political competitors and challengers, open repression

remains an employable last resort. The instruments of the security state have been maintained all over the region.

Based on the empirical research in this volume, it is safe to assert that thoroughgoing institutional and political changes in Arab countries should not be expected, barring some sort of change in the relative influence among the PRE—specifically a decrease in the ability of the prime decisionmaker and core elite to control elite recruitment and hinder more competitive forms of elite circulation and change.

External interference and pressure may be successful if they are applied to elite strategies. They are likely to yield only limited success (at best) if their purpose is to bring about a change in leadership or the exchange of an entire elite. In both cases, such tactics create fears among incumbent elites about the stability of their regimes. Rather than encouraging political openings, these fears are likely to strengthen a prevalent autocratic elite consensus on the necessity of maintaining stability, or the status quo.

Such a consensus already exists in many Arab countries. As the case of Morocco illustrates, it may include some of the main opposition parties and thereby effectively marginalize the rest of the opposition.⁷ Consensus on the rules of the game allow for economic adjustment and modernization, for the gradual rejuvenation of the elite—whereby new elements better equipped to respond to new challenges are brought in—and for successions and generation change, which can spare a country the types of divisions that can lead to major disturbances, including civil war. It is a consensus, however, that allows for modest institutional development at best, and is therefore likely to disappoint some constituencies, domestically and abroad, that expected deeper political systems change.

To date, such expectations, particularly in Western policymaking and media circles, have not been based on realism. Why, one might ask, should anyone expect a leader who has just inherited power to share it or risk it through democratic elections, unless forced to do so through constitutional or other constraints? Why should the advisors of that heir, and second-circle elites who owe their positions to him, urge him to open the political system and hold elections that would allow others to compete for the positions that they have just obtained?⁸

Conventional Western thinking may also have overrated the importance of youth and exposure to the West. First, exposure to the West is not a new phenomenon. Quite a number of elder technocratic elites obtained their expertise abroad; some of the prime decisionmakers of the outgoing generation were trained at Sandhurst or the École Supérieure de Guerre in Paris—as opposed to Harvard Business School or the École Nationale d'Administration more en vogue today. Second, time spent in the West, although an interesting and attractive subject to the media, obviously does

not necessarily transform an heir apparent into a committed democrat. A future leader trained in, for example, a London clinic may well develop ideas about the efficacy of technology and efficiency and be inspired by British hospital organization; as head of state, however, he may then take the latter such forms of organization, rather than Westminster democracy, as a model for organizing "his" state.

Perhaps what must be realized is that elite change in autocratic systems should not be confused with "transition to" a new system. This applies not only to Arab states, but also to such cases as Turkmenistan, Belarus, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and others. In the Arab states, which provide an empirical basis for this book, the ruling elites have proved to be proficient at system maintenance. Although in many cases they have been less successful at providing services to citizens, their ability to preserve their regimes, which includes maintaining domestic stability, is a fact appreciated by many, including members of the business and intellectual elites and members of the wage-earning middle classes who in other respects may have second thoughts about these regimes and their policies.

Core elite strategies in most Arab countries have been increasingly influenced by inputs from and developments in their international environment. Consider, among others, the prospects of EU association or WTO membership; media globalization; international human rights campaigns; and more recently of course the geopolitical revolution brought about by the U.S. invasion of Iraq. While they could not escape the international context, these core elites have adapted to it, not least so by their management—or manipulation—of elite change. Elite circulation has thereby been used quite successfully for the modernization of policies and style, and the reproduction of power structures.

Research can be misleading if its analysis of Arab elites and change, or the potential for change in the Arab states, is gauged solely by the question of whether these elites have "succeeded" or will be able to succeed in bringing about a transition from autocratic rule to some form of democratic system. Such change may not be their goal. Arab PRE have proved themselves quite successful at developing a "type of political system whose institutions, rules, and logic defy any linear model of democratization,"⁹ a type one might call liberalized autocracy or pluralistic authoritarianism¹⁰ and is here to stay for some time.

The political role of elites remains crucial, nonetheless. During the 1990s hopes rose that in the Arab world democracies would emerge "without democrats."¹¹ There should today be little expectation of that happening if the "powerful" are not also "committed to the democratic project."¹² With limited external and societal pressures, and quite workable regime maintenance strategies, even emerging Arab elites will not automatically develop such a commitment. This is not to say that Arab countries are

immune to democracy or addicted to despotism. The modernizing young and emerging elites are certainly not principally or ideologically antidemocratic. Given an uncertain future and a rapidly changing international environment, however, they may simply find their interests better served by not rocking the boat.

Notes

1. Przeworski, "Some Problems in the Study of Transition," p. 48.
2. Higley and Lengyel, "Elite Configuration After State Socialism," p. 8.
3. League of Arab States, Consolidated Arab Economic Report, 2001, p. 328.
4. *Financial Times*, 1 December 1999.
5. See Rola el-Husseini's chapter on Lebanon in this volume.
6. See Isabelle Werhoffs's chapter on Algeria in this volume.
7. See Saloua Zerhouni's chapter on Morocco in this volume.
8. See, similarly, Carapico, "Successions, Transitions, Coups, and Revolutions."
9. Brumberg, "The Trap of Liberalized Autocracy," p. 56; see also Schlumberger, "Transition in the Arab World."
10. For more, see Perthes, *Geliebte Gärten*, pp. 347–368.
11. Salamch, *Democracy Without Democrats*.
12. McFaul, "Fourth Wave of Democracy and Dictatorship."