

Collective Protest and the Institutional Promise of Monarchy

Adria Lawrence
Assistant Professor
Department of Political Science
Yale University
adria.lawrence@yale.edu

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Abstract

The fate of regimes after the Arab Spring protests has prompted scholars to reconsider how and whether different authoritarian institutions affect mass protest. Why did Mubarak fall, but not King Mohammed VI? Are the paths to regime change different in monarchies? This paper provides a theoretical framework for understanding the effects of monarchy on collective protest. It argues that monarchies have a unique institutional feature that other types of authoritarian regimes lack: they can democratize without destabilizing the leadership by transitioning to a constitutional monarchy. This feature alters the calculus of both kings and regime opponents. For kings, it reduces the risks of political liberalization. For opponents, it provides an additional option unavailable to opposition forces in other kinds of authoritarian regimes: the possibility of both democracy and stability. The promise of constitutional monarchy complicates coordination among regime opponents, affects the kinds of claims they make, and weakens mass protest for regime change.

Arab kings did not survive the Arab Spring because they were more legitimate, smarter, or because they offered more meaningful reforms. Nor were kings invulnerable; monarchies can and do crumble. But monarchs are less likely to confront revolutionary protest than their counterparts in the authoritarian republics. I demonstrate support for this argument using two sources of data. The first is an analysis of cross-national findings on regime type and instability. The second draws on field research, including participant observation, interviews, and a survey done via Facebook, on pro-democratic protest in the Kingdom of Morocco.

1. Introduction

On August 21, 2012, clad in a golden robe and shielded from the sun by a giant parasol, symbol of the Alawite dynasty, King Mohammed VI of Morocco rode out on a stallion to receive the *bay`a*, the annual pledge of allegiance. The surrounding dignitaries, including the country's notables and elected parliamentarians, bowed to him and received his blessings as they do every year. The *bay`a* ceremony dates to the era of the Prophet Mohammed; in Morocco it has symbolized the religious legitimacy of the king, a descendent of the Prophet, for centuries.¹ In the blogosphere, the activists who had led countrywide protests one year earlier called the spectacle “degrading” and “archaic.” One blogger tweeted that these prostrations before the king were a “national humiliation”; another told her daughter that it was shameful in the modern era to watch one person bow to another like a slave to a master.² On his Facebook wall, an activist asked, “How is it that a medieval, backward form of government like our monarchy continues to thrive today? When will the people wake up?”³

Moroccan activists are not the only ones wondering about the resiliency of monarchy. The events of the Arab Spring have renewed an older debate about whether monarchies are more resilient than other types of authoritarian regimes, and why.⁴ In public and academic forums, two competing views have emerged. The first maintains that the absence of widespread successful challenges to monarchies during the Arab Spring is an artifact of other, contingently

¹ For more on the *bay`a* ceremony, see Combs-Schilling (1989) and Hammoudi (1997, 24–25).

² For a sample of activist reactions, see <http://globalvoicesonline.org/2012/08/22/morocco-is-the-allegiance-ceremony-a-thing-of-the-past/> and <https://www.mamfakinch.com/allegiance-to-the-king-of-morocco-a-degrading-ceremony-and-more/>.

³ Demonstrators gathered in Rabat the next day to object to the ceremony, but turnout was low and the protest was dispersed with force. See <http://www.slateafrique.com/91859/mohammed-vi-maroc-baya-prosternation-alaouite>.

⁴ See the useful review of the literature on monarchies in the Middle East prior to the Arab Spring in Lucas (2004).

related characteristics: it is their oil wealth, foreign support, or savvy leadership that shielded them, not the institution of monarchy itself. The second argues in favor of monarchical exceptionalism, stressing the political culture, flexibility, or legitimacy of monarchs.⁵

This article sides with the latter camp, but not for the usual reasons. Kings are not shielded by their history – their prior state-building efforts, their ties to their nation’s historic and religious past, or their success at constructing enduring coalitions – but by the promise they hold out for the future. What differentiates monarchies from authoritarian republics, from the point of view of the population that could be expected to mobilize for regime change, is that monarchies can democratize without overthrowing the leadership. Dictatorships are incompatible with democracy: for democracy to come about, the leader must go. Kings, on the other hand, are perfectly consistent with democracy; their removal is neither necessary nor desirable. The prospect of a genuine democratic constitutional monarchy shapes the incentives for both kings and their opponents. It complicates collective action, reducing the likelihood of mass anti-regime protest. Ironically, because kings *can* be democrats, it is harder to force them to limit their power via popular protest.

The paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 lays out the logic and predictions of the argument. These predictions are stated in general terms; although inspired by the Arab Spring events, the objective is to propose a theory capable of addressing contestation (and its absence) in monarchies in other time periods and regions. Section 3 situates the argument in the existing literature, describing the contributions and limitations of prior work. Section 4 analyses existing

⁵ For both sides of the debate, see “Arab Uprisings: The Arab Monarchy Debate.” POMEPS Briefings 16, December 19, 2012. On the supposedly spurious relationship between monarchy and resilience, see Sean L. Yom, <http://www.fpri.org/enotes/2012/201204.yom.monarchy-arab-spring.html> and Gause (2013). For statements that endorse monarchical exceptionalism, see Bellin (2012); Herb (2013); Menaldo (2012); and Lawrence, http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/11/16/elections_dilemmas_for_moroccos_protest_movement

large-N findings of the relationship between authoritarian regime type and stability. Section 5 presents a subnational analysis of Morocco, discussing the history of the monarchy and the Arab Spring protests. The key contribution of this section is to tie the institutional setting to the experience of autocratic rule for its citizens, evaluating the implications of the argument by considering how Moroccans interact with and think about monarchy. This section draws on both qualitative ethnographic fieldwork and original survey data. A final section concludes.

2. The Promise of Constitutional Monarchy: Democracy and Stability

Monarchy, with its attendant symbolic rituals and ceremonies, is not as archaic as Moroccan activists would have it. Monarchy has been an extraordinarily common form of rule throughout history. Even today, twenty-two percent of the world's heads of state are hereditary rulers – kings, queens, or princes – but the majority play a purely ceremonial role. The history of how their power came to be constrained exemplifies a route to democracy that does not begin with overthrowing the ruler.⁶ In a monarchy, political actors have an option that is unavailable in other kinds of authoritarian regimes: a democratic constitutional monarchy. This section argues that this institutional feature affects the organization of popular protest, one path to regime change.⁷ It begins by considering the implications for monarchs, arguing that this option offers them some protection and permits movement toward political liberalization. The discussion then turns to the perspective of regime opponents, pointing to the consequences for pro-democracy protest. It concludes by laying out the empirical predictions of the argument.

⁶ On the influence of European examples, see Ayalon (2000, 23–24).

⁷ Regime change also occurs via dissension within the leadership (see O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986) or through coups or international intervention. This paper focus on the effects of monarchy on popular protest, not on regime change more broadly.

Kings have a choice that dictators do not have; instead of facing execution or the prospect of living out their post transition days in exile or prison, they can inaugurate a transition themselves and finish their days as respected, historic leaders.⁸ Monarchs can and do democratize while retaining their role as head of state. Monarchs atop a larger structure of government. That government can be authoritarian or democratic, family-run or based on the support of loyal elites, centralized or decentralized. Observers have long noted the advantages of a monarch's position above the political fray.⁹ Winston Churchill once quipped, "The monarchy is so extraordinarily useful. When Britain wins a battle she shouts, "God save the Queen;" when she loses, she votes down the prime minister." The ability of a monarch to avoid blame lies in the distance between the monarchy and the structure of government; increasing that distance by empowering other state institutions is one option. Contra Huntington (1968) who saw monarchy as incompatible with modernization and political accommodation of social groups, political liberalization is less risky for monarchs than it is for other authoritarian rulers. Offering political reforms may placate demands for further democratization, but even if it does not and a full transition occurs, the consequences are not as dire for monarchs, who retain the option of reigning even after their absolute power is stripped away. This outcome is clearly not one that the region's kings favor; if it were, we would expect to have seen more political liberalization by now. If the pressure to democratize were serious enough, however, the penalty for relinquishing power would be less severe than for leaders like Bashar al-Asad or Muammar al-Gaddafi. Below, I explain why monarchies have tended not to face intense pressure to democratize from the street.

⁸ Halpern (1963) points to this option, while remaining pessimistic that Middle Eastern monarchs will take it. For simplicity's sake, this discussion contrasts monarchies with personalistic authoritarian regimes; other types of authoritarian regimes, including military, single-party, and multi-party states, likewise lack the option of genuine constitutional monarchy, but the consequences of democratization for these regimes varies. See the discussion in section 3.

⁹ See the discussion in Lucas's (2004) review.

The possibility of democratic constitutional monarchy also shapes the incentives for citizens. The available evidence suggests that people living under authoritarian rule typically yearn for more democratic freedoms; their compliance is at least in part a function of coercion.¹⁰ But democracy is only one good that people value; they also value stability.¹¹ For actors contemplating mass protests against an authoritarian regime, these twin goals can be difficult, or even impossible, to reconcile. In Mubarak's Egypt or Assad's Syria, the leadership stood in the way of democracy. A transition (with its uncertain outcome) could only be inaugurated by destabilizing the regime. Ben Ali of Tunisia could not have ushered in an era of democratization and retained a permanent leadership role; there is no model of a dictator-turned-democrat. Protesters in the authoritarian republics therefore converged on a first, powerful demand: down with the leader.

Opponents of authoritarian rule in monarchies have a path that their counterparts in dictatorships cannot take. They can maximize both democracy and stability by advocating reform from above and calling for the king to lead a genuine transition. Advocating top-down democratization is broadly appealing because of the risks and uncertainty associated with overthrowing the leadership. Such a move may produce democratization, but it can also have tragic consequences. Would-be democrats in the Arab world are all too aware of the dangers of overthrowing a king; the monarchies that fell in the mid-twentieth century were replaced by regimes that were even worse. A monarch who is willing to voluntarily cede absolute power can ensure greater stability and less bloodshed by maintaining a leadership role throughout the process. With the monarch still at the helm, there are fewer opportunities for other actors to

¹⁰ See Jamal and Tessler (2008) on support for democracy in the Arab world. On authoritarian methods of gaining compliance, see Bellin (2004); Wedeen (1999); Wintrobe (1998).

¹¹ See Person (2011) and Wedeen (2008).

seize power and derail the transition. Keeping the existing monarch provides the possibility of a stable, controlled transition.

The appeal of top-down regime change complicates the calculus for activists in authoritarian monarchies. In an authoritarian republic like Egypt, it is relatively easier to get a consensus on what needs to happen first: in order to transition to democracy, the regime needs to fall and with it, the regime's ruler. In a monarchy, there may be debate over whether the king needs to go; it is difficult to converge on the necessity of the king's departure from power if democracy is possible without overthrowing him. Thus there may be disagreements among the community of pro-democracy activists.¹² Some may point to the monarchy's past unwillingness to democratize and hold it responsible for the country's problems, while others advocate maintaining the monarchy while applying pressure for change.

Even when activists converge on the desirability of a democratic constitutional monarchy, collective action is complicated. Calling for a leader's departure is a clear, simple message and success is easy to evaluate. Ousting a dictator gives protesters a sense of their power. In contrast, asking for reform, change, or better democracy is murkier and more difficult to assess. Reform is multi-dimensional: it may be minimal or significant or somewhere in between, it may apply to some governmental powers and not others. Reform also requires technical expertise, which is one reason why protesters may refrain from issuing specific demands. Measuring success can be difficult; if the monarch does respond, his response may seem adequate to some and inadequate to others. Getting people onto the street for "change" or

¹² Debates between pro-monarchy democrats and anti-monarchy democrats characterize other revolutions in history, such as the American Revolution (which pitted Samuel Adams against his cousin John Adams when both took different initial stances toward the English monarchy.)

“better government” is a less compelling mobilization platform.¹³ If mobilization is weaker overall, the king may need to do less to diffuse protest. Ironically, his ability to preside over a transition to democracy can mean that he may not, in the end, have to do so.¹⁴ Failing to implement real reform, however, potentially has long-term consequences if in subsequent episodes of opposition, the king’s promises lack credibility.

This discussion points to a number of observable implications that can be evaluated empirically within and across states. At the macro level, monarchies are expected to experience protest, but not protest demanding that the ruler step down.¹⁵ Consequently, regime change via popular uprising should be less common in monarchies than in other types of authoritarian regimes. Other pathways to regime change are not expected to differentiate monarchies from other types of authoritarian regimes. Further, if political liberalization is less risky for monarchs, all else equal, there may be more of it in monarchies than other types of authoritarian regimes. At the micro level, the possible co-existence of democracy *and* monarchy may complicate coordination among regime opponents, creating divisions about what goals to seek (the king’s removal or democratic reform). Reform-oriented goals should dominate; political opposition is expected to seek to transform the regime without overthrowing it and to look for signs that such a transformation is occurring. From the monarchy’s perspective, we should expect pressure from below to induce a willingness to signal reform.

¹³ Protesters in the authoritarian republics do not avoid the difficulties of dealing with complex, multi-dimensional issues, but these follow the removal of the ruler, when the task of deciding what comes next begins.

¹⁴ Anderson (1991, 14) notes that monarchs in the Middle East have not encountered powerful demands to restrict their power; she attributes this absence to successful statecraft; this paper proposes an alternative.

¹⁵ Herb (2013) and Goldstone (2011) attribute demands for change rather than demands for overthrow in the region’s monarchies during the Arab Spring to institutional flexibility, but what this flexibility entails is under-theorized; this paper argues that the key respect in which monarchy is flexible is its compatibility with both authoritarian and democratic rule.

The next section situates these hypotheses in the literature on authoritarian regimes and monarchies in particular. It addresses alternative arguments for monarchy's exceptionalism, and discusses the contributions and pitfalls of existing approaches.

3. Monarchy in the Literature

A rich literature has addressed authoritarian resilience by developing typologies of authoritarian regimes and identifying key features of these types that make them more or less vulnerable to instability. Monarchies have not featured prominently in this literature, but studies that disaggregate autocracies are useful for this discussion because they outline important mechanisms that affect authoritarian resilience. Svobik (2012) theorizes two problems all authoritarian rulers confront: the problem of power-sharing and the problem of control. Discussions of monarchical resilience following the Arab Spring have pointed to features of monarchies that help them with one or both of these problems. In this section, I offer a critical evaluation of the claims that monarchy is better able to address these problems.

In general, I suggest that existing arguments about monarchy are vulnerable to one or more of the following three criticisms. First, some explanations that predict resilience say little about the conditions under which monarchies fall. A useful account should address both resilience and vulnerability; otherwise we are left wondering why so few monarchies survived into the 21st century. A second criticism is that some work identifies features that are not unique to monarchy. Explaining monarchy's advantage requires a precise account of what differentiates it from other regimes. Third, pointing to institutional differences is insufficient without an analysis of how those differences shape behavior; a compelling theory ties institutional differences to the outcome by suggesting mechanisms whereby key features affect stability and

opposition. This paper focuses specifically on the consequences of institutions for collective protest. The section concludes by returning to the claim that it is prospective differences – namely, the ability to retain leadership after a transition - that set monarchies apart from other regimes and affect the possibilities for anti-regime protest.

3.1 Monarchy and the problem of authoritarian power-sharing

Authoritarian leaders rely on their ruling coalitions to stay in power; their effectiveness at constructing a durable coalition matters for their longevity. Svobik (2012, 4–5) shows that the majority of threats to authoritarian regimes come from regime insiders: out of 316 authoritarian rulers who lost power by non-constitutional means between 1946 and 2008, 68 percent were removed by members of the regime’s inner circle, the government, or the repressive apparatus. Only 11 percent were removed via popular uprising.

Some scholars have suggested that monarchy’s advantage lies in its superior power-sharing arrangements. Specifically, monarchy’s resilience has been attributed to reliance on family members, flexibility in coalition-building, and hereditary succession. Herb (1999) argues that dynastic monarchies are durable because important positions are kept in the family. Family rule marks a clear distinction between monarchies and other regimes, yet only some monarchies rule in this manner; in others, as Herb shows, the ruling coalition includes other actors. Further, it is not clear that families behave differently than other groups of regime insiders. As Gandhi and Przeworski (2007, 1288) point out, monarchs are often threatened by their own family members; the current monarch of Oman overthrew his own father, for instance. Families may be able to rely on in-group affection and support, they can also be characterized by intense competition and back-stabbing. Family members, like other regime insiders, have a stake in the continuation of the regime, but their calculations may be similarly affected by opportunities to

seize power. It is not clear that families display more solidarity than other groups of regime insiders who are similarly dependent on the regime for power and prestige, and who risk punishment if the regime falls.

A number of studies have suggested monarchs are capable of building strong ruling coalitions even without family members because they serve as “focal points” for coordination across diverse actors (Anderson in Lucas 2004, 107; Menaldo 2012); they have the institutional flexibility to share power via consultative councils (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007; Herb 1999); and their political culture distinguishes regime insiders from outsiders (Menaldo 2012, 710). These features do not differentiate monarchies from other types of authoritarian regimes, which have been similarly able to foster ties to the regime through building institutions capable of dispersing rents, fostering divisions among competitors, and giving actors a stake in the regime’s continuity. Prior work shows that authoritarian regimes in general have been flexible in the sense that they have constructed a variety of power-sharing institutions.¹⁶ Suggestions that monarchies are more flexible in these respects remain underspecified. As Gause (2013) argues, the evidence that monarchies function in superior ways to manage opposition is unpersuasive.¹⁷

One characteristic that does differentiate monarchies from other regimes is hereditary succession, a feature that scholars have argued produces stability by providing stable expectations about the future.¹⁸ But just why predictability prevents opposition is unstated; presumably, for those who dislike the regime, stable expectations should create more, not fewer

¹⁶ On the use of legislatures to build regime coalitions, see Gandhi (2008) and Gandhi and Przeworski (2007). On the use of parties, see Geddes (2003), Lust (2006); Magaloni (2008). Svobik (2012, 7) points to the existence of high level consultative bodies in monarchies like Saudi Arabia, but also in China and Chile. Bueno de Mesquita et al (2003, 324) suggest further that monarchies and juntas are *more* vulnerable to threats from within because they have smaller selectorates.

¹⁷ Gause does see monarchs as superior coalition builders, but argues that there is no single reason why they are so; for the Gulf monarchies, oil wealth helps construct the coalition.

¹⁸ See Brownlee et al (2013); Goldstone (2011); Lucas (2004); Magaloni (2008, 10); Menaldo (2012, 711).

grievances.¹⁹ Predictability is only satisfying for those who benefit from the status quo. Perhaps hereditary succession matters because there are fewer opportunities for contestation during the period when rule is passed down. Yet, as Anderson (1991, 8) points out, hereditary succession has often been a “fluid and ambiguous system” with successors chosen among multiple candidates within a family who have to be ratified by families and religious authorities. Bueno de Mesquita et al (2003, 71) state that succession is not uncontested in monarchies; historical examples demonstrate widespread competition, even warfare, over the throne. In contrast, succession can be less problematic in other types of authoritarian regimes; recent successions in the Middle East have, in fact, occurred smoothly when the president’s designated successor simply took over from his predecessor (Anderson 1991, 12). A final point is that pointing to hereditary succession helps explain resilience but says little about when monarchies fail. If hereditary succession explains why monarchies weathered the Arab Spring, why did it fail to shield the monarchs who fell in the mid 20th century?

Existing claims that monarchies are superior at power-sharing are unpersuasive not just because they fail to address variation, provide mechanisms, or isolate distinctive features, but also because they lack empirical support. As section 4 shows, monarchies, like other authoritarian regimes, are vulnerable to threats from within the ruling coalition. It is the nature of the threat from the street that differentiates monarchies.

3.2 Monarchy and the problem of authoritarian control

There is little empirical evidence that monarchy is systematically associated with the differential use of repression and co-optation, the two main tools used by authoritarian regimes

¹⁹ Indeed, in Egypt, it seemed that it was not the uncertainty about succession that motivated Mubarak’s opponents, but opposition to the plan to hand-off power from father to son.

to gain the compliance of their populations.²⁰ Monarchies, like other authoritarian regimes, wield carrots and sticks to maintain control; we lack a theoretical justification for why they should do so more effectively than other regimes.²¹ Anecdotally, they appear to use repression less often than other authoritarian regimes.²² In part because of the relative absence of heavy repression, numerous scholars and observers have attributed the longevity of monarchies to their legitimacy. By this logic, monarchies may not qualify as authoritarian, since legitimacy implies the consent of the governed. Arguments based on legitimacy remain persistent, despite persuasive attacks against them. Given the prominence of references to legitimacy to explain the absence of demands to overthrow monarchies, it is worth some consideration.

Yet specifying what legitimacy means, and how to know whether a leader has it, is a thorny conceptual problem. At worst, arguments based on legitimacy are tautological, in the sense that the proof of a leader's legitimacy is that he stays in power.²³ Wedeen (1999, 7) describes two ways to conceptualize legitimacy. The first is with reference to a higher authority, such as divine law, the law of nature, customs, or constitutional authority.²⁴ In this usage, legitimacy is external to the person of the king: it is granted from above. According to this

²⁰ See Svobik (2012, 9) and Wintrobe (1998) on these tools.

²¹ Gause (2013) has argued that monarchies are no better or worse at ruling their populations, but that their control is a function of the fact that many of the region's contemporary monarchies simply have more rents available to pay off their populations. This argument and my own are not mutually exclusive – monarchies can have an institutional advantage, and rents can independently affect protest. A larger case list in which the independent effects of rents and monarchy on protest can be assessed is a useful step.

²² Yom (2013) argues that monarchies were less repressive during the Arab Spring because they had learned that repression does not work, but it is not clear why only monarchs would be capable of learning this lesson, if indeed the evidence clearly suggested that repression is counter-productive, a claim that remains debatable.

²³ On this point, see Sean L. Yom, <http://www.fpri.org/enotes/2012/201204.yom.monarchy-arab-spring.html>

²⁴ If a constitution counts as external authority, however, than most dictators likewise have legitimacy in this sense, although we may consider this source of legitimacy dubious where the dictator or monarch wrote his own authority into the constitution.

conceptualization, many monarchs are legitimate.²⁵ The Moroccan king, for instance, is approved by the *ulema*, the country's religious authority, in part on the basis of his ancestral ties to the Prophet. By custom and law, he is the "commander of the faithful"; even before the Moroccan state consolidated its political authority, he was held in esteem by tribes outside his direct control.

The second understanding of legitimacy, according to Wedeen, is the more common social science usage likening legitimacy to popularity. Measuring the popularity of an authoritarian leader is exceedingly difficult, given constraints on public criticism. There are no "king approval ratings."²⁶ It is risky to state an opinion of a king, or any other kind of authoritarian ruler, and there are incentives to feign loyalty where none exists (Wintrobe 1998). Regimes can thus appear legitimate until they suddenly do not; a revolution can be the first sign of the absence of legitimacy.²⁷ Further, public opinion about a leader may fluctuate over time and circumstance. Legitimacy is often treated as a stable property, which a leader either has or does not have, but if it is linked to public opinion, there is little reason to expect it to remain stable. Legitimacy may be dependent upon people's estimation that the leader is doing a good job, and therefore it may decrease during times of economic crisis or when people are dissatisfied with policy.

²⁵ Anderson (1991, 3, 6), however, points out that monarchs in the Middle East typically are not sanctioned by tradition; monarchy is new to the region and in part a colonial creation. Of the four monarchies in existence in the 19th century, two were overthrown despite their pedigree (North Yemen and Egypt), the other two (Oman and Morocco) are the only ones with a long historical role.

²⁶ In Morocco, *Le Monde* and *TelQuel* conducted an illegal poll on the king's popularity. Though the poll showed overwhelming support for the king, it was banned in Morocco because the king's popularity ought not to even be subject to question. It is also fairly improbable that critics of the king would have been comfortable speaking honestly to a pollster. See http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2009/08/03/maroc-le-sondage-interdit_12252_3212.html.

²⁷ For an explanation of why this is so, see Kuran (1991).

The problems measuring legitimacy, defined in terms of popularity, in authoritarian contexts make it difficult to assess its causal weight. The Moroccan may be more legitimate than the Saudi King, and both may be more legitimate than Mubarak was, but how scholars could know this without relying on impressions and anecdotes is difficult to say. A comparative account that explains variation in popular protest with reference to legitimacy at a minimum needs to be able to explain what makes kings are more legitimate than other autocrats, if they are.²⁸

Measurement issues aside, however, legitimacy remains problematic as an explanation for the absence or weakness of protest. Claims that monarchies are legitimate are inconsistent with three observations. First, prohibitions on criticizing the monarch should be unnecessary if the monarchy is truly legitimate. Second, if legitimacy explains control, it is puzzling that monarchs continue to rely on and maintain a coercive apparatus. Third, public opinion polling shows agreement on the virtues of democracy; it is difficult to reconcile the purported legitimacy of monarchy with statements that democracy is the best form of government.²⁹

One way to resolve support for democracy with claims about legitimacy is to avoid assuming that legitimacy implies the right to monopolize political power. The Queen of England enjoys both forms of legitimacy discussed above, but her legitimacy does not give her the right to issue policy or rule absolutely. A stock of legitimacy, therefore, does not equate with a right to play a particular type of leadership role. A citizen can simultaneously consider the king to be legitimate in a historical, traditional, or religious sense, but support a democratic system that restricts the king's political power. Legitimacy does not foreclose public expressions of

²⁸ Menaldo (2012) argues that kings' political culture makes them more legitimate, a claim that asserted rather than demonstrated empirically.

²⁹ See Jamal and Tessler (2008, 98); in the Arab Barometer's first wave, 86 percent of Jordanians, 92 percent of Moroccans, and 88 percent of Kuwaitis agreed that democracy is the best form of government.

opposition or the desire for a new kind of regime. Support for the pomp, ritual, and tradition of kingship can be untied from support for absolute rule.

3.3 Prospective Differences: The fate of autocrats after democratic transitions

I argued above that kings have an option that other autocrats do not: they can retain their title and remain the head of state. For other kinds of autocracies, their post-transition roles vary. Geddes et al (Forthcoming) examine the fate of leaders after democratic transition by autocratic regime type; the outcome is death, jail, or exile for 64 percent of personalistic leaders, 37 percent of military leaders, and 20 percent of party regimes. The monarchs fare better; 100 percent die of natural causes.

This variation in survival maps onto the possibilities for autocrats after transition. Personalist leaders are least likely to find a post-transition political role and most likely to be punished.³⁰ Military dictatorships, as Geddes (2003) argues, tend to be short-lived because their rule is sometimes intended to be only temporary; military rulers value the unity of the army over running the state. These regimes most resemble monarchies because there is an established precedent whereby they may withdraw from ruling; they do, not however, retain an official political leadership role. They may retain the capacity to intervene, but they do so through extra-institutional means. Ruling parties in party regimes can also survive a transition by participating in competitive elections, as the PRI did in Mexico, but in doing so they must accept electoral uncertainty and be willing to relinquish power when the opposition wins.³¹ Monarchs are thus not the only autocrats who can carve out a future after transition; this capacity varies across autocracies. For other types of rulers, however, surviving the transition at a minimum entails

³⁰ These regimes are also known as sultanistic regimes, not to be confused with monarchies (see Chehabi and Linz 1998).

³¹ For recent work on the stability of party regimes, see Geddes (2003); Magaloni (2008); see Levitsky and Way (2010) on regimes that embrace some competitiveness without transitioning to a democracy.

accepting periodic withdrawals from government and risking future loss of support and power. For a king who presides over a transition to democracy, his power diminishes, but he retains a prominent permanent position atop the government structure.

In drawing on the literature on authoritarian regimes and regimes in the Middle East, this discussion has focused on general claims about authoritarian durability. Less attention has been paid to the consequences of particular authoritarian institutions for mass protest specifically. The next two empirical sections evaluate how monarchy's institutional promise affects the prevalence and nature of challenges from the street.

4. Cross-national findings

Existing cross-country studies of the relationship between regime type and instability provide initial support for the theory advanced here. Using a time-series cross national dataset of the Middle East and North African countries from 1950-2006, Menaldo (2012) finds that the region's monarchies were less likely to experience instability and more likely to survive in office.³² Menaldo disaggregates instability to test whether monarchies are more susceptible to some kinds of conflict than others. Using tribalism, measured by the time lapse since the transition to settled agriculture, as an instrument for monarchy, he finds that monarchy is negatively correlated with revolution, guerrilla war, government crises, purges and assassinations.³³ Monarchy is not systematically associated with demonstrations or riots and is

³² The data source is the Banks (2009) Conflict Index.

³³ The magnitude of the effect is smaller for these final two, while notably monarchy reduces the probability of revolution by 16 percent and guerrilla war by 49 percent. Definitions are given in an online appendix. Revolution and guerrilla war are both defined with reference to the aim of regime overthrow, as is government crises, which somewhat counterintuitively includes "any rapidly developing situation that threatens to bring the downfall of the present regime" except revolt. Menaldo notes that no

positively associated with strikes. These results are compatible with the argument proposed here; as hypothesized, monarchies experience protest, but are less vulnerable to revolution and more stable overall. A better test would disaggregate protest by demands, but this would require cross-national data indicating whether protesters targeted the monarchy or advocated movement toward democracy without seeking the king's departure. Menaldo's work also supports the hypothesis that monarchs are more likely to undertake political liberalization; he finds that monarchies fared better on the Quality of Government Index from the International Country Risk Guide, meaning that they were perceived as less corrupt, more respectful of the rule of law, and the bureaucracy was more professional than other regimes in the region.

While Menaldo's analysis is restricted to the Middle East and North Africa, the Geddes et al dataset provides an opportunity to examine monarchies in the context of autocracies world-wide.³⁴ Using data on 280 autocratic regimes in existence between 1946 and 2010, they also find that monarchies are extraordinarily stable; monarchies fail far less than other autocratic regimes. Using their data, on average monarchies last for 54.2 years, party regimes for 23 years, military regimes for 7 years, and personal regimes for 12 years.

Disaggregating the data provides a sense of the threats monarchies faced. They code regime failures according to type: 7 out of the 12 monarchies that fell were coups, the highest rate of failure by coup among the four types of autocracies. The predominance of coups relative to other types of anti-regime events is consistent with this paper's theory; my argument is that the prospect of constitutional monarchy affects the likelihood of protest, not challenges to the regime from within the regime or the military.

bibliographic references are given in the Banks Index, but the primary source appears to be the New York Times.

³⁴ See Geddes et al (Forthcoming).

Out of the remaining 5 failure events, 3 are coded as popular uprisings. A closer look at the three cases – Ethiopia, Nepal, and Iran – is instructive, however. The overthrow of Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia, is arguably more accurately coded as a coup.³⁵ Selassie was deposed by a military committee known as the Derg in September 1974. Geddes et al state that this deposition occurs in the context of a popular uprising, and indeed protests and riots had occurred in Addis Ababa in February and March of that year. Popular protests had ended, however, after the Emperor froze prices and implemented oil subsidies. Discontent over low pay continued to fuel opposition within the military, however, and Selassie was seized and imprisoned by the young army men of the Derg.

The case of Nepal supports the logic of the argument here. Nepal transitioned to a democratic constitutional monarchy in 1991, exiting the Geddes et al dataset. The popular uprising occurs in response to King Gyanendra's decision to reverse this move to constitutional monarchy following the death of the prior king: in the fall of 2002, he dismissed the prime minister, canceled elections, and assumed executive powers. Massive demonstrations against the reassertion of absolute rule forced the king to reinstate the parliament in 2006; the parliament stripped the king of his powers and returned Nepal once again to a constitutional monarchy.³⁶ Mass protests in Nepal were thus aimed at the goal of constitutional monarchy, not the removal of the king.

³⁵ The NAVCO dataset on protest does not include the Selassie's overthrow as a popular uprising (Chenoweth and Lewis 2013).

³⁶ See the Geddes et al case descriptions in the codebook. The case of Nepal is complex. The king's democratic reversal took place in the aftermath of a royal massacre, in which the crown prince shot the prior king, his entourage, and himself. This occurred in the midst of Nepal's civil war. During the 2006 protests, pro-democracy activists allied with the Maoist insurgents to demand the reinstatement of limits to the monarchy's power.

The Iranian Revolution is a clear case of a mass-based revolution to overthrow a monarch; it does not conform to the expectations of my argument.³⁷ The Shah of Iran fell after mass demonstrations in 1979; the Geddes et al dataset codes the monarchy as lasting from 1925-1979. The democratic experiment in the 1950s may help explain Iran's outlier status. As Prime Minister of Iran from 1951-1953, Mossadegh enjoyed immense popular support; mass protest in his favor resulted in the granting of special emergency powers, which he used to inaugurate democratic reforms aimed at limiting the power of the monarchy. His efforts to nationalize the oil industry prompted opposition from Great Britain and the U.S.; in collaboration with the Shah, they deposed him in 1953 and restored the powers of the Shah. The overthrow of Mossadegh remained salient in 1979, and its lessons likely affected how regime opponents viewed the Shah. My argument is that monarchs have the option of transitioning to a constitutional monarchy. This option was pursued during the Mossadegh era, but it failed, undermining any credibility the Shah might have had to signal a willingness to democratize. His cooperation in the removal of Mossadegh showed his subservience to foreign powers and reluctance to reduce his own power. Given this history, evolution toward constitutional monarchy may have seemed improbable to regime opponents after the 1950s.

In the Geddes et al cases, few monarchies transition to democracy; 10 out of the 12 regime failure cases transfer to another type of authoritarian rule, which is probably due to the high rate of coups. In contrast with Menaldo, monarchies appear less democratic, with lower average Polity scores than other authoritarian regimes; differences in the measure used explain these varying results.

³⁷ Note also that the Iranian revolution also does not conform to arguments about the importance of oil rents for monarchical stability; Iran's vast oil wealth did not save the Shah, leaving analysts to argue that it is the use of resources that matters.

Cross-national data is suggestive of my argument's explanatory power, but micro-level implications cannot be evaluated using macro-level data. A remaining question is why monarchies are not overthrown via popular protest; the mechanisms require investigation. The next section considers the lived experience of citizens in a monarchy, discussing how the monarchy shapes and constrains political action in the case of Morocco. The section illustrates the complexities associated with organizing collective action in a monarchy, the appeal of constitutional monarchy, and the ways that this possible future shaped the form and content of opposition in Morocco in 2011.

5. Protest in Morocco

Morocco is arguably the best case in the Arab world for considering the possible effects of the institution of monarchy because of the absence of other characteristics that affect demands for democracy. Morocco lacks the rents and riches that other Arab monarchies deploy to alter the calculus of potential dissenters; it has neither vast resources nor significant foreign support. It does not have sectarian divisions or large disenfranchised populations that make democratization costly for ruling elite. The absence of these impediments to democratization also make the regime's longevity puzzling. The Moroccan dynasty dates back to the 17th century, leading analysts to suspect that the monarchy's legitimacy is responsible for its durability. The Moroccan monarchy has not gone uncontested, however. This section begins by looking at opposition to the monarchy in the colonial and immediate postcolonial years, before turning to a discussion of the Arab Spring protest in 2011.

5.1 Opposition and State Formation in 20th century Morocco

Arguments for constitutional monarchy date back to the colonial period, when Allal al-Fasi and other reformist leaders made the case that the French should live up to their promises of modernizing Morocco by building representative democratic institutions. During the 1930s, these leaders proposed reforms that would have limited the sultan's power.³⁸ The French, however, backed the sultan, despite accusations of hypocrisy. French intransigence led al-Fasi and the other leaders to abandon their demands for democratic reform in favor of nationalist demands; in the upheaval that followed the allied landing in North Africa, they founded the *Istiqlal* party and began seeking independence. This switch in demands corresponded with a new attitude toward the sultan – while the proposed democratic reforms would have restricted the role of the monarch, the nationalist party adopted the sultan as a symbol of the nation. As Tessler (1987, 225) points out, it was the nationalists who began to refer to him as the king of Morocco. The protectorate period thus served to promote the king's authority. In the pre-colonial period, the sultan's territorial reach was limited; he had not established a monopoly of violence over the territory and his administrative powers were weak, confined largely to the imperial cities of the interior under his control. With the help of the French and the nationalists, his control over the state when independence arrived in 1956 was better than it had ever been before.

Even at independence, however, the king's sovereignty was “arguable and fragile” (Lahbabi 1975, 67). The new king's state included a number of actors vying for control: a rural insurgent army, urban and rural violent groups, notables who had sided with the French, and a nationalist party whose ranks had swelled with arrival of independence (Waterbury 1970, 54–

³⁸ On the movement for democratic reform and the implications for the monarchy, see Hoisington (1984) and Lawrence (2013a).

55). The king took steps to consolidate authoritarian control and reduce the power of other actors.³⁹ His success in doing so is, at least in part, a function of historical accident. Hassan II, who acceded to the throne in 1962, almost met with the same fate that befell his fellow monarchs in Libya, Egypt, Iraq, and Yemen when he narrowly averted a series of coup attempts in the early 1970s. In one case, his plane was attacked while it was in the air; the pilot was killed but the king managed to land the plane. He lived to dole out punishment to General Oufkir, the chief coup plotter (Pennell 2003, 171).

If Hassan II had instead been shot, or if the plotters had made the wiser choice of blowing the plane from the sky, no one today would be claiming that Morocco's king was more legitimate than any other king in the region. But he survived, and by the 1980s and 1990s, scholars proposed that his legitimacy helped to shield him.⁴⁰ His death in 1999 demonstrates the difficulties entailed in assessing an authoritarian ruler's legitimacy, however. In the last decades of his rule, as far as anyone could tell, he was a well-respected international ruler whose domestic legitimacy was unquestioned, at least openly. After he died, his regime was retroactively criticized and his rule dubbed the "era of lead."⁴¹ His son and successor, seeking to distance himself from the brutality of his father's regime, led the charge, initiating a truth and justice commission to investigate the abuses of his father's regime. The son's criticism rendered other forms of criticism permissible and Hassan II today is no longer considered the legitimate ruler that he was during the last years of his reign. Although it was Hassan II who began implementing political reform in the mid 1990s, permitting the socialist government to form a government in 1998, Mohammed VI has claimed the reformer role, promising to modernize, if

³⁹ On this process, see Hart (2000); Lawrence (2010); Waterbury (1970); Zartman (1964).

⁴⁰ See Hammoudi (1997) and Combs-Schilling (1989) for accounts of Hassan II's legitimacy.

⁴¹ An expression I never heard used during my residence in Morocco from 1995-1998. Hassan II did not immediately become illegitimate, as scenes from his funeral attest. Some of the staunchest critics of the king I knew wept at his burial.

not democratize, Morocco (Dalmasso 2012, 228). Today, Mohammed VI is compared favorably with his father, but his legitimacy, like his father's, may also be subject to revision after his reign ends. Nothing alters perceptions of legitimacy faster than death or sudden overthrow.

5.2 The Arab Spring in Morocco

The Moroccan monarchy, like other authoritarian regimes, has been threatened by regime insiders and very nearly fell in the mid 20th century. But it was not until 2011 that it confronted mass protest. On February 20, 2011, tens of thousands of Moroccans took to the streets in over 50 towns to demand democratic freedom and dignity, although they did not seek to overthrow the monarchy.⁴² On March 9, the king gave a speech promising far-reaching constitutional reforms, including an independent judiciary, rule of law, and an elected government that reflects the will of the people. The protesters, spurred on by success, continued to mobilize in mass numbers; these were among the largest Arab Spring protests in the cases where the existing ruler held onto power. Protests peaked in April 2011, when 110 towns saw mass protest (Benchemsi, Forthcoming). Starting from July 2011, participation shrank, as most Moroccans waited for change to come from within the existing institutions. Why did protesters avoid targeting the king? Why did mass protests erupt but then fizzle out? Why did the promise of reform defuse the protests?

To answer these questions, I conducted participant observation and interviews in Morocco from September 2011 to March 2012. I conducted approximately 50 interviews with participants and non-participants in Morocco's protest movement, primarily in Rabat. I spoke with core participants, those who dropped out, and non-participants who were nonetheless given opportunities to join. I interviewed members of the February 20th movement (hereafter M20)

⁴² Estimates of the number of participants range from 37,000 (Moroccan Ministry of Interior) to 300,000 (protest organization estimate). See Benchemsi (Forthcoming).

along with their friends, classmates, and colleagues who were aware of the movement and its goals, yet either dropped out or decided against participating. These respondents do not constitute a representative sample, but instead were selected because they constitute those with a high potential for collective action. In addition to formal interviews, I attended some of the weekly protests, meetings, and events sponsored by the M20 and its General Assembly. I also carried out unstructured interviews with academics, business people, and a newly elected member of parliament. During the summer of 2012, I engaged in on-line discussions with activists and I conducted a Facebook survey of activists and their social networks.

When I began my field research, I did not believe that the absence of revolutionary protest was due to the monarchy. I doubted arguments about legitimacy and I did not see any reason why a king could not fall as easily as a dictator. It was tempting to see King Mohammed VI as particularly savvy, yet I could not see why he would be smarter than other rulers or why his strategies for managing protest worked where Ben Ali's and Mubarak's had failed. I wondered whether Moroccans were simply more apathetic than others, but Egyptians had likewise been called apathetic before 2011. My initial skepticism about the importance of the monarchy was countered by the empirical evidence: in interviews, on-line discussions, and the survey, Moroccans again and again pointed to the monarchy as the key institution that limited both participation in protests and the kinds of demands protesters made. With one or two exceptions, everyone I spoke with pointed to the monarchy as the most important reason why the movement failed to get vast numbers of people to mobilize for revolutionary change like they did in Egypt and Tunisia.⁴³

⁴³ This question was asked in the survey and I have not yet incorporated the results here; however as in the interviews, many pointed to the monarchy as the key reason for the protests' limited aims and achievements. Survey respondents discussed the monarchy only in open-ended questions; there were no

The argument that it was the appeal of a genuine constitutional monarchy helps to make sense of the way that protests unfolded in Morocco in a number of respects. First, as the theory suggests, the possibility of democracy *and* stability affected the overarching objective of the movement. Moroccan activists debated the question over the course of 2011. Some members of the M20 did want the regime to fall; a number of core activists confessed to me that they were truly republicans, while others maintained that they wanted a genuine constitutional monarchy. During a General Assembly of the M20 in Rabat, vigorous discussions about whether to ask for reform or regime change continued even in November 2011. Most maintained that overthrowing the monarchy was not a plausible goal. In interviews and meetings, activists invoked the examples of England and Spain; they said that the French revolution was not the best model to follow. Ultimately, the group converged on the aim of a king who “reigns but does not rule.”

Second, the theory helps to explain why the reforms offered by the king proved acceptable to most Moroccans. The king’s speech in March was widely praised in the international press; he was reportedly offering a new model for the Arab Spring: change through continuity. On the street, the initial reaction was enthusiastic. One of the M20 core activists told me he was overwhelmed with excitement. He thought, “We’ve done it! Our message has gotten through -the king actually gets it! He is going to meet the legitimate democratic aspirations of the people.” More seasoned M20 members greeted the speech with skepticism. One activist said, “They called the constitutional reform a first step. In Morocco, we are always taking the first step. We have been taking the first step toward democracy since 1962 [when the first constitution was issued]. The problem is that we never take a second step.”

questions aimed at evaluating the monarchy because of the sensitivity of the topic and the fact that it would likely deter respondents from taking it.

The reforms to the constitution proved minimal; they did not diminish the king's power.⁴⁴ His move to offer these reforms has been called a savvy one, evidence of his clever strategy to undercut the protest movement. Yet the puzzle is why these changes proved acceptable. Ben Ali, Mubarak, and Saleh likewise offered reforms after protests began, but were unable to undercut mass action. Further, the protests offered by these presidents went much further than what the king offered. The mystery of why the king's reforms "worked," while the presidents' did not, only makes sense in a place where change could plausibly come from above. Moroccans hoped the king would lead the way; this was the best outcome and it was thus worthwhile to many to allow him some leeway to move toward democracy.

The possibility of change from above made rejecting reforms and calling for the king's removal unnecessarily risky and destabilizing. Following the reforms, a group of participants dropped out, preferring to wait and see what the reforms produced. This group worried about stability. One participant who attended protests from February-March 2011, stated, "Initially I wanted a revolution. But who is to say that we will be as successful as Tunisia? We could end up like Syria. It is better to let the king take the lead." Fear of instability and hope that change would come from the top, not a belief in the reforms themselves, a sense of the king's legitimacy, or an estimation of his cleverness led to demobilization.

Third, the theory helps explain why it was so difficult for activists to articulate a clear platform. Although most sought a genuine constitutional monarchy, mobilizing with that goal in mind is complicated. Unlike their counterparts in Egypt and Tunisia, Moroccan activists could not issue a sharp demand with easily observable success or failure. Instead, they asked for

⁴⁴ The main change was that the king was now compelled to choose a prime minister from the winning party, a constraint that matters little in a country in which the parliament is subordinate to the monarchy, the parties are reliant on the monarchy, and the king has the right to dismiss the parliament. For more on the reforms, see Maghraoui (2011).

reform, democratic freedom, dignity, and justice. The success of this platform is far more difficult to assess than the demand for a leader's ouster. By showing some movement, the king could plausibly signal that the goals were being taken seriously. But a mobilization platform based on reform is complicated. It is one thing to ask for justice; it is another to advocate policy moves and laws that will effectively improve the judiciary.

Fourth, the argument can account for the attitudes of some of those who attended only the first big protests or no protests at all. One Moroccan woman told me she attended the first protest with her entire family, and it "brought tears to her eyes" to see Moroccans from different backgrounds uniting to come out on the streets. For her, the protests were not about seeking future change, they actually exemplified the change itself. As another put it, "there we were, protesting just like people in any democracy. This had never happened before." The protests, rather than being a means to an end, were evidence that democracy was indeed arriving in Morocco – by marching on the streets, Moroccans were able to act as if they already members of the kind of state they hoped to inhabit. Through performing a democratic practice, some felt they were in effect witnessing democratic change itself. Change was not something that needed to be attained through further protest; it was happening and the evidence for that was their act of protest itself.

Other recent developments have been interpreted as evidence that the king intends to reform in a democratic direction. The construction of the high speed rail, the new Rabat Zoo, the construction of malls, including the ostentatious Morocco Mall in Casablanca, have lent credence to the view that democracy, with its accompanying "consumption-oriented pleasures" was, if not

imminent, at least visible on the horizon.⁴⁵ Neither democracy, nor the increased economic well-being associated with it,⁴⁶ was a reality for most Moroccans, but young urban Moroccans could see its possible arrival. Activists, in contrast, bemoaned these construction projects as wasteful and shameful in a country with high rates of poverty and low levels of literacy. But to others, the sight of a new mall going up in Agdal is reassuring because it suggests new possibilities for upward mobility.

The king's political acts have also lent credibility to his claim to be a reformer. The truth and reconciliation commission, although it did not result in punishment or shed light on any previously unknown abuses of the prior regime, was intended to contrast Mohammed VI favorably with his father; it was his father's regime that relied on repression, not his.⁴⁷ The 2003 reforms to the family code that improved women's rights also showed the king's political intentions.

These policies, along with the new construction, point to the king's credibility as the right person to lead Morocco toward democracy. Still, while Moroccans sought signs that the country was moving in a positive direction, it remained difficult to evaluate. In the 2012 Facebook survey, respondents were divided about where the country was heading (see Table 1).⁴⁸

⁴⁵ See Wedeen (2013) who argues that the desire for middle class goods and lifestyle rendered resistance less attractive for urban middle and aspiring upper class Syrians.

⁴⁶ See Jamal and Tessler (2008) on the link between democracy and economic well being in the Arab World.

⁴⁷ Members of the commission were not given access to the regime's secret service files, but were only permitted to look into incidents already publicly known (personal communication, member of the commission). Mohammed VI's regime has relied on repression, both in the aftermath of the 2003 Casablanca bombings and in response to the M20 protests. See Delmasso (2012) and Lawrence (2013b).

⁴⁸ Note that this survey uses a non-probability sample of M20 activists and those in their friend networks. It remains interesting that this group is split in its assessment of the country; because of the sample we might expect them to offer a more negative assessment of the past two years. Fifty-five percent of the sample did not participate in any of the protests.

Table 1: Do you think that democracy in Morocco has increased over the last two years?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		71	42%
2	No		70	41%
3	Less democratic		28	17%
	Total		169	100%

It is clear that Moroccans involved in the protests, as well as others who support the protests' aims but did not themselves protest, sought signs that genuine reforms were on the horizon as they assessed the prospect of top-down change. Further, the king himself has attempted to show his willingness to democratize – perhaps most clearly in the astounding speech he gave in March – while also seeking to retain as many of his political prerogatives as possible.

The protests themselves constitute evidence that large numbers of Moroccans favor democratic change. Mass participation operates against the claim that Moroccans accept the status quo as legitimate. The king is reputed to be well-liked and many Moroccans will state their admiration for him, but this sentiment did not foreclose demands for change.⁴⁹ As discussed earlier, even if Moroccans do believe in the king's legitimacy, they also believe in the legitimacy of other institutions and norms – human rights, religion, and tradition. Belief in the king's legitimacy is not incompatible with aspirations to limit his power.

An alternative argument to the one that I have proposed is that it is the M20 organization that is responsible for the 2011 protest outcomes. Perhaps the M20 was simply less competent than its counterparts in other parts of the Arab World. Core M20 activists worried about the weaknesses of their own movement strategy, speculating about whether other courses of action would have sustained protests and achieved real change. As a struggling movement, they were

⁴⁹ The recent publication of *Le Roi Prédicateur* sought to undermine the king's public image by pointing to the excesses of the monarchy and its control over the country's resources and wealth.

keen to figure out what they could have done better. But as interviews with non-participants made clear to me over time, the M20 did not have a winning hand to play. The M20 were not particularly incompetent or disorganized, as they sometimes feared they had been.

Revolutionaries are typically young and inexperienced; the M20 youth did not differ from others in these respects. They were also successful at sparking major, nation-wide protests. The major difference is that there was no consensus to demand the fall of the regime. Instead most people sought a constitutional monarchy, which meant allowing the king some freedom to chart the course.

Conclusion

This article has identified an option available in monarchies but not in other authoritarian regimes: democratic, constitutional monarchy. This option is, in fact, not one, but many – constitutional monarchies in the world differ significantly from one another. In some, the monarch is a mere figurehead, in others the monarch retains some political power. Constitutions provide differing limits on the powers of the monarch; the bargain that is struck is one that results from processes of contestation and concession. There is no one formula for constitutional monarchy, making it difficult to decide what to advocate and how to evaluate progress. In Morocco, citizens in 2011 pushed for greater restrictions on the monarchy, but also looked for signs that the monarch was responsive. The desire for constitutional monarchy gave the Moroccan king the advantage: it made the platform of the M20 less concrete and it provided incentives to demobilize and wait for change. Today, core activists are committed to maintaining pressure through weekly protests, but they have moved from demanding democracy to focusing on specific issues, such as the arrest of their members or the expansion of the high-

speed rail in Morocco at the expense of poverty alleviation. As one activist told me, “We continue. We are not going to get democracy today, and it may not be us who achieves it. But we will be ready when the moment is right.” The moment could indeed arise again, and in the next round, protesters may be less satisfied by mere promises of future reform.

Studying monarchy is important for our overall understanding of why and how regimes transition to democracy. Monarchy has been an extraordinarily common form of rule; it is worth investigating how monarchy shapes and constrains demands for democracy. This article has discussed large-N findings on authoritarian regimes and the Moroccan monarchy to make the case that anti-regime protest in monarchies is different from protest in other kinds of authoritarian regimes. In focusing on the consequences of authoritarian regime type on protest, rather than on resilience or collapse, the aim has been to develop a precise account of the strengths and vulnerabilities of monarchies. Further work can be done to understand how the possibility of constitutional monarchy shapes protest and revolution by looking not only at contemporary authoritarian regimes but also by studying democratic constitutional monarchies and analyzing the processes that restricted the powers of monarchs.

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