Chapter Two
A Brief Overview of Political Systems

Approaches to Comparative Democratic Concepts

The notion of democratic government has varied considerably over the centuries. Perhaps the most fundamental distinction is between those in ancient Greece based upon direct popular participation and those that operate through some kind of representative mechanism (Heywood, 2004: 221). A direct democracy is characterized by the fact that legislation, as well as the main executive and judicial function are exercised by the citizens in mass meeting or primary assembly. Such an organization is possible only within small communities and under simple social conditions. The modern understanding of democracy is dominated by the form of electoral democracy that has developed in the industrialised West, often called liberal democracy. Despite its undoubted success, liberal democracy is only one of a number of possible models of democracy and one whose democratic credentials have sometimes been called into question (Kelsen, 2009: 288-289).

Representation has been associated with the system of election, sometimes in combination with heredity as in constitutional monarchies. The fact remains that the sheer size of modern states had the effect of making it materially impracticable for the assembled people to play a part in government (Manin, 1997), 8-9). To Adam Przeworski, “the miracle of democracy is that conflicting political forces obey the results of voting. Incumbent risk their control of governmental offices by holding elections. Losers wait for their chance to win office” (Przeworski, 2003: 15-16). Further as Larry Diamond emphasised: “even if we think of democracy as simply the rule of the people, as a system for choosing government through free and fair electoral competition at regular intervals, governments chosen in this manner are generally better than those that are not.
They offer the best prospect for accountable, responsive, peaceful, predictable and good governance” (Diamond, 2003: 29). Hans Kelsen posited that “politically free is he who is subject to a legal order in the creation of which he participates. An individual is free if what he “ought to” do according to the social order coincide with what he “wills to” do. Democracy means that the “will” which is represented in the legal order of the State is identical with the wills of the subjects. Its opposite is the bondage of autocracy” (Kelsen, 2009: 284). However, he elaborated that “in political reality, there is no state conforming completely to democracy or the autocracy type. Every state represents a mixture of elements of both types, so that some communities are closer to the one, some closer to the other pole” (Kelsen, 2009: 284). Nevertheless, Nadia Urbinati surmised that “representative democracy can be described as government that shows the dual nature of popular sovereignty as a constitutive guideline to, and a limit on, political power as legislative power” (Urbinati, 2006: 221).

Yet to make democracy more meaningful, civil liberty is required in the form of freedom to speak and publish dissenting views among other rights (Diamond, 2003: 32). Liberal democracies respect the existence of a vigorous and healthy civil society, based upon respect for civil liberties and property rights, besides constitution, bill of rights and independent judiciary and a network of checks and balances. Thus, according to Andrew Heywood, “A representative government would therefore be a microcosm of the larger society, in terms of social class, gender, religion, ethnicity, age and so forth and in numbers that are proportional to their strength in society at large” (Heywood, 2004: 238).

To Samuel R. Freeman “a democratic society is one in which inherited privilege is rejected and people are widely regarded as equals and as free; they are judged, not according to their lineage, but according to their accomplishment (or lack thereof). Moreover, people are allowed equal opportunities and are treated as civilly free” (Freeman, 2007: 212-213). Similarly, for John Stuart Mill: “there is no difficulty in showing that the ideally best form of government is that in which the sovereignty, or supreme controlling power in the last resort, is vested in the entire aggregate of the community; every citizen not only having a voice in the exercise of that ultimate
sovereignty, but being, at least occasionally, called on to take an actual part in the
government, by the personal discharge of some public function, local or general...” (Mill,
2003: 312). Pointing out Rawls’ political philosophy, Freeman elaborated on Rawls
“constitutional democracy”, which is different from a purely “majoritarian democracy.”
A constitutional democracy ensures democratic government with restricted majority rule
and the legislative powers subject to scrutiny within constitutional framework. On the
contrary, a purely majoritarian democracy does not have restrictions upon the will of a
majority and there is no judicial review of legislation to check on anti-democratic
decisions (Freeman, 2007: 213). According to some “A democracy, briefly defined, is a
political system in which citizens enjoy a number of basic civil and political rights and in
which their most important political leaders are elected in free and fair elections and
accountable under a rule of law” (Almond et al, 2004: 27).

Arend Lijphart cautioned that there is a strong and dangerous tendency to define
democracy almost exclusively in terms of majority democracy. Majority democracy
suffers from a serious contradiction between its theory and its practice. In theory,
majority rule tends to be regarded as the crucial decision rule and hence as the defining
criterion of democracy. In practice, however, strict application of majority rule is
extremely rare, especially with regard to the most important decisions and to issues that
cause deep splits in societies. The existence of this gap between the theory and practice of
majority rule is important for two reasons. One is that most of the democratising and new
democratic countries need consensus democracy even more than the stable and mature
ones, because they tend to suffer from more serious internal cleavages and face more
sensitive and divisive issues. The second reason is that the view equating democracy with
majority rule is so strong and widespread and constitutes a major obstacle to any serious
consideration of the consensus model. Majoitarian model of democracy concentrates
political power in the hands of the majority, whereas the consensus model tries to share,
disperse, restrain, and limit power in a variety of ways. For instance, coalition cabinets,
multiparty systems, proportional representation, bicameral legislatures, judicial review
and federalism are all common democratic patterns that practically function on consensus
model (Lijphart, 2008: 111-116).
To allocate and demarcate functions of various institutional organs of the government, a set of laws, most commonly in the form of constitution embodies these features. In the words of Andrew Heywood, "a constitution can be understood, in its simplest sense, as the rules which govern the government. Constitutions are thus sets of rules which allocate duties, powers and functions to the various institutions of government and define the relationship between individuals and the state" (Heywood, 2004: 143). Constitutions confer legitimacy upon a regime by making government a rule-bound institution. Constitutional governments therefore exercise legal-rational authority; their powers are authorized by constitutional laws. However, the mere existence of a constitution does not in itself ensure that government power is rightfully exercised. In reality, a constitution confers legitimacy only when its principles reflect values and beliefs which are widely held in society. Government power is therefore legitimate if it is exercised in accordance with rules that are reasonable and acceptable in the eyes of the governed (Heywood, 2004: 143-144).

Hegel perceived constitutional monarchy as the better form of government. Summing Hegel’s concept Beiser argued: “A constitutional monarchy consists in three fundamental powers: the sovereign, which formally enacts the laws; the executive, which applies and enforces the laws; and the legislative, which creates the laws. Since the sovereign is one individual, since the executive consists in several individuals and since the legislative consists in many individuals” (Beiser, 2005: 253), Hegel maintains that constitutional monarchy is a synthesis of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy. Thus, stressing on division of powers, he also endorsed Montesquieu’s “Separation of Powers” among the three important organs of the government. This prevents the possibility of one organ from dominating others, while ensuring institutional freedom from arbitrary rule (Beiser 2005: 253).

The basic assumption of modernisation theory is that there is one general process, of which democratization is but the final facet. Modernisation consists of a gradual differentiation and specialization of social structures culminating in a separation of the
political from other structures and making democracy possible. The specific causal chains consist in sequences of industrialisation, urbanization, education, communication, mobilisation, political incorporation, and innumerable other progressive accumulation of social changes that make a society ready to proceed to democratisation. Modernisation theory supposes that countries develop over a longer period, so that all the modernising consequences have time to accumulate (Przeworski et al, 2003: 109). According to Samuel P.Huntington, the current era of democratic transitions constitutes the third wave of democratization in the history of the modern world. Among others, two major factors have contributed significantly to the occurrence of the third-wave transitions to democracy: “the deepening legitimacy problems of authoritarian regimes in a world where democratic values were widely accepted. Consequently, their inability to maintain legitimacy due to economic and sometimes military failure; the unprecedented global economic growth of the 1960s, which raised living standards, increased education, and greatly expanded the urban class in many countries” (Huntington, 2003: 93).

In this context, Seymour Martin Lipset proposed that high per capita income, urbanization and the higher level of education of a nation’s population are related to better chance for democracy. All the aspects of economic development — industrialization, urbanization, wealth, and education are so closely interrelated as to form one major factor, which has the political significance of democracy development (Lipset, 2003: 57-59). Similarly, to Adam Przeworski, “democracy is more likely to survive in wealthy countries and more likely to last when no single political force dominates. It is more likely to endure when voters can choose rulers through elections. Democracy lasts when it offers an opportunity to the conflicting forces to advance their interests within the institutional framework” (Przeworski, 2003: 16).

However, two contending schools of thought on modernization exist: One school emphasizes the convergence of values as a result of modernization, the overwhelming economic and political forces that drive cultural change. This school predicts the decline of traditional values and their replacement with modern values. The other school of thought emphasizes the persistence of traditional values despite economic and political
changes. This school assumes that values are relatively independent of economic conditions. Consequently, it predicts that convergence around some set of modern values is unlikely and that traditional values will continue to exert an independent influence on the cultural changes caused by economic development (Inglehart and Baker, 2003: 168).

Following the post-Orientalist challenge, the once common terms “Modernisation” and “Westernisation” have largely been replaced by the more neutral “development” and “transformation” notions. Ideas and institution which had first developed in Western Europe and North America might not be essentially ‘Western’; they might in course of time become culturally ‘neutral’, the common property of all societies of modern age. In the Ottoman Empire, these internal processes of change and development were usually slower and less dramatic than the pace of modernisation in Europe and North America. Nevertheless, a slower pace enabled societies to adapt more comfortably to change (Pappe, 1997: 164). Lucian W. Pye emphasised “political development as one aspect of a multi-dimensional process of social change.” Political development encompasses the economy, polity, and social order. In this sense, it does not mean any single entity but all entities combined as a whole that come under the ambit of political development. In this context, democracy is a part of the political development process (Pye 1966: 33-45).

John H. Kautsky suggested the possibility of analysing political modernisation in terms of five categories: traditional aristocratic authoritarianism, a transitional stage of domination by the nationalist intellectuals, totalitarianism of the aristocracy, totalitarianism of the intellectuals, and democracy. He adds that there are infinite numbers of variations of sub-types and mixed and transitional forms that make it impossible to find any of the five types in pure form (Kautsky 1962: 4).

Edward A. Shils gave a classification of modern political systems into two varieties – democracy and oligarchy. He further classified them into “political tutelary democracies” of the former and modernising, “totalitarian traditional oligarchies” of the latter. Taking political modernisation as a plausible ground for the stratification of political systems, Shils begins with the case of primitive and backward societies where parochial loyalties make it difficult to achieve the norms of modern democratic life, like rule of law and
legitimate exercise of political authority. The availability of justice in administration and adjudication process is made difficult, owing to the tendency of favour towards the kinsmen, caste and co-believers (Shils 1962: 48).

According to Shils, after the “Political Democracy”, “Tutelary Democracy” constitutes the second best form of a political system. It refers to a political system that is committed to observe the norms and values of democracy and thus it tries to emulate the ways of countries known for having political democracy. It is thus the result of pragmatic response by committed democrats to situations, which seem to be inherently incapable of effectively operating democratic institutions. Finally, he takes up the case of traditional oligarchy that is based on strong dynastic constitution associated with traditional religious beliefs. Rulers emerge based on kinship in the selection process. The rulers’ counsellors and immediate confidants form a palace retinue chosen by the ruler on the basis of kinship or personal choice (Shils, 1962: 109-110).

Similarly, David E. Apter offered a complex but intriguing theory of stages and alternate paths of political development in the larger framework of political modernisation. He gave particular attention to the characteristics of traditional societies as the starting points of change, using a two-dimensional classification based on three authority types (hierarchical, pyramidal and segmental) and two value types (instrumental and consummatory). Depending on the character of the traditional base and subject to the contradictory and varied influences of the Western social and political systems, Apter discerns two main development consequences: a secular-libertarian model approaching democracy through “mobilisation systems” and a “sacred-collectivity model” approaching totalitarianism through mobilisation systems. In this context, Apter’s scheme analyses modernising autocracies, military oligarchies and other complex patterns of political modernisation (Apter 1965: 28-33). Further, Apter talks about modernising autocracy that tends to have a traditionalistic ideology associated with a monarch or King who represents the nation. Authority remains at the top, although in fact, it may be shared through a variety of instrumentalities such as councils, parliaments, party groups and so
Serious conflicts in West Asian and North Africa after the World War II were characterized by ethnic and class conflicts and military coups. This was the consequence of rapid social change and the rapid mobilization of new groups into politics coupled with the slow development of political institutions. The political instability in West Asia derives precisely from the failure to meet equality of political participation. Social and economic change: urbanization, mass media expansion, extended political consciousness and multiple political demands have broadened political participation. These changes undermine traditional sources of political authority and traditional political institutions. They enormously complicate the problems by creating new bases of political association and new political institutions combining legitimacy and effectiveness. The rates of social mobilization and the expansion of political participation are high; the rates of political organization and institutionalization are low. The result is political instability and disorder. The primary problem of politics in the region is that the development of political institutions lags behind social and economic change (Huntington 1968: 3-5).

From the above discussion on the various concepts of democracy, and political development and modernisation approaches, further discussion will dwell on the aspects of political systems of Jordan and Morocco.

**The Political System of Jordan**

According to the constitution promulgated in January 1952, Jordan is a constitutional monarchy. The Constitution concentrates a high degree of executive and legislative authority in the King, who determines domestic and foreign policy (United Nations, 2004). The throne of the Hashemite Kingdom devolves by male descent when the King attains his majority on his “eighteenth lunar year”. If the throne is inherited by a minor, the powers of the King are exercised by a Regent or a Council of Regency. If the King, through illness or absence cannot perform his duties, his powers are exercised by a
Deputy or by a Council of the Throne. The Deputy or Council is appointed by royal decrees by the King, or if he is incapable, by the Council of Ministers (The Europa World Year Book, 2004: 2387).

The Executive

The King of Jordan is both the head of the State and the chief executive. Thus, the King is immune from all liability or responsibility. He appoints the Prime Minister and other ministers, the President and members of the Senate. In turn, the prime minister and the cabinet must be approved by the Lower House of Parliament, the House of Deputies. If the House of Deputies votes against the prime minister, he and his entire cabinet must resign. The Lower House can also vote any individual minister out of office. The number of senators cannot exceed one-half the number of elected representatives. The Constitution stipulates that the reigning monarch must approve laws before they can take effect, although his power of veto can be overridden by a two-thirds majority of both houses of Parliament. He declares war, concludes peace and signs treaties; however, treaties must be approved by the parliament. The King is the Commander-in-Chief of the army, navy and the air force. He orders the holding of elections, convenes, inaugurates, adjourns and prorogues the House of Representatives. The King also authorizes the appointment and dismissal of judges, regional governors and the mayor of Amman. No death sentence can be executed until confirmed by the King. Likewise, the King grants special pardons and amnesties (The Royal Hashemite Court, 2001).

The constitution provides for the separation of powers between the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government. In practice, the King has enormous powers to make or break governments and parliaments. The lower house of parliament cannot initiate separate legislation or exercise effective control over government policies. It can only move a vote of no confidence in the government and overrule a royal veto of legislation. However, the King can dissolve a "troublesome" parliament and, if necessary, rule by decree. For example between 2001-2003 when the King delayed elections after dissolving parliament, the palace appointed government passed over 150 laws. Indeed the
extraordinary executive powers of the King have for many years been the source of political dissent in Jordan (Macintyre, 2008: 409).

The King's extensive power and control are seen in the activities of the *Mukhabarat*, or General Intelligence Department (GID). The *Mukhabarat* ensures people's loyalty to the King and his government (Shihab-Eldin, 2008). Overall, the span of monarch's executive power speaks for itself as divulged just a few days before the death of King Hussein. With the transfer of power, Crown Prince Abdullah, who was designated the successor was invested with the full constitutional powers of the monarchy. The Crown Prince had the right to mobilise the military, dismiss the Parliament and appoint Cabinet ministers (Jehl, 1999). By the time Crown Prince Abdullah became King in 1999, he imposed additional restrictions on the media and civil societies' activities after various groups including Islamists, leftists and Jordanians of Palestinians descent staged demonstrations to demand the annulment of the 1994 Peace Treaty with Israel and expressed support for the Palestinian *intifida* (uprising) against Israel that began in 2000 (Freedom House, 2009).

For most of Jordan's history, there has been little opportunity for domestic institutions or interest groups to affect foreign policy. While it would be impossible to ignore the role of the monarch as the most prominent architect of Jordanian policy, he does not act alone. The King is advised by officials in the Royal Hashemite Court or Diwan and by the Prime minister, cabinet ministers, specialists in various fields and sometimes powerful personal confidants. Still, the core foreign policymakers are a small and relatively cohesive group. At times, this circle may be so small that it will actually exclude both the prime minister and foreign minister, much less other cabinet members. Historically, these cabinet officials have existed to implement the decisions of the palace (Ryan, 2002: 67-68).

Contrary to its portfolio, the Jordanian foreign ministry is among the least influential institutions in Jordanian foreign policy-making. It is only charged with the implementation of decisions of royal court and articulating its foreign policy to other
countries. Yet, even this role is often circumscribed by the King, who frequently prefers his personally designated envoys to represent country’s policy. Particularly, trusted confidants have been groomed in the ranks of the Royal Court, occupying positions from chief of the Royal Court to national security adviser and later taking portfolios as cabinet ministers and perhaps eventually Prime Minister (Ryan, 2002: 68).

Many Jordanian prime ministers have originally made their marks as head of the General Intelligence Directorate. Jordanian prime ministers often continue to exercise influence even after retirement as members of the Senate (Ryan, 2002: 68-69). By 1967, the King’s position as supreme decision-maker was well established. Earlier, power was not concentrated in the hands of the King. For instance, during the Suez crisis (1956), King Hussein ordered the army to march from Jenin into Israel in support of Egypt. However, the cabinet was then the centre of power and it refused to heed the King’s order (Mutawi 1987: 3).

The turning point in the centralization of power came in April 1957, with dismissal of Prime Minister Sulaiman Nabulsi’s cabinet dominated by members of parties opposed to many basic features of Hashemite rule. This was immediately followed by the establishment of the King’s authority over the army after averting the threat of a military coup a few days later. From that point on, political parties were outlawed and the lower house of the Jordanian parliament was rarely in session (it met only once between 1974 and 1984), giving space for the King to perfect a system that allowed him to make all the major decisions affecting foreign affairs and external security while leaving the execution of policy in other areas to a small group of loyal politicians who circulated between his Royal Court and the regular cabinet in charge of day-to-day administration (Owen, 1992: 46).

**The Council of Ministers**

Article 41 of the constitution provides for the Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister. According to Article 42, no person shall be appointed a Minister unless he is a
Jordanian. Article 43 stipulates that the Prime Minister and Ministers shall, before assuming their duties, take the following oath before the King: “I swear by Almighty God to be loyal to the King, uphold the Constitution, serve the Nation and conscientiously perform the duties entrusted to me.” Article 50 states that in the event of the resignation or dismissal of the Prime Minister from his office, all Ministers shall be considered as having automatically resigned or been dismissed from their offices (The Constitution of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, 1952). The Council of Ministers is responsible to the House of Representatives for matters of general policy. Ministers may speak in either House of the Parliament. Votes of confidence in the government are cast in the House of Representatives and decided by a two-third majority. If a vote of “no confidence” is returned, the ministers are bound to resign. The House of Representatives can impeach ministers and its own members (The Europa World Year Book, 2004: 2387).

The Legislature

The development of Jordanian parliament began with the creation of Majlis Shura (the State Consultative Council) in 1923. The Council was entrusted with developing laws and regulations. Following independence in 1946, the first Jordanian parliament was established in 1947. It was a bicameral parliament known as the National Assembly, consisting of two houses: the Senate (House of Notables) and the House of Representatives (Chamber of Deputies). Legislative powers were entrusted to both the King and the new established parliament. Under the 1952 amendments to the Constitution (which followed Jordan’s annexation of the West Bank), the King assumed the power to appoint members of the Senate while the public directly elects members of the House of Representatives. The Constitution upholds the principle of equality between the two houses but gives the House of Representatives the right to cast a vote of confidence or no confidence in the government or any of its ministers (Suleiman and Henderson, 2007: 6). Legislative power is vested in the Parliament: the Senate has 60 members appointed by the King for eight years (one-half of the members retiring every four years), while the House of Representatives has 120 members. 9 seats are reserved for

Senators must be unrelated to the King, over the age of 40 and are chosen from present and former Prime Ministers and Ministers, former Ambassadors, former Presidents of the House of Representatives, former Presidents and members of the Court of Cassation and of the Civil and Sharia Courts of Appeal, retired officers of the rank of General, former members of the House of Representatives who have been elected twice to that House. The President of the Senate is appointed for two years (The Europa World Year Book, 2004: 2387). The members of the House of Representatives are elected by secret ballot in general elections for four years. The President of the House is elected by secret ballot each year by the Representatives. Representatives must be Jordanians of over 30 years while close relatives of the King are not eligible. If the House of Representatives is dissolved, the new House is required to assemble in extraordinary session not more than four months after the date of dissolution. The new House cannot be dissolved for the same reason as the previous one (The Europa World Year Book, 2004: 2387).

General provisions of the National Assembly (Parliament)

The King summons the National Assembly to its ordinary session on 1 November each year. The date can be postponed by the King for two months or he can dissolve the Assembly before the end of its three months’ session. Alternatively, he can extend the session up to a total period of six months. Each session is opened by a speech from the throne. The Prime Minister places proposals before the House of Representatives and if accepted, they are referred to the Senate and finally sent to the King for confirmation. If one house rejects a law while the other accepts it, a joint session of the House of Representatives and the Senate is called and a decision made by a two-third majority. If the King withholds his approval of a law, he returns it to the Assembly within six months with the reasons for his rejection. A joint session of the Houses then makes a decision and if the law is accepted by this decision, it is promulgated (The Europa World Year Book, 2004: 2387). On the procedure of adoption of laws, the Prime Minister refers to the
Chamber of Deputies any draft law and the Chamber can accept, amend or reject the draft law but in all cases the Chamber refers the draft law to the Senate. No law may be promulgated unless passed by both the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, and ratified by the King (Bitar, 2004).

In cases where the National Assembly is not sitting or is dissolved, the Council of Ministers, with the approval of the King, has the power to issue provisional laws covering matters which require necessary measures or which necessitate incapable of postponement. The constitution stipulates such provisional laws to be placed before the Assembly at the beginning of its next session and the Assembly may approve or amend such laws. Ten or more Senators or Deputies may propose any law. Such proposal is referred to the committee concerned in the House for its views. If the House is of the opinion that the proposal be accepted it refers it to the Government for drafting it in the form of draft law and to submit it to the House either during the same session or at the following session. Should either House twice reject any law proposed by Senators or Deputies, the proposal is not presented for a second time during the same session (Bitar, 2004).

**The Judiciary**

The judicial system in Jordan has a dual nature with provision for *Sharia* Courts alongside Civil and Special Courts. The constitution endorsed the authority of the *Sharia* Courts on all matters of personal status in the Kingdom affecting its majority Muslim population, while preserving the rights of non-Muslims (Milton-Edwards and Hinchcliffe, 2001: 37). The Jordanian the legal system was influenced by the French legal system (Commercial law and civil and criminal procedures), and by the Egyptian and the Syrian legal systems, particularly in personal status matters (Bitar, 2004). Moreover, with the exception of matters of purely personal nature concerning members of non-Muslim communities, the law of Jordan is based on Islamic Law for both civil and criminal matters (The Europa World Year Book, 2004: 2390).
The civil jurisdiction is exercised at four levels: the Court of Cassation, the Courts of Appeal, the Courts of First Instance and the Magistrates’ Court. The highest court is the Court of Cassation in Amman; its president, who is appointed by the King, serves as the country's Chief Justice (Bitar, 2004). The Court of Cassation consists of seven judges, who sit in full panel for exceptionally important cases. In most appeals, however, only five members sit to hear the case. The two Courts of Appeal with three judges each, hear appeals or deal with Magistrates Courts’ judgements. The jurisdiction of the two Courts is geographical, with the Court for the Western Region (which has not sat since June 1967) situated in Jerusalem and the Court for the Eastern Region based in Amman.

Appellate review of the Courts of Appeal extends to judgements rendered in the Courts of First Instance, the Magistrates’ Courts and Religious Courts. The Courts of First Instance encompasses general jurisdiction in all matters of civil and criminal except those specifically allocated to the Magistrates’ Courts. Three judges sit in all felony trials, while only two judges sit for misdemeanour and civil cases. Each of the seven Courts of First Instance also exercises appellate jurisdiction in cases involving judgements of less than JD 20 and fines of less than JD 10 rendered by the Magistrates’ Courts. The 14 Magistrates’ Courts exercise jurisdiction in civil cases involving maximum fines of JD 100 or maximum imprisonment of one year (The Europa World Year Book, 2004: 2390).

The religious courts are divided into Sharia Courts for Muslims with a qadi (judge) in each court presiding over the cases derived from Islamic law. For Tribunals of other Religious Communities (ecclesiastical courts for the minority Christian communities representing eight percent of the population), three judges usually from among the clergy sit in each ecclesiastical court and pass judgements drawn from various canon laws as interpreted by the Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Anglican traditions. These courts are responsible for disputes over personal status (marriage, divorce, child custody, and inheritance) and communal endowment among their respective communities (Bitar, 2004). Despite provision for separate religious courts, in matters of inheritance cases, even Christian courts apply Shari'a (Jurist, 2003). Appeals from the judgments of the religious courts are referred to the Court of Appeal sitting in Amman. In the event of dispute that involves members of different religious communities, the civil courts have
jurisdiction unless the parties mutually agree to submit to the jurisdiction of one of the religious courts. In case of jurisdictional conflicts between any two religious courts or between a religious court and a civil court, the President of the Court of Cassation appoints a three-judge special tribunal to decide jurisdiction or to hear the case (Bitar, 2004).

In matters of other civil related cases involving constitutional interpretations, Special Courts are instituted at the request of the Prime Minister or of either Chamber of the Parliament. When necessary, the Court of Cassation hears habeas corpus and mandamus petitions and may issue injunctions involving public servants charged with irregularities. It is also empowered to try Cabinet Ministers charged with offences (Bitar, 2004). Notwithstanding provision for judicial independence in the Constitution as mentioned in Article 97, further, Article 98 provides for appointment and dismissal of the judges of all courts by Royal Decree (The Constitution of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, 1952). Thus, judiciary remains subject to pressure and interference from the executive branch. A judge's appointment, advancement and dismissal from the judiciary are determined by the Higher Judiciary Council, a committee whose members are appointed by the King (Jurist, 2003).

The Regional and Local Governments

The kingdom is divided into twelve governorates, each headed by a governor and subdivided into administrative regions. The governorates are an extension of the central government and are supervised by the Ministry of the Interior. Governors enjoy wide administrative authority and in specific cases, they exercise the powers of ministers. Municipal councils within a governorate are elected by local residents for a four-year term. However, in cases of legal disputes or lack of a quorum, the governor can appoint a municipal committee for an extendable two-year term. Starting in July 1995, nationwide municipal council elections were held on the same day. The mayor and half of the council of the Greater Amman Municipality are appointed by the government and the other half
elected. At the village level, each village has a council appointed by the governor and councils are changed as the governor deems necessary (United Nations, 2004).

The 12 governorates are Ajlun, Aqabah, Amman, Irbid, Balga, Jarash, Karak, Ma'an, Madaba, Zarqa', Mafraq and Tafilah, each under a governor appointed by the King on the recommendation of the interior minister (Encyclopedia of the Nations, 2010). Each Governorate consists of districts (Liwa) and sub-districts (Qadha). The districts consist of municipalities and village councils. Governors are assisted by two councils: The Executive Council and the Advisory Council. The Executive Council is composed of local representatives of the different ministries. Responsibilities include implementation of decisions of the ministries on the regional level. The Advisory Council is chaired by the governor and is composed of members of parliament and members at the regional level, mayors of municipalities, NGO’s and trade unions. This council can only make propositions, whereas, it is up to the executive council to make binding decisions. Members of the village council (3-11) are chosen by the governor to represent local residents and traditional chiefs are included by virtue of their position within the community. The governor appoints the head of the council from among its members and controls all activities of village councils. All administrative, financial or technical decisions of village councils are subject to approval by the Governor. However, there is no systematic framework of local governance to be followed by all local governments in Jordan (Jordan Institute of Public Administration, 1998).

In contrast to the appointed district governors, mayors are elected. The only exception to this rule is the mayor of Amman, who is appointed directly by the King. Mayors supervise the day-to-day affairs of towns and cities and grievances against mayors can be appealed to the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment (The Royal Hashemite Court, 2001). A municipality is the most important units of local administration in Jordan. This level is organized according to municipal act No.29 of 1955 and its amendments. In 1994, drastic changes were affected for restructuring municipalities: Mayors started to be elected by public vote separate from municipal member. The new law necessitates that mayors at the centre of the governorate should
hold a bachelor degree. All citizens (18) years of age and above have the right to vote for their local council (Taamneh, 2007).

The Political Parties Law

Political parties were banned before the July 1963 elections. In September 1971, King Hussein announced the formation of a Jordanian National Union, which was the only legal political organization. In March 1972, the organization was renamed the Arab National Union but then in April 1974, King Hussein dissolved the executive committee of the Arab National Union. In February 1976, the Cabinet approved a law abolishing the Union. A royal commission was appointed in April 1990 to draft a National Charter, one feature of which was the legalisation of political parties. In January 1991, King Hussein approved the National Charter, which was formally endorsed in June. In July 1992, the House of Representatives adopted draft legislation which formally permitted the establishment of political parties (The Europa World Year Book, 2004: 2388).

In order to receive a license from the Ministry of Interior, a political party must meet the following conditions: respect for the constitution, principles of political pluralism and the security of Jordan; and no organisational or financial ties to non-Jordanian body. The headquarters, communications and correspondences of political parties, in turn are protected by the law from raids and searches except with a judicial order. Parties are allowed to issue publications in accordance with the Press and Publications Law (The Political Parties Law, 1992).

Article 3 of the Charter states:

A party is every political organisation which is formed by a group of Jordanians in accordance with the Constitution and the provisions of the Law, for the purpose of participating in political life and achieving specific goals concerning political, economic and social affairs, which works through legitimate and peaceful means. Further, Article 4 provides that "Jordanians have the right to form political parties and to voluntarily join them according to the provisions of the Law" (The Political Parties Law, 1992). On 18
May 2010, the government approved a temporary election law for the year 2010 (POGAR, 2010) increasing the number of seats in the House of Representatives to 120 from 110. It also doubled the number of seats allocated specifically for women to 12 from six with one seat for each of the 12 governorates (Zaitoon, 2010).

The Political System in Morocco

Following its independence in 1956 (Tachau, 1994: 385), Morocco has had several constitutions, which have introduced a parliamentary system and the concept of a legislative assembly elected by the people; but the sovereign retains the initiative by divine law. The allegiance of the Moroccan people establishes the monarch as "commander of the faithful." His power thus presents a doubly formidable obstacle for those who might think of vying for supreme command. Attacking him would be both a crime and a sacrilege (Hammoudi, 1997: 13). The first constitution was adopted on 10 March 1962 and was revised in 1970, 1972, 1980, 1992 and 1996. The amendment of the constitution on 23 September 1996 provides for bicameral legislature (ACRLI, 2006).

The preamble to the Constitution of Morocco adopted on 13 September 1996 declares Morocco as an “Islamic and fully sovereign state whose official language is Arabic; the Kingdom of Morocco constitutes a part of the Great Arab Maghreb.” Article 6 reiterates that “Islam shall be the state religion. The state shall guarantee freedom of worship for all.” Further, Article 7 mentions that “The motto of the Kingdom shall be: God, The Country, The King.” Article 1 states, “Morocco shall have a democratic, social and constitutional Monarchy.” Further Article 2 maintains, “Sovereignty shall be that of the people who shall exercise it directly, by means of referendum, or indirectly, through the constitutional institutions” (Kingdom of Morocco: The Constitution, 1996).

The Executive

According to Article 19, “The King, “Amir Al-Muminin” (Commander of the Faithful), shall be the supreme representative of the nation and the symbol of the unity thereof. He
shall be the guarantor of the perpetuation and the continuity of the state. As defender of the faith, he shall ensure the respect for the constitution. He shall be the protector of the rights and liberties of the citizens, social groups and organizations.” In addition, Article 23 says, “The person of the King shall be sacred and inviolable” (Kingdom of Morocco: The Constitution, 1996).

Articles 24-35 in chapter two of the constitution lay down the prerogatives of the King (Kingdom of Morocco: The Constitution, 1996). He ensures the respect for Islam and the constitution. By the same token, he is the guarantor of the independence of the nation and the territorial integrity of the kingdom within all its rightful boundaries. The King’s prerogatives are exercised at various levels. The King appoints the Prime Minister and upon the prime minister’s recommendation, he appoints the other cabinet members. The King presides over the cabinet meetings and has the power to dissolve the government either on his own initiative or because of their resignation. The powers of the King also include: promulgating laws, dissolving parliament, addressing the nation and parliament, issuing royal decrees. The King is the commander-in-chief of the Royal Armed Forces and appoints civil and military officials. The King signs and ratifies international treaties (Article 31). The King exercises the right of granting pardon; preside over the Supreme Council of the Magistracy, the Supreme Council of Education and the Supreme Council for National Reconstruction and Planning (Portail National du Maroc, 2006).

The crown is passed down to the eldest son unless the King named a different successor during his lifetime. The closest male relative is chosen if the King did not have sons and did not appoint another successor (Magharebia, 2008). Thus, like Jordan the King is the head of state and executive power is vested in him (ACRLI, 2006). The justification of these powers is based upon thirteen centuries of history and religion (Portail National du Maroc 2006).

The constitution provides for the institution of Regency in case the King is a minor. The major age of the King, which was fixed at 18 years old in the constitutions of 1963, 1970 and 1972, was reduced to 16 years after the constitutional revision of 1980. During the
King’s phase of minority, a Regency Council assumes the powers of the constitutional rights of the Crown with the exception of those pertaining to the revision of the constitution. The First President of the Supreme Court presides over the Regency Council. The members of the Council includes the president of the House of Representatives, the President of the House of Counsellors, the Chairman of the Rabat and Sale’ Ulama Council, and ten dignitaries appointed with the King’s own accord (Portail National du Maroc, 2006). The Regent Council performs the constitutional roles of the King until he reaches the age of 16 and serves as an advisory board until he turns 20 (Magharebia, 2008).

For long the Moroccan monarchy has relied heavily on the Royal Armed Forces (FAR) and on an internal security and intelligence establishment of considerable scope and power. Its democratic trappings are real: multiple parties with no single dominant one, a Parliament of long standing, yet it remains an authoritarian government controlled by a powerful monarch and his security apparatus (The Estimate, 1999).

For instance, after the 2007 elections, top leaders of the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP) Ali Bouabid along with two other leaders informed party leader Abdelwahed Radi that they were freezing their membership in the political bureau until the next party congress session. Bouabid believed that the policy of unconditionally backing the monarchy has stalled democratic reforms. This controversy within the USFP is emblematic of problems inside other political parties as well, in light of Morocco’s patronage based system and the centripetal force of the monarchy. Changes inside the USFP, which has participated in every Moroccan government since 1998 over the last decade are at the heart of the current problems (Monjib, 2010).

The Government

The Prime Minister may initiate legislation and exercise statutory powers, except in domains reserved for the King (ACRLI, 2006). The Government is accountable to the King and to the Parliament. The Prime Minister presents before each of the Chambers of
Parliament the programmes of the government. While the programme is debated at each Chamber, it is only voted in the House of Representatives. The procedure is restricted to a simple debate in the House of Counsellors. In the case of confidence motion, only the House of Representatives can grant or retain its confidence to the government when the general policy declaration is presented or when a text is voted. If the absolute majority of the House of Representatives’ members vote against the motion, the government shall tender collective resignation (Portail National du Maroc, 2006).

The Legislature

King Hassan II was the author of Morocco's first Constitution. The Constitution, guaranteed freedom of the press and of religion and created an elected legislature (Gregory, 1999). The constitution was approved overwhelmingly in a December 1962 referendum. In May 1963, legislative elections took place for the first time (Library of Congress, 2006) based on the bicameral system. It was made up of the House of Representatives and the House of Counsellors. The House of Representatives was elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term, whereas the House of counsellors was elected by indirect universal suffrage for a six-year term. Two thirds of it was elected by an electoral college composed of communal councils and one third was elected by a college composed of representatives of professional chambers and trade unions. The brief experiment with bicameral legislature ended after twenty months due to political instability (Portail National du Maroc, 2006). During the period (1963-1965), the country’s politics saw instability with bitter rivalries between the Palace-led cabinet – Front for the Defence of Constitutional Institutions (FDIC) and the oppositions – the Istiqlal Party and the National Union of Popular Forces Party (UNFP) over power dominance. The Casablanca riots of 1965 further exacerbated the fluid political situation (Waltz, 1995: 114).

As early as 1965, there were violent student riots in Casablanca and elsewhere over plans to cut funds for higher education. On the political front, arrests, imprisonment, exile and execution of opposition leaders followed. Mehdi Ben Barka, a prominent nationalist and
opposition leader of the UNFP was kidnapped in Paris and assassinated. In the midst of chaotic political situation, Hassan dissolved Parliament and instituted a state of emergency, wielding absolute power until a new constitution was adopted in 1970 (Shaoul, 1999). With the suspension of parliament due to civil unrest, the King grew resilient on the powerful Ministry of Interior to suppress political opposition (Phillips, 1995).

The constitution of 30 July 1970 abandoned the bicameral system and adopted the unicameral system. The House of Representatives was elected for a six-year term: one third was elected by direct universal suffrage and two thirds by indirect universal suffrage by colleges representing communal councils and professional chambers. Subsequent legislatures of 1977, 1984 and 1993 were unicameral. Two thirds of the House of Representatives, elected for a six-year term were elected by direct universal suffrage and one third was elected by a college composed of communal elected members as well as members elected by colleges composed of professional chambers and labour union representatives (Portail National du Maroc, 2006).

The Moroccan constitution provides for a strong monarchy but a weak parliament and judicial branch. Since the constitutional reform of 1996, the bicameral legislature consists of a lower chamber called the Chamber of Representatives, which is directly elected and an upper chamber, the Chamber of Counsellors, whose members are indirectly elected through various regional, local and professional councils. Parliament's powers are limited, but were expanded under the 1992 and 1996 constitutional revisions to include some budgetary matters, approval authority and establishment of commissions of inquiry to investigate the government's actions. Though never used, the lower chamber of Parliament may dissolve the government through a majority vote of no confidence (U.S Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, 2010).

Under the 1996 constitution, the 325 members of the House of Representatives are elected for a five-year term by direct universal suffrage. The 30 seats are reserved for women on a nationwide constituency basis (POGAR, 2000). In addition, women can also
contest from electoral districts outside their reservation slot. Speaker of the House of Representatives is elected by all the members for five years on a vote by secret ballot. In the absence of the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker assumes his/her role and functions. The members of the House of Counsellors are elected for a nine-year term by indirect universal suffrage. The House of Counsellors comprises 270 members out of which 162 counsellors are elected in each region by an electoral college consisting of the representatives of the district councils (local and regional councils, provincial and prefectoral assemblies). The remaining 108 counsellors are elected in each region by elected members of professional chambers (industry, agriculture, handicraft, commerce, service sector, labour union and sea fisheries). The speaker of the House of Counsellors is elected at the opening of October's session and at the renewal of the House (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2010).

The Parliament holds two sessions in a year. The constitution stipulates that an extraordinary session can be convened at the request of the absolute majority of one of the parliament chambers or at the request of the government. Sessions are open to public and each house drafts its own statutes whose constitutionality is systematically controlled by the Constitutional Council. With the revised Constitution of 13 September 1996, the legislative function underwent modifications in the new constitutional text by creating a new procedure between the two chambers. Draft bills and proposed bills are submitted to the two Chambers. In case the two Chambers failed to arrive at consensus, the government sets up a joint committee with equal representation. In case of disagreement, even after the submission of the text by the joint committee, the House of Representatives takes the final decision (Portail National du Maroc, 2006).

Prerogatives of the Parliament:
The prerogatives of Parliament concern the fields of law-making and the control of the government's action. The Prime Minister and members of Parliament have the right to initiate laws and propose amendment to laws. Draft bills are laid in one of the two Chambers (Portail National du Maroc, 2006). The powers of the Parliament were expanded under the 1992 and 1996 constitutional revisions to include budgetary matters,
approving bills, questioning ministers and establishing ad-hoc commissions of inquiry to investigate the government’s actions. A law passed by the parliament becomes effective only after it has been promulgated by royal decree. If the King disagrees with a law, he may return it to the parliament for re-examination or settle the issue through popular referendum. In either case, the outcome is invariably in line with the King’s wishes (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2008). A proposal for revision of constitution submitted in the Parliament is adopted only if voted on by a two-third majority of the members of the House concerned. The proposal is submitted to the other House, which may adopt it by a two-third majority of its members. Neither the state system of monarchy nor the prescriptions related to the religion of Islam may be subject to a constitutional revision (Portail National du Maroc, 2006).

**Relations between the King and the Parliament:**

Regarding the relation between the King and the Parliament, Article 67 stipulates, “The King may request a second reading by the two houses of any draft bill or proposed law.” Moreover, Article 68 reiterates, “A second reading shall be requested in a message. Such a new reading shall not be refused.” According to Article 69, “After a second reading, the King may, by Royal Decree, submit any draft bill or proposed law to referendum, except in the case of those submitted for a new reading which shall have been adopted or rejected by a two-third majority of the members of each one of the two Houses.” Further Article 70 says, “The results of the referendum shall be binding upon all” (Kingdom of Morocco: The Constitution, 1996). After consulting with the Speakers of the two Chambers and the Chairman of the Constitutional Council, the King may decree the dissolution of the two Houses or of one of them only. The election of the new Parliament or the new Chamber takes place at the latest within three months after the dissolution of Parliament. In the meantime, the King assumes the powers of the Parliament in terms of law making.
The Judiciary

Article 82 states that "the Judiciary shall be independent from the legislature and executive branches" and according to Article 83, "Sentences shall be passed and executed in the King's name" (Kingdom of Morocco: The Constitution, 1996). Morocco has a civil law system in which codes are adapted versions of the French civil law, except for matters of personal status which are based on religious laws. The Supreme Council of the Judiciary headed by the King has administrative authority over the judiciary. The Council consists of the Minister of Justice as Vice-President, the First President of the Supreme Court, the Prosecutor General in the Supreme Court, the President of the First Chamber of the Supreme Court, two representatives elected among magistrates of the Court of Appeal and four representatives elected among magistrates of First Instance Courts. Although the constitution clearly endorses the principle of separation of powers, there is significant participation of the executive in the judiciary. The ministry of justice plays an important role in judicial affairs, which supervises judges and oversees administrative matters connected with the courts, including budgetary issues (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2008).

Article 1 of the 1-74-388 Decree issued on 15 July 1974 determines the judicial organisation of the Kingdom as follows: Common law jurisdictions are composed of: Supreme Court, Courts of Appeal, First Instance Tribunals, Communal and District Courts. Specialised jurisdictions are Administrative Tribunals, and Tribunals of Commerce (Portail National du Maroc, 2006). There are 68 First Instance Tribunals including 183 centres for resident judges; 21 Courts of Appeal and the Supreme Court. The specialised jurisdictions are 7 Administrative Tribunals; 8 Tribunals of Commerce; 3 Appellate Courts of Commerce; and the High Court (Article 88 of the Constitution). Until 1965, French was the working language of Moroccan jurisdictions. Since then, Arabic has been used instead with the exception of the acts registered in the trade registers which are still accepted in French (Portail National du Maroc, 2006).
As the apex court, the Supreme Court has jurisdiction to review the decisions of all courts and tribunals, and disputes arising among courts. It hears appeals for review of the government’s decisions and adjudicates suits for bias filed against magistrates and courts with the exception of its own. It can only review cases that make it to the Courts of Appeal and that deal with life sentences, and the death penalty. Courts of Appeal try criminal cases and rule on appeals against judgements passed by Tribunals of original jurisdiction. Courts of Appeal only handle cases involving crimes punishable by five years in prison or more. Courts of First Instance adjudicate crimes punishable by up to five years imprisonment and civil, personal status or commercial cases (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2008).

Courts of First Instance include the Communal and District Courts, which settle minor criminal offences and the Sadad Courts, which have general jurisdiction and are organized into separate Sharia, Rabbinical, Civil, Commercial, Administrative and Penal sections. The Sharia and Rabbinical courts settle matters of personal status for members of their respective communities. Trade Courts rule on cases involving commercial activities. The majority of legal matters fall within the jurisdiction of Regional Tribunals. The Administrative Courts hear disputes related to administrative contracts. It adjudicates claims for compensation of prejudice caused by public entities’ acts or activities. Besides, the High Court of Justice looks into the charges against government officials over criminal and felonious matters. It consists of equal number of members elected from the House of Representatives and the House of Counsellors. Its president is appointed by the Royal decree. There is a Standing Tribunal for the Royal Armed Forces as well (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2008). Further, a six-member Constitutional Council appointed by the King for nine years oversees the validity of legislative elections, referenda, organic laws and the rules of procedure of both chambers of the parliament (ACRLI, 2006).
The Regional and Local Governments

According to Article 100 “the local government of the Kingdom shall consist of Regions, Prefectures, Provinces and Communes. No other form of local government may be established except by law.” Article 101 further states that “local assemblies shall be elected to be responsible for the conduct of their affairs on the basis of democratic principles and in accordance with provisions defined by law. Governors shall carry out decisions by provincial, prefectoral and regional assemblies in accordance with the conditions set by the law” (Kingdom of Morocco: The Constitution, 1996).

Morocco is divided into multiple levels of local government, all directly under the Ministry of the Interior. At the top are 16 administrative regions governed by walis, which are further divided into 38 provinces administered by governors. Walis and governors are appointed by the King. As part of his initiative to appoint technocrats to local government positions, King Mohammad VI appointed new walis in 13 of the 16 regions and new governors in 14 of the 38 provinces in June 2005. The provinces are in turn divided into urban and rural municipalities. Morocco has 1544 municipalities, each of which elects municipal councils and mayors by general election. Morocco’s municipal councils oversee most local services and elect two-third of the members of the House of Counsellors (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2008).

The urban provinces are divided into prefectures. Provinces and refectures have elected councils and there is little difference in their powers. Provinces cover larger areas and rural districts while prefectures cover small areas and are wholly or mainly urban. Provinces are divided into small units called Communes. A semi-federal system is proposed, in part to accommodate the disputed Western Sahara within Morocco. In the 1990s, as a first step towards that aspiration, the kingdom was divided into seven economic regions, each grouping provinces and prefectures. In 2002, the seven regions were replaced by 16 regions, one of which occupies southern Western Sahara and two of which straddle the border between Morocco and Western Sahara (Carpenter, 2007: 1236).
Political Organisations

Article 3 states that "political parties, unions, district councils and trade chambers shall participate in the organisation and representation of the citizens" (The Constitution, 1996). The majority of Moroccan parties are of the right or centre-right orientation. The most prominent ones are the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP), Istiqlal (a Socialist-democratic party), the (Islamic) Justice and Development Party (PJD), the (conservative) National Rally of Independents (RNI), the (conservative) Popular Movement (MP), the (conservative) National Popular Movement (MNP) and the (centre) Constitutional Union (UC). Informal alliances are forged during elections, such as the conservative Wifaq bloc, the Centre bloc and the left-wing Koutla bloc. None of the party has won an absolute majority in the parliamentary elections (Carpenter, 2007: 1236).

In relation to political parties, the monarchy is not averse to leaning on loyalist organisations at critical times. It instigated the creation of a political organisation that was to give it support during the first parliamentary experiment of 1963. For instance, in 1962, the party supporting the monarchy – the Front for the Defense of Constitutional Institutions (FDIC) was founded by A.Reda Guedira, a long time friend and close advisor of the King (Hammoudi 1997: 19-20). In 1977 Parliament elections, although the maority of elected representatives as independents were Palace loyalists, under a formal party organisation, Istiqlal (Independence) emerged a single majority party, which joined the government. To retain his control and organise his Independent supporters, in 1978 King Hassan urged his loyalist Prime Minister and brother-in-law Ahmed Osman to bring together loyalist independents under a party banner, resulting in formation of National Rally of Independents (RNI) (Tachau, 1994: 390).

In both cases, the Palace was careful not to identify openly with any specific group. Within the logic of the system, such identification would have contradicted the notion of royal sovereignty as bestowed by divine grace upon the Commander of the Faithful (Hammoudi 1997: 19-20). Significantly, even in the present context, the fundamental
challenge of reconciling an activist Monarch with a constitution of limited powers of the King remains. Constitutional monarchies, as compared to European systems have long eschewed participation in day-to-day politics but the Moroccan King remains the central protagonist in the political landscape (White, 2001: 37-38).

From the overview of political systems, both Jordan and Morocco have similar structure and functioning of their respective political systems. In both the countries, the Kings are not only the head of states but also the chief executives of their respective governments. Although, their constitutions provide for Council of Ministers, headed by the Prime Minister, the real executive power lies with the Kings. The Prime Minister is accountable to the King as well as the parliament. Despite various provisions accorded to parliaments to monitor and check the government, the constitutions also place the Kings as the arbiters in the policy formulation and control over government. In judicial aspects, both countries’ constitutions stipulate that judiciary is free from the intervention of executive and legislative organs. However, the Kings sit at the apex of the judicial councils who can appoint and terminate their services. Even Political Parties’ Laws are frequently amended and altered at the convenience of the kings to suit their interests, which hardly provides space for the political parties to function effectively. The executive branch of the Kings also permeates the local governments, with the governors of the provinces and regions appointed through the Royal decree.