

Electoral Engineering in Autocracies: Effects of the 2021 Electoral Reform on Morocco's Parliamentary Elections

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Inmaculada Szmolka

This article examines the effects of electoral engineering in the 2021 Moroccan parliamentary elections. It demonstrates that Morocco's proportional system, introduced in 2002 and reformed in 2021, is designed to co-opt political parties, prevent a predominant party and promote party system fragmentation, in line with the monarchy's interests. Nevertheless, the electoral system is not imposed on political parties. The analysis of the process of electoral reform yields evidence of the political parties' involvement in electoral engineering, the changing political stances of the Moroccan parties, the role of administrative parties as intermediaries of the Minister of the Interior and, ultimately, the connivance between the political regime and the political parties, which acquiesce to the electoral rules in the expectation of being rewarded with seats and even office. In addition, the in-depth electoral analysis and the electoral simulation conducted in this paper reveal that the 2021 electoral reform led to an extreme multi-party system with balance between parties. The electoral amendments were particularly detrimental to the largest party, and to a lesser extent to the second and third parties. By contrast, the electoral reform benefitted small and medium-size parties in the new regional districts, where most of them are significantly overrepresented.

More information

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About the Author

Inmaculada Szmolka is Senior Lecturer in Comparative Politics; Middle East Politics at the University of Granada (Spain).

Twitter: [@InmaSzmolka](https://twitter.com/InmaSzmolka)