

A Changing Political Landscape: The 2022 General Election in Jersey

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ABSTRACT: This paper analyses the general election held on 22nd June 2022 in the Bailiwick of Jersey, a British Crown Dependency and the largest of the Channel Islands with a population of 107,800. This election is notable for two reasons. First, the new electoral system entailed the abolition of island-wide senators and the election of thirty-seven deputies elected across nine districts using the multiple non-transferable vote (or ‘bloc vote’) variant of the ‘first past the post’ system, and one *connetable* (the elected head of the parish) from each of the island’s twelve parishes, to the States Assembly. Second, in a system traditionally dominated by independent candidates, this election saw the appearance of political parties on a significant scale, giving voters distinct left and right blocs to choose from for the first time. This paper uses material obtained by interviews with all those closely involved in this election supported by the analysis of additional content-materials such as news articles, published reports and campaign manifestoes. Finally, this paper discusses Jersey’s unique system of government and traces the context within which the election occurred and concludes by reflecting on the brand positioning of each of the island’s political parties, considers the prospects for an emerging party system and draws out governance and political implications for Jersey in the years ahead.

Keywords: branding, Crown Dependencies, elections, Jersey, political parties, small states, subnational jurisdictions, territories

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Introduction

Jersey’s general election of 22 June 2022 was historic. In the first election since wide-ranging reforms to the island’s voting system were implemented, ninety-two candidates contested the forty-nine seats in the island’s States Assembly. For the first time, voters had a choice of four political parties to vote for. Chief minister John Le Fondre lost his seat, alongside ten other high profile and long-serving members; twenty-one first time deputies were elected. Beatrix Poree became Jersey’s first minority ethnic deputy, women made up fifty one percent of newly elected deputies, and on 27 June Kristina Moore became the island’s first female chief minister. A recognisably centre-left party doubled its representation from five to ten seats, whilst the three other parties, a combination of centrist and centre-right groupings, failed to make any significant breakthroughs in a political landscape where the States Assembly would still be dominated by thirty-five independents.

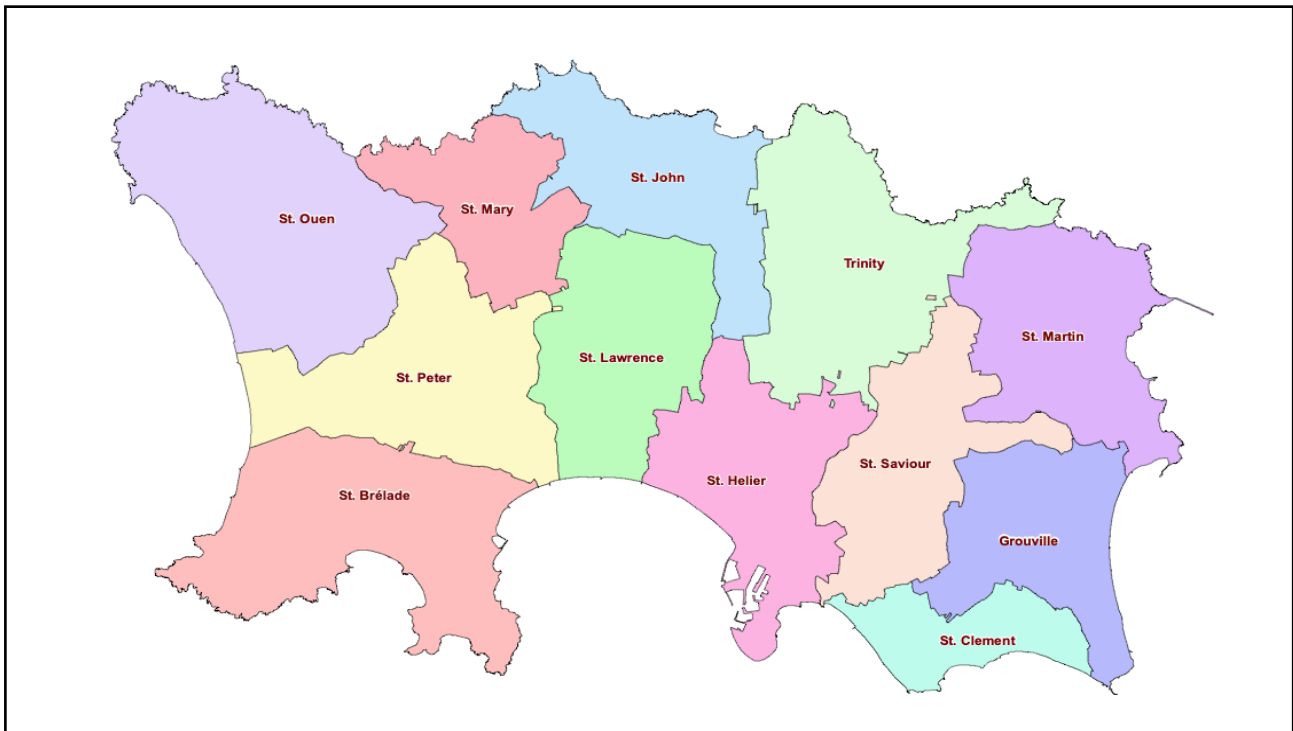
This article considers the context, onset and implications of Jersey’s general election. It draws extensively upon interviews with all the key players in the island’s politics, as well as reports, official

documents, statistical data and news articles. It starts by framing Jersey and its 2022 general election in the context of the study of small states and territories, contextualising the island's politics and system of government. In undertaking a literature review that places Jersey within the context of the politics of the Crown Dependencies, it points to a shortage of research that constitutes an odd omission for a British territory in the British Isles. The article then discusses the theoretical underpinning and research methods employed, arguing that a phenomenological approach is a critical tool in the context of Jersey's 2022 general election. The article then reflects upon the findings of the research. The background to the 2022 general election is briefly considered, and then a discussion is advanced on the emergence of a party system in Jersey by engaging with the literature of party typology and brand positioning. We argue that Jersey is, most probably, in the early days of being on the road to an established party system. Finally, the consequences of the election for the island's politics and governance are discussed, alongside the wider implications of Jersey's election. Future potential research directions are also presented.

Ma Normandie: Jersey in context

Along with Guernsey and the Isle of Man, the Bailiwick of Jersey is one of the three British Crown Dependencies. The island is under the sovereignty of the British monarch but is not part of the United Kingdom, which handles Jersey's defence and, with consultation, the island's international representation. Jersey's constitutional status gives it self-government and judicial independence; Jersey has never been a part of the European Union (EU). The island, positioned in the Bay of St Malo, covers a land area of 119.5 km² and is 22 km from Normandy, of which it is culturally and historically a part. Jersey lies 161 km from the south coast of England. In 1204, the English Crown lost mainland Normandy following the Battle of Rouen, but Jersey's elite were instead persuaded to stay with England instead by King John. Jersey's current constitutional position is based on this foundation, where the privileges granted by the English monarch included self-government. Jèrriais, a Romance language and a form of Norman French, was the traditional language of Jersey's people and is still used in administrative and governmental circles. Around 3% of the population currently claim to speak the language and 15% claim some working knowledge of Jèrriais.

Figure 1: Map of Jersey and its parishes (Mapping Services Team, Jersey).



The island is divided into twelve administrative units known as parishes, and each are named after the saints to which their parish church is dedicated (see [Figure 1](#)). The parish is Jersey's local government and the Connetable (constable) is the directly elected head, assisted by a parish municipality who each have specific responsibilities relating to local services. Parishes also play a key role in wider community events and are at the heart of Jersey's social and cultural life. The parish is, therefore, the basic tier of both Jersey's democracy and society.

Jersey is a unitary jurisdiction and parliamentary representative democracy. The Bailiff is the head of the judiciary and the chief minister serves as the head of Jersey's government. The States of Jersey (Etats d'Jerri) is the island's parliament, holds executive and legislative power, and consists of the Assembly of States members, composed of the island's thirty-seven deputies and the Connetable of each of the twelve parishes. Jersey has had ministerial, as opposed to committee government, since 2005. The elected States members appoint the Council of Ministers, led by the Chief Minister, which co-ordinates administration and policy, and presents a strategic plan for the island every three to four years. Ministers are appointed by the chief minister or any other states assembly member, but must be confirmed by the States Assembly. There are nine government departments: Office of the Chief Executive; Treasury and Exchequer; Justice and Home Affairs; Children, Young People, Education and Skills; Health and Community Services; Infrastructure, Housing and Environment; Customer and Local Services; Chief Operating; and Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance.

The island's economy, once based on agriculture and tourism, has been transformed since the 1960s by the offshore financial sector. One long serving deputy, and former government minister, outlines those changes. The biggest change of all is the upward growth of the financial services sector, thanks to some really forward-thinking politicians in the sixties, seventies and eighties:

We have developed one of the foremost international finance sectors in the world. I know that we're not the biggest, but we have a massive amount of experience behind us, our courts have been operating for centuries, we have a lot of 'going with the flow' regulation, a lot of well-regarded industries that employ a massive amount of people. So, I guess that's the biggest change in Jersey life. Our countryside is under pressure from building and houses like everywhere else. We still have tourists, but a different type of tourist, and the vast majority of people are in financial services now.

Literature review

There continues to be a paucity of research on the governance and political processes of small states (Ahlawat & Cogan, 2023; Reardon & Pich, 2021). More specifically, there have been very few studies devoted to the Crown Dependencies (Pich, Armannsdottir & Dean, 2020; Reardon & Pich, 2021). This is surprising given that the Crown Dependencies including the Isle of Man, the Bailiwick of Guernsey and Bailiwick of Jersey represent a dynamic set of related yet distinct independent jurisdictions (House of Commons, 2009). Moreover, the three territories exercise powers of quasi-independent states and continue to represent under-researched political units within a broader "British family" (Ministry of Justice, 2020, p.3). Nevertheless, there has been intermittent literature on the Isle of Man, where the focus has been upon the island's constitutional evolution and political processes (Kermode, 2001, 2002) accompanied by explicit calls for further research into those areas. A landmark review of the island's parliamentary governance (Lisvane, 2016) led to analysis of the subsequently instituted constitutional reforms within a small democracy theoretical and comparative framework (Edge, 2020), but without any further published research on Manx politics or political culture more generally.

Similarly, there is limited research in the context of Guernsey. Guernsey's policy and resources committee, the senior committee of government, reviewed the island's governance structures, using an appreciative enquiry methodology which drew extensively upon the experiences of deputies and senior civil servants (States of Guernsey, 2019). This initiated structural reforms relating to systems and behaviour which passed unnoticed beyond the island. Guernsey has, however, been used as a case study exploring how election candidates construct their own personal brand in a competitive political system that was then without political parties (Pich, Armannsdottir & Dean, 2020). Furthermore, Pich, Armannsdottir & Dean (2020) concluded that further research on political systems in other small states was needed as existing studies tended to favour larger jurisdictions with established party systems. This in turn would provide additional insight into the dynamic and evolving political environments, which often are under-researched and remain an enigma to outsiders (Pich, Armannsdottir & Dean, 2020). Similarly, Reardon & Pich (2021) investigated and reflected on Guernsey's 2020 General Election following distinct changes to its electoral system from a political environment dominated by individual-independent politicians to the emergence of 'political parties'. However, following the 2020 General Election, the new political parties failed to make the anticipated breakthrough and independent politicians continued to be the dominant force within the Guernsey Parliament [The States of Guernsey]. Reardon & Pich (2021) concluded with an appeal for further research devoted to other contexts which would provide badly needed insights into other jurisdictions facing similar changes and challenges.

In terms of Jersey, the limited research focuses upon the island's status as an offshore financial centre (Murphy, 2010; Shaxson, 2012; Bullough, 2015). Moreover, there has been some commentary and criticism of the island's weak system of governance and the policy implications of this architecture (Entwistle & Oliver, 2015). There has been very limited discussion of elite political culture on the island within the context of financial practices (Mitchell & Sikka, 1999) and of the relationship between the island's constitutional position versus practical economic constraints (Le

Reindu, 2004). That which exists is rather dated. In addition, existing research in the context of Jersey has focused on government reports and policy papers associated with strategic goals, economic options, policy and broader societal development options (States of Jersey 2011, 2018, 2021). In addition, there appears to be limited academic research focused on Jersey's political system and reflections on electioneering (Reardon & Pich, 2021).

There are, therefore, significant gaps within the literature on the politics of the Crown Dependencies. The most common focus tends to be upon issues that are consequences of the three island's political systems themselves, most notably taxation and financial issues, rather than the actual structures of the political system that underpin the policy process and the three unique political cultures themselves. No study has yet explored the context and impact of an election in Jersey (Reardon & Pich, 2021). These are rather odd omissions, considering the Crown Dependencies status as British Islands and their increasingly unique international identities post-Brexit (UK Parliament, 2017). Furthermore, this appears consistent with the wider calls for further insight and understanding of electioneering, political structures and political processes in diverse geographic contexts (Ahlawaf & Cogan, 2023; Bochsler, 2023; Katz, 2019). This is particularly the case in small states witnessing fundamental changes to the political landscapes, as with the introduction of political parties (Otjes & Van de Wardt, 2020; Pich, Armannsdottir & Dean, 2020; Reardon & Pich, 2021).

Therefore, this paper analyses and reflects on Jersey's General Election held on 22nd June 2022. Jersey represented an appropriate context for two reasons. First, its new electoral system entailed the abolition of island-wide senators and the election of thirty-seven deputies elected across nine districts. Secondly up until 2022, Jersey's system was traditionally dominated by independent candidates and the election witnessed the appearance of political parties on a significant scale, giving voters distinct left and right blocs to choose from for the first time.

Methodology

This article employs the qualitative research method of one-to-one interviews. A phenomenological approach, as developed by Husserl (2012) is used throughout. Phenomenology helps us to learn from the experiences of others and focuses on an individual's lived experiences within the world. Phenomenology considers how we share a similar experience of the world around us, identified by Brooks (2015) as the lifeworld, where we can only really comprehend concepts when they are grounded in concrete experience. Indeed, it provides us with a useful framework for understanding the context around events such as an election.

Sample

The study adopted a purposive sampling framework consistent with qualitative approach (Gorman & Clayton, 2005) which involves researchers selecting "the sample based on his or her judgement about some appropriate characteristic required of the sampling members" (Zikmund, 2003, p. 382). Furthermore, qualitative researchers tend to select a purposive sample technique as the aim is not to infer generalisations to the population but to gain an understanding of a particular phenomenon from the perspective of specific groups of individuals (Daymon and Holloway, 2011; Gorman and Clayton, 2005). Our initial sample was selected by our identification of personnel in leadership positions in Jersey's political parties, and others in political and societal leadership roles who we felt would be able to provide commentary and analysis of Jersey's emerging party system.

This included, but was certainly not restricted to, party leaders, and also encompassed those performing key administrative and organisational roles in Jersey's political parties who were not necessarily seeking office themselves, as well as key players in Jersey's civil society. Selected

participants were contacted by email in late October 2021 and invited to contribute to the research. Those responding positively were then provided with more detailed information about our aims with interview times arranged accordingly. The interviews themselves, which used a semi-structured format to give interviewees time to relay their lived experiences and wider thoughts, were conducted by telephone and online via Zoom. A total of 12 people were interviewed between November 2021 and February 2022 and interviews lasted from fifty to ninety minutes each.

Analysis

In order to improve the rigor and trustworthiness of the methodology, this study adopted the strategy of data triangulation (Bell et al. 2019). Data triangulation refers to researchers using multiple sources and a variety of material as part of the research project. In the case of this study, the additional sources-materials analysed alongside the interview transcripts ranged from notes made during the interviews by the researchers, practitioner reports, manifestoes, websites and news articles which focused on the Jersey General Election. Analysing multiple sources-materials provided deeper insight into the phenomenon under study and supported the development of key themes uncovered from the one-to-one interviews (Bell et al. 2019; Denzin 2017).

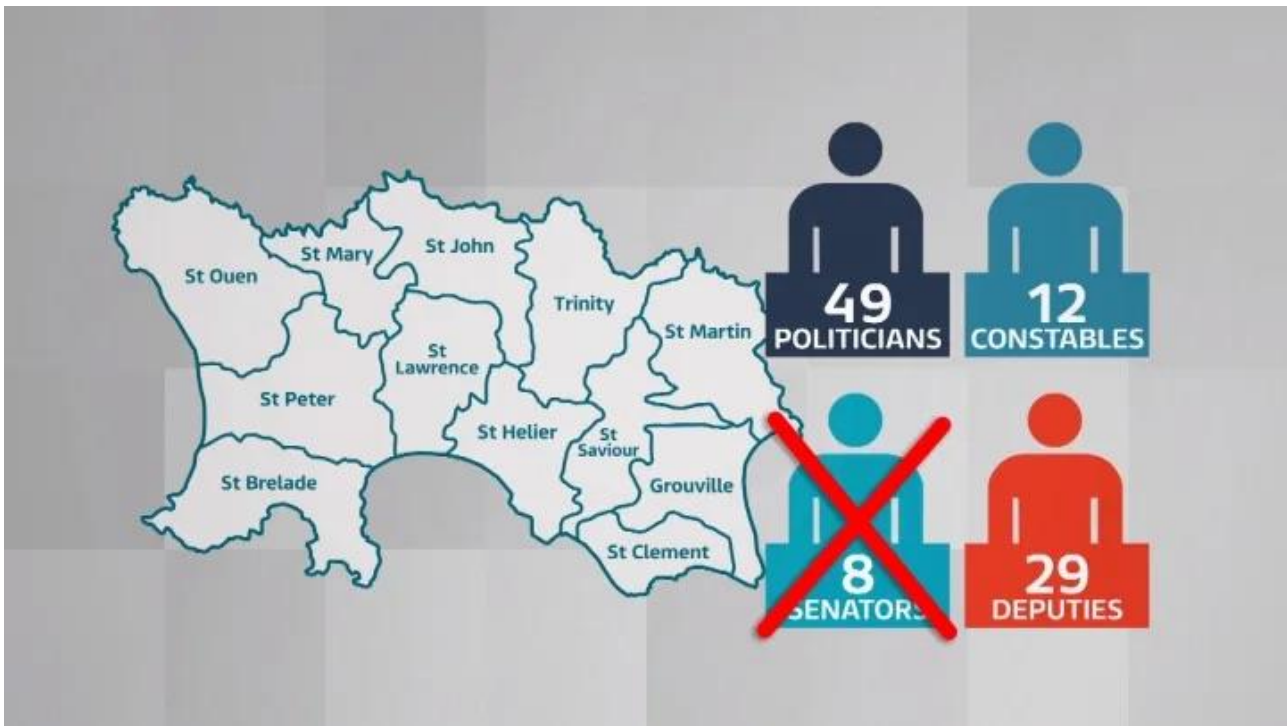
The recordings from the 12 interviews were transcribed by the researchers and each transcript ranged from 5,000 to 9,000 words. In order to analyse the transcripts, thematic analysis was adopted as part of the analytical strategy. Thematic analysis can be seen as a flexible approach adopted by researchers to identify patterns and distinct themes in the data (Bell et al., 2019). The goal of thematic analysis is to ‘construct a plausible and persuasive explanation of what is transpiring from the emergent themes, recognising again all the explanations are partial by nature, and there are always multiple ways that experiences and/or phenomena can be explained’ (Butler-Kisber, 2010, p. 31). Moreover, this study adhered to Braun & Clarke’s (2006) six phased framework of thematic analysis. This simplistic framework represented a systematic process starting with a familiarisation with the transcripts, followed by creating codes and developing themes, reflecting on and amending themes within and across transcripts and finally consolidating themes ahead of reporting the findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Findings

To recap, this paper set out to analyse Jersey’s general election of 2022 and its political implications. Our research highlights three key themes connected with the election. First, the disruptor effect of constitutional reforms in 2020 that led to the abolition of the eight island-wide senators and their replacement with thirty-seven representatives elected across nine electoral districts. Second, the emergence of political parties on a significant scale for the first time since the advent of universal suffrage on the island in 1945. Third, the short-term implications of the election. Each area provides deep insight into understanding this election and its implications for Jersey’s democracy and governance.

In 2020, after many previous attempts to introduce reform starting in the 1990s, the States Assembly approved the abolition of the eight island-wide senator roles and their replacement by an increased number of deputies as compensation, chosen from nine electoral districts electing, three, four or five members. The conetable position remained largely unchanged, although in an election where there is only a single candidate nominated, voters then have the option of placing a cross against a specific ‘none of the above’ option. The move proved controversial given the criticism that no elected states member would have an island-wide mandate, an established tradition in the island’s politics and a unique feature of Jersey’s governance. There were no changes to the method of plurality voting, with the attendant criticism of skewered results.

Figure 2: Jersey's revised electoral system (Credit: ITV Channel TV).



The constitutional reforms of 2020

The changes were driven by a desire to simplify the voting system and to increase voter turnout, which in 2018 was 43.4%, a startlingly low figure compared to other small states and territories. In 2013, an island-wide referendum on electoral reform was seen as having significantly damaged public trust in the island's governance. Islanders were asked to choose between three different electoral systems and to rank them in order of preference. Option A offered voters forty-two deputies to be elected in six, seven-member constituencies; Option B, the most preferred option, was for forty-two deputies elected in six, five-member constituencies, and Option C was for forty-five deputies elected in constituencies of different sizes. On 24th April 2013, voter turnout collapsed to 26%, and in the States Assembly vote on adopting the referendum outcome two months later the proposals were rejected.

Back to the future? Jersey's party system

Political parties in Jersey are not a recent development. Jersey's experience of political parties is very different from that of its neighbour Guernsey. Whereas Guernsey had no tradition of political parties until just before the island's general election of October 2020, Jersey has, on occasion and going back many years, had political parties. This perhaps makes the island more comparable to the Isle of Man, where parties have also occasionally appeared, than to Guernsey. This should not detract from the fact that independents have historically overwhelmingly dominated the island's politics, especially in the post-war period.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a duopoly of radicals and conservatives contested elections in Jersey, known as the Magots, symbolised by a rose, and the Charlots, whose emblem was a laurel. The existence of rose gardens or laurels in older houses on the island is still said to identify the political allegiances of the former property owners. With the introduction of secret voting towards

the end of the nineteenth century, independents became more dominant, but hangover groups from the two earlier parties contested elections in the early years of the twentieth century. Constitutional reforms implemented in the aftermath of the second world war and the occupation of the island saw the emergence of two main political parties in the early post-war years: the Jersey Democratic Movement and the Jersey Progressive Party. The Jersey Communist Party, a separate entity from the Communist Party of Great Britain, was also established on the island as a campaigning rather than an electoral presence; one of its longstanding members and activists, Norman Le Brocq, was elected to the States, albeit as an independent, in 1972. A smattering of political parties then appeared in later years. In 1990, Stuart Syvret became the first Green to be elected to a national parliament anywhere in Britain. The centre-left Jersey Democratic Alliance (JDA) were successful in securing a small number of seats in the States Assembly between 2005 and its dissolution in 2011; whilst the centre-right Centre Party, in existence from 2005 to 2007, was unsuccessful in getting any of its members elected, although some were subsequently elected as independents. A Jersey branch of the UK Liberal Democrats has been in existence since 2011 but has not contested any elections and lies outwith Jersey's political system.

From 2011 until 2014, there were no registered political parties in Jersey. Reform Jersey, initially established as a pressure group, subsequently became the island's next established political party and registered at the Royal Court on 4th July 2014 with a view towards contesting the general election later that year. Reform Jersey identifies very clearly as a centre-left social democratic party with close links to the island's small trade union movement. In the October 2014 poll, Reform Jersey secured 4.4% of the vote, electing three out of forty-nine deputies, with the remaining seats going to independent candidates. A number of Reform Jersey's candidates, most notably Geoff Southern, had previously contested elections as members of the Jersey Democratic Alliance, and in Southern's case were elected. Four years later, the party held its four seats in the States Assembly with leader Sam Mezec securing the final, island-wide, senatorial seat. Later that year, Mezec was appointed as Jersey's first minister of Children and Housing.

No further political parties appeared in Jersey until 2021, when both the Progress Party and the Jersey Alliance registered with the Royal Court. Progress, self-identifying as a centrist big-tent party, was formed by two current and one previous States members, with Senator Steve Pallett as leader. The centre-right Jersey Alliance was formed by Sir Mark Boleat as leader, with chief minister John Le Fondre and three other government ministers drawn from the States. In January 2022, the Jersey Liberal Conservatives (JLC) registered, identifying as fiscally conservative, culturally liberal and centre-right, chaired by former external relations minister Sir Philip Bailhache. This set the scene for an election unlike anything Jersey had experience before, with changes to the voting system and the appearance of political parties. Sam Mezec stated that "the election won't just be a glorified personality contest" (ITV News, 23 June 2021). A former senator and government minister cautiously welcomed the move towards political parties.

It's a really interesting one and I think I'm on the record being quoted as saying I think that political parties are necessary and they are an important part of political debate. However, I've been involved for a number of years in discussions about setting up and merging parties and groups, and I still haven't managed to form one or join one. I think for me it's particularly obvious at the moment, especially with talking to people in the UK, they look at me and ask why on earth would I want to start one? I was slightly nervous from that perspective. But I did feel that people deserve greater transparency about who is connected to whom, who shares a similar common platform and agenda to each other because it hasn't always been that apparent. It was impossible to hold anyone to account as to whether they had achieved their manifesto commitments when they are an independent and they are just one of forty-nine. But parties with numbers and backing and support helps to achieve those manifesto promises.

One leading figure from the island's business community argues that political parties have arisen as a result of a leadership vacuum on the island.

It's possible to run politics without parties. A lot depends on the individuals involved. With island wide elections you give people an opportunity to have a say on who should take the leading positions in government, and that gives people a direct say. The government machine is not working.

There are things to be done. Whether this means party politics permanently I don't know. I just want good quality government. We have party politics through a combination of poor leadership and the decision to get rid of senators, which you can argue is a symptom of bad leadership.

The process of establishing political parties was not, however, without its challenges, as one deputy who came round to the idea of political parties, explains.

A few years ago I wasn't really a party person at all. We all stood on our independent mandates, and in my small parish I've had a reasonable amount of success bringing things forward. But as time has gone on, and I'm now coming to the end of my third session of the states, it's much clearer that if you want to get anything done party politics is the way to do it. As an individual I've realised that if you're a minister it's very difficult to get anything done. If you sit on the backbenches you might moan and scream and you might be lucky to get something passed, but it's about the accountability of the States Assembly. They have made some decisions which haven't really been followed through in the way we expected them to be.

We underestimated the task ahead of us. It wasn't too bad coming up with the constitution and the by-laws and that sort of thing. We managed to do that. A few others came on board and we got there. But it was some of the stuff that we hadn't even thought about, like a bank account. One colleague is an accountant and he's got a lawyer with him. For nine months it was nigh on impossible to find a clearing bank anywhere in Jersey that would go near us with a bargepole. We were on the verge of going to the Greffier, who is the senior clerk in our Assembly, and saying to him you've got to do something about this because as a political party we can't get anyone to open a bank account for us.

Jersey's emerging party system underlines the need for more research into party typology. Much of this literature was formulated in the 1960s and focused solely on the typology of western political parties. The most recent, and significant, research into this area has been Gunther and Diamond (2003) who argue that an explosion in party diversity means that the typologies devised six decades ago are inadequate in applying party typology to Jersey and other modern, especially emerging, party systems. Drawing upon the Gunther and Diamond typology and combining it with an analysis of party platform orientation, we can make the following assessment about the four political parties that contested Jersey's general election.

The Jersey Liberal Conservatives and the Jersey Alliance can both be categorised as elite parties given their basis with established elites within the specific geographical area of the island. Both parties hold centre-right views. Reform Jersey, the most established of the island's four parties, can be currently categorised as organisationally thin, but with the features of a movement party, categorised by Gunther and Diamond as a party that seeks to represent economic interest groups and is concerned about matters of economic distribution given the closeness of the party to the island's

trade union movement. Moreover, Reform Jersey is the party most likely to establish a mass membership, identified by Gunther and Diamond as a context where party members penetrate in other areas of civic society with the objective of advancing programmatic objectives. This can already be evidenced by Reform Jersey’s links with pressure groups and others on the island. Progress can also be identified as organisationally thin, and also as an electoralist and catch-all party formed for the purpose of contesting elections and maximising its vote, with a clear centrist positioning.

The election campaign and outcome

When the changes to the voting system were agreed in 2021 it was also decided to hold the next general election in June 2022 rather than May, so that a five-week campaign would be uninterrupted by a series of bank holidays. This provided a significant run-up period for the candidates and the establishment of political parties. The dedicated States-supported website, www.vote.je, served as the official portal for candidates and voters.

Eligible voters must be sixteen years of age or older on the day of election and to have lived in Jersey for two years, or resided on the island for six months in addition to a period that adds up to five years. Candidates for public office must be eighteen or older on the day of election, British citizens and resident in Jersey for at least two years up to and including the day of the election, and resident in Jersey for six months up to and including the day of the election, as well as a total period of five years previously.

Of the twelve parish elections for connetable, eight saw the incumbent standing unopposed. Only one candidate, Philip Le Sueur in Trinity, who himself was unopposed, was elected, although he resigned from the party a month after the election. A total of seventy-six candidates contested the thirty-seven deputy seats. Most, totaling thirty-five, were independents. Reform Jersey fielded the most candidates of any political party with fourteen, the Jersey Alliance stood thirteen, the JLC put forward five and Progress four. Five candidates stood under the banner of Better Way, an initiative whereby sitting States members could offer support to new independent candidates who signed *The Principles of Better Way 2022* pledge. Better Way was not a registered party and each candidate was ultimately free to campaign on their own manifesto and policy priorities. With multiple candidate voting, independents won thirty-five seats, four were associated with Better Way, Reform Jersey gained five to secure ten, the JLC won two, Progress also won one and the Jersey Alliance, to widespread surprise, failed to secure a seat in the assembly.

Figure 3: Distribution of the 49 seats in the States of Jersey Assembly

Party	2018 general election	2022 general election
Independent	44	35
Reform Jersey	5	10
Liberal Conservatives	Party not formed	2
Jersey Alliance	Party not formed	1
Progress Party	Party not formed	1

Jersey's general election of 2022 prompted a considerable degree of reflection. Three substantial reports were produced, with each one making specific recommendations for the next poll, due in 2026.

First, Vote.je, the island's official election portal and voting guide, produced a report that reflected upon the work undertaken by the States' Digital and Public Engagement Team, whose remit was to improve voter turnout, ensure greater candidate diversity and boost media coverage (Vote.je 2022). The strategy, and subsequent report, shows highly detailed strategic thinking in preparation for the general election and honest assessments following the poll. The report contains the full details of what happened across a range of areas, including media coverage, town hall meetings, social media, events and activities. The concluding targets and outcomes section and the objectives and outcomes section highlight both the relative success of the strategy and the significant changes that the final results brought about in the context of a very different voting system. A precise comparison with the 2018 general election is difficult because of the changes to the electoral system, but the report notes that turnout for the deputy elections was 41.6% (down from 42.3% in 2018) and that for connectables 39.8%. Some deputies were elected unopposed in 2018 and there were four contested connectable elections in 2022, up from one in 2018. The report notes the election of a more diverse states assembly, with thirteen female deputies elected in 2018 up to twenty-one in 2022, and the election in 2022 of the first ethnic minority deputy (Beatriz Poree) and Jersey's first Romanian-origin deputy (Raluca Kovacs).

A second report was produced by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (British Islands and Mediterranean Region) reflecting the work and findings of their electoral observation mission to Jersey at the invitation of the States Assembly (CPA 2022). This served as an independent assessment of Jersey's general election against the island's own laws and international standards. The report makes a number of urgent recommendations that focus largely on issues of electoral administration but also broadening participation by, for example, allowing prisoners to vote and broadening the base of those eligible to stand as candidates. It notes that there are still significant obstacles to democratic participation in Jersey, noting in particular the failure of the island to adopt the 2008 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the limitations placed on participation in public life as a result. The report also notes inaccuracies in the register of voters and administrative errors that precluded participation in the election. In short, the report argues, participation is not broad enough, whether that is measured by the accuracy of the electoral register, the exclusion of vulnerable groups from participation, or the preponderance of uncontested seats.

Finally, Sir Mark Boleat, an election candidate and leader of Jersey's Alliance party, produced his own report into the 2022 poll (Boleat 2022). Boleat's report highlights longstanding issues around elections in Jersey, notably around changes that were deemed to have been carried out without sufficient public consultation and concerning low voter turnout. A very clear contextual background into Jersey's government and politics are provided. The report notes that Reform Jersey gained significantly in the election, doubling their number of deputies, dominating the urban parts of the island and coming close to winning seats in rural areas as well. Boleat notes with honesty that the Jersey Alliance, which he led, was perceived by voters as the party of the establishment, at a time when results suggest that this was a change election, especially when candidates who had previously won elections as independents were defeated under the party label. The low turnout is once again noted as a concern, as it is in the other two reports. There were significant variations: In St Helier Central turnout was an extremely low 28.8%, rising to a higher, but still low for a national election, figure of 50% in rural areas. Boleat rightly compares these figures with the 2019 UK general election, with a turnout of 67.3%. Reasons for this low turnout are explored – something missing from the other two reports. Boleat's report is a significant contribution to the debate about Jersey's democratic

governance, but what may be even more significant is his establishment of the Jersey Policy Forum, Jersey's first and only independent think tank dedicated to evidence-based measures to strengthen civic society and improve democratic participation. His report concludes with number of significant constitutional, administrative and practical suggestions are made for improving electoral administration and island governance more broadly.

Discussion

This article explored and reflected on the Bailiwick of Jersey's 2022 General Election. This election was notable for two reasons. First, the new electoral system entailed the abolition of island-wide senators and the election of thirty-seven deputies elected across nine districts using the multiple non-transferable vote (or 'bloc vote') variant of the first past the post system, and one *connetable* (the elected head of the parish) from each of the island's twelve parishes, to the States Assembly. Second, in a system traditionally dominated by independent candidates, Jersey's 2022 election saw the appearance of political parties on a significant scale, giving voters distinct left and right blocs to choose from for the first time. Therefore, this study addresses the paucity of research devoted to investigating the governance and political processes of small states (Ahlawat & Cogan, 2023; Reardon & Pich, 2021) particularly the limited studies on the Crown Dependencies (Pich, Armannsdottir & Dean, 2020; Reardon & Pich, 2021).

This study provides insight into the impact of the wide-ranging reforms to the island's voting system. For example, ninety-two candidates contested the forty-nine seats in the island's States Assembly. For the first time, voters had a choice of four political parties to vote for and twenty-one first-time deputies were elected. In addition, Beatrix Poree became Jersey's first minority ethnic deputy, women made up fifty one percent of newly elected deputies, and on 27 June 2022, Kristina Moore became the island's first female chief minister (www.vote.je). A recognisably centre-left party doubled its representation from five to ten seats, whilst the three other parties, a combination of centrist and centre-right groupings, failed to make any significant breakthroughs in a political landscape where the States Assembly would still be dominated by thirty-five independents. Moreover, our findings suggest Jersey is in the early days of being on the road to an established party system; although it may take several electoral cycles [General Elections] for more political parties to make a long-term impact on the local political landscape. This represents an area for further research and understanding of electioneering, political structures and political processes in diverse geographic contexts and jurisdictions witnessing fundamental change to their political landscapes (Ahlawaf & Cogan, 2023; Bochsler, 2023; Katz, 2019; Otjes & Van de Wardt, 2020; Pich, Armannsdottir & Dean, 2020; Reardon & Pich, 2021).

• Limitations

This paper has its limitations and at least three that need to be highlighted. First, the study has been undertaken from an internal perspective without reference to the island's voters. Interviews with even a sample of Jersey's electorate would certainly make for a more complete picture at a time when, anecdotally, many seemed to be unaware of the significant changes being enacted to the island's political system. Second, we are very aware that we only interviewed party insiders and again, this provides a somewhat limited perspective. Nearly everyone that was interviewed occupied, in some form, a leadership position in their party or prospective party. A survey of ordinary party members, especially those ordinary voters who had taken an active decision to join one of the new parties, would yield interesting results. Third, independent candidates still dominated this election. They represented a range of political perspectives and this was not then into account in the course of our study. It would be interesting to revisit this in a future election study.

Conclusion

This study discussed the process and impact of Jersey's General Election of 2022. While the paper has its limitations, various opportunities for further research can be identified. The politics and government of all three Crown Dependencies in a general sense remain areas that are significantly under-researched, a point we have made previously (Reardon & Pich, 2021). Specifically, there has been no analysis of voting behaviour, political culture or candidate recruitment, as well as a further need for additional electoral studies in small jurisdictions. Indeed, we believe that the Isle of Man will prove of interest to researchers given the jurisdiction's apparent revisiting of a party system, as evidenced by the results of the 2021 Manx general election and the revival of the island's Labour Party and emergence of the Greens. There is plenty of available material and willing interviewees for those who choose to pursue research into the politics and government of the Crown Dependencies.

This study provided insight into the outcome of Jersey's constitution reforms and the emergence of new political parties that offered islanders additional choices at the ballot box beyond the offer of the well-established Reform Jersey Party [set up in 2014] and individual-independent candidates. However, despite changes to the electoral system, additional options of *who to vote for* [three new parties and a large number of first-time candidates] and a series of high profile campaigns led by Jersey's Electoral Commission (ww.vote.je), voter turnout was lower than the 43.38% of the 2018 General Election (www.bailiwickexpress.com). Future studies should investigate the barriers and factors associated with voter turnout and explore voter engagement and the voter journey across political events in more detail, and preferably from a voter perspective. This in turn will provide strategists with much needed insight and additional understanding, which will allow them to develop targeted strategies and tactics to address voter disengagement and develop long-term relationships between the electorate and elected officials. Secondly, this study recognizes that there are very few longitudinal and comparative studies which focus on topics explored in this paper, particularly in small states and territories. Future research should consider longitudinal and comparative studies focused on singular contexts and/or across contexts to advance knowledge and identify areas of good practice which may strengthen voter engagement and voter turnout in future elections. Finally, future studies could investigate why new political parties often have little success at the ballot box particularly in small states and territories where political systems are undergoing significant change and in territories with high voter disengagement.

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