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Summary of the doctoral thesis

*Determinants of the democratisation process*

*in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in 1989-2013*

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Justification of theme selection

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, its history, political system and foreign policy remain relatively understudied in the Polish scholarly literature despite the crucial role Jordan plays in shaping the contemporary Middle East and in supporting interests of the global superpowers in this region. Jordan’s geopolitical location in a close proximity of one of the most turbulent points on the world’s map – Israel and Palestine – is at the same time the biggest threat to the state’s security and an important asset in its foreign policy, a blessing and a curse. It makes the Hashemite monarchy an extremely interesting object of study.

The dissertation hereby presented is a continuation of author’s academic work related to Jordan. This time the author aims to explore in detail causes, determinants and factual course of the socio-political reforms in Jordan in 1989-2013 and, accordingly, to offer possible scenarios of subsequent development of the political situation in the kingdom. At the same time, the analysis shall enable a better understanding of the events happening in the Middle East in the wake of the Arab Spring. Furthermore, the author offers an innovative approach to the topic by applying the international historical sociology as a primary analytical tool.

In the academic literature there is no single volume explaining comprehensively the determinants and the outcomes of the democratisation process in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan after 1989. Most of them touch upon only selected themes or short periods of time. This doctoral thesis aims to present the democratisation process in Jordan in a comprehensive manner, over 25 years after king Hussein bin Talal has initiated liberalisation of the political system. Simultaneously, the author focuses its analysis on the determinants of the democratisation process in 1989-2013. It is noteworthy, however, that the author, as well as many other analysts, believes that the political system in Jordan is far from being democratic. In spite of having certain institutional and procedural features of a democratic system, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is an authoritarian regime. Therefore, more than often the Jordanian democratisation process is being described pejoratively, as “defensive”, “façade”, “tactical”, “frozen”, “blocked”, “decorative and artificial” or “monarchical”. Some of the analysts even write about the de-liberalisation and de-democratisation taking place in Jordan. Nevertheless, despite its limited scope, it is justified and timely to analyse and explain the reform process in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.
Research problem, hypothesis and research questions

Determinants of the democratisation process in Jordan in 1989-2013 are thus the primary research subject of the dissertation, whereas the research problem asks which of them, international (external) or domestic (internal), have influenced the pace and direction of the socio-political reform in the monarchy to a greater extent? The author intends to verify the hypothesis which argues the following: despite importance of both groups of determinants, external factors have influenced the socio-political reform process in Jordan more than the internal ones. It is because survival and security have always been the priority of the Hashemite monarchy which, in light of Jordan’s geopolitical location, forces it to undertake steps projected by the international community. In other words, it is not the domestic social and political scene but external pressures which have the formative influence over the shape of the socio-political system in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. It is particularly visible in the period of 1989-2013.

In order to verify the hypothesis, the following research questions were developed:
1) How can one explain the democratisation process? How is it done with the application of the international historical sociology?
2) What were the internal determinants of the democratisation process in Jordan in 1989-2013?
3) What were the external determinants of the democratisation process in Jordan in 1989-2013?
4) How did the categories of determinants impact the decision-making centre? What was the nature and strength of their impact? Was any of the factors of a predominant character?
5) Is there a variability of determinants and their impact over time?
6) What was the linkage between the categories of determinants? Did they mutually strengthen, weaken or neutralise?
7) What was the real impact of the determinants on the outcome of the democratisation process in Jordan? Has any of the categories of determinants had a predominant character?
8) What factors may have a dominant influence over the process of socio-political changes in Jordan in the near future?
**Research methods**

The issues raised in this thesis show the state politics as a sphere related to social factors, economics, ideology, culture, as well as to the external environment. They also take into account changes in those relationships over time and space. Thus, as noted above, it appears to be adequate to adopt the international historical sociology (also known as historical sociology in International Relations or world sociology) as a theory relevant to explain democratisation processes since it is underlining the interconnectedness between the state, the society and the international dimension. Consequently, the author decided to apply two primary research methods. The first one – systemic analysis – is focused on the Jordanian political system as such and aims to explore its nature and relationship with its external environment. A particular attention is paid to indicate which elements are the most important drivers of change in the system. The second method may be perceived as complementary – it focuses on the decision-makers and decision-making processes, and analyses phenomena and socio-political changes from their perspective. It enables both a holistic approach to presented phenomena and a detailed analysis of the dynamic changes taking place in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan after 1989.

Other research methods and techniques used in this dissertation are appropriate for the social sciences and include, among others, elements of historical analysis and forecasting, analysis of primary and secondary sources, direct and indirect observations, interviews. Their diversity results from the application of two ways of undertaking research – desk study and fieldwork.

**The structure**

The thesis aspires to fulfil the descriptive, explanatory and prognostic functions of the political science, a reflection of what can be seen in the applied structure of the dissertation. The first chapter refers to the theoretical aspects of the analysis. The subsequent chapters have a mixed character: descriptive & explanatory when they aim to present and analyse the impact of different categories of determinants on the democratisation process in Jordan (Chapters 2 and 3) and to explain the interdependence of determinants and their implications for the state of reform in Jordan (Chapter 4); and explanatory & prognostic when they present possible developments of the socio-political system in the coming years (Conclusions).
The first chapter presented theoretical and methodological framework of the thesis with a special focus on democratisation theories and the international historical sociology. Within its scope the author reviewed several theories of international relations and explained the relevance of selected framework in analysing the case study of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The following research questions were advanced in order to structure the analysis: How can one explain the set of relations between the state, the society and the international community? What are the theoretical underpinnings of the international historical sociology? Is this approach relevant to study the socio-political situation in the Middle East? How can one explain the democratisation process? What are the determinants of this process? Additionally, the first part of the chapter defined key terms applied in the analysis, namely “democracy” and “democratisation”.

The consecutive two chapters constitute the main part of the dissertation and aim to portray two groups of determinants of the democratisation process: internal (Chapter 2) and external (Chapter 3). In each of them the author described and analysed both categories of determinants, consequently indicating their connection with the democratisation process in Jordan. Once again the analysis was organised in line with the research questions. Firstly, the internal (political, legal, institutional, social and economic) and external (regional and global) factors influencing the socio-political reform in the Hashemite monarchy after 1989 were indicated, and concurrently the direction and strength of their impact was evaluated. The author was also interested whether any of the determinants played a predominant role and if there was a variability of determinants and their impact over time.

The second chapter was devoted entirely to internal determinants of the democratisation process in Jordan, inter alia its geographic environment (geopolitical location, natural resources), as well as socio-political and economic systems. On one hand, features common with many countries in the region, such as linkage between the colonial past and the modern state authority, tribalism and patriarchalism of the society or the role of Islam in social life, were explored. On the other hand, features exclusive for Jordan were also investigated, such as the legal and institutional order, the survival strategy of the Hashemite family, fractionalisation of the society and the specificity of the socio-economic system of Jordan.

The third chapter examined impact of external determinants on the Jordanian statehood, both in regional and global scale, by analysing selected events and problems of a
key importance to the democratisation process in Jordan. It is why the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Middle East Peace Process were discussed, along with the revolutions of the Arab Spring, Jordan’s relations with the United State, the European Union and the Gulf monarchies and the impact of the international financial institutions.

The last chapter inspected the interdependence of determinants and their impact on the course of socio-political reform in Jordan. This was primarily aimed at analysis of the democratisation process in the Hashemite Kingdom in light of international historical sociology and at showing its complexity. Therefore, the author drawn attention to linkages between particular groups of determinants and the nature of their relationship, asking whether they mutually strengthened, weakened or neutralised. Simultaneously, an attempt was made to indicate the dominant category among the analysed factors, which in turn made it possible to verify the initial hypothesis.

The concluding part of the dissertation describes future of the Jordanian regime. The author drafted a synthetic prognosis of the subsequent socio-political situation in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan by advancing three possible scenarios: (1) full transition into democracy, (2) regress towards authoritarianism and (3) maintaining the status quo and the semi-democratic (hybrid) regime.

**Research sources**

Research for this thesis was based primarily on a very rich academic literature about Jordan, its history, socio-political system and foreign policy, all written in English. Amongst the main authors publishing within this stream there are: Laurie A. Brand, Curtis R. Ryan, Ellen Lust-Okar, Russell E. Lucas, André Bank, Louisa K. Gandolfo, Jillian Schwedler, Sean L. Yom and Quintan Wiktorowicz. As the Polish scholarship on Jordan remains relatively scarce, it is thus used rather complementarily. The main Polish authors who have published work about the Hashemite monarchy are Adam Wąs and Bartosz Wróblewski, as well as, to a lesser extent, Piotr Niziński and Agnieszka Sylwoniuk. The author’s own hitherto work, mostly in the form of book chapters and journal articles, have also been referenced throughout the dissertation. Polish academic resources were cited more broadly in the methodological (Józef Kukułka, Ryszard Zięba) and theoretical (Andrzej Gałganek, Agnieszka Kolasa-Nowak, Czesław Maj, Łukasz Wojnowski) layers of the thesis, as well as in reference to general publications on the Middle East (Jerzy Zdanowski, Justyna Zając, Marek
Dziekan, Katarzyna Górak-Sosnowska, Radosław Fiedler), however even in this area the foreign scholars predominate. While analysing democracy, democratisation process and authoritarianism, the author quite frequently refers to work of Robert Dahl, Martin Seymour Lipset, Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, Adam Przeworski, Samuel Huntington, Jan Teorell, Jean Grugel, Georg Sørensen, Charles Tilly and Jason Brownlee. Similarly, also the academic writing on international historical sociology is dominated by the Anglo-Saxons: Theda Skocpol, Stephen Hobden, John Hobson, Justin Rosenberg, George Lawson, Fred Halliday and Raymond Hinnebusch.

Wherever possible, the author has also referred to Arabic scholarly resources. However, a review of the available literature indicates its relative ambiguity and omitting the content being of a major interest for the author. Nevertheless, references to materials in Arabic included in this thesis are extremely important for a full understanding of the research theme. Moreover, the voice of the Jordanian society and representatives of its Academia is present in the dissertation to a higher degree than it would appear from the number of texts written in Arabic – many authors, NGOs and public institutions publish results of their work in English. Mohammad Abu Rumman, Marwan Muasher, Mutayyam al-O’ran, Walid Khalid Abu-Dalbouh and Hassan Barari are some of them. Concurrently, the author’s interviews with the government, civil society and media representatives were conducted in both English and Arabic.

Importantly, the aforementioned resources are diverse in form and include monographs, journal articles, reports of international organisations and NGOs, public opinion polls, interviews conducted by the author, press and audio-visual materials and primary resources (e.g. documents of both domestic and international law). The perspective presented in the dissertation takes under consideration different views and tries to balance opinions of Arab, Israeli (among them Avi Shlaim, Yoav Alon, Hillel Frisch i Assaf David are particularly interested in Jordanian politics), European and American scholars. Furthermore, wherever applicable, the author includes his own opinions on phenomena and processes taking place in Jordan. They are the result of almost a year-long observation of the Jordanian political scene during his fieldwork in September 2011, September 2012 – March 2013, April 2014 and May 2015.
Research findings

The research undertaken for the purpose of this dissertation has allowed the author to verify the initial hypothesis—as the results show, it can be confirmed only partially.

Various factors had a determining impact on the socio-political reforms in Jordan in different moments of the analysed period of 1989-2013, nevertheless one can also identify a set of enduring determinants. The Hashemite survival strategy can be seen as one of them. It forced the Hashemite family to constantly manoeuvre around threats of both internal and external origin, to build a positive image of rationality and moderation in the international scene, to promote stability and to identify dynastic ambitions with the Jordanian raison d’état. Furthermore, several immanent features of the Jordanian society can also be perceived as determinants of durable impact. These are: tribal structures, patron-client networks, high dependency of the society on the state resources, relatively low level of political activism as well as prioritising stability and improvement in living conditions over democratic reforms. It is confirmed not only by the political analysts and external observers, but also by the Jordanians themselves.

This is the result of three elements, the most important of which is the legacy of the past, namely historical ties between the Transjordanian populace and the institution of the monarchy. Particularly vital is the role of the political elites from the East Bank, its consistency and determination in maintaining the neopatrimonial system. It manifests itself in the form of, among others, support for the monarchy in the wake of threats and guarding it against public criticism. It is also a direct consequence of the deliberate actions of the regime, which aim to discourage public anti-systemic sentiment (such as propaganda, co-optation of the elites, harassment of the opposition, use of legal regulations to restrict civil society, etc.) and of the negligence of social actors, which have paid no attention to the education system, in which successive generations were educated.

Other conditions had generally a medium- or short-term impact on the democratisation process of the Jordanian socio-political system. For instance, the social divisions between Palestinians and Jordanians were often used by the regime to mutually antagonize these groups, which in result prevented them from working jointly for reform or from opposing unpopular decisions in Jordan’s foreign policy. This was the case during the debate about the peace treaty with Israel (1993-1994), during the riots following the outbreak of the Second Intifada (2000-2001) or throughout the debate about Jordanian
national identity (the first decade of the twenty-first century). Likewise, the Israeli-Jordanian peace process had an extremely strong impact on the regress of liberalisation in Jordan in the second half of 1990s, while it was almost absent from the public discourse after 2000, despite numerous, albeit less intense attempts of the opposition to boycott the normalisation of relations with Israel.

The problem of both the Jordanian opposition and Jordanian society at large was the mobilisation against or for some public cause. Organised demonstrations were usually small in numbers, and most certainly very quickly exhausted their potential, mainly due to the impatience of the masses, but also because of the threats issued by the regime and directed towards the demonstrators. Nonetheless, when the level of social mobilisation was high, e.g. in 1989 or at the beginning of the Arab Spring (mid-2011), it brought tangible results in the form of political opening and constitutional reform respectively; when the scale of the demonstrations was small, they were either ignored by the regime or suppressed by force. Equally varying was the influence of the main opposition group – the Muslim Brotherhood and its political wing, the Islamic Action Front – which was highly correlated with the level of social mobilisation. The Islamist movement had exerted the greatest pressure on the regime in the early 1990s and after the outbreak of the Arab Spring; in other periods it was much more focused on internal divisions between “doves” and “hawks”.

The most fluctuating, however, was the impact of external factors. One can even say that the Hashemite monarchy responded to local, regional and global crises with specific adaptations in its domestic politics, for example with political opening and reforms in the case of pressure exerted by the international financial institutions (1989) or in the wake of revolutionary wave in the Middle East which started in late 2010. On the other hand, a number of other events and crises – the Second Intifada, the war on terrorism, conflicts in Iraq and Syria – resulted in somewhat different consequences for the socio-political system of Jordan. They were associated primarily with restrictions on civil liberties and political rights. Likewise, in the event of a collision between contradictory (i.e. with different expectations from the regime and towards the reform) internal and external determinants, almost always the incentives located within the international realm had a decisive influence over the actions taken by the Jordanian political elites. The only exception to this rule were the circumstances of the Gulf War of the early 1990s when Jordan opposed the Western pressure and at the same time acted in accordance with the will of its public. In result it did
not support the international intervention in Iraq led by the US (1991). In a later period, namely after 1994, the only lasting external determinant affecting the democratisation process was Jordan's strategic alliance with the West (mainly with the United States but later also with the European Union).

As noted previously, in addition to different form and duration of impact of individual factors, the force with which they influenced the decision-making centre has also varied. The table below presents the most important factors of change that can be described as determinants of the democratisation process in Jordan in 1989-2013.

**Table 1. Key determinants of the democratisation process in Jordan in 1989-2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal (domestic)</th>
<th>External (international)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Hashemite survival strategy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Neopatrimonialism</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Rentierism</td>
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<td>• Tribalism</td>
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<td>• Social fractionalisation</td>
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<td>• Colonial past</td>
<td>• Alliance with the USA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Israeli-Jordanian peace process</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Arab-Israeli conflict</td>
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A detailed analysis of the research problem, i.e. presentation of the various determinants of the democratisation process, evaluating the strength of their impact on the decision-making centre and examination of their interdependence, leads the author to the following conclusions.

Internal factors – the nature of social relations (patrimonialism, tribalism) and the economic system (rentierism), as well as the experience of colonial past, including informal alliance between the Hashemites and the Transjordanian tribes as a basis for their survival strategy – affect the durable processes and social attitudes observed in contemporary Jordan. These include clientelist networks, co-optation of local elites to power structures, attitudes of subjection to the regime or prioritising stability and security over the idea of democracy. So far, these conditions were conducive to perpetuating authoritarianism in Jordan and had a strong influence over the main actors of the democratisation process: both the Jordanian society and the decision-making circles. One can also say that internal factors played a dominant role in shaping the structural conditions of the democratisation process of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.
On the other hand, the external conditions, both of regional and global character, have a greater impact on the dynamics of changes in the socio-political system of Jordan. In many cases, the regime's actions are a direct response to events taking place in the Middle East, and to the interests and expectations of key international players, primarily the USA and global financial institutions. This reaction proved to be both positive (e.g. in 1989 and in 2011) and negative (e.g. in 1994 and in 2003) in its outcomes, but overall contributes to stabilisation of authoritarianism rather than to promotion of democratic reforms. It stems from the lack of a firm external pressure, which could force Jordanian regime to implement the political liberalisation programme on a scale broader than just procedural or institutional aspects. The experience of the past twenty-five years clearly indicates that the foreign partners of Jordan opt for stability and the status quo in the monarchy in exchange for security, stable regional partnership and securing their own geopolitical interests.

In light of the above, the research hypothesis can be confirmed only partially. Contrary to initial assumption, both groups of determinants – internal and external – are equally important in explaining the democratisation process of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. What is more, in fact the degree of their interdependence is so significant that it is impossible to critically analyse ongoing socio-political processes in this country without simultaneous reference to both groups of factors. At the same time, however, it is justified to posit that the security and survival have always been a priority for the monarchy, which in the context of its geopolitical location implies close cooperation with international actors and high vulnerability to external pressure. However, one cannot downplay the importance of domestic actors in shaping the democratisation process in Jordan. In other words, both groups of determinants are equally important, however, there are different spheres of their influence: the internal factors primarily form the structure, whereas the external factors – the agency; the internal determinants are permanent and durable, while the external – short-term and variable. In both cases, individual factors lead to the perpetuation of the current authoritarian system, only occasionally forcing the regime to minimal concessions and carrying out necessary reforms. This means that in the short term perspective, the full democratisation of Jordan is rather unlikely.