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The Interplay of Regime Survival Strategy and Political Reform in Jordan and Morocco after the Arab Spring[1]

Introduction

The phenomenon of the Arab Spring divided both experts and politicians. On the one hand many European and American decision-makers called the Arab Spring as the *fourth wave of worldwide democratization* pointing to the potentially positive outcome of the on-going transition process in Egypt or Tunisia.[2] On the other hand, the majority of scholars changed the vocabulary of analyzing the political process in the Arab political regimes. Among those experts is Raymond Hinnebusch who has begun to describe recent political changes in the framework of the "post-democratization" discourse drawing attention to the *vicious circle* of political liberalization and de-liberalization.[3] International organizations as well as Western states dropped the term of democracy and democratization from the agenda as the limited political liberalization in the Arab republics during the 1990s failed to succeed in liberal democracies. Political reforms were seen as a tool of regimes survival strategy in the hands of autocrats. The pre-Arab Spring *authoritarian stability* has not challenged the *status quo*, which was beneficial for Western states providing security and stability in the Middle Eastern region.[4] However, the Arab Spring challenged the *status quo* in an unpredictable way that was not in favour of the West. According to the author's hypothesis the outcome of the political transformation process in the affected Arab republics is the evolution of a *neo-authoritarian political structure* in which the old political players (armed forces) share the political space with the new players (Islamist parties). These new players are not completely new as it is the case with Islamist parties, which were part of the legal (Jordan), illegal (Syria) or semi-legal opposition (Egypt) in the pre-Arab Spring era. It is important to emphasize the differences among the national differences among the states involved in the Arab Spring. The historical and societal context of Egypt differs from the mainly tribally affiliated Libya.

The last two years in the Middle East have resulted in the ongoing transformation process of the authoritarian political structures of Arab republics. While in Libya and Syria the Arab Spring culminated in a bloody civil war, in Egypt and Tunisia the resignation of long-serving presidents has been forced by mass protests. Not only the

[2] See SARIHAN, "Fourth Wave Democratization".
[3] HINNEBUSCH, "Authoritarian Persistence, Democratization Theory and the Middle East".
[4] GAUSE , "Why Middle East Studies Missed the Arab Spring?"

Arab republics were those countries among affected by recent upheavals, but also the monarchies have witnessed politically challenging days of public rage against authoritarian rule. However, the monarchies with high natural oil and gas reserves and export potentials proved to be more stable than the republics. Rentierism provides a huge benefit for the citizens of the oil monarchies in the Persian Gulf keeping them silent concerning political mobilization. It does not mean that the existence of a rentier economy prevented mass protests on the streets of Riyadh, Manama or other Gulf cities.

In the post-democratization discourse of Middle Eastern Studies, Jordan and Morocco were referred to as a distinct subgroup among authoritarian regime types. Jordan and Morocco are called "civic-myth monarchies", where the existence of the state is based on historical and religious factors.[5] The members of the ruling Hashemite dynasty in Jordan are direct descendants of the Prophet, while the royal family of Morocco the Alawites, has the same historical origins and Mohammed VI is also "*amir al-mu'minin*". Jordan and Morocco have semi-rentier economies, where the rent comes from phosphate mining in the case of Morocco and "dividend of peace" (foreign aid) in the case of Jordan. Both Jordan and Morocco have a recent political development of liberalizing and de-liberalizing monarchies with a flourishing multi-party system and quasi-democratic elections.

Jordan and Morocco have not managed to escape the spill-over effect of Bouazizi's self-immolation in Tunisia and the aftermath of the so-called Arab Spring. The author asks the question why the protests in the two civic-myth monarchies have not resulted in regime breakdown. Both countries have moved forward with political liberalization allowing constitutional reforms which included the relinquishment of the right of the kings to appoint the prime minister and dissolve the Parliament. The aim of the paper is to analyse in a comparative way the factors which helped the regimes to calm down protesters.

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[5]   KAMRAVA, "Non-democratic States".

Table 1: Similarities and differences between Jordan and Morocco

Factors	Jordan	Morocco
Economy	Semi-rentier (foreign aid)	Semi-rentier (phosphor)
Religious legitimacy	King direct descendant of the Prophet	King direct descendant of the Prophet and *amir al-mu'minin*
Party system	Relatively weak party system	Relatively stronger party system (continuous existence of political parties)
Power base of the Monarch	Bedouin Tribes ("East Bankers")	Makhzen
Society	Religiously homogenous, ethnically large Palestinian population	Religiously homogenous, ethnically large Berber population
Relations with EU and the US	Share common interest, good relations	Share common interest, good relations
Main opposition party	Moderate Islamists (Islamic Action Front)	Moderate Islamists (Justice and Development Party, PJD)
Geopolitical context of the protests	Civil war in Syria, influence of the Palestinian issue, Iraqi refugees	Algeria remained calm, West Sahara issue, protests in Mauritania, illegal immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa
Response to the demands during the protests	Political concessions, amended constitution	Political concessions, amended constitution

Pre-Arab Spring political context in Jordan and Morocco

At the end of the bipolar world order, both Jordan and Morocco witnessed a serious economic crisis, which forced the late kings, Hussein and Hassan II, to react with gradual political reforms.

In 1989 the late King Hussein in Jordan opened up the political system that resulted in regularly organized elections, a certain level of negative and positive liberties, a vibrant civil society and the creation of more than 30 political parties. On the other side of the political spectrum, the Jordanian media are under state control, the parliament is marginalized, leaders of the opposition are often intimidated and new laws severely restrict personal freedoms. Despite the existence of dozens of political parties the party system remained weak and the political participation of the citizens was mainly organized through tribal affiliation. The regime had the intention to politically

marginalize the Palestinians (the so-called West-Bankers, who represent more than 50% of the population) favouring the members of East Bank tribes south from Amman (East Bankers). The most popular political party in the Kingdom is the political wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, the moderate Islamic Action Party, which gained majority in the first free elections of the Kingdom. As Islamists had a majority in the new Parliament, the King reinforced the tribal affiliation with appointing non-Islamist prime ministers. The election system (one man one vote system) itself was designed to prevent any political party to win the elections. Under the reign of King Abdullah II (1999–) these internal political trends have been continued.[6]

During the last 10 years King Abdullah II had to face the spillover effect of the regional conflicts surrounding the Kingdom. The mass influx of Iraqi refugees after the fall of the Saddam regime (2003) and the beginning of the second *intifada* (2000) made the Kingdom politically vulnerable. The King decided to postpone political reforms as well as national elections aimed at preserving the *status quo*. The outbreak of the *Al-Aqsa intifada* in 2000, the war on terrorism in Afghanistan and recent wars in Iraq and Lebanon reinforced the image of the Hashemite Kingdom as a moderate and liberalized monarchy in a turbulent region. King Abdullah II tried to divert attention of his dissatisfied population by launching positive initiatives such as the *Jordan First* and the *National Agenda 2006–2015*. On 2 March 2007 King Abdullah II dissolved the Parliament and announced elections. The IAF won only 5.5 % of the popular votes, which can be seen as a major setback for the party. In 2009 the King dissolved the democratically elected Parliament saying that it failed to address the daily problems of the average citizens – unemployment or poverty. The King expressed the need for a newly elected Parliament and he governed through royal decrees. The elections were postponed several times until November 2010, when mainly the King's tribal loyalists gained a sweeping majority. The IAF boycotted the elections calling for a new democratic election law. A year before the Arab Spring King Abdullah secured his regime with the elections in spite of a growing dissatisfied population especially among Palestinians. Only 17 members from the 110 in the lower house of the Jordanian Parliament belong to the opposition. The dissatisfaction with the future of the monarchy is very high especially among Palestinians in and around Amman with an extremely high unemployment rate.[7]

The Moroccan political system shares some similarities with the Hashemite Kingdom. The late King Hassan II initiated political liberalization after several decades of political instability. Morocco has a religiously homogenous society, but ethnically the Kingdom is diverse with a large Berber population. Morocco's population is less urbanized as only slightly more than half of the citizens in the Kingdom live in towns. There is a correlation between the surprisingly high rate of illiteracy in Morocco (43.9 %) and the relatively low level of urbanization. The Moroccan society from this point of view is very far from the Arab average and the 38 year reign of Hassan II left an under-developed economy. The King used the *makhzen*, the political elite to prevent the rise of any opposition movement. The *makhzen* includes the loyalist civil servants, the business elite as well as landowners who helped the King to preserve the authoritarian

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[6] CSICSMANN, "Responsible Freedom".
[7] HAMID, "Jordan: the myth of the democratizing monarchy".

status quo. Before the gradual reform process, the political system was built around the absolute power of the King who has – among others – the right to dissolve the Parliament, appoint the prime minister, declare war and state of emergency. It is equally true that from the independence, Morocco has a multi-party system, which is much stronger than the Jordanian counterpart. The King tolerated the loyalist parties, which kept the taboos not to criticize the King and the system. The policy of co-optation was at the forefront of the political strategy of the *makhzen* at the same time suppressing any non-loyalist potential forces trying to cross the red line set by the constitutional rights of the King.

In the second half of the 1990s Morocco witnessed gradual political reforms with a constitutional revision in 1996. The revised constitution introduced a bicameral Parliament with a Lower House directly elected by the citizens which was one of the claims of the opposition parties. The 1998 elections are regarded as an important milestone in the process of political liberalization. The long time opponent of the royal palace, the leader of the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP), Abderrahman Youssoufi was allowed to form a government, but he was not able to appoint its own ministers as traditionally the makhzen has the right to choose the four most important ministers. After the death of Hassan II, the new King, Mohamed VI (2000-) inherited a dual political system in which the constitution transfers political and religious authority to the King in spite of the existence of a multi-party system and emerging civil society. Mohamed VI, similarly to Abdullah II in Jordan, can be seen as a reform-oriented King with a vision to convert Morocco to a constitutional monarchy similar to Juan Carlos's Spain.[8]

During the reign of Mohamed VI the main opposition party of the *makhzen* has been the moderate Islamist Justice and Development Party (PJD). The Islamist political scene has been as divided in Morocco as in Jordan. Unlike the more conservative Justice and Benevolence movement, founded in 1974, which has never accepted the legitimacy of the monarchy, the PJD, as a post-Islamist party, was able to play the election card as a legalized political party. The PJD has never questioned the legitimacy of the Alawite dynasty and the monarchy itself. As King Mohamed VI holds the religious position of *amir al-mu'minin*, it gives enough legitimacy to neutralize the politically challenging Islamist critics. The policy of co-optation has continued during the 2000s. The PJD's political performance at the time of elections has rapidly improved from nine seats in the 1997s elections to 42 seats in the 2002s elections. The third largest party in the Parliament is not part of the coalition government, but it has the chance to serve as a constructive opposition loyal to the Palace. The PJD has become the second largest party in the Parliament after the 2007 elections. Mohamed VI with the adoption of a progressive family law (*Mudawwana*) earned recognition for his reform-minded approach in spite of a severe opposition from the Islamist movements including the PJD.

In order to summarize the main common characteristics of the Jordanian and Moroccan political context, the author argues that the two monarchies share a similar

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[8] WHITE, "The 'End of the Era of Leniency' in Morocco".

religious and political legitimacy. The members of the Hashemite dynasty are direct descendants of the Prophet, while the Alawites hold the title of *amir al-mu'minin*. Both monarchies have a mixed political system with quasi-absolute rights vested in the monarch by the constitution and at the same time both countries have a vibrant civil society with a multi-party system. However, neither monarchies can be considered similar to the European constitutional monarchies which Mohamed VI is dreaming about.

Jordanian Exceptionalism?

The Arab Spring has swept through the Middle East with an unprecedented turbulence. Neither Jordan, nor Morocco has managed to escape the political turmoil of Bouazizi's self-immolation. However the outcome of the political protests in both monarchies is different from most of the Arab countries reinforcing the view that they belong to a certain subtype of Middle Eastern regimes.

The protests in Jordan began in January 2011 in parallel with the Egyptian and Tunisian political developments. The protesters main demands were related to economic and social issues similar to Egypt or Tunisia. The rise of food and fuel prices as well as the high rate of unemployment triggered the protests. The protesters requested a more equal wealth distribution and called for a fight against corruption. They viewed the prime minister, Samir Rifai as the source of corruption and called for the resignation of the government. Jordan's own Arab Spring cannot be compared in size with the demonstration that took place on the streets of Cairo or Tunis. It is important to emphasize that these protests were not spontaneous, but rather organized mainly by the largest opposition movement, the Muslim Brotherhood. That kind of demonstration is not new in the Kingdom, as in the previous years the country has witnessed several strikes and sit-ins. However, the protests were new in the sense that it was the first time in the history of the Hashemite monarchy that various groups including the Islamic Action Front Party, leftist organizations as well as the loyalist Bedouin tribes were also involved in the demonstrations. Neither political movement taking part in the opposition movement wants to abolish the monarchy or initiates regime change. The Friday's demonstrations were peaceful, as neither the opposition wanted to use violence, nor the police forces used violent methods to supress the political marches. In the literature of political theory and the process of democratization, the unity of the opposition is regarded a key element.[9]

King Abdullah II portrayed himself as a leader who understood the needs of the citizen and has decided to appoint a new government headed by a former national security chief, Marouf Bakhit in February 2011. The Bakhit government promised further political liberalization allowing political parties to play a stronger role. The appointment of the government has not fulfilled the demands of the opposition movement despite the fact that the King responded to the protesters with the establishment of a committee with a mission to draft new laws on election and

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[9] BARARI and SATKOWSKI, "The Arab Spring: The Case of Jordan".

political parties. A second committee was charged with modifying the constitution. The committees were successfully recommended how to reform the country's political system echoing what the opposition movement wanted. However, the government has not intended to abolish the "one man one vote system" due to security and political reasons. The Marouf Bakhit government was suspicious about the growing role of the Muslim Brotherhood in the political reform process. The King dismissed the unpopular Bakhit government in October 2012 and appointed an internationally recognized judge, Awn Shawkat Al-Khasawneh as prime minister. It was an important step to calm down the opposition as the previous government was seen as a group of corrupt politicians.

The ideologically different groups of the opposition formed an alliance in April 2011 under the name of National Front for Reform. The movement includes the Islamic Action Front Party as well as leftist parties and professional associations. A document of the National Front for Reform calls for constitutional reforms, a new election law based on a proportional system or open list, fight against corruption, freedom of media and social justice.[10] The different fractions of the Jordanian youths have established the 24th March Movement after a sit in organized by mainly university students demanding political reforms. The youth movement formed in Jordan mimics the Egyptian counterpart. It must be noted that the Jordanian opposition movement is far from being a homogenous block. Even the Islamic Action Front Party has different branches regarding how to respond to the Arab Spring. A tiny minority within the party for example wants to bring the government down with more violent demonstrations as it happened in Tunis or later in Egypt. The majority of IAF members disagree with turning Jordanian protests into a violent political demonstration. The other fault line within the opposition movement is between the IAF and other, mainly leftist parties. Many leftist parties distanced themselves from the organized protests of the Muslim Brothers due to the fear that they will dominate the next governments. Among those who distanced themselves from the Islamist movement was Ahmed Obeidat, the former head of the intelligence services, who joined to the opposition and he is the current head of the National Front for Reform.

The royal committee, which was charged with revising the constitution, submitted its report to the King in August 2012. In the report the committee recommended to amend the constitution in 41 places in order to achieve a more democratic political system. Both the Lower House and the Senate approved those amendments in September 2011. However, these amendments were not aimed at curbing the rights of the King. The King, the Royal Palace and the intelligence services (General Department of Intelligence) limit the ability of any government to serve as the power basis of the country. The King also promised in his speech on the occasion of the 12th anniversary of ascending to the throne in June 2011 that he has the intention to transform the Kingdom into a democratic constitutional monarchy with elected government.[11] The main demand of the Islamic Action Front Party and other politicians in the opposition is the relinquishment of the right of the King to appoint the prime minister. The King

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[10]   The Vision of Jordan's National Front for Reform.

[11]   VOGT, "Jordan's Eternal Promise of Reform".

understood very clearly from the protests in Cairo and Tunis that in order to maintain stability in the Kingdom he has to answer to the demands of the opposition very quickly.

The second committee (National Dialogue Committee) with the task of modifying the election law and the law on political parties submitted also its recommendations to the King. The committee called for a 15 seat reservation for open list and asked for a representative body to oversee elections. They eased the establishment of political parties with reducing the number of founding members from 500 to 250. Despite the fact that the King responded positively to the demands of the opposition, experts and politicians are sceptical about the advancement of structural political reforms. Most of the political reforms approved by the King and the Parliament are only cosmetic changes in nature as they fail to address the most important questions (for instance the limitation of the rights of the King). According to the author's views the King used the old mechanism (political concessions without the fear of a regime change), regime survival strategy in order to respond to the critics. Mubarak and Ben Ali responded in the same way as King Abdullah II in Jordan, but it was not enough to calm down the protesters.

A major step to fulfil the demands of the opposition is the new election law the draft of which was unveiled in April 2012 by the Khasawneh government. The law abolishes the controversial "one man one vote" system and introduces a mixed electoral system with two votes going to the district candidates and one for a party list on the national level. The new law also strengthens the quota system for women (15 seats) and raises the number of MPs from 120 to 138. The new election law was the most important demand of the political parties. The political parties generally rejected the new law, as the mixed system was not designed according to their views. The parties called for a proportional system with at least 50% of the MPs to be elected from a party list. According to the new law only 15 MPs would be chosen from a national party list, which means that the election law continues to keep the party system as a weak system. The reform of the election law shows how regime survival strategy works in reality. On the one hand, the new law meets most of the demands of the protesters (abolishment of the one man, one vote system), but on the other hand, it fails to transform the election system which supports the tribal Bedouins loyal to the King.

The King asked the new Tarawneh government to change the law according to the popular demands. The final version of the law, which was approved by the two chambers of the Parliament and the King in July 2012 increased the number of proportionally elected MPs to 27 and raised the total number of MPs from 138 to 150. The King announced that national elections would be held in the country in the year 2013. He also promised that the new government would be elected according to the result of the votes. The Muslim Brotherhood as well as other political parties called for the boycott of the elections. They regard the new law as flowed and demand a real democratic reform of the monarchy. Finally, the King dissolved the Parliament in early October allowing general elections on 23 January 2013. The elections can be seen as an important step in the reform process of the Kingdom. From 3.7 million eligible voters only 2.3 millions were registered. It is expected that the overall turnout during the elections will be less than 50% which suggests that state-society relations would be

further aggravated. The costs of the potential failure of the elections are very high, risking the image of the Kingdom as a "stable oasis" in a turbulent regional setting (Syria, Iraq, Palestinian issue).

Reform rather than Revolution: the case of Morocco

The Arab Spring in Morocco has arrived in a very similar way as in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. As in Tunisia, several deadly self-immolations have occurred among the young population responding to the absence of a positive view on their future. The youth protests started on 20 February demanding social justice, the end of corruption, and a more democratic political system. The demonstrations were relatively peaceful and while the protesters have never challenged the legitimacy of the monarchy and the monarch, they called for a limitation of the rights of the sovereign. The 20 February Movement (the movement's name derived from the date of the first demonstration) can be viewed as an umbrella movement consisting of ideologically different sections of the Moroccan society. The main political movement taking part in the demonstrations was the Justice and Benevolence movement, which was not allowed to register itself as a political party.

The King in his speech on 9 March responded with what has been called a regime survival strategy, appointing a committee to amend the constitution. A prominent lawyer, Abdellatif Mennouni was charged with heading the committee. The opposition movement which was invited to join the committee viewed the process as flawed. After three months, the committee submitted its report to the King. The King called for a public referendum for the new constitution which was held on 1 July 2011. Not surprisingly, 98.5% voted in favour of the new constitution. The new constitution introduces a range of democratic political reforms calming down the critics of the regime. The constitution allows the president of the government (prime minister) to be appointed from the largest political party in Parliament diminishing the power of the King. The prime minister now has the right to appoint its own ministers, which had previously been the privilege of the *makhzen*. It introduces Tamazight, the language of the Berber minority as an official language as well as it emphasizes the importance of the Amazigh culture played in Morocco's history and society. It also recognizes the demands of the Saharawi tribes in Western Sahara with accepting the Arab-Hassani culture and language.[12]

The amendments to the constitution portrayed by the state media in Morocco as a major step toward a more inclusive and democratic political system. The authorities and the *makhzen* itself monopolize the discourse over the political reforms in the Kingdom. The whole public referendum was highly manipulated and showed as genuine evolution of a democratic system. However, if someone reads the constitution from the perspective of the opposition, it clearly shows how Mohamed VI uses the same strategy as Abdullah II in Jordan with allowing some political room for the opposition, but to maintain the *status quo*. According to the constitution, the King

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[12]   MADDY-WEITZMAN, "Is Morocco Immune to Upheaval?",.

retains most of his prerogatives on defence, religion and government. The King has the right to dismiss ministers from the government and he is the president of the new National Security Council. Little steps were taken in order to vitalize the political party system in the Kingdom. The *makhzen* remained the ultimate power broker in the Kingdom. It is equally true that comparing Morocco with their Maghrebi counterparts; the Kingdom is more liberalized than any other country in the neighbourhood.

Mohamed VI called for national elections as the final step in his reform agenda. The election law in 2011 was amended, too: 305 seats are chosen from district lists, the other 90 seats are chosen from national list. The last election in 2007 was regarded as a meaningless comedy (see the case of Jordan) by political parties. After the 2007 elections the head of the Istiqlal Party was appointed prime minister. The main question of the 2012 election is the popularity of the moderate Islamist party, the PJD. Most of the political parties – including the PJD – decided to participate in the short campaign and the elections itself. A few leftist parties and the conservative Islamists (the Justice and Benevolence Party) called for a boycott of the election process. Mohamed VI was quicker than Abdullah II in responding to the protests. It seems that Moroccan political reforms in 2011 were more far-reaching than in Jordan.

Three main political groups contested the elections: the most popular PJD party which came as second in the 2007 elections, a political coalition of eight parties (Coalition for Democracy) and another coalition called Koutla with Istiqlal as the main party. Koutla asked the PJD to join the coalition recognizing the changing nature of Moroccan politics. The Moroccan elections were the first in the Arab World after Palestinian legislative elections in 2006 where an Islamist political party gained majority. The PJD won 22.8% of the votes and 107 seats in the Parliament. The head of the PJD, Abdelilah Benkirane has been appointed prime minister in November 2011 bringing the first Islamist politician as the head of government in the Kingdom. The new prime minister according to his promise established a coalition government with the liberal Popular Movement and the leftist Party of Progress and Socialism in order to show restraint in their political ambitions.[13]

The prime minister silenced the more conservative voices within his party calling for the wearing of headscarves and raising the alcohol consumption issue. Benkirane reassured the old elite (the *makhzen*) that he has not the intention to Islamize the society from above, but he rather wants to focus on economic issues. Key ministerial portfolios belong to the Islamists, but some important non-Islamist ministers have remained close to the King and *makhzen*. The new government and the prime minister serve as a test of Moroccan democracy. It must be emphasized that the King and the Islamists share some common interests. From the point of view of the King and the *makhzen,* their interest in allowing the Islamists ascending to power lie in preserving their privileges in politics. From the side of the Islamists, Benkirane recognized that without the support from the *makhzen* he would never have become prime minister. The main problem with the Moroccan political reform is the huge challenge for the Islamists to move forward with economic reforms. Creating jobs is among the most important priorities of the current government. From the point of view of the *makhzen*

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[13]   ARIEFF, *Morocco: Current Issues.*

the Islamists can discredit themselves politically if they mismanage the country economically.

Conclusion: The need for further reforms

According to the author's analysis, the political reform in Morocco is in a more advanced stage. Mohamed VI without hesitating approved a new constitution and called for elections during the second half of 2011, just half a year after the first demonstrations took place in the streets of Morocco. It was not imaginable that only after few months of demonstrations an Islamist was asked to form a government. It seems that political parties are stronger in Morocco than in Jordan. In Morocco the main question is the transformation of the society. The task ahead of the Islamists, among others, is to create jobs, to fight against poverty, to eliminate illiteracy.

However the slow pace of political reforms in Jordan is not a failure of Abdullah II himself, but the circumstances seem to be more complex than in Morocco. For want of space, the regional context of the demonstrations cannot be addressed here. In Jordan, the major debate between the different political fractions of the IAF is over the influence of Hamas and the future of Palestinian issue in general. In January 2012 the King received Khaled Meshal, the leader of Hamas in an official visit to discuss the more violent protests in Syria. It was the time when the Hamas leadership was forced to leave Damascus and it opted to stay in Doha instead of Amman. The influence of Hamas helps us to understand why the King was not keen on relinquishing his right to appoint a prime minister and he has no intention to allow IAF into ascending to power. The King's main fear is the spill-over effect of the Syrian civil war to Jordan destabilizing the monarchy. The election in January 2013 is an important event in Jordan's political life. However, with serious limitations for political parties the IAF is not in a position to gain control of the government. It seems that major political reform in the election law is a step ahead of the monarchy. The other side of the coin is that both monarchies strengthen their ties with GCC countries.

Neither Morocco, nor Jordan has become a Western type liberal democracy. However, important steps were taken without violent events toward a more liberalized political system. If one recalls the notion of illiberal democracy (used by Fareed Zakaria)[14], both Jordan and Morocco fulfils the criteria of that type of mainly non-democratic regimes.

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[14] ZAKARIA, *The Future of Freedom*.

Table 2: Major Socio-economic Indicators in Jordan and Morocco

(Latest year available)

Country / Indicators	Jordan	Morocco
GNI/capita (USD), PPP	5.800	4.600
Population (millions)	6.330	32.3
Unemployment (%) – total	11	10
Poverty rate (%)	2.4	10.6
Illiteracy (%)	7.8	43.9
Urbanization (%)	78.6	58.8
Youth Unemployment (15-24)	38.9	15.7
Internet users	2.350.000	15.700.000
Income Gini Coefficient (1-100)	37.7	40.9

Source: UNDP, Arab Human Development Report, AHDR Statistical Profiles
(http://www.arab-hdr.org/data/profiles/) Accessed: 15 October, 2012

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