UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

PERCEPTION OF PARTISANS TOWARD DEMOCRATIC PRACTICE AND THE APPOINTMENT OF PRIME MINISTER OF JORDAN

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By

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Chairman   :   Associate Professor Mohd Mahadee bin Ismail, PhD
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The Jordanian constitution gives the absolute power to the King to appoint the prime minister without referring to the will of people in Jordan. This King-based selection of the prime minister is however thought to harm the democratic practice and the future of the democratization process in Jordan. As such, this study aims to identify the Jordanian partisans' perception of (i) the concept of democracy, (ii) the democracy practice in Jordan, and (iii) the appointment of the prime minister by the King. A survey questionnaire using a quantitative design was conducted and a total of 380 partisans took part in the study. The gathered data of the study was analyzed using descriptive statistics and a one-way ANOVA. The results of the analysis revealed that the participants were less clear in their stance of the notion of democracy. The democratic practice in Jordan was also influenced by some obstacles including tribalism, which has a great influence on the parties' activities and elections. Giving the King the full constitutional right to appoint the prime minister was also considered the most significant factor that hinders the democratization process in Jordan. The Jordanian partisans seem to be in support of the view that taking people's demands into consideration is the most important factor that should be considered by the King in appointing the prime minister. In discussing the differences between the political factions toward the current democratic practice in Jordan and the appointment of the prime minister, the results showed that both the right wing and left wing were dissatisfied with the current democratic practice in Jordan, whereas the moderates seemed to be neutral in their stance. These results together can provide insights about the democratization process, and the factors hindering this process in Jordan.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

PERSEPSI GOLONGAN PARTISAN JORDAN TERHADAP AMALAN DEMOKRASI DAN PELANTIKAN PERDANA MENTERI DI JORDAN

Oleh

JEHAD MOHAMMAD KHAZER AL-MAJALI

Februari 2021

Pengerusi : **Profesor Madya Mohd Mahadee bin Ismail, PhD**
Fakulti : **Ekologi Manusia**

Perlembagaan Jordan memberikan kuasa mutlak kepada Raja untuk melantik perdana menteri tanpa merujuk kepada kehendak rakyat. Pemilihan perdana menteri berdasarkan Raja ini dianggap membahayakan amalan demokrasi dan proses pendemokrasian di Jordan kelak. Demikian, kajin ini mengkaji persepsi golongan partisan Jordan terhadap (i) konsep demokrasi, (ii) amalan demokrasi di Jordan, dan (iii) pelantikan perdana menteri oleh Raja. Sebuah tinjauan soal selidik menggunakan reka bentuk kualitatif telah dijalankan dan sebanyak 380 golongan partisan mengambil bahagian dalam kajian ini. Data kajian dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif dan ANOVA sehala. Dapatan analisis menunjukkan golongan partisan kurang jelas terhadap pendirian mereka mengenai konsep demokrasi. Amalan demokrasi di Jordan juga dinpengaruhi oleh beberapa rintangan iaitu kabilah yang mempengaruhi pengaruh besar terhadap kegiatan dan pemilihan parti. Pemberian hak penuh perlembagaan kepada Raja untuk melantik perdana menteri adalah faktor terpenting yang menghalang proses pendemokrasian di Jordan. Golongan partisan Jordan didapati menyokong pandangan bahawa menitik berat tuntutan rakyat adalah faktor terpenting yang harus dipertimbangkan oleh Raja dalam pelantikan perdana menteri. Dalam membincangkan perbezaan antara puak-puak politik terhadap amalan demokrasi semasa di Jordan dan pelantikan perdana menteri, dapatan menunjukkan bahawa kedua-dua sayap kanan dan sayap kiri tidak berpuas hati dengan amalan demokrasi semasa di Jordan., penyokong sederhana pula didapati berpendirian neutral. Dapatan ini memberikan pencerahan mengenai proses pendemokrasian di Jordan dan faktor-faktor yang menghalang proses ini.

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of the Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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Declaration by Members of Supervisory Committee

This is to confirm that:
- the research conducted and the writing of this thesis was under our supervision;
- supervision responsibilities as stated in the Universiti Putra Malaysia (Graduate Studies) Rules 2003 (Revision 2012-2013) were adhered to.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the topic of the study and discusses the research problem, specifically the factors that impede the democratization process in Jordan. The chapter also states the research objectives and research questions, the theoretical framework and conceptual framework, the significance of the study, and finally the operational definitions used throughout the thesis.

1.2 Background of the Study

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is a sovereign Arab state located in Western Asia on the East Bank of the Jordan River. It is bordered by Saudi Arabia to the south, Iraq to the north-east, and Palestine to the west. The Dead Sea lies along its western borders and the country has a small shoreline on the Red Sea in its extreme south-west. Strategically, Jordan is located at the crossroads of Asia, Africa, and Europe. The city of Amman is the capital of Jordan, which is the most populous city, and the country's economic, political, and cultural center. Jordan is relatively small and almost land-locked country with an area of 89,342 km^2 (Office of King Hussein, 2012; BBC News, 2017).

A population numbering 10 million makes Jordan the 11th most populous Arab country. Jordan is classified as a country of "high human development" with an upper middle-income economy (WHO, 2013). The Jordanian economy is one of the smallest economies in the region, which is attractive to foreign investors based upon a skilled workforce. The country is a major tourist destination and it attracts medical tourism due to its well-developed health sector. Nonetheless, the lack of natural resources and large flow of refugees and regional turmoil have hampered its economic growth (Yousef, 2014; Nahar, 2012).

Democracy is a governmental system in which the citizens can elect a representative to form a governing body represented by the parliament (Gollop, 2007; Wiktorowicz, 1999). It is a system of processing conflicts in which the outcomes depend on what participants do, but no single force controls what occurs with outcomes. The democratic system makes the people responsible for choosing who would lead them as a way of life based on the full conviction of citizens to the value of democracy, including their thought, practice, equality, and justice which are principles requiring certain mechanisms to turn them into reality (Ryfe, 2007; Robinson, 1998).

Democratization is the process of shifting from authoritarian regimes to multiparty systems based on popular choice, legitimate institutions, and fair elections. It also refers to the exchange of power and living under democratic conditions that allow the establishment of a system between the ruler and the government on the basis of freedom and respect (Donno, 2013; Abdel-Hadi, 2016). Therefore, the parliamentary system contrasts with forms of government where power is either held by an individual or a small number of individuals in which the political forces and parties develop their programs to win the votes of people and implement these programs when reaching power (Stepan et al., 2014; Anderson, 2007).

The prime minister in the parliamentary system is a key part of the executive branch. He is in charge of the domestic and foreign policy of the government. The parliamentary government depends mainly on the principle of multiparty which denotes to the legality of multiplicity of political forces and opinions and their right to co-exist, to express themselves, and to participate in influencing the political decision in their society (Mashaqbeh, 2019). These forces are political that compete to gain public opinion by the authority to achieve their goals and programs. This competition should not turn into a violent conflict that threatens the safety of society (Puddington, 2013).

The Emirate of Eastern Jordan has been established in 1921 while Jordan hosted the Arabic Independence Party as the first step to the beginning of political life in Jordan, where the first prime minister of Jordan was Rashid Tulaa who is the head of the Arabic Independence Party (Al-Hamad, 2014). The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is a constitutionally parliamentary monarchy. The relationship between the House of Representatives and the government is also based on the balance of power between each other where the government has the right to appoint the King, to dissolve the House of Representatives, and the right to vote no confidence on the government and for dismissal (Yesil Yurt, 2014).

The bilateral executive authority and its political system are based on the principle of separation of authorities, with a kind of cooperation and balance between each other as is the case in all parliamentary systems in the world (Tayie1 & Dashti, 2017; Lucas, 2016). Jordan is one of the Middle Eastern countries that has been greatly affected by the chaos of the neighborhood countries, including Palestine, Syria and Iraq. The surrounding chaos has led to the instability of the political situation in Jordan for some time and thus has become part of the American plan for its projects, such as the new Middle East. This was one of the reasons for shifting towards democracy in Jordan (Sultana & Watts, 2007; Roberts, 2018). The Arab Spring was also one of the influential reasons to have Jordan gear itself for democracy. The Arab Spring was also the main reason behind the amendments of the Constitution in 2011 and other political reforms in Jordan (Kubba, 2018).

The political development is an action made by the political system in which new forms of objectives and demands are created (Happer & Philo, 2013). The parliamentary government is an important part of the democracy and political

development in any political system. In the parliamentary government, the people are considered the source of authority. However, in the Jordanian political system, this type of parliamentary government was only present once in the past and it was led by Suleiman Nabulsi. (Sargentich, 1993; Lust et al., 2015). Nevertheless, there was a set of obstacles that made the parliamentary government difficult to proceed. These include the lack of the political activity and the dominance of clans on the elections. These obstacles sometimes encourage and entitle the King to appoint a prime minister by his own person. Yet, the King promised that Jordan will follow a democratic reform plan that satisfies the citizens' demand for a parliamentary government (Abdel-Hadi, 2016; Yom, 2017).

1.3   Problem Statement

Jordan is constitutionally a democratic country; however, the Jordanian political system still does not implement all the principles of democracy in appointing the prime minister (Wiktorowicz, 1999; Al-Hamad, 2014). The democracy practice in Jordan is influenced by the article (35) of the constitution which gives the King the absolute power to appoint the prime minister without referring to the will of people and this in turn violates the general principles of democracy.

Since the independence of Jordan in 1946, the Jordanian political leaders who worked under the stewardship of the Palace have promised to give the Jordanian people their political rights to elect a Parliament and to form and join political parties (Ryan, 2018). Jordan witnessed two liberalization periods, in the years 1952 (establishment of the constitution) and 1989 (the return of the political life), however the promises of these political leaders remained incomplete. Jordan had parliamentary elections and since 1989 the Jordanian people had the right to join political parties and Jordan started to shift towards democracy (Huneidi, 2014).

Jordan has a multi-party system with a parliamentary monarchy in which the prime minister is considered the head of government. The Jordanian prime minister is usually appointed by the King even if the chosen one is not a parliament member or even a partisan. However, Jordan has more than 40 licensed parties, but they are small and most of them share the same ideology. Many of whom also represent tribal groups. Parties were banned since 1956-1989. and Jordan was under the martial law for more than 30 years. During this time Jordanian got fear about joining political parties, which still has influence on people until the current days.

However, the King argues that the main problem lies in the political parties in Jordan, specifically their inactivity and the lack of clear program for their development. Recently, the government has implemented a law to fund parties for better (The Jordan Times, 2018). However, the text of the constitution article (35) remains an obstacle for all of these efforts as it gives an executive authority to the King to appoint the prime minister regardless if his partisanship status (Jordanian Ministry of Higher Education and Research, 2010). In fact, the weakness of parties in Jordan

lied of many reasons, as such, the tribalism, the constitution and the lack of political awareness (Lloyd, 2019).

The forms of democracy applied in a parliamentary system are usually different from one country to another for several factors. However, there are principles and foundations upon which the democratic system is based. In the case of the prime minister in the parliamentary system, the prime minister should be elected by people. There are many ways to democratically elect the prime minister in country, through either direct or indirect elections by the parliament (Rajeev, 2015). Appointing the prime minister by the King is the main problem addressed by the present study.

1.4   Research Questions

This study is guided by three research questions. They are sated as it follows:

  i.   What is the perception of Jordanian partisans towards the concept of democracy?
 ii.   What is the perception of Jordanian partisans about the current democratic practices in Jordan?
iii.   How does the appointment of the prime minister affect the democratic practice in the perception of Jordanian partisans?

1.5   Research Objectives

The general objective of the study is to examine the perception of the Jordanian political elite towards the Jordanian political system represented by the appointment of the prime minister by the King. The specific study objectives are the following:

  i.   To identify the Jordanian partisans' perception towards the concept of democracy
 ii.   To identify the Jordanian partisans' perception towards the current democratic practice in Jordan
iii.   To determine the Jordanian partisans' perception of the appointment of the prime minister by the King and its impact on the democratic practice in Jordan

1.6   Significance of the Study

The parties take on goals and roles to strengthen the national identity and to raise the level of political participation and expression of opinion. The developed and politically open countries always seek to highlight the best levels of political and social participation to build a democratic society that meets the requirement of political and social change which aims to serve the public and national interest (Al-Mashaqbeh, 2019). Practical issues in Jordan have reduced the effect of the

Parliament with brief parliamentary sessions and lack of resources and support for members of both houses (Singh, 2017). There has been a lack of involvement in the Jordanian politics of political parties. There is research demand for the complementary relationship between the King, people and the parties, and none of them should be excluded or ignored.

This study aims to shed light on the experience of the Jordanian constitutional reforms during the era of King Abdullah II and the Arab Spring. Moreover, this study aims to provide a comprehensive and an integrated view of these vital reforms and the democratic process in Jordan including the appointment of the prime minister. With regard the fact that the constitution represents the backbone of any political regime, the constitutional developments in Jordan are reviewed since the first Jordanian Constitution in 1928. By analyzing the most recent constitutional amendments, this study identifies the main features of these amendments as well as their strengths and weaknesses, the potential for success or risk of failure, and the positive and negative reactions.

The importance of the study lies in its being a recent study dealing with this topic that occupies a great deal of importance in the political systems in general and the Jordanian political system in particular. The issues related to the appointment of the prime minister is very important in the Jordanian political system where it has an impact on the process of political reform and deepening the political participation (Al-Masri, 2017). This study is one of the few studies that deals with the issue of appointing the prime minister of Jordan and the effect of tribalism on the democratic practice in Jordan.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

This research is guided by both the democratic theory and the theory of democratic partisanship. According to the democratic theory, "democracy is an extremely complex one, including but not limited to, the existence of a government that is chosen by the majority of the population" (Engelen, 2007). The concept of democracy does not carry a single precise and agreed meaning. Its meaning and connotation vary from time to time depending upon the social and economic system. Variation on the meaning and definition of democracy is largely drawn from the fact that democracy does not limit itself to institutions and practices, but rather the concept itself is an expression of our value judgment on them. Democracy is synonymous with active participation of citizens in the decision-making process where modern democracy is often identified with liberal representative democracy.

The components of democracy in political science include the "freedom of speech, assembly, discussion, ethnic, racial and minority freedom, and the right to participate in political life with free, fair, and competitive elections". It also refers to legal equality under one law and the government is committed to this law. Other components include independent judiciary, freedom from torture and unjustified detention, checks and balances on control of power at the state leve, a vibrant civil

society, and civilian control over the military (Petersen, 2009). It is towards the achievement of these components of social and political life that countries must strive when trying to democratize themselves and be in very liberal democracy.

Democracy is a universal value and it has become the internationally predominant governance system (Sen, 1999). The democracy has the plurality of virtues including the intrinsic meaning of political participation and freedom to achieve human well-being, the instrumental importance of assuring government's responsibility and accountability, and the constructive role in value formation and understanding the needs, rights and citizens' duties. Various forms of political government have been advocated, from direct democracy where the citizens exert the decisions directly to the widespread system of representative democracy in which the elected representatives act in the interest of the people.

The theory of democracy has recently taken a deliberative turn whereby the democratic legitimacy increasingly rests on authentic deliberation rather than on voting or interest aggregation. Deliberative democracy has supporters and detractors. Deliberation causes individuals to reflect upon their interests and preferences and to become amenable to changing them and reaching a workable agreement that follows a certain decision rule such as consensus, unanimity, or majority. However, the deliberative democracy might favor conditions for strategic behavior and fostering chaotic and arbitrary outcomes.

As regards the partisanship theory, many scholars have recently considered parties and partisanship as objects of normative theorizing. They posit partisanship as a fundamentally democratic practice where they developed a model of what partisans can do at their best to contribute to liberal democracy (Herman, 2017). Political parties are the cornerstone of every democratic society. It gathers public policies and secures the necessary structures to political participation. The parties also train the political leaders and compete in elections to gain a degree of control over the government institutions. When these parties get the majority of votes, they lay the organizational bases for forming the government (González, 2009), but when the minority parties get the votes, they stand in the opposition's ranks or are a substitute for the government. It should be noted that the candidates seek to promote the legislature when they succeed in the elections and they represent specific programs of work for the policies that have the necessary legitimacy according to the authority that the voters bestowed among them. In parliament, the members of the same party often marge into parliamentary groups or blocs, which is the primary way for parties to organize themselves within the legislature. Therefore, effective parliamentary groups are necessary to establish more effective and representative parties, as well as to better organize and manage the legislative action (Carey & Shugart, 1995).

This description is based on classical and modern partisan theories that focus on partisans' roles in shaping the values, beliefs, and attitudes of the masses, and their instrumental and influential abilities to mold public institutions by maintaining the flow of communications within the system, and enacting, interpreting, and enforcing

the rules that govern the masses (Beatty, 2003). Moreover, the description of Jordanian partisans' political culture is also based on John Locke's political theory of cautious liberalism that has discordant tendencies towards both liberalism and conservatism in terms of change in the political system (Grant, 1987).

The theory of democratic partisanship has formed the theoretical foundation for this study. In addition, the personal knowledge and observations by the researcher, along with a number of practical, intellectual, personal goals have added to the study's inferences. The practical and intellectual goals of the study are compatible with the researcher's motivations, personal goals, and curiosity that lag behind these situations, and therefore the researcher's desire to see the wheel is moving towards achieving appropriate democratic procedure in appointing the prime minister, as well as having high levels of liberalization, democratization, and development in Jordan.

1.8   Conceptual Framework

According to the theory of the study, the political parties are the foundations of any democratic country. They prepare public policies and provide the necessary structure for political participation. The practice of democracy in a country is considered as a mean of expressing an opinion, whether this is political, social, or even intellectual. The election process is the most prominent and common in these practices in the country. The appointment of the prime minister and dependence on the exercise of democracy and political parties as the legitimate representative of people in political forums is the focus of the present study.

Figure 1.1 : Conceptual Framework

The political change can take different directions, yet not all of which necessarily lead to a change in political regime. These changes may affect and the political competition, government performance, political rights and civil liberties There are seven processes of political change which include democratization, democratic regression, political liberalization, authoritarian progression, democratic deepening, and democratic consolidation (Szmolka, 2014). Democratization entails a transition from an authoritarian regime to a democratic regime (Linz & Stepan, 1996) and this occurs when specific conditions are met. Thus, there must be sufficient agreement on the procedures for electing a government.

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The government must also have come to power as a result of free and popular vote, and the government must have de facto authority to generate new policies. The new legislative, executive and judicial powers should not share power with other actors such as the military or religious leaders (Sharp, 1935). Another widely held view among scholars holds that it is only possible to speak of democratization when eight conditions of equal and universal suffrage are met: the right to hold elected office; free, fair and regular elections; freedom of expression; freedom of association and the independence of associations; a plurality of sources of information; institutions that allow public policy to depend on votes and other expressions of preference; and finally safeguarding the rights of minorities against any form of abuse by the majority (Schedler, 2002).

In realizing the differences in the background of the partisan people in different Middle Eastern countries, Stone Zartman (1980) conducted a comparative study and examined the influence of the following four independent variables: the recent history of partisan circulation, the current form of political structure, the social background and preparation, and partisans' attitudes, personalities, and motivations. Stone used a typology to assess the relationship between these four variables, where the first and second variable focus on the political structure that partisans operate under, whereas the third and fourth variable represent partisans' socialization, political culture, and personal characteristics. Stone aimed to examine the relationships between the first and third and the second and fourth variable (Jost et al., 2009).

A regime can go from being fully democratic to a defective one when the political decision-making is played by actors who are not a subject in the democratic control, or alternatively when the rights and freedoms of the political, ethnic, and/or religious minorities are limited. The political liberalization occurs in authoritarian contexts (Landemore, 2017). It involves an easing of political repression and an expansion of political rights and civil liberties, without fully guaranteeing them. Political liberalization does not necessarily signify the start of a democratic transition, but it can lead to a shift from a hegemonic authoritarian regime to a quasi-competitive one (House, 2014).

1.9 Operational Definitions

This section provides definitions of the key terms used in this study. Each term is presented and defined in the following subsections.

i. Partisan

It refers to a member of a party or a group. According to Van (2019), partisans maintain the flow of communication between the people and the government and they enact, interpret, and enforce the rules that govern the people.

ii. Political Faction

A political faction is a group of members within a larger entity of political climate. The members of a political faction usually share some ideas that differ in some respect from the ideas of other factions. They have one unified goal and they band together to achieve it within their party. Jordan mainly has three political factions within them other sub-parties meet together. These include the left wing, the moderate wing, and the right wing. Their definitions are given in the following subsections:

iii. Left wing

This faction usually supports social equality and egalitarianism. The left-wing in Jordan includes the communist and national parties.

iv. Moderate wing

This faction usually rejects radical or extreme views. In Jordan, this political faction aligns with the views of the governments, and therefore, they are known as the patriotism party.

v. Right wing

This faction refers to the views in which certain social orders are desirable and typically supporting certain beliefs related either to economics, religion, or a tradition. The right wing in Jordan includes those represented by the Islamic-oriented parties, specifically the Islamic Action Front.

1.10 Summary

This chapter has presented a background to the study, specifically the governmental system in Jordan and its democratization process. The chapter also discussed the problem statement of the study and how the absolute power of the King in appointing the prime minister has a great influence on the democratic practice in Jordan. This was discussed in the light of the constitution and the weaknesses of the political parties. The chapter also presented the objectives of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, the theoretical framework, the conceptual framework, and the operational definitions that are used throughout the thesis. The literature review is discussed in the following chapter.

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