

University of Southern Denmark, 7 October 2011:
Mediterranean Perspectives

The EU, Jordan and Lebanon – case studies

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Student Presentation by Jens: The EU, Lebanon and
the European Neighbourhood Policy

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Literature:

- Brand, Laurie A. (2010) National Narratives and Migration: Discursive Strategies of Inclusion and Exclusion in Jordan and Lebanon, *International Migration Review*, Vol. 44, No. 1, pp. 78-110.
- Lust-Okar, Ellen (2006): Elections under Authoritarianism: Preliminary Lessons from Jordan, *Democratization*, Vol. 13, No. 3, pp. 456-471.
- Sarto, Rafaella A. Del & Schumacher, Tobias (2011) From Brussels with love: leverage, benchmarking, and the action plans with Jordan and Tunisia in the EU's democratization policy, *Democratization*, Vol. 18, No. 4, pp. 932-955.
- Seeberg, Peter (2009) The EU as a realist actor in normative clothes: EU democracy promotion in Lebanon and the European Neighbourhood Policy, *Democratization*, Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 81-99.

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Outline:

- Introduction: The EU and Jordan
- The Hashemite Kingdom and EU's democracy promotion attempts
- The Jordanian regime and the elections – Jordan on its way to (real) democracy?
- Europe's engagement with the Islamist opposition in the MENA-region?
- Conclusions and discussion

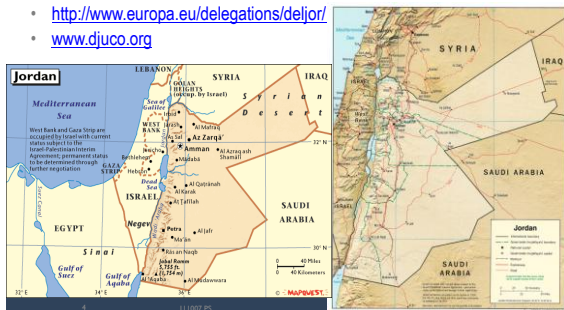
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Introduction: The EU and Jordan

- <http://www.kingabdullah.jo>
- <http://www.europa.eu/delegations/deljor/>
- www.djuco.org



Introduction: The EU and Jordan

- Political Rights Score: 6
- Civil Liberties Score: 5
- Status: Not Free
- Status Change Explanation: Jordan's political rights rating declined from 5 to 6 and its status from Partly Free to Not Free due to King Abdullah's dismissal of the parliament and his announcement that elections would not be held until the end of 2010, as well as the security forces' increased influence over political life.
- Overview : The king dissolved the parliament in November, about two years into its four-year term, and announced that new elections would not be held until late 2010; ordinarily, elections would be held within four months of the parliament's dissolution. The delay would allow the government to rule by decree for at least a year, and it was expected to enact a series of unpopular market liberalization measures as well as a new election law in the parliament's absence.

The Hashemite Kingdom and EU's democracy promotion attempts

- Both reform in Jordan and the EU attempts at promoting reform have not been successful...according to Ana Echagüe
- At the same time Jordan fares better than most Arab states...(?) the most significant challenge being the Arab-Israeli conflict...
- King Abdallah was expected to intensify political reform, but so far mostly economic reforms have been passed – added to that a number of provisional laws (while parliament was suspended – June 2001- June 2003) with new restrictions within civil and political liberties
- The EU-Jordan cooperation has taken on a "cooperation to peace"-dimension
- EU-officials: It is not time to push for political reform...still certain red lines make it impossible
- Referring to Jordans national security makes the EU back off from raising tough demands...(pragmatism in EU foreign policy)

The Hashemite Kingdom and EU's democracy promotion attempts

- Three areas express the EU commitment as to democracy-promotion, human rights and good governance
- A democracy and human rights clause (this is a common thing in EU agreements), democracy promotion instruments built into the ENP (see http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/action_plans/jordan_enp_ap_final_en.pdf) – seen as a "gesture for show" (p. 42) and distribution of EU-grants through EIDHR (support of NGO's etc.)
- + all the national programmes from France, Germany, The Netherlands and Denmark (The Danish Arab Initiative) etc...
- Conclusions and recommendations: links between political reform and long term stability need to be made together with links between political and economic reform. And Jordan should be held accountable for its lack of compliance with international Conventions signed...
- There is room for improvement in governance, anti-corruption, institutional capacity and political participation

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The Jordanian regime and the elections – Jordan on its way to (real) democracy?

- The questions by Ellen Lust-Okar:
- What is the role of elections under authoritarian rule? An important aspect is legitimacy...
- How can we understand voter behaviour in authoritarian elections? Voting for *wasta*, not for ideology or policy preferences...
- How and why do candidates participate in elections? Often without close relation to political party – in order to promote individual, local or regional interests
- How do state elites manage electoral competition? Gerrymandering, (change of) electoral rules...
- Democracy ahead? – according to Lust-Okar certainly not – can we therefore speak of success of authoritarianism in Jordan?
- Jordan seem to be a liberalizing autocracy, changing to preserve...

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Europe's engagement with Islamist opposition in the ME-region

- Direct engagement with Islamist political movements typically a no-go area for the EU...but maybe some shift on its way...
- Different forms of representation: In Morocco, Jordan, Kuwait and Bahrain legal parties with parliamentary representation.
- In Algeria and Egypt Islamic opposition legal as members of a legal party or individual members. In Tunisia and Syria Islamist parties are illegal. Palestine and Lebanon contain controversial and sensitive cases... (Hamas and Hezbollah)
- Why the reluctance? Lack of consensus – in spite of a proactive EU-Parliament. Unofficial contacts at lower levels.
- In the long run contact unavoidable, but recently the lack of inclusion, the difficulties of handling the challenge from Hamas – and Islamism in general are important factors.
- Added to that the focus on security on behalf of the EU...
- Conclusion: Reluctance might lead to re-radicalisation?

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Can (and should) the EU engage more with Islamists?

- Why does it seem to be a good idea and how can we engage with (moderate) Islamist movements?
- Three points while looking for objectives on behalf of the EU:
- A necessity of a better understanding of the Islamist movements
- Engaging Political Islam as a political force in the MENA-region
- Securing the success of the Peace Process
- Do we have lessons from other parts of the world?
- And is it possible to initiate cooperation (ngo-activities, capacity building...) with Islamist parties – when thinking of the political realities in Europe?
- An important discussion seems also to be the question of how to exert pressure on the authoritarian regimes – in relation to their policies against the opposition

Conclusions and discussion

- It seems that no single trend characterizes recent Islamist movements in the MENA-region. Rather we see four trends:
- Islamism has been growing in countries influenced by the Arab-Israeli conflict
- A new trend among radical Islamic actors seems to be that some are abandoning the reluctance to engage in participatory politics
- The AKP stands as major example of successful de-radicalization
- Moderate Islamists experienced some electoral success – but recently they have been disappointed – leading to apathy, strengthening of boycotting tendencies, occasionally becoming strategic partners of the incumbent regimes
- Political recommendations for the EU: put pressure on the MENA-regimes to abandon repression of moderate Islamists, aim at influencing frameworks that regulate participation and increase cooperation with opposition forces – Islamists and others...

Supplementary literature

- See the DJUCO-homepage, books and articles, at:
- http://www.sdu.dk/~media/Files/Om_SDUCentre/C_Mellemoest/DJUCO/Bibliografier/Research%20Literature.aspx
- ...and
- http://www.sdu.dk/~media/Files/Om_SDUCentre/C_Mellemoest/DJUCO/Bibliografier/Research%20Papers.aspx
