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MOHAMMED BIN SALMAN’S RISING TO POWER. CHANCES FOR TRANSITION IN SAUDI ARABIA?

In June 2017 Mohammed bin Salman was nominated as heir apparent of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In fact, not the current king Salman but Mohammed bin Salman, known also as MBS is ruling the country.

Mohammed bin Salman came into Saudi politics with promising ideas. Thus he has been considered “modernizer” with a plan for profound reforms and modernization of Saudi Arabia. His ideas were tightly related to the economic sphere and he believed in successful diversification of Saudi economy when the country could be less dependent on oil export in favour of developing tourist infrastructure at the Red Sea coast particularly. Mohammed bin Salman’s plans for development alongside with respect for women rights were greeted with applause around the world.

However, it was quickly understood that Mohammed bin Salman was cynical and authoritative politician who effectively deprived his opponents power and influences, especially these ones who directly threatened bin Salman’s position, including the high members of ruling family. Moreover, the killing of Jamal Khashoggi in the Consulate of Saudi Arabia in Istanbul deeply outraged world public opinion and it was believed Mohammed bin Salman was behind this Saudi intelligence operation.

The aim of this paper is to present the outline of planned and already implemented social, political and economic changes in the context of gradual transition of power in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The main thesis put in this paper relates to Mohammed bin Salman’s leading project – “Vision 2030” which assumed gradual multi-dimensional transition in Saudi Arabia. Many of changes implemented already, including the limitation of clergy’s activity will not bring about quick social-political transition due to long-lasting and deeply rooted alliance between Saudi ruling clan and radical movement of Wahhabis, that determines conservative regime in the country. However, it doesn’t mean that changes are impossible. Certainly, changes will proceed gradually but in the longer period of time, even for a few decades. In fact, in such a conservative state like Saudi Arabia, it is difficult to be a real “modernizer.” Even Mohammed bin Salman proved that himself when he initiated waves of arrests of royal family officials and high-ranked Saudi businessmen. This decision was labelled with the fighting the corruption, but in reality, although the corruption problems truly existed, behind that was bin Salman’s need to strengthen its position in the high ranks of politics in Saudi Arabia. In relation to main thesis a few research questions has been put:

- Does the Wahhabi-Saudi historical alliance make the wide range of planned changes in the social and economic sphere impossible?
- What is the real resonance of planned and implemented changes in Saudi Arabia by Mohammed bin Salman?
- Does all repressions of selected members of royal family impact on the position of crown prince Mohammed bin Salman as a “moderniser”?

In the paper following methods has been applied: historical method, which refers to analysis of historical process of shaping and development Saudi monarchy; documentary analysis – relating to governmental project “Vision 2030” particularly; elements of systemic approach in which system is constituted by political regime of Saudi Arabia.

Elements of statistical method has been also employed in the context of variable economic or social data. Predictive analysis applied in the paper refers to the model of Saudi Arabia’s development under the rule of Mohammed bin Salman.

CHANGES IN THE SUCCESSION TO THE THRONE OF SAUDI ARABIA

Since the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was established in 1932, the House of Saud was ruling the state. However, as far as back at the end of the 1st World War Ibn Saud – the leader of Saudi clan, initiated concentration of power in his hands and expanded the territory of Najd which was a cradle of Saudi state. At that time Ibn Saud competed over influences with Sharif of Mecca, Hussein bin Ali. Although, Great Britain supported Hussein bin Ali, finally Ibn Saud succeeded in forcing Hussein bin Ali to leave Arab Peninsula and then he united all provinces to establish Saudi Arabia with his leading role as a king Abdelaziz al-Saud (Zdanowski, 2010: 138–141).

King Abdelaziz ruled Saudi Arabia over 20 years till his death in 1953. He had 22 wives and 36 sons who survived till adulthood with five who had an opportunity to rule the country. Currently, the number of princes and princesses being descendants of Ibn Saud is estimated at 35 thousands (Cochran, 2019: 370).

Since the beginning of Saudi Arabian state, ibn Saud decided that succession to throne should have been based on agnatic seniority rule, referring to first heir apparent, his son Saud bin Abdelaziz. Subsequently, power was transferred to brothers of Saud bin Abdelaziz till current rule of Salman. Saud bin Abdelaziz ruled in years 1953–1965; Faisal bin Abdelaziz (1965–1975); Khalid bin Abdelaziz (1975–1982); Fahd bin Abdelaziz (1982–2005); Abdallah bin Abdelaziz (2005–2015) and since 2015 current ruler is Salman bin Abdelaziz.

Succession and appointing heir apparent is incredibly delicate topic in the royal family as well as among ordinary citizens. After king Abdullah’s death, the transfer of power proceeded rapidly. In the next few hours crown prince Salman bin Abdelaziz has been proclaimed king. Normally, during the time of transition of power, among House of Saud some symptoms of disappointment might appear. Because there were no any official negative comments when Salman has become king, it was regarded as a proof of coherent stance of House of Saud (Al Rasheed, 2018: 14).

Actually it’s noteworthy that the House of Saud is not free of intrigues, plots and rivalry for influences and willingness to seize power. Thus, Saudi royal family is not

an exception in comparison to historical dynasties throughout the world. Quickly after Salman became a new king he shook the foundation of royal family changing the arrangements made during the time of king Abdullah's ruling. He deposed Muqrin bin Abdelaziz as a crown prince, what was against king Abdallah's will. It meant that Muqrin couldn't have been proclaimed king after Salman's death anymore.

What's more, in January 2015 Salman decided to replace former crown prince Muqrin by its cousin Mohammad bin Nayef, grandson of the first king of Saudi Arabia – Ibn Saud (<https://houseofsaud.com>). Such case was unprecedented in the history of succession to throne of Saudi Arabia. It was clear that once upon a time grandson of Ibn Saud would become king, but extremely controversial was to depose one of Ibn Saud's son (Muqrin) and replace him with prince of royal family representing next generation.

King Salman didn't persevere in his decision much time. In 2017 he changed his mind once again and evolved deep shock in Saudi royal family and the Saudi society by deposing Mohammad bin Nayef from the post of crown prince and appointing his son Mohammad bin Salman as a crown prince and deputy prime minister (Anishchenkova, 2020: 70).

It is said that decision on appointment of Mohammed bin Salman as crown price wasn't his original stance and was taken under a huge pressure made by Mohammed bin Salman against Mohammed bin Nayef. Salman's son Mohammed bin Salman sufficiently convinced the king to appoint him as a crown prince casting the shadow on Mohammed bin Nayef that he was a drug addict and unreliable person. Moreover, some people closely tied to royal family confirmed Mohammad bin Nayef's drug problems and the reason why he was forced to quit the claims to Saudi throne (Hubbard, Mazzetti, Schmitt, 2017). Information about Mohammed bin Nayef's drug problems was difficult to verify, however it was true that since attempt on his life in 2009, bin Nayef permanently needed to take painkillers based on drugs.

Just after official nomination of being crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman has become deputy of prime minister and minister of defense. Thus much power was kept in his hands (<https://english.alarabiya.net>).

IN THE DIRECTION OF MODERNISATION THE STATE: VISION 2030

Before Mohammad bin Salman was nominated heir apparent, he was in charge of initiative leading to Saudi Arabia's transition, particularly in the economic and social spheres. The project announced in 2016 was named „Vision 2030.” The aims contained in the project were divided into three groups: first regarded social development; second related to development and transition in economic sector, and third group referred to ambitious plans for the national development. Few aims of each group were to be achieved in 2020.

In the first part of “Vision 2030” the key issue was a huge potential lurking in Saudi society which wasn't fully achieved due to enormous income from natural resources exploitation, oil in particular. For a decades it naturally restricted Saudi society's capability and motivation to developed their skills in a different economic areas.

In the domain of social development, the cultural expansion and promotion the state was underlined. Within this, the plan contained the regular increase Saudi capacity to welcome Umrah visitors from 8 to 30 million every year and to double the number of Saudi heritage sites registered with UNESCO. Additionally, it's been assumed that dynamic development of Saudi cities with preserving the environment and natural resources would enable to rank them among top-ranked 100 cities in the world. Another issue was anticipated increase of Saudi household spending on cultural and entertainment activities inside the country from the level of 2,9% to 6%, what was connected with planned opening venues dedicated to culture and entertainment activities. It would help to increase the ratio of individuals exercising at least once a week from 13% to 40% of Saudi population. Finally, last but not least issue in the aspect of social development was intensification of caring for Saudi families and children education. Bigger emphasis was about to put on parental guidance in children education. Alongside with investments in healthcare system and expected increase the average life expectancy from 74 to 80 years it would lay the ground for strong and productive society (Vision 2030: 17–31).

In the part related to economic transition, particular attention was given to work inclusion of women. 50% of Saudi university graduates are women. Nevertheless it doesn't correlate to their participation in the labour market. For this reason it is anticipated that in 2030 women's participation in work market will increase from current rate of 22% to 30%. It also should be connected with increase of small and medium-size enterprises (SME), which according to data from 2016, contributed to only 20% of Saudi Arabian GDP. Planned economic development and establishing new business incubators, specialized training institutions and venture capital funds would aid entrepreneurs in developing their skills and networks and finally would enable to reach the SME's contribution to GDP at the rate of 35% (Vision 2030: 28–39).

However, the diversification and restructuring all the Saudi economy seems to be the most significant economic issue. Oil-dependent economy should be transformed to diversified-economy where export of non-oil products currently rated at 16% of its contribution will rise to 50%. It would be directly connected with structural changes in the Saudi economy and increase of contribution of private sector to GDP rated around 65% at least (currently it's 45%). Alongside with aforementioned changes, the another assumed element of economic transition is a boost of foreign investments from 3.8% to 5.7% of Saudi GDP (Vision 2030: 43–62). The project of future tourist city named "Neom" has become one of the most notorious project representing bin Salman's ideas of modernisation and diversification. Project was initiated in 2017 with localisation in north western Saudi province adjacent to Red Sea. Termination of the first section of project is scheduled in 2025. The plan envisages building modern tourist complex with airport and hotel infrastructure. Saudi government has decided to channel 500 bln USD financial assets for the first stage of the project. According to governmental prediction Neom would contribute an annual GDP return of 100 bln USD by 2030 (Hassan, 2020: 225).

The third part of "Vision 2030" is tightly correlated with Mohammad bin Salman and relates to the changes in governing the state. The strategy of state's development contained fight the corruption and political-administrative transparency. Moreover, it

was pointed that channels of communication between government and citizens should be enhanced and governmental digital platform improved. Thus, it would enable to come into a practice the project of e-government and project of development the human capital connected with developing skills of state administration personnel and effective spending public assets. Finally, it would lead to increasing the ranking's position in Government Effectiveness Index (Vision 2030: 64–71).

Rising up this ranking's position isn't easy task and demands to introduce all the structural changes boosting the effectiveness in public administration and the rest of governmental sectors. However, in the case of Saudi Arabia, its position in Government Effectiveness Index rises slowly. In 2017 the index was rated at 0.26 and in 2019 went up to 0.31 (govdata360.worldbank).

„Vision 2030” was leading and far-sighted project of Saudi government. It also made Mohammad bin Salman one of the key person of royal family with the label of “moderniser” and representative of young generation of princes who had a different point of view on many political, social and economic issues in the country.

One can find critical opinions on “Vision 2030” in many analysis. Particularly sensitive question was put whether economic or social transition is feasible without any political changes in the system (Al Rasheed, 2018: 16). That principal question shows immanent correlation between political regime and economic system of state. Thus, anticipated small and medium-size entrepreneurs, privatization of selected economic sectors, encouraging foreign investors or even increased women inclusion in labour market would restrict Saudi royal family influence on economic issues and also could diminish political leverage inside the state. So, the conclusion is that social and economic transition would result in political changes, even in the aspect of conservative and religious Wahhabi movement and its impact on Saudi society.

CONCENTRATION POWER BY MOHAMMAD BIN SALMAN. IS IT THE END OF A DREAM ABOUT MODERNISATION?

When Mohammad bin Salman has become heir apparent officially, he quickly proceed to actions of strengthening his position in Saudi politics. One of the method he used was to restrict activity among princes-opponents in royal family and hostile businessmen seeing them as persons who could threat bin Salman's position.

Bin Salman, using the pretext to fight the corruption, started first arrest campaign in November 2017. What's noteworthy, just few hours before the arrests began, king Salman had issued the decree on establishing new powerful anti-corruption committee with Mohammed bin Salman in charge. Newly founded institution had the right to investigate, arrest, ban from travel, freeze the assets of anyone deemed corrupt. Thus, Mohammed bin Salman had an opportunity to act against the opponents with the enforcement of law. During the first wave of arrest 11 princes were detained including Saudi billionaire Alwaleed bin Talal. The arrest of bin Talal deeply stirred public opinion, particularly among world financing centres. Prince Alwaleed was the head of investment group “Kingdom Holding” and one of the richest man in the world, owning a major stakes in 21st Century Fox, Citigroup, Apple and Twitter. As many experts said

it was the last move to consolidate power of Mohammed bin Salman who is the top advisor and favourite son of king Salman (Kirkpatrick, 2017).

Rampant corruption was a real problem in administration and business-political sphere. Mohammad bin Salman announced curbing the corruption and wide transparency of business activities, however in fact, he wanted to have a bigger control over business transactions and to restrict and cut sources of income of the key opponents. Actions taken by bin Salman also showed that the royal family's functioning was changed and even influential members of House of Saud couldn't be considered untouchables anymore (Chulov, 2017a).

Curbing corruption was just one of a few elements of bin Salman's "political programme." In the interview given to "Guardian" in October 2017, Mohammed bin Salman stated that his main aim was to transform Saudi Arabia into a moderate Islamic state, because ultra-conservative state has been 'not normal' for past 30 years. According to crown prince, moderate Islam allows to open for the world. 70% of Saudi population is less than 30 years old and, as bin Salman said, we can't waste another 30 years for fight with radical ideas, which should be eliminated as quick as possible (Chulov, 2017b). Thus Mohammed bin Salman challenged long-lasting and historical alliance of House of Saud and fundamentalist Wahhabi movement, whose doctrine named Wahhabism is regarded as an official religious doctrine in Saudi Arabia.

Saudi-Wahhabi pact lasts for 250 years. It is difficult to imagine now, that in a short period of time this pact was broken and would replace with another pact in the context of planned modernisation. Legal system in Saudi Arabia is based on sharia law. Thus the attempt to broke pact between Saudi family and Wahhabis would undermine the fundamental existence of political and legal regime in the country. However, crown prince succeeded in restricting prerogatives of religious institutions in Saudi Arabia. He was behind the King Salman's decree issued in 2016 on limitation the power of Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (known also as *Mutaween*). King Salman also appointed more moderate clerics to the Council of Senior Scholars, which is the highest religious body in Saudi Arabia (Barmin, 2018).

The second wave of arrests took place in March 2020. As same as it was in 2017, the reason of that action were accusations and suspicions of corruption. 674 clerks have been interrogated and 298 were detained for "financial and administrative corruption." Among detainees were military officers, security service officers, judges and healthcare workers. The scale of corruption was rated at 379 million rials (101 million USD) (*Saudi Arabia: New Mass*, 2020).

Changes already implemented by crown price might be "modernising" and connected with project "Vision 2030." However political repressions against opponents and members of royal family cast a shadow on Mohamed bin Salman as a "moderniser" of Saudi Arabia. It was also connected with the arrest of leaders supporting women rights. Even though, women in Saudi Arabia were given the right to drive vehicles by themselves in 2018, Loujain al-Hathloul one of the key leader of protests was detained in custody. Only now after few years of imprisonment she has been released in 2021. Mohammed bin Salman was also under pressure of world public opinion in the case of Saudi dissident and liberal blogger Raif Badawi who was detained in 2012. Badawi

was charged with apostasy and sentenced to 10 year in prison (Pollitt, 2018: 6). Crown prince bin Salman hold his ground and finally Badawi was released in 2022.

In fact, the most publicized case, which showed Mohammad bin Salman in a bad light, was abhorrent political murder of anti-governmental journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Saudi Consulate in Istanbul in 2018. World public press and media pointed that Crown Prince was behind Khashoggi's murder and he commanded Saudi intelligence to carry out that. Thereafter the reputation of Mohammed bin Salman was heavily damaged and currently the world opinion is not so fascinated by crown prince's "modernisation." On the contrary, in world public opinion his political repressions and keeping his opponents in custody are underlined by far than his "modernising" achievements.

Officially, Mohammad bin Salman denied any allegations of his involvement in Khashoggi's murder, although as some journalists say, there are reliable proofs that bin Salman was fully informed about planned action in Saudi Consulate (Hopkins, Kirchgaessner, 2019).

Giving the interview to PBS station, Crown Prince stated that he didn't take responsibility for planning Khashoggi's murder nor did he admit that he had prior knowledge of it. However he admitted that his responsibility was institutional because Khashoggi's killing happened "under his watch" (Booker, 2019).

Apart from planned changes that would come into practice in the internal politics, Mohammad bin Salman is strongly engaged in shaping foreign policy in order to strengthen Saudi position in Middle Eastern region.

In Saudi foreign policy, the main dilemma is regional conflict with Shia Iran which takes place in variable areas in the Middle East. One of the most significant place of Saudi-Iranian rivalry is Yemen encompassed by protracted war, firstly between al-Houthi rebels and Yemeni government leading by president Ali Abdallah Saleh, and then between al-Houthi and forces of president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi and secessionist of Southern Transitional Council that controlled few provinces in the south of Yemen.

Saudi Arabia military involved in the Yemeni conflict in 2015 with two reasons. First, Saudi government wanted to support legal government of president Hadi in regaining the power in the country, and second to secure its borders with Yemen (Cochran, 2019: 374).

Saudi Arabia's government didn't achieve these aims eventually and involvement in war in Yemen lasted for a few years what cast a shadow on Mohammad bin Salman's reputation. It's been explicit particularly after attacks of al-Houthi rebels backed by Iran on Saudi infrastructure and oil installations adjacent the Yemeni border (Laub, Robinson, 2020). In recent time Houthi also targeted aims located in the interior of Saudi Arabia like Aramco refinery and airport in Riyadh (*Saudi forces*, 2022).

Another sphere of bin Salman's international activity was the blockade of Qatar. Rapidly forged Arab coalition of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, United Arab Emirates shut down all airways and one land route (Qatari-Saudi border) of supplies to Qatar. Such action was taken due to tightening economic cooperation between Qatar and Iran. Moreover, coalition demanded closing down based in Qatar TV station al Jazeera, well-known for critical opinions on Middle Eastern governments including Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in particular. Additional reason was maintaining by Qatari govern-

ment relations with pro-Iranian Lebanese Hezbollah, by some labelled as a terrorist organisation and demand for closing down Turkish military base on Qatari territory. Addressed demands to Qatari government were considered by him attempting on its sovereignty (Walsh, 2017).

Although international mediation in the dispute, Qatar still is isolated by many Arab states including his neighbour Saudi Arabia. Just few months ago meeting between former president Trumps' advisor Jared Kushner and crown prince Mohammed bin Salman was held where solution on Qatari dispute was introduced. The idea was to reach the final settlement of dispute until Donald Trump was the incumbent president (*Saudi Arabia*, 2020).

Mohammad bin Salman was also engaged in international scandal with the involvement of prime minister of Lebanon Saad Hariri who paid the visit to Riyadh in November 2017. During his visit Hariri was forcibly detained for almost two weeks and he was forced to resign as a prime minister of Lebanon. Mohamed bin Salman was one of inspirer to take such action against visiting prime minister of Lebanon. The key reason of keeping him against his will was increasing role of Shia Hezbollah in Lebanon what collided with Saudi interests in this country. In result of foreign diplomatic initiatives, particularly French president Emanuel Macron, Saad Hariri was released and immediately returned to Lebanon, where he retracted his decision taken in Riyadh about resignation as prime minister (Barnard, Abi-Habib, 2017).

On the contrary, Saudi-Israeli relations after bin Salman gained power were far from any normalisation, but due to mutual Iranian danger both states were softly bringing closer with each other. One could say that Saudi Arabia could follow the way paved by U.A.E. and Bahrain which decided to establish diplomatic ties with Israel. U.S president D. Trump believed Saudi Arabia would take such step and he officially declared his expectations that Saudi Arabia alongside with Bahrain and U.A.E forged with Israel new relationship (*Trump expects*, 2020). However it is hard to imagine that Saudi Arabia could reach an official agreement with Israel in current time, Mohammed bin Salman is ready to forge unofficial "alliance" with Israel against Shia Iran and its allies. Unresolved Palestinian question seems to be the main obstacle for Saudi crown price but if this issue was settled, then Israel would be a potential ally (*Saudi Crown*, 2022).

In the aspect of Saudi Arabia's politics, the U.S. attitude to bin Salman's activity needs to be explained. During the D. Trump's presidency bin Salman was favourably treated by American administration. Trump perceived Saudi Arabia as a pivotal ally in containing Iranian political and military aspirations. Thus, after re-imposing sanctions on Iran by U.S. in 2018 Saudi Arabia played fundamental role in American policy towards Iran. Trump refrained from criticizing bin Salman's policy including responsibility for arrests in Saudi Arabia and accusations of staying behind the murder of Khashoggi. When Joe Biden became president of U.S. in January 2021, he pledged to reassess the relations between U.S. and Saudi Arabia. It meant that crown prince bin Salman wasn't one of his favourites and U.S-Saudi relations initiated new stage (Smith, De Luce, 2020). One of the first decision taken by Biden's administration in relation to Saudi Arabia was the demand to stop Saudi engagement in war in Yemen. President Biden stated that war in Yemen was one of the biggest humanitarian catastrophe with 80% of Yemeni people in deep need. U.S. decided to review its policy

towards Yemeni conflict with reversing decision made by Trump on al-Houthi rebels putting on terrorist list (*Biden ends U.S.*, 2021).

The project „Vision 2030” was announced over four years ago. In the meantime Mohammed bin Salman has become crown prince and initiated modernisation of state what quickly turned into a repressive actions against his opponents. One might ask, whether far-sighted plans of economic reform correlated with social transition and also with regime changes of legal and political sphere are possible to come into practice in Saudi Arabia in relatively short period of time that is just one decade?

Taking into consideration 250 years of historical alliance House of Saud with Wahhabi movement, it is difficult to imagine that Crown Prince in short perspective would succeed in breaking the fossilized political and religious pact. Undoubtedly, he is able to impact on structure of this long-term pact, what was confirmed with nominating, in coordination with king Salman, moderate clerics to one of the most important religious body or limitation the competences of religious institution (*Mutaween*). Certainly, it can be regarded as a symptomatic changes which might determine further regime transition. However, it should be remembered that these are just a few elements of anticipated large-scale changes.

Political and legal regime of Saudi Arabia is based on sharia law which constitutes many dictates and bans, and limitations related to all domains of life of Saudi citizens. Basing on sharia law as a foundation of legal and political regime determines limited possibilities of implementing changes in social, economic and political sphere. Although Mohammed bin Salman, what contained “Vision 2030,” underlines the meaning of Islam in social and political role in Saudi families, he suggests that the only solution for future is the moderate Islam. Thus, systemic transition must take few decades at least.

Reforms implemented by crown prince might face a lot of difficulties which are connected with repressive actions directed at any opponent-member of House of Saud, aiming at strengthening the political position of Mohammed bin Salman. After the waves of arrests in 2017 and 2020 one can be convinced that there is no any person considered “untouchable.” However, such actions like eliminating political opponents might limit the scale of social, political and even economic reforms which in its consequences would hit back Crown Prince’s position in the Saudi Arabia.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to present the outline of planned and already implemented social, political and economic changes in the context of gradual transition of power in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The main thesis put in this paper relates to Mohammed bin Salman's leading project – "Vision 2030" which assumed gradual multi-dimensional transition in Saudi Arabia. Many of changes implemented already, including the limitation of clergy's activity will not bring about quick social-political transition due to long-lasting and deeply rooted alliance between Saudi ruling clan and radical movement of Wahhabis, that determines conservative regime in the country. Basing on the main thesis Author tries to give the answer to research questions correlated with the thesis and touching the issue of possibility for implementation political, economic changes in Saudi Arabia by Mohammed bin Salman.

In the paper following research methods has been applied: historical method, which refers to analysis of historical process of shaping and development Saudi monarchy; documentary analysis - relating to governmental project "Vision 2030" particularly; elements of systemic approach in which system is constituted by political regime of Saudi Arabia; elements of statistical method employed in the context of variable economic or social data and elements of predictive referring to the model of Saudi Arabia's development under the rule of Mohammed bin Salman.

Keywords: Saudi Arabia, House of Saud, succession, economic transition

PRZEJĘCIE WŁADZY PRZEZ NASTĘPCĘ TRONU MOHAMMADA BIN SALMANA. SZANSE NA ZMIANY W ARABII SAUDYJSKIEJ?

STRESZCZENIE

Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie zarysu planowanych i wprowadzonych już zmian społecznych, politycznych i gospodarczych w Arabii Saudyjskiej w kontekście generacyjnej zmiany władzy. Główna hipoteza jest ściśle powiązana z flagowym projektem zmian pod tytułem „Wizja 2030” i bezpośrednio dotyczy następcy tronu Mohammeda bin Salmana, który stoi za tym przedsięwzięciem. Wiele zmian w różnych sferach życia społecznego, gospodarczego i także politycznego zostało już wprowadzonych, w tym m.in. ograniczenie roli duchowieństwa i instytucji religijnych takich jak *Mutaween*. Należy przy tym zaznaczyć, że daleko idące przemiany polityczno-religijne wymagają dłuższej perspektywy czasowej, choćby z uwagi na ist-

niejący już od 250 lat układ polityczny pomiędzy klanem rodowym Saudów a religijnymi fundamentalistami Wahhabitami. Powiązanie wahhabicko-saudyjskie determinuje konserwatywny ustrój państwa i może być główną przeszkodą w planowanej jego modernizacji. Do hipotezy badawczej postawiono kilka pytań badawczych związanych z szansami implementacji planowanych zmian w sferze gospodarczo-społecznej i tym samym politycznej w Arabii Saudyjskiej.

W tekście wykorzystano następujące metody badawcze: metoda genetyczna, która odnosi się do procesu historycznego kształtowania państwowości Arabii Saudyjskiej; analiza źródłowa dokumentów, w szczególności odnosząca się do flagowego dokumentu „Wizja 2030”. Wykorzystano również elementy metody systemowej, w ramach której określonym systemem jest ustrój polityczny Arabii Saudyjskiej oraz skorzystano z elementów metody statystycznej w zakresie posługiwania się danymi liczbowymi w odniesieniu do zjawisk ekonomicznych i społecznych. W tekście zastosowano również elementy metody predyktywnej w odniesieniu do prognozy dalszego rozwoju zmian wdrażanych przez następcę tronu Arabii Saudyjskiej.

Słowa kluczowe: Arabia Saudyjska, Saudowie, sukcesja, przemiany ekonomiczne