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**Nationalism in the Middle East: The
development of Jordanian national identity since
the disengagement of 1988**

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A Thesis submitted for a Degree of Doctor Of Philosophy

At The school of Government and International Affairs

Durham University

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Abstract

This thesis attempts to explain the development of national identity in Jordan in the post-disengagement period since 1988. National identity in Jordan has come full circle with the announcement of the 'Jordan First' policy. The Jordan First policy was enunciated to put the interest of the country first over other influences that were perceived to be inimical to the development of a strong national identity. After the Second World War, Jordan was still unsure of its national identity and its place in the Middle East state system. The rise of nationalism as one of the chief ideological instruments in many cases in the region soon found traction in Jordan as well, and led the country's authorities to apply nationalism to the development of the national identity. Nationalism has become one of the primary dynamics for the development of national identity in Jordan. Within the context provided, this thesis, thus, explains the evolution of nationalism in Jordan and its impact on identity politics in the post-disengagement period since 1988.

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Thesis Structure

For this thesis, national identity in Jordan will be examined in the post-disengagement period since 1988. National identity in Jordan has come full circle with the announcement of the 'Jordan First' policy. The Jordan First policy was enunciated to put the interest of the country first over other influences that were perceived to be inimical to the development of a strong national identity. After the Second World War, Jordan was still unsure of its national identity and its place in the Middle East state system. This thesis will examine the evolution of nationalism in Jordan and its impact on identity politics in the post-disengagement period since 1988. The first chapter will provide a modern history of Jordan up to the late 1980s, analysing the key events and the policies implemented in the country. Building on this, a detailed literature review is undertaken to examine the existing literature in the field and to show the development in the analysis of the literature written on Jordan. Key texts will be examined as well as key scholars. How one research work builds on another will be highlighted, as well as how the different schools of thought vis-à-vis nationalism and national identity in the Middle East. Gaps will be identified that will prove fruitful for further research. My thesis will build on the literature on the field and make an original contribution to the subject area of Middle East politics. The methodological tools used for the research will also be highlighted. Chapter One examines the different theories of nationalism in the Middle East and looks at ethnicity. From Gellner to Kohn, key theoreticians in the subject area will be examined. Chapter Two seeks to analyse the Hashemite monarchy and the Jordanian national discourse after disengagement. Key to this chapter will be an

understanding of tribal politics and the role of the army in the debates concerning national identity.

Chapter Three will examine relations between Jordan and the Palestinian authority with a view to understanding how the Arab-Israeli conflict influences the discourse of national identity in Jordan. Fundamental to the analysis in this chapter will be a discussion of the confederation scheme between the Jordanians and Palestinians. Lastly, the administration of the holy places in Jerusalem and its impact on Jordanian politics will be examined.

Chapter Four builds on the previous chapter by undertaking a study of the Jordan-Israeli Peace Treaty and its effects on identity formation. The Arab-Israeli conflict affects Jordanian politics more than any other Arab state, and its resolution would be key to the building of a strong identity in Jordan. The fifth and final chapter will bring the analysis up to date by examining the role of the Arab spring on identity formation in Jordan. Key to this will be an understanding of what inspired the protests, the role of the Hirak and the continuing civil war unfolding in neighbouring Syria.

In sum, the thesis will provide a thorough examination of the development of nationalism in Jordan since the 1980s. Its conclusion will be that national identity as a result of the factors examined above has undergone difficult tests and trials but has emerged coherent and further strengthened.

Introduction: Modern History of Jordan from the 1950s to the Disengagement of 1988

In this opening chapter of the thesis, I will be providing the historical context and foundations for the subsequent study to follow. My thesis will be looking at the development of Jordanian nationalism in the post 1988 disengagement period. The thesis will offer a critical and analytical examination of the development of national identity and discourse of the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan.

This chapter will have a four-way division. The purpose of the four-way division will be twofold: 1. To give a sound historical foundation to the argument and analysis to be advanced later in the thesis; 2. To show in each of the four sections the precise nature of the development of Jordanian nationalism in the concerned period.

The four-way division of this chapter is as follows: 1. The first section of the first chapter will look at the reign of the late King Hussein primarily focusing on the 1950s and how in this early period the idea of the Jordanian national identity was first mooted and began to be formulated; 2. The second section of the chapter will have as its focus the Six-Day War of June 1967 as its linchpin; the larger discussion of the section will highlight developments in the 1960s. The 1960s was an important period in the development of Jordanian nationalism because this was the time when the pan-Arab sentiment was at its height and also the time in which Jordan had to cede control of the West Bank of the River Jordan to the expansionist Israeli state 3. The third section of the thesis will look at the Palestinian factor in depth with the events of September 1970 very much in the forefront of the discussion. The challenge of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation to the reign of King Hussein and the territorial integrity of Jordan was a

very real threat. These events prompted Hussein to take the forceful measures he did, culminating in Black September 1970. The 1970s were a crucial decade in the development of the Jordanian nationalism because of the heightened consciousness of an emergent Palestinian identity distinct to and in places in contra to a Jordanian national discourse. The very foundations and viability of a Jordanian national consciousness were challenged by a Palestinian alternative. The fourth and concluding section of the first chapter will bring the historical narrative up to the late 1980s, specifically 1988, and the decision of Jordan to formally disengage from claiming ownership of the West Bank and thereafter the coining of term 'Jordan First'.

History of Trans Jordan 1921-1948

Before the thesis begins to examine the early years of King Hussein's rule and what happened in the 1950's as far as Jordanian history is concerned. It is necessary to examine Briefly the History of what was then called Trans Jordan and how it helped shape Jordanian Identity. Before 1921 there was no territory, people, or nationalist movement that was designated or designated itself as Trans Jordanian. Trans Jordan as a nation state was established in the wake of World War 1 in 1921 by the British and the recently arrived Emir Abdullah. This was Trans Jordan's inaugural moment. The British replaced the few existing state structures left by the Ottomans and the small short lived regional governments that regionalists has established in 1921 to 1921 during the interregnum period following the end of Ottoman rule and the beginning of British Rule. The first decade of the rule was characterized by the British and the Amir's attempts to set up a governmental structure, an army, an police force and a

bureaucracy followed by the establishment of laws that began to be decreed in 1927.¹ Trans Jordan's first constitution was set up in 1928 as the Organic Law concomitant with many other laws governing every aspect of life in the new state. Also, Trans Jordan expanded demographically and geographically through the annexation of an area extending from south Ma'an to Aqaba that was part of the Hejaz before.

Consolidation of state power proceeded apace in the 1930's through coercion and co-optation of local elites, whose resistance to the non-representative state in the late 1920s and through the mid-1930s was crushed or neutralized by different means through the recruitment and subjugation of the previously recalcitrant Bedouin population, consisting almost half the nascent country population.²

Anticolonial uprisings took place in the second half of 1930's in solidarity with the neighbouring Palestinians who were revolting against the British and the Zionist Project. These were also crushed. The 1940s witnessed many changes in the country, Trans Jordan's mostly Bedouin army which is also called as the Arab legion acquired an international role through intervening in Syria and Iraq in behalf of the British Government and a domestic one of disciplining the Bedouin population itself declaring itself through its integration to state structures. Trans Jordan was transformed from an emirate to an independent country with emir Abdullah declaring himself as King. The very name of Transjordan which was named by the British government after World war one was changed to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.³

¹ Jospeh, Masa'ad Colonial Effects The making of National Identity In Jordan. Columbia University Press 2001 p.35

² Ibid.p.36

³ Ibid.p.37

The newly independent country experienced even more fundamental transformations before the decade was over. It had expanded to include central Palestine, the largest land that the Zionists did not conquer and a large Palestinian population that consisted of citizens of central Palestine that was later named The West Bank and the refugees expelled from the part of Palestine that became Israel more than tripling the population. This was the second time that Jordan expanded geographically and demographically. The 1925 and 1940 to 1950 expansions constitute an important moment in the history of the country as the country's physical boundaries and demographic constitution were transformed in ways that was detrimental to its national identity and culture.

I. The early years of King Hussein's rule and the 1950s

To begin with we shall be looking at the reign of King Hussein of Jordan and the events that took place during 1953-1966 periods.

Amir Abdullah's Hashemite family actually hailed not from Jordan itself but from Mecca in western Arabia. The Hashemites had fought with the British in the 'Great Arab Revolt' against the Ottoman Turkish Empire during World War I. However shortly after the war ended, the Hashemites were defeated and expelled from Arabia by their rivals the Saudis, who ultimately carved out the modern Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to which they attached the family name. In the post-war mandate period, the British government decided to install two brothers of the House of Hashim, Abdullah, and Faisal, in their mandates of Jordan and Iraq respectively. This move was in large part intended as a reward for Hashemite support in the Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire during World War I.

The events of the First World War, the Arab revolt specifically, and the Hashemites being the standard bearers of the incipient Arab identity all contributed to raising the

consciousness of an educated class of Arab notables and them espousing through nationalism a demand for greater Arab recognition and power vis-a-vis a declining Ottoman empire and a resurgent Turkish nationalism. A Jordanian national identity had not as yet been formed simply because Jordan as a country did not yet exist. The antecedents of a Jordanian nationalism as I will argue in my thesis are to found in the Arab revolt and the incipient Arab nationalism in the inter-war years in particular. The Hashemites heading up of the Arab movement in the Middle East allowed them to place themselves as its chief spokespersons and therefore the family and the group that was to benefit the most from any redrawing of national frontiers in the post-war peace settlement.

From such inauspicious beginnings, Jordan has developed into a modern state that has long defied predictions of its imminent demise. It was anticipated by a number of commentators of the region that Jordan would not long survive its creation in the post war period. It was deemed that it was an artificial creation on the part of the European powers and that it would only survive on British subsidy, however Jordan today is a fully-fledged participant of the Middle East state system.⁴ What began as the British Mandate of Transjordan in 1921 evolved into the Emirate of Transjordan and following independence from Britain in 1946, finally evolved into its current form as the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in 1949. Jordan can therefore be seen – at least in its origins – as among the most artificial states in the modern Middle East. Over time, however, a sense of nationhood and national identity has developed within the kingdom

⁴ Nasser Aruri, *Jordan A study in political development 1921-1965*, the Hague 1972 pp.15-33

so that the notion of ‘Jordanian’ does carry very real meaning for many Jordanians.⁵

When Jordan came into being as a country there was little sense of a distinct national identity and discourse. What were in place however were the ingredients with which to ‘bake’ a national consciousness. The key factors in this respect were: 1. The Hashemites leading of the Arab independence movement; 2. The Hashemites standing in the Middle East as a family of repute and lineage, drawing on their ancestry and tracing their roots back to the family of the Prophet and also crucially the custodians of the sacred sanctuary in Mecca and the holy cities in the Hijaz. 3. Princes Abdullah and Faisal had made contact with the Arab nationalist groups in Syria and were in communication with them with the view to be the leading protagonists of the Arab cause. The above three factors were the prime reasons for the Hashemite family to be viewed as the representatives for the Arab nationalist movement. This analysis has shown that even before the historical of the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan in the post war period, the family of the Hashemites were intimately and closely associated with a school of thought that had advanced nationalism as its primary ideological concern. My argument in this chapter will be that Arab nationalism was a precursor to Jordanian nationalism and Jordanian nationalism was built on the foundation stones of the Arab nationalist discourse of the post-war period.

In the years after the Jordanian state was founded, King Abdullah I took control of Transjordan after liberating it from British rule. However it was his grandson King Hussein who led Jordan’s political development, created many of its institutions, and ensured that the Western great powers would view the kingdom as having vital

⁵ Curtis Ryan, *Jordan in transition: from Hussein to Abdullah*, Lynne Rienner publishers published in united states, 2002 p. 5.

geopolitical and geostrategic importance in both the Cold War and the Middle East peace process.

From the foundation of the Hashemite state onward, Jordan maintained close strategic ties to Britain. After World War II, and with the onset of the Cold War, Jordan also established stronger links to the United States, as the Western powers came to view Jordan as a conservative bulwark against communism and radical forms of pan-Arabism, and as potentially a moderating element in the Arab-Israeli conflict. King Hussein played on these concerns and his regime's conservative and anti-Communist credentials to solidify ties with the United States in particular. From its emergence as an independent state, Jordan has held close ties to powerful Western states and has in fact depended heavily on foreign aid from these countries to keep the kingdom afloat.⁶

King Hussein was not only instrumental laying the operational and logistical foundations of the modern Jordanian kingdom but was also crucial and innovative in laying the ideological bases for the emergent Jordanian identity and its attendant national discourse. In broad terms, there were a number of key decisions which the young king took which helped in the development in the national discourse. These were related to the military, the Bedouins and the formulation of a constitution for the country. Underpinning these endeavours was King Hussein's unique reading of Arab nationalism and Jordan's place in the larger scheme of events. As far as King Hussein was concerned the unity and strength of an Arab nation lay in the constituent parts that comprised the larger family of nations, he was quite clear as to Jordan's role in this⁷.

² Ibid., p.6.

⁷ King Hussein's view on Jordan's view on Unity http://www.kinghussein.gov.jo/views_arab2.html accessed on 10/10/2012.

Jordan's particular territorial integrity and its incorporation of first Bedouin and secondly Palestinians elements were factors which made Jordan unique to other Arab nations. This uniqueness and 'separateness' was first to be respected and recognised before any pan-Arab scheme could be realistically embarked upon.⁸

But beyond this emphasis on a religious and cultural source of legitimacy, the monarchy also established itself immediately as the premier and centralised political power in the emerging Jordanian state. At the time of the initial organisation of the Jordanian state, the nation itself was new and based on artificial boundaries, which therefore included disparate groups of settled and nomadic peoples on both the East and West Banks of the Jordan river.⁹

This did not amount to a political void, but nonetheless civil society, like the economic basis for the new state, was weak. The emerging state almost immediately filled these gaps itself. Jordan's new government began the process of establishing a large role for the public sector in the economy (a legacy undergoing transformation only today), ensuring a similarly large role for the military in backing the political regime, and finally co-opting the fragmented aspects of much of society into the new Hashemite political order. With this process well under way through the efforts of King Abdullah I, King Hussein would later develop the power of the state still further while also allowing intermittent and minimal levels of pluralism.¹⁰

⁸ Adid Daweesha, *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century: From Triumph to Despair*, Princeton university press 2003, p.210.

⁹ Eugene Rogan and Tariq tall, *Village, steppe and state: the social origins of Modern Jordan* London British academy press 2004 p.187

¹⁰ Peter Gubser, 'Jordan: Balancing Pluralism and Authoritarianism' in Peter J.Chelkopwski and Robert I Pranger, eds., *Ideology and power in the Middle East: Essays in Honor of George Ienczowski*, Durham N.C. Duke University Press, 1988 pp89-114. in terms of political liberalisation in the early 1950s, after

Given its location, Jordan was from its emergence under the British deeply involved in the various dimensions of the Palestinian-Israeli and broader Arab-Israeli conflicts. By the time of Jordanian independence in 1946, tensions were peaking in neighbouring Palestine between Jews and Arabs over the issue of Zionist versus Palestinian mandate aspirations to full statehood. When the United Nations voted to partition Palestine between the two peoples in 1947 and Israel declared its independence the following year, Jordan's Arab Legion was one of the Arab armies that attacked the new state, joining fighting that had already begun between the two communities. In that hard-fought campaign – a defeat for the Arab forces – Jordan's Arab Legion held on to East Jerusalem and the West Bank.¹¹

The Arab Legion's performance in the first Arab-Israeli war of 1948 was one that was widely commended and this indirectly helped Jordan to A) lay claim to the administered West Bank formally part of historic Palestine B) raised the stature of the Hashemite monarchy and its conception of Jordanian nationalism amongst the wider family of Arab states. Although the 1948 war represented a defeat for the Arab states and marked the great Nakba for the Palestinians, of all the Arab forces the Jordanian Armed forces (Arab Legion) performed most valiantly fighting of the Zionist militia forces and retaining east Jerusalem and a large part of the West Bank. The loss of Palestine and the creation of the Israeli state was forever to bedevil the Jordanian national discourse and also in many ways to impact on the evolution of a national identity in Jordan. I will argue in my thesis that Israeli expansionist goals in the Middle

the appointment of a new prime minister in 1953 King Hussein introduced press freedoms and allowed for more greater political participation by the political parties and the newer pressure groups in society.

¹¹ Benjamin Shawdran, *Jordan a state on tension*, council for Middle eastern affairs New York. 1959 pp.201-221

East indirectly fed into a strengthening of a Jordanian national identity, vis-à-vis the enemy across the river Jordan. The fact that there was a resolute opponent to Jordan in the form of the Israeli expansionist state, this fed into a narrative in Jordan that bolstered national resoluteness and opposition to Israeli designs on Jordan. Having a common enemy served to strengthen the Jordanian understanding of the self and brought unity to the disparate groups within the country. The existence of a common enemy brought all Jordanians together and made them identify themselves as Jordanians.

In what remains one of the most controversial moves in the history of modern Middle East politics King Abdullah I formally annexed the West Bank to his Jordanian kingdom in 1950. The debate ever since has turned on whether King Abdullah (I) move preserved Arab territory from complete Israeli control, or whether he had foreclosed the possibility of a smaller Palestinian state by annexing the territory.¹²

Abdullah paid for that decision with his life, when a Palestinian nationalist gunned him down outside the Al-Aqsa Mosque in East Jerusalem in 1951. Standing beside him that day was his grandson and the future King of Jordan, Hussein. The assassin's bullets too had hit him, but the one that hit him did no harm, as it amazingly ricocheted off a medal on the young King Hussein's chest.¹³ This soon became the stuff of legend: the martyred founder of the regime, the assassination at one of the holiest of Islamic sites, and the deflected bullet that marked the beginning of the 'survivor' image so associated with King Hussein throughout his long reign. After a brief transitional period in which

¹² Avi Shlaim, *collusion across Jordan: King Abdullah, the Zionist movement and the partition of Palestine* New York, Columbia University press 1988 p.80, *al kitab al sanawy daerat al matbuat wa al nasher, wezarat al ealam amman*, 1986 edition p.25

¹³ Roland Dallas, *King Hussein: A life on the edge*, London profile Books 1999. P.14

his father, Talal, was judged mentally unfit to rule, Hussein became King of Jordan in 1953. Thus for most of Jordan's modern history (1953-1999) it knew only one king as architect of the kingdom's domestic development and of its foreign policy. King Hussein consolidated the Hashemite regime in Jordan and defended it against internal and external challenges, neither, of which was in short supply.¹⁴

The preceding discussion has highlighted some of the key events of the early history of Jordan as an infant and distinct Arab country. I have tried to demonstrate how the development of the idea of Jordanian nationalism took root in the early period and then subsequently gained a momentum of its own. Key to these developments was the very real danger of the artificial state collapsing or disappearing overnight (just as it had emerged over night), but it is a testimony to the strength of character and forcefulness of purpose of the late monarchy, in great part, that Jordan was able to stand on its feet and its national identity gradually plant roots.

The challenges faced by King Hussein in his early years

King Hussein took office on August 11 1952 when the Jordanian parliament relieved King Talal from his duties and installed Hussein as King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.¹⁵ Having led the Arab revolts against the Ottoman Empire the Hashemite dynasty had a claim on the origin of Arab nationalism.¹⁶ The young king's view on Arab nationalism was not only focused on the search for political unity but also a desire to have a strong cultural, social and secure relations with the larger Arab family of

¹⁴ Robert Satloff, *From Abdullah to Hussein: Jordan In Transition* Oxford University press 1994.p.160

¹⁵ Peter Gubser, *Historical dictionary of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*, London 1991, p. 44.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

nations¹⁷. The king played an important role in developing the political system in Jordan and also made sure that his people's welfare was being met (i.e. more jobs were created during his reign and better education was assured for a greater part of the citizens).

The first challenge faced by King Hussein of Jordan was the Bagdad Pact. The pact was an alliance that was inspired by the British government and that aimed at limiting the influence of the Soviet Union in the Middle East by encouraging governments in the region to join the NATO and CENTO security systems.¹⁸ It was itself a flawed strategy that under-estimated the Arab nationalist preoccupation with the attainment of full sovereign independence from the residue of European colonialism; Egypt and Algeria were an example of two such countries. It was a rather transparent device through which the British tried to maintain their influence in the region in the face of the decline of post-war imperialism. Britain then secured the participation of Turkey, Pakistan, and Iran in the pact. With the membership of Iraq interest in the Arab world in the organisation increased.¹⁹ King Hussein's reaction to the above countries joining the pact was to evince interest initially and eventually become a fully-fledged member himself. Undoubtedly this was also an opportunity on the part of Hussein to show to the world the stature of his leadership at both home and on the wider Arab canvas. Despite the above, King Hussein spent much of 1955 unwilling to place the Hashemite Kingdom under London's pressure and Britain eventually came round to agreeing with

¹⁷ King Hussein's speech on the eve of the general election Amman October
<http://www.kinghussein.gov.jo> Accessed on 01/03/2015

¹⁸ Philip Robins, *A History of Jordan*, Cambridge university press 2004 p.91

¹⁹ Ibid.

Hussein's line of reasoning.²⁰ Such actions only helped the cause of anti-Pact forces and with the increased criticisms of the Egyptian's winning over an overwhelming majority of the Jordanian government matters became increasingly precarious for the King. Every party in Jordan, at the time, from the Ba'ath to the Muslim Brotherhood were all united in their hostility to the British sponsored Baghdad Pact and openly campaigned against Jordan's premature membership of the organisation. The Bagdad Pact issue proved to be a very divisive matter for the politically conscious Jordanian people. It had mobilised and radicalised much of the Jordanian population at a time when there was no shortage of radical parties on the political scene in the country. It had shown for one how precarious was Jordan's political balancing act and how the mass of the Jordanian people had reacted to the populist appeal of the Egyptian president Jamal Abdul-Nasser. It had exposed the indecisiveness of Britain, Jordan's traditional sponsor and had drawn attention to the growing limitations to its increasing influence in the Arab region.²¹ Lastly, it had been a damaging experience for Jordan's political class with the incentives to remain loyal to the centre diminishing at an alarming rate.

It was also a somewhat a transparent device through which Britain tried to maintain its sagging influence in the region in the face of post-war imperial decline. Britain quickly secured northern tier participation in the alliance in the form Turkey, Pakistan and Iran, with Iraqi membership exciting a flickering interest in the Arab World. With Hashemite Iraq on board, but Egypt already implacably opposed, Jordanian participation was the

²⁰ Ibid., p.92.

²¹ Ibid.

only though risky option for its extension into the Levant.²²

Jordan did not promptly join the Pact because of adverse public opinion and the sharp criticism of Iraq in the Arab League. Jordanians were in no mood to accept further involvement in the western military pacts. The Palestinian majority, which is made up of two thirds of the population of Jordan, considered Israel rather than the Soviet Union as the aggressor in the Middle East. Egypt in the meantime denounced the pact, claiming Baghdad's participation was inconsistent with the treaty of Joint defence and economic cooperation signed by the Arab League members between 1951 and 1953.²³

As the foregoing discussion about the Bagdad Pact has demonstrated Jordan was reluctant to join this British instigated alliance to restrict soviet influence in the Middle East. Public opinion in Jordan at this moment in time was in support of Nasser's foreign policy which was centred on non-alignment and opposition to any western inspired alliances that was read by the Arab street as being supportive of American and indirectly Israeli Agendas. At this critical early phase in Jordanian history King Hussein was careful to align Jordan's national identity in the progressive revolutionary camp as opposed to the reactionary western front. This analysis has demonstrated to me as a researcher how difficult a balancing act King Hussein had to play in nurturing and fathering a Jordanian national identity and steering a steady course between a pro-Western Bagdad Pact influenced alignment or at the other end of the spectrum a pan Arabist radical reading of nationalism as espoused by Jamal Abdul-Nasser and the reach of radio Cairo. King Hussein was able to chart a middle course that preserved

²² Philip Robins, A history of Jordan university of Cambridge press 2007 p.91.

²³ League of Arab States, Treaty series, agreements, conventions concluded between Member States Within the Framework of the Arab League (n.d.) pp.10-15.

Jordanian national territorial integrity and at the same time charted a distinct path for the Jordanian national discourse, rooted in the specificities of Jordan but amenable also to the sway of Pan-Arabism.²⁴

The next challenge facing King Hussein was the dismissal of the Arab Legion's General Glubb Pasha (1956). The Jordanian government's reputation was at such a low ebb. This was because of the harsh way in which the government suppressed opposition to the joining of the Baghdad pact, after being overwhelmed by the pressure of public opinion the government in Jordan felt that it must reach a deal with the opposition at home and abroad. The opposition demands were made true before the end of the year by the dismissal of the leader of the Arab legion Major General Glubb and other British generals.

March 1956 was referred to by King Hussein as one of the most important months of his life.²⁵ General Glubb who was the head of the Arab Legion was dismissed and was ordered to leave the country in the same month.²⁶ Whereas the dismissal of general Glubb was the necessary move made by the king to satisfy the opposition, several specific interpretations to explain his dismissal were advanced.

King Hussein explained that the reason for Major General Glubb's dismissal from the Arab region was the result of a long period of consideration and thinking in the best interest of Jordan and the Jordanian people²⁷. King Hussein said that the only reason for dismissing Major Glubb from the legion was disagreement on two issues: the first issue

²⁴ Ariel Dunn, *King Hussein and the challenge of Arab radicalism* Oxford university press 1989, p.26.

²⁵ King Hussein, *UnEasy Lies The Head*, Windmill Press Ltd, Kingswood Surrey 1962, p.107.

²⁶ Nasser Aruri, *Jordan a Study in Political Development*, the Hague martinus nijoff publishing, 1972, p.128.

²⁷ Hussein, op.cit., p.138.

was the role of Arab officers in the army and the second was the strategy of defence in the Hashemite kingdom. The king asked for more promotions for Arabs in the army and training for higher ranks so that the Jordanian army was arabized.²⁸ King Hussein accused Glubb Pasha of giving his allegiance to Britain and berated Britain for the lack of response to the nationalist aspirations.

The preceding episode in regards to the dismissal of General Glubb was prompted on King Hussein's part by his wanting to appease the nationalist opinion in Jordan in 1950s. There were two reasons why King Hussein dismissed Glubb Pasha from his post in 1956. The first reason was personal, there was a generational gap between the two men. Glubb was close to Hussein's grandfather King Abdullah, it was said the two had a good personal rapport. This relationship was aided by the fact that Glubb was the junior man, in effect meaning that the late king was in a more senior position. After King Hussein's accession to the throne matters changed and now Glubb was the elder, in fact by almost 40 years. Given this generational gap it might be asserted that tension is going to be inevitable.²⁹

The other reason for Glubb's removal from office was political; the scenario of national and local politics had repercussions on the context and outcome. In the immediate short term the removal of Glubb Pasha was the way for monarch to change his political standing. The removal of Glubb was predetermined to be a popular move at home and about this there can be little doubt. In the Middle East people were still caught up with symbols of political independence, the removal of a British head of the military was a

²⁸ Ibid., p.129.

²⁹ Philip Robbins, A history of Jordan, Cambridge University press 2004, p.93

wonderful and extremely popular move in the part of the King.³⁰

The removal of Glubb was helpful to King Hussein at the time of the Suez crises in 1956, soon after this incident, the young king was able to fight domestic criticism, a path of action that was helped by his proclamation of brotherhood with Egypt during the international crises. Because of the critical events at the time of the Baghdad Pact, because of Nasser's popularity on the Jordanian street and in order to assert his own position and leave a mark the young monarch was compelled to take this bold step which in the end bolstered his opinion at home and abroad.³¹

The next and last challenge faced by King Hussein was the dismissal of Suleiman al Nabulsi, leader of the Nationalist Socialist Party and Prime Minister at the time. Since King Abdullah's death in 1951, the National Socialist Party had emerged as the strongest electoral force in Jordan. Led by Suleiman al Nabulsi, the political and economic platform of the party was ambiguous, but it was considered a modernist and loyalist party.³²

Al Nabulsi was considered to be a modest, patriotic figure with liberal instincts that pushed him to tolerate radicals but not to share their demands for widespread social change. In stark contrast to Al Nabulsi and his nationalist party, amongst the other ideological parties king Hussein and his aids viewed the leftist Ba'ath party and the Communist party as radicals who opposed monarchic rule in Jordan. Radical candidates from other parties focused on the more dramatic and regional issues during their 1956

³⁰ Glubb was frequently a scapegoat for Egyptian nationalist rhetoric in which he was consistently called an: imperialist scorpion. Trevor Royle, *Glubb Pasha: the life and times of sir John Bagot Glubb, commander of the Arab Legion*, Little Brown and company, London 1992 p.439

³¹ Benjamin Shawdran, *Jordan A state of tension*, council for Middle eastern affairs press, New York, 1959, pp.335-359.

³² George Joffe, *Jordan in Transition* C Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd London(2002) p.71

election campaign, however both the Ba'ath and the communists embraced programmes for fundamental socio-economic domestic change targeting a socialist re-distribution of wealth via pro-peasant and labour policies and progressive land reforms.³³

The proven electoral strength of the Nationalist Social Party before the election took place made it more likely that the party would return to its parliamentary influence.³⁴

As the leader of the most successful party in Jordan, Al Nabulsi was asked by the King to lead and form the new government. The king was happy to set the pattern that the monarch is the one who appoints the Prime Minister not the winning party. What amazed King Hussein is that his prime minister wanted to form a coalition government with the Ba'athists and the communists on the basis of shared Jordanian nationalism.³⁵

The cabinet of al Nabulsi's government consisted of six members of the National Socialist party, three independents, one communist, and one Ba'athist. From the King's point of view, the policies of the al Nabulsi government quickly became intolerable. The radical ministers and members of parliament used their ability to mobilize the street, namely to ask people to help them push their agendas forward.

By spring of 1957 the Eisenhower doctrine had proposed replacing the British aid with American aid to Jordan in exchange for support against the spread of communism.³⁶

Many members of the National Socialist Party had favoured exchanging the declining British aid assistance for American.³⁷

³³ Ibid., p.72.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Uriel Dann, *King Hussein and the challenge of Arab Radicalism: Jordan, 1955-1967*, Oxford University press, 1989, pp.39-52

³⁶ Ibid., p.73

³⁷ Ibid.

The liberal Al Nabulsi government strayed beyond the limit envisioned by the king in his struggle to assert his own role as the originator of all policies. The continuing crises stemmed from the fact that al Nabulsi's government did not represent the moderate and conservative majority elected to the Jordanian Parliament. The acquisition of the power to implement reform by the Ba'athists, communists, and their supporters threatened to sweep aside traditional socio-economic elites. Therefore the group of privileged elite could not have seen a potential radical government as anything less than disastrous to their interests.³⁸

The above episode demonstrates to me that the internal dynamics of Jordan in the 1950s particularly with respect to al Nabulsi rise to ascendancy created a potentially divisive situation for king Hussein and Jordan. With the prospect that under Nabulsi's leadership Jordan would steer a more radical pan-Arabist agenda, partly influenced by Nasser's Egypt, King Hussein and the monarchy checked the increasing shift to the left of Jordanian politics by dismissing al Nabulsi government. King Hussein opted for a Jordan specific centrist reading of Jordanian nationalism in arriving at this decision he seems to have wanted to negate the influence and popularity of pan-Arabist revolutionary discourses. The Nabulsi government was cognisant that Jordan as a state would not survive for very long and the idea that Nabulsi proposed was that Jordan would form a federation with other Arab countries i.e. Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia. A pan Arab fund would replace the British subsidy and this would facilitate Jordan being more pro- Arab in its International Affairs. The Nabulsi government in order to ride the Arab nationalist wave have signed an agreement with a number of Arab

³⁸Ibid., p.74

countries as mentioned above.³⁹

II Jordanian nationalism in the 1960s and the Six Day War, 1967.

The next section shall be looking at the events that took place in Jordan during the 1967 war. The first event we shall look at is the Israeli forces raid on the Jordanian town of Samu 1967. The second event we shall look at is the unification of the East and West Banks and the loss of East Jerusalem to Israel in 1967.

This section of the chapter will look at the development of Jordanian nationalism in the 1960s with special reference to the Samu raid and the war of 1967. The 1960s were a time of rapid change and the maturity of specifically of Jordanian national discourse. If the 1950s were a decade in which nationalist discourse in Jordan was finding its feet, the 1960s were a period of the consolidation of the main elements of Jordanian nationalism. The factors integral to Jordanian nationalism were the monarchy, the tribal forces, the Bedouin confederations, and the Palestinian diaspora.

King Hussein of Jordan was pulled into the 1967 war and did not join the Arab Alliance willingly as was traditionally believed. King Hussein was obliged by the Palestinian population in Jordan to consider seriously joining the Arab camp in the war against Israel. Had Jordan not participated in the 1967 war events internally would have conspired against the monarchy meaning the large Palestinian population would have lost confidence in the King's nationalist credentials. More recent scholarship maintains

³⁹ Betty Anderson, *Nationalist voices in Jordan the street and the state* university of Texas press 2005 pp.178

that it was internal factors over regional that pushed Jordan to join the 1967 war and which proved in the long run to be a disastrous path for Jordan and its administration of the West Bank.⁴⁰

(i) The Samu raid 1966

On 13 November 1965 the Israeli army crossed the border between Israel and Jordan. The Israeli army's motives for attacking Samu was to convince the Jordanian government that Israel did not see any difference between one Arab state and the other. For this reason the Israelis mentioned that one reason for the attack was to show the Arabs that they were Israel's enemy whether they were Syrians, Jordanians or Egyptians. This raid made the Jordanians feel that the sheer logic of this attack demanded that Amman belong to an Arab regional defence system.⁴¹

It also made the Jordanian government aware that the Israeli army might try to take control of the West Bank since the Jordanian army was perceived to be very weak. The Jordanians also felt that the Samu raid was made to convince them to retaliate against the Israeli army. This gave them (the Israelis) a great opportunity, namely excuse, to invade Jordan and destroy the Jordanian army detachments and also occupy the West Bank. The Jordanian government felt that the raid on Samu was made to widen the divisions of the Arab world. The Jordanians believed that the Israeli government had wished that the Arabs would be divided in a way that they would not be able to attack Israel.⁴²

⁴⁰ Zachary Landau, *Jordan's Entry to the Arab Israeli War 1967: A study of OmniBalancing*. Nimep insights Journal Volume 3 Fall 2007 pp.83-94

⁴¹ Samir Mutawi, *Jordan in the 1967 War*, Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 77.

⁴² Ibid. p.78.

For King Hussein the lead up to the 1967 war began with the Israeli attack on the West Bank village of Samu. This was a very devastating attack it killed upwards of twenty Jordanians soldier, and even more civilians.⁴³ The Samu attack had a very negative influence on the national identity in Jordan. Most importantly it highlighted the relative weakness of the Jordanian national Army. These developments also fed into Palestinian frustration at the country's inability to safe guard them or provide them with the necessary means to look after themselves. As Clinton bailey has analysed 'the need to wield the Arab Legion against the Palestinians wiped away six years of effort to win legitimacy in the eyes of the Israeli people'.⁴⁴

The Jordanians believed that the raid of Samu was designed to weaken the defences of the Jordanian army. The raid resulted in a feeling of insecurity in the minds of Jordanians living next to Israel, this itself gave pressure to the Jordanian army to spread around the city and protect it from any invasion. The Jordanians believed that the raid on Samu was designed to force the residents of the West Bank to initiate a rebellion against the Jordanian government⁴⁵. This rebellion would increase the possibility of civil unrest in the West Bank and would potentially give Israel a good reason to invade the city. The Israelis could make a point that the Palestinians gaining the upper hand in Jordan was by itself a serious threat to their national self-interest.⁴⁶

The Samu raid and the activities of the Fedayeen across the Israeli –Jordanian border prompted unrest in a number of West Bank cities, which was directed against the

⁴³ Avi Schlaim, *The Iron Wall : Israel and the Arab world*, Norton, New York, 2000 p.234

⁴⁴ Bailey, *Jordan's Palestinian challenge 1948-1983*, p.25

⁴⁵ Laura James, *Images of the Enemy: Foreign Policy Making in Egypt and Jordan on the eve of the Six Day War*, Mphil thesis, university of Oxford 2002

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Hashemite monarchy. Israel may have wanted to weaken Jordanian control of the West Bank and thereby de-legitimise its presence. In return Jordan would have seen Israeli provocations as a measure to incite Jordan to War, with the view of taking further territory from it in the West Bank. In terms of the articulation of a Jordanian National Identity such episodes would not have been conducive to building a cohesive and coherent Jordanian identity and discourse. King Hussein and the monarchy would have wanted to consolidate their rule of the West Bank with the view to building a Trans-Jordanian identity spanning the two Banks of the river Jordan. However the Israeli and certain Palestinian elements for different reasons may have wanted to question and debunk any Jordanian identity incorporating the West Bank.

(ii). The unification of the West Bank

The project of the unification decision or *mashru' Qarar al wihdah* was the way the Jordanian government titled the annexation proposal. The opening statement of the government declaration, inaugurating parliamentary debates on the question, asserted that its decision was based on the reality of both banks (of Jordan) the Eastern and the Western, its nationalist, natural and geographic unity and the necessities of their common interests.⁴⁷

The parliamentary decision called for the complete unity between Jordan's Eastern and Western Banks and their consolidation into one state that is the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan or *al-Mamlakah- al-urduniyaah al-hashemiyah*. King Abdullah (I) speech at the throne that inaugurated the parliamentary session that voted for unity stressed that this

⁴⁷ Annex to the official Gazette, parliamentary minutes(Mulhaq al-Jaridah al-Rasmiyyah, Mudhakkat Majlis al -Nuwwab) VOL number 3 May 13 1950 p.7

‘is the first time in the history of the constitutional life of Jordan that the parliament which grouped both banks of Jordan, emanates from the will of one people, one homeland and one hope’.

King Abdullah (I) also motioned that this is a blessed step which the two banks have embarked upon and which the people who are the concerned party have set to achieve, aiming to strengthen its national unity, its patriotic pride (*wihdatihi- al Qawmiya wa izzatihi al wataniya*) and its common interests. ‘Abdullah analogizes the new expanded Jordan to a bird whose wings are a East and a West and who has a natural right to have its people and relatives come together’.⁴⁸

Whereas the bird’s wings correspond concretely to the east and west banks, the bird’s body representing Jordan has no concrete geographic correspondence. In its response to his majesty’s speech from the throne, the senate described the East Bank as the sister of the West Bank and described King Abdullah (I) as an experienced captain of the ship ploughing a way for his ship in the middle of raging storms of whims and inclinations.⁴⁹

Abdullah asserts that the unity of both banks is a nationalist and factual reality. Its nationalist reality is attested to through the entanglements of people’s origins and branches of the coalescence of vital interests and the unity of pain and hopes. Its factual reality is attested by the establishment of strong unionist links between both banks since 1922, those important and notable links included unity of currency, common defense, utilization of ports etc., all based on unity of interests and cultural and legislative exchange which have rendered each of the two banks as an excellent center for the

⁴⁸ Khitab al arsh in al-Hukumah al Urduniyyah, wihdat Diffitay al-Urdunn: Waqa i wa Wathaiq(The unity of Banks of Jordan: Events and documents) Amman: Idarat al Sahafah wa al-Nashr, June 1950 p.7

⁴⁹ Rad Majlis al A’yan ‘Ala Khitab al ‘Arsh in, wihdat Diffitay al-Urdunn: Waqa i wa Wathaiq(The unity of Banks of Jordan: Events and documents) Amman: Idarat al Sahafah wa al-Nashr, June 1950 p.15

other.⁵⁰

The discourse permitting this union, like the one used to found Transjordan back in 1921, is Arab nationalism. Abdullah stresses that when Great Britain surrendered its mandate over Palestine, which has been excised from the Mother country (al-watan-al-umm) and the storms of the Arab-Zionist dispute raged, it became imperative to assert the rights of the Arabs and to stand up to aggression through a general Arab co-operation and in our opinion there is no security to any Arab people except in its real unity and in the coming together of its scattered parts wherever this is possible and reflective of the general will and is not a breach of covenant or agreement.⁵¹

King Abdullah (I) viewed the parliamentary elections in both banks preceding their unification as evidence of a sense of self that the people of both banks have. His speech further stipulated plans to unify both banks. He concluded by saluting and congratulating members of parliament and stressing that you have marched with me in past years and I shall march with you in forthcoming years under your constitutional responsibility and with my paternal guidance, wishes the best for the homeland.⁵²

The parliament in Jordan voted for unity based on the right of self-determination, the reality of self-determination, the reality of Jordan's two banks the east and west, its nationalist, natural, and geographic unity and the necessities of their common interests and vital domain.⁵³ Whereas the Jordanian senate likened the Jordanian kingdom to the mother of both banks, Abdullah is clear on his role as father to all whom his kingdom

⁵⁰ Khitab al Arsh in wihdat Diffitay al-Urdunn: Waqa i wa Wathaiq(The unity of Banks of Jordan: Events and documents) Amman: Idarat al Sahafah wa al-Nashr, June 1950 p.3

⁵¹ Ibid., p.4.

⁵² Ibid., p.6

⁵³ Ibid.

encompasses. His paternal guidance was much appreciated by the lower house's response to the speech from the throne. In it, those pretending to speak for parliament 'praise... your majesty's response towards the Palestinian refugees and your work to save them from despair'.⁵⁴

Certainly such metaphors are not specific to Jordanian nationalism as they are rampant in all European nationalism where the idea of the nation as a motherland or fatherland depending on the context and its leaders/founders as fathers- note the use of the term founding fathers in the U.S. context was first used.⁵⁵ Whereas Arab nationalism is the discourse deployed to unify Jordan and Palestine, Transjordanian nationalism, not Arab nationalism must define the new unified and expanded unity.

As the proceeding discussion has demonstrated King Abdullah and his government were clear sighted and adamant in their wish to legitimise the unity of the East and West Banks. King Abdullah specifically wanted to emphasize the shared history, linguistic bond, and cultural interdependence and evoked the motherland to symbolise this. It is clear in this discussion that prior to disengagement of 1988 Jordanian monarchs has made concerted attempt to unify both wings of the Jordanian Kingdom and to legitimize the incorporation of the West Bank into the Unified Kingdom of Jordan. One could assert that King Abdullah (I) was trying to assert the Jordanian primacy over any Palestinian identity or he was clear in the above quotes that a Jordanian Arab identity took precedence over any Palestinian specific sentiment. It is noteworthy that there is no mention of the Palestinian people whereas in the current

⁵⁴ 'Rad Maklis al-nuwwab Ala khatab al Arsh in Wihdat diffaty p.18

⁵⁵ Joseph Massad, 'conceiving the masculine: Gender and Palestinian nationalism,' in the Middle East Journal edition number 49, issue number 3 summer 1995.

debate in Jordan there is a recognition that a Palestinian state must live side by side with Jordan and centered on the West Bank.

The proceeding discussion explained what happened when the West Bank was unified with the East Bank. The following discussion in this section will now explain how the West Bank was unified with the East in terms of the electoral procedure and the legal technicalities of the ratification of the West Bank

The unification of the East and West banks took place in the 1950s. The West Bank was placed under the rule of the military from 17 May 1948 until 2 November 1949.⁵⁶

In the 1950s, the first election was held in both the East and West Banks, after the election took place members of both the East Bank and West Bank parliaments met together with a Jordanian assembly and made an announcement. Below is an excerpt from this announcement:

- a. To confirm the unification of both the East and West Bank in one state called the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and having King Abdullah I elected as King and ruled by a constitutional representative assembly where all citizens are treated equally.⁵⁷
2. To affirm the safeguarding of all Arab rights in Palestine and the defence of all rights by all means without prejudice to the final settlement of a just cause.
3. To refer this resolution to King Abdullah I for approval.

⁵⁶ Rajah Shadeh, *From Occupation to Interim Accord: Israel and the Palestinian Territories*, Kluwer law international, The Hague, 1997, p. 78.

⁵⁷ Anas Sayigh, *Al Hashimiyum wa Qadiyat falasteen*, Beirut Al Maktabah Al Asriyaah wa Jaridat al Muharir 1966 p.10.

4. This resolution shall be confirmed when King Abdullah I endorses it.⁵⁸

With the unification of the West Bank with the East Bank, Jordan proposed to bring into being a Trans-Jordanian Identity incorporating both East Bankers and West Bankers, incorporating both Palestinian and tribal, Bedouin elements in one unifying state. The purpose of this exercise and how it affected the development of Jordanian nationalism needs to be carefully understood.

As far as king Hussein and Jordan was concerned, matters were deliberately engineered to dilute the specific and distinct Palestinian national identity, since this was viewed in conservative quarters as a direct threat to a specifically Jordanian discourse and the paramount position of the Hashemite monarchy. Jordan benefited from an expansion of the territory under its control but it distrusted the Palestinian narrative rooted in the West Bank. For The Jordanian national discourse it was imperative that the Palestinian identity be subsumed under a larger and more overarching Jordanian National identity. To summarise the annexation of the West Bank and its incorporation into Jordan smothered a specifically Palestinian expression of identity in the interest of a more overarching and inclusive Trans-Jordanian narrative .up until the 1988 and disengagement the official position in Jordan was the West Bank was an integral part of an enlarged and all-inclusive Jordanian national state.

On 8 January 1952, a new constitution of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan was introduced. According to the Jordanian constitution of 1952, the courts had jurisdiction over all Jordanian citizens in both civil and criminal matters. The executive branch of

⁵⁸ Annex to the official Gazette Parliamentary Minutes (Mulhaq al Jaridah al Rasmiyah mudhakkarat Majlis al Nuwaab no 3 may 13 1950 p.7.

the state was placed in a three-tier system.

The executive branch of the state such as the governmental ministries were placed on top, below it was the district level which was directed by district commissioners and other high ranking officials who represented the central government in their areas as well as the link between central and local governments. Next was the local government constituted of municipal councils and village councils. The council of ministers were the authority along with everything else of public life in Jordan.⁵⁹

The constitution adopted in 1952 was generally believed to be a liberal document with well-intentioned rules and regulations. One criticism that can be levelled against the constitution however was the degree of powers invested in the monarch. The state religion was identified as Islam and the language of the government was identified as Arabic. Together the three constituent elements of the constitution: Monarchy, Islam, and Arabic language can be considered the linchpins of Jordanian nationalism in the 1960s. To summarise the above argument in terms of the development of the Jordanian national Identity and discourse, the Hashemite family, place of religion and contribution of language have all remained common denominators in the history of Jordanian Nationalism.

(iii) The West Bank

Given the history of Jordan's control in the West Bank, its legal status before 1967 may be well said something less than that of a legitimate sovereign and something more than that of a belligerent occupant. Belligerent occupancy can only happen when the

⁵⁹ Ibid., p.79.

occupying force is at war with the government of the territory it occupies.⁶⁰

Jordan's entry to the West Bank occurred without the express permission of the inhabitants of the area; the Arab population of the West Bank certainly did not request it who by virtue of the partition resolution and general international consensus had the right to proclaim authority over the area of Palestine not given control to the Jewish state. Jordan's status in its term of control over the West Bank was to be that of a trustee-occupant; however its responsibility in administering that trust was subject to debate.⁶¹

The institutionalization of a Palestinian identity was feared as a threat to Jordan's mission for permanent control of the West Bank. While regretting the loss of territories in the Palestinian rule, Jordan simultaneously inhibited Palestinianism as part of a policy that was aimed at retaining control of a majority population that was Palestinian.

Given Jordan's legal status in the West Bank between the periods 1948-1967 as a trustee occupant and given the disaffection between the West Bank and Jordan it became difficult to explain Israel's legal status in the region. If we say that Israel gained control of the West Bank in 1967 in exercise of its self-defence, we can assume that Israel's status can only be that of a lawful belligerent occupant.⁶² The West Bank is still a big talking point in Arab politics today therefore the West Bank issue will be discussed in more detail when we talk about the disengagement of 1988.

The preceding analysis highlights the protracted nature of the evolution of Jordanian

⁶⁰ Allan Gerson, *Israel, the West Bank and International Law*, Frank Cass and Company, London, 1978, p.78.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.79.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p.80.

national identity in the face of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank in 1967. After the loss of West Bank to Israel Jordan has to fall back on demarcating a national identity based upon the history, people, and rule of the monarchy in the East Bank solely. The evolution of Jordanian nationalism in the post 1967 war period is then dependant solely on dynamics specific to the East Bank, and the consequent temporary removal of the Palestinian question. The loss the West Bank was not only ideologically disastrous for Jordanian nationalism but economically the setback was incalculable. The tourism industry and the agricultural sector were given a severe blow with the loss of the West Bank. In addition to the preceding, Jordan now had to give refuge to an addition 300,00 Palestinian refugees, this inevitably had an effects on the demographics of the East Bank. Jordan now had to placate a restive Palestinian population that now had to saw its destiny not in Arab but in Palestinian Hands. The Nurturing of Jordanian Nationalism in 1948-1967 periods had been a slow and arduous exercise and with defeat in 1967 war and the loss of the West Bank, the dynamics determining national identity and discourse were given an unexpected shudder.

Transjordanians are divided between 'Jordanian nationalists' and 'Pan Jordanians'. The former group consisted of those who after the defeat of 1967 were happy to see the West Bank dismembered from Jordan. This particular group maintained the presence of the West Bank within the nation of Jordan before 1967 had made difficult the building of a more geographically and specifically Jordanian national identity. The members of this group argued that the PLO and Arafat should represent all Palestinians in the West Bank and the PLO should eventually be the leader of a liberated Palestine. Furthermore they maintained Jordanian passport holders of the East Bank who thought of their

national identity, as being primarily Palestinian should leave the East Bank and live in the new Palestinian state when conditions allow it.⁶³

The pan Jordanians were called the followers of King Abdullah (I) in the 1950s. This group believed in the Unity of the Two Banks as a geographical basis of the Jordanian national Identity, they maintained that the centre of power of such a country should remain in the capital Amman. This group called the PLO and Arafat as rivals and competitors, they believed no concession on representation or governance should be made to the PLO. This group tended to consist of those Jordanian from Palestinian background, whose forefathers who arrived in Jordan before 1948 and they had established businesses in the East Bank but they were not fond of Jordanian national identity which excluded the Palestinian element.⁶⁴

(iv) Jerusalem

The following section on Jerusalem will analyse the role of the Holy City in the evolution of Jordanian identity. From the time of the unification of the West Bank in 1956 to the time of disengagement of 1988, Jordanian official policy was centred on harnessing the symbolic power of Jerusalem and to utilise it for Jordanian legitimacy. Jordan wanted to be seen to be the protector and the maintainer of the holy sites in East Jerusalem and the Old city, this responsibility to maintain the holy sites of Islam would give the Kingdom Much needed legitimacy in the eyes of the Palestinians in the West Bank. Jordanian national identity in the pre-disengagement period was clear about the

⁶³ Nawaf Wasfi Tell ' Jordanian foreign policy in the 1970s, PhD thesis University of Exeter, 2001 pp.88,101

⁶⁴ Debora De olivira Martins, *Politically salient social identities among Palestinians in Jordan*, University of Amsterdam, Masters thesis July 2002. pp 36-47

role of Jerusalem as being central in the Jordanian, Arab, Islamic, narrative.

In April 1947 the United Nations established a committee on Palestine to inspect the situation in Palestine and propose a solution to the problem. In 1947 the United Nations voted by 33-13 votes for the majority scheme that suggested the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states with an international district consisting of Jerusalem and Bethlehem. The Palestinians rejected the above proposal from the United Nations. There were disturbances that resulted in the first Arab-Israeli war, after the Jewish authority declared the establishment of the state of Israel in May 1948.⁶⁵

During the war of 1948, Israeli forces took control of much of the areas assigned to the proposed Arab state that included eighty five per cent of Jerusalem. The Jordanian army (Jordanian Arab legion) took control of the West Bank that also included a small proportion of the eastern part of Jerusalem.

On 2nd February 1949, the Israeli Prime Minister, Ben Gurion, announced that the Israeli-controlled west Jerusalem was no longer occupied territory but a part of the state of Israel. On 13 December 1949 west Jerusalem was 'illegitimately' announced the capital of Israel.⁶⁶

Israel's control of Jerusalem seen as the eternal capital for all the three monotheistic faiths was a setback to Palestinian and Jordanian hopes of religious legitimacy and control of the third holiest sanctuary in Islam. In terms of the development of Jordanian Nationalism, Jerusalem occupation by the enemy served two purposes: 1) it dealt a blow to the Hashemite monarchy wanted to project itself as the rightful custodians of al

⁶⁵ Jerusalem Bulletin, <http://www.passia.org/publications/bulletins/english-jerusalem>, p. 1. Accessed on 1/7/2012

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.2.

Quds; 2) it gave a sense of re-invigoration to a Jordanian-identity increasingly defined in respect of the Israeli 'other'.

(v) Jerusalem's role in the 1967 war

Jordan joined the June 1967 War to appease pan-Arab and Palestinian opinion that threatened to worsen into serious internal challenge to the Jordanian government and the stability of the Jordanian state. The June 1967 War was a victory for Israel, which was able to annexe the West Bank, and unifies both parts of Jerusalem (East and West Jerusalem). As far as Israel was concerned, three Arab states could not defeat it and it managed to secure its main objectives. The war of 1967 and the victory for Israel gave rise to different schools of thought in the country as to its future.⁶⁷

. One saw this as an opportunity to use the newly acquired land as a basis to establish peace with the neighbouring Arab states.⁶⁸ The other perspective was to believe that this was a divine intervention that justified the very existence of the Jewish state and saw the dreams of expansion into Jerusalem come true. Jews who had been reconciled to the idea of a portioned Jerusalem from 1947-1967 even accepting the United Nations Plan for the city in 1947 now believed Jerusalem to be a part of Israel and many Israelis believed that it was meant to be the capital of Israel. Israel was confident and wanted to have peace talks with its Arab neighbours after the Six Day War ended. The heavy defeat and a deep sense of humiliation stopped the Arab nations from negotiating peace without an Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied during the war.⁶⁹

The reasons for delineating and analysing the Israeli position on Jerusalem has been

⁶⁷ Mutayam al Oran, *The Jordanian-Israeli Peace Building Experience*, Rutledge, 2008, p. 11.

⁶⁸ Don Peretz, *The West Bank, Best View*, Boulder 1984p.34

⁶⁹ Joles S. Migdal ed. *Palestinian society and Politics*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1980 p.39

demonstrate how to competing narratives, the Jordanian and Israeli concerning the one city were both on odds and overlapped. For the Israelis Jerusalem was their symbolic and eternal capital it tied in very neatly with the spiritual prayers 'next year in Jerusalem'. As far as the Jordanian narrative was concerned Arab East Jerusalem and the sacred sites, the al Aqsa and the Dome of the Rock mosques was integral to Hashemite claims of leading the Arab Muslim on the safe guarding of Islamic holy sites. In an ironic way national identity in both the Jewish state and the Arab Jordanian coalesced around the competing visions for the sacred sites of Jerusalem and its holding by the respective competing states. Jerusalem symbolised for both countries the Kingdom of God in earth.

To summarize, the 1967 war was an undisputed victory for Israel, Jordan however suffered terribly it lost East Jerusalem and the West Bank to the enemy. The defeat in 1967 war meant Jordan had to re-envision a national Identity minus the West Bank. Within Jordan Arab nationalists were discredited and a more sharpened Palestinian identity came into being. This more assertive Palestinian discourse prompted Jordan also to define a sharper sense of it vis-à-vis the neighbouring countries and an internal Palestinian refugee population. This new Jordanian nationalism never the less continued to embrace the idea that the occupied West Bank was an integral part of a unified Jordanian state (this position was only formally reversed with the announcement of disengagement in 1988).

III Black September 1970

(i) Events prior to September 1970

This section provides an explanation of the battle of Karamah of 1968, in which the Jordanian army and the Palestinian guerrillas (al Fedayeen) fought against the Israeli army and forced them to move out of the Jordanian town of al karamah.

At the outset of the battle the Israelis demolished the town of al karamah, this resulted in heavy casualties amongst the Palestinian guerrillas and detachments of the Jordanian army. Both the Jordanian army and the Palestinian guerrillas minimized the role of the other in the operation and claimed victory for themselves. The Karamah battle became a rallying cry of the Palestinian population in Jordan who were thirsty for any kind of victory over their enemy i.e. the Israeli army.⁷⁰ After this victory thousands of Jordanian Palestinians became volunteers and joined the Palestinian guerrilla movement. As far as the Jordanian military was concerned the Karamah battle became one of the most important occasions in Jordanian history.⁷¹ The approximate number of soldiers who were involved in the battle of al Karamah was well around 300.⁷²

The battle provided a victory for the Jordanian forces over the invading Israeli enemy. The Battle of Karamah on 21st march 1968 was a success for the Jordanian and Palestinian forces. On this occasion the Israeli forces attacked a Palestinian strong hold

⁷⁰ Joseph massad, colonial effects the making of national identity in Jordan, Columbia university press 2001, pgs 23

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Zeev Maoz, Defending the Holy Land: A Critical Analysis of Israel's security and Foreign Policy University of Michigan press, 2006 pp.244-246

in the Jordan valley. Jordanian troops joined with the Palestinian fighters in confronting the operation forcing the Israelis to withdraw. Both the Palestinians and Jordanians hailed this operation as a military success against Israel.⁷³ The occasion gave rise to joy amongst the Palestinians diaspora in Jordan and also in the national level it brought the Jordanians together with the Palestinians in celebrating for the nascent state. In terms of relevancy to our study this occasion provided for the cementing of Palestinian and Jordanian identity and for a sense of national pride.

In sum, this incident heightened Jordanian national consciousness and contributed towards the coming into being of a combative spirit and strengthened Palestinian allegiance to Jordanian national interests. Every year Jordanians and Palestinian Jordanians descend onto the town of Karamah to show their support to their Palestinian brethren across the border in the Palestinian authority.

For many Jordanians, the Karamah battle has become a significant event in the national narrative of Transjordan. Jordan has adopted this battle as part of its national heritage and has transformed this event implying presently that it was a victory of the Jordanian national state as opposed to a successful operation on the part of the Palestinian resistance movement. The Karamah battle has become a political illusion paving the way for the creation of a Jordanian national identity and an important pillar in the development of a Palestinian nationalism.⁷⁴

Jordanians and Palestinians initially hailed Karamah battle a success however very soon after the Hashemite monarchy became wary of the recruitment drive by the Palestinian

⁷³ Norvell De Atkine, Amman 1970 a memoir, in Middle East review of international affairs Journal, volume 6 no 4, December 2002, p4.

⁷⁴ iris fruchter-ronen, black September :the 1970-1971 events and their impact on the formation of Jordanian national identity., civil wars journal vol 10,issue no 3 2008 edition p.247

resistant group in Jordan. As the Palestinian resistant group gained prominence this did not sit comfortably with those Jordanian nationalists who feared that Palestinian activity on Jordanian soil would invite disproportionate Israeli retaliation. In short the battle of Karamah was the beginning of the end of the Jordanian-Palestinian comradeship. After this Palestinian resistance activity meant an articulation of a more clearly defined Palestinian identity vis-à-vis a Jordanian identity.

(ii) 'Black September' 1970

In the early 1970s, one event shaped internal politics in Jordan. The brief civil war that took place between the Jordanian army and the Palestinian population, which was led by the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). It was during this period that the future of the Hashemite kingdom reached a point of instability that shook the notion of the Hashemite state, territoriality and its existence to the core.

The term Black September is used by the Palestinians to mark the events that led the Jordanian army to do battle with the Palestinian Liberalization Organization and the subsequent defeat and expulsion of Yasser Arafat and his followers.⁷⁵ The events that followed the Black September conflict were marked by increasing tension in the relationship between King Hussein's government and the Fedayeen movement, which was headed by the PLO. While it was evident to King Hussein when he assumed the throne in 1953 that the national make up in Jordan would always have a Palestinian element, the events of the late 1950s had led the king and his followers to believe that any disruption to the state could be contained without excessive difficulty. In the late 1950s king Hussein could believe he could control the restive Palestinian population

⁷⁵ Beverly Edwards and Peter Hinchcliffe, *Jordan: a Hashemite Legacy* York: Routledge, 2003 p.45

however subsequent events, Black September being a case in point, demonstrated that monarchy only with difficulty could keep a constrain on Palestinian activity.

While the Jordanian government knew of the threat posed by the large influx of refugees and the radicalisation of the Palestinian issue, at a regional level the Palestinians resisted its policies of containment at every stage. In the wake of the Black September war the Palestinians blamed Jordan for their predicament and mocked the Jordanian army. Criticism of the performance of the Jordanian army in the war struck at heart of the Jordanian government and was considered as a personal insult to the king. The ability of the king and his government to re-assert their authority over the Palestinian population became important. What became clear was that a resort to legislative or constitutional measures would not be enough to contain the threat. While martial law had been announced in 1967 as a means by which the coercive arm of the state could be given more freedom and authority to deal with the threat, this had barely done enough to address the growing strength of Palestinian nationalism as constituted within Jordanian borders⁷⁶.

The events of September 1970 demonstrated to the Arab world two competing nationalism Jordanian and Palestinian could not co-exist within Jordan. Palestinian nationalism in the form of the defeat of the grillers and the eviction of the PLO to Lebanon re-enforced the non-accommodation of a Palestinian revolutionary identity within a more conservative nationalist and resurgent Jordanian only nationalism.

By the 1970s the possibility of a serious military engagement between the Jordanians and the Palestinians appeared inevitable as tensions grew on both sides. Palestinian

⁷⁶ Ibid., p.46

confidence had been reinforced by the battle of Karamah and the ever-increasing military forays over Jordanian borders and into Israel. The turning point in the crises came in the summer of the 1970s when Arab support for the Palestinian cause appeared to be further eroded by the acceptance of both King Hussein and Jamal Abdul Nasser of the American formulated plan which placed resolution of the Palestinian issue outside the Palestinian liberation organization control.⁷⁷

The goodwill that the Jordanian government had built amongst the Palestinians partly as a result of al Karamah incident and other actions over the course of the 1950s and 1960s dissipated now. Any sense of allegiance to Jordan, the Palestinians harboured in the period prior to Black September was lost as a result of the brutal and harsh crackdown. In the overall context the events of September 1970 undermined Jordanian national identity by making the Palestinian population restive and questioned their allegiance to the Jordanian government in other words the Palestinian population in Jordan were asked at that time if they are with the Palestinian rebels or are they are with the Jordanians in their battle against the Fedayeen. The reason behind this is that the Jordanian government felt that the Palestinians in Jordan are against them and is backing the Palestinian rebels in their war against The Jordanians

Further Arab involvement was approaching by the end of September as Nasser and the Egyptian government stepped in to put pressure on both sides to stop the conflict and negotiate a ceasefire. The involvement of the Egyptian government successfully resulted in a ceasefire by the beginning of October but this was a temporary relief. In the shorter term this war left the Palestinian Liberation Organization seriously

⁷⁷ Ibid., pp.46-47.

weakened and the Jordanians had seriously undermined the activities of the guerrilla movement. Despite this success, the events of the September conflict were chalked up as nothing more than round one in the Jordanian government's confrontation with Palestinian nationalism.

By 1971, the Jordanian government had achieved what they wanted by forcing the PLO to leave Jordan and the last remaining guerrilla bases including Ajlun were overrun in further engagements. In November 1971 the king ordered the final surrender of the Palestinian Liberation Organization and closed down the remaining offices of the movement in Amman.⁷⁸

The 1970-1971 events were an important turning point in the formation of Jordanian national identity. After 1970 Jordan refocused its national orientation on a more specifically Jordanian basis relegating the Palestinian element to a secondary basis. It became increasingly apparent to all that an assertive and revolutionary Palestinian identity in the wake of 1967 war was not going to be accommodated within a Jordanian narrative that emphasized Hashemite, tribal and East Bankers traditions. From that point onwards, the Transjordanian identity became an amalgamation of a constituent number of identities, which included: Bedouin tribal identity, Islamic identity, and Hashemite identity. Following the 1970-1971 civil war event, the Jordanian government found a new Jordanian nationalism based on East Jordanian tribal and Islamic traditions, loyalty to the Hashemite royal family and to his majesty the king of Jordan and his armed forces. The new national identity was going to be disassociated

⁷⁸ Ibid., pp.49-50.

from Palestinian, pan-Arab and liberal ideologies.⁷⁹

The events of 1971 had showed many trans-Jordanians that Palestinian nationality was a distinct autonomous nationality and as a result of this the trans-Jordanians believed that they should have their own nationality. Many Transjordanians saw the civil war of 1970-1971 as a victory against the Palestinian army (Fedayeen) that was seen to be an integral part of Jordanian society previously.⁸⁰ The civil war was a turning point in bolstering the growth of trans-Jordanian awareness, due to the fact that the challenge the Palestinian organisations posed to the authority of the state was seen as traitorous.

The sense of local awareness among trans-Jordanians had been rising since the civil war of 1970-1971 and had been linked to another important consequence of the civil war of 1970, which was the implementation of the policy of the Jordanisation of the state. This meant turning the Palestinians in Jordan into Jordanians. The civil war of 1970-1971 actually led to a narrower and more specific concept of Jordanisation which meant that privileges were granted to trans-Jordanian nationals in preference to the Palestinians including those living in the East-Bank, especially in the state public sector i.e. the Jordanian army, universities etc.⁸¹ The Palestinians being side-lined and being reduced to a second class citizenship meant that their allegiance to Jordan became questionable and also they were not perceived as being one hundred per cent Jordanians . To add to this discussion this distrust of the Palestinians is still happening to Palestinian Jordanians as we speak and the Jordanian people still do not recognise that they are part

⁷⁹ Iris fruchter-ronen, Black September: the 1970-1971 events and their impact on the formation of Jordanian national identity, civil wars journal, vol 10, issue no:3 september 2008 edition p.252.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.253.

⁸¹ Sirriyeh H, Jordan and the legacies of the civil war 1970-1971, civil war journal issue 3 vol 3 2000 edition p.77

of the Jordanian society.

This policy that took place as a result of the Trans-Jordanian opinion of the Palestinians as traitors during the 1970-1971 civil war was described by the state as East Bankers first.⁸² This East Banker's motto that targeted Palestinians in the Hashemite kingdom and also discriminated against the Palestinians who were working in the Jordanian public sector has left a lasting impression of distrust amongst the Palestinian diaspora in Jordan.⁸³

The monarchy in Jordan tried to handle this division by manipulating it at times when it saw its position threatened by Palestinian nationalism, and suppressing it at other times when it deemed necessary to forge a pan-Jordanian communal solidarity. It has been maintained that the Jordanian monarchy has been trying to foster a hybrid Jordanian identity for both Jordanians and Palestinians, based on two elements of association with the Hashemite monarchy as a symbol of Jordan: commitment to and expression of Arabism and a commitment to Palestine and an appeal for the unity of the two peoples as branches of the same family.⁸⁴

Such identity has been described as a mixture between the two communities with the king acting as a sort of meditative filter between the two halves in Jordanian society.

Other than the above factors, political Islam played a role in re-integrating some Trans-Jordanian and Palestinian sectors within the Jordanian community. It has been said that

⁸² Ghazi al khalili, *shihadat ala Judran zanzanah yawmeyat mu' taqal fe al sujun al urduneyeh*(testimonies on the walls of a prison cell : the memoirs of a detainee in Jordanian prisons) Beirut, itihad al kutub wa al sahafeyeen al filisteyeen 1975

⁸³ on the massive Palestinian purges see Asher Susser on both banks of the Jordan: A political biography of Wasfy el tell, Essex Frank Cass 1994 pp.156-160

⁸⁴ Joseph A Massad, *colonial Effects: the making of national identity in Jordan* p.246

Islam is a powerful rubric in helping the Palestinians in Jordan to express antipathy towards the Israeli state in religious terms without compromising their experience as Jordanian citizens and hence not alienating East Bankers. Islam has been a successful means in transcending divisions within the Jordanian society.⁸⁵ To give an example of the above, some Palestinians and Transjordanians have been joining ranks through the Islamic Front in order to criticise the government in Jordan and some regime policies.⁸⁶

Another implication of the Jordanian civil war of 1970-1971 has been the solidarity between the tribes in Jordan and the monarchy. This has been evident in the royal patronage given to the tribes for example giving them positions in the state.

To summarise the finding of this section it has been demonstrated above that the civil war of the 1970 was a life changing experience for many Palestinians in Jordan. The events of black September hastened the development of a sharper sense of Palestinian consciousness vis-à-vis the Jordanian state and more importantly for our study it laid the antecedents for the emergence of such policies as 'East Bankers First' and latterly 'Jordan First'.

IV. Jordan in the 1980s (pre disengagement)

The early 1980s were known as a period of political stability period in Jordan, this was due to the place of martial law in Jordan and a heavy security operation. Political activists expressed discontent in a variety of forms, but in particular non-governmental organisations such as student movements, the Muslim brotherhood movement etc. In

⁸⁵ Ibid., p.78.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.79.

absence of formal provisions of democracy, elections to such organisations were the only method of measuring the political state of play in the country. In these forums a semblance of political life came to the fore, particularly leftist activists and Palestinians who could use these bodies to play a political role in the countries heavily contested elections.⁸⁷

In the 1980s the Jordanian government looked more concerned with the strategic and internal challenges posed by the new revolutionary regime in Iran. Having toppled the shah in 1979 and established the Islamic republic of Iran, the Islamic regime of Ayatollah Khomeini was viewed by the Hashemite monarchy as deeply threatening. Basically the reasons for Jordan fearing Iran were centred on Jordan fearing that Iran would export its revolution to neighbouring Iraq and thereby install a radical Shia regime in Baghdad. (Indeed Iran did not pose any threat to Jordan, but the Hashemite monarch focused on Iran's potential to disrupt Jordan's domestic and economic stability.) Despite the Jordanian government's continuing concern with security threats, these no longer seemed to include fears of invasion or war on Jordanian borders. By the early 1980s the external-military threat appeared to be declining relative to the concerns of economic security for the regime and concurrently for the stability of the Hashemite kingdom.⁸⁸

With the beginning of the first Palestinian intifada of 1987 and the consequent unrest in the occupied territories, king Hussein and Jordan were forced to re-examine their relations with the Palestinian territory.

⁸⁷ Beverly Edwards and Peter Hinchcliffe, *Jordan: a Hashemite Legacy* York: Routledge, 2003p.51

⁸⁸ Curtis ryan, *Jordan in transition from Hussein to Abdullah*, Lynne Rienner publishers, London 2002 ed .p.11

The intifada was the first Palestinian grass root protest movement against Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza strip. The beginning of the intifada caught everybody unaware. For it was a movement which was not directed by the PLO, Jordan or any other Arab state. In terms of Jordanian national identity the intifada was a further reinforcement to King Hussein that the West Bank could not indefinitely remain under Jordanian rule and that disengagement was a very serious consideration.⁸⁹

Despite the intifada originally seen as a threat to Jordan's national interests, King Hussein was able to exploit the situation to Jordan's long-term national interest and benefit. King Hussein realized that he could win greater approval and support within Jordan and without if he renounced all Jordanian claims to the West Bank. The King had to undertake a bold response to look after Jordan's long-term interests hence the announcement of disengagement. Post disengagement Hussein envisaged two crucial roles for Jordan: 1) Jordan would be a big brother to the Palestinian State and 2) Jordan plays the role of mediator between the Israelis and the Palestinians. As far as Jordanian national identity was concerned this move was the next logical step to provide for a territorially homogenous and a strong nation in which the primary allegiance was to the Jordanian state.

In 1986 demonstrations broke out at the University of Yarmouk, as students protesting the rise of student fees engaged with a fierce battle with the Jordanian police. In the same year king Hussein introduced and the parliament approved a new electoral law. The new law was important for a number of reasons, not least because in theory it enfranchised women for the first time in Jordanian history and the number of deputies

⁸⁹ Andrew Terill, *Global security watch Jordan* Santa Barbara 2010 p.54

to the House of Representatives was raised from 60 to 142 seats. Also there would be further future allocations of seats along sectarian /ethnic/national lines, reserving seats in the parliament for refugees, Christians, Circassians and Chechens.^{90,91}

In April 1989 the nationalist critique of king Hussein's policy was validated when anti-government riots erupted in southern Jordan. For the first time the Hashemite monarchy faced violent opposition from Jordanians who had traditionally formed bedrock of support in the armed forces and the government. These protestors were speaking against the government austerity measures imposed by the international monetary fund. The demonstrators sent a clear message that king Hussein has lost his grip on the East Bank. The riots also sharpened the line, blurred in the 1970s that differentiated Jordanians and Palestinians. The Palestinian refugee camp and business community remained quiet during the disturbances. King Hussein responded by calling Jordan's first election in twenty-two years. He subsequently legalized political parties, lifted martial law and approved a new electoral law changing Jordan's voting system.⁹²

As a result of political demonstrations and protests Jordan's experienced a period of political liberalisation, the monarchy and the government solved this exercise as a considerate response on the part of the authorities to the legitimate grievances of the people. Elections were held and political restrictions were removed all with the intention of taking the steam out of the opposition's drive for reform. Ultimately Jordan in the 1980s refashioned its national identity to embrace a more liberal and people orientated understanding of nationalism. The purpose of the earlier section has been to

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., p.52.

⁹² Lawrence Tal, *is Jordan doomed* foreign affairs journal vol 72 issue no 5 p.52.

give context on the internal Jordanian scene with respect to the larger discussion to the disengagement.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a historical account of the development of nationalism in Jordan. It has achieved this objective by looking at the key incidents that shaped Jordanian history in the post war period to the late 1980s. When analysing this historical activity I have tried to remain relevant throughout to the title of the thesis. The analysis forwarded in this chapter has shown Jordan to be a relatively secure state but a weak corresponding nation, meaning although the government has strengthened its position and outreach, the concept of a Jordanian nation has been less quick to evolve. This has been primarily because of the constituent elements that have comprised the Jordanian state, namely East Bankers, West Bankers, tribal groups, Palestinians and Circassians.

This chapter has set the foundation stone for the study to follow and it has done this by providing a comprehensive and exhaustive account of the history of Jordan in the twentieth century and how this history has impacted on nationalism and national identity. In subsequent chapters of the thesis I will explore the political and recent historical discussions that have taken place inside Jordan vis-à-vis national identity. The work will now focus on the period post-disengagement, post 1988 with the view to shedding light on the development of Jordanian nationalism after King Hussein's momentous announcement of renouncing Jordanian claim on Jordanian territories.

Before analysing other sections of the thesis the study will have provided a comprehensive historical account of the different time periods before the disengagement of 1988 and also the study will give the reader a brief insight of

Jordanian politics and how this discussion will help in the development of the politics in the country after Jordan's disengagement with the West Bank in 1988. Jordan after disengagement stood by the Palestinians in their cause in establishing their own state. The Jordanian state would also work with the Israelis to help them to establish a dialogue with the Palestinians and there is a two state solution just and fair to both sides

Chapter One: Nationalism and Ethnicity in Jordan

In the opening chapter of the thesis, I examine the concept of nationalism as it originated in Europe. Thereafter, I look at this concept as it was transposed to the Middle East at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. The contours and constituents of Arab nationalism in general are examined before a detailed study is made of nationalism in Jordan, from the inception of the Hashemite kingdom to the present day. The thesis examines in greater depth and in more methodical fashion the development of national identity in Jordan after the disengagement of 1988.

In this work, I contend that nationalism in Jordan, unlike in many countries, is defined on the basis of external and political, rather than ethnic factors. The influence of different external groups and political discourses can create conflicts and discussions about national identity; thus, politics in Jordan consists of different nationalist discourses that are in constant competition. I contend that the three national discourses shaping Jordanian national identity are the Hashemite, Palestinian and Pan-Arabic discourses. These are not entirely separate from each other, but are intertwined in a variety of ways; therefore, a successful analysis of nationalism in Jordan must also discuss the relations and interactions between these national discourses.

I. Early theories of nationalism

In this section of the chapter, early theories of nationalism are examined and reference made to how these theories fed into modern discussions about the development of Arab nationalism. The purpose of such a delineation is to contextualise the analysis within early academic discourse; any discussion of Arab nationalism in the contemporary period must make reference to earlier theories of nationalism in the European context.

For the purpose of this literature analysis and the topic under review, it is important to be aware that there are many competing theories and approaches to explaining nationalism, such as perennialism, primordialism and ethno-symbolism.

First of all, as Smith suggests, ‘perennialism’ must not be confused with ‘primordialism’, which conceives of the nation as a natural entity.⁹³ Instead, perennialism follows an entirely historical account of nationalism and may reject any such ‘natural’ account; it may even reject any natural and historical argument. Smith groups perennialist views under fewer than two main headings. ‘Continuous perennialism’ is the type that is more applicable to European countries with a long uninterrupted cultural history, and it particularly emphasises ‘the slow rhythms of collective cultural identity’.⁹⁴ The second type of perennial theory is ‘recurrent perennialism’, which argues that the nation ‘reappears in every period of history and is

⁹³ Smith, Anthony D. *Nationalism*, Polity Press, 2001, p. 50

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

found in every continent of the globe ... even though it may be expressed in varied ways⁹⁵ in different historical eras. In this sense, even though particular nations appear and disappear during the course of history, the concept of nationhood prevails as a universal phenomenon applicable to different communities in all ages.

From a different prospective, 'primordialism' puts emphasis on a concept of naturalism that makes reference to the intrinsic genesis of the concept of nationhood and to the beginnings of the contemporary processes and change in thought and behaviour occurring in the different cultural and political groups residing in the Middle East. For example, Geertz claims that, as individual human beings and participants of group loyalties, 'we feel and believe in the primordiality of our ethnicities and nations – their naturalness, longevity and power'.⁹⁶ However, Smith contends that this proposition cannot serve as a historical and sociological explanation for various kinds of cultural community, since it fails to capture their transformation occurring over time.

Ozkirimli writes: 'primordialism' is nationality expressed as a natural part of individual human. This is apparent in the explanation of the term 'primordial', which can be explained while making reference to the original, intrinsic, and overarching principles.⁹⁷ Ozkirimli analyses primordialism by breaking it down according to three mutually exclusive approaches: naturalist, socio-biological, and culturist. The naturalist approach examines a nation as a natural extension of human beings, who are natural organs of a nation; therefore, it claims that every nation has a specific origin in nature as well as a particular, naturally oriented character and destiny. This evidently entails an ideological

⁹⁵ Ibid., p.51.

⁹⁶ Smith, op cit., p. 54.

⁹⁷ Ozkirmili, Umit. *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction*, Palgrave, 2000, pp. 64-65.

view of the past from which a nation naturally arises.⁹⁸ The second type of primordialism noted by Ozkirimli is the socio-biological approach, which employs both biology and sociology in the understanding of the ethnic ties between people, and ultimately the emergence of nationalism from these ties. Contrary to the naturalist-ideological approach, socio-biological primordialism endorses physical symbolism, and focuses on the apparent similarities and discrepancies between different social and ethnic structures in its analysis of different nation formations. On the other hand, the third approach, cultural primordialism, prioritises the perceptions and beliefs of individuals and their relations to already established social entities.⁹⁹ Geertz, for example, highlights the importance of the foundations of the primordial concepts, and what they may provide for the ideas, values, customs, and ideologies held by individuals.¹⁰⁰

Another theory of nationalism, which has arisen, as an alternative to modernism and which functions especially at the socio-historical and cultural level, is ethno-symbolism. As a response to modernism, ethno-symbolic perspectives emphasise the relation between the social elite and the lower strata they represent. Research conducted by the ethno-symbolists is based on long-term analysis of social and cultural patterns, aiming to reveal the complex relationships between the past, present and future of the ethnicities and nations of history.¹⁰¹ They place the analysis of the rise of nationalism ‘within the framework of earlier collective cultural identities and especially of ethnic

⁹⁸ Ibid., pp.66-67.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p.74.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p.73.

¹⁰¹ Smith, Anthony D. *Nationalism*, Polity Press, 2001, p.58.

communities or ethnicities.’¹⁰²

Moreover, ethno-symbolism puts emphasis on the importance of shared passion and attachment in ethnic communities in its analysis of the development of national feelings. Smith also argues that, by focusing on cultural factors such as symbol, memory, myth, and value in particular communities, ethno-symbolism manages to provide an alternative to the essentially political, social and economic approaches developed by modernism and thereby enriches the theoretical debate on nationalism.

After explaining what ethno-symbolism is, we shall now look at the different approaches associated with its theory. Scholars in Middle Eastern studies have different perspectives on Ethnosymbolism, with some arguing its relevancy and others dismissing it as inappropriate in the Middle East. Proponents of Ethnosymbolism argue for nativist traditions such as language, tribes, ethnicity, and culture. Those not giving Ethnosymbolism primacy maintain that European notions of nationalism, allegiance to the state, notions of citizenship and democratic fraternity take precedence over attachments and loyalties located in the ‘distant past’.¹⁰³ The first approach is termed ‘*la longue durée*’. According to this, understanding nationalism requires us to first look at ‘the origins and formations of the nations as well as their future over a long period of time’, rather than linking their existence and formation to a certain period in time or specifically to the process of modernisation.¹⁰⁴

The second category of ethno-symbolism is concerned with the ethnic basis of nations and nationalism. According to this category, most nations are based on:

¹⁰² Ibid., p.58.

¹⁰³ Conversi, D. (1995) ‘Reassessing current theories of nationalism: nationalism as boundary maintenance and creation’, in *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp.73-85.

¹⁰⁴ Smith, Anthony D. *Myths and Memories of a Nation*, Oxford University Press, 1999, p.10.

‘... Ethnic ties and sentiments and on popular ethnic traditions which have provided the cultural resources for later nation formation that sought to turn ex-colonies into territorial nations [and which] must forge a cultural unity and identity of myth, value and memory that can match that of nations built on pre-existing ties if they are going to survive and flourish as nations.’¹⁰⁵

Similarly, according to Brass:

‘Nations may be created by the transformation of an ethnic group in a multi-ethnic state, into a self-conscious political entity or by the amalgamation of diverse groups and the formation of an inter-ethnic, composite or homogenous national culture through the agency of the modern state.’

This also suggests a need to use ethno-symbolism with modernism so as to have a more complete picture of nation formation. Therefore, continues Brass, ethnic nationalism can be considered as ‘a more general process of identity formation, defined as the process of intensifying the subjective meanings of a multiplicity of symbols and of striving to achieve multi-symbol congruence among a group of people defined initially by one or more central symbols’.¹⁰⁶ However, Brass also points out the importance of politics in the transformation of ethnic groups into politically mobilised modern institutions,¹⁰⁷ which may in turn transform into larger entities, namely nations. Therefore, social-structural formation is as important as having an ethnic-symbolical basis in the process of nation formation. Conversi stresses that ethno-symbolism, when deprived of the assistance of other theories like modernism, remains conceptually uncertain, and in practice falls short of explaining the distortion of ethnic symbols and

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p.13.

¹⁰⁶ Brass, Paul R. *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison*, Sage Publications, 1991, p.20.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p.23.

myths by political parties and elites.¹⁰⁸ On the other hand, the very generality of its focus also renders ethno-symbolism applicable and adaptable to diverse nation formations in the examination of the ethnic and cultural basis of socio-political development.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, Smith's notion of nationalism considers ethnicity as a basis of nationhood (and thereby couples the theories of perennialism and ethno-symbolism), even though it must be redefined according to the practical political and social context in which it continues to exist. Therefore, reconciling the ethno-symbolic, modern, and perennial definitions of the nation, Smith subsequently argues for the necessity of developing different approaches for diverse collective ethnic identities while examining the relationship to the general historical, social, and political context.¹¹⁰ However, this does not mean that a collective cultural identity can be rendered exactly like a modern nation, but rather that it may come to look like a nation after it is reconstructed in accordance with modern political and social actuality. In the end, attempting to move beyond the theoretical boundaries, Smith follows the ethno-symbolic approaches only if 'these earlier collective cultural identities may be related to modern nations while allowing for historical discontinuities between them and for the possibility of novel combinations of ethnic categories and communities in the making of recent nations'.¹¹¹ In the end, Smith accepts the relevance and equal inclusion of these paradigms to the study of nationalism, prioritising modernism and perennialism for their focus on theory and history, and understanding ethno-symbolism as a

¹⁰⁸ Conversi, Daniele. 'Mapping the Field: Theories of Nationalism and the Ethnosymbolism Approach' in Leoussi & Grosby, *Nationalism and Ethnosymbolism: History, Culture and Ethnicity in the Formation of Nations*, Edinburgh University Press, 2007, p. 26.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Smith, Anthony D. *The Nation in History: Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism*, University Press of New England, 2000, p. 51.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p.76.

necessary corrective to the excessively general and universal arguments developed by the two main paradigms.

Ethnosymbolism highlights the persistence between pre modern and modern understandings of communal cohesion, without neglecting the ruptures brought about by the modern age. The continuous characteristics in the development and furthering of national identities in Middle Eastern states such as Jordan are historical myths, distant memories, tribal values, Bedouin traditions, and Arab nationalist symbols.

Despite Smith not focusing on the role of Arab intellectuals, he does discuss in his book the crucial role as the creators, inventors, producers, and analysts of the ideas of Arab ethnosymbolism.¹¹² This thesis examines how Jordanian intellectuals have played an important role in Jordanian ethnicity and ethnosymbolism. These Jordanian intellectuals mostly act as ‘chroniclers’ of the Tribal Past, they research and elaborate on those distant memories which link the modern Jordanian state back to its envisaged ‘Golden Age’.

My research acknowledges the key role of Jordanian painters, musicians, sculptors, photographers, novelists, play writers, actors, film directors, and television producers. Smith acknowledges the aforementioned intellectuals, strategic employment of national symbols as ‘perhaps even more potent than Nationalist principles and ideology’.¹¹³

Through their work, the imagined Arab community becomes starkly popular, emotionally resurrected and at regular intervals celebrated. I would even go so far as to

¹¹² Anthony D. Smith(1981), *The ethnic Revival*, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press in Athena S.Leoussi and Stevin Grosby(editors) *Nationalism and Etnoysmbolism: History, culture and ethnicity in the formation of Nations* Edinburgh, Edinburgh university press p.22.

¹¹³ Anthony Smith(2000) *The nation in History*, Cambridge :polity press in Athena S.Leoussi and Stevin Grosby(editors) *Nationalism and Ethnosymbolism: History, culture and ethnicity in the formation of Nations* Edinburgh, Edinburgh university press p.22

suggest a historically deep tribal ethnic foundation is a precursor to the longevity of the Jordanian state in the 21st century.

The next topic that arises for discussion is how can relatively isolated Jordanian intellectuals have such a wide appeal? Another question that arises is how that it possible to reassure the Jordanian people in the immemorial, perennial genesis of the Jordanian nation? The Answer according to my work is to be found in the category of Jordanian intelligencia and the Jordanian professionals. Smith identifies these people as a group of individuals exposed to some higher form of education.¹¹⁴ This class of people in Jordan have the Power and capacity to apply and disseminate the ideas developed by Jordanian intellectuals. To conclude these strata of people plays an even more critical role in the success of Arab nationalist movement.

In the following section, modernist approaches to nationalism will be considered, the purpose being to link with the foregoing discussion and continue this line of analysis into the modern period. In terms of the analysis of Jordan, the early and modernist approaches are equally relevant to the development of national identity in the country.

II. Modernist approaches to nationalism

Among the many approaches to theorising nationalism, modernism constitutes the ideological core of the research. Smith divides the paradigm of modernism into five varieties; among these is ‘constructionism’, developed by Anderson and Hobsbawm.

¹¹⁴ Anthony D.smith(1991) *National identity*, Harmondsworth : University of Nevada Press in Athena S. Leoussi and Stevin Grosby(editors) *Nationalism and Ethnosymbolism: History, culture and ethnicity in the formation of Nations* Edinburgh, Edinburgh university press p.22.

Hobsbawm argues that most of the literature on nationalism defines a nation as ‘the chief characteristic of classifying groups of human beings ... who belong to it [,] and the nation is in some ways primary and fundamental for the social existence ... of its members [as human collectivities]’.¹¹⁵ He accepts Anderson’s theory that this definition of a nation is new in human history; but while most European nation-formations would support the objectivist theory, Hobsbawm criticises this objective definition of nation and calls it ‘fuzzy shifting ambiguous’.¹¹⁶ He finds such definitions of a nation misleading, and asserts ‘that the real nation can only be recognized *a posteriori*’,¹¹⁷ meaning that a nation can only be understood and defined according to its political and historical transformations after these changes have taken place. In other words, following the modernist approaches, we need to define a nation by examining the present political and social structures in its society. Hobsbawm also argues that every new party coming to power redefines history in accordance with its political interests; therefore, there can be diverse narrations of national history, and different definitions of nation, operating within the same country. What is more, nationalism not only reinvents the past but also hides facts that must be avoided in order to create a common national identity. In this sense, according to social constructivism, knowledge and reality are actively generated or constructed by social and political relations and events. This argument will assist the main hypothesis of this project, which concentrates on the relationship between concrete political events and the abstract definition of the nation. Billig’s conceptualisation of ‘banal nationalism’ supports the modern constructionist

¹¹⁵ Hobsbawm, E.J. *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Program, Myth and Reality*, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 6.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p.9.

argument. He argues that nationalism is neither unusual nor uncommon but a humdrum part of our daily lives.¹¹⁸ That is, nationalism and its representations exist everywhere, on money and in media, films, newspapers, stickers, and flags. This can be said to hold true for the development of nationalism in modern Jordan, where the symbol of the monarchy appears everywhere in the different forms highlighted above. For Billig, we are reminded of our nationality by these symbols of nationhood, even though we forget that we are surrounded by these symbols.

On the other hand, Kedourie, drawing attention to the ideological and political influences on the development of modernist nationalism, emphasises the links between the paradigm and the theories underlying the Age of Enlightenment in Europe.¹¹⁹ However, he also states that in Middle Eastern countries like Jordan, the main division is between those who belong to the political administration and those who do not; therefore, the formation of nationalism is not initiated by a social class, unlike the nationalisms in Europe, which were constructed upon middle-class movements.¹²⁰ In addition to the above when analysing Arab nationalism analysed the principle goals of nationalism in the Middle East as the struggle against foreign colonialism, in order to liberate the Arab motherland completely and finally; the fight to gather all the Arabs in a single free country; and the removal of the present discredited structure, an overthrow which would include all the sectors of intellectual, economic, social and political life.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Billig, Michael. *Banal Nationalism*, London: Sage, 1995, p.6

¹¹⁹ Smith, Anthony D. *Nationalism*, Polity Press, 2001, p. 48

¹²⁰ Kedourie, Elie. 'Nationalism and Self-determination' in Hutchinson and Smith (eds.), *Nationalism*, Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 55

¹²¹ Kedourie, Elie, *Politics in the Middle East*, oxford university press, Oxford, 1992 p298

Lastly, Gellner¹²² also holds that ‘Nationalism ... invents nations where they do not exist’,¹²³ perhaps overstating the doctrine's arbitrary character, but without underestimating its creative potential.

In the following section, the thesis will examine Gellner’s structuralist theory and how this is applicable to nationalism in the Middle Eastern context. Gellner wrote copiously on Middle Eastern culture and history, and by referencing this work the thesis will elucidate the structuralist theory of nationalism.

III. Gellner’s structuralist theory

The structuralist approach used by Gellner to deduce his theory has been the subject of much debate. His *a posteriori* synthetic calculation posits that industrial strength is conducive to political strength, which in turn paves the way for nationalism. It can be argued that Gellner has a Eurocentric perspective that limits the utility of his theory when considering non-European cases and taints his analytical lens. However, to presume that his theory is utterly irrelevant is to misconceive the value of the materialistic methodology that Gellner developed. In non-European contexts, such as the Jordanian experience, Gellner’s notion still holds a degree of validity on the grounds of its innovative approach to political and social aspects of the nation-building processes, even though it fails to address some crucial ethnic and historical questions.

Gellner’s social, economic and political argument further strengthens the modernist paradigm of nationalism. He argues against the traditional understanding of

¹²² Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism*, Blackwell Publishing, 2006, p. 5

¹²³ Gellner, Ernest. *Thought and Change*, London: Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1964, p. 168

nationalism, which defines the nation as a formation based on traditional criteria and forces such as those of an ethnic, cultural, or religious nature. Gellner calls these ‘old, latent, dormant forces’, and instead considers the nation as a *new* socially constructed organisation, conditioned by the education-dependent high cultures which rule the state and determine the political discourses which dominate society as a whole. In this sense, his modernist theory entirely opposes the perennial-ethnic theories of nationalism. In doing so, like other social constructionists, he entirely distinguishes the modern political state from culture and considers it as an independent agent, building national identity, utilising social-political dynamics and disregarding the ethnic and cultural origins of the community.¹²⁴ A second key tenet of Gellner’s argument is that nationalism is a self-generated response to the modern need for a mobile labour force, which necessitates a common education in a uniform language. The role of mass education is related to the industrial need for a semi-skilled labour force that must be easily replaceable. By losing their traditional roles in pre-industrial societies, men (and later women) become available in the labour market as a uniform mass rather than individuals. The ‘standardisation of expression and comprehension’ leads to the capacity for context-free communication.

Third, Gellner’s interpretation of nationalism owes much to the fact that there is a radical discontinuity between industrial and pre-industrial societies. This contrast is, indeed, at the centre of all his explanations of nationalism. Moreover, Gellner focuses on the bureaucratisation of culture: ‘the state has not merely the monopoly of legitimate violence, but also of the accreditation of educational qualification. So the marriage of

¹²⁴ Gellner, Ernest. ‘Nationalism and High Cultures’ in Hutchinson and Smith (eds.), *Nationalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1994, p. 63

state and culture takes place, and we find ourselves in the Age of Nationalism.¹²⁵

According to Gellner, the high culture of the 'Age of Nations' is the vehicle of industrialism. This is a mass, rational and scientific-technological culture, which is communicated by a standardised script in the 'national' language.¹²⁶

But is Gellner's theory essentially Eurocentric? Answering this question would allow us to evaluate to what extent it is possible to employ his type of modernism in the examination of Jordanian nationalism. Ernest Gellner is one of the first to have argued for the congruence of the political and the national unit under a primarily political principle. His theory explains the formation of nationalism by way of the political forces and historical processes which dominate the place and time frame in which nation formation occurs. For example, most of the people living in the kingdom of Jordan define themselves as Jordanian-Palestinians, the first element indicating their politically constructed national identity, the second revealing their ethnic and cultural identity. Because Gellner places industrialisation, which he sees as the facilitator of all forms of nationalism, at the heart of the methodology, his theory can be seen as Eurocentric; however, to derive the view that his theory is utterly irrelevant because of this analytical lens is to overstep the mark.

It is hardly surprising if Gellner offers a Eurocentric perspective and universalises the European experience. One might ask whether Gellner was even aware that he was guilty of providing a Eurocentric account. The imperial psychology was such that it created hierarchies within cultural and academic literature, and this remains the norm even to this day. It is easy to objectify nationalism and to forget its individualistic

¹²⁵ Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism*, Blackwell Publishing, 2006, p. 107

¹²⁶ Ibid.

purposes. In the following analysis therefore, when I speak of nationalism and its development in modern Jordan in the post-1988 period, I will be using Gellner's conceptualisation. That is:

'Nationalism is a theory of political legitimacy, which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones, especially ethnic boundaries within a given state.'¹²⁷ According to Gellner ethnic boundaries and political boundaries should not be confused. However in Jordan's case as any observer would highlight ethnicity plays a very important role in national identity. Ethnicity and tribal identities are paramount to a study of nationalism in Jordan in this context Gellner's conceptualisation can be debated.

This need not mean that other typologies of nationalism are unimportant. However, for our purposes it allows us to better evaluate the applicability of Gellner's theory.

That said, it might be the case that Gellner does not provide a purely Eurocentric account in that his theory is universalisable. The assertion that Gellner's approach is not useful because it is Eurocentric is only valid if his European account is not applicable to the non-European world.

The Jordanian state and nation must be analysed in terms of its regional context. In the Middle Eastern Arab world, the nation-state developed in a completely dissimilar way to European states, and not through a process of change in social structure. The most important element missing in Arabic nation-state formation was industrialisation, by which common modes of thought and belief were diffused in eighteenth and nineteenth century European societies. In Arab states, however, social structures could not entirely overcome strong religious, sectarian, and tribal identities. In this sense, Jordanians or East Bankers do not really constitute a nation according to the model created by the

¹²⁷ Ibid., p.1

modern Western world. Jordanian national identity is not centred on particular symbols, myths and memories, or on legal equality, common culture, and a shared economic system, but on loyalty to the monarchy and fidelity to the pronounced tribal traditions of the country.

As aforementioned, this need not mean that other typologies of nationalism are unimportant. However, for the purpose of the following discussion, it allows us to better evaluate the feasibility of Gellner's theory. Snyder argues that nationalism can be seen as: (i) a force for anti-colonialism, which led to the creation of new nation-states in Africa, Asia and the Middle East¹²⁸ (that is, it was transformed from a movement of opposition and defiance into a movement of nation-building in countries such as Ghana, India and Jordan); (ii) a force for economic expansion because nationalism accompanies the attempts of many powerful nations to obtain economic advantages *vis-à-vis* less developed nations; and (iii) a force for colonial expansion, enabling older established nations to enhance their imperial ambitions.

Hans Kohn will be the next theorist of nationalism, which the thesis will engage with. His dichotomy theory of nationalism will be analysed to better situate discussion on Jordanian nationalism in the twenty-first century.

IV. The Kohn Dichotomy

In this section of the thesis I will be analysing Kohn's understanding of nationalism in particular with respect to the meaning and history of nationalism as a European concept

¹²⁸Louis L. Snyder, *The New Nationalism*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 1968, p. 4.

exported to the Middle East. Kohn illustrates the modern nature of the concept by highlighting old allegiances based on historic empires and city-states. Human civilisation was then downscaled to a national understanding of what civilisation meant, and the general and universal became the particular enunciation of national expression. Despite this, nationalism in the formative stage began in a country, which called for the 'liberty of man'. This was the conception of national identity in seventeenth century England.¹²⁹

The French Revolution signalled the beginning of the idea of the European nation state. This idea was transplanted into the Middle East in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and it was this transplanting which gave nationalism first a territorial slant and then an ethically based foundation. Other scholars in their analyses of territorial and ethnic nationalism later adopted the binary division of European and Middle Eastern nationalisms, once elucidated.¹³⁰

The Kohn Dichotomy between Western and non-Western nationalism is useful for analysing whether Gellner's theory is irrelevant. Kohn saw nationalism as a long historical process, arguing that one form of nationalism does not need to be the same as other types; rather, nationalism is dependent on the historical traditions and political climates in which each nation arises.¹³¹ The reason Gellner is highlighted in this section is because Kohn seems to take variance with Gellner's understanding of nationalism in the Middle East. Both theoretician of nationalism for my study of Jordan are equally important and I will therefore be using those scholar's conceptualism.

¹²⁹ Kohn, H. *Nationalism, Its Meaning and History*, Revised Edition, An Anvil Original, Van Nostrand, Princeton University, 1955, 1965, pp. 16-19

¹³⁰ Smith, Anthony, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1994, p. 216

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p.53

While the Western conceptualisation of nationalism tends to be based on political reality, nationalism in the non-Western world usually focuses on a search for the 'ideal fatherland', referring to the past, and to non-political and historically conditioned factors.¹³² On the other hand, critiques of Kohn argue that his classification is too favourable to the Western world and he disregards any manifestations of non-Western nationalism in the Middle East.

Similarly, John Plamentaz' conceptual differentiation is key to this debate. Plamentaz talks about two types of nationalism. One is 'Western', having emerged from Western Europe; the other is 'Eastern', originating from Asia, Africa. Both types depend upon the acceptance of a common set of criteria by which the state of development of a particular national culture is measured.¹³³

Brass finds some of the claims of the primordialist theory of nationalism implausible because of its narrow scope. He believes this is not sufficient to explain most aspects of the complex social structure of contemporary societies, which are mostly multi-ethnic and multilingual, and have more than one dominant religion. Even though Jordanian society is relatively less cosmopolitan and less complex compared to European and American nations, the simultaneous presence of separate influential cultures such as Palestinian and Bedouin makes it impossible for analysts to employ solely the primordial principles of nationalism, and makes the use of the modern criteria of nation formation necessary.¹³⁴

¹³² Ibid., p.55.

¹³³ Plamentez in Ernest Gellner and John Breuilly, *Nations and Nationalism*, Blackwell publishing press oxford 2006 p.96.

¹³⁴ Brass, Paul R. 'Elite Competition and Nation-Formation' in Hutchinson and Smith (eds.), *Nationalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, pp. 83-84

Breuilly comments that the spheres of state and society are becoming detached from each other, even though state and society can never be totally separate but instead originate from the same social and political sources and forces within the community. This finding is relevant to understanding the relation between the culture in question and the political situation in the community:

‘The leap from culture to politics is made by portraying the nation at one moment as a cultural community and at another as a political community whilst insisting that in an ideal state the national community will not be ‘split’ into cultural and political spheres. The nationalist can exploit this perpetual ambiguity.’¹³⁵

According to the above quote, there are two understandings of national community, one is cultural and the other political. In the context of Jordan it might be said the country has a strong political community but a weak cultural community in the sense of a full acceptance of Jordanianess. This is also partly true for Jordanian society, where the political elite governs society defines and shape the national identity in accordance with the political ideology they support. This 'isolates' politics and the political sphere from wider society, and the nation comes to be constructed according to the official ideology of the Hashemite elite.

Kohn defines nationalism psychologically as a ‘state of mind’. He thereby argues that a process in a nation’s history can be analysed by looking at the dynamics of, and changes taking place in, the communal psychology regarding private and social life in the country. In this sense, the traditionally accepted categories such as language, territory and ethnic background make for a more clearly delineated group relevant to

¹³⁵ Breuilly, John. ‘The Sources of Nationalist Ideology’ in Hutchinson and Smith (eds.), *Nationalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 111

the study of Jordanian nationalism. Nationalism, then, must be considered as an idea-force that can directly affect the social relations in society, defining and redefining their meanings. Therefore:

‘Nationality is not only a group held together and animated by common consciousness; but it is also a group seeking to find its expression in what it regards as the highest form of organised activity, a sovereign state.’¹³⁶

This argument resembles that of the Hashemites, who established themselves as the sovereign social group defining the Jordanian national identity. As Kohn argues, the Hashemites established their rule, and thereby their national discourse, by influencing communal psychology. The discourse they have employed has naturally striven to correspond to the political dynamics of the historical era within which it has been created and organised into a force-principle governing the entirety of social life. Like the European nationalisms, in Jordan the Hashemites have become the dominant corporate dynasty even though they form essentially a *non-national* body such as churches or classes. Referring to these non-national governing bodies, Kohn claims:

‘These characters are not determined pre-historically or biologically, nor are they fixed for all time; they are the product of social and intellectual development, of countless gradations of behaviour and reaction...’¹³⁷

In this sense, the Hashemites themselves must be regarded not as an entirely separate governing, organising and reshaping brain, but rather as the ultimate outcome of the social structures within Jordanian society, and as the individuals acting and reacting to these by way of their social relations.

¹³⁶ Kohn, Hans. ‘Western and Eastern Nationalism’ in Hutchinson and Smith (eds.), *Nationalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 162

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.163.

As a summary to this section, the various theories covered included ethnosymbolism, the Kohn dichotomy, Billig's banal nationalism, and Gellner's modernist understanding of nationalism. All these theories and theoreticians are all important to any study of nationalism in the Middle East, they will form the theoretical foundation of the study. These theories will explain the development of nationalism in the Jordanian context before the thesis makes its own original contribution in analysing national identity in the post 1988 period.

In the following section of this chapter, the thesis will examine Islam's relationship with the development of nationalism in the Arab world. Contrary to much academic discourse, Islam and Arab nationalism are very closely intertwined and mutually interchangeable.

V. Gellner and nationalism

Following the extensive introduction to Gellner's theory of nationalism and modernism in general, and in order to understand Gellner's approach to the Middle Eastern countries in particular and to formulate a transition from the theory of nationalism to its practical outcomes in Muslim countries, it is necessary to focus on the relationship between Islam and nationalism. Islam is an integral part of identity in Jordan given that the Hashemite monarchs build their own family identity and legitimacy on a genealogy that goes back to the Prophet. Surprisingly, Gellner actually wrote extensively on this reciprocal relation between Muslim societies and nationalist ideologies. Referring to the economic and social aspects of nation-building processes in developing Middle Eastern states, he suggests that in spite of the different scenarios presented by countries in the process of industrialisation, it is nevertheless possible to forward a basic explanation for

their ideologies related to uncertainty, namely:

‘The reason why they are obliged to undergo change is of course to be sought in the technical, economic and military superiority of industrial society ... These societies are torn between “westernisation” and populism, that is, the idealisation of the local folk tradition.’¹³⁸

Applying this line of argument to the role of Islam in the structuring of the Middle East, Gellner argues that the Muslim faith has kept hold of and elaborated its communal relevancy, and is, furthermore, employed by both traditionalist and revolutionary governments in the Middle East. Islam, in Gellner’s conception, is observable in two guises: 1) a popular, street-Islam variety; and 2) a high, ulema-endorsed literate tradition:

‘Its sober and restrained Unitarianism, its moralism and abstention from spiritual opportunism, manipulateness and propitiation, in brief, its ‘protestant’ traits, give it an affinity with the modern world.’¹³⁹

Nonetheless, Gellner also points out that this affinity between modernism and Islam did not save Muslim lands from the impact of potentially extremist nationalism:

‘The call for culturally homogenous communities, endowed with a state-sustained and endorsed culture, in other words nationalism, has been felt in the Middle East and North Africa as powerfully as elsewhere.’¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Gellner, Ernest.. ‘Foreword’ in *From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam*, Arjomand (ed.), Oxford: Macmillan Press, 1984, p. viii

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. ix. Gellner also adds, ‘It did not engender the modern world, but it may yet, of all the faiths, turn out to be the one best adapted to it. It can dissociate itself from both folk ‘superstitions’ and its archaic hierarchies, and it is not dragged down by them’ (ibid.) ‘Islam held a particular fascination for Gellner. He regarded ‘Muslim society’ as the exception to the pervasive trend towards a shared culture of nationalism, with its ensuing fruit of modernity which, among other features, precludes an ‘ideological monopoly’ (Eickelman, D.F. ‘From Here to Modernity: Ernest Gellner on Nationalism and Islamic Fundamentalism’ in *The State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism*, Hall (ed.), Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 258)

¹⁴⁰ Gellner, Ernest. ‘Foreword’ in *From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam*, Arjomand (ed.), Oxford: Macmillan Press, 1984, p. x. However, contradicting himself, Gellner elsewhere claims that nationalism does not necessarily insist on homogeneity. ‘The culture which, more or less contingently, is chosen as

He then underlines the similarities between Islamic fundamentalism and modern nationalism as follows:

‘The mechanisms which underlie Muslim fundamentalism, of an identification with an anonymous Umma, are similar to those which underlie modern nationalism: men leaving, or deprived of places in a local social structure, are attracted by identification with a community defined by a shared High Culture.’¹⁴¹

Similarly, Milton-Edwards argues that it would not be wrong to confuse the concept of nation or watan in the Middle East with the Muslim notion of community (umma). Here, she gives the example of the Jordanian monarchy, which in its attempt to form a nation-state refers to a people or community as Bani Hashim (sons of Hashim) or Hashemites.¹⁴² Moreover, she adds, ‘In Islamic fundamentalism we can observe a mix of ethnicity, nationalism, and sectarian rivalry.’¹⁴³ Therefore, an analysis of nationalism in the Middle East must also refer to the religious (Islamic) background of the community being studied.

O’Leary underlines Gellner’s explicit consideration of the relationship between Islam and nationalism. However, he adds that this combination still remains an unhappy one. On a number of levels, the understanding of Islam, which Gellner elaborates in order to propose that the religion is conducive for modernisation, is just as applicable to the analysis he applies to the broader development of ‘nationalism’:

‘The traits which allegedly make Islam secularisation-resistant are then invoked to claim that Islam can, and may well trump nationalism as a legitimating formula, in a way that Christianity can no longer do in the West. Indeed, Gellner claims that fundamentalism is presently victorious over nationalism ... Gellner applies his arguments almost wholly to Arabic lands.’

the medium of that homogeneity, comes to define the political ‘pool’ in question’ (Gellner, Ernest, ‘Nationalism’ in *Theory and Society*, 1981, pp. 767-8)

¹⁴¹ Gellner, Ernest. *Encounters with Nationalism*, Nationalism and Islam, p. 179

¹⁴² Milton-Edwards, Beverley. *Contemporary Politics in the Middle East*, Polity Press, 2000, p. 44

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.60.

According to Gellner, Islam as a political force can very much play the role of national identity and a unifying bond in much the same way as Nationalism has done in the European context in the 19th and 20th centuries. As O’Leary’s analysis of Gellner highlights Islam is resistant to secularism unlike Christianity and is therefore in its current fundamentalist guise is able to contest national boundaries as witnessed in Middle East today.

O’Leary also adds that it is not evident that ‘fundamentalist Islam has trumped nationalism in South-East Asia, South Asia, or indeed the Middle East’¹⁴⁴ Similarly:

‘... Gellner himself appeared to suggest that Islam, unlike the other world religions, might be capable of performing modernisation’s necessary support functions – thereby making nationalism inessential for the breakthrough to modernisation.’¹⁴⁵

Nonetheless, O’Leary claims that:

‘Gellner underplayed the role of power-politics in explaining which cultures become nations, and the possibility that nation-builders explicitly see the functional relationship between nationalism and modernity.’¹⁴⁶

Gellner’s *Conditions of Liberty* argues that Islam may take ‘the place of nationalism in large parts of the modern world’. Here, Gellner stresses that the Muslim faith contains

¹⁴⁴ O’Leary, Brendan. ‘Ernest Gellner’s diagnoses of nationalism: a critical overview, or, what is living and what is dead in Ernest Gellner’s philosophy of nationalism’ in *The State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism*, Hall (ed.), Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 74-5. ‘Gellner’s claim that ‘fundamentalism’ is the essence of a monolithic Muslim society runs counter to the highly diverse political and religious currents which suffuse Muslim societies and Muslim-majority polities ... These significant other voices, like fundamentalists, are distinctively modern, in that they break with earlier forms of conventional religious authority’ (Eickelman, D.F. ‘From Here to Modernity: Ernest Gellner on Nationalism and Islamic Fundamentalism’ in *The State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism*, Hall (ed.), Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 262)

¹⁴⁵ O’Leary, Brendan. ‘Ernest Gellner’s diagnoses of nationalism: a critical overview, or, what is living and what is dead in Ernest Gellner’s philosophy of nationalism’ in *The State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism*, ed. Hall, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 53

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

within itself a formal literary corpus, emphasising learning and strict orthodoxy, which can be and is employed by those protagonists who want to liberalise and advance their countries:

‘This means that Islamic societies can evade ... the awful choice between populism and westernisation: remaining true to their better selves allows them to enter the modern world. It is this that lends Islam, in Gellner’s view, its secularisation-resistant quality, making it a major force to be reckoned with in the modern world.’¹⁴⁷

Furthermore:

‘Arab nationalism gives way to Islamic integrism, just as the demise of Soviet Marxism opens the way for virulent nationalisms. The search for a categorical identity, to answer the call to difference, and be the bearer of the sought-for dignity, can take many forms.’¹⁴⁸

This section has therefore established that Islamism, as an already established categorical identity, assists the process of nation formation in Middle Eastern countries. This will be developed in the next section, which will analyse closely the definition of Arab Nationalism.

¹⁴⁷ Hall, John A. ‘Introduction’ in *The State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism*, Hall (ed.), Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 16

¹⁴⁸ Charles Taylor. ‘Nationalism and Modernity’ in *The State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism*, Hall (ed.), Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 214. Furthermore, highlighting Gellner’s depiction of Islam in *Conditions of Liberty*, Eickelman argues that ‘he (Gellner) preferred the single society to the plural societies in writing about Islam because he regarded Islam as a faith imposing ‘essential’ constraints on conduct and those committed to it ... Islam was a ‘closed system’ of thought for which he had a horrified fascination ... In Islam fundamentalism becomes the essence of total society, so that regimes are judged by the religious norms of sacred law’ (Eickelman, D.F. ‘From Here to Modernity: Ernest Gellner on Nationalism and Islamic Fundamentalism’ in *The State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism*, Hall (ed.), Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 259)

VI. Definition of Arab Nationalism

Arab nationalism is the recognition by the Arabs of their full social existence. This is a consciousness, which is both internal and external objective knowledge, and refers to the image of the Arab community as a spiritual and living complex.

Language. The Arabic language significantly strengthens the consciousness of unity and can engender a nationalist connection in two ways. First, language is a channel of communication that allows people to exchange ideas, so that sentiments and inclinations become close to one another. In this way, language serves as a strong link which makes the *community* share in disappointments and aspirations, enables it to safeguard its past and its triumphs, allows it to commit to writing its social, political and literary history so that coming generations may be familiar with it, and steers the umma towards a bright future. Second, language is a national tradition that solidifies good relations among all members of a group so that they feel as if they are one family. If someone hears another language being spoken, he feels the speaker to be different to him, and might even go so far as to hate the speaker because of this supposed difference.

Interest. Interest, when it is bound up with ideals and hopes, is a powerful factor that can unify desperate people. Since interests are shared within the fatherland, the religions, which in history were believed to safeguard interests, have no use now except for ethics and conduct. Common interests within the common Arab fatherland impose unity, despite diversity of religious conviction.

History. This issue is of great significance in creating a unified and concentrated feeling because it is the record of events, whether happy or sad, which have occurred successively to the Arab nation. When a group of people go back to their history, their

sentiments and concepts return to certain fixed points. The common happiness and upsets of the past create the memories of a shared life to which every Arab returns, unified in thought and feeling. History also safeguards the traditions of the Arab nation, its goals, and its aspirations.

Customs. The similarity of customs comes from racial, historical, and geographical unity, and there is no doubt that the fact of seeing somebody behaving in the same way as you do will bring you nearer to him.¹⁴⁹

VII. Prominent thinkers on Arab nationalism

Sati al Husri was the most important ideologue of Arab Nationalism. Throughout his many books on the subject, Husri never lost sight of the ultimate aim of the ideology he so passionately disseminated: the political unity of the Arab people. Husri writes:

‘People who speak the unitary language have one heart and a common passion. As such, they constitute one nation, and so they have to have a unified state.’¹⁵⁰

Elsewhere, he says that the most content of countries is one where political and national frontiers are one and the same.¹⁵¹ Husri thought that the Arab countries were artificial creations of the European colonial powers. These were motivated by their colonial strategic interests, and broke up what was basically a natural, cultural polity with an incontestable right to political independence. An intended consequence of this

¹⁴⁹ Haim, Sylvia G. Haim, *Arab Nationalism An Anthology* University of California press 1962 ed. pp 121-127

¹⁵⁰ Adeed Dawisha, *Arab nationalism in the Twentieth century*, Princeton university press 2005 p.2

¹⁵¹ Abu Khaldun Sati ‘ al Husri. *Ara ‘wa Ahadith fi-alQawmiya al Arabiya (Views and discussions on Arab nationalism)* Beirut: Dar al Ilm lil al Malayeen, 1964, p. 23

deliberate dissolution was to keep the Arab peoples politically weak. In one of his books, Husri says he is continually asked how it was that the Arabs lost the 1948-1949 wars over Palestine when they were seven countries and Israel was only one. His answer is very clear and forthright: the Arabs lost the war precisely because they were seven countries.¹⁵²

The conclusion is equally clear: to avoid losing wars in the future, the Jordanians have to unite with other Arab states. The Arab Legion of Jordan was the only Arab force that performed well in the 1948-1949 war.

As a concept, 'Arab nationalism' has tended to be used in the literature of Middle Eastern politics and history interchangeably with other terms such as Arabism, Pan-Arabism, and even occasionally Arab radicalism, thus blending the sentiment of cultural nearness with the desire for political unity.¹⁵³ To say one is Jordanian should mean something different from saying one is a Jordanian nationalist; similarly, 'Arab' is not synonymous with 'Arab nationalist'. The term 'Arab' conveys one's cultural heritage, expressed in this thesis as the term Jordanian, whereas the 'Arab nationalist' or 'Jordanian nationalist' imbues this cultural oneness with the added ingredient of political recognition.

Humphreys, in a very insightful and careful study of Middle Eastern history, follows a similar path of conceptual overlapping.¹⁵⁴ In a chapter titled The Strange Career of Pan-Arabism, he delineates the growth and decline of the Arab nationalist movement. Here

¹⁵² Abu Khaldun Sati ' al Husri. *Al- 'uruba Awalan (Arabism first)* Beirut: Dar al Ilm lil al Malayeen, 1965, p. 149

¹⁵³ Adeed Dawisha, *Arab nationalism in the Twentieth century*, Princeton university press 2005 p.6

¹⁵⁴ R.Stephen Humphreys. *Between Memory and Desire: The Middle East in a Troubled Age*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999

again, though, Humphreys sees little need for a definitional distinction among the terms ‘Arab nationalism’, ‘Arabism’ and ‘Pan-Arabism’, and as such he employs the three terms interchangeably.¹⁵⁵ In one section, he concludes his analysis of the diminishing fortunes of the Arab nationalist movement in the period after disengagement by asking: ‘Where is Pan-Arabism or Arab nationalism in any form?’

Michel Aflaq’s views on nationalism and revolution were instrumental in the development of Arab nationalism in the twentieth century. Aflaq feared that Arab nationalism might fall to the level of mere intellectual knowledge and verbal discussion, and therefore lose affective power. He believed nationalism is founded on blood, a spiritual quality taken from history or a common culture, and that it did not banish religion or take its place.¹⁵⁶

Aflaq and the genesis of the Bath party especially in Syria and Iraq had an instrumental influence on the development on socialism and nationalism in Arab countries. Whereas in Syria and Iraq monarchies were toppled in the name of nationalism, in Jordan Aflaq’s ideas did not spoon revolution against the monarchy.

VIII. A conceptual discussion of nationalism in Jordan

Given the political connection, which has closely linked Jordan with historical Palestine, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has a central place within the context of national identity formation in the Middle East. Since the country was created in 1921 as

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., pp.60-65.

¹⁵⁶ Aflaq, Michel. 'Nationalism and Revolution' in Sylvia G. Haim (ed.), *Arab Nationalism: An Anthology*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1964 pp. 242-251

a British mandate, Jordan has been seen by many scholars as the most artificial of all states in the Middle East. For instance, Illya Harik maintains that the Arab countries are old societies and also old states, but argues that Jordan is an exception to this rule.¹⁵⁷

At present, a common sense of Jordanian national identity has not fully evolved, and one of the main points of this thesis will be to explore the on-going reformulation of such an identity. This is a continuous building process, especially after the disengagement of 1988 and the Jordanian monarchy's promulgation of the Jordan First policy. Further, in Jordan there has been no cohesive national narrative. Following Gellner's argument mentioned earlier, such narrative can be secured from two sources: either by building unity or by national liberation from colonial rule.¹⁵⁸

Jordan has attempted to create a national narrative by sharing common myths and rituals. In this regard, Jordanian nation building in the post-disengagement period is associated with developing a territorial *watani* identity. It is for this reason that, in the post-disengagement period, harnessing Jordanian *watani* loyalties is crucial in dealing with the internal tension between Palestinians and Jordanians, and the non-resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

However, despite what has been written here, creating a Jordanian national identity has not been a straightforward project, especially in the more recent years of the post-disengagement period, given the demographic facts on the ground, regional uncertainties, and the civil war in Syria. In Kramer's view, one of the basic hurdles for a coherent Jordanian national identity comes from the impact of ethnicity and tribalism

¹⁵⁷ Harik, Illya. 'The Origins of the Arab State System', in Ghassan Salame (ed.), *The FArab nationalismoundation of the Arab State*. London: Routledge, 1987, p. 35

¹⁵⁸ Gellner, Ernest, *Nations and Nationalism*, New York: Cornell University Press, 1983, p. 26

on political conduct and social structuring in the country.¹⁵⁹

The characteristics of the new Middle Eastern order constructed in the Arab world in the period post-1979 are twofold: more pragmatic in terms of the survival of monarchy, and less ideological because of the awakening of Pan-Arab nationalist aims. The most important goal of all Middle Eastern countries is the securing of their self-interests in the newly constructed regional state system. Therefore, Jordan's East Bank First Programme in the aftermath of Black September created between the Jordanian armed forces and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, and the newly introduced 'Jordan First Arab Second Manifesto', are similar, and show a trend towards strengthening the objectives of the Arab states.

In the post-disengagement period, the 'Jordan First' manifesto, rather than promoting an ideological *Qawmiya* sense of national belonging, is more attached, geographically, to the concept of *wataniya*. 'Jordanians will come first' is the basic element of the national campaign today in Jordan, resurrecting the statist promotion of 'Jordanian land for Jordanians' and the parallel 'Palestine for Palestinians' in order to strengthen Jordan's separate political unity and nationhood *vis-à-vis* Palestinian national identity.

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The movement from *Qawmiya* to *wataniya* can partly help to explain Jordan's peace agreement with Israel in 1994 after disengagement. Jordan's example shows that national goals and identities are not necessarily preordained; instead they are given shape and distinguished by the public and historical landscape in which they are rooted.

¹⁵⁹ Kramer, Gudrun, 'Integration of the integrists : a comparative study of Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia', in Ghassan Salame (ed.), *Democracy without democrats*, London: I.B.Tauris, 1994

¹⁶⁰ Interview with H.E. Dr Abdel Salam Al-Majali, Former Prime Minister of Jordan, Chairman of the Islamic World Academy of Sciences, Amman, Jordan, August 2013

If the old argument and norms were still relevant to the Arab state system, Jordan's stand during the Gulf War, its disengagement from the West Bank and its finalising of the peace treaty with Israel could not have happened so readily and so reassuringly.

During this period, each Middle Eastern country has wanted to separate itself and its particular identity from the others, while to some degree remaining conscious of the Arab nations' overall achievements. In this regard, the Jordanian example has been a little less straightforward because of the lack of cohesion among Jordanian-Jordanians and Palestinian-Jordanians.¹⁶¹

Largely because Jordanian national identity has been seen as identical to loyalty to the king and the Hashemite monarchy, the arrival of the large Palestinian community in the aftermath of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war was injurious to Jordan's development of a national identity. For the scholar Joseph Nevo, 'there was no way of preserving the dominance of the East Bank if genuine integration were allowed' by the Hashemite family.

Significantly, the identity disagreement between Trans-Jordanians and Palestinian people was further complicated with the formation of the PLO and the enhancement of Palestinian national identity. This subject will be further explored in Chapter Three. The growing rift between Jordanians and Palestinians found expression in political geography with the late King Hussein's disengagement from the West Bank in 1988. Since 1988, those of Palestinian background do not consider themselves as full citizens

¹⁶¹ Interview with H.E. Tahir al Masri, Leader of the Jordanian 'House of Lords' *Majlis al Ayan al Urdni*. Amman, September 2013

like those of the East Bank, but rather as residents in somebody else's homeland.¹⁶²

The dissatisfaction among the Palestinians garnered support for the Muslim Brotherhood and its political counterpart the Islamic Front in Jordan. During the course of my fieldwork, I found that the imbalance of representation of Palestinian citizens in Jordanian politics is the major reason for their anger. Therefore, since 1988 Jordan has tried to strengthen its geographical national identity in order to win over and restrict the internal opposition movement, as seen in the recent unrest of the 'Arab Spring'.

In this second section of the chapter we shall be looking at three Areas of nationalism and ethnicity in the Middle East. The first section explores the Ethnic Factor in Middle Eastern Politics. The second section explores Ethnicity, Majority, and Minority in the Middle East and lastly we shall explore the role of politics and ethnicity in the Middle Eastern state.

IX. The ethnic factor in Middle Eastern politics

In tracing the profound changes that have taken place in the ethnic politics of the Middle East and in the literature on this subject during the past sixty years, it may be useful first to distinguish between three principal phases of history.

Phase one: World War I brought the end of a traditional order during the four previous centuries; most of the region was ruled by the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire was a Muslim state successor to the tradition of great Muslim empires and membership in its ruling class was open to Sunni Muslims who followed the Ottoman way to

¹⁶² Nevo, Joseph, 'Changing identities in Jordan', *Israel Affairs*, vol:9, issue 3, Spring 2003. p. 190

perpetuate Ottoman-Turkish culture.

In this polity, informed by religious affiliation and solidarity, ethnic identity played a marginal role. Well into the nineteenth century, the term Arab and Turk designated in most cases nomads —Bedouins or Turkoman – in contrast with the sedentary population. It was then only and even more so during the decade preceding World War 1 that ethnic solidarity and differences became an important factor in the political life of the Ottoman state. Proto-nationalisms made an appearance on the Middle Eastern stage, such case were Turkish, Arab and Iranian identities.

This becomes more apparent when the nineteenth century antecedents of Arab Nationalism are examined in a historical context. Nationalism as an identifiable political creed and ideology becomes more manifest and pronounced in the immediate post world one years, with the establishment of the state system of Middle East .A secular streak and an Arab ethnic resentment of Turkish pre-eminence can be discerned among the old proponents of Arab nationalism, but soon thereafter Arab nationalism acquired a distinct Sunni Muslim quality.¹⁶³

Phase two: In the interwar period the destruction of the Ottoman empire and the settlement by the victorious powers that laid the foundations of a new state system in the region were all important developments in the incubation of a national identity in the region which was to comprise Trans-Jordan. At an early stage, Turkey and Iran appeared to be on their way to becoming nation-states, though later events were to show how difficult it was to fashion Turkish or Iranian territorial nationalisms. Middle

¹⁶³ Milton J. Esman and Itamar Rabinovich, Ethnic politics in the Middle east in Milton J. Esman and Itamar Rabinovich, Ethnicity, pluralism and the state in the middle east, cornell University press 1988 edition. pp.5-6

Eastern Nationalisms no longer making Islam the first reference point now had to contend with the problems of ethnic minority politics.

For a number of reasons, problems of ethnicity played a crucial and prominent role in this process. The sway held by the doctrine of Arab nationalism pitted the Arab Sunni establishment against the other communities, and the policies of Great Britain and France, by design or unintended consequences tended to exacerbate intercommunal relations.¹⁶⁴

The preceding analysis has shown that the foundations of Jordanian nationalisms were laid in the immediate post war period when the European powers created the state system in the nearer Middle East. Jordanian national identity as such took some years to evolve however the primary bases for distinct national identities in the Middle East such as Palestinian, Lebanese Syrian and Jordanian were all demarcated by victorious British and French in the interwar period. Arab notable families especially those who were educated in the west and Christian minorities were some of the leading proponents of western styled nationalism as distinct from the old dying ideology of Ottomanism.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p.7.

XI. Politics of ethnicity and the Middle Eastern state

Considered as societies... new states are abnormally susceptible to serious disaffection based on primordial attachments'.¹⁶⁵ The political arena of the Middle East is an extraordinary example of this statement by Edward Shils. If the central problem in contemporary Middle Eastern politics today is the building and maintenance of legitimate territorial states then Joseph Rothschild's book states: 'Though several new issues have arisen in the twentieth century, ethnic nationalism – or politicized ethnicity – remains the world's major ideological legitimator and delegitimator of states, regimes and governments.' Moreover Rothschild argues that all around the world, 'politicized ethnic assertiveness is... a valid but not exhaustive explanation of the contemporary state's renewed crises of legitimacy'.¹⁶⁶

The legitimating power of ethnic politics has a profound pull on ethnic nationalism of the Middle East; in the case of Jordan this is very apparent. When analysing national identity in the post disengagement period, ethnic politics and the differentiation between Arabs and Jews and Bedouin and sedentary are all-important in the analysis on national identity.

¹⁶⁵ Edward Shils. 'primordial, primordial, personal, sacred and civil ties,' British Journal of Sociology, quoted in Clifford Geertz, 'The integrative revolution: primordial sentiments and civil politics in the new states' in political development and social change, ed J.L. Finkle and R.W. Gable, 2nd edition New York Wiley, 1971 p.656

¹⁶⁶ Joseph Rothschild, *Ethnopolitics: a conceptual framework*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1981 edition pp.14,19

The basis of ethno politics appears to be what Clifford Geertz terms ‘primordial attachments’. By a primordial attachment is meant one that stems from the given or more specifically as culture is unsurprisingly involved in such matters, the presumed givens of social existence: immediate contiguity and kin connection mainly but beyond them the givenness that stems from being born into a particular religious community speaking a particular language or even a dialect of a language and following particular social practices. These congruities of blood, speech, custom etc. are seem to have an ineffable and at times over powering, coerciveness in and of themselves.¹⁶⁷

Ethnic identity in Jordanian national consciousness is a very important feature to understand and fully comprehend. Any examination of National identity in Jordan must take into account the above discussion by noted scholars in the field. Only by undertaking such analysis the thesis be able to shed more light on the lived reality and on-going development of identity politics in a state that is in a condition of flux, such as Jordan today.

Thus a coupling of weak states and strong primordial sentiments would be a debilitating liability in an attempt to maintain a legitimate political community, yet in many parts of the Middle East this is the case.

One may ask what does ethno politics mean, beyond the politicization of primordialism, the answer to the above question is not clear, but the notion of primordialism is sufficiently powerful to capture the substance and essence of the phenomenon:

¹⁶⁷ Clifford Geertz, ‘The integrative revolution: primordial setiments and civil politics in the new states’, in *Political Development and Social Change*, eds. J.L. Finkle and R.W. Gable, New York Wiley, 1971, p.656

‘Politicised ethnicity, ethno-politics, ethno-nationalism, ethno-secessionism and so on are all terms used... in analysing what happens when such entities bring their social, cultural, and economic interests, grievances, claims, anxieties, and aspirations into the political area- the intrastate and /or the interstate arena.

Nor would it be helpful or even possible, to separate out the idea of ethnic consciousness, solidarity and assertiveness from religious, linguistic, racial and so-called primordial foci of consciousness, solidarity and assertiveness ...suffice it to the state... that the terms ethnicity and ethnic... are used generally to refer to the political activities

Of complex collective groups whose membership is largely determined by real or putative ancestral inherited ties, and who perceive these ties as systemically affecting their place and fate in the political and socio-economic structure and state society.’¹⁶⁸

Geertz describes six possible foci of primordialism, which are not mutually exclusive: assumed blood ties, race language, region, religion and custom. All six points are pertinent to the analysis of Jordanian nationalism. Blood ties are all important to the Hashemite dynasty in tracing the lineage of the dynasty back to Sheriff Hussein of Mecca. The line of the prophet gives the monarchy legitimacy in the Arab world. Race and language are two important elements of Jordanian identity. One of the important elements of national identity is the understanding of the Arab identity as distinct from Jewish and Turkish identities. The Arab language also plays a key role in the delineation of identity politics in Jordan: Arabic is one of the bedrocks of Jordanian national identity. The area comprising the Jordanian state lies between the River Jordan and the frontiers of Iraq and Saudi Arabia. This region has historically been seen as constituting the hinterland of the coastal area of Palestine. The religious element of

¹⁶⁸ Joseph Rothschild, *Ethnopolitics: a conceptual framework*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1981, pp.8-9

national identity of Jordan focuses upon the religion of Islam and its connection with Arabism. Islam is a very important component of national identity in Jordan. The historical customs of the Bedouins and tribes are an important anchor of the rootedness of identity politics in Jordan. All these six factors working in tandem as Geertz highlights are important ingredients in the conception of identity politics in Jordan in the 21st century.¹⁶⁹

Beyond the general identification of primordial foci, Geertz is much more focused with the construction of some basic typology 'of the concrete patterns of primordial diversity that are found within the various states' (the Middle East obviously included)¹⁷⁰. A simple typology yields five categories or patterns in Geertz's terminology. The first pattern is a single and dominant and usually (though not inevitably) larger group set over a strong and chronically troublesome minority (example in the Middle East Jordan). The majority in Jordan would include the Bedouin and tribal elements; the minority would historically constitute the Palestinian and Christian communities. The second pattern is one central group, geographically or politically and several medium-large and at least somewhat opposed peripheral groups (for example, Morocco and Iran). The third pattern is a bipolar pattern of two nearly evenly balanced groups (Sunni's and Shi'ites in Iraq; Christians and Muslims in Lebanon)¹⁷¹.

Thus we have in the Middle East: majority vs. minority, central groups vs. peripheral groups and a complex case of evenly matched groups. All three groups tend to

¹⁶⁹ Clifford Geertz, 'The integrative revolution: primordial sentiments and civil politics in the new states' in political development and social change, ed J.L.Finkle and R.W. Gable, 2nd edition (New York Wiley, 1971) p.652.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p.660.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p.661.

exacerbate political conflict over the assets of the state. The two patterns missing in the Middle East seemed to be designed to diffuse such political struggles to a certain extent.¹⁷² This majority v Minority and central groups versus peripheral groups is also applicable to the case of Jordan therefore Jordan shares certain characteristics with respect to identity politics with its neighbouring countries.

Conclusion

To conclude, this research must take into consideration the argument that Gellner's Eurocentric perspective, which limits his utility when considering non-European cases, taints his overall analysis. However, for one to presume that his theory is utterly irrelevant is to misconceive the valuable and material methodology that Gellner provides in painting a picture of how nationalism is derived. Gellner's theory is still applicable to states outside Europe, as can be seen in the nationalisms, which have taken hold in many Middle Eastern and Arabic countries such as Jordan. As this chapter shows, the argument can also be endorsed by Gellner's own writings regarding the relationship between nationalism and religion in the Middle East. Thus, it is legitimate to call Gellner's theory relevant to a case study on Jordanian nationalism, and the arguments in this project will be developed in favour of, and/or in contrast to, Gellner's modernist approach so as to provide a comprehensive answer to the main question regarding the development of Jordanian nationalism in the period since disengagement

¹⁷² P.C. Salzman, 'the study of complex societies in the Middle East: A review essay' International journal of Middle eastern studies issue number 9 1978 edition pp.539-557

in 1988.¹⁷³

In fact, despite the ethnic and political discrepancies between Western and Eastern societies, modernism, rather than primordialism or ethno-symbolism, is the most valid theory for the examination of nation formation in the Middle East. This is because, unlike the other theories, modernism defines nationalism in countries such as Jordan as a result of colonialism, political struggle, and social and bureaucratic transformation, and thereby manages to capture the dynamics underlying the generation of new national identity. Most of these criteria are equally significant for the history of nationalism in the Western world. However, this does not mean that other theories (especially ethno-symbolism) are completely irrelevant. Indeed, ethno-symbolism may prove very useful in approaching aspects of Jordanian nationalism such as the ethnic past of the Palestinians and other minorities, including Bedouins, who live in Jordan.

This chapter has explored theories applicable to the development of nationalism in the Middle East, and has highlighted key developments in Jordanian national identity in the period after disengagement. In this respect, the chapter offers a conceptual framework for the study that is to follow. The research methodology and research questions that will provide beneficial insights into nationalism have also been addressed, and will be explored in more detail in later chapters.

This analysis has discussed the development of the concept of Jordan First in depth by clarifying the meaning of state power and the regime's survival strategies. It presumes that a new meaning of the concept of Jordan First as a national slogan is considered to be one of the main factors that has weakened traditional powers, and is a new beginning

¹⁷³ Interview with Adnan Abo Odeh, Former Chief of the Royal Court, Amman, Jordan. August 2013

for the political liberalisation process. The underlying assumption is that individuals will begin to define themselves according to their personal achievements. Therefore, Jordan First as the regime's national slogan is an instrument of modernisation that heightens popular demand for the principle of personal achievement.¹⁷⁴

To summarise this chapter, the analysis has demonstrated over four sections that the development of national identity with respect to the Hashemite discourse has engendered a clearly defined and coherent understanding of Jordanian national identity. First with respect to the tribes of Jordan, the analysis demonstrated how tribal and Bedouin identity are integral to any modern concept of Jordanianess. Although increasingly less relevant, the tribal makeup of Jordan for the foreseeable future will remain an important undercurrent of national identity. In relation to the armed forces, the analysis has demonstrated that from the conception of the state of Jordan through to its present history, the martial qualities represented by the armed forces are an integral and important component of modern Jordanian identity. The Palestinian analysis in this chapter has shown this important population of the country is a cohesive and a counter force when it comes to national identity formation. In short, where the segments are not well integrated in Jordan, in socio-economic terms, there is a greater likelihood that they will espouse a more pronounced Palestinian identity. With respect to Jordan First, this was a response by the monarchy to counter opposing views, but it is too early to determine whether the regime has been wholly successful in inculcating a strong sense of Jordanian identity in view of the effects on the country by the current Syrian situation, which is a scenario that is still unfolding.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

Literature review

The purpose of the following literature review is to critique the books written on Jordan and to review the books on nationalism on the Middle East. The review we look to highlight the connections between the various studies on Jordan. In this process the review will identify the gaps in the literature that this thesis will look to cover. A review will be undertaken of all the major scholars who are writing on Jordanian history and politics. The review will highlight the most important theories on Nationalism in the Middle East.

This literature review will be divided into a number of different sections, each section will look at an important facet of Jordanian history and Politics. Within each of the literature review sub sections, a number of different books and articles will be reviewed . In total the literature review has examined more than ten books and articles. It is important to emphasize here that the literature review itself is thematically organised.

(i) From colonialism to Arab nationalism

In his book, Massad analyses the political thought of Antonio Gramsci; who himself in his analysis of national identity highlights what he terms ‘three historical moments’.¹⁷⁵ The three moments are numbered thus: 1) the colonial moment; 2) the anti-colonial moment; and 3) the expansion and contraction of the nation. This mode of analysis can be applied to the political history of Jordan where the ‘first moment’ that is termed the colonial moment is when the British established a state framework on a colonial piece of territory and inaugurated a state structure

¹⁷⁵ Joseph A. Massad, *Colonial effects: The making of national identity in Jordan*, New York, 2001, p.8

where it had not existed before.¹⁷⁶ The ‘second moment’ when applied to Jordan is that of the anti-colonial moment; in relation to Jordan this is the moment when the struggle against colonial rule becomes more generalised and leads to the establishment of a national independent state. This is also the moment when the administrative British structure is adopted by the Jordanians to set-up their own independent national state, the date in this case is May 1946.¹⁷⁷ The ‘third moment’ is that of the expansion and contraction of the Jordanian nation; in our case study I refer specifically to the territorial and demographic expansion and contraction of the Jordanian state through annexation and the loss of territory. In terms of ‘expansion’ this is when in the *Nakba* of 1948, the Jordanian state took over administrative responsibility of the West Bank and the attendant Palestinian citizens. In terms of the contraction of the Jordanian nation, this took place when the West Bank was lost to a victorious Israeli state in the 1967 six-day war.¹⁷⁸

Massad in his book examines how modern Jordanian national identity was developed and articulated. The author examines two important institutions in Jordan, the law courts and The armed forces. Massad employs these two to craft a unique and very accurate analysis of the growth of national Identity in Jordan in the British colonial period and in the time after the Second World War. This book will be a key element in the current study, as the researcher will look to build on the analysis advanced by Massad by examining the post disengagement period after 1988.

Anderson’s analysis shows convincingly how after the fall of Faisal’s government in Damascus to the French Army many of his colleagues and early Arab nationalists flocked to Amman for refuge. In effect bringing with them the ideology of Arab nationalism, formulated specifically

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p.9.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p.9.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., pp.9-10.

first, in Paris, and later, in Damascus. One could therefore argue that the seeds of Jordanian nationalism are to be found in the fall of Damascus to the French and the subsequent arrival of Arab nationalists to Amman and what was then termed Southern Syria.¹⁷⁹ In Anderson's words Amman became 'the capital for the propagation of Arab nationalism'.¹⁸⁰ Building on this analysis, Abdullah's meeting with Churchill in March 1921 in effect dealt an important blow to the ideology of pan-Arab nationalism as the young prince agreed not on a unified Arab kingdom; not on a greater Syrian state; but to propagate nationalism in a small province titled Transjordan and centred on the oasis town of Amman. This analysis by Anderson is very forceful and insightful.¹⁸¹ Anderson shows convincingly how this historical junction Jordanian, British and Middle eastern Realities joined together to meet the mutual interest of all parties. Specifically Anderson shows that a crucial opportunity to promote Arab Nationalism through the establishment through the united Arab Kingdom was lost because of the Interest was lost because of regional Arab state Interest.¹⁸²

Anderson also examines the Jordanian National Movement, active from the 1920s through to the 1950s, and its attendant successes and failures. The author's analysis suggests that the JNM promised too much and failed to live up to its expectations. Arab nationalism as an ideology could not provide 'electricity' and employ the 'urban poor'. The Hashemites on other hand remained adamant and constant in their claim that they were the true representatives of Jordanian identity and destiny; as Anderson writes: 'In a basic way, the Hashemite regime had come to 'fulfil the normalizing mission of the modern state' as the population granted it legitimacy'.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁹ Betty S. Anderson, *Nationalist Voices In Jordan : The street and the State*, University of Texas Press, 2005, pp.33-35.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p.37.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., p.38.

¹⁸² Ibid., pp.61-62

¹⁸³ Ibid., p.171.

Building on this line of analysis Anderson writes of the struggle for the future national identity of Jordan between the monarchy and the Jordanian National Movement. The JNM sought identification with pan-Arabism, particularly the Egypt of Jamal Abdul Nasser; a leftist political orientation; union, even, with Syria and Egypt and a democratic and representative form of government. The monarchy on the other hand sought entrenchment of the status quo; leadership of the Hashemite dynasty; a closer working relationship with Washington and moving the country gradually to any form of open representative government. As Anderson highlights the future of Jordan socially, politically and economically was not yet definitively decided even as late as the late 1950s.¹⁸⁴ The king and the Hashemites were adept at portraying their conflict with the JNM as an international sabotage mission by the Soviet Union to infiltrate the small country. The Hashemites evidently felt threatened by a resurgent and a revolutionary Arab nationalist spirit and sought to de-legitimise it by playing the ‘communist card’. These events proved instrumental in consolidating the Jordanian state identity in favour of a cautious and guarded Arab identity rooted in monarchical rule.¹⁸⁵ Keeping with our review of literature on Middle Eastern nationalism, the thesis will now examine the work of Robinson. Francis Robinson has written extensively on Middle Eastern politics and history.

In his discussion of Islam and nationalism, Robinson suggest there is a tendency amongst Muslims of the Middle East to organise their politics on the basis of their religion. Where people of the Islamic faith are in a majority, movements take the form of Islamic political parties such as the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt or the Jama’it Islami of South Asia, whose goal has been to insure that government and community run as far as possible along what they understand to be religious lines. Where Muslims make up a small percentage of the population, there often arises

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p.177.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p.179.

the demand that Muslims should be organised as a distinct political community, either as a separate country or a country within a country.¹⁸⁶

Lynch notes in his introductory chapter that King Abdullah I accepted the creation of Transjordan as a short-term necessity for realising his larger ambitions to be at the head of an independent greater Arab kingdom.¹⁸⁷ Lynch advances his analysis by highlighting that Emir Abdullah in pursuit of his aims contributed greatly in defining and giving content to the ideology of Arabism. Lynch in fact makes an important distinction by coining the phrase ‘Hashemite Arabism’ as opposed to ‘nationalist Arabism’.¹⁸⁸ Lynch discusses an open secret when he examines Abdullah’s close relationship with the Zionist forces, even going so far as suggesting that Abdullah’s and the Zionist interests may have converged in forestalling the emergence of a Palestinian polity.¹⁸⁹ While acknowledging that there is continuing scholarly debate over the precise agreements made between the Zionists and Abdullah, Lynch seems to imply that Abdullah’s regional ambitions were partly satisfied with the incorporation of the West Bank with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in the post 1948 period. Building on this line of analysis he makes the important point that over the course of the 1950s Jamal Abdul Nasser’s variety of Arabism, ironically, came to be viewed as a threat to Amman’s reading of Arabism. This is highlighted in the following quote:

‘Nasser’s Arabism portrayed Jordan as a particularly illegitimate division of the Arab world, a buffer state for British interests and a guarantor of Israeli security rather than an authentic Arab state.’¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁶ Francis Robinson, ‘Islam and Nationalism’, in John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith(editors) *Nationalism*, Oxford University Press 1994 pp.214-217

¹⁸⁷ Mark Lynch, *State Interests and Public Spheres: The International Politics of Jordan's Identity*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1999, p.24.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.24.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.24.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.25.

In the book *The Origins of Arab Nationalisms*, the contributors offer the most recent revisionist literature on the rise of the Arab nationalism that developed after the fall of the Ottoman empire at the end of the First World War. The distinguished set of authors forward a comprehensively broad understanding of the Middle East at the turn of the twentieth century, accommodating a comparison of narratives in a number of national contexts from Syria and Egypt to the Hejaz, Libya, Iraq and finally Jordan.

Mary Wilson analyses the crucial period of the Arab revolt and the birth of Modern Jordan. She demonstrates that 'Arabism was not espoused by the Hashemites until it became of particular use to them'. She maintains that only after the Hashemite forces crossed the frontiers of the Hejaz and advanced towards Syria did the family begin to employ the ideology of Arabism against the Ottoman Empire. Wilson compares the approach of Amir Abdullah, whose ambition was the Hijaz, with that of his brother Faisal, the leader of the Arab revolt, who took to heart the idea of Arabism as the vehicle for his attraction to the educated rulers of Syria, where his own focus is directed.¹⁹¹

Adeed Dawisha, in his article *Requiem for Arab Nationalism*, argues that the demise of Arab nationalism coincided with and was prompted by Egypt's defeat in the 1967 Arab Israeli conflict. The heyday of Arab nationalism was the 1950s and 1960s and with the death of Jamal Abdul-Nasser nationalism suffered an irreversible blow. Adeed maintains that there is a new Arabism with the proliferation of social media and the transnational networks that the Arab elites build at a regional and international level. However he maintains that this is a sentimental sop to the fervour and enthusiasm of the Arabism of old. He maintains that now there is a complacency and

¹⁹¹ Mary C. Wilson *The Hashemites, The Arab Revolt and Arab nationalism in The Origins of Arab nationalism* by Rashied Khalidi, Lisa Anderson, Muhammad Muslih and Reeva S. Simon Columbia University Press New York pp.204-224

a resignation to the tumultuous events in the Arab world. Interesting Jordan is now promoting a renewed nationalist discourse with the Jordan first policy of King Abdullah and this is what the thesis will seek to examine.¹⁹²

(ii) Tribes and Bedouin

Massad when looking at the interface between the Hashemites and the Palestinian refugees after 1948 writes in particular about the 1928 Law of Nationality. Massad refers to the 1949 addendum, which affirmed the rights of all Palestinian nationals and gave them automatic Jordanian nationality and made them in theory equal subjects of the Jordanian state.¹⁹³ According to Massad the term ‘Arab’ was first used in the 1952 Jordanian constitution in defining the state’s supranational identity. This constitutional identification of the state as ‘Arab’ was partly in response to the rising tide of Arab nationalism witnessed in the Middle East in this era. In relation to my PhD thesis this continuing defining and re-defining of Jordanian nationalism tells me of the evolutionary and gradual formation of a specifically Jordanian nationalism.¹⁹⁴ According to Massad the nomadic Bedouins constituted almost half of the Trans-Jordanian population in 1922; this observation tells one of the importance of the relations between the Hashemites and the local tribal population.¹⁹⁵ It is interesting to note that in a country where the inhabitants had tribal and family links that crossed the ‘invented’, and arbitrarily imposed, national boundaries the definition of national identity had to be very carefully regionalised; meaning it had to take cognisance of local allegiances and loyalties. This was especially the case with the Bedouins who had little respect for the boundaries of the new Jordanian state.¹⁹⁶ Over a period of time an

¹⁹² Adeed Dawisha, ‘Requiem for Arab nationalism’ in *Middle East Quarterly* winter 2003, pp.25-41

¹⁹³ Joseph A.Massad, *Colonial effects: The making of national identity in Jordan*, New York, 2001 p.39

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.56.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.58.

economic policy planned and executed by the Jordanian state helped gradually to re-construct the Bedouin economy, overtime transforming it into one reliant increasingly on the state for subsidies and monetary aid. At one point, as Massad highlights, leading a Bedouin lifestyle was considered an anti-state activity and those Bedouins who resisted state led sedentarization policies were imposed with penalties.¹⁹⁷

Anderson demonstrates that the immediate problems facing the new state of Transjordan after the First World War were twofold. Firstly, subduing the unruly tribes; and secondly, extending governmental power. In this respect, as cited by Anderson, R. Taylor asks a pertinent question: ‘By virtue of Jordan’s status as a country, the rise of nationalism was inevitable. But what form was such nationalism to take?’¹⁹⁸ The ambitious King Abdullah had to convince the subjects of the new state that the country had the right to exist and in order to do this he had to connect the Hashemite dynasty to the fortunes of the infant country. According to Anderson the 1920s and the 1930s witnessed the successful completion of the first goal; namely anchoring the state in the people’s consciousness. In connection with this point it is interesting to note that the people of Jordan came to accept the political existence of the country, partly because of largesse provided by the state.

Finally Anderson demonstrates how after the disbanding of the JNM in 1957 the Jordanian state progressively appropriated the Arab awakening of the nineteenth century, the Arab revolt, the ideology of Arab nationalism and the battle for Palestine into the Jordanian national identity narrative. In this respect what is instructive, as highlighted by Anderson, is the opening of a number of museums in the country to, to quote: ‘display Jordan’s cultural heritage, as defined by

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., p.59.

¹⁹⁸ R. Taylor cited in B. Anderson, *Nationalist Voices in Jordan: The Street and the State*, p.34.

the Hashemite state'.¹⁹⁹ In connection with the above traditional Jordanian costumes appeared in museums and television shows over the course of the 1970s and 1980s to unify various groups and tribes into one cohesive and overarching national identity.²⁰⁰ Jordan's Folklore Museum and Jordan's Museum of Popular Traditions, both, display costumes of Jordan's different tribal and religious groups. By presenting these 'instruments, clothes and activities', the dynasty is deliberately showing them to be intrinsic components of the Hashemite-Jordanian contemporary identity. The indigenous traditions and the statecraft of the Hashemite polity are therefore carefully fused together.²⁰¹ Building on this analysis Anderson show's convincingly how the Jordanian state also co-opted the Bedouin, tribal element in service of the state's wider legitimacy project. The Hashemite king appears in Bedouin costume in thousands of pictures carefully posted in different areas of the country and tourist literature is careful to extol and dignify Bedouin tradition and custom. It appears the tribal past is deliberately highlighted as a key component of the contemporary Jordanian national identity. As Anderson writes:

'... The clothing and customs of the Bedouin have been co-opted by the Hashemite state as part of its program to fill out the national narrative and give it grounding in the Jordanian experience.'²⁰²

Anderson has demonstrated how the Jordanian state progressively legitimised its staying power in the minds of people through a careful and calculated manipulation of history, politics, tribes and nationalist sentiment.

At the beginning of the 20th Century Jordan, like much of the Middle East, was a loose collection of tribes. By the time of its independence in 1946 it had the most firmly embedded state

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p.200.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., p.200.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p.201.

²⁰² Ibid., p.201.

²⁰³ Yoav Alon, *the Making of Jordan*, Palgrave Macmillan 2007, pp.13-35.

structures in the Arab world. Drawing on previously untapped sources, Yoav Alon examines how the disparate clan networks of Jordan were integrated into the Hashemite monarchy, with the help of the British colonial administrators²⁰³ Looking at the growth of key state institutions from a grassroots perspective, Alon shows how they co-opted the structures of tribal society, and produced a distinctive hybrid between modern statehood and tribal confederacy that still characterizes Jordan to this day. Alon's innovative approach to the origins of modern Jordan provides fresh insights not only into Jordan itself but also into colonialism, modernity and the development of the state in the Middle East.²⁰⁴

Linda Layne in her article, Tribalism: national representations of tribal life in Jordan, uses Bhakti's idea of conversation to show how two different Jordanian understandings of tribalism are influenced and moulded by other narratives including regional political ones to give an example Israel's idea of Jordan is Palestine and the international understanding of 'folk culture' and 'traditions' and heritage and she analysis the concepts of modernity, nationhood, and political development. All of the above issues are analysed in demonstrating how understanding of tribal life in Jordan in particular national representation of it has developed up to the period of disengagement in 1988.²⁰⁵

Richard Antoun in his article examines civil society, the development of tribes and recent changes in Jordan, he undertakes his study in an anthropological framework. The article examines what is a civil society and whether one exists in the Middle East. It revises earlier assessments to demonstrate that institution of co-operation and trust do exist in Jordan despite the claim that civil

²⁰³ Yoav Alon, *the Making of Jordan*, Palgrave Macmillan 2007, pp.13-35.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., pp.48-58.

²⁰⁵ Linda Layne, Tribalism National Representations of Tribal Life in Jordan, *Urban Anthropology and studies of cultural systems and World Economic Development* Vol 16, No 2, The Anthropology of the Middle East Summer 1987, pp.183-203.

society is weak. Antoun analysis the role of tribes and tribalism in Jordan in the post disengagement period. He also examines notions of honour and the tribal process in Jordan. Towards the end of the Article Antoun considers the Impact of recent changes on civil society in Jordan today.²⁰⁶

(iii) The military

In this section of the literature review, the thesis will examine books and articles written the military and its role in the development in the nationalism identity in Jordan after the disengagement period.

Yoav Alon in his book the making of Jordan analysis the military role in the post independence years in inculcating a stronger sense of national identity amongst a new generation of military officers in Jordan. In terms of the consolidation of the Jordanian state identity through the military, as Massad highlights the Arabising of the army was a key moment in the late 1950s as, significantly, a new generation of leaders saw the army as an instrument of national unification.²⁰⁷ The leadership of the army wished to integrate the National Guard, the decision making body of the military, into the forces as well as achieve the integration of the East Bankers and the West Bankers. In contrast to the goals of Jordanian nationalism in the 1940's, being ridding the country of the British, the nationalism of the 1950s of the younger generation of officers was centred on unifying the young state and Arabising the military, taking their lead after the rhetoric and nationalist policies of the Free Officers in Egypt.²⁰⁸ In relation to the more recent history of Jordan and the role of the military and the formation of a state identity Massad writes

²⁰⁶ Richard T. Antoun, Civil Society, Tribal process and Change in Jordan: an anthropological view, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, volume 32, 2000, pp.441-463.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p.187.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p.188.

that after the civil war of 1970 the government in Amman launched a new campaign of military recruitment deliberately excluding Palestinians. Massad notes that partly as a result of this Bedouin chauvinism increased in the army.²⁰⁹ It seems that after the catastrophic events of the early 1970s Jordanian national identity became more sharply delineated by highlighting the Bedouin element to the detriment of the Palestinian in the rank and file of the army. Massad also makes an interesting point by highlighting the army's role in the national culture over the 1970s and 1980s; the army had a greater presence in the state controlled media and its work was disseminated through the medium of the television and radio to the Jordanian people as a whole. One could argue this was deliberate social engineering to ensure loyalty was directed via the army to the state; the sole arbiter and focus for all national allegiance.

In this sections having looked at Palestinians and Jordanians and the literatures on these topics it is now important to see that any discussion of National identity in Jordan the role played by the late King Hussein in terms of his personality and demeanour is fundamental to the discussion of Jordanian national identity in the pre-disengagement period. Even if King Hussein is not present in Jordan today, many Jordanians and Arabs consider his legacy to Jordan to be so great that he features prominently in any debates and in any visual representation of the Jordanian monarchy today.

The title of Avi Shlaim's extensive and well written biography of Jordan's late King Hussein (1935-1999) makes no secret of its author's view. Nevertheless, Shlaim's book gives us a better understanding of a major politician. Having seen his grandfather murdered for his efforts at agreement with Israel, Hussein was crowned at the age of 17 and led his country through decades of tense Arab-Israeli relations. Shlaim's representation of Hussein as a thwarted peacemaker –

²⁰⁹ Ibid., p.214.

and an alleviating force in the Middle East – is demonstrated with a range of interesting material, including intelligence briefings, academic accounts and eyewitness reports, as well as interviews with the king himself.²¹⁰

(iv) From Palestinians to Jordanians

In this section of the literature review, the thesis will examine literature on the war of 1948, the dispossession of the Palestinians and in subsequent years how a Palestinian identity morphed into a Jordanian identity particularly in the years when the West Bank was under the Administration of the Jordanian government.

The population of Jordan increased substantially after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 with the return to Jordan of approximately 200,000 to 300,000 Palestinians who returned from the Gulf countries; having either been expelled or choosing to make the journey to Jordan after experiencing difficulties with the host communities in the Gulf. This sudden demographic expansion had a major impact on life in the new Jordan taking shape in the post-Cold War era. In short the Palestinians, in comparison to the native Jordanians, were more urban, more educated and, significantly, more experienced in political participation. This arrival of additional Palestinians changed dramatically the debates surrounding what it meant to be a modern Jordanian and the discourse on nationalism and national identity in the country. In relation to the contemporary national identity and the Hashemite regime the dynasty was always more sympathetic to a Transjordanian nationalism over a specifically Palestinian one for reasons examined in this thesis.²¹¹ In terms of overcoming the difficulties of the events of the early 1970s the Jordanian monarch, King Hussein, embarked on a new national project that was termed the

²¹⁰ Avi Shlaim, *Lion of Jordan: The Life of King Hussein in War and Peace*, New York, 2008.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.234.

National Union. In terms of hard facts this was the only permitted legal political organisation in the country and it indirectly ensured that all other parties remained, for all intents and purposes, practically outlawed.²¹² In his address to the people of the country, when inaugurating the National Union, the King spoke proudly of ‘one Jordanian family’. The above has been recounted to show how Jordan embarked on a new nationalist era, which was to prove fundamental in forming the contemporary national identity of the country.

This union king Hussein argued would aid the Jordanians to realise the objectives of ‘ al-Hurriyah, al-Wihdah, Wa al-Hayat-al-Afdal’ or ‘ liberty, unity and the better life.’ The king also offered the media and the citizens of Jordan the unions principle points which he maintained where the result of frequent discussions with the candidates of the people. The national union charter had a separate guidelines for Jordanian Bedouins and women. The king sought to tie the women of the county constituting half the population and the Bedouin tribal population that was a significant support base for his rule into a more encompassing and inclusive national identity. In inaugurating the national union at this important juncture of Jordanian history the king sought to define the roles and responsibilities of the different strata of the Jordanian population. In promulgating a new national identity the king was mindful of including the women and the Bedouins in this progressive agenda.²¹³

When speaking at the formal announcement of the National Union the king insisted that the N.U. was not a political party rather he thought of it as:

‘ ... A general framework which organises life and human beings in our beloved country, it is a immense crucible which melts all our energies, with all the

²¹² Ibid., p.246.

²¹³ Hani Hurani, ‘Al-Ittihad al- Watani wa al- Shaki al Rahin lil-Sultan Fi al-Urdunn,’ (‘The National Union’ and the current Form of Authority in Jordan) in shu’un Filastiniyyah no 14 October 1972 p.55

differences and verities, in order to make of its outcome the Jordanian miracle which will open for us the road to victory.²¹⁴

In the volatile environment and time of the early 1970s when in 1967 Jordan lost the West Bank in the six day war and after the death of Jamal Abdel Nassir, the memory of black September also being very raw King Hussein tried to articulate in the above speech the importance of the various Jordanian subjects sublimating and downplaying the more parochial identities in favour of a primary focus on the love and the future of the Jordanian country. In short king Hussein wanted to emphasize a loyalty to the Jordanian nation over any centrifugal forces.

Massad also supports this line of thought in his key book that is a primary reference for my thesis, the making of National identity in Jordan.

Massad shows convincingly in his a book how the Jordanian state manipulated people's sensibilities and allegiances and engineered a successful bid to bring into being a coherent and strictly delineated Jordanian national identity premised on a pronounced and carefully articulated national ideology.²¹⁵

Betty Anderson in her book nationalist voices in Jordan: the street and the state analyses the different contending factions that make up the Jordanian state. There are different groups of competing interests in Jordan who each articulate a different nationalist voice and Anderson in her study. notes that after the catastrophic defeat of 1948 the Palestinians had to reconcile themselves to Jordanian rule in east Jerusalem and the West Bank. Palestinians had now to live under Hashemite dynastic rule from effectively 1948 to 1967; they never, however, gave up their claim to sovereign nationhood, choosing now to continue their struggle within the framework of

²¹⁴ The king's speech, September 7 1971 in *Majmu'at Khutab*, vol III, p.341; cited in *ibid.*, p.246.

²¹⁵ Joseph Massad, *Colonial effects: the making of National identity of Jordan*, Columbia university press New York 2001. P.246

the Hashemite kingdom and under the banner of Arab nationalism.²¹⁶ This no doubt provided the Hashemites with a new set of difficulties having only very recently brought the indigenous Jordanians in line and made them amenable to dynastic rule from Amman; the addition of the Palestinian component greatly complicated the national project.

In terms of the interface between the Hashemites and the Palestinian refugees Lynch observes that after the catastrophic defeat of 1967 and the loss of the West Bank to Israel, Palestinian identity became more sharply focused and articulated in a nationalist vein; to the extent that the Palestinian resistance movement came to be seen as a threat to the survival of the Jordanian state.²¹⁷ After the events of Black September, when the Kingdom of Jordan fought a civil war with the PLO and defeated it and subsequently evicted it to Lebanon, three important points emerged as far as Jordan was concerned which are highlighted poignantly by Lynch: 1) Jordan established its identity as Jordan first and foremost with the Palestinian question being accorded a secondary position; 2) the neighbouring Arab states accepted this action (i.e. Black September) because the state system proved in the long term more enduring and strategic over any support for a revolutionary Palestinian agenda; and 3) the whole conception of Arabism post Black September took a conservative bent and this ultimately played in the favour of the Hashemite ideological game plan²¹⁸.

When analysing the strengthening of Jordanian national identity in the 1950s, Lynch highlights that with the annexation of the West Bank in 1950 the Hashemite dynasty had to construct a competing narrative to that of the sharply defined Palestinian national identity. In some ways the

²¹⁶ Betty S. Anderson, *Nationalist voices in Jordan the street and the state*, Texas university press 2005. pp. 84-116

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.26.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.27.

incorporation of the West Bank with the Jordanian state proper, the Hashemite dynasty was compelled to consolidate a specifically Hashemite Jordanian national identity, vis –a-vis a Palestinian one.²¹⁹ Building on this line of analysis Lynch notes that over the course of the 1950s and 1960s Amman tried to elaborate a unitary national identity inclusive of both Trans-Jordanians and Palestinians. The rationale behind this reasoning was that the wider pan-Arabist goals were paramount over more singularly defined national constituent identities; namely Trans-Jordanian and Palestinian. This position, however, became untenable because of two factors: 1) the loss of the West Bank to Israel in 1967; and 2) the recognition of the PLO as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people by the larger Arab world.²²⁰ In summary, the Hashemite dynasty’s attempt to consolidate a Jordanian state identity that incorporated the Palestinian constituent failed because of reasons beyond its immediate control from the late 1950s onwards, however it did not stop them from continuing with such policies – as evident in the West Bank with the historic decision of 1988.

Finally Lynch highlights that the contemporary national identity in Jordan has reconciled itself with the existence of a separate Palestinian state to be headed up by the PLO. Note the Hashemite dynasty no longer lays an exclusive claim on the representation of the Palestinian cause and accepts in principle a Palestinian state based in the West Bank and Occupied Territories. In terms of the peace treaty with Israel in 1994 although the state elite in Jordan would like this to be a new component of the new national identity, matters remain unresolved because of the continuing failure to achieve a durable and just peace between Israelis and Palestinians.²²¹ Further in the book Lynch discusses the ‘old’ and ‘new’ Jordan; the key difference between the two being that

²¹⁹ Ibid., p.25.

²²⁰ Ibid., pp.75-76.

²²¹ Ibid., pp.255-256.

contemporary national identity in Jordan clearly and categorically denies any claim to the West Bank whereas the old Jordanian national narrative did not preclude the possibility of including the West Bank as a part of the Jordanian state.

Al Oudat and Alshboul in their article write that the disengagement from the West Bank in 1988 marked a new course in the formation of the contemporary national identity in Jordan. As the authors write:

‘This development helped produce a Jordanian nation that conformed more closely to the modern, Western model of nation by clarifying and confirming the Jordanian self and the Palestinian other.’²²²

The resolution to this claim did away with any ambiguity harboured by those inside or outside Jordan as to the assertion that Jordan is Palestine. With this single act the Hashemites proclaimed confidently that Jordan is Jordan and Palestine is Palestine. This, the authors argue, is a key belief of the contemporary Jordanian national identity.²²³ The notion of Jordan First emerges so the article argues after the events of September 1970; the phrase employed at the time was ‘East Bankers First’. Thereafter the army, the monarchy and the tribal leaders working in concert delineated the concept of Jordan First. This has further been elaborated, as the authors highlight, by the pragmatists in Jordan today who go so far as to argue that Jordan is strictly for Jordanians and Palestinians are not strictly Jordanians.²²⁴

Adnan Abo Odeh in his book *Jordanians, Palestinians and the Hashemite Kingdom* analyses how the complex relationship between Transjordanians and Palestinians influenced not only Jordan

²²² Mohammed Ali Al Oudat and Ayman Alshboul, ‘Jordan First.: Tribalism, Nationalism and Legitimacy of Power in Jordan’, *Intellectual Discourse*, 2010, Vol. 18, No. 1.

²²³ *Ibid.*, p.79.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.80.

itself but also the Whole Middle East Peace process. At different times in its history the Hashemite monarchy has sought to accommodate, welcome, take a side or work with Palestinians and the PLO and the repercussions of these endeavours has been felt throughout the Middle East.

Jordan has signed a peace treaty with Israel and the Palestinian population makes up more than half of the Jordanian population however the dynamic relationship between the Hashemites, Jordanian and their Palestinian subjects still brings to the fore powerful emotions at home and can sent repercussions through the West Bank and Israel. Abo Odeh in his book examines this relationship from its origins in the inter war period to the more recent attempts to deal with competing national identities in Jordan²²⁵

²²⁵ Adnan Abo Odeh, *Jordanians, Palestinians and the Hashemite Kingdom* United States institute of Peace press Washington, 1999, pp. 237-264

Methodological section

The project adopts qualitative methods of data collecting and tries to reach the abovementioned conclusions by way of the use and comparison of these findings with the historical and political facts. In order to test the main hypothesis, the project requires qualitative data regarding the changes in the dominant political discourse in Jordan and its impacts on the discourse of Jordanian nationalism, and political and social events and conflicts since disengagement in 1988.

This is necessary to grasp the overall pattern of historical change and to test if there is any correlation between these variables. The methodological framework informs the foundation to the thesis. The methodology also acts as a framework for the multiple ethical consideration which came up during the fieldwork research in Jordan.

Something that needs to be categorically stated in this section is that a conscious decision to adopt an empirical method for the research work. The methodological framework proved particularly pertinent in the analysis of the evolution and sustenance of new and old identities in Jordan post disengagement.

Data collection involved participant observation and qualitative interviews conducted over four months in the summer of 2013 in Amman. The demography of the twenty respondents was diverse, this was a deliberate decision on the part of the researcher to get a more holistic and representative sample of Jordanian society, both aged and the youth. Lengthy and in-depth interviews with government ministers present such as H.E Mr Tahir Al Masry who was the leader of the Jordanian Parliament and past such as Mr Adnan Abo Odeh who was the foreign minister under King Hussein and H.E Marouf al Bakheit who served as the Prime minister in King Abdullah's II reign. These interviews provided invaluable insight into the world view and opinions of the People of Influence in Jordan. The honesty of the respondents was thanked and respected and where people requested to remain anonymous this was also followed through. One last point the researcher would like to make is that ethical issues was given full consideration in the compilation and drafting of the thesis.

In addition to the above historical archives in the university of Jordan was visited to gather insights on famous speeches which was made by the Late king Hussein during various events in the disengagement period and also during the historical agreement between the Jordanians and the Israeli which took place in 1994. It was important that the researchers adds these speeches as it gives the reader an insight of the decisions which was made at that time by the late King Hussein and also informs his citizens reasons behind his decision behind the disengagement of the West Bank from Jordan in 1988 and also the benefits of the historic Wadi Araba agreement between the Jordanian government and the Israelis in 1994.

After careful consideration and discussion with the supervisor, the empirical method for data collection was chosen. The overarching purpose of the methodological research was the investigation and examination of the evolution and sustenance of new and old identities in pre- and post disengagement periods in Jordan. In the data collection phase of the fieldwork, the participant observation methodology was chosen. Interviews were conducted in Jordan over the six months of the spring/summer 2013. The majority of the fieldwork was conducted in the capital city of Amman.

The demography of the thirty respondents chosen for fieldwork research was diverse. Ten were from the low-income strata; ten were from the middle-income group; and ten were from the elite Jordanian status. In discussion with my supervisor a reduced number of interviewees was deemed prudent. This would allow for lengthy and in depth interviews. My goal, given the political sensitive situation in Jordan, was to build trust with the respondents, I wanted an insight to their milieu and their perspective on national identities. The interviews were also useful to gather insights on the case studies which is explored in the thesis.

The interviews included employees in Jordanian embassy in the United Kingdom and the Foreign Service in Jordan, newspaper columnists, publishing house editors, former Jordanian senators and Prime ministers, academic directors of educational institutions in Jordan and finally business company presidents.

Chapter Two: Hashemite and Jordanian National Discourse since 1988

I. Hashemite discourse and tribes

Introduction

Amongst scholars today, there is little agreement about the accepted definition of tribes and tribalism. This is because tribal organisation in the near east varies across the region. Tapper has put forward an interesting definition of tribes as:

‘A localised group in which kinship is the dominant idiom of organisation, and whose members consider themselves culturally distinct of customs, dialect or language, and origins.’²²⁶

Tribes keep their social unity through ‘a myth of common ancestry’. Tribes and tribalism can also be best understood through their varied socio-political relationships: the interactions between the tribe and the government, between the tribe and other tribes and amongst tribal members themselves. Historically, tribes are explained in terms to their opposition to the government, their continually changing alliances with other tribal groups and the variability of the leadership mechanisms within their ranks. Leadership within the tribe has a patrimonial ethos: the tribal leaders kept their position only as long as they maintained the loyalty of their subordinates. Their position and purpose was safe primarily by maintaining a continuous flow of goods and services to

²²⁶ P.S. Khoury and J. Kostiner, *Tribes and state formation in the Middle East*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990, p.5.

junior members. If the tribal leader did not fulfil his duties, he was no longer seen as fit to lead and was replaced by a tribal leader who could better secure the interests of his tribal colleagues.²²⁷

Tribal origin, tribal identity and tribalism are concepts that have been, and continue to be, a major point of discussion in Jordan. The discussion has been held at various levels, the intra-tribal, inter-tribal, tribal-state and intra-state. Taken on a national stage, the discussion links up to regional political discourse and to concepts such as ‘modernity’, ‘nationhood’ and ‘political development’.²²⁸

In contemporary Jordan, tribalism has taken on a wide range of meanings. In its broad sense, it is one of the ‘organisational principles in a dynamic and complex political environment’. Tribalism has been further described as a ‘persistent social and political force bringing people together for different purposes, and doing so in the context of many different, competing or alternative principles of alignment’.²²⁹

Jordanian critics of tribalism bring forth the argument that the existence and predominance of primordial tribal ties pose a threat to the nation state. They maintain that tribalism empowers a small group to control and manipulate the state to serve their own needs. However, Jordanians who support the tribalist identity highlight the cultural coherence and consensus provided by tribalism that helps towards establishing a sense and demonstration of national identity. A national identity asserts itself actively by stressing what one is, as opposed to a passive juxtaposition to others, for example, that

²²⁷ Ibid., p.4.

²²⁸ Schirin H. Fathi, *Jordan: An Invented Nation? Tribe-state Dynamics and the Formation of National Identity*, Deutsches Orient-Institute, Hamburg, 1994, p.33.

²²⁹ Ibid., p. 36.

one is not Palestinian, Syrian, etc.²³⁰ The notion of tribal identity in Jordan is very much to the fore, has strong historical antecedents and is a notable feature of the political landscape. The Hashemite monarchy draws on the support of the tribes to win legitimacy from the people who are native and indigenous to the East Bank of the country. Since 1988, tribal national identity has been in decline because of the ascendancy of other political reforms of identifications, such as Jordan First and a transnational Arab-Muslim identity. The demands of protesters on the streets of Amman and other cities are not for greater tribal identification, but for the empowerment of disenfranchised and voiceless groups that want political freedom.

(i) Tribes and state formation in the Middle East

The focus on tribes and state in a Middle Eastern context is important for two reasons: first, for long periods of history, large parts of the Middle East were not effectively dominated by the imperial states that ruled the region. Although tribes played a significant role in the creation of Islamic empires such as the Umayyad, Abbasid, Fatimid, Ottoman, Safavid and Qajar states, they also populated and dominated at various points vast areas of the Middle East that did not come under effective Islamic imperial authority; such areas included the Iranian and Turkish plateaus, the Syrian desert, the Arabian Peninsula, the upper Nile and the deserts, mountains, and plateaus of North Africa.²³¹

Discussions of state formation in the Middle East, however, poses certain difficulties that are not easily resolved. To begin with, the term state is associated with modern

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ G.S. Hodgson, *The venture of Islam Volume 2: the expansion of Islam in the Middle Periods*, University of Chicago Press, 1974, pp. 69-78

European conceptions and institutions that do not necessarily correspond to Middle Eastern realities, even in the late twentieth century. Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner have written that the state implies a sovereign authority, a sovereignty based upon both consent and coercion. The state is associated with a particular bounded territory, over which it exercises a monopoly of coercive authority. Legitimacy implies myths and symbols, which provide a kind of ideological rationalisation and justification for this monopoly of coercive authority.²³²

In the Middle East, the monarchs, military officers and other elites that have come to power in the twentieth century have faced varying degrees of difficulties in building exclusive monopolies of coercive authority and control because they have been unsuccessful in developing the forms of popular legitimacy necessary to support their rule. As a consequence of this, they have faced opposition and resistance from a variety of social and political forces that include tribes. This case can also be said to apply to the history of Jordan, especially the early period.²³³

At the same time, however, the very process of state formation across the Middle East and North Africa during the last century has led to the voluntary or forced breakup of traditional forms of tribal authorities and the erosion of the old tribal loyalties: the result has been the emergence of new groupings and movements that retain certain tribal characteristics but that are also heavily conditioned and shaped by other factors, including class, ethnicity and even nationalism.²³⁴

²³² Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner eds., *The state, religion and ethnic politics: Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan*, Syracuse University Press, 1986, p.7

²³³ *Ibid.*, p.8.

²³⁴ Philip S. Khory and Joseph Kostiner, Introduction: tribes and the complexities of state formation in the Middle East, IB Tauris Press 1991, p.3.

(ii) Sub-societal divisions in the Middle East: tribal, ethnic or sectarian

In this section, I examine the role played by tribes, tribal identity and tribal custom in the development of national identity in Jordan. Tribal politics is key to understanding Jordan more than any other country in the Near East today. Tribal politics and tribal patriarchy are influential factors in dynastic politics in Jordan.

The term tribe has been used to describe many different kinds of groups or social formations, and a single, all-encompassing definition is virtually impossible to produce. Tapper's article in the introductory section in Khory and Kostiner's book on tribes and state formation in the Middle East underscores the problem of definition by explaining not only the myriad ways the term has been used, but also the ways anthropologists and historians have misused it. He has suggested that this is the best way to examine tribes at their different levels of organisation 'from camp to confederation' and by the different kinds of processes that affect them at each level. He offers some helpful hints in that regard:

'Tribe may be used loosely of a localised group in which the kinship is the dominant idiom of organisation and whose members consider themselves culturally distinct tribes are usually politically unified, though not necessarily under a central leader... Such tribes also form part of larger, usually regional, political structures of the state... The more explicit term confederacy or confederation should be used for a local group of tribes that is heterogeneous in terms of culture, presumed origins and perhaps class composition...'²³⁵

As this brief section has demonstrated, tribal identity, tribal politics and tribal stakes in Jordan's future are all dependent upon conceptions of national identity that both

²³⁵ Richard Tapper, Introduction to *Conflict of Tribe and State*, Croom Helm Publishing, London 1983, pp. 6, 9

incorporate tribal allegiance and tribal dependence.

(iii) Tribes and the state in the Middle East

In the Middle East, groups referred to as tribes have never in historical terms been isolated groups of primitives remote from contact with states or their agents; rather, tribes and states have maintained each other in a single system, though one of inherent instability. Lampton remarks on the situation in Iran, but which applies generally to much of the Middle East:

‘Control of the tribal element has been and is one of the perennial problems of government ... All except the strongest governments have delegated responsibility in the tribal areas to the tribal chiefs. One aspect of Persian history is that of a struggle which has continued in a modified form down to the present day. Various Persian dynasties have come to power on tribal support...’²³⁶

The tribal problem and the role of tribes and their leaders as actors and agents in Middle Eastern history have been the subject of various detailed studies. If the rulers of the Middle East have been preoccupied by a tribal problem, however the tribes could be said to have a perennial state problem. No tribe has ever, at least in recent centuries, been totally unaffected by any state, and an important theme in the literature is this state problem, that is, the role of states in creating, transforming or destroying tribal institutions and structures. A focus on the role of tribes in the Middle East needs to be complemented by awareness of the role of states in tribe formation and deformation.²³⁷

²³⁶ A.K.S. Lambton, *Islamic society in Persia*, London, 1954, p.6.

²³⁷ Richard Tapper, ‘Anthropologists, historians and tribes people on State formation in the Middle East’ in Philip Khoury and Joseph Kostiner, *Tribes and state formation in the Middle East*, IB Tauris Publishing, London, 1991, p.52.

(iv) Who are the tribes of Jordan?

All the Jordanians of East Bank origin who are ethnically Arab and either Muslim or Christian are part of a tribe, be it a tribe that is historically settled, semi-nomadic or Bedouin.²³⁸

Looking at Jordan today, particularly the post-disengagement period since 1988, it can be seen that the following tribes inhabit the Jordanian desert: in the north, the Beni Khalid (most of this large tribe live in Syria; however, it also extends from Palestine to Kuwait); other tribes include the al-Sardiyyah and the tribe of al-Sirhan; the warrior 'isa and the Ahl-al-Jabal, al Rualla. In central Jordan, one finds the Beni Sakhar. In the south of Jordan, we can find the Huwaytat. These are the rivals of the Beni Sakhar tribes in Jordan; the indifferent Hajayah. In central Jordan, we find the tribal clan of al Belqawiyahs and the Beni Attiyah tribe. The two remaining semi-nomadic tribes can be found in the north and south of Jordan, the Beni Hassan and Beni Hamidah clans respectively.²³⁹

There are four semi-nomadic tribes, or rather tribal confederations, for not all the clans of these tribal alliances are originally related by blood, but rather have coalesced and they have officially adopted each other for reasons of mutual defence and friendship: in the north of Jordan, there is the Beni Hasan, a huge tribe comprising 12 main clans, whose population is numbered at over 200,000 in central Jordan, and the Abbadis, a traditional ally of the Bani sakhir tribes, number over 100,000, who they live in dozens of villages spread across greater Amman. Then there is the Belqwiyyahs, which

²³⁸ In Jordanian present-day political discussion, the word *bedu* refers to Bedouin, the word *ashair* is used to mean settled tribes and the term *ashair al badya* is used to mean the seminomadic tribes.

²³⁹ Ghazi bin Mohammad, *The tribes of Jordan at the beginning of the twenty first century*, Rutab Series, The Royal Islamic Strategic Center, 1999. pp. 9-11.

includes tribes such as the Adwan, Ajarmeh and the Hadid, and is even larger than the Beni Hasan tribe, numbering over 250,000. Before the ascent of the Beni Sakhir clan, it was the premier tribal power in Jordan. Finally, the Beni Hamidah tribe numbers about 150,000 and lives between Madaba and Karak and in a few villages around the al Tafiheh.²⁴⁰

The concept of tribalism today plays a new role in Jordanian society as it has been politicised in the current debates, which are concerned with the nature of Jordanian society. To explain the nature of these debates, it should be noted that a substantial proportion of the contemporary population of Jordan is of Palestinian origin. Up until very recently, the majority of the Jordanian population were ardent supporters of the struggle for the Palestinian cause. The situation changed after the events of Black September (1970) and Jordanians of trans-Jordanian origin turned against the Palestinians during the 1970s, because they believed them to be unwilling to recognise their debt to the country that had welcomed them.

Transjordanians regularly accuse Palestinians of disloyalty towards the king. The tribal discourse is now deployed in the context of 'Jordanian-Palestinian' tension within Jordanian society.²⁴¹ When Palestinians are accused of being disloyal to the Jordanian state and monarchy, it is because the perception is that they do not acknowledge the tribal dimension of state and society. Palestinians, although Arab, have a less pronounced understanding of tribal routes, since their society is more urbane and literate. How this plays out in terms of national identity is that while the East Bankers may want to highlight tribal ties, the Palestinian majority is less inclined to adopt line of

²⁴⁰ Ibid., p.12.

²⁴¹ George Joffe, *Jordan in Transition, 1990-2000*, C. Hurst and Company, London, 2002, p.201.

thought. Over the passage of time, with the Palestinian element increasing, it is only natural that the tribal identity of Jordan will correspondingly decrease.

The distinction between Jordanians and Palestinians is characterised by contrasting the nomadic traditions of the former with the peasant and the urban traditions of the latter. To add more to this discussion, the terms ‘*asha’ari* (tribal), *watani* (patriotic) and *urduni* (Jordanian) have progressively acquired equivalence between them. To be tribal, to claim tribal characteristics, to support tribalism thus becomes a way of claiming Jordanian authenticity, but at the same time, it also becomes a way of anchoring this authenticity in a tribal epoch, which, along with this myth dimension, extends beyond the event and semi-tribal way in which the Jordanian state was created.²⁴² Although the analysis has maintained that tribal identity is in decline, it can equally be argued that when decisiveness takes a hold of Jordanian society, there is an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ mindset. People of east Jordanian origin will be pre-disposed to highlighting tribal authenticity by claiming tribal ancestry and indirectly paying allegiance to the origins and genesis of the Jordanian state.

Tribes have always been connected with the monarchy in Jordanian society. This connection stems from the key role of the tribes in supporting the Hashemite monarchy. The Bedouin tribes are identified with the Hashemites because the king’s social legitimacy derives from traditional claims of kinship, religion and historical performance. The loyalty of a tribesman stems from a desire to defend the honour of the family, tribe and king, and not from some abstract notion of Jordanian patriotism.²⁴³

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Mohammad Ali al Oudat and Ayman al Shboul, ‘Jordan First: Tribalism, nationalism and legitimacy of power in Jordan’, *Intellectual Discourse*, 2010, Volume 18, Issue no 1, p.70.

This aspect of modern Jordanian identity should not be overlooked despite the Arab world becoming more globalised and interconnected, and with the current Arab spring and notions of freedom and democracy becoming more prevalent through social media. Despite the above been interpreted as progressive tendencies, it would be foolish to claim the demise of tribalism. As this thesis will demonstrate in its conclusion, tribalism is a very important aspect of modern Jordanian political identity.

After Jordan gained its independence in 1946, the Jordanian state became merely an extension of the assumed identity and character of the king. During his rule, King Hussein worked in the direction of trying to create a sense of Jordanian history and nationality as a nation state. In addition to the above, the present regime has recognised the importance of transcending tribalism, parochialism and communalism in order to format a coherent national identity. More recently, the Jordanian regime has appeared to be withdrawing its support from the last vestiges of tribal identification. This substantiates the claim made at the beginning of the chapter that tribalism as an identity marker is progressively declining, and is of less importance as a component of a national identity in the new Jordan.

The Bedouin (tribes) have enjoyed a strong political and socio-cultural role. Politically, the regime gained control over the tribes and relied on their loyalty and support. Socio-culturally, the east Jordanian tribes often idealised different aspects of Bedouin life and practices from which the Jordanian social pattern is derived.

The creation of the institutions of a modern state depended mainly on the support of the tribes and the expansion of the army. State building proceeded as a personalised monarchy in which the loyalty was to the king, not the state. This explains the tribal mentality in which loyalty is centred on a personality, as opposed to formal institutions. Such tribal alliances in Jordan's political structure also has created a degree of

uncertainty, and whether these tribal partnerships create stabilising institutions has recently been open to debate.²⁴⁴ This debate centres on the discussion on whether tribalism is able deliver a strong binding component of national identity, or whether it actually debilitates the formation of a strong cohesive national identity project.

The tribes have always been supported and sponsored by the state in what has been a symbolic and symbiotic relationship. The Jordanian monarch has depended on tribal support during difficult times. Since the founding of the Hashemite kingdom, the Bedouin have constituted one of the king's most loyal constituencies. In addition, the tribal dominance of the Jordanian army has contributed to the survival of the regime and has ensured its stability.²⁴⁵ To sum up, tribalism as a force of national identity can be a contributing factor to stability and longevity of the regime, but can equally be a divisive concept vis-à-vis the Palestinian majority. In this section, the analysis has demonstrated that while tribalism is a double-edged sword, the monarchy utilises the tribal linkages with society to strengthen its hold on power and win legitimacy.

Since the 1920s, which saw the last instances of Bedouin disaffection with the Hashemite regime, the Bedouin and the regime have co-existed peacefully and collaboratively, and have depended on each other in vital matters in regime survival, as well as in promoting Bedouin socio-economic and cultural interests.²⁴⁶

The state's initial effort to keep the Bedouin apart from the national body politic and its subsequent attempts to integrate them into it have now combined to produce a new

²⁴⁴ Ibid., p.71.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., p.2.

²⁴⁶ Joseph A.Massad, *Colonial Effects: The Making of National Identity in Jordan*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2001, p.66.

strategy. King Hussein's commitment to identifying Jordanian culture as tribal relied on these two strategies to accomplish its goal – namely to render the country tribalised or even 'Bedouinized' through settling the Bedouin. The Bedouin are seen as the carriers of Jordan's true and authentic culture and tradition. The Bedouinization process of the country and its *Hadari* (*Hadari* is the designation of the predominately nomadic population of Jordan.) A population is based on the state's reconfiguration of what tribal culture is. The process of settling the Bedouin was marked by the state's process of redefining their culture for them, while continuing to identify it (the culture) as Bedouin, and it set the new framework as the norm of the society by identifying it as a true Jordanian national culture.²⁴⁷

The above analysis has shown that the Hashemite discourse gradually co-opted the tribal past of the country. With respect to the development of Jordanian nationalism in the post 1988 period, tribalism has proved to be an important cementing block in binding the disparate groups of the country together. My work has shown Bedouin and tribal culture to be central to the development of a Jordanian identity. Although the country today is perhaps mostly Palestinian in its makeup, the traditional predominance and loyalty of East Bankers to the monarchy has been a stabilising and important factor in the longevity of the Hashemite regime.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., p.71.

Conclusion

This study of Jordan demonstrates that countries cannot be created out of thin air and that even the most patently obvious arbitrary nation must employ existing cultural references to construct their nations. Jordanian national identity in the post disengagement period contains three important features – Arabism, Islam and the tribes. These were all present in some form in the area that became Transjordan before the creation of the modern Jordanian state. These elements were combined together and transformed into modern nationalism when the state of Transjordan came into being in the 1920s and 1930s. Many years later, these three elements, Arabism, Islam and the tribes have come to fruition with a fully-fledged national identity post 1988, with the tribal element playing the most important role.

In the years leading up to the disengagement of 1988, the topic of tribalism came up for intensive discussion when the Jordanian parliament proposed abolishing the tribal law, which was introduced by Glubb Pasha in 1930s. After a lot of public discussion, during which the tribes were accused of being ‘backward’, king Hussein came to their defence.²⁴⁸ In doing this, he very cleverly brought together the tribes, Arab identity and Islam in an overarching Jordanian national identity.

I would like to repeat to you what I told a meeting of tribal heads recently that: ‘I am al Hussein from Hashim and Quraysh, the noblest Arab tribe of Mecca, which was honoured by god and into which was born the Arab Prophet Mohammad.’ Therefore,

²⁴⁸ Stefanie Nanes, ‘National identity in the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan; state made still durable’, in Mitchell Young, Eric Zuelow and Andreas Sturm (eds.), *Nationalism in a Global Era: the persistence of nations*, Routledge, London, pp.221-239.

whatever harms our tribes in Jordan is considered harmful to us, as this has been the case all along, and it will continue to be so forever.²⁴⁹

In terms of the discussion of the thesis, which is the development of Jordanian nationalism in the post-disengagement period, the most important elements of Jordanian national identity – the tribes with a Hashemite religious justification and Arab national identity – these were all evident in the person of King Hussein himself as commander-in-chief of the Jordanian armed forces. It is noteworthy that this speech was given before a meeting of Jordanian tribal leaders, highlighting the traditional means by which the Jordanian king still keeps a hold on his power and gains legitimacy amongst his people.

Although the tribal element of modern Jordanian national identity has come to be the most important aspect of it, King Abdullah II, the present monarch, has tried to play down some of the more blatant displays of tribal support. For instance, he called on tribal elders to stop placing large advertisements in the newspapers to celebrate the kingdom and emphasise their obedience on the occasion of the king's birthday.²⁵⁰ King Abdullah has focused on bringing foreign investment into Jordan and integrating it into the global economic market through a free trade agreement with Washington. Despite all of these measures, Jordanian national identity, and its tribal bias, is still very relevant because national identity is connected to governmental power. Jordanian national identity since 1988 has become stronger and even more durable. This is because, as my thesis maintains, it has affectively absorbed the local tribes, Arab nationalism and Islam in order to justify an increasingly robust and permanent territorial Jordanian state. In

²⁴⁹ *Jordan Times*, January 28, 1985

²⁵⁰ Interview with the former prime minister of Jordan Abdul Salam al Majali, August 15 2013.

spite of its traditional underpinnings, Jordan now boasts a fully-fledged national identity, with almost seven million Transjordanians believing in the *raison d'être* of their country.

2. The Army and the Hashemite discourse

Introduction

The Jordanian army – the Arab Legion – is intimately associated with and tied to the monarch and not to the state.²⁵¹ The army in Jordan has been utilised by the king in a variety of functions. The Jordanian army has also served as a solidifying element and an inspiration for a national identity, being one of the few country-wide Jordanian organisations whose units took on board all strata of the native-born populations.

The armed forces most significant national purpose was the integration of the nomads into the developing Jordanian state and society. Since the enrolment of the nomads in the armed forces committed them to a remunerated economy, they became financially dependent on the government. More and the more of the nomads developed a sense of attachment to the idea of Jordan, were introduced to the state structures and became an important constituent of social support for the government. This was at variance with the role usually taken by the Bedouin in most other Middle Eastern countries. A Jordanian private of Bedouin origin declared: 'I never knew Jordan existed before I

²⁵¹ The Jordanian Armed forces include 88,000 active soldiers. 25,000 soldiers belonging to the public security forces the Darak and the Royal Jordanian Air forces number 12,000 men. In <http://www.kinghussein.gov.jo>

joined the army.²⁵²

References to the Jordanian Armed Forces were often made in the statements of the late King Hussein and also by the current King Abdullah II. The references were not made as often as those made to Jerusalem and the West Bank; however, both are utilised with similar lines of reasoning: offering two pillars of independence in the form of country-wide symbols of identification: one is religious, the other is of this world. If the holy city of Jerusalem is a source of motivation and reason for armed struggle, then the armed forces are the country's connection with history, the carrier of armed struggle and the unaffected secure base in which the country is built.²⁵³ The armed forces are, in a very real way, Jordan itself, since the kingdom began with the Arab revolt against the Ottoman rule of 1915 and so did the armed forces.²⁵⁴

Following the departure of the British forces in 1958, King Hussein reasserted his personal authority over the Jordanian armed forces. In addition, members of the royal family held key positions in the Bedouin-based national army. The military helped build a cohesive nation, just as the Hashemites had built the nation on the force and loyalty of the Arab revolt and loyal Bedouin soldiers.²⁵⁵ The army is central to the Hashemite discourse on the national identity of Jordan. The current king and his predecessor styled themselves as commanders of the army, as well as monarchs of the kingdom. The monarchy has intimately associated itself with the fortunes of the armed forces; this has been a deliberate exercise to depict the king as a super monarch, who

²⁵² James Lunt, *Glubb Basha: A biography*, London, 1984, p.92

²⁵³ Speech of 1st November 1969 before parliament, official text of his proposal: *al-majmu'ah al-kamilah li-khutab jalalat al-Malik Hussein Bin Talal al-mu'azzam*, Amman, June 1985, Vol 3, p.139.

²⁵⁴ *Majmu'ah al-kamilah li-khutab jalalat al-Malik Hussein Bin Talal al-mu'azzam*, Amman, June 1967, Vol 2, p.597.

²⁵⁵ Beverly Milton-Edwards and Peter Hinchcliffe, *Jordan a Hashemite Legacy*, Routledge Publishers, London, p.41.

exhibits leadership and martial qualities in equal measure. In Jordanian culture and history, a leader who is demonstrably strong of mind and body and demonstrates leadership virtues will win the support of the subject population. The monarchy is very cognisant of cultivating this image of the association between the ruling family and the armed forces of the country. All this is in a bid to strengthen national solidarity and exhibit the virtues of a tribal sheikh who has supreme oversight.

From King Hussein's point of view, and this also applies to the current king with his own military background, the Jordanian Arab Legion has played almost a mystical part at the heart and soul of the Jordanian nation. The late King Hussein often portrayed it as the natural linear successor to the Arab army that had fought at his great grandfather's behest in the great Arab revolt of 1916. This rhetoric and myth creation reflected an important plank in the platform of legitimacy invoked by the Hashemites as rulers of modern Jordan.²⁵⁶

After the end of the civil war of 1970, the Jordanian army was able to recuperate as a unified force with an unwavering commitment to defending the monarchy, a commitment that prevailed even under the nationalist officers in the mid-1950s. The government launched a major campaign of army recruitment after the civil war that targeted Transjordanians, but left out Palestinian Jordanians. Recruitment was to all branches of the Jordanian military.²⁵⁷ The recruitment of East Bankers into the armed forces was a deliberate ploy to cultivate support and strengthen the connection with the native indigenous inhabitants of Jordan. This carefully thought-through policy was

²⁵⁶ Ibid., p.42.

²⁵⁷ Joseph A. Massad, *Colonial Effects: The Making of National Identity in Jordan*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2001, p.213.

undertaken by the monarchy in order to strengthen its national basis and safeguard itself against the possibility of any Palestinian sentiment being harboured in the armed forces. After the civil war of 1970, the ruling elite was very mindful of not having any repetition of these calamitous events. By side lining the Palestinian population in the recruitment of the armed forces, the state was engineering a policy of selective enfranchisement. In the short term, it secured the support of the native East Bankers, but in the long term, it was to lead to the sense of exclusion and powerlessness on the part of the burgeoning Palestinian population. The armed forces are an integral part of national identity formation in Jordan today. A cohesive national identity is built on the cohesive incorporation of the armed forces and its projection as a Transjordanian institution.

Ever since its inception, the Arab Legion has played an important role in giving strength to the sense of a national Jordanian identity. Amongst its members, and through them to the rest of the society, the Arab legion helped to establish the rules of the game for the Jordanian nation state. The military was a central vehicle for the advancement of a new culture that was nationally defined and governed by the laws of the nation state. From music to clothes to food to the very tribalist values that the Jordanian culture came to represent, the role of the Jordanian army has been a central instrument in the formation of a national identity. This army served both to unify and to divide the people, commensurate with different strategies used by those who controlled it.²⁵⁸ As this analysis has demonstrated, the army permeated every nook and cranny of Jordanian life, such as playing a part in the musical tradition and the national dress of

²⁵⁸ Ibid., p.217.

the country and influencing its cuisine and its people. An example of the above is the bagpipe tradition that originated in the army and that the British bequeathed to Jordan. The red kuffiya is associated with native Jordanians (whereas the white is associated with Palestinians and their struggle), and the mansaf is the local food co-opted by the military as a marker of social differentiation.

Strongly identifying the Armed Forces with the Hashemite Kingdom, Arab nationalism and Islam became a continuous phrase in Hussein's public statements. In many instances, he spoke of the army being the symbolic head of Jordan and its defence forces, neatly aligning all the factors of Jordanian national identity.²⁵⁹

However the King included in this division the assertion that Jordan's armed forces serve the entire Arab people, asserting that their most important instruction is the defence of Arab freedom, Arab honour and Arab historical society.²⁶⁰

All of these different manifestations tie in very cleverly with the late king's public statements on the idea of Israel as a competitor, since it is the army that safeguards for the Arab nation the longest border with the Jewish State. These references to Israel were no longer made after the 1994 peace treaty, but the army continues to be understood by the current monarch, King Abdullah II as a manifestation of nationalism, national identity and Jordanian independence.

Change has been occurring in the army from 1988 onwards. Army personnel are now much better educated, and conscription has transformed the composition of the younger officer corps. Whereas older officers remain Bedouin in outlook, the younger officers

²⁵⁹ Ibid., Vol 3, p.254.

²⁶⁰ Speech before the 28th class of graduates of the General Staff College as broadcasted by Amman Radio 16 December 1987. Accessed on 14 August 2013.

are urbanites.²⁶¹ By building this social constituency in the enlarging towns and cities of Jordan, the army is building in the long term a loyal base of support amongst new generations of urban Jordanians. As a consequence of this, Jordanian national identity and its distinctively armed dimension have been inculcated into a new generation of armed officers.

Concomitant with the many changes and developments in the country's political life is that the very name of the army underwent a transformation. The Arab army was renamed in 1944; the name of its head as the chief of the Jordanian Arab Army was changed in 1947 to the chief of general staff of the Jordanian Arab Army.²⁶²

Since the late 1980s, the army of Jordan has been undergoing increasing professionalisation, and, in tandem with this, it is slowly beginning to lose its exclusive Bedouin character. As the authors Jureidini and McLaurin have highlighted, the late King Hussein's 'political legitimacy is accepted increasingly [in the military] for East Bank interests – the safeguarding of the interests of historical Transjordan and the Transjordanians. Economic issues are more important to tribesmen, including those in the army, while the role of the Hashemite kingdom is of less importance.'²⁶³

These tendencies and patterns of progress only increased over the course of the 1980s and into the 1990s. In 1980, for instance, the monarchy granted special places at Jordan's institutions of higher education (which are urgently sought after by the children of ordinary families who cannot get admission because of restricted

²⁶¹ Ibid., p.218.

²⁶² Ibid., p.219.

²⁶³ Paul A. Jureidini and R. D. McLaurin, *Jordan: The Impact of Social Change on the Role of the Tribes*, New York, Praeger, 1984, p.63.

²⁶⁴ King Hussein speech delivered on July 12, 1980, reproduced in Hattab, *AlThawrah*, p.200.

availability) and full bursaries to the children of army personnel whose parents served for more than a decade in the country's military forces.²⁶⁴ Furthermore, the financial role of the armed forces became more significant with the introduction of discounts, shops and commissaries for the sole use of military personnel. Indeed, as in the 1930s, the military's economic role is primarily one of maintaining the loyalty of its members. Now the thesis will examine the size, state and role of the Jordanian Armed forces in the society. According to the constitution of Jordan, the king and the council of ministers are responsible for both the internal and external security of the country. The chain of command between the armed forces and the state flows through the council. The King appoints the council itself and the final decision-making rests with him.²⁶⁵ Abdullah II is considered the supreme commander of the armed forces. The chief of staff is nominated by the prime minister, and is accountable to him only.²⁶⁶ Therefore, the king's power over all defence matters is wide-ranging. The armed forces' budget is passed by parliament; however, the members of the legislature are not allowed to scrutinise how any sum is to be spent.

This dependency on foreign aid helps the armed forces to remain independent of any constitutionally mandated oversight.²⁶⁷ As the foregoing paragraph has illustrated, the size, state and the role of the armed forces is fundamental to the governance and security of Jordan today. As demonstrated, the king has a very important and a strengthened role with wide-ranging powers to oversee the operation of the armed

²⁶⁴ King Hussein speech delivered on July 12, 1980, reproduced in Hattab, *AlThawrah*, p.200.

²⁶⁵ Nawaf Wasfi Tell, 'Jordanian security sector, governance: between theory and practice', paper presented at challenges of security sector in Middle East workshop (Geneva, 12-13 July 2004) p.17.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.18.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

forces. The foreign aid that is channelled to the Jordanian armed forces allows this institution to exercise a degree of autonomy vis-à-vis other state organs.

After examining the make-up of the Jordanian armed forces, the chapter will now analyse the role that the institution has played in identity formation in recent years. Jordan abolished the compulsory draft to the armed forces in 1992, four years after disengagement and since then, it has functioned as an all-volunteer army. After the king's purge from the armed forces of politicised members and those whose loyalty was suspect, namely the Palestinians, recruitment for the military focused on the East Bank tribes and the Bedouins.²⁶⁸

The Jordanian ruling family has adopted a specific strategy to maintain a mostly East Bank military to consolidate power and directly allocate patronage benefits through the state to royalist citizens. The loyalty of the armed forces to their monarch is not however fully secured; for the time being, however, it is safe to assume matters are in hand.

The Jordanian armed forces also serve an internal role of maintaining Jordanian identity, particularly in relation to Palestinians who are seen to have dubious loyalty.²⁶⁹

The military exists first to be loyal to the king, embodying the tangibility of Jordanian national identity. This fits in with the concept of a nation-building monarchy in which the king serves the important role of lynch pin above a multitude of tribal and regional identities. In short, the ruling family serves as a thread that holds a divided country together and projects a unitary Jordanian national identity.

²⁶⁸ Michael Herb, *All in the Family*, Albany, State university of New York Press, 1999.

²⁶⁹ Alexander Bligh 'The Jordanian Army: between domestic and external challenges', *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Volume 5, Number 2 (June 2002) pp. 13-20.

The above analysis has demonstrated that the monarchy has been mindful of cultivating continued support for the regime amongst the traditional bastion of the armed forces. The development of the national identity of Jordan since 1988 is therefore inextricably linked with the intimate and mutually dependent relationship that the royal family has with the country's armed forces. The analysis in this section has also demonstrated that the armed forces are an integral part of national identity formation and that their subservience to the monarchy has meant that the military tradition is synonymous with what it means to be a proud, upright Jordanian in the 21st century. The discourse of the Hashemite monarchy deliberately and in a methodical fashion employs a martial tradition to highlight the close bonds between the armed forces and what it means to be Jordanian, and it has made an impact on areas as diverse as food, clothing and social custom. While there is a close intimate bond between the armed forces and the East Bankers, the role of the Palestinian population in contemporary Jordan is a dimension that should not be overlooked, and this leads to the next section of this chapter.

Conclusion

To summarise, the armed forces have been and still are the main support base of the monarchy. In the expanded army, the most senior units and command structures remain predominantly tribal, and in situations of danger, these are entrusted to the close circle of the Hashemite family, with the King himself personally maintaining close ties to the elite infantry. Elsewhere in the armed forces, political dependence and steadfastness to the monarchy still make up the most important criteria. The king personally makes sure that promotions are used to celebrate and continue those ties of kinship. A very important feature of the superior tribal units is that their support comes from their business and personal interests; however, their effort in maintaining the Hashemite kingdom stems from their strongly held traditions and beliefs. There is a national

dedication in the armed forces that supersedes mere monetary expedience. The role of the Jordanian armed forces in the evolution and subsequent development of Jordanian national identity is critical. The armed forces has since disengagement been a crucial binding force that upholds an unswerving loyalty to tribal politics, the Arab nation and the Muslim faith of the majority population. In short, the armed forces continue to be a key constituent element in the formation of the modern Jordanian national identity.

3. The Palestinians and the Hashemite discourse

Introduction

The view of the monarchy is that the country developed in Jordan is a homogenous entity in which Jordanians and Palestinians made up one united family, a family that shared a common religion, language and culture. The conflicts of the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s between the two communities are no longer talked about and all are seen as equal citizens. The fact that most of its citizens are in fact of Palestinian origin was therefore not relevant to the monarchy. King Hussein used early Islamic terminology to explain the characteristics of the two communities and also the nature of their relationship: the Palestinians are the modern version of the muhajirun and the Jordanians are seen as the equivalent of the Ansar. Both are believed in Jordan today to have of equal significance to for consolidation of the modern Jordanian national identity.²⁷⁰

In Jordan, as in other countries, national as well as sub-national identities are in a state

²⁷⁰ Adnan Abo Odeh, international symposium, Paris, 25 June 1997.

of continuous adjustment, if not reconstruction. Therefore, answers to the questions of ‘who is a Jordanian?’ and ‘who is a Palestinian?’ or ‘what constitutes Jordanianess or Palestinianess?’ are different today from what they would have been five or ten years ago.

The presence of Palestinians in Jordan, who today probably comprise more than half the Jordanian population, dates to the 1948-1949 war, when more than 700,000 Palestinians were expelled or fled from their homes.²⁷¹ This is a controversy that has not been settled despite the passage of time. Israel insists the Palestinians left of their accord and voluntarily, and even maintain that the Arab armies compelled the Palestinians to vacate their land.²⁷² On the other hand, the Palestinians maintained they were forcibly evicted from their historical homeland at the point of a gun. The atrocity committed at Deir Yassin by the Zionist forces is cited as an example of pre-meditated ‘ethnic cleansing’. Some 700,000 went directly to the East Bank of the River Jordan, which at the time had an estimated, largely indigenous, Transjordanian population of about 45,000 people.²⁷³ In the 1950s, following the enactment of a series of preparatory administrative measures, Jordan’s King Abdullah I annexed part of central Palestine that is now known as the West Bank, which had not fallen to Israeli forces during the war of 1948. King Abdullah’s extension of Jordanian citizenship to all West Bank citizens (440,000 indigenous and 280,000 refugees from the areas that became Israel), as well as to the 70,000 who went directly to the East Bank, laid the formal political

²⁷¹ Jim Zanotti, ‘Palestinians: Background and U.S. relations’, Congressional Research Service, United States, January 8 2010, p.44

²⁷² Avi Plascov, *The Palestinian refugees in Jordan 1948-1967*, Frank Cass Publishers, London 1981 pp.10-16

²⁷³ Hal Marcovitz, *Creation of Modern Middle East Jordan*, Chelsea House Publishers, London 2009, pp. 39-41

basis for the unity of the two banks.²⁷⁴ The unification of the two banks of the River Jordan meant that the boundaries of interwar Jordan were enlarged to encompass a substantial population from the West Bank and the historical British mandate of Palestine. King Abdullah and the Jordanian elite now had to contend with a composite nationalism that embraced both the Bedouin and tribal elements of the East Bank, with the distinctively separate and unique Palestinian identity based on the population of Jerusalem and the West Bank. Henceforth, any Jordanian national identity would have to pay due recognition to the Palestinian component of a transformed and enlarged Jordan.

Since their mass arrival in 1948, there have been a number of important distinctions made between Palestinians in Jordan, which have evolved and intensified over the years. What underlies Palestinian identity in general is attachment to village or town of origin, a sense of loss of homeland and of gross injustice at the hands of the international community and the centrality of the notion of return. The constituent parts listed here go to make up the chief characteristics of the worldwide Palestinian diaspora. The notable elements here are a) that the key defining historical cataclysm was the Nakba of 1948, which was the key defining moment of dispossession, b) a sense of a community bound together by a grievous injustice and bonds that tie the community together in the shape of religion, ethnicity, language and land, and c) the notion of a homeland, imagined or real, a notion of a return to the homeland (i.e. the right of return, which the Palestinians are still hopeful of today), and a notion that this homeland is to be reconstituted and maintained by the Palestinian diaspora who live in

²⁷⁴ Laurie A. Band, Palestinians and Jordanians, A Crisis of Identity, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 24, Issue no 4, 1995, p.48

exile worldwide.

The analysis cannot be applied to the Palestinian population in Jordan. In this respect, there are three groups. The first group is the refugee camp dwellers who are 1948 or 1967 refugees. The sense of Palestinianess is stronger amongst members of this group, and this sense of being Palestinian as opposed to being Jordanian was kept alive until the late king Hussein's disengagement from the West Bank in July 1988. This first group of Palestinian identity was defined in part in opposition or in hostility to a Jordanian identity, although it should be noted that years of residence also made Jordan a home, but not necessarily the homeland.

A second group comprises the Palestinian middle class of small merchants and lower-level government employees. The sense of identity is strong, but as a group that has achieved certain economic success and integration, hostility to a Jordanian identity has been less pronounced, except for those who played some role in the Palestinian liberation movement. This second group has achieved a satisfactory level of socio-economic entitlement and a residual sense of attachment to Jordan as their adopted country and place of settlement, but it still aspires to a reconstituted independent Palestine. A sense of Palestinian identity is re-awakened during instances of invasion, unrest and flashpoints across the border. In summary, although Palestinian identity is latent and there is some attachment to Jordan as home, this group is nevertheless still aware of its distinctiveness and unique national characteristics.

A third group comprises those Palestinians who have achieved notable success in business. Following the fighting in 1970-1971, this Palestinian bourgeoisie appears to

have accepted political quiescence in exchange for the regime's provision of a stable atmosphere conducive to making money.²⁷⁵ This group is the one that is perhaps least susceptible to an emotional attachment to Palestine, since it is the one that is most successively integrated although not assimilated to the Jordanian state. Another way of looking at this is to note that this group would be the one most adversely affected by any radical change in the status quo. This group has the most to lose should the conflict with Israel reemerge again. So, due to the socio-economic benefits this group has accrued, it is the one that has reconciled itself most fully to a Jordanian national identity in the political sense; however, in a cultural sense, this group has also maintained a Palestinian identity.

During the 1990s, a lively debate over citizenship and national identity emerged in Jordan. The debate focused on how national identity determines the degree of citizenship of Jordan's two national groups: Transjordanians and Palestinian Jordanians. Transjordanians are descendants of the initial inhabitants of Jordan, as it was constituted at its creation in 1921. Palestinian Jordanians are the descendants of Palestinian Arabs who fled or were expelled from the parts of Palestine that became Israel, and those who simply remained on the West Bank after it was captured and annexed by Jordan in 1948.

The physical location in May 1948 of either east or west of the River Jordan marks the critical distinction between these two groups. However, since the war, through both internal and regional developments, these separate national identities have acquired

²⁷⁵ Ibid., p.49

lasting meaning.²⁷⁶

Like other multinational countries, Jordan struggles to adjudicate between the competing demands of national identity and the universal equality embodied in the modern concept of citizenship. In this struggle, two conceptions of Jordanian national identity underpin two opposing understandings of Jordanian citizenship. The dominant voice in this debate is that of Transjordanian nationalists, who assert the primacy of national identity and citizenship that Jordan is for Transjordanians. Palestinian Jordanians may be part of the national community only by suppressing all signs of public Palestinian identity. This nationalist formulation of the relationship between citizenship and national identity is increasingly countered by a pluralist vision, which claims that the political community is defined not by national identity, but by other bonds of solidarity, such as citizenship in the state. This second viewpoint puts forward a more flexible vision of Jordanian identity that includes Jordanians of all origins. This inclusive conception of citizenship is emerging through debates about the relationship between Jordanian citizenship and national identity, and is imagined explicitly by pluralists as a way for Jordan to address its identity divide.²⁷⁷

Despite this consensus on international identity, the national identity of Jordanians of Palestinian origin remains the most disruptive question in Jordanian politics.

Among the many issues that have been explicitly cast in communal terms are the privatisation of the state, electoral districts and electoral law, and press reporting. All these issues are overshadowed by the fear of resettlement. If the peace process is to end

²⁷⁶ Stefanie Nanes, Choice, Loyalty and the Melting Pot: Citizenship and National Identity in Jordan, *National and Ethnic Politics Journal*, No. 14, Taylor and Francis Publishers, 2008, p.86

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p.86.

with the final resettling of Palestinian refugees in Jordan, there would no longer be any justification for their exclusion from the centre of Jordan's political life, and the current distribution of power would be indefensible.

The rejection of resettlement encompasses both Transjordanians, who fear for their domestic power, and Palestinians, who fear for their right of return. This does not mean that all Palestinians would return, but rather they all demand the right of return.²⁷⁸ King Abdullah II has stated forcefully that even as Jordan strongly demands the right of return, no Jordanian national would be stripped of Jordanian citizenship because of the peace process. Nationalists in the Hashemite kingdom viewed this scenario as threatening to the Jordanian identity of the state.

The peace process seems to suggest the permanent integration of substantial numbers of Palestinian refugees in Jordan. All these factors point to an increased role for the Palestinian elite in the ruling coalition and a decreasing reliance on the Trans-Jordanian tribes. The future of Jordan's identity with regard to Palestinian-origin citizens remains the subject of intense political conflict. The Hashemite discourse on identity in the 1990s repeatedly called for full citizenship and the participation of all Jordanian citizens, which would imply a greater role for the Palestinian elite.²⁷⁹

The above analysis of the Hashemite monarchy and the Palestinian people who reside in Jordan has shown that over the course of time, especially since formal disengagement since 1988, Palestinian attachment to the Jordanian state has somewhat increased. This might be partly explained by Jordan renouncing its claim of the West

²⁷⁸ Telhami Shelby Michael Barnet, *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, Cornell University Press, 2002, p.47.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.48.

Bank, and also the burgeoning position of the Palestinian middle class that is prospering in Jordan.

Conclusion

It is reasonable to assume that if a Palestinian nation were to be established, it would have a special relationship with Jordan; however, the Jordanian national identity would continue to be the dominant one. The Palestinians in Jordan, despite being in the numerical majority, would have to accept this identity and to be reminded of their Palestinian roots. The only possible solution for this might be the time factor. Even today, the majority of Palestinians in Jordan were born in Jordan and not in Palestine. Some of them have parents and grandparents who are also natives of Jordan. Given the unfolding Arab spring, the next few years may further blur the differences and decrease inter communal mistrust. My personal understanding from my fieldwork is that a tacit understanding will develop between the two communities in which Palestinians will take charge of business affairs and native Jordanians will dominate the political institutions of the country.²⁸⁰

Despite these findings, the Palestinian narrative remains an important symbol in the modern politics of Jordan, and its relationship with Jordanian national identity will be discussed further in the following chapter.

²⁸⁰ Conversation with his excellence Abdul Salam al Majali.

4. Jordan First and the Hashemite discourse.

In October 2002, the government launched the Jordan First campaign. The campaign was intended to strengthen the foundations of a pragmatic, democratic state to emphasise the pre-eminence of Jordan's interests above all other considerations and to spread a culture of respect, tolerance and integrity and fortify the concepts of parliamentary democracy, the supremacy of the law, public freedom, accountability, transparency and equal opportunities.²⁸¹ The real intention was to encourage Jordanian national sentiment and therefore unity by re-focusing public attention on domestic issues at a time when it was diverted by the crises over Iraq to the east and Palestine to the west.²⁸² Jordan First was not merely a slogan raised or an objective uttered, but was presented rather as the strong link and efficacious bond that enwraps all Jordanian patriots, who see in their belonging to their homeland a gateway to their loyalty to their nation. The document called for a strengthening of democracy, personal liberties and press freedoms to achieve social justice, especially by reducing poverty and unemployment. It recommended reforms to improve the efficiency of the courts and reiterated the National Charter's call for the establishment of a constitutional court.²⁸³

The Jordan First campaign was the first initiative under King Abdullah II that had attempted to articulate a comprehensive vision of economic and political reform, although it leaned more strongly towards economic issues. Initiated by the king, the

²⁸¹ Paul Pasch and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, *Jordan First: The Dynamics of Development and Democratisation in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*, Abteilung Internationale Publishers, 2013, pp.1-5.

²⁸² Alan George, *Jordan Living in the Crossfire*, Zed Books Publishers, 2005, p50

²⁸³ Ibid.

initiative included the formation of a national committee to deal with different economic and social issues.²⁸⁴ The section on political reforms debated five issues, which were a) the possibility of establishing a constitutional court; b) drafting a new political parties law with the aim of ending the state of fragmentation among political parties by encouraging mergers between them; c) introducing a parliamentary quota for women; d) enacting anti-corruption measures; and lastly e) setting rules to cover relations between professional organisations and the state and society in general.²⁸⁵

Commentators described the slogan ‘Jordan First’ as a political vision that was an attempt to balance an uncompromising security with an agenda of policies cognisant of realities on the ground, namely image building and economic improvements. Jordan was sandwiched between two international conflicts that threatened to have repercussions within the Hashemite kingdom: one was the continuing Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, and the second was the change of regime in Iraq. Jordan wanted to distance itself from the effects of regional turbulence by stressing the centrality of its national interests via the notion of Jordan First and used a formula of virtual disengagement from regional affairs to concentrate on the national interest.²⁸⁶ Jordan First as a state policy was intended to put the interest of the country first and foremost, the intention being that any competing national identities as a minor reference to the Palestinian identity should all be subsumed under its overarching agenda.

²⁸⁵ Marwan Muashar, *A Decade of Struggling Reform Efforts in Jordan: The Resilience of the Rentier System*, Carnegie Papers, May 2011, p.7

²⁸⁶ Beverly Milton-Edwards and Peter Hinchcliffe, *Jordan: A Hashemite Legacy*, Routledge Publishers, London, 2001, p.65

An in-depth discussion of Jordan First is particularly pertinent to a discussion of the development of national identity in Jordan in the post 1988 period, forming the key defining area of study for this thesis. When looking at the development of national identity in Jordan, it can be seen that the Jordan First project was an initiative by the monarchy and the government to make their interests central to the future political development of the country and the surrounding region. The Jordanian government wanted to form a cohesive and loyal national identity by promoting a policy initiative that put Jordanian national interests, including geostrategic and socio economic interests, above all other concerns.²⁸⁷

Jordan First was used as a pretext in the national interest to crack down on popular manifestations of dissent, and was intended primarily to rally a sceptical public behind government policies on both Iraq and Palestine and to call on the Jordanian public to put aside their differences and unite around a common national identity. One Jordanian political analyst explains that the king's objectives were clear: the king wanted a stable internal situation, national unity, socio-economic development, to tackle poverty and unemployment, and to promote peace and national security.²⁸⁸

The most significant manifestation of the Jordan First campaign was the nationwide public relations campaign, with the logo appearing in national newspapers, and on billposters, label pins and bumper stickers. Other loyalties among the citizens of the Hashemite state were effectively to be subordinated to the Hashemite primacy. Inward looking, the campaign established patriotic jingoistic credentials in a state with an

²⁸⁷ Abu Hajla, Ameen Abdul-hadi Al Urdun Awalan, Athmat Al qeyada wa talahum al Umma 'Ammān: A. 'A. al-H. Abū Hajlah editors, 2003 pp.10-19

²⁸⁸ Milton Edwards, op. cit., p.65

already permanent Palestinian majority.²⁸⁹ The more attuned segments of the Palestinian majority saw through this attempt of the monarchy to side line Palestinian consciousness. The Palestinian intelligentsia may have interpreted this initiative as a rather feeble attempt to impose a unitary and one-dimensional identity onto a composite and heterogeneous nation-state.

The aim of the Jordan First campaign was not only to provide initiatives for the king to provide stronger bilateral relations, but also to repair the gap between Jordan and its main partners. Remarkably, in the era of the late King Hussein, liberalisation was the main concern at a time of domestic, regional and international crises. Even the security concerns in the regional and international spheres did not change the course of the domestic political liberalisation process. King Abdullah has emphasised the balance between the domestic and international constraints, which has increased the need to reinforce the domestic implications of the regime's own slogan, Jordan First.²⁹⁰

The need for a national campaign increases when domestic opposition continues to challenge the regime's decisions in both its domestic and foreign policies. To reduce the level of unpopular dissatisfaction, the regime promoted the national Jordan First campaign as a patriotic act to justify their decisions. The idea was that no Jordanian would oppose this campaign without appearing unpatriotic. The Jordan First campaign corresponded with the regime's dominating consensus that Jordanians belong only to Jordan and their loyalty should only be to the Hashemite monarchy. It was aimed to

²⁸⁹ Ibid. p.66

²⁹⁰ Mohammad Ali al Oudat and Ayman al Shboul, 'Jordan First': Tribalism, Nationalism and Legitimacy of Power in Jordan, *Intellectual Discourse*, 2010, Volume 18, Issue no 1, p.85

silence anyone who wanted to oppose the regime's policies.²⁹¹

The regime's security strategy under the Jordan First campaign did not bring stability, but encouraged more voices to oppose the policy together with more radical opposition movements. It also reflected the severe economic, social and political situation of the country, and led the regime to implement an International Monetary Fund programme, which made clear the vulnerability of the domestic and economic policies of the regime and its poor decision-making in the political economic sphere.

The Jordan First initiative has been used by the monarchy to silence any opposing forces that seek to chart a different future for the country, for example, those parties in Jordan that are Baathist orientated, socialist orientated or Islamist orientated that have had to deal with the Jordan First programme diplomatically. On one occasion, King Abdullah II went on record to announce:

‘The programmes, objectives, membership and financing of every party operating in Jordanian territory ought to be purely Jordanian ... In recent decades, Jordan has given priority to Arab interests and not to its national interests... We have a right to be concerned first for our own people, as every country in the world does, which is where our ‘Jordan First’ slogan comes from’.²⁹²

The notion of Jordan First has been described as a new basis for a comprehensive national effort to rediscover and reinvent the principles and values for which Jordan stands. This initiative vigorously aims to create a new relationship between the state and its citizens by setting parameters for a successful process of democratisation and the establishment of a free and independent public voice as essential steps towards

²⁹¹ Al ru'ya al Malakeya le wathqat al Urdun Awalan, Al noor magazine, dar al nur publishers, Amman, Jordan, p.45.

²⁹² Agence France Presse, 11 October 2002.

strengthening the national consensus. In this sense, Jordan First refers to the problems of the domestic and foreign policy of the Jordanian regime. While the slogan recommends a strong national consensus approach, it is used to emphasise and to direct attention to the foreign influences within Jordanian domestic politics. King Abdullah has criticised the weakness of the relationship between the people and formal institutions, especially the international ties of many Jordanian parties and their programmes that should be purely Jordanian, having as their first priority the national interest.²⁹³

Conclusion

This analysis has discussed the development of the concept of Jordan First in depth by clarifying the meaning of state power and the regime's survival strategies. It presumes that a new meaning of the concept of Jordan First as a national slogan is considered to be one of the main factors that has weakened traditional powers, and is a new beginning for the political liberalisation process. The underlying assumption is that individuals will begin to define themselves according to their personal achievements. Therefore, Jordan First as the regime's national slogan is an instrument of modernisation that heightens popular demand for the principle of personal achievement.²⁹⁴

To summarise this chapter, the analysis has demonstrated over four sections that the development of national identity with respect to the Hashemite discourse has engendered a clearly defined and coherent understanding of Jordanian national identity. First, with respect to the tribes of Jordan, the analysis demonstrated how tribal and

²⁹³ Ibid. p.86

²⁹⁴ Ibid. p.87.

Bedouin identity are integral to any modern concept of 'Jordanianess'. Although increasingly less relevant, the tribal makeup of Jordan for the foreseeable future will remain an important undercurrent of national identity. In relation to the armed forces, the analysis has demonstrated that from the conception of the state of Jordan through to its present history, the martial qualities represented by the armed forces are an integral and important component of the state's identity. The Palestinian analysis in this chapter has shown that this important population of the country is a cohesive and a counter force when it comes to national identity formation. In short, where the segments are not well integrated in Jordan in socio-economic terms, there is a greater likelihood that they will espouse a more pronounced Palestinian identity. With respect to Jordan First, this was a response by the monarchy to counter opposing views, but it is too early to determine whether the regime has been wholly successful in inculcating a strong sense of Jordanian identity in view of the effects on the country of the current Syrian situation, which is a scenario that is still unfolding.

In the following chapter some of the key issues identified in this chapter will be picked up and elaborated on in more depth. Specifically a detailed analysis will be undertaken of Jordanian-Palestinian relations and how they have impacted on the development of Jordanian national identity in the post disengagement period. When looking at the evolution of Jordanian identity in the modern period, a political analysis of the two nations is paramount for the thesis to make some original contribution to the field of international relations.

Chapter Three: Jordanian-Palestinian relations and their impact on identity formation in Jordan

Introduction

In recent years, Jordanian-Palestinian relations have received a great deal of academic attention – particularly in reference to literature in Middle Eastern Studies. Relations between the two countries came to a head after the Israeli state and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) signed the first Oslo Accord in 1993. Following this, it was hoped that the continuation of the peace process between the Israeli state and the PLO would lead to the formation of an independent Palestinian nation, one that is also separate and distinct from Jordan. Jordanian-Palestinian relations, however, still present a non-mediated subject in Jordanian politics. With these developments in the 1990s, the people of Jordan realised the need to re-negotiate relations between the two peoples.

This chapter will evaluate the relations between Jordanians and Palestinians and the impact that these have had on the formation of the Jordanian national identity, in particular during the period of post-disengagement. The first section of the main body of the present chapter will explore relations between Jordanians and Palestinians from 1937 to 1948. The second section will explore the dynamics of these relations from 1948 to 1967. The third section will analyse the relationship between Jordanians and Palestinians following the cataclysmic six-day war in 1967 until the Jordanian disengagement from the West Bank in 1988. The final section will discuss how relations between the two countries continue to frame and reframe the development of a contested Jordanian national identity in the contemporary period. The aim of this

chapter is to show in general terms how Jordanian identity is carefully intertwined with the increasingly assertive Palestinian identity. Due to the assertion of a distinct Palestinian identity, Jordanian national identity has been seen to harden.

I. Jordan's involvement and struggle for Palestine

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the mandated territory of Palestine were governed under the same British mandate. They were often treated by the British government as one undifferentiated colonial region, consisting of two banks divided by the river Jordan. The role of the emir in Palestine was put on a pedestal when the Peel Commission in 1937 put forward the idea of joining the Arab part of Palestine with Transjordan. This proposal was the first attempt to involve Transjordan as a separate entity in resolving the Palestine-Israel conflict.

After the partition plan, the British regime sought to put together a system of security alliances independently with each of the influential Arab countries. Under the new arrangement, Egypt, Iraq and Jordan were seen as completely independent and self-governing states. The British government sought to secure its strategic goals through expansion of King Abdullah bin Al Hussein of Jordan's kingdom to include parts of the Palestinian Mandate.²⁹⁵

Emir Abdullah's interest in Palestinian affairs can be examined as two distinct periods before and after 1937. During the years of King Abdullah's passivity towards Palestine, his involvement was only solicited occasionally through Britain's support for the

²⁹⁵ Avi Shlaim, *Collusion across the Jordan: King Abdullah, The Zionist movement, and the partition of Palestine*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1988, pp.130-131.

British policy but rarely by the Arab leadership. During this period, the group in Palestine that most assiduously built and maintained relations with Abdullah was the Jewish leadership. This was not because Jewish leaders thought Abdullah was influential in Palestine itself but rather because they helped to open up Transjordan to Jewish settlement or as an outlet for displaced Arabs of Palestine.²⁹⁶

These contacts, initiated by the Jewish agency, culminated when King Abdullah I concluded a deal with the Jews. However, the 1936-1939 Palestinian rebellion changed the situation dramatically in two ways. First, the Palestinian leadership began to lose its position as the chief mediator between the British government and the Palestinian Arab community. The strike and rebellion threatened to undermine the social hierarchy of Palestine, from which the nationalist elite had derived its original position of leadership. In a sense, the appeals of the Palestinian leadership to other Arab leaders to intervene in Palestinian affairs at this time can be seen as an effort to shore up a tottering social structure. On the other hand, Britain had lost confidence in the Palestinian nationalist elite as a mode of leadership through which Britain could ensure its own interests were promoted.²⁹⁷

The second way in which the Palestinian rebellion changed the circumstances in Palestine in Abdullah's favour was that it revealed the extent and depth of Arab opposition in Palestine and forced Britain to rethink its policy on Palestine.

The results of this rethinking were twofold: First, Britain came to the conclusion that the terms of the British mandate in Palestine could not be carried out within a unitary

²⁹⁶ Mary C. Wilson, 'King Abdullah and Palestine', *British Society for Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1987, Taylor & Francis Publishing, p. 39.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

state. Second, Britain needed to find a new intermediary in Palestine to replace the local nationalist elite. Britain turned to Emir Abdullah to govern Palestine, which was also an ally of Britain.

The British Royal Commission's 1937 report advocated the partition of Palestine between the Arabs and Jews, and suggested that Emir Abdullah rule the Arab part. Abdullah jumped at the chance and accepted the role. He was the only Arab leader to publicly support the partition of Palestine, for which he was roundly castigated throughout the Arab world.²⁹⁸ The Jewish Agency that had so assiduously cultivated Abdullah during the 1930s sought him out again soon after the end of the Second World War. Two meetings were held with the Jewish Agency in King Abdullah's residence in Shuna Valley in the Jordan Valley in August 1946. Rather than an act of betrayal, Abdullah would have regarded holding a dialogue with the third of the three main protagonists on the ground as nothing new and eminently sensible.²⁹⁹ The secrecy of the meeting, however, indicates that he knew that others would view it differently. It was unfortunate that Abdullah's sense of his own manifest destiny should have become the benchmark of Arab honour and principle.

The Shuna meetings went very much as the representatives of the Yishuv had expected. Both parties agreed in principle on the issue of territorial partition. Abdullah would preside over the Arab territory, which would be incorporated into his new established kingdom, preferably without conflict. Cementing the convergence of the interests of Abdullah and the Yishuv was their mutual antipathy towards the Mufti of Jerusalem,

²⁹⁸ Dr. Rory Miller, *Britain, Palestine and Empire: the Mandate years*, Ashgate Publishing Limited, Surrey, United Kingdom, 2010, p.120.

²⁹⁹ Eugene L. Rogan, *The war for Palestine: re-writing the history of 1948*, University of Cambridge Press, 2001, p.109.

Hajj Amin al Husseini, with whom both had become implacable enemies over the course of the preceding two decades.³⁰⁰

If partition was Abdullah's preferred policy and was fully in keeping with his Hashemite dynastic ideology of expansion and incorporation, his public diplomacy in the aftermath of the Shuna meetings was considerably less clear-cut. Hemmed in by the Arab consensus articulated and standardised by the recently established Arab League, and concerned about the propaganda of Arab nationalists in Palestine, Abdullah felt it expedient to formally deny the principle of partition.

The Palestinians, as their battle with Jewish organisations continued, became unable to defend their homeland before 1948, and Arabs were forced to become refugees and leave the lands of their ancestors. King Abdullah tried his best to reach agreement with the Jews by using his own diplomatic channels; he tried to bring peace to the region and take the Arabs' demands into consideration.³⁰¹ Furthermore, he offered the Jews proposals that would constitute the basis to reaching a lasting peace settlement. The main idea of these proposals can be summarised in the following four points:

- 1) Palestine would remain undivided, with limited freedom for the areas where the Jews were in a majority;
- 2) This arrangement would be affective for one calendar year, after which time the country would become a part of Transjordan;
- 3) There would be one assembly in which the Jewish people would be given approximately fifty percent of the seats;

³⁰⁰ Philip Robins, *A History of Jordan*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p.62.

³⁰¹ Hassan Afif al Hassan, *Israel or Palestine? Is the two state solution already dead? A political and Military history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict*, Algora Publishing, 2010, pp.141-143.

- 4) There would be one cabinet in which the Jews would be represented, although there was no mention of the precise percentage.³⁰²

At the 1939 London Conference of Jews and Arabs, Abdullah instructed his representative, Prime Minister Samir Al Rifai, not to break ranks with the other Arab participants. While welcoming the visit of the United Nations Special Committee to Palestine, despite its boycott of the Arabs in Palestine, Abdullah was again coy on the issue of partition.³⁰³

The massacre of a substantial number of unarmed villagers at Deir Yassin on 9 April 1948 by the extremist Jewish group, Irgun Zvi Leumi, greatly aided Abdullah's position. First, the outrage sparked an outflow of refugees and prompted increasingly impassioned appeals for him to intervene on behalf of the Arab population of Palestine. For Abdullah, the desperation of those on the ground meant that he was no longer the sole supporter as far as Palestine was concerned. Second, it made military inaction among the neighbouring government to Palestine much less tenable and, hence, hastened the emergence of a full-blown inter-state armed conflict.³⁰⁴

The first stage of the conflict lasted for one month, with 35,000 Jewish regular soldiers and conscripts, and around 21,500 Arabs troops, taking to the field. Abdullah's forces were well organised, well led and experienced. The Arab Legion moved into Palestine to take up positions in Jenin, Nablus and Ramallah, but was immediately faced with a dilemma posed by the Jewish forces' move on Jerusalem.

³⁰² Adnan Abo Odeh, *Jordanians, Palestinians and the Hashemite kingdom in the Middle East Peace Process*, Washington D.C, United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999, p.88.

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ Ibid. p.64

Having set out an explanation of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, the chapter will now explore the unification of the West Bank, which was referred to earlier in a previous chapter but will now be taken up again in greater detail. In the preceding paragraphs, I analysed events from 1937 to 1948. This analysis has shown that there was a very close relationship between King Abdullah I of Jordan and the Zionist leadership in British administered Palestine. Some scholars have even gone so far as to assert that there was collusion across the River Jordan between Arabs and Jews. It seems the aspirations of the Palestinian people for independence and statehood were sacrificed 'at the altar' of the Abdullah-Zionist alliance. In terms of the development of Jordanian nationalism post-1988, the analysis of the early history demonstrates a very intimate and close connection between the evolution of Jordan as a state and the Palestinian tragedy. No matter how much Jordan may today support the existence of an independent and sovereign Palestinian state, it is very difficult to deny that the country's early leadership colluded with the Zionist leadership to forestall the emergence of an independent Palestinian state. For Jordanian nationalism to fully evolve, it must either accept the existence of a parallel Palestinian nationalism or co-opt elements of the Palestinian narrative if it is not to offend its own Palestinian citizens.

The fraught relations between Abdullah bin Hussein and the Zionist movement hold a very unique place in the long and difficult history of Palestine. The two nationalist movements were in competition with one another for the possession of Palestine during the first half of the twentieth century. Hajj Amin al Husseini led the Palestinian people and Chaim Weizmann led the Jewish people, followed by David Ben-Gurion. Whereas the majority of the Arab countries supported the Palestine Arabs in their conflict with the Jewish state, Jordan's King Abdullah pursued a policy of working with the Zionist enemy. The Zionists aimed to obtain the support of the monarchs of the Arab states for

the Zionist state of Israel or to get them to at least deny their support for the Palestinian people. The general consensus of the Arab rulers, however, was for Palestine to remain within Arab hands and for the Jewish encroachment to cease.

Israeli foreign policy since 1948 has shown certain favour for the Hashemite kings of Jordan. After the assassination of King Abdullah I and the dashing of the hopes that the Egyptian revolution of 1952 would restore peace, the Hashemite option gradually came to an end with Israeli foreign policy. When Israel went to war in 1967 with the neighbouring states of Egypt, Jordan and Syria, even as the conflict was being conducted, both sides looked for an early peace settlement. After the war ended, the Israelis invited King Hussein – King Abdullah’s grandson – to look at options for an agreement. The ruling Labour party in Israel preferred the Jordanian option, which was for a peace settlement based on a territorial compromise, rather than a settlement with the Palestinians of the West Bank. Over the next decade, King Hussein met in secret with various senior Israeli figures, including Abba Ebon, Moshe Dayan, Yigal Alon, Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres.³⁰⁵ King Hussein met with Golda Meir ten times during her premiership. At all of these meetings, King Hussein told the Israelis that he was happy to have normal, peaceful relations with them provided that all of the territory that Israel had obtained over the course of the war was returned to Jordan. When the Likud ministers, led by Menachem Begin, rose to power in the late 1970s, there was no longer a basis for talking as they thought of Jordan as a Palestinian state and insisted on keeping the whole of the West Bank as an integral part of the state of Israel.³⁰⁶

³⁰⁵ Avi Shlaim, *Collusion across the Jordan*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1988, p.613.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.* p.623.

II. Jordanian-Palestinian relations after the Nakba and until the Six-Day War

At the end of 1948, realising that the West Bank was being held and controlled by Jordanian troops so that the Jordanian king could seize the territory, the Arab League moved to undermine this effort. The league established an all-Palestinian government in the Gaza strip, which was to be headed by the mufti of Jerusalem, the idea being that this body would be the legitimate representative government for all Palestinians. King Abdullah moved quickly to sabotage this move by organising a Palestinian legislature of his own supporters – this meeting was held in Amman on 1 October 1948. This congress did not accept the Gaza government and beseeched the king to take Arab Palestine under his wing and accord it security.³⁰⁷

The unification of the East and West Banks took place in the 1950s. The West Bank was placed under the military rule from 17 May 1948 until 2 November 1949.³⁰⁸

In the 1950s, the first election was held in both the East and West Banks; after the election took place, members of both the East Bank and West Bank parliaments met together with a Jordanian assembly and made an announcement, an excerpt of which is given below:

1. To confirm the unification of both the East and West Bank in one state called the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and having King Abdullah I elected as King and ruled by a constitutional representative assembly, where all citizens are

³⁰⁷ Abdullah ibn Hussein, *Memoirs of King Abdullah of Transjordan*, London, Oxford University Press, 1950, p.15

³⁰⁸ Rajah Shadeh, *From Occupation to Interim Accord: Israel and the Palestinian Territories*, Kluwer Law International, The Hague, 1997, p. 78.

treated equally.

2. When the unification took place, the military and security institutions were fully Transjordanian.
3. To affirm the safeguarding of all Arab rights in Palestine, and the defence of all rights by all means without prejudice to the final settlement of a just cause.
4. To refer this resolution to King Abdullah I for approval.
5. This resolution shall be confirmed when King Abdullah I endorses it.³⁰⁹

Following the unification of the West Bank with the East Bank, Jordan proposed to bring into being a Transjordanian identity incorporating East Bankers and West Bankers, and Palestinian and tribal Bedouin elements into one unifying state. The purpose of this exercise and how it affected the development of Jordanian nationalism needs to be carefully understood.

As far as King Hussein and Jordan were concerned, matters were deliberately engineered to dilute the specific and distinct Palestinian national identity, since this was viewed in conservative quarters as a direct threat to a specifically Jordanian discourse and the paramount position of the Hashemite monarchy. Jordan benefited from an expansion of the territory under its control but it distrusted the Palestinian narrative rooted in the West Bank. For the Jordanian national discourse, it was imperative that the Palestinian identity be subsumed under a larger and more overarching Jordanian national identity.

³⁰⁹ Ibid. p.79.

Another important challenge, as far as Jordanian identity is concerned, that the country had to confront after unification was how to lessen the differences between the two peoples that had two separate identities so as to bring them together under a single flag. Jordanians and Palestinians had different views of each other, needing time to accept each other in order to peacefully live together in one society. Palestinians tended to see Jordan as an occupying power, maintaining that Jordan, like the other Arab countries, had failed to come to their aid.³¹⁰ In contrast, Jordanians saw Palestinians as more educated and Western-leaning. They believed that the Arab Legion had fought in Palestine to defend the Palestinians because they had refused to fight for themselves.³¹¹ Many Palestinians and Arab refugees in Jordan in particular, propelled by the Arab leaders, blamed the Jordanian king for their defeat by the Zionists. As a result of this, the refugees held the king responsible for their misery. Lastly, however, some Palestinians viewed the king as the protector of their homes and towns in the West Bank.

To summarise, the annexation of the West Bank and its incorporation into Jordan subsumed a specifically Palestinian expression of identity into the interests of a more overarching and inclusive Transjordanian narrative. Until 1988 and disengagement, the official position in Jordan was that the West Bank was an integral part of an enlarged and all-inclusive Jordanian national state.

As a result of the Arab states coming together in a federation, and also because of them not being able to reclaim Palestine, a large number of Palestinians in Jordan looked closely at the distinct policy of not only integration but assimilation as well. One

³¹⁰ Abu-Odeh, op. cit., p.57

³¹¹ Ibid.

Palestinian refugee by the name of Yasser Arafat never believed Arab unity was the road to the liberation of Palestine. He was convinced of the opposite – where liberation of Palestine would lead to Arab unity.³¹²

The path to the liberation of Palestine, as Arafat understood it, was the mobilisation and armed struggle of the Palestinians themselves. Arafat's idea of Palestinian self-help and of a specifically Palestinian identity posed a threat to King Hussein's Jordanian national identity.³¹³ The monarch, with his Palestinian majority, would not adopt a Palestinian identity but was determined to maintain Jordanian national identity. Egypt took everybody by surprise when, in 1963, it proposed the establishment of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation. The responsibility for organising the PLO was put into the hands of Ahmad Al Shuqairi. The setting up of the PLO under nominal Egyptian supervision was seen as a challenge to Jordan's sovereignty over its Palestinian citizens. For King Hussein, any challenge to the regime's slogan of 'one Jordanian family composed of Trans-Jordanians and Palestinians' was seen as a direct challenge to the rule of King Hussein in Jordan and to the development of a specifically Jordanian national identity.³¹⁴

When Arafat and the Al Fatah party began to carry out infiltration raids from Jordanian territories into Israeli grounds, this complicated Hussein's relationship with his Palestinian subjects. King Hussein feared that Palestinian operations from his territory would lead to Israeli reprisal operations against his kingdom. On the other hand,

³¹² Y. Harkabi, *Fedayeen Action and Arab Strategy*, Institute for Strategic Studies, London, 1968, pp. 8-11.

³¹³ Asad Ghanem, *Palestinian Politics After Arafat: A failed national movement*, Indiana University Press, 2010, p. 145.

³¹⁴ Malcolm Hooper Kerr. *The Arab Cold War: Gamal 'Abd Al-Nasir and His Rivals, 1958-70*, Oxford University Press, 1972, pp.127-136.

Hussein had to be careful not to antagonise Palestinian public opinion in his kingdom by restricting the activity of the PLO. In the final analysis, the danger of the Israeli reprisals seemed greater. Hussein was stuck between a rock and a hard place and decided to clamp down on Fatah.³¹⁵

In terms of the analysis of the above and the development of Jordanian nationalism in the modern period with reference to the issue of Palestine, this tortured relationship with the PLO did not bode well for the evolution of a clearly defined and widely accepted Jordanian national identity. With Fatah's activity being seen as a direct threat to the integrity of Jordan, the monarchy was obliged to both placate Palestinian opinion and appear to defend Palestinian interests at a regional level. Jordanian nationalism ultimately had to stand proud in serving Jordanian interests primarily, part of which was to look after its Palestinian residents and stand shoulder to shoulder with Palestinians in their struggle. Jordanian nationalism also had to be cognisant of specifically Jordanian geo-strategic interests, which dictated that the struggle with Israel should not jeopardise the wellbeing of Jordan and its citizens.

The Palestinian relationship has always been difficult. In many ways, the relationship can be categorised as being a sour one. The Hashemite kingdom of Jordan took over the West Bank of Palestine during the Arab-Israeli war of 1948 and formally annexed it in 1951. This annexation was contrary to the wishes of the Palestinians and was not recognised by the international community. King Abdullah I, the grandfather of King Hussein, dreamt of being a monarch over a large kingdom consisting of Jordan, Palestine and Syria. While the financially better West Bank became a part of Jordan,

³¹⁵ *Fatah* is an Arabic word meaning 'conquest'. The three letters (f-t-h) in reverse are also an acronym of the movement for the liberation of Palestine ('*harakat tahrir falstine*').

the Gaza Strip came under Egyptian administration. These two areas were occupied by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War.

Between 1948 and 1967, the Palestinians were not treated well by Jordan. While those on the East Bank of the River Jordan experienced some prosperity, the West Bank Palestinians suffered. After the armistice line was agreed between the frontline Arab countries and Israel in 1949, the Palestinians had to accept much hardship. To the surprise of many, the Jordanian authorities worked in a way that helped Israel. It is to be noted that during this period, a number of Arab countries looked upon the Palestinians with some anxiety.

Jordan has been more afraid of the Palestinians than any other Arab group, since it has a 600-km border with Israel. Palestinians make up 60 per cent of the Jordanian population. According to a 1980 statistical document, there were 1,148,334 Palestinians at that time. Jordan tried to hold on to its pre-1967 leadership in the West Bank – the traditional leadership system was maintained in order to avoid any radical change in the area. The status quo, however, changed with the covert formation of Yasser Arafat's al Fatah movement between 1958 and 1964. The Palestine Arab Congress in Jerusalem was held under the oversight of Jordan and Egypt and the official PLO was established in 1964. This was an endeavour on the part of these Arab countries to contend with the Israeli project to divert the water of the Jordan River.³¹⁶

Al Fatah began its resistance war in January 1965: three important events helped the expansion of the Palestinian movement in Jordan. The first event was the Samu raid in

³¹⁶ Mahmoud Hussein, PLO-Jordan relations, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 21, No. 37, 1986, p.1632.

1966 as soon as the guerrillas became active from Jordanian territory against Israel; the latter attacked the Palestinian base in Israel in November 1966. The Palestinians and Jordanians came together to represent the Palestinian resistance fighters. This action led to demands to arm the fighters properly. The continuing guerrilla attacks on Israel was one of the reasons for the Israeli attack in 1967.³¹⁷

The second event was the defeat of the Arab armies in the 1967 war, which resulted in an increase in Palestinian guerrilla activity from Jordan. As the Arab armies retreated, the Palestinian fighters seized the left-over arms and began their guerrilla campaign. The Palestinian guerrilla then launched a guerrilla war.

The third event was the attack by the Israelis on the Palestinian base: a famous battle called the Karamah battle was fought between the Palestinians and the Israeli armed forces. The poorly armed resistance fighters not only fought back well against the sophisticated Israeli army but also captured their tanks. Seeing the victory of the resistance movement against the Israelis, King Hussein was photographed on one of the captured tanks with the guerrillas saying 'Jordanians and Fedayeen are brothers'.³¹⁸

As the preceding account has demonstrated, in the period from the first half of the twentieth century until the Six-Day War of 1967, Palestinians in Jordan were treated poorly. As my discussion of the pre-1948 situation has demonstrated, and, as Avi Shlaim has convincingly argued, King Abdullah actively sought to prevent the emergence of a specific geopolitical entity in the West Bank; this double-dealing by the monarch did not win him confidence or trust among his Palestinian subjects.

³¹⁷ John W. Amos, *Palestinian Resistance: organization of a nationalist movement*, Permagon Press, United States, 1980, p. 39.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

This troubled relationship between the two neighbouring countries, which originated at the beginning of the twentieth century, demonstrates the inherent contradictions and dichotomy between the nationalities, which triggered such identity crises and marred relations between Jordanians and Palestinians in the Hashemite kingdom. Since disengagement in 1988, the difficulty of reconciling Jordanians and Palestinians within one national identity has meant perplexing contortions for the original Jordanian national identity.

The events of the early twentieth century are remembered by successive generations of Jordanians and Palestinians. History informs national identity today in Jordan and is a narrative that feeds into the ongoing debate on who is Jordanian.

III. Jordanian-Palestinian relations from the Six Day War until the 1985 Agreement

The June war of 1967 changed the character of the Arab-Israeli conflict more than commentators at the time thought it would. When the war was over, Israel controlled all of the land of historical Palestine in addition to the Syrian Golan Heights and Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. Jordan was the country that suffered most, having lost the West Bank; Egypt and Syria were not necessarily broken in half like Jordan. During a visit to a number of Arab countries towards the end of 1967, King Hussein maintained that Egypt and Syria would be compensated for their losses while the loss of the West Bank jeopardised Jordan's very existence.³¹⁹

³¹⁹ *Nahar* newspaper, Beirut, 29 August 1967. For more on the June war of 1967 and Jordan's role, see

King Hussein felt an urgent obligation to restore the West Bank to Arab control and, in particular, Jordanian control. Jordan was under a great deal of pressure to reach a settlement with Israel in order to win back the West Bank. The 1967 war and the immediate creation of the Arab League of Nations did not remove the old divisions and disagreements between the Arab countries. These differences were exacerbated by further splits between those Arab states, which saw armed resistance as the only way to restore the occupied territories and forever remove the disgrace suffered by the Arabs at the hands of the Israelis and those who sought a diplomatic solution.³²⁰

Meanwhile, on one side, the Israelis insisted on having Jordan as a negotiating partner and rejected the creation of a future Palestinian state comprised of the West Bank and Gaza. On the other, the majority of Arab countries insisted on the inclusion of the PLO in the peace talks and in determining the future status of the West Bank and Gaza, where they demanded the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

The PLO strategy helped to postpone the immediate clash with Jordan. Until the early 1970s, the PLO had not spelt out its final position towards the Jordanian-Palestinian partnership. But the head of the PLO, Ahmad Shukairi, saw the eventual break-off from the territory of Jordan as a central PLO objective.³²¹ Breaking away remained the undeclared view of a number of Palestinian groups and that of the PLO throughout its first ten years, reinforced by the PLO's grand strategy of liberating all of Palestine.³²²

Walter Lacqueur, *The road to war: the 1967 war*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968; Samir Mutawi, *Jordan in the 1967 war*, Cambridge University Press, 1987.

³²⁰ *Middle East Record* (1967), New York, Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1978, p.263. For more on this split, see Adid Dawisha, *The Arab radicals*, New York, Council on Foreign Relations, 1986.

³²¹ Shukairi en al Qima ela al –Hazima, pp.45-55; PLO, Palestinian national charter, articles 2-5 and 8-11.

³²² See the Palestine national charter and official PLO communiqués; the Palestinian documents, Beirut,

This action plan allowed Jordan and the PLO to co-exist as it was at least theoretically possible for the two roles to be compatible: Jordan's responsibility was limited to the West Bank and to sectors of its Palestinian population, while the PLO pushed for a more general objective – the liberation of historical Palestine. This Palestinian goal of all or nothing with Israel provided Jordan with the practical basis on which to retain its union with the West Bank. The act of unity of 1950 between Jordan and the West Bank categorically stated that the Palestinians should be allowed to exercise their national self-determination once Palestine was restored to Arab control. But the Jordanian-PLO honeymoon period was soon to disintegrate under the pressure of competing interests. In the 1970s, King Hussein tried to dilute the Palestinian identity by suggesting that the West Bankers could be 'part and parcel' of the Jordanian state and society. Jordan tried to maintain its control over the West Bank through placing its teachers in the education system and through the religious leaders employed by Jordan in the Awqaf administration.³²³

While this was taking place, the PLO succeeded in gaining both regional and international recognition, at least to the extent of reviving a Palestinian nationalism as opposed to a Jordanian national identity in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The West Bank, in particular, did not wholly endorse the Jordanian military rule but publicly supported the PLO.

Over the course of the 1970s, the Palestinian movement managed to rally the Arab and Muslim worlds behind the PLO and its claim to exclusively negotiate over the future of

the Palestine Research Centre, 1966-1969; Shukairi, *Liberation Not Negotiations*, Beirut, Palestine Research Centre 1966.

³²³ Ibrahim Dakkak, 'Back to Square One: A study in the re-emergence of the Palestinian identity in the West Bank, 1967-1980', in A Schlock (ed.), *Palestinians over the Green Line*, London, 1983, pp.71-75.

the West Bank and Gaza. In October 1974 in Morocco, the PLO was recognised by the Arab countries as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian struggle.

Within the Jordanian government, these developments generated a group favouring separation from the West Bank, and the members of this lobby believed that it would be possible to demand that Palestinians living in the East Bank give up their 'dual identity' if they wished to remain full citizens of Jordan.³²⁴ This proposal of disengaging from the West Bank would be adopted by Hussein twelve years later.

The king would make his decision of renunciation in 1988, only after being convinced that the West Bank was lost.

Across the Atlantic in the United States at this point in time, President Carter began to use terms such as 'homeland' for the Palestinians, but he failed to mention any Jordanian connection with the West Bank, and he talked of Palestinian rights wherever they lived, implying those living in Jordan as well.

After the defeat of the 1967 war and the loss of East Jerusalem and the West Bank to Israel, the PLO came to be seen as the sole representative of the Palestinian cause, and, with the Arab states defeated, the Palestinians came to recognise that their salvation lay not in the United Arab war front, but with the struggle for statehood resting firmly in the hands of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation. Although the monarchy and the government in Jordan were not pleased with the greater prominence of the PLO, King Hussein had to concede that within Jordan and the Jordanian claims over the West Bank, there resided a distinct and categorical Palestinian voice. The sum of all of this

³²⁴ Robert Day, *East Bank /West Bank: Jordan and the prospects for Peace*, Washington, 1986, p.24; Peter Gubser, *Jordan: Crossroads of Middle Eastern Events*, Boulder, 1982, p.110.

and its relevancy to this thesis lies in the analysis that the formation of a Jordanian national identity was beholden to a resurgent Palestinian identity. Hussein and Amman had to decide early on whether they should try to co-opt and smother the Palestinian voice or look at a tentative Palestinian narrative separate from the unfolding and possibly unravelling Jordanian national identity in the 1970s. This vexed question was to bedevil Jordan's national identity, even more so given that the country east of the River Jordan had a substantial Palestinian diaspora in residence.

Towards the end of the 1970s, King Hussein entered into reconciliation with the PLO after severing these ties in the wake of 'Black September' in the early 1970s. Hussein publically announced his recognition of Palestinian rights to self-determination and his opposition to the Camp David Accord. This was followed in the spring of 1981 by a statement issued by Adnan Abo Odeh, Jordan's Minister of Information, that 'King Hussein has said on numerous occasions that Jordan will not act as a substitute for the PLO but rather as a source of support for it.'³²⁵

At the same time that Hussein was leading his country with better relations with the PLO, he also tried but failed to undermine the PLO's position in the West Bank. Throughout the 1970s, Hussein was very worried about Israel's design plans vis-à-vis the West Bank. When Egypt and Israel wanted to invite Hussein to the Camp David Accord to discuss Palestinian autonomy, Hussein realised this for what it was. In short, the Israeli version of autonomy was alarmingly close to annexation, and the king referred to this situation more than once as being very dangerous for Jordan. There was a danger that this line of events could lead to the transfer of the Palestinians to the East

³²⁵ Adnan Abo Odeh, 'Jordan and the Middle East Crises', *A Foreign Policy and Defence Review*, 3, 1981, pp.12-13.

Bank, and to demands to return this region to Palestine.

Hussein became more active in West Bank affairs after the Israeli invasion of 1982.

Many commentators saw his support of the PLO war effort in Lebanon as a move aimed at placating the Palestinian radicals in Jordan.³²⁶

The analysis will now move to the Reagan Peace Plan of 1982. On the day that the last PLO fighter left Beirut, President Reagan revived the Jordanian option by proposing self-government for Gaza and the West Bank in a federation with Jordan. As expected, Jordan reacted favourably.

On 1 April 1983, the PLO accepted a solution based on a Jordanian-Palestinian federation. The PLO executive committee, however, did not accept the plan that implied the recognition of Israel's and Jordan's right to the West Bank.

In the end, the dialogue between the PLO and the Jordanian government broke down because of internal opposition within the PLO. For some of the PLO factions, reconciliation with Jordan was almost as difficult as accepting the existence of the Jewish state. The mistrust between the Palestinians and Jordanians was ultimately stronger than the will to change.³²⁷

The outbreak of the intifada in December 1987 hastened King Hussein's decision to renounce his connection with the West Bank. Crown Prince Hassan and others had already made up their minds to do so in the mid-1970s. The inevitable speech came in July 1988 when Hussein relinquished any ostensible link with the West Bank. In the final analysis, only history will tell whether this was a dramatic change in government

³²⁶ Emile F. Sahliyeh, *The PLO after the Lebanon War*, London, 1986, pp.115-138.

³²⁷ Klein Menackhen, *Antagonistic Collaboration: PLO-Jordanian dialogue 1985-1988*, Jerusalem, David Institute Publication, 1988, p.85.

policy or just another change of heart on the part of a very pragmatic monarch.

Temporarily distancing himself from the explosive intifada was, in the minds of many commentators, a very sensible move on the part of the autocrat.

The preceding analysis has shown that between 1967 and 1985, the Palestinian-Jordanian relationship fluctuated immensely. On the Palestinian side, the 1967 defeat meant that the Palestinians would have to fight for their independence, which meant a more sharply delineated Palestinian identity was necessary to offset any Jordanian-Palestinian partnership or scheme for federation. On the Jordanian side, despite wanting a greater sphere of influence for Jordan encompassing the West Bank, there now had to be recognition on the part of King Hussein that a Palestinian identity would forever remain strong. Coming to terms with the Palestinian identity and the notion of a Palestinian state centred on the West Bank and the Gaza strip with Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state meant that Jordanian national identity had to take a diametrically opposed stance of a Jordanian identity rooted in the East Bank, marked off distinctly from the Palestinian struggle for independence.

IV. The Agreement between King Hussein and Yasser Arafat

King Hussein did his best to reach a political solution with Israel under international auspices, based on the principle of the exchange of land for peace, as embodied in UN Resolution 242, after the Six-Day War. However, the king's efforts were thwarted by the rise of the PLO and its internationally recognised position as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. During the 1970s, the main body of the PLO, led by Fatah's Arafat, had in fact directed the political process by emphasising diplomacy rather than military tactics. Such a trend facilitated its recognition by the international community

for representing the Palestinian population. Sadly, however, the PLO's goals were frustrated by the Israelis in their refusal to talk to the Palestinians.³²⁸

The relations between the two nations were critical for the definition of the Jordanian identity that both demarcated itself from a more acutely defined Palestinian identity and at the same time sponsored the Palestinian cause as a pan-Arab initiative in which Jordan's role was both instrumental and key.

The Amman Accord between Hussein and Arafat included the following foundations and principles:

1 - Land for peace, as stated in the United Nation's agreements, including the Security Council resolutions.

2 - The right to self-determination. The people of Jordan and Palestine moved forward to realise the above within the framework of the pan-Arab system that was supposed to have been established between the two countries.

3 - Talks within the framework of an international gathering under the auspices of the United Nations; this consisted of five permanent members of the Security Council and all of the different groups who were part of the conflict, including the PLO.³²⁹

In its principles and fundamental terms, the Jordanian-Palestinian agreement embodied, from the king's point of view, the rules and principles that govern the relations between the two peoples in terms of the equality of their rights and their duties in facing their single joint destiny.

³²⁸ Alain Gresh, *PLO - The struggle within - Towards an independent Palestinian state*, London, Zed Books.

³²⁹ The text of the Hussein-Arafat agreement is given in Harold Sanders, 'An Israeli Palestinian Peace', *Foreign Affairs Journal*, Fall edition, 1982, p.179.

Its importance was manifested in the Arab move regarding a peaceful settlement based on the principles of Arab peace, and in the wide impact it had on the international awareness of the cause of peace, paving the way for the participation of the PLO in the International Peace Conference, represented by a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. The US condition for opening dialogue with the PLO required the latter to declare its recognition of Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 and to be ready to enter negotiations in order to achieve peace with the Israeli government within the International Conference and to condemn terrorism. On this basis, the organisation could be involved in the peaceful settlement efforts and was invited to attend the conference as part of the joint delegation.

On January 25, 1986, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat arrived in Amman at the head of a delegation from the Palestinian leadership, and held four extended meetings with the Jordanian side, three of which were chaired by King Hussein, during which they discussed the US pledge of inviting the PLO to the conference and the PLO's position regarding the pledge.

However, after all the efforts by Jordan to involve the organisation in the peace process, the PLO leadership refused to accept resolution 242 and called for the amendment of the proposed wording of the resolution, and the addition of a statement that refers to the open recognition by the US of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination within the confederate union between Jordan and Palestine.

On February 5, 1986, the American side put forward a new version that included the approval of an international agreement on the basis of resolution 242, and the safeguarding of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. Jordan informed Arafat

about the American recommendations with regard to the wider peace process, and this was thus considered to be progress in the US policy to push towards peace. However, the PLO was dissatisfied as it viewed the US recognition as not covering the Palestinians' right to self-determination.

Arafat left Amman on February 7, persisting in his position and the reasons which led him to refuse to accept the international decision, putting an end to the Jordanian-Palestinian dialogue and the suspension of the coordination.³³⁰

On July 7, 1986, the Jordanian government closed all of the PLO's offices. On April 10, 1987, the Palestinian National Council cancelled the Amman Accord, which increased the anger of the Jordanian leadership and deepened its distrust of the organisation's leadership.

In November 1987, Arafat visited Jordan to attend the reconciliation and agreement conference; the king, however, was not there to meet him like he had met the other Arab leaders who came before him but instead sent Prime Minister Zeid Rifai to receive him. This incident made Arafat's resentful and made him consider for a moment returning to where he had come from, but his advisers convinced him to ignore what had happened for fear of exacerbating the problems and further straining Jordanian-Palestinian relations.³³¹

This demonstrates that Jordan's relationship with the Palestinians was somewhat strained during the events leading up to its disengagement in 1988. As my analysis of the negotiations has shown, Arafat and the leadership of the PLO did not like working

³³⁰ ali al safadi, *mushahadat men ahed al hussein al bani*, Jordan Central Press, Amman, Jordan, 2013, p.124

³³¹ Abu al Shareef Bassam, *Yasser Arafat Riyadh al rayyes lil kutub wa al nasher*, Beirut, 2005, p.218.

under the terms and conditions proposed by King Hussein and his government at the time.

The United States was instrumental in bringing the two sides together to resolve their differences. This section of the thesis has also demonstrated the intricate and complex politics that went into bringing the two sides together. For the larger purpose of the thesis, it was important to recount the preceding events in order to assess how they affected national identity in Jordan. For disengagement to happen in 1988, these preceding negotiations were important to ensure that King Hussein no longer had administrative control over the West Bank. In looking to disengage from the West Bank, King Hussein was saying to his people that the Jordanian identity was primarily rooted in the East Bank and was distinct from that of the Palestinians west of the River Jordan.

V. Dismantling legal and administrative links with the West Bank

The failure of the 1985 Amman Accord did not affect the relations between the two peoples for very long. Jordan continued to maintain its contacts and administrative support for the Palestinians in the West Bank. King Hussein tried his best to express his concerns and worries about the hardships of the Palestinian people living under Israeli occupation. Furthermore, he kept the Palestinian people updated on political developments regarding the Palestinian territory and people, and Jordan continued to try to solve the Palestinians' deepest problems by attempting to secure Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories. The king wanted to make clear to the Palestinians that they were the real negotiators in their fight for independence and to reassure them that Jordan would continue to support them.

Israel tried to exploit the Jordanian-PLO agreement by encouraging the Palestinians to leave the leadership of the PLO. In response to this, Jordan launched a five-year development plan to boost the financial position of the occupied territories, as well as decrease their dependency on the Israeli economy. The main purpose of this economic agreement was to give the Palestinians political manoeuvrability. Important Palestinian leaders such as Elias Freig and Al Shawwa pushed the Palestinian people to pay tribute to and express gratitude for Jordan's leadership:

‘We breathe through Jordan; it is our gate to the Arab world ... the West Bank is totally dependent on Jordan economically, politically, geographically and psychologically.’³³²

The most important development that undermined Jordan's long-standing view of the West Bank as part of the Hashemite kingdom was the start of the intifada. According to my conversation with Adnan Abo Odeh, the late King Hussein's political advisor, who is of Palestinian origin, the Palestinian retaliation was a watershed moment in Jordan's relationship with the Palestinian people. It demonstrated that the Palestinians who were looking for self-determination understood his comments to clearly mean that the king favoured Palestinian independence.³³³ Building on this analysis, the intifada represented a huge swathe of Palestinian opinion living under Israeli occupation that shifted the focus of their activity away from the PLO to the occupied territories. This was also key to demonstrating that the intifada would play an important role in the debate over the future of Palestine. It upset Jordan that after a 20-year struggle between the Hashemites and the PLO as to who would represent the Palestinians in the occupied

³³² Petra (Jordan News Agency), February, 1988.

³³³ Interview with Adnan Abo Odeh, Amman, August, 2013.

territories, it was now clear that the Palestinians wanted to speak for themselves. Therefore, the centre of gravity of the Palestinian struggle for freedom, which before had moved between Damascus, Amman, Beirut and Tunis, now shifted to Gaza, Nablus and Jerusalem and to the hundreds of previously anonymous villages and refugee camps in the occupied territories. The intifada, although directed against the Israeli occupation, raised serious questions about the wisdom of Jordan's continued political and financial investment in the West Bank.³³⁴

The uprising of the Arab people in the occupied Palestinian territories against the Israeli occupation, which started at the beginning of 1988, was the biggest event around which the official Arab policies revolved, and a forum was set up to defend the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people for freedom, independence and self-determination.

An emergency Arab summit to discuss the implications was held in Algeria on June 7, 1988, to address the consequences of that event, which King Hussein, in his documentary statement at the conference, qualified as the most important historic event in the evolution of the Palestinian cause since 1948. The king considered his statement as the clearest possible pronouncement on the relationship between settler colonialism, which inverts the course of history as represented by the Zionist ideology that refuses withdrawal and self-determination in conformity with history and which is embodied by the Arabs of Palestine in their struggle against the occupying coloniser.

King Hussein also described the uprising as being not only an event but also the ultimate beacon for the Palestinian struggle. It was even the shining light of the

³³⁴ William B. Quandt (ed.) *The Middle East: Ten Years After Camp David*, pp.185-187.

Palestinian struggle. It was indeed the shining light in a series of consecutive events that forged the Palestinian cause over more than 70 years, making it what it is today. King Hussein also demonstrated that the state of Jordan, from its institution in 1921 to the present day, has accompanied the Palestinian cause and has interacted with and been influenced by it; this accompaniment helped to consolidate the unity between Jordan and the West Bank in April 1950.

This accompaniment has gone through two periods: the first one being prior to the June 1967 war, and the second being the post-war period.³³⁵

King Hussein made clear that if, at the present time, the wishes of the representatives of the Palestinian people was to dissociate them from Jordan, the Jordanians would welcome their wish just as they respected it in 1950 when the representatives of the Palestinian people wished to unite with Jordan.

However, this legitimate wish should not undermine the experience of unity between the two banks before the Israeli occupation of the West Bank. This is because Arab unity is not a concept solely owned by Jordanians and Palestinians but an aspiration that is nurtured by the Arab conscience throughout the Arab world; therefore, no one has the right to undermine this hope by depicting the unity of the two banks as a form of domination of one Arab state over another with a view of arbitrarily annexing it for the purposes of greed and gain.

‘The relationship between Jordan and Palestine is not a national commitment that we share with the rest of our Arab brothers. It’s rather a special and privileged relationship. And this privilege and that exclusivity

³³⁵ al safadi,ali, *mushahadat men ahed al hussein al bani*, Jordan 2013, p.133

Central Press, Amman, Jordan,

is not something we have made up nor have created and worn arbitrarily. They are merely the result of objective interaction based on geographical proximity and the intermingling of the population; cultural interaction, economic integration and common historical experience.³³⁶

King Hussein further explained to the Arab leaders that Jordan had earlier warned of the sensitivity of the PLO's leaders and their outlook for the leadership of Jordan as a competitor, and to dissipate that sensitivity, King Hussein took the initiative to propose a project for possible alternatives for the relations between Jordan and Palestine after the liberation of the occupied territories, based on the following three options:

1- A return to integrative unity as was the case before the occupation by Israel of Palestinian lands.

2- The establishment of a federal system under the name of 'the United Arab Kingdom', made up of two states, namely, Jordan and Palestine, each with its own regional parliament and government, and a joint parliament hosting the same number of members from both countries.

3- The establishment of an independent Palestinian state.³³⁷

From all that has been presented above, it appears that the Jordanian decision to dismantle the legal and administrative links with the West Bank was crystallised in the ideology of the Jordanian leadership several months before its adoption. This was not due to a personal wish that the Jordanian leadership had but was in response to the demands of the PLO and the Arab leaders who wanted to be rid of the burden of the Palestinian cause. All this lay at the feet of the PLO, despite the fact that those leaders were aware of the organisation's inability to recover by itself the full Palestinian

³³⁶ Ibid, p.134.

³³⁷ Ibid, p.135.

territories or gain all of the legitimate national rights that the Palestinian people claim.

The Jordanian decision was not a voluntary abandonment of its nationalism regarding the Palestinian cause and the rights of its people, but in line with the general Palestinian-Arab consensus adopted by more than one Arab summit, and which believed in stressing Palestinian identity in full, and in getting the Palestinians to bear the full responsibility of the future of the occupied lands.

During preparations for the final decision at the local level, and through his continuous meetings with his people, King Hussein emphasised the constraints that Jordan announced on May 8, 1988:

‘Jordan is an Arab nation that is not looking into the origin of any citizen, where they were born and where their parents come from. According to the Great Arab Revolution, whoever lives on this Jordanian land is one of us and we’re one of them; and I say to our brothers and sons of Palestine who live here, that this position does not contradict our commitment and their commitment towards Palestine; and we in Jordan, we are the heirs of the great Arab Revolution; and its principles and its objectives and its goal is Arab unity, without any regards of the origins of a person, whether they relate to this family, or their fathers or their grand-fathers. We are all Arabs, and they are all the sons of Jordan.’

King Hussein made it clear that the decision to dismantle the legal and administrative links with the West Bank, which he announced on July 31, 1988, would not affect the rights of Jordanians of Palestinian origin, and declared that:

‘It should be clearly understood that the measures we are undertaking towards the West Bank are only linked to the occupied Palestinian land and its people, and not, in any way, the Jordanian citizens from Palestinian descent who live in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. They all enjoy full citizenship rights and they should abide by those rights and duties exactly as any other citizen, barring their origin ,they are part of

the Jordanian state to which they belong, and on the land of which they live and participate in its life and various activities.³³⁸

As the preceding text has made clear, King Hussein's decision to disengage from the West Bank was preceded by careful deliberation and consideration of the impact of such a decision on Jordan's relations with Jordanians of Palestinian descent. King Hussein was mindful in his disengagement pronouncement to stress that this action was being undertaken in the best interests of the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination. By appearing to facilitate Palestinian statehood, King Hussein won the hearts and minds of the Palestinian people and the wider Arab community. The decision to disengage did have repercussions for the Jordanian identity, centred more exclusively on the West Bank. The act of disengagement said to Jordanians that their destiny now lay fully with the land east of the river Jordan. Jordanian national identity was therefore very clearly demarcated: one could be Palestinian and Jordanian in the sense of being of Palestinian descent but one's immediate loyalty and sense of citizenship had to be directed towards the Hashemites and the Kingdom of Jordan. The remainder of this chapter will look at events after 1988 and disengagement and examine how they had an impact on the continuation of Jordanian national identity in the contemporary period.

³³⁸ Ibid, p.136

VI. Jordanian-Palestinian relations after the disengagement of 1988

In 1988, King Hussein publically supported the concept of an independent Palestinian state. He emphasised the importance of the PLO in the search for peace. The king added:

‘We have no designs, ambitions or goals other than deliberation of Palestinian territories and enabling the Palestinian people to determine their own destiny on their national soil and regain their legitimate national rights’.³³⁹

When rioting broke out in Ma’an in the middle of 1989, it quickly spread to other towns and cities where there had always been support for the monarchical regime. The king chose not armed repression, but to give political liberalisation a try.

Since disengagement in 1988, political and economic liberalisation has gone together hand-in-hand. Economic restructuring had sought to reduce the role of the state in the Jordanian economy, as well as cutting back government bureaucracy. Political liberalisation, on the other hand, had meant more respect for human rights and, consequently, a diminished role for the security apparatus.

As a result of the changes in the political and economic spheres, the Jordanians felt threatened by the restructuring, from which it was believed the Palestinians would benefit. In tandem, political liberalisation gave new opportunities for freedom of expression.

³³⁹ James Lunt, *Hussein of Jordan: A Political Biography*, London, McMillan, 1988, pp.232-233.

In the domain of organised political activity, the splits that occurred within Jordanian parties appeared on a number of levels to be related to the internal communal divisions in Jordan between Jordanians and Palestinians. Even amongst the Muslim Brotherhood, which was the strongest force in parliament, there was reportedly a Jordanian-Palestinian divide.³⁴⁰

With the liberalisation of the political parties, questions were raised about the future trajectory of the PLO faction in the country. In the end, Jordanian concerns about PLO activity and the concern expressed by both communities over any overt Palestinian political activity contributed to the 'Jordan is Palestine' argument in Israel. Jordanian divisions in the resistance parties were opened, but Fatah did not establish a Jordanian branch.³⁴¹

During the first Gulf crisis, Palestinians and Jordanians marched together in protest demonstrations. However, the socio-economic fallout from the Gulf War widened divisions between the two communities. Inflation affected all of the communities in Jordan. The arrival of some 200,000 immigrants, who were mostly Palestinians from Kuwait, strained an already difficult situation. The result of all of these developments was that a number of Jordanians felt that they were losing their country to what were termed 'outsiders'. It was feared that these Palestinians would gradually acquire more and more power.

Over the course of the early nineties, there developed a much broader sense of Jordanianness, which had similarities to the 'East Bank First' movement, developed.

³⁴⁰ Laurie A. Brand, Palestinians and Jordanians: A Crisis of Identity, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 4, 1995, p.55.

³⁴¹ The democratic front established Hizb al Sha'b al-Dimuqrati and the popular front established Hizb al-Wihda al-Sha'biya

This emerging feeling crystallised in opposition to the role of Palestinians in Jordanian politics. One person who represented this view was the former secretary general of the public security department, Abdel Hadi Al Majali, who stated his position in the following terms:

‘We need to distinguish between our Jordanian Brothers of Palestinian origin who belong to our joint political identity... and between those who are demanding a separate identity and a separate state... what is between us is not defined by national (Watani) unity but by relations in a pan-Arab (Qawmi) framework ... the Palestinian who lives amongst us and wishes to maintain ... his Palestinian political identity, has the right to live without discrimination ... he does not have the right to work in the Jordan Political Institution.’³⁴²

Some people within the Palestinian community acted as a counterpart to Jordanian nationalists like al Majali.³⁴³ These Palestinians viewed Jordanian citizenship with distain; however, given the uncertainty regarding the future of Palestine, they were not willing to give up their Jordanian citizenship. The involvement of these people in the affairs of Jordan, given their primary allegiances elsewhere, is one more source of Jordanian-Palestinian resentment.

³⁴² ‘Fi Nadwa Hawla Mafhum al-wattaniya al urduniya ‘ind al ahzab’, Al dustur newspaper, 11 May 1993.

³⁴³ These groups are called the Jordanian and Palestinian Likud in Jordan.

VII. Jordanian-Palestinian relations in the peace process

Alongside the economic and political changes, matters were complicated by Jordan's involvement in the peace process. After the Madrid conference in 1991, the Jordanian negotiating team included Palestinian representatives. However, over time, as the Palestinians began to operate as a distinct delegation, reports of difficulties began to be increasingly voiced.

King Hussein was not happy about being kept out of the sensitive Oslo negotiations. By the end of 1993, relations between the two sides had deteriorated to a significant extent, and in January 1994, in a speech to a group of military officers, the king issued a warning to the PLO.³⁴⁴ After this, whenever a member of the royal family complained of a lack of trust between the Jordanians and the Palestinians, tensions at the government level quickly found popular expression at the street level.

The signing of the declaration of principles was a turning point in Jordanian-Palestinian relations. The prospect of an independent Palestinian state put the question of who would be citizens directly on the table for discussion. In Jordan, where the Palestinian community held citizenship, the issue of Palestinian national identity vis-à-vis a Jordanian national identity became a very real and moot point.

That the issue of Jordanian-Palestinian inter-communal tensions was sometimes within the control of the Jordanian government has to be highlighted. Evidence gathered over a

³⁴⁴ Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Near East and South Asia, 3 January 1994.

number of years suggests that the Jordanian government had sometimes exploited Jordanian-Palestinian tensions to further its own geo-strategic interests. By the same token, however, the Jordanian government would reign in any expressions of communal tensions, which jeopardised relations between the two communities. Therefore, when tensions between the two communities reached unprecedented heights in the middle of 1994, King Hussein spoke out angrily against those working to sow ‘seeds of discord in this country among its people’ and pledged that ‘any person who attempted to harm national unity will be my enemy until judgement day’.³⁴⁵ Newspaper coverage following the king’s threat revealed that any trouble-making articles and topics would henceforth be barred.

The tensions between Jordanians and Palestinians increased even further when it became clear that Jordan was going to sign its own peace agreement with Israel. The Washington Declaration that was signed between King Hussein and Yitzhak Rabin formally ended the state of conflict between Jordan and Israel. An article in the Washington Declaration that gave the Hashemites a privileged position in the running of the holy sites in Jerusalem greatly upset many Jordanian Palestinians.³⁴⁶

On the specifically Jordanian side, worries about the peace process included anxieties that Jordan might be the final site for the permanent housing of Palestinians from Syrian and Lebanon; hence the phrase ‘Jordan is Palestine’ and the sentiment that, with the establishment of the a Palestinian confederation, Jordan would be eaten up by a Palestinian-controlled political system.

³⁴⁵ *Al Dustur Newspaper*, Jordan, 10 July 1994.

³⁴⁶ The Washington Declaration, paragraph B.3, as reproduced in *The Journal of Palestinians Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 1, Autumn 1994, p.129.

On the Palestinian side, the proclamation of the Oslo Accord generated shock, anxiety and displeasure with the PLO, in particular among the 1948 refugees, which led to increased sympathy for King Hussein. Support for the Jordanian monarchy remained strong, at least until the kingdom's own peace agreement with Israel was publicised.

Broadly speaking, dissatisfaction with the Jordanian-Israeli peace process had been increasing since the mid-1990s. Many people who were supportive of the peace process or had their doubts but remained silent now seemed to have embraced opposition to the peace process because of the lack of any real benefits. This dissatisfaction with the peace process was most evident in calls by professional groups to contest normalisation; there had been numerous instances where the Muslim Brotherhood and the socialists had held anti-normalisation protests.

It seemed that growing Palestinian dissatisfaction with the peace process, coupled with Palestinians' negative reaction to the growth of Jordanian nationalism, could work together to destabilise the government following the 1988 disengagement (Jordanising the Palestinians in Jordan). If the negotiations between Jordan and Israel further undermined Palestinian rights in Palestine, the old memories of Jordan's pro-western and anti-pan-Arab orientation might once again have upset the Palestinians in Jordan and distanced them from political authority and the monarch; this was already becoming evident with Jordan's unpopular peace treaty, with Israel being called 'the king's peace'.³⁴⁷

³⁴⁷ Reuters, 10 May 1995

VIII. Confederation: theory versus practice

(i) Definition of the Confederation and its importance

In this section, I will analyse the possible confederation between Jordan and Palestine and the impact that this has had on the Jordanian national identity. After 1988 and disengagement, the leadership of the two states actively promoted the idea of a confederation between the people of the two areas. Should a confederation materialize in the not too distant future, then Jordanian national identity will likely comprise a larger Palestinian dimension. Currently, Jordan is a kingdom for the people of the East Bank, even if they are of Palestinian descent. It is a country rooted in the Hashemite, tribal and Bedouin traditions of the East Bankers. The Jordanian identity encompasses many different elements, and since 1988 it has distanced itself from historical Palestine. Should a confederation between the two political entities come to fruition, then the likelihood is that Jordanian national identity will be diluted and will be far more accepting of and encompass the Palestinian narrative and the strong Palestinian consciousness.

The term ‘confederation’ refers to ‘contractual union, independence union or international unions’ and means an agreement ‘between two or more countries wherein each one country safeguards its right, at home and abroad, but establishes between them some sort of a link and a union in order to achieve specific purposes and principles which should be agreed upon in an agreement between these countries’.

The whole process will be supervised by a joint body called the association or conference, and will include delegates from both of these peoples: the purpose of an independence union is to fulfil the desire of its constituent states to maintain their independence, as well as preventing wars between them, safeguarding their economic interests, and defending their economic and political interests at the international level.

An association or conference that represents a union could not be a state above the other member states. Each country must enjoy full domestic sovereignty and maintain its own international image. Each country also has the right to political representation along with other states, and to engage in treaties, provided that these are not contrary to the goals of the union or of those of its members.³⁴⁸

(ii) Jordanian confederation with Palestine

The official perspective of a Jordanian-Palestinian completion status continued to be that of a partnership between the two independent peoples, but only after Palestine had achieved statehood. As this two-state agreement became gradually accepted, Jordan exonerated more and more of its historical claim on the occupied West Bank. While Jordan provided an overarching cover for the Palestinians at the Spanish and American peace talks, the joint delegation eventually split itself into two separate committees with the most basic consultation. The Jordan leadership came to realise during and after the peace talks that to stake an uncompromising claim on the West Bank would jeopardise the long-term integrity and national sovereignty of the Jordanian state. The Jordanian monarch, and political and professional associations in Jordan wanted a Jordanian identity strictly demarcated from any mention of Palestinian statehood. Despite laying claim to the West Bank in the past, the protectors of Jordan did not want the Jordanian and Palestinian identities to now become confused. The idea of a confederation was seen to compromise the Jordanian identity and potentially to propose the idea that Jordan was Palestine; this will be discussed later in the section.

³⁴⁸ Mohammad Kamel layla, al nuthum al seyaseya: al dawla wa al hukuma, Beirut dar al nahda al arabeya 1969, pps.119-120

By the beginning of the 1990s, the people of Jordan across the political divide openly viewed confederation as tantamount to the dissolution of the Jordanian identity; Jordanian nationalists put forward the argument that any connection with the West Bank posed an unacceptable threat to the very life of Jordan as an independent state.³⁴⁹ King Hussein demanded that the concept of joint rulership be removed from Jordanian political terminology, with two independent internationally recognised states bound by shared interests and treaty settlement emerging as the preferred solution. The Oslo Peace Process upset and disturbed the Jordanians, instigating strong concerns about Jordan's future identity; however, the Oslo process strengthened the East Bank idea of Jordan by importantly moving toward the creation of a separate Palestinian identity located on the West Bank and a Jordanian identity situated in Jordan and the East Bank.³⁵⁰

The realisation by the Jordanian ruling class that their country's very future was compromised by talk of confederation deeply disturbed the nationalist sentiment in Jordan. Ironically, Jordanian identity was more strongly reinforced when there was talk in the Middle East of a peace settlement and Palestinian statehood. The analysis in my research has shown that talk of Palestinian statehood has consistently reinforced the idea of Jordanian distinctiveness and of Jordanian separateness. In fact, I am convinced that there is a direct correlation between the prominence of Palestinian nationalism and its provocative domino effect on Jordanian nationalism.

After some difficulty, Jordan continued to highlight its support for an independent

³⁴⁹ Fahad al Fanik – Jordan's leading columnist and a key figure in the Jordanian nationalism – has argued that confederation would be suicide for Jordan; this was a far cry from the official line that confederation would be open for future discussion.

³⁵⁰ Lawrence Tal, 'Is Jordan Doomed?', *Foreign Affairs Journal*, Issue 72, Vol. 5, 1993, pp.45-58.

Palestinian state but categorically declined to negotiate on behalf of the Palestinians. However, it sought to maintain some partnership and communication with the Palestinian government. Jordan's peace agreement with Israel solely highlighted Jordan's interest and again concretely separated this Jordan from Palestine. This new identity with Jordan's geo-strategic interests has sometimes clashed with fixed external ideas about Jordan's assumed unchanging identity and interests.³⁵¹

Jordan's official government policy since the death of King Hussein has been to preserve its distinct identity and interests. Despite some initial doubts about whether King Abdullah II might renegotiate the relationship with the West Bank, he has confidently rejected any Jordanian part in the occupied territories. Whatever minor interest Jordan might have held in the West Bank, Abdullah has openly accepted the new identity of an East Bank Jordan separate from the West Bank. On every international platform, King Abdullah has highlighted that 'there is no such word as confederation in my vocabulary' and that Jordan 'supports without reservation the creation of a Palestinian state'.³⁵² The new government of King Abdullah has gone further than King Hussein did in Jerusalem regarding disengagement, with Jordan now having renounced any role in the administration of the holy site of Jerusalem. As the political commentator, Adnan Abo Odeh, stated, 'Jerusalem is no longer an internal Jordanian affair'.³⁵³

Jordanians across the political spectrum reject confederation but are divided on the best

³⁵¹ Shibley Telhami and Michael Barnett, (eds), *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, Cornell University Press, London, p.45.

³⁵² Quoted by William Orme, 'Jordan's King assuming key role in Mid East talks' New York Times, October 7, 1999.

³⁵³ Abo Odeh, quoted by Al Ittihad newspaper (Abu Dhabi, September 24, 1999), translation by BBC summary of world broadcasts (September 27 1999).

future partnership with the West Bank. Inhabitants of Jordan of Palestinian origin have tended to support a closer economic relation, but their support for open borders between the two countries does not differ greatly from the interests of Jordan's native business elite; indeed, many inhabitants of Palestinian origin agree with a number of Jordanian nationalists about the importance of sharply distinguishing between Jordan and Palestine to find a solution to any doubts about their identity and sense of loyalty. This change in identity conception and its significance in Jordan should help to establish the importance of identity in Jordan's foreign relations with Palestine, Israel and the surrounding Arab countries. Before disengagement in 1988, Jordanians held very closely to the idea of a West Bank-inclusive identity and its state interests in the face of Arab opposition, Palestinian efforts, civil war and the changing realities on the ground. It was only with the beginning of the intifada in 1987, disengagement in 1988 and liberalisation after this period that there emerged new conditions for a significantly different Jordanian identity based primarily on severance from the West Bank.³⁵⁴

(iii) The confederation's most important goals, benefits and motivations

A great deal of literature in political science – which deals with complementary relations – has summarised the benefits or reasons for a confederation into two points: Integration, according to international experts, is one of the most successful ways to reduce the chances of conflict and disagreement between countries that generally thrive upon it. The confederation (union for independence) is considered to be a transitional system which may evolve into a federation or fall back in the event of a separation between the parties, so that the members of the confederation can proceed to a more full

³⁵⁴ Telhami and Barnett, *op. cit.*, p.49.

relationship in a federation, or revert to their original situation in the event of a separation.³⁵⁵

(iv) The confederation option in the official Jordanian vision: Attitudes and concept

Regarding a confederate relationship with the Palestinians, the official Jordanian position has been established and explained in the declarations of the late King Hussein and those of the current King Abdullah II, who has declared his adherence to the policy of his father several times.

The official position of Jordan, whether during the 1980s or the 1990s, was always the same regarding accepting a confederate relationship following the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, provided that both the Palestinian and the Jordanian peoples were in favour of it. That is, it relied on the principle of free choice for both peoples and that Jordan should not be the alternative nation. In one of his press interviews, King Abdullah II declared:

‘The idea of a confederation between Jordan and Palestine was proposed to us years ago, and the answer at the time was that this issue should be determined by both the Jordanian and the Palestinian peoples, with their free will, and only when the Palestinian people obtain their legitimate rights on the national Palestinian land.’

The king said that nothing new had occurred that would make him or his administration change their position in that respect.

‘For us, the confederation is a concept of unity between two fully independent countries, and on this basis, it can lead to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state after which the two peoples agree on a formula that will unite them both, and we will not accept it, under any

³⁵⁵ Ahmad suwaylem al umari, ‘ al itihad wa al wihda fe itar al alam al arabi’ fe majlad al thani lilmadawat al seyaseya, al Qahira, al hayea al masreya lil kitab, 1975, p.175

circumstances.³⁵⁶

This means that the confederation should not be a means to put an end to or transcend Israel's right in negotiating a final solution between the Palestinians and the Israelis, or be at the expense of building an independent Palestinian state. Also, following the Oslo Accords, the Jordanian position regarding the timing of the confederation lost much of its enthusiasm compared to that same enthusiasm in the 1980s – especially considering that the Palestinian-Israeli negotiation issues have still not been concluded. This may be because Jordan is not willing to commit itself in advance to any form of future relationship with the Palestinians, as such an obligation might lead to Jordanian concessions in favour of either the Palestinians or the Israelis, which may later prove to be unnecessary.

None of the statements and declarations made by Jordanian officials have provided any details regarding the Jordanian concept of the confederation; they have only described a general framework. Therefore, in order to clarify some details of the Jordanian concept of the confederation, it is useful to use certain references and declarations that attempted to do that. One of these sources reports that Khaled Hassan, a Palestinian official, reported his negotiations with the Jordanian party regarding the Amman 1985 Accord and said: 'For history, it's essential that I record the following meanings which His Majesty King Hussein and some of those who were present clarified, and the said meanings reflect what was verbally said and not what was recorded in writing.'

³⁵⁶ King Abdullah's interview with *All Watan al Arabi* magazine, 17-23 September 1999.

Khalid Hassan continued to say that the Palestinian state would not only be a Palestinian choice, but also a choice for the Jordanian people. He went on to point out that there was a belief in Jordan that the Palestinian state could not be run from outside and that its governance should most definitely be led from within.

The Palestinian official also said that from these two elements of persuasion, the Palestinians would agree to the confederation union through a referendum put to the peoples of both countries, the results of which would decide if the said confederation would materialise or not. Lastly, the official said that the Jordanian union meant concessions by each of the Kingdom of Jordan and the Palestinian state for joint full sovereignty, and that the political establishment in Jordan would be prepared to pay the price that would equal the recovery of the territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem.³⁵⁷

(v) The confederation option in the official Palestinian vision: Attitudes and concept

The official position of the Palestinians with regard to the Palestinian-Jordanian confederation and their understanding of this confederation was the calling for the establishment of a Jordanian confederation after the establishment of a Palestinian State. This was conducted through the decision of the Palestinian National Council, which endorsed this position. For example, among the resolutions of the Palestinian National Council, in its 16th session held in Algeria, were the following:

- An emphasis on the special and privileged relationship between the Jordanian and the Palestinian peoples

³⁵⁷ Khaled al Hassan, al itifaq al urduni al falasteny lel taharuk al mushtarak Amman 11/2/1985 fe dawuu al qawaed al asaseya lel qarar wa al taharuk al seyaseya awraq 13, Amman, Dar al jaleel 185.

- Observing the decisions of the National Council with regard to the relationship with Jordan, and starting from the fact that the PLO is the legitimate and sole representative of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories and abroad; and the Palestinian National Council sees that this future relationship (Palestinian) be established with Jordan on the basis of a confederation between two independent countries.

Also, declarations by some Palestinian officials confirm this Palestinian position and the special nature of the relationship between Jordan and Palestine. For example, in August 1992, one of the Palestinian officials declared that the Palestinian leadership had set up a Palestinian committee to study the upcoming Jordanian-Palestinian relations and to bring its visions to the executive committee of the Palestinian Liberation Organization.³⁵⁸

In general, both the official statements and the official political activity, following the Madrid and Oslo peace conferences (i.e. in the 1990s), show that the Palestinian position regarding the confederate relationship is more enthusiastic and urgent than the position of Jordan, which is more reserved and less enthusiastic, contrary to what the situation was in the 1980s when the Palestinian positions were less inclined towards confederacy.

The possible reasons for this are that the Palestinian side, prior to the disengagement of Jordan from the West Bank in 1988 and the Madrid Conference and the Oslo Accords, was more in favour of what was known as the Palestinian fundamentals, and later, as the post-Oslo era. The regional and international role of Jordan with regard to the Palestinian cause was enhanced by any flexibility from the Palestinians towards the

³⁵⁸ Al Rai newspaper, 16 August, 1992.

resolution of the Palestinian issue. However, at some point after the dismantlement and the Madrid Conference, Jordan felt that the confederation was a 'load of worries' and a burden of the Palestinian and Israeli cause, which Jordan had to bear.

Jordan realised that being used as a way-out in all of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, and being blamed for the burdens and the negative results of these negotiations, would mean that any Jordanian agreement to a confederation would not match up with Jordanians' expectations for the time being. On the other hand, the Palestinians would have to become more pragmatic regarding their cause.

Therefore, the Palestinians set about acquiring many other international channels that they were unable to access in the 1980s, and which Jordan could provide to them.

Palestinians fear of Jordanian dominance with international support shrank dramatically following the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in part of the Palestinian territories, and what followed in terms of the strained relations with the international community, especially with the European countries.³⁵⁹

As recent reporting from the area has clarified, Islamists in Jordan welcome the idea of a Jordanian confederation with Palestine whereas the nationalists in both countries do not support the idea. The Islamists are likely to be support joint sovereignty because of their belief that the Islamic brotherhood between two people overrides any distinct national identity among both Palestinians and Jordanians. For Islamists, the national identity of Jordan is firstly Islamic and only secondly Arab. The rationale here is that Jordan and Palestine would be stronger working together and that re-affirmation of their mutual Islamic bond would forge a closer union between Palestine and Jordan based on

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

religion.

The Arab nationalists' position in both countries is different from that of the Islamists. For the Arab nationalists, the Jordanian and Palestinian identities are rooted in non-religious spheres, such as nationality, ethnicity, culture, language, dress and cuisine – dimensions of identity that are more pronounced than religious aspects. Nationalists are also pragmatic and state-oriented in their concerns. For them, the national geo-strategic interests of their respective countries are better served by eschewing the confederation idea. Currently, in both countries, the nationalists' position would appear to be stronger than that of the Islamists.³⁶⁰

(vi) Scenarios for the future Jordanian-Palestinian relationship

In this section, I will summarise four scenarios for Jordanian-Palestinian relations in the future.

Scenario number one has been termed the drift scenario – this covers what will happen if the Jordanian and Palestinian leadership are in a reactive mode, responding to events and not heading them up. Both Jordanians and Palestinians engage in tactical manoeuvres, but neither of them is able to impose a broad game plan. In Palestine, the leaders could be concerned with consolidating power and moving further down the road to full independence before dealing with the question of their relations with Jordan. Other members of society, from the rulers to those in the streets, will focus more on the struggle for independence from Israel than on relations across the river. On the part of the Jordanians, there is a possibility that they may not determine any of the

³⁶⁰ Daoud Kattab, 'Jordanian-Palestinian confederation no longer taboo', Huffington Post, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/daoud-kattab/jordan-palestinian-confederation-talks_b_2335084.html, Accessed 15 September 2014.

developments in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and will therefore simply have to wait on the sidelines for an independent Palestine state.

The outcome of such a state of 'drift' in Jordanian-Palestinian relations would be neither positive nor negative. Family, material and psychological ties, which bind the two people, will continue alongside mutual suspicion and friction.³⁶¹

The next scenario is termed the functional scenario. In this case, a hard-line Israeli government is assumed to take the initiative, conceding to the Palestinians no more than autonomy in the West Bank. However, neither the Palestinian nor the Jordanian leadership would accept such a result. If the Palestinians are slowly marginalised and the Jordanians find that they are filling the power vacuum, the result would be a functional division of man power between Palestinians and Jordanians. The end result of this scenario would lead to Palestinian nationalism that would retain its supporters on both sides of the River Jordan. Hamas, a Palestinian Islamic organisation, would gain strength, and a new generation of PLO foot soldiers would become more emboldened in the occupying territories. At the same time, Jordanian nationalists would not favour deeper Jordanian involvement in political and economic affairs across the River Jordan.³⁶²

The next scenario is the separation scenario, which takes developments in a very different direction from the functional scenario. In actual fact, this may be driven by an aversion to the possibility of Jordanian involvement in the West Bank. It may also come about as a symptom of a drive for Palestinian independence from Israel. As envisaged

³⁶¹ Mostafa Hamarneh, Rosemary Hollis and Khalil Shikaki, *Jordanian Palestinian Relations: Where to? Four Scenarios for the Future*, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1997, pp.28-49.

³⁶² Ibid. pp.52-74.

in my research, however, this scenario assumes a Palestinian leadership that wants to establish a political and economic system that is completely separate and different from that of Jordan. I believe that the PLO would go along with this and that Hamas would not oppose it if the scenario were to be presented as a quest for Palestinian nationhood. Likewise, public opinion in Jordan might not object to this if separation were presented in a similar vein.³⁶³

The co-operation scenario represents a vision for Jordanian-Palestinian relations that would capitalise on the benefits to be gained from the two communities working together. This scenario would avoid the disadvantages of separation and the instability that is presented in the functional scenario. However, because there are mutual suspicions between Palestinians and Jordanians, the only way this could feasibly be overcome would be for co-operation to be based on independent Palestinian statehood as a necessary precondition. Those who have an interest in promoting separation would not be open to this scenario. The distrust between Jordanian and Palestinians would be a major stumbling block that could only be removed by a genuine desire for friendship between both communities.³⁶⁴

³⁶³ Ibid. pp.77-99.

³⁶⁴ Ibid. pp.102-123.

IX. Agreement between Jordan and Palestine over custodianship of Jerusalem's holy places

(i) Introduction

On March 31, 2013, an agreement that came as a shock to many was signed between the Palestinians and the Jordanians, which confirmed Jordan's guardianship of the Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem. The *Al Quds al Arabi* newspaper highlighted that the agreement had been signed in complete secrecy in the presence of King Abdullah II, Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas and also ministers of religious authorities in Jordan.³⁶⁵

The agreement mentions that 'His Majesty King Abdullah II, as the custodian of the Jerusalem holy sites, will exert all possible efforts to preserve the holy sites, especially the Haram al Sheriff (the al Aqsa mosque) ... and to represent their interests'. The agreement highlights that King Abdullah is responsible for maintaining respect for the holy places, guaranteeing Muslims freedom of movement to and from the sites, ensuring their repair, and representing their interests on the international stage.³⁶⁶

In its historical context, the Hashemite dynasty in Jordan has been the guardian of the holy places in Jerusalem since the early 20th century. Even after the Six-Day War and Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem, Jordan continued to play a religious part in

³⁶⁵ *Al Quds al Arabi* newspaper, London, May 9 2013. The Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian officials were circumspect about the agreement. For this reason, the harsh reaction of the former head of intelligence in Palestine, Tawfiq al Tirawi, is striking. He criticised the agreement, saying: 'we have sold out Jerusalem'.

³⁶⁶ www.jordantimes.com March 31 2013 edition, Accessed 29 September 2014, as cited in C. Jacob, 'Agreement between Jordan, Palestinian Authority officially recognizes Jordan's custodianship over Jerusalem's holy places'.

Jerusalem's holy places via the East Jerusalem endowment, which it oversees.

In 1988, Jordan formally separated itself from the West Bank by seizing its legal and administrative connections with it, but the separation policy did not apply to the holy places in Jerusalem. In 1994, this guardianship was re-emphasised via a Jordanian proclamation that underlined the kingdom's historic position in Jerusalem's holy places as well as the peace agreement between Jordan and Israel, where Israel acknowledged Jordan's special position in Jerusalem.

(ii) Jordanian identity linked to defending Jerusalem

The Jordanian authorities and the Palestinian government legitimised the documentation as necessitated by the need to combine their efforts to resist Israeli efforts to 'Judaize Jerusalem'.³⁶⁷ The Palestinian Authority's Minister of Islamic Affairs, Mahmoud al Habash maintained that the document was purely spiritual and that there were no ulterior motives, saying it was put together to establish a reality that had existed for many decades and that it put forward a legal foundation for partnership between the two parties in safeguarding Jerusalem. The former Jordanian minister of communications and information, Sami al Ma'ayta, similarly remarked that the documentation was earmarked to limit the Judaization of Jerusalem.³⁶⁸

The weekly newspaper in Jordan, *al Bayader al Seyasi*, which is sympathetic to the PLO, commented:

'Jordan has the power, capability and influence in the international and Arab arenas to halt any attack on the al Aqsa mosque, while the Palestinian authority is powerless to defend Jerusalem and its holy

³⁶⁷ Al Hayat al Jaded newspaper, (Palestine), April 3 2013, Accessed September 28 2014.

³⁶⁸ Ammonnews.net, April 7 2013, Accessed 28 September 2014.

places.’³⁶⁹

The above analysis of recent developments with respect to the Jordanian role regarding the Jerusalem holy sites has demonstrated that despite Jordan disengaging from the West bank in 1988, it still sees itself as being intimately linked with its maintaining and overseeing the Palestinian holy sites. This demonstrates that despite Jordan wanting to separate itself from the West Bank and the Jordanian identity being distinct from Palestinians, the monarchy still wishes to emphasise its religious legitimacy by maintaining some hold over the Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem. It is very important for King Abdullah to show to the Arab world and the wider Muslim community that his position as a direct descendent of the prophet, highlighting the Hashemite progeny with guardianship over Muslim East Jerusalem and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, ties the Jordanian monarchy to a religious past, emphasising his employment of religious identity in Jordan’s foreign policy. What the preceding analysis has shown is that the Jordanian monarchy is very conscious of the religious nature of its regional identity. Given the artificiality of the Jordanian state and its lack of historical longevity, it is seen as important by the Jordanian monarchy that the religious nature of the Hashemite family is continually emphasised, demonstrating the importance of religion in discussions of modern Jordanian identity. The Jordanian regime consciously employs religious terminology to win legitimacy in the Arab and Muslim world.

³⁶⁹ Al Bayader al Seyasi (Jerusalem), April 27 2013. <http://www.al-bayader.com/> Accessed September 2013.

Conclusion

The Jordanian government's efforts since the early 1950s to formulate a hybrid Jordanian national identity incorporating both Jordanians and Palestinians have been resisted by each community in its own way. At the same time, however, there is strong evidence to suggest that the regime itself did not hesitate when it served its interest to stir up or exploit tensions between the Jordanians and Palestinians in the country.³⁷⁰

Complicating an already difficult situation is the effect of Jordanian-Palestinian relations within the ongoing processes of economic and political liberalisation measures that have re-ignited tensions between the two communities.

Each of these processes has led to the formulation of policies that affect the economic and political balance between the Jordanians and Palestinians in Jordan. These changes in the internal communal sharing of power have a specific meaning insofar as this balance has gone some way in the past to forming each group's identity, with Jordanians seeing themselves as being tied to the government and the Palestinians seeing themselves as outside the government.

The accumulated effect of economic restructuring and political openings appears to have led the two communities in different directions: sensing a threat to their historical power position, Jordanians have delineated more clearly a narrative that has been referred to as one espousing 'trans-Jordanian nationalism'. Many Palestinians in Jordan, on the other hand, witnessing an opening up of the political and economic system after disengagement and being more understanding of the king after the Gulf crises, have begun to feel that they have to take part in the Jordanian system.

³⁷⁰ Laurie Brand, *Palestinians in the Arab World*, Columbia University Press, 1988 edition, pp.180-185.

The Jordanian kingdom has responded to the recent Arab spring protests with tentative monarchical reflexes, bringing the politics of identity and institutions of the government back into the public domain. Therefore, the public demonstrations have disclosed the fundamental issue: ‘The identity politics of who is Jordanian, and whom the state is therefore meant to serve’.³⁷¹ Within this outline, the divergent preferences of Jordanians and Palestinian Jordanians have created two different elements of identity formation: on the one hand, Palestinian national identity is rooted in the struggle with Israel; on the other, the most important component of national identity construction is closely related to the state formation, the Hashemite kingdom for Jordanians.³⁷² Unlike the protests organised to resist the peace treaty with Israel in 1994 and 1997, in the current demonstrations, it is this very basic notion of Jordanian national identity and preferences that has emphasised the role of native Jordanians in leading the public rallies today.³⁷³

Whatever the outcome of the continuing tensions between Jordanian and Palestinian anxieties, the two groups are certainly going to continue talking and debating and will feature prominently in domestic politics as this current stage in the redefining of Jordanian national identity after 1988 continues to unfold.

King Hussein was concerned about the possible impact of the emerging Palestinian entity on the relationship between Jordanians and Palestinians in Jordan. On many occasions, the king warned that anyone tampering with Jordanian national unity would

³⁷¹ Curtis R. Ryan, ‘The Armed forces and the Arab Uprising: the case of Jordan’, *Middle East Law and Governance*, Volume 4, 2012, p.166.

³⁷² Curtis R. Ryan, ‘Identity Politics, Reform and Protests in Jordan’, *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 2011, p.566.

³⁷³ Noor Karpulu, The interplay of Palestinian and Jordanian identities in re/making the state and nation formation in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in Kenneth Christie and Mohammad Massad, *State Formation and identity in the Middle East and North Africa*, Palgrave Macmillan Press, 2013, pp.81-82.

be his ‘enemy until doomsday’. The king added that the Palestinians in Jordan enjoyed all rights of citizenship and would continue to do so unless they freely elected to leave for Palestine.³⁷⁴

The king assured the PLO that Jordan’s own self-interest dictated support for the PLO. Jordan’s involvement with the Palestine issue was regarded as a twin-track approach – the political, historical and social bonds between the East and West Banks would make strategic ties essential to both nations once the Palestinians fully achieved their national aspirations. After 46 years in power, King Hussein died on February 7, 1999.

Jordan’s involvement with the Palestine question has always been, and still remains, one of the most crucial aspects of its national identity narrative. Jordan was born out of the Palestinian struggle and has been tied to its fortunes and misfortunes from the beginning of the Arab-Israeli struggle for the Holy Land. Indeed, as the analysis in the chapter has demonstrated, the geographical factor has been conducive to the development of strong, social, commercial and administrative ties between Jordan and the West Bank.³⁷⁵

In keeping with the discussion of Jordan and Palestine, and as this chapter has demonstrated, Black September and its aftermath had a very significant impact on the relationship between the two countries, ultimately leading to Jordan disengaging with Palestine in 1988. Within its frontiers, Jordan faced a conflict. Jordanian nationalism,

³⁷⁴ Nasur, Nader Ibrahim M. Bani; Al-Fawwaz, Abdulrahman A.; Al-Afif, Ahmad Kh., ‘Jordanian Foreign Policy toward the Palestine Issue’, *British Journal of Arts & Social Sciences*, 2012, Vol. 8, Issue 1, p.1.

http://www.bjournal.co.uk/paper/BJASS_8_1/BJASS_08_01_01.pdf

³⁷⁵ James Lunt, *Hussein of Jordan: A Political Biography*, London: McMillan, 1988, p. 252.

built, as it was, on Transjordanian identity, developed into a distinct identity as a reaction to Palestinian nationalism. In terms of their identity, this left Jordanians of Palestinian origin in a very precarious situation. The removal of the Palestinian liberation organisation was a necessity to ensure the longevity of Jordan; however, the subsequent Jordanisation of the government apparatus served to alienate Jordanians of Palestinian descent from the emerging Jordanian identity.³⁷⁶

³⁷⁶ Barbara Galletz, *Black September and identity construction in Jordan* in Journal of Georgetown University Qatar, Middle Eastern studies student association March 2015.
<http://www.qscience.com/doi/10.5339/messa.2015.12>

Chapter Four: Jordanian-Israeli Peace Treaty and its effects on Jordanian identity

Introduction

Throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s, Jordan continued its traditional policy of maintaining discreet but tolerant relations with Israel, although the potential for increased problems was always present. Many Jordanians became particularly worried as some of Israel's conservative politicians became increasingly enamoured with the slogan 'Jordan is Palestine'. This slogan and the approach it represented suggested that Jordan could serve as an alternative Palestinian homeland, and that there was correspondingly no need for a Palestinian state created out of the Palestinian territories captured in 1967. An early advocate of the alternative homeland theory was Israeli General Ariel Sharon, who favoured allowing the PLO to overthrow King Hussein in 1970.³⁷⁷ Almost no other Israeli leader supported this idea at that time, but some later suggested that Jordan was the proper homeland for the Palestinians even if the Hashemites remained in power. The Jordanian leadership would have nothing to do with such ideas, which they viewed as designed to enable Israel to annex the West Bank while claiming that they were not depriving the Palestinians of a national existence. In practical terms, many Jordanians feared that the alternative homeland approach could lead to an Israeli effort to encourage Palestinian mass emigration to Jordan. In Jordan's worst-case scenario, Israel could annex the West Bank and then expel huge numbers of

³⁷⁷ Avi Shlaim, *Lion of Jordan*, New York, Vintage Books, 2009, p.421.

Palestinians into the kingdom, overwhelming Jordanian economic infrastructure and radically altering the kingdom's demographic balance. This scenario did not occur, but the Jordanians remained worried.

In July 1994, King Hussein and Israeli Prime Minister Rabin announced the Washington Declaration, whereby the leaders of the two countries declared an end to the formal state of war between their countries at a White House ceremony in the presence of President Clinton. This declaration laid the groundwork for a peace treaty between the two countries, which was expected to be forthcoming in a matter of months.

Jordanian and Israeli leaders signed a formal peace treaty on October 26 1994 at a ceremony in the Arava Valley, south of the Dead Sea, in an area which had formerly been a minefield. The treaty helped resolved a number of important, long-standing differences over key issues, including borders, water and the security of both nations. The Israelis returned 380 square kilometres of Jordanian territory that had been taken as Israeli farmland following the 1967 war. The Israelis also agreed to provide Jordan with water resources to compensate for water drilling in Jordanian land. The treaty further recognised that Jordan held a special and privileged position in protecting the Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem and that the border between the countries was explicitly defined. The Jordanians saw a number of advantages of making such an agreement beyond the specific details of the treaty on the functional issues noted here.³⁷⁸

One key reason for seeking the treaty with Israel was to gain as much security as

³⁷⁸ Efraim Halvey. *Man in the shadows: inside the Middle East crises with a man who led the Mossad*. New York, St. Martin's Press, 2006.

possible in the face of any future right wing Israeli government unsympathetic to Jordanian interests. In 1994, Amman continued to be alarmed by the rhetoric of the various hard-line leaders that Jordan was an alternative homeland for the Palestinians. Israel political leader and later prime minister Ariel Sharon had continued to show interest in the 'Jordan is Palestine' concept and presumably had not fully given up on his belief that the Hashemite government needed to be overthrown to allow indigenous Palestinian institutions to develop a new Palestinian homeland. The establishment of a treaty with Israel created obligations on the part of both countries to respect the other's sovereignty and institutions. Sharon for his part did not openly oppose the treaty in the Israeli Knesset, although he did abstain in the vote to ratify it. The final Knesset vote for the ratification of the treaty was 105 in favour, 6 against and 6 abstentions. King Hussein was particularly pleased with the result, which indicated peace with Jordan was broadly accepted by the Israeli leadership and not simply an agreement between Jordan and Israel's Likud party under Prime Minister Rabin.

The Jordanian leadership was also aware that the peace treaty received this sweeping Knesset endorsement at a period of deep political polarisation in Israel over the nature of Palestinian peace, when especially fierce invective was used in the debate between the Israeli hawks and doves over other issues. Even in this environment, the Jordanian peace treaty did not become politically divisive in Israel. The advantages of the peace treaty did not prevent it from becoming controversial within Jordan. Organised Islamists, including the Islamic Action Front, were particularly opposed to the treaty and the less well-organised leftists also found it objectionable. The oppositionists failed to block the treaty's ratification in parliament due to intensive lobbying by the Palace.

The treaty correspondingly passed by a vote of 55 to 23 in the lower house in a vote by elected delegates.³⁷⁹

The 1994 Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty is appreciated better when compared to the background of the existing Jordanian-Israeli treaty. The history of these interactions provides a useful perspective for understanding the course adopted in the recent Jordanian-Israeli peace-making process. In many critical respects, this is precisely what occurred with the Jordanian-Israeli treaty, which effectively broke with earlier patterns of unsuccessful Arab-Israeli negotiations. However, reverting to previous negative responses, such as doubting the motives of the other party, and differences in perceptions between the leaders has so far prevented the full expression of the rewards promised by the treaty's architects.³⁸⁰

Israel became the most important political actor in the Middle East, and it has always been Israeli policy to try to normalise Arab-Israeli relations through bilateral peace accords with its neighbours. Since the mandate period, Israeli leaders had fantasised about the economic potential of an open Middle East market.³⁸¹ With regard to Jordan, Israeli economists had more recently speculated about the potential financial rewards of jointly developing commercial and tourist facilities at the Dead Sea, and at the twin cities of Eilat and Aqaba. A formal accord with Jordan was a necessary stepping stone along the path of mutual fiscal gain; however, beyond the economic advantages of peace, security-conscious Israel clearly appreciated that peace with Jordan would

³⁷⁹ Curtis R. Ryan, *Inter Arab Alliances, Regime security and Jordanian foreign policy*, Tampa Florida, University of Florida Press, pp.145-164.

³⁸⁰ Efraim Karsh, *Israel, the Hashemites and the Palestinians a faithful triangle*, Frank Cass Publishers, p.91.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.92.

constitute significant closure along its long eastern front.

A formal agreement with King Hussein was acceptable policy across Israel's highly fractionalised political spectrum, because peace with Jordan was a long-cherished goal, dating from the interrupted agreement with King Hussein's grandfather, Abdullah (d.1951). After capturing the West Bank from Jordan in the 1967 War, many Israelis promoted the Jordanian option as a way to trade that territory for a separate peace, without the trauma of having to deal with the Palestinians or the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

The popularity of the peace according to King Hussein reflected the traditional Israeli preference for dealing with non-Palestinian Arab state leaders and the long-standing predominance of Jordanian nationalists over Palestinian nationalists within the Israeli foreign-policy establishment. This was true despite the 1993 breakthrough of directing Israeli-PLO dealings embodied in the Oslo Accords, and even more so in light of subsequent crises in Israeli-Palestinian relations. Enthusiasm for the treaty with Jordan was also an expression of relief at having found a counterweight to, or insurance policy against, Yasser Arafat's and the Palestinian Liberation Organization's unproven ability to deliver the goods³⁸².

The king shared many of Israel's motivations in finally concluding a formal peace, and his thinking had similarly evolved to the point where the question was not *whether* peace was possible, but *when* and on what specific terms. Concerned that a successful Israeli-PLO agreement would leave him sidelined, King Hussein was anxious to maintain Jordanian influence in the West Bank. His own declaration on 31 July 1988

³⁸² Ibid., p.93

had reduced Jordanian responsibility for West Bank Palestinian affairs. Any new PLO-Israeli security or economic measures established would obviously have a huge impact on Jordan; however, King Hussein wanted to position Jordan to better shape developments to its advantage.³⁸³

After Madrid, Israeli-Jordanian negotiations benefited from sustained, symmetrical, high-level interaction between the two sides, such as between Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin after making peace at Camp David in 1978. This compared with precedents set at the turn of the century, when both King Hussein and Prime Minister Rabin commanded sufficient popularity and power at home to be able to make good on their promises. Rabin enjoyed a particularly strong position domestically. Even the right-wing opponents of his dealings with the PLO endorsed peace with Jordan, which was described by one observer as a ‘risk-free’ policy.³⁸⁴

King Hussein’s peace agreement faced opposition from both Islamists and leftists, which were not insignificant elements within the Jordanian parliament, but the 1993 electoral defeat of the Islamic Action Front by Hussein loyalists suggested that the king was correct in his estimation that he could expect parliamentary support for his treaty with Israel.³⁸⁵ In gauging the likelihood of support from the Jordanian population, Adnan Abu-Odeh distinguishes between Transjordanians (Jordanian nationals of Transjordanian origin) and Palestinian-Jordanians (Palestinians who became Jordanian

³⁸³ Ibid., p.93.

³⁸⁴ Ibid., p.95-96.

³⁸⁵ Karsh, Efraim, *Israel, the Hashemites and the Palestinians: The Fateful Triangle*, P. R. Kumaraswamy, Frank Cass, 2003, p.96.

nationals after the unity of the West and East Banks in 1950).³⁸⁶

The triangular interaction between Jordan, Israel and the PLO contributed to the resurgence of Transjordanian nationalism in the 1970s. In the beginning, ascendant Transjordanian policies were represented as a reaction to the Palestinian threat to Transjordanian identity, and to the seemingly permanent occupation of Israel of the West Bank, 'with its implications of more Palestinian emigration to the East Bank, more pressure on Jordan's meagre resources, more demographic imbalance, and eventually the establishment in Jordan of a substitute Palestinian homeland'.³⁸⁷

The Jordanian state, after signing the peace treaty with Israel, began to back the Transjordanian national discourse, mainly for domestic political reasons. In 1997, Nahedh Hattar, an editor and journalist, and also one of the important influences of the modern Jordanian national movement explained the convictions, principles and goals of his movement:

'The Trans-Jordanian national identity is in opposition to the Zionist entity, since the former is an extension of the surrounding Arab entity that is in opposition to Israel ... The continuing existence of the Zionist entity necessitates the negation of the Trans-Jordanian entity, because Israel is willing to expel Palestinians who will find a Jordan *al -watan- al badil* (the substitute Palestinian homeland) ... Therefore the movement supports strongly the establishment of a Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital'.³⁸⁸

It is apparent from this interview that Abu-Odeh is arguing that Transjordanian nationalists should maintain their exclusionary attitude by asserting that their chief

³⁸⁶ Adnan Abu-Odeh, *Jordanians, Palestinians and the Hashemite Kingdom*, Washington DC, 1999, p.xv.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.241.

³⁸⁸ Abu Odeh's interview with Nahedh Hattar, Paris, June 23, 1997.

motivation is to preserve their Palestinian identity as the antithesis to Zionism, even though the official discourse continuously underlines Palestinians being a burden in Jordanian politics.³⁸⁹ However, Abu-Odeh suggested that the argument that the creation of a Palestinian state would constitute a security risk to both Israel and Jordan was misguided, and argued for the creation of a Palestinian state for the stabilisation of relations between Jordanians, Palestinians and Israelis.³⁹⁰ The most constructive prime minister of Israel, Yitzhak Rabin (d.1995), first recognised the Palestinians as a peace partner, but paid with his life to establish peace between Jordanians, Palestinians and Israelis, and bring Israeli politics into balance in favour of reconciliatory politics with the Palestinians.³⁹¹

Former Foreign Minister Shimon Peres's role in the 1993-1994 agreements with Jordan, who acted with Prime Minister Rabin's full authority, stands in sharp contrast to his abortive negotiations with the king around the London document of 1997 that was vetoed by the Prime Minister Shamir (d.2012) at that time. Despite a bitter decade of prolonged rivalry between them, Rabin and Shimon Peres joined forces after 1993 to present King Hussein of Jordan as a solid political partner, as he presented himself to them.

The 1993-1994 Jordanian-Israeli Peace Treaty benefited from direct and well-focused attention given by strong leaders in control of their governments, who were well served by their loyal aides. Success was also facilitated by the fact that the high-level officials entrusted with the ongoing negotiations between the periodic meetings by their political

³⁸⁹ Ibid., p.259.

³⁹⁰ Ibid., p.272.

³⁹¹ Ibid., p.274.

bosses developed smooth and pleasant interpersonal relations.

These findings have revealed that Israeli-Jordanian relations had been fraught for many years because Jordanian popular opinion was deeply suspicious of Israeli activity in the West Bank and particularly with regard to Palestinian harassment; however, there came a point when the political leadership in both states realised the mutual benefit of a peace agreement. Part of the Israeli agenda was to reclaim the West Bank as part of Eretz Israel, which would remove any recognition of Palestinian national identity and force Jordan to recognise that there would be no third state between it and Israel. The Israeli political establishment wanted Jordanian nationalism to encompass and subsume any vestige of Palestinian identity. The rationale here was that if Jordan was forced to accept the Palestinian inhabitants of historic Palestine, Israel would absolve itself of any new responsibility towards the Palestinians and forestall the establishment of any Palestinian state of the future.

As far as Jordanian national identity was concerned, the insistence by Israel that it would take responsibility for all Palestinians there gave Israel a free hand, and was, in the long term, not acceptable. Although there was a period up to the disengagement of 1988 when certain sectors of the Jordanian political class favoured the incorporation of the West Bank within Trans-Jordan, and thereby extend the borders of the state across the River Jordan and share a boundary with Israel, this plan did not have long-term feasibility.

The opening section of this chapter demonstrated that Jordanian national identity from 1950 to 1988 tried to co-opt Palestinians citizens within a Jordanian identity. During the 1980s, Jordan was forced to recognise that there had to be a separate Palestinian existence. Following the intifada and the emergence of a more assertive younger generation that was disconnected from the PLO and more sympathetic to Palestinian

Islamism (Hamas and Islamic Jihad), King Hussein had to concede that not all Palestinians were part of the Jordanian national project. Therefore, although Jordanian national identity had attempted to incorporate Palestinian national expression, by 1988 and the time of disengagement, Jordan had to accept that Palestinian nationalism was distinct from Jordanian nationalism. Since 1988 and the forestalled peace process, a number of Jordanians have called for the Jordan First option to be pursued at all costs, even if Palestinian interests had to be sacrificed. This chapter will continue to analyse the development of Jordanian nationalism after disengagement in 1988.

I. Terms of agreement

As both parties moved through the successive stages of the peace process, the terms of agreement expanded in both breadth and depth. The culmination of a four-part process that evolved over 24 months, the Jordanian-Israeli treaty ended the state of war between the two countries, and established a full and formal peace. It went on to outline quite specific and concrete steps in many areas. The treaty's 30 articles and five annexes covered an extensive array of co-operative measures in various fields, such as border demarcations and crossings, water sharing, cultural and scientific exchanges, tourism, transportation, crime, economics and trade, aviation, environment, post and telecommunications, energy, health and agriculture.³⁹² In addition, a peace treaty was signed between Israel and Jordan that promised to respect the territorial sovereignty of the two countries; for example, Israel was obliged to concede that Jordanian national

³⁹² Laura Zittrain Eisenberg and Neil Caplan, *Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace: Patterns, Problems, and Possibilities*, Indiana Series in Arab & Islamic Studies, Indiana University Press, 1998, pp. 217-28.

identity and nationalism were part of a transformed Middle East in which Israel was now secure in the knowledge that peace on its southern and eastern flanks with neighbours Egypt and Jordan was partially guaranteed.

The peace treaty also implicitly recognised the existence of a Jordanian national state in the heart of the Middle East that came with recognition of its national identity, and, as the peace treaty was signed six years after disengagement, there was recognition on the Israeli establishment side that peace with Jordan did not mean peace with the Palestinians. However, contained within the terms of the treaty was also implicit recognition that Jordan no longer claimed the West Bank for itself, and that on West Bank land and that of the Gaza Strip, an independent Palestinian state would be forged. Therefore, the treaty recognised the existence of Jordanian nationalism along with Israeli nationalism, and since Jordan had relinquished control of the West Bank in 1988, it also indirectly recognised the existence of a third party between the two states. Just as Egypt secured its national interests with the Camp David Accord of 1979, so, around 20 years later, did Jordan secure its national interests, considered by some to have been at the expense of the Palestinians, with its formal treaty with Israel in 1994.

II. Identity in Jordan and the peace process

Identity represented a crucial dimension in the treaty outcome. Among all the justifications for the treaty, the most significant achievement was seen as the guarantee of the existence of Jordan as an entity. The treaty defined Israel's eastern border for the first time in history, and ended the discursive struggle in the international public sphere: Jordan is not Palestine. To explain further, the treaty offered a formal Israeli endorsement of the identity consensus secured between both the Jordanians and the

Palestinians after severing the ties that Jordan achieved with the West Bank in 1988 with disengagement. The various responses to the term 'Jordan is not Palestine' are central to the re-conceptualisation of Jordanian identity.

The Israeli threat served as the justification for the need to emphasise and develop Jordanian identity. A validation of state identity was formed based upon the perspective of Arab norms. From this perspective, the consolidation of the Jordanian identity helped the Palestinian cause by confirming a distinctive Palestinian identity, thereby forcing Israel to come to terms with the Palestinians, rather than continue to hope for a Jordanian intermediary. Prior to the Oslo Agreement, this ability to justify the public assertion of Jordanian identity in terms of Palestinian rather than Jordanian interests was significantly important. After the Oslo agreement, the justification of Jordanian identity in terms of Jordanian interests assumed an increasingly prominent place. In addition, Jordanian identity became an acceptable end in itself, and not merely a means towards advancing the Palestinian cause. The sentiment was: 'Jordan has nothing to apologise for as a nation or as a nationalism'.³⁹³

The change in conceptions of Jordan's state identity and the implications for its preferences in the peace negotiations represent a significant dimension that is not identified by rationalist bargaining theory. The removal of the refugee issue from the Jordanian preferences depended upon the reconstruction of Jordanian identity. Firstly, Jordan's identity changed with the severing of ties with the West Bank after disengagement in 1988. Secondly, Jordan's preferences changed with the refugee issue being dropped, which made the final status outcome possible. Thirdly, this change in

³⁹³ Tarek Masarwah, 'What is the Jordan we want?' Al-Ufuq Journal, September 7, 1994.

preferences over outcomes in the West Bank defined Jordanian strategies in the bargaining, and made Jordan a different actor in many respects from the Jordan that discussed possible settlements with Israel in the 1970s and 1980s. Fourthly, Israel's negotiations with the PLO, combined with the growing recognition that Jordan's preference and identity had changed, led it to abandon the Jordan option as a viable final settlement. The recognition that Jordan is Jordan represented the achievement of a powerful and critically important acceptance in the international public sphere of this reality. This acceptance of Jordan's identity allowed its interests to be legitimised and to be publically accepted. Finally, the centring of a Jordanian identity within a Jordanian public sphere made the articulation and justification of specific Jordanian interests more normatively defensible.³⁹⁴

This analysis has demonstrated that in the years since the Jordanian-Israeli Peace Treaty of 1994, Jordanian national identity has been streamlined to disengage the Palestinian element in the recognition of Israel, allowing Jordan to be reinstated as a key player in the wider Middle East peace process, receive endorsement from the international community and be seen as a separate state within the Middle East state system, and finally to demonstrate to Jordanians that Jordan as a state was just as powerful as any other state promoting its national identity in the region. Since the peace treaty with Israel in 1994, Jordanian national identity has become more clearly demarcated, is more clearly expressive of Jordanian national interests and has evolved on a trajectory that is specifically Transjordanian, without reference to the Palestinian dimension of pre-1988 Jordan.

³⁹⁴ Marc Lynch, *State interests and public sphere: the international politics of Jordanian identity*, Columbia University Press, 1999, p.186.

III. Debates in Jordan over the Jordanian-Israeli Peace Treaty

As early as 1994, the government of Jordan began a media campaign to influence public opinion to support the impending agreement. The regime knew that it would be difficult to gain public support for ending nearly 50 years of hostility with Israel, especially in the absence of a comprehensive accord for Middle East peace. For this reason, King Hussein personally took the lead in promoting the treaty, and in contrast to most Jordanian government campaigns when the prime minister appeared as the main policy actor, King Hussein made it clear that the treaty was his personal ambition. Thus, any opposition to the treaty would be interpreted by the regime as opposition to the monarchy itself, and with the relevant consequences.³⁹⁵

The campaign attempted to persuade Jordanians to support the peace treaty with two major arguments: the first one was that the regime and those who supported it presented the treaty as a strategic option for Jordan, where the country had little choice. The government argued that Jordan needed to join the peace camp, and King Hussein explained that in the past, many opportunities for peace with Israel had been missed. Government supporters in the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Deputies recommended the treaty should be endorsed, as this was the ‘best’ accord the regime could have reached given what was ‘possible’ and ‘realistic’.³⁹⁶

The second argument identified in the peace treaty was that Jordan, as an independent state, got all that it claimed back from Israel. In a statement to the lower house of

³⁹⁵ Christian Science Monitor, 5 August, 1994.

³⁹⁶ The Jordan Times, 29 October 1994.

parliament, a government spokesman said that the treaty should quickly be ratified in order to ‘regain Jordanian rights in land and water, to protect the country from threats and conspiracy and to ascertain the Kingdom’s borders’.³⁹⁷

The openness of the Jordanian public sphere became a public issue second only to the peace treaty itself. King Hussein and his government at the time regularly asserted the existence of a Jordanian national consensus for peace. The public sphere had not produced such a consensus, and the perceived need to maintain the appearance of one drove the repression of the public sphere. A major achievement of the democratic era had been to bind the public to a Jordanian identity through participation in an open Jordanian public sphere.

‘Loyalty’ replaced ‘participation’ as the mechanism of proving belonging (*intima*) to the Jordanian identity. In sharp contrast to the principle of public sphere participation, the regime attempted to re-establish a norm of the inviolability of royal decisions:

‘Because the king enjoys the confidence of his people, he doesn’t have to defend his right move to them ... it is the right of the leader to act without needing to justify or interpret.’³⁹⁸

During the peace negotiations with Israel, there was considerable public debate over its meaning for Jordanian identity and interests. King Hussein often emphasised that the opposition represented only a small minority of Jordanians, and that the vast majority of Jordanians supported his moves towards making peace with Israel. King Hussein floated the idea of a national referendum over any peace treaty in July 1994, but the

³⁹⁷ The Jordan Times, 31 October 1993.

³⁹⁸ Fahad Al Fanik article in Al Rai newspaper, August 10, 1994.

idea quietly faded away as the negotiations drew to a close, and the outcome of such a referendum seemed less certain than a vote in parliament, where an absolute pro-government majority existed. Later, the opposition called again for a referendum on the peace treaty, but their calls were ignored.

King Hussein and Prime Minister Majali each explained that because ‘the vast majority of Jordanians support the peace ... there is no need for a referendum.’³⁹⁹

The opposition framed its objections in terms of both interests and identity, and in terms of level of interests, the opposition made specific arguments about the text of the treaty and its implication for Jordanian security, water rights, economic development and sovereignty. At the level of identity, the opposition argued that the treaty with Israel would cause Jordan to lose its Arab and Islamic identity. Meanwhile, the government emphasised the Jordanian state interests achieved in the treaty, although the opposition denied the priority of these interests in relation to wider Arab interests and identity.

The regime responded that the Jordanian negotiators had secured all of Jordan’s rights and interests. Firstly, it argued that the treaty had returned every centimetre of Jordanian occupied territories and some of its rights to water, while decisively ending the threat of Israeli expansion eastward. Secondly, the government of Jordan at that time emphasised the economic benefits of peace in order to deflect attention from the political concessions in the treaty, and relied heavily on the premise that the economic interest would supersede political ideology or concerns over identity.⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁹ Majali interview in Al Ahram newspaper, August 7 1994, King Hussein interview on Radio Monte Carlo, August 17, 1994.

⁴⁰⁰ Marc Lynch, *State interests and public sphere: the international politics of Jordanian identity*, Columbia University Press, 1999, p.186.

Focusing on the opposition criticism of the treaty specifically with reference to the loss of Jordanian standing in the wider Arab and Islamic worlds, the regime had to respond in a suitably robust and straightforward fashion. With reference to the loss of credibility in the Arab and Islamic setting, this had the potential to damage Jordanian national identity in regional and international spheres. In certain quarters of the Arab world, and particularly in Arab streets, any talk of peace with Israel given its mistreatment of Palestinians under its occupation was a recipe for disaster. Criticism of Jordan was primarily driven towards the assertion that Jordan left the Arab camp to serve the interest of the enemy occupying state. Arab solidarity had been compromised, and just as Sadat had been accused of being a traitor, so King Hussein now found himself in this dangerous firing line. For an Arab state to recognise and make a peace treaty with Israel without securing a written guarantee of Palestinian statehood was seen by many Arabs as a 'stab in the back'. Jordanian national identity would now be highly compromised in the eyes of many Arabs, from Morocco to Iraq.

With reference to the wider Islamic world from Africa to Asia, Jordan's recognition of the existence of Israel was similarly seen as a breaking of the ranks of the Islamic brotherhood, for example, the Ummah. Jerusalem being the third holiest city in the Muslim world and Israel being in occupation of east Jerusalem since 1967 was a damaging blow to Jordanian national identity, although this criticism has been somewhat muted recently with the securing of Jordanian rights of maintenance and refurbishment of the *haram al sharrif*. Concurrent with this criticism of Jordan was the one directed at the state by the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan and the surrounding states. This criticism of Jordanian national identity was specifically made at King Hussein, who was of the noble Hashemite lineage and therefore a descendent of the prophet. This criticism levelled against Jordan from both the Arab and Islamic quarters

had potential to do real damage to the national identity of the country. The fact that Jordan had weathered this storm since 1994 and King Abdullah II had managed to steer the fortunes of the Hashemite kingdom in a sensible direction with tacit endorsement from the said quarters bodes well for Jordan's continuing endeavour to chart a recognisable and respected national identity in the 21st century.

IV. National identity and the peace process after the death of King Hussein

In the aftermath of King Hussein's death, the new king chose not to visit Israel for around 14 months while he adapted to his position as leader of the country. This initial reluctance to make a state visit was annoying to the Israelis, but King Abdullah might have been concerned about the danger of making a public and media worthy mistake so early in his administration.

King Abdullah came to power in 1999 and continued King Hussein's policy with regard to Israel and the peace process. The new, western educated and western oriented king said that his first priority was Jordan, and that he wanted to see a less corrupt, and more prosperous country. King Hussein's attachment to Jerusalem soon disappeared from Jordanian priorities, and did not seem to be missed by Jordanians.⁴⁰¹

In September 2000, the Al Aqsa intifada broke out, and like the Arab and the Muslim worlds, the Jordanian public envisaged a fight against an Israeli attempt to destroy the logic of the Oslo peace process, which they understood as leading inexorably to a Palestinian state in all of the West Bank, with Jerusalem as its capital. If King Hussein

⁴⁰¹ Marwan Muasher, *The Arab center: the promise of moderation*. New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2008, p.108.

was alive to make some contribution to the disposition of the Haram al Sheriff, the intifada could have been avoided. Nevertheless, Jordan and King Abdullah were not consulted at the Camp David negotiations; nor were they involved in the outbreak of the second intifada.⁴⁰² However, all Jordanians publicly adopted the cause of the Palestinians, and attitudes towards Israel that were already cool became icy. Israeli diplomats were attacked on the streets of Amman, which led to the withdrawal of diplomats' families, and after the Jordanian Ambassador to Israel resigned, no successor was sent. Israel warned its citizens to avoid travelling to Jordan.

Jordanian attitudes seemed to have reached the point that prescient observers feared even during the days of 1994-1996. The anti-normalisers had routed the normalisers from the field, although their leftist and Islamist baggage did not represent the views of most Jordanians. For them, working with Israel and consorting with Israelis was now seen as an anti-Islamic and anti-Arab act. The blacklist of those who were deemed to be collaborators and therefore traitors to the Palestinian cause, which had been in the process of compilation for years, was released and was made generally available. Many of those who appeared on it were solid and well-known Jordanian citizens. These were types of people typically opposed by the Islamists and leftists, and were western oriented. They were mostly from the Christian community in Jordan, and often strong supporters of the Jordanian monarchy.⁴⁰³

In retrospect, the only way an Israeli-Jordanian peace could have succeeded was if an Israeli-Palestinian peace had also been signed. This was obvious to the Jordanians, but

⁴⁰² Efraim Karsh, *Israel, the Hashemites, and the Palestinians: The Fateful Triangle*, P.R. Kumaraswamy, Frank Cass, 2003, p.160.

⁴⁰³ Ibid.

much less so to the Israeli government. The East Bank Jordanian leadership, and especially the more nationalistic among the East Bank elite, also had hopes that Jordan's specific national interest could make the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty work. The fight over normalisation in Jordan is in some respects a conflict that goes beyond the merits of dealing with Israel. On the side of the anti-normalizers are the Islamists who are seeking for a Jordanian and even a pan-Islamic state governed by Islamic law (*sharia'a*) plus assorted leftists and pan-Arabists. The other side is more complex, as much of the educated, westernised elite, especially of east Jordanian background, would prefer to have good economic, political and even cultural relations with Israel, but know that this is impossible without resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli dispute.

The question now is whether the popular feeling against Israel will become so strong that the government in Jordan will have to acquiesce with overt support to break relations with Israel, and this is what most people in Jordan are asking for at the present time. Even then, security cooperation could very possibly continue, because the fact that the two governments share important geostrategic interests is unavoidable. If there is a settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, there is little reason to believe that Jordan's popular perception of Israel will not improve to some degree, and especially if Israel's policy includes economic measures that are supportive of the weak Jordanian economy. This is what Jordan has been looking for since the 1994 peace treaty signing, and whether these measures can or will be undertaken by Israel remains to be seen.

This analysis has demonstrated how the ongoing tense relations with Israel impact upon the future national trajectory of Jordan and its citizens. During times of tension, the peace agreement that Jordan signed in 1994 comes under greater scrutiny, and in some quarters, there are even calls for its revocation. It is in the long-term interests of Jordan

that concerted and steady progress is made towards a just and durable peace settlement. With the establishment of a Palestinian state, the political elite of Jordan could rest assured that Jordan would have a separate identity that is distinct from the Palestinian national identity. For Jordan to develop a cohesive, open and confident national identity in the future, it is imperative that the peace with Israel brings real dividends. There needs to be both economic prosperity and more liberalisation of the Jordanian political apparatus, especially in the wake of the tumultuous developments of the ‘Arab Spring’. The evolution of Jordanian national identity has always been tied in with the Palestinian question, resolution of which is partly dependent upon amicable relations with Israel, the regional ‘strong man’. Jordan cannot develop a clear and confident national identity until the Palestinian tragedy is resolved. Given the murky history of the relations of both Israel and Jordan, which one scholar has termed collusion across the Jordan, and given that up until 1988, Jordan insisted upon retaining control of the West Bank, this will not easily be erased from the Palestinian psyche.

V. Peace with Israel and the future of Jordanian identity

The purpose of this chapter was not to outline the contours of the peace agreement with Israel, but to analyse the key points that need to be discussed in order to secure a warm relationship. This section of the chapter will look at the prerequisites for a just and workable peace agreement and improving Jordanian-Israeli relations.

There is agreement among top-level leadership figures in Jordan as to what needs to happen in order to find a resolution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The establishment of a Palestinian country and a just resolution of the refugee problem are important requirements, without which attempts at normalisation will lack popular agreement and

involvement. What this means is that Jordanian leaders are of the belief that a warm peace with Israel is really dependent upon the latter's actions, and no durable peace is possible unless Israel permits the establishment of a Palestinian state and a solution to the refugee crisis.

There was agreement in the literature and research work undertaken that Jordanian economic requirements had to be met, and promises given in this regard had to be sustained and delivered. Before 1994, Jordan was led to believe that as a result of the peace agreement, Israel would help the people of Jordan to make the desert bloom as part of the peace agreement, and the US helped abolish Jordan's foreign debt, which enhanced Jordan's willingness to make the peace agreement with Israel. As the research has demonstrated, people in Jordan must see a positive impact on their living standards, and this positive impact has to be traceable to the peace agreement.

Another point that became evident during the research was that the United States has to be more involved and more determined to have all parties sign up to obligations and to work in concert to tackle violence. In September 2003, the third year of the second intifada was celebrated, with demonstrations taking place across the West Bank and Gaza Strip. However, the research shows that scholars and commentators believed the intifada to be weak and perhaps a lost cause. Recent research for this project has shown that the second intifada did not yield any real results apart from strong Israeli retribution.⁴⁰⁴

The economic situation in the occupying territories is continually deteriorating because

⁴⁰⁴ Lori Allen, 2003, 'Uncertainty and disquiet mark intifada's third anniversary' Middle East Research and Information Project, Middle East Report Online.

of closures and curfews that restrict the people to their houses for many days at a time. The important point here is that while there is little support for more violence, there is equally very little support to see the violence subside overnight, and this is an opinion shared by the inhabitants of the refugee camps in Jordan. The mood of the people in Jordan and the occupied territories is that there is no viable alternative to confrontation because the end of violence would mark the end of any serious pressure on Israel to come to the negotiating table.⁴⁰⁵

The findings of this research suggest that for Jordan to build a cohesive national identity, it is important for the Middle East peace process to stay on track, undeterred by violence, with strong international support, particularly in the area of monitoring peace, as well as strong economic support to give peace a monetary dimension. Members of the Jordanian political elite do believe that peace with Israel is possible; however, this is contingent upon a just resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli dispute. The research found that many Jordanians in middle level leadership positions, particularly those in universities and colleges in Jordan, maintained that it would be very difficult to make young Jordanians believe Israel could be a friend. Many of the younger generation in Jordan believe that Israel is the eternal enemy, and so would not become a partner in peace in the short term.

The political middle level leadership in Jordan was found to be divided into an ideology-based opposition. This is the normalisation movement composed of the Muslim Brotherhood and the socialists in Jordan. The other movement in Jordan is the nationalists. The members of the Muslim Brotherhood are not necessarily opposed to

⁴⁰⁵ Mutayyam al O'ran, *Jordanian-Israeli relations, the peace building experience*, Routledge, 2009, p. 80.

peace and normalisation with Israel, but had one condition: that the state be for all its citizens and not be a specifically Jewish state. To many members of the Islamic opposition, any negotiations or deals over the Palestinian state are not justified, as the area between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean should be referred to as historical Palestine. As for the Jordanian nationalists, they are more pragmatic in their approach, since they see no harm in making peace with Israel and accepting its existence; however, they too believe there should be a Palestinian state for the refugees. As far as the title of this thesis is concerned, emotional ties to a pan-Arabic identification are at variance with those currents working towards a specifically Jordanian identity.

VI. The evolution of identity in Jordan and relations with Israel

The state of Jordan in the Middle East is a unique development. This is in relation to the formation of the country and the development of its specific identity, particularly in relation to where it is situated in the map of the region. As my research has demonstrated in the early chapters, Jordan was a somewhat artificial creation in the immediate post World War I period. This difficult territorial and population history gave rise to a very interesting social and political development: in place of a slow evolution of one overarching national identity, a number of collective identities came into being, sometimes building on one another, and sometimes developing in tandem.⁴⁰⁶

Jordanian-Israeli relations present a harder case of state behaviour under conditions of high security and political pressures. It has been widely assumed that Jordan and Israel

⁴⁰⁶ Linda L. Layne, *Home and homeland; the dialogics of tribes and national identities in Jordan*, Princeton, 1994, p.20 ; and Schirin H. Fathi, *Jordan – an invented nation?* Hamburg, 1994, pp.10, 201.

share important strategic interests, which serve as the foundation of interstate cooperation. On the other hand, Israel has been the constitutive 'other' in Arabist discourse, and the long-standing covert but widely known Jordanian-Israeli relations comprised its avowed identity. The sharp contradiction between the demands of the identity (Israel as an enemy) and interest (Israel as necessary partner) has long been of central concern.⁴⁰⁷ Avi Shlaim advances a very interesting thesis in his book that there was secret collusion between the Zionist entity and the Hashemite monarchy across the river Jordan. The book, when published in 1988, created a controversy, both in the Arab world and among Israeli intellectuals. The thesis of the book has interesting implications for my identity study, namely that there may be a very intimate and close connection, a mutual interest you might say, between Israeli state formation and Jordanian identity formation.⁴⁰⁸ The peace treaty signed in 1994 forced direct engagement with these contradictions. While opposition to the treaty did refer to interests, a surprising amount of its public argumentations focused on Jordan's Arab identity. Opponents argued that the formal treaty with Israel would cause Jordan to lose its Arab and Islamic identity. Whilst the Jordanian government explained the state interests achieved in the treaty, the opposition denied the priority of these interests in relation to wider Arab interests and identity. Israeli arguments that the Israeli deterrent would protect Jordan against threats from its Arab neighbours might have reflected private discussions with officials from the Jordanian army, but could not be usefully advanced in the Jordanian public sphere; the substitution of Israeli for Arab friends

⁴⁰⁷ Ephraim Kam, 'The future of strategic relations between Jordan and Israel', Jaffa Center for Strategic Studies, Strategic Assessment 2, Volume 1, June 1999, p.20.

⁴⁰⁸ Avi Shlaim, *Collusion across the Jordan: King Abdullah, the Zionist movement, and the partition of Palestine*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1988, pp.41-56.

could not be reconciled with the existing Jordanian identity discourse.

The regime responded with a comprehensive frame linking Jordan's interests to regional transformation, which would forestall a direct confrontation between the two incompatible identities. King Hussein tapped into a discourse of peace in which forces among both the Arab and extremists who challenged those on the Israeli side who wanted peace were challenged by more radical elements. The regime demonstrated the link between identity and interests by justifying the peace treaty with Israel on the basis of specifically Jordanian interests without reference to Arab or Palestinian interests.

The government emphasised the return of Jordanian occupied territories and some of its rights to water, along with potential for economic gains through joint investments and trade. Overall, the official discourse held up the decisive response to the Israeli 'Jordan is Palestine' claim as the single most important achievement. As Fahd al Fanek, a Jordanian columnist, mentioned during an interview with *Al Rai* newspaper: 'the fundamental benefit to peace is to confirm the Jordanian Identity.'⁴⁰⁹ The only interests invoked were Jordanian interests, defined to exclude all conceptions of Jordan included in either Palestinian or Arab identity.

⁴⁰⁹ Fahad al Fanik, interview in *Al Rai* newspaper, June 1998.

VII. The future prospects for Jordanian-Israel relations and identity formation

The leaders of both Jordan and Israel highlighted their intentions for a long peace between the countries when they signed the peace treaty in 1994. Both Tel Aviv and Amman hoped that normalisation of relations would bring a new peace to the Middle East. In Jordan, the monarchy tried to change people's attitudes toward Israel. One could find in the mid and late 1990s indications that normalisation was beginning to win approval in the minds of many Jordanians. The peace treaty with Israel also involved the re-configuration of Jordanian identity, with a stress on Jordanian interests and a downplaying of the Arab identity.

The study has demonstrated that three factors were responsible for the failure for normalization. I) Israel acted to undermine the belief of the Jordanians in the possibility of a regional peace; II) The monarchy reversed the political liberalisation project to deal with the anti-normalisation opposition movement; III) The expected benefits of peace did not materialise.⁴¹⁰ Ultimately, King Abdullah II inherited a situation where he was compelled to re-orientate the alliance with Israel towards a focus on better ties with the American government. Jordan's identity when making the peace with Israel highlighted regional relations and its own state interests at the expense of pan-Arabism; however, with the loss of confidence in the treaty, Jordan's identity resurrected its transnational

⁴¹⁰ Paul L. Scham and Russel E. Lucas, 'Normalization and anti normalization in Jordan: the public debate', *Israel Affairs*, Vol 9, No 3, Spring 2003, pp.141-164.

relations with the United States, with a greater dependency on the sole superpower emerging.⁴¹¹

The territorial and demographic tests of the Hashemite kingdom since its beginning in 1921 as a loose framework have shaped the nature of the various collective Jordanian identities that have emerged. The most important factor the study has highlighted appears to be geographical rather than people related. The Jordanian idea of *wataniya* has prevailed as the dominant national ideology, even though the majority of the population are of Palestinian descent. For the foreseeable future, it is likely to remain this way, with acceptance amongst Palestinians of the political dominance of the Jordanians and Jordanians' realisation that they must recognise the Palestinian majority and share with them not only power but also the historical national identity of Jordan. In sum, my work is highlighting that efforts to 'Jordanise' Palestinians or 'Palestinise' Jordanians have not succeeded. Since disengagement, the concept of a Jordanian national identity as a joint project of Transjordanian and Palestinian elements has won greater acceptance.

There has been a foreword amongst Jordanians and Palestinians in the country towards a positive identification with Jordanian national identity. As one noted scholar has highlighted, the answers to the questions of 'who is a Jordanian?' and 'who is a Palestinian?' may be different today from what they would have been before disengagement.⁴¹²

Ironically, the failure of the peace treaty with Israel has brought the Palestinian and

⁴¹¹ Marc Lynch, *State interests and public spheres: the international politics of Jordan's identity*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1999, pp.200-201.

⁴¹² Laurie A. Brand, 'Palestinians and Jordanians: a crises of identity', *Journal of Palestinian Studies*, Vol XXIV, No 4, Summer 1995, p.47.

Jordanian people together to chart a future in a more clearly defined Jordanian national identity that gives hope to both peoples and contributes to the delineation of a more inclusive and tolerant Jordanian future identity. The Israeli dimension in this discussion is key to recognising that a Jordanian identity cannot be divorced wholly from the Jewish state across the River Jordan.⁴¹³ As this chapter has demonstrated, Jordan's relationship with Israel is tortuous and dependent on a combination of factors: Jordan will have to work with Israel for its future stability, and it will also have to incorporate its Palestinian population more fully for it to chart a delicate and progressive future that outlines a strong and more deeply rooted Jordanian national identity.

Conclusion

The chapter of the thesis has suggested a constructivist link between change, identity and the conducting of foreign policy. One is in a position to question the idea that identity is a product of ethnic, religious, cultural or state interests. In place of these traditional understandings, the experience of Jordan post disengagement demonstrates that struggles over identity in the national and international settings give birth to pockets of interests that key elements within the country then try to realise at all costs. Since 1988, Jordan's identity has changed, particularly since it has concluded a difficult peace with Israel in 1994. All of these elements have led to very different understandings of Jordan's identity and interests. The more vocal interpretations of the Arab dimension of Jordan's identity constrained the ability of the monarchy to publicly

⁴¹³ Joseph Nevo, 'Is there a Jordanian entity', *The Jerusalem Quarterly*, Vol 16, Spring 1980, pp.108-109.

side with Israel. Even those Jordanians who would have benefited from peace publicly at least tried to demonstrate adherence to Jordan's Arab identity.

This chapter has also analysed Jordan's relations with Israel from the beginning of its existence to the present day. It has shown how the relationship between the two states has demonstrated both cordiality and deep mistrust. The chapter focused on the peace agreement between the two countries in 1994 and has shown how despite promising a great deal, the treaty failed to deliver on peace and security. Jordanian national identity has had to evolve very carefully, while making subtle reference to its neighbour to the west. Jordan both defines itself with respect to

Israel as being Arab, Islamic, native to the region, monarchical and tribal in a positive sense. It also looks to make similarities with Israel by styling itself as progressive, modern, advanced, democratic and liberal in its governance.

In this context of struggle between the government and the opposition to establish a dominant public frame, popular opposition to the treaty was not foreordained or inherent in Palestinian communal identity, Islamic beliefs or Arab culture. Identity does not produce interests but rather forms the articulation of interests in public political struggles. Improved relations with Israel involved both strategic interests in state-to-state co-operation and also fundamental challenges to the Arab dimension of Jordanian-Arab identity. To conclude this paragraph, Jordan's disengagement from the West Bank in 1988 offers a very powerful argument for the very real relationship between Jordanian identity and geostrategic interests.

Chapter Five: The Arab Spring and National Identity in Jordan

This chapter will analyse the unfolding events of the Arab Spring and how it has impacted on Jordan. Particular attention will be paid to the crises unfolding in neighbouring Syria. With the region in turmoil and the Syrian refugee problem in Jordan, there has been a greater discussion of national identity in Jordan and, in some aspects, a greater emphasis on an exclusive Jordanian national identity.

Introduction to the Arab Spring protest

In the spring of 2011, the Arab world witnessed the beginning of popular political upheaval. Starting in Tunisia, the protest movement in the Arab world spread region wide, with democratic movements subsequently gaining momentum in Egypt, followed by popular protests in Bahrain, Libya, Yemen and Syria. At its core, the Arab Spring is a popular rejection of the uncivil Arab state that represents the historically discontinuous and colonially imposed oppressive state apparatus in the Arab world.

⁴¹⁴This oppressive and externally imposed apparatus, initially constructed by the former colonial regimes, was subsequently inherited and refined by the post-colonial indigenous rulers, whether in the form of military rulers or traditional monarchies. By the 21st century, the mass rejection of the uncivil state represented not only a struggle

⁴¹⁴ Jacqueline S. Ismael and Shereen T. Ismael, The Arab Spring and the uncivil state, *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol 25, No 3, special issue: Perspectives on the Arab Uprising, summer 2013, p.227

for democracy, but also an attempt to construct an indigenous, authentic new politics that represent the popular will of the Middle Eastern people.⁴¹⁵

The protestors forced the ousting of the most powerful and ruthless rulers of the region. Tunisian ruler Zain al Abedeen ben Ali was forced to leave his country and head into exile in Saudi Arabia in January 2011. The Egyptian president was also forced out of power by the Egyptian people with the help of the army in February 2012 and was sentenced to life in prison.⁴¹⁶ Meanwhile, a rebellion against Libya's ruler, Muammar al Gaddafi, accelerated into an armed conflict, eventually drawing in an intervention by Western forces, which were brought in to support the Libyan opposition on the purported basis of an international responsibility to protect innocent civilians.⁴¹⁷ Finally, Syria was locked into a brutal civil war in March 2011 between Bashar al Assad's forces and the free Syrian army, where the spectre of sectarianism and regional proxy wars has taken hold.⁴¹⁸

Aided by modern technologies, the Arab Spring movement subverted the tired repressive technologies of the ancient regimes of the Middle East. An area of the world that was previously a byword for political stagnation and autocratic rule was transformed in 2011-2012 into an intense battle for the future of the Middle East, bringing in participants representing liberals and leftists, Islamists and nationalists,

⁴¹⁵ Jacqueline S. Ismael and Shereen T. Ismael, The Arab Spring and the uncivil state, *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol 25, No 3, special issue: Perspectives on the Arab Uprising, summer 2013, p.229.

⁴¹⁶ Hamza Hendawi, Egypt's Mubarak sentenced to life in prison, Associated Press, June 2nd, <http://news.yahoo.com/egypts-mubarak-sentenced-life-prison-100619336.html> Accessed on 15/11/2014.

⁴¹⁷ David Rieff, R2P RIP. New York Times, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/08/opinion/r2p-rip.html> Accessed on 17/11/2014.

⁴¹⁸ Yasir Ghazi and Tim Arrango, Iraqi militants pour into Syria turning civil war into sectarian war. Minneapolis Star tribune, October 27 2012 edition, <http://www.startribune.com/world/17611591.html>, Accessed on 20/11/2014

along with elements of the contested regimes.⁴¹⁹

As the above has explained the larger context of the Arab spring must not be forgotten when analysing the Jordanian case. The unfolding of the tumultuous events in countries surrounding Jordan accelerated demands for change in the country. Although the protests in Jordan were not as violent like those in Syria and Egypt, nevertheless, the monarchy was mindful of the potential for the protests to spiral out of control. King Abdullah had a difficult balancing act to follow, and in order to safeguard the monarchy and his interests, he emphasised Jordanian national identity and the future of a stable and prosperous Jordan dependant on grass roots support, with change coming from the bottom up, not violent and oppositional politics.

Section A: The Arab Spring

(i) An overview of the Arab Spring in Middle East politics

The powers and belief systems that propelled the modern political narrative of the Middle East from 19th century changes in government and through much of the 20th century were largely irreligious and nation-state orientated.⁴²⁰ Religious politics was always there, but only in part, and often subservient, to the wider governmental subject area. It was divided into conservatives trying to maintain male-dominated and institutional freedoms, like many of the conservative religious scholars, and a more recent populist civil society, such as the Muslim Brotherhood. Conflicting parties and

⁴¹⁹ Jacqueline S. Ismael and Shereen T. Ismael, The Arab Spring and the uncivil state, *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol 25, No 3, special issue: Perspectives on the Arab Uprising, summer 2013, p.230.

⁴²⁰ S. Zubaida, *Beyond Islam: A New Understanding of the Middle East*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2011, pp.77-114.

varied belief systems were nationalist orientated but of different colours, manifested at times as Westminster constitutionalism, as in the Wafd party and other movements in dynastic Egypt, or as nationalism and socialism in Nazi Germany-inspired parties during the interwar period in Iraq.⁴²¹

Palestine and Egypt, then, forcefully introduced communist, statist concepts in the pan-Arab nationalisms of Nasser, the Ba'ath and the Algerian FLN, propelled by and allied to the Russians from the 1950s. These conceptual politics, especially Nasser's Egypt, had very permanent populist social bases and sympathies throughout the near east and in connection to the ever-present Arab-Israeli conflict. The importance of Islam in politics came much later, from the 1970s onwards, partly following the failure and corruption of the populist military governments, the success of the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran, the dismemberment of the USSR and the communist world, which had been part of the conceptual and military-inspired scenario. Within this political analysis, the secular dimension of contemporary social movements is not a revelation, but their distance from racist nationalism and state-oriented communism, in favour of common liberties, is a new departure. The next question that arises is what this entails for the immediate future of the Middle East.⁴²²

It is significant that 'democracy' delineated in terms of elections, however transparent, contributes to the justification of this scenario. Elections move forward nativist and religious sectarian social bases and justify the sharing of political power and resources between corrupt politicians sitting over ministries which become resource centres for

⁴²¹ P. Wien, *Iraqi Arab Nationalism: Authoritarian, Totalitarian, and Pro Fascist Inclinations, 1932-1941*. London: Routledge, 2006, pp.56-112.

⁴²² Sami Zubaida, 'The Arab Spring in the Historical Perspectives of Middle East Politics', *Economy and Society Journal*, Vol 41, No 4, 2012, pp.568-579.

groups and different networks of people. This is the effect of elections without civil society frameworks and legal mechanisms to check accountability and strengthen social and majoritarian party rule.⁴²³

Iraq, of course, is a very particular and special case, owing its liberation to the ‘American invasion’. The countries that are now experiencing the changes of the Arab Spring are different, as is the process of political change. The political arena and the opposition TV and radio stations in Egypt were never completely destroyed by the Mubarak government, and they have come to fruition after the revolution. The various parties that lead the call for change raised the words of liberty, freedom, reform, change, and social accountability, with very little or no reference to the concerns of the ethnic and Islamic politics that gave rise to previous opposition parties.⁴²⁴

Yet the social bases and the institutional organisation for such participatory politics are basically not present, having been destroyed during the many years of authoritarian rule. It is important to note that the removal of Mubarak and his colleagues has not really transformed the government of Egypt, and the present military rulers, who have deep ties to the old ruler, are not about to hand over power to the elected representatives of the people. The religious parties and the city-wide bosses can mobilise votes and support, and a very early friendship is emerging between them and the military against the revolutionary forces that propelled the changes.

The Muslim Brotherhood and the more fundamentalist Salafist movement gained a

⁴²³ Ibid., p.577.

⁴²⁴ David Held and Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, The Arab Spring and the changing balance in global power, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/arab-awakening/david-held-kristian-coates-ulrichsen/arab-spring-and-changing-balance-of-global-power> Accessed on 16/11/2014

majority victory in the January 2012 parliamentary elections. It is important to note that in the last round of the presidential elections in June 2012, the vote was equally split amongst many contenders: Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood and Mohammad Shafeeq representing the old regime and the 'deep state'. On the positive side, the more liberal and socialist candidates did rather well in the first round.⁴²⁵

Syria is an even more difficult case in this respect: it is very difficult to see a scenario for political change if the government should fall. The movement for freedom in Syria started in the poor and marginal areas, most notably Dara'a, from a population that had reached the limits of disaffection from poverty and state suppression, enraged by a barbaric act of state violence and feeling weak and humiliated by the regional Assad government. This was soon taken up by the literate middle classes and the socially connected younger generation, with talk of liberty and social accountability, just like their compatriots in Egypt and elsewhere in the region.⁴²⁶

The above-mentioned revolutionary changes in Iraq and Syria show that Jordan cannot remain unaffected by these changes for long; the problem for the regime is to second-guess where these changes are to impact Jordan. For King Abdullah II and his government, given the changes that are happening in the neighbouring countries, the identity of Jordan needs to be both dynamic and cognisant of Arab Spring vocabulary, and, at the same time, pay heed to state conceptions of Jordan as a pillar of longevity in an otherwise tumultuous region.⁴²⁷

The prerequisite for identity formation in Jordan is to second guess what happens in the

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

⁴²⁷ 'Arab spring is different in each country', <http://www.kingabdullah.jo>, Accessed on November 15 2014.

neighbouring countries: King Abdullah must concede to the opposition some legitimate demands, and yet he must also not encourage too much revolutionary change in case this backfires and initiates a movement that he subsequently cannot control.⁴²⁸

(ii) A preliminary analysis of the Arab spring protests

The Syrian conflict has incrementally entered into Jordanian political life to play a significant part in shaping opposition alliances and regime policies towards the popular opposition movement. Towards the end of 2010, Jordanian public sentiment was very feverish, and demonstrations against corruption and the cost of commodities, in particular petrol prices and basic staples such as imported flour, sugar and meat, were common. In addition to these issues that angered the public, the difficulties associated with efforts by Jordanian governments to open the Jordanian market indiscriminately to foreign and private investments were very apparent on the national stage, whereas before they had been more likely to be handled locally via the negotiations of family, tribal, social and political organisations.⁴²⁹

As the above analysis has demonstrated, political disenfranchisement was not the only grievance for the protesters on the streets of the capital; there were socioeconomic factors at play also, chief amongst them being the rise of the cost of living and the hardship many middle and low middle class families faced. In this state of anxiety and flux, the regime was careful to defend itself by evoking ideas of national solidarity and the promotion of a strong national identity that would safeguard Jordanian interests at

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

⁴²⁹ 'Thousands protest in Jordan',

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/01/2011128125157509196.html>, Accessed 16/11/2014

home and abroad.

iii) The Arab Spring opposition movement in Jordan

The prevailing narratives are all in agreement that Jordan's state and society can be characterised as being essentially tribal and divided between Palestinians and East Jordanians. Insider and outsider political viewpoints have been analysed based on this division. This analytical viewpoint of Jordan was formed in the early 1970s after the terrible events of black September. This approach does not provide any information about important differences regarding city, nomad or peasant loyalties, as it groups all these aspects under the aspect of tribalism. The current scholarly discourse that segments Jordanian society between its Palestinian part and its Jordanian part is itself employed by the Jordanian government to emphasise its right to rule and its ability to safeguard societal and regional peace. This is also a narrative used by some opposition voices in Eastern Jordan, either against the Hashemites as the ruling family, at the expense of other groups in the East Jordanian community, or against the monarchy as a political entity, at the expense of other political structures, such as a republic.⁴³⁰

However, the protests that swelled up with the eruption of the Arab Spring indicated that there are parts of Jordanian society that are different from the prevailing discourse. My analysis has shown that there is a need to distinguish, on the one hand, the protests that originated in popular discontent at the Jordanian government's record in safeguarding public affairs, in particular, corruption, high living costs and unemployment, and, on the other hand, official opposition groups that exploited the

⁴³⁰ Hana Jaber, 'Jordan: Protests, Opposition Politics and the Syrian Crisis', *The Arab Reform Initiative*, July 2014, p.3. <http://www.arab-reform.net/sites/default/files/20140725%20%20Jaber%20-%20Jordan%20and%20the%20Syria%20crisis.pdf>. Accessed on 17 September 2014.

ongoing discontent to push themselves forward onto the political stage.

The Islamists were heading up the official opposition, represented by the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood, which indirectly started from the Palestinian resistance movement. Despite martial law forbidding the formation of political parties for nearly 40 years, the Muslim Brotherhood movement survived through this difficult time by changing itself into a charitable organisation, thus becoming an important player in the building of the Jordanian monarchical government. The appearance of the Islamic Action Front as an opposition movement in the post-disengagement period was no more than the open and public expression of this role and its manifold contradictions.

There were also pan-Arab nationalist and socialist trends, or those with Nasserist, leftist, or populist leanings. The most important socialist parties are the Communist Party, the Jordanian Democratic People's Party and the Democratic Popular Unity Party. Arab nationalist parties include the Socialist Ba'ath Party, the Arab Progressive Ba'ath Party and the Direct Democratic Nationalistic Movement.

As my thesis has demonstrated, the number of registered parties increased so much between 2010 and 2014 that it became very difficult to monitor them with certainty, due partly to the parties' disappearances, merges and name changes that have accompanied the changing public narrative in the country. My analysis shows that a rise in the number of parties provides a very clear indication for researchers that Jordan already enjoys a party democratic pluralism, unlike countries like Tunisia, Libya, Yemen and Syria, where the monopolisation of political power by authoritarian regimes is apparent. My examination of the rise in the number of political parties since 2010, and, in particular, since the start of the Arab Spring, leads to a number of observations. First and most importantly, there is an absence of a clearly defined political, social or even people-oriented agenda in most of the parties' manifestos. Second, I found in my

fieldwork that there are very limited data that allow researchers to analyse the quantity and the quality of the members of these parties.

The current opposition narrative of the Jordanian political scene before the start of the Arab Spring intrinsically connected domestic and regional goals, especially with regard to the Palestinian issue analysed in Chapter Three. This delayed both the political and economic plans for change in Jordan until after the goal of self-determination of the Palestinians could be realised.

My analyses and conclusion to this section confirm that the Arab Spring has compelled the different Jordanian political opposition groups to work together within the purely Jordanian social and political reality, as distinct from the Palestinian issue. I think it was therefore a surprise that the Syrian civil war, as it became more complicated and had growing repercussions for neighbouring states, especially Jordan, would eventually lead to a polarisation that would halt Jordan's internal reform movement, which had been praised despite the fact that the protests were entering their third year. All this has demonstrated that identity formation in Jordan continues to be in flux, and the civil wars raging in Syria and Iraq mean that Jordanians are increasingly apprehensive about events on the horizon and do not intend to alter their status quo radically. Identity in this respect has largely coalesced around the figure of King Abdullah II and the royal armed forces. People around the country are apprehensive and reluctant about a sudden and dramatic change in the future of the country. For the time being at least, Jordanian identity is secure and open, but cautiously guarded, and it has in recent years focused most evidently on its historical anchor of religion, king and nation.

iv) The effects of the Arab Spring in Jordan

The Arab Spring, which began in January 2011, swept through Tunisia, Syria and Egypt, but did not affect Jordan. The system of government in Jordan was affected by the demands of the protestors, and the monarchy had to introduce some changes, albeit superficial, to appease the demands of the reformers. There is the very real danger that those sectors of Jordanian society that have depended on the monarchy may switch sides, feeling that siding with the monarchy will ultimately prove life-threatening.

The regime is dependent upon its traditional base of support on the East Bank of Jordan and cannot rely wholly on the basic support of the upwardly mobile Palestinian strata. The King can feel relatively ensconced with a sound base of support within the public sector; besides, the division of the electoral constituencies in Jordan has historically favoured support for the monarchy. On the other hand, the Jordanians of Palestinian origin suffer from marginalisation and exclusion from key positions in the state. And so they are sometimes treated unfairly. The memory of Black September dominates their view of the central authorities, which increases their sense of marginalisation. The issue of identity has been paramount for Jordan in the 21st century as the country moves forward to chart a new future under the young king. Key issues that concern the young generation in Jordan include how to reconcile the Jordanian identity with the pan-Arab identity. Jordan must look forward and construct an identity that is rooted in the tribal tradition, the monarchical position and, finally, in the Palestinian dimension. National identity is key to the security of Jordan. The people of Jordan must feel that their hopes and aspirations are catered for and an identity is carved that is not at odds with the region-wide demand for democratic liberalisation.

However, the traditional source of influence for middle-class Jordanians, represented by their relationship with the state, suffered damage due to the wave of privatisation and rampant corruption, as well as the concentration of resources in the hands of a new elite in the private sector enjoying special privileges and easy access to the royal palace. As a result, it was concluded by many East Bankers that the solution was the addressing of economic grievances that require political reforms, including constitutional and electoral reforms. This coincided with the Islamic movement itself making more realistic demands.

The Islamic movement in Jordan, although led by the Muslim Brotherhood, has always chosen to operate within the system and not against it. The Brotherhood in Jordan is an organisation that works for incremental slow change, and it must not be confused with the more extreme expressions of political Islam associated with Syria and Iraq. Islam is a basic aspect of national identity in Jordan, and the country cannot disassociate itself from its Islamic moorings. The King and the governing apparatus cannot afford to sideline the expressions of political Islam making headline news. In order to diffuse the momentum of the Islamic opposition, the King must co-opt the moderate elements in the Brotherhood.⁴³¹

While it was relatively easy in the past to take advantage of the monarchy divisions separating East Bankers from Palestinian Jordanians, it has become difficult for the system to contain the protests by dividing the protesters, as it gave rise to alliances of transient groups around specific demands for political reform, which challenges the

⁴³¹ Jacob Amis, 'Jordanian Brotherhood and the Arab spring', Hudson Institute, December 27, 2012. <http://www.hudson.org/research/9876-the-jordanian-brotherhood-in-the-arab-spring>, Accessed on 10/11/2014.

dominance of practices based on identity politics. Although most of the East Bankers and Jordanian Palestinians are not united in their anger, the renewed anger of both sides could mark the beginning of what is the greatest threat to monarchical stability in Jordan. The Palestinians of Jordanian descent have historically demanded a more open and freer governance. They have been less inclined to a monarchical system of governance and more demanding of change in the government style. In contrast, the East Bank population has favoured more stable and lasting relations with the monarchy, which has historically been the bedrock of Jordanian political stability. The regime has been dependent upon the population of the East Bank, and the identity formation has therefore been closely representative of East Jordanian interests.⁴³²

Up until recently, the way in which the system responded was always historically receptive to the demands of its key support base, and the King has overseen amendments and changes in the law in this respect. The ministerial committee, which has been mandated to explore potential reforms, is charged with a critical mission at a time when the authorities are seeking to exacerbate the hostility between the two communities of the Palestinians and the East Bankers. It can be argued that this combination of tactics has been successful so far, as the protests have failed to reach the stage of critical mass demonstrations along the lines of some of the other revolutions of the Arab Spring, as they are merely modest alternatives to address the causes of anger. The king is trying his best in a very difficult situation to appease opposition elements that are overly critical of the regime. He is walking a tightrope, where he has to appease

⁴³² Lamis al Muhtaseb, 'Jordan's East Banker-Palestinian Schism, *Norwegian Peace Building Resource Centre Journal*, pp.1-4, http://www.peacebuilding.no/var/ezflow_site/storage/original/application/746892aacedd3e8fcb1ff7370a77fb67.pdf Accessed on 15/1/2015.

overly critical opposition; the King also has to be mindful of the Arab Spring raging around his country. The coming years are set to be very critical for the regime: it must espouse and formulate a key policy initiative that is based on the identity formation and the incorporation of competing demands. Jordan needs an identity that is rooted in its indigenous traditions but that is also accepting of a changing Middle East and acknowledges tensions and struggles as emergent democracies fight to take root.

It would be wise to postpone the elections, especially amid mounting pressure to dissolve parliament after the hearing on the issue of the casino and the recently started process of privatisation of the phosphate mines persuaded many that the current parliament is not serious in eradicating corruption. The recent arrest of activists and peaceful advocates of reform shows that the government still considers the protest movement primarily as a security threat. This, as well as the lack of accountability of those responsible for a series of attacks against demonstrators since the beginning of 2011, shows that Jordan still has a long way to go to safeguard political and civil liberties, which are indispensable in any genuine political reform process.⁴³³

A long-term plan for Jordan requires a serious addressing of issues that various members of the Jordanian population are unhappy about. But patience is key, and the government must respond at a measured pace and implement real reforms. The government must make credible reforms in the electoral system and provide a more equitable representation of the urban centres, as well as pay more attention to the particular needs of the social and economic development of rural areas.

⁴³³ Ian Black Election test for Jordan reform the guardian newspaper
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/on-the-middle-east/2013/jan/22/jordan-abdullah-arab-spring>
Accessed on 17/1/2015

There are also other steps that will make a difference, such as limiting the powers of the State Security Court, ensuring accountability for corruption and human rights violations, giving real powers to the parliament, establishing an elected Council of Elders, and abolishing or at least reducing the role of unelected bodies. These demands are being put forward by a younger electorate that wants to see a more open, liberal and democratic future for Jordan that facilitates the formation of a healthy, robust and dynamic new identity for the country. These are the issues that concern the younger educated strata of Jordanian society, who are upwardly mobile, more world-conscious and linked through social media. The king should modify his rhetoric and style of leadership to accommodate this new dynamic identity for Jordan. Young Jordanians are witnessing the Arab Spring and want the benefits of the Arab Spring without the drawbacks: this means they want political liberalisation, economic reform, freedom of the press and more social equity; however, they do not want the internecine social discord and civil unrest that has marred Syria, Egypt and Libya.

The king still retains some of the trump cards in his hand: the fear of destabilising the popular image of the monarchy, the political and material support Jordan receives from the United States and the Gulf states and the permanent divisions within the opposition. However, it is foolhardy to believe that there is no danger or that the prospect of radical change and strikes that lurks in the background will not sooner or later affect Jordan. The system will have to learn from the lessons of others or face a similar fate.

The preceding section has demonstrated the importance of incremental change, and of the king opening up the country to more progressive ideas. Jordan is in a critical situation: it has thus far weathered the storm of the Arab Spring; however, it cannot remain immune to the demands of younger protestors impatient for change. Identity formation is key to Jordan's stability in the 21st century. The monarchy must play a

positive role in helping to form an open identity for Jordan in this century. Jordanian identity has undergone critical checks and balances: the role of the monarchy, the role of the tribes and the role of the Palestinian population are all key to positive identity formation. Jordan will be tested severely if the war in Syria continues to rage, and there is no end in sight. The king's balancing act means he needs to maintain stability with the help of the United States and the Gulf states, and he must appease the demands of those asking for greater reform.⁴³⁴

(v) The context of the Arab Spring protests in Jordan

Jordan sits at the centre of a volatile regional environment, and over the years it has had to face the grave consequences of unending regional instability as well as the influx of Palestinian refugees into the Hashemite kingdom. These challenges remain the hallmark of political life in Jordan today, and have a profound impact on the evolving identity of the people of the country. To survive these challenges, the monarch has had to balance carefully domestic and foreign policy goals. Over the decades, the regime in Jordan has shrewdly exploited the country's geo-strategic location to secure an influx of foreign aid that has helped to create a kind of semi-rentier system similar to the one in operation in the Gulf region.⁴³⁵

For years this has helped Jordan to compensate for the lack of a strong indigenous economy. It has also shaped state-society relations in a way that allowed the monarch to overcome economic as well as political challenges by emasculating 'institutionalised

⁴³⁴ Serine Rached, 'Is Jordan Immune from the Arab Spring?', translated from *al Quds al Araby* newspaper, <http://www.alqudsalarabi.info/index.asp?fname=today%5C27qpt480.htm&arc=data%5C2012%5C03%5C03-27%5C27qpt480.htm>. Accessed on 23/4/14.

⁴³⁵ Hazem Beblawi, 'The Rentier State in the Arab World', in Giacomo Luciani (ed.), *The Arab State*, London: Routledge, 1990, pp.85-98.

opposition to its rule and relying on the distribution of benefits and privileges to create a cohesive support base and a security establishment loyal to the existing political order'.⁴³⁶ These developments have confounded identity formation in Jordan, with some people supporting the status quo and the monarchy, and others seeing in the recent changes in the Arab world an opportunity to re-orientate Jordan in a politically more progressive direction.

When Jordanians took to the streets of several cities in the spring of 1989 to protest against the government decision to raise the prices of several commodities, the late King Hussein responded to the mini-uprising by opening up the political system and allowing the fairest parliamentary election in the modern history of Jordan to take place. Opposition and international observers alike hailed the milestone elections of November 1989. These elections, however, would be an isolated episode in Jordan's quest for democracy.⁴³⁷

Despite the optimism surrounding the elections of 1989, Jordan has failed to develop a democratic system based on the rotation of power. These developments have reignited heated debates on Jordan's future and, as a corollary, what it means to be Jordanian in the 21st century: whether it entails being more in tune with the native tribal traditions and having sympathy for the monarchy and the ruling dynasty, or whether a more progressive identity is constructed by a younger population that is inclusive of Jordanian and Palestinian differences.

The state-society harmony during that period could not have been more striking. All

⁴³⁶ Julia Choucair, 'Illusive Reform: Jordan's Stubborn Stability', *Carnegie Papers*, no. 76, December 2006.

⁴³⁷ http://www.orsam.org.tr/tr/trUploads/Yazilar/Dosyalar/201229_ortadoguetutler_volume3_no2.pdf Accessed on 12/12/2014.

internal political indicators suggested that Jordan was on the right track. The political reform process continued and brought some positive progress. Above and beyond all expectations, King Hussein reached a historic reconciliation with those who wanted his regime to fail. The national charter of 1991 outlined a new framework for political participation in the Hashemite kingdom, giving the King a legitimacy that he never had before. He suspended the martial law that had been in place since 1957, thus permitting the opposition to take part in political life. For the first time in decades, the Islamic opposition in Jordan agreed to take part in the government.⁴³⁸ This was a significant step, partly because it demonstrated to the Islamist opposition that there was room for a religion-based understanding in national identity and a co-option of the Brotherhood in the national political discourse.

The number one priority for King Hussein at that time was to break from the disheartening cycle of regional and international isolation. The opportunity arose in the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference, and the peace process was key to his survival. He entered into the process forcefully despite some domestic opposition. When it looked as if Jordan was about to reach an agreement with Israel, the King re-orchestrated the domestic political scene to obtain the support he needed to reach an agreement with Israel in 1993. The agreement with Israel as analysed in Chapter Four was key to Jordan securing peace on its western border and aligning it on internal matters to address domestic grievances. This took the public's attention away from Israel, concentrating it on internal identity issues. Jordan was no longer identified with an anti-

⁴³⁸ Jordanian national charter of 1991 in United nations refugee agency Refworld.
<http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b53b4.html>
Accessed on 14/12/2014.

Israeli narrative. This development opened up new scenarios as to what being Jordanian meant in a positive role, as opposed to a negative definition.

The government changed the electoral law and restructured electoral districts to deprive the opposition of a strong voting block that could limit the king's room for manoeuvre in dealing with Israel. The king later dissolved parliament and called for early elections. Therefore, the government of Jordan turned its back on reform and resorted to a new electoral law that would guarantee a parliament that would approve whatever deal the king would strike with Israel. Reform was put on the back burner, and as of that moment power was centralised in the hands of a few.⁴³⁹

Centralisation and the silencing of the opposition, particularly with regard to matters concerning the Palestinian cause, always arouse strong emotions. The king, wary of criticism of the peace treaty, sold it to the Jordanian people by emphasising that it would bring manifold dividends to Jordan and would allow the monarchy to devote its energies to the building and advancement of the country. The ultimate goal in this scenario was to sell to the Jordanian people the idea of a country that would be less worried about the idea of conflict and more concerned about building prosperity and creating a new Jordan for the coming generations. This tied in with the monarchy's effort to sell the policy of 'Jordan first' and to delineate a sharp sense of Jordanian identity where the interest of the country was the priority.

Upon his accession to the throne, King Abdullah promoted an image of himself as a reformer. He introduced a number of initiatives such as Jordan First and the national

⁴³⁹ Malik Mufti, 'Elite Bargains and the Onset of Political Liberalization in Jordan', *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1, February 1999, pp.100-129.

agenda and a sweeping vision of socioeconomic transformation. However, the first phase of the 21st century was the worst in terms of reforms. Parliament was suspended for no reason for more than two years, between 2001 and 2003. Implicit in the action was a condescending attitude on the part of the ruling elite towards the ability of people to elect representatives who could live up to the vision of the King. There was a naive assumption on the part of some political analysts that Jordan needed a quick pace of reform, and parliament was only impeding this process. They argued for reform from above, to use the parlance of political scientists.⁴⁴⁰ Political reform from above was seen to be more direct and sure to pass the test of time, as opposed to reform from below. Throughout the modern history of Jordan, all reform programmes have been initiated by the monarchy in response to changing circumstances on the ground. National identity projects have also invariably been led by the monarchy and central government, the intention being to create a cohesive and clear Jordanian identity despite the presence of centrifugal factors.

It was at this juncture that power was centralised in the hands of a few politicians – many of whom were accused of being corrupt – who initiated privatisation in a very irresponsible way. Without effective monitoring bodies, corruption reached a new high in the history of Jordan: it seems as if the state was incapable of reversing this deteriorating trend. Against this backdrop, people felt they had no option but to resort to the street and express their dissatisfaction and bitterness about the economic and political situations.⁴⁴¹ Street protests led directly to the Arab Spring phenomenon and

⁴⁴⁰ Hassan A. Barari and Christina A. Satkowski, 'The Arab Spring: The Case of Jordan', *Ortadogu Etuleri*, Vol. 3, No. 2, January 2013, p.47.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.48.

the corresponding call for change and reform, as well as the charting of a national identity that was seen to be more progressive, liberal and democratic.

It is certain that Jordan faces severe political and economic difficulties that mirror the grievances that motivated mass uprisings elsewhere in the region. However, the chances of regime change in Jordan are slim. While ensuring long-term stability requires Jordan to find solutions to its difficult political and economic problems, the country's underlying political and social configuration is likely to remain unchanged for the foreseeable future. Therefore, identity formation will continue to be a key concern of the rulers and the ruled alike. Jordan will have to be cognisant of the changes in the neighbouring Arab countries. National identity in Jordan is a thorny subject because the country is in a volatile region and the leaders will want it to remain immune from the revolutionary changes surrounding it. Jordan will need to construct a very robust and clear identity that distinguishes it from the Palestinian and Syrian narratives.

Section B: The protests in Jordan

(i) Arab Spring protests in Jordan

Following the events throughout the Middle East, Jordanians took to the streets in 2011 to protest against the rise in the cost of living in Jordan, that is, the rise of the cost of food, fuel and other commodities. The moderately small size of the protests contradicted their importance, in that this period they were dominated by segments of

the regime's historical support base, East Bank Jordanians.⁴⁴² Over time, these protests evolved to include a wide spectrum of the population, including citizens of Palestinian origin, Islamists and unaffiliated youths.

While each of these communities expressed specific criticisms and demands, the protest movements' overall ambition set around the call to end political and economic corruption. At its core, the discontent expressed a lack of public confidence in politics and governance more than a decade after King Abdullah II's 1999 accession to the throne. Despite continuous talk of political reform sustained by successive public-relations campaigns, decision-making continues to lack both transparency and accountability, remaining concentrated in the royal palace. The prospects for ordinary citizens, whether of East Banker or Palestinian origin, to participate in politics, remain scarce; their elected representatives in parliament have little influence. Accordingly, protesters stressed the need for greater balance of power, increased political participation and effective government accountability. The tone and main objective of Jordan's Arab Spring protests so far have been to reform, not overthrow, the regime. In other words the protests were aimed at the government not the Jordanian monarch, to whom they were loyal.⁴⁴³

⁴⁴² Jordanians who inhabited the area before the arrival of the first Palestinian refugees in 1948 usually are referred to as 'Transjordanians', in reference to the name that Great Britain gave the territory after installing Abdullah bin al-Hussein as emir in 1921. However, this term is both anachronistic and confusing, as it could be seen as referring to both banks of the River Jordan, including the Palestinian-inhabited West Bank. 'East Banker', commonly used in English language literature, comes closest to the term used by Jordanians themselves.

⁴⁴³ International Crises Group, Popular protest in north Africa and the Middle East: Dallying with reform in divided Jordan. *Middle East and African Report*, No. 118, March 2012, p.1, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/Iran%20Gulf/Jordan/118-popular-protest-in-north-africa-and-the-middle-east-ix-dallying-with-reform-in-a-divided-jordan.pdf> Accessed on November 20th 2014.

The common concerns uniting the demonstrators masked fundamental differences among them. The principal fault line separates East Bankers from Palestinian-Jordanians. These two communities' historically fraught relationship and often disconnected realities have stymied the protest movement and stand in the way of establishing a more coherent opposition. Unsurprisingly, reform-adverse elements within the regime have sought to exploit these differences.

While East Bankers form the historical pillar of the Hashemite monarchy, Palestinians began arriving en masse to the country only two years after the kingdom was established in 1946.⁴⁴⁴ The political integration of these refugees, most of whom were granted citizenship after Jordan annexed the West Bank in 1950, was reversed after the 1970-1971 'Black September' civil war that pitted the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) against the monarchy. Over time, Palestinian refugee camps increasingly fell under the sway of the Muslim Brotherhood, which the authorities supported at the time even as they simultaneously repressed nationalist Palestinian groups, such as the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Palestinian Communist Party and Fatah.⁴⁴⁵

Palestinian-Jordanians have been locked out from both the public sector and security apparatus since Black September; they also have suffered at the hands of an electoral law based on gerrymandered districts that privilege rural East Banker areas at the

⁴⁴⁴ The Emirate of Transjordan became the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in 1946, when Jordan gained independence from the British mandate authorities. During the 1948 war, Jordan occupied the West Bank, which voted to remain part of the kingdom in a 1950 referendum. Israel occupied the West Bank as a result of the 1967 war. King Hussein severed administrative ties with the West Bank in 1988 and signed a peace agreement with Israel in 1994. Today, most Jordanians are of Palestinian origin, although there are no publicly available statistics on the country's exact demographic balance.

⁴⁴⁵ Mohammad Abu Rumman, *The Muslim Brotherhood in the 2007 Jordanian Parliamentary Elections: A Passing 'Political Set-back' or Diminished Popularity?* Amman, 2007

expense of Palestinian-dominated urban centres.⁴⁴⁶

In reaction, the Palestinian-Jordanian elite has invested heavily in the private sector, in which it eventually came to play a leading role. Most refugees moved out of the camps and into the Amman-Zarqa-Irbid municipality that attracted most infrastructure and industrial development.⁴⁴⁷ In contrast, rural East Banker strongholds suffered from the near collapse of the agricultural sector and the curtailing of public spending from the 1990s onwards.⁴⁴⁸

Socioeconomic differences between the two communities fuelled a ‘nationalist’ East Banker discourse in which Palestinian-Jordanians figured alternatively as greedy capitalists or treacherous Islamists, disloyal and unpatriotic. This has undermined the protest movement and provided opportunities for the regime to exacerbate communal tensions. While the effort has met with some success, not all East Bankers subscribe to such negative views of Palestinian-Jordanians; some pro-reform activists believe that the communities have suffered equally from mounting corruption and political stagnation and are seeking to bridge communal divides by offering detailed proposals for political reform that include a new electoral law benefitting East Bankers and Jordanians of Palestinian descent alike.⁴⁴⁹

4-Crisis Group Middle East Briefing N°10, *The Challenge of Political Reform: Jordanian Democratisation and Regional Instability*, 8 October 2003, pp. 16-19.

⁴⁴⁷ 17 percent which is roughly 346,000 of the two million Palestinian refugees registered with the United Nations relief and works agency for Palestine (UNRWA) live in refugee camps. Source: Jordan camp profiles, <http://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/jordan> Crisis Group Middle East Briefing N°10, *The Challenge of Political Reform: Jordanian Democratisation and Regional Instability*, 8 October 2003, pp. 16-19. Accessed on 1/12/2014.

⁴⁴⁸ Jane Harrigan, Hamed El-Said and Chengang Wang, ‘The IMF and the World Bank in Jordan: a case of over-optimism and elusive growth’, *Review of International Organisations*, Vol. 1, 2006, pp. 263-292.

⁴⁴⁹ International Crises Group, Popular protest in north Africa and the Middle East : Dallying with reform in divided Jordan. *Middle East and African Report*, No. 118, March, 2012, p.6, [http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/Iran%20Gulf/Jordan/118](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/Iran%20Gulf/Jordan/118)

Quite evidently the strange relations between East Bankers and Jordanians of Palestinian descent was a dynamic in the opposition movement in the monarchy. These strains and tensions were exploited by the government to lessen the impact of the opposition movement. However, these disagreements could also be counterproductive for the future stability of Jordan, and in order to forestall any such outcome, the monarchy was careful to emphasise national unity and national identity as a precursory defensive measure. Therefore, national identity served multiple purposes: it was utilised by the opposition to demand change in the interest of the Jordanian people and it was also harnessed by the government to show that national identity and national self-preservation was the primary objective of King Abdullah II and his government.

One of the most obvious problems that upset the status quo and led to widespread discontent was the issue of the nomads. When the regime took control of large areas of farmland from the al-Hajayah tribes in the south of the country east of the Hijaz border, they registered the lands in the name of the royal family as a token gesture. The lands were then distributed to overseas companies to turn into phosphate mines, from which the shares that they took out would reach tremendously high prices.

This matter led to a changed political dialogue from deep inside Jordanian society, including those who are familiar with the losses and gains from dealing with the royal court publicity demanding a share in political decision-making.⁴⁵⁰

ii) The protest movement in contemporary Jordan: The case of the Hirak

The Hirak movement received little of the media coverage that was saturated by the

-popular-protest-in-north-africa-and-the-middle-east-ix-dallying-with-reform-in-a-divided-jordan.pdf

Accessed on 2/11/14.

⁴⁵⁰ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20321086> Accessed on 1/1/2015.

larger protests in Amman during 2011-2012. In the spirit of the Arab uprisings, the Muslim Brotherhood and its Islamic Action front (IAF) party, secular leftist parties, professional syndicates and youth groups held weekly demonstrations calling for democratic reforms, some drawing thousands of marchers. Significantly, these protests brought new coalitions of reformists that overcame long-standing divisions, such as the Islamic/secular division.⁴⁵¹ The vanguard of these rallies, the Brotherhood and professional syndicates, had dominated the opposition landscape since the early 1990s, when the end of martial law under King Hussein facilitated a renaissance in the civil service.⁴⁵²

Though they drew the attention of western analysts looking for revolutionary drama, this groundswell of urban protests did not pose a credible threat to the regime. For one, security officials understood well how to undermine mass mobilisation in Amman through non-violent means, such as using bureaucratic restrictions and associational laws to limit the size of demonstrations.⁴⁵³ Furthermore, these demonstrations were more stage-managed exercises than spontaneous revolts, complete with fixed marching routes, pre-distributed slogans, frequent utterances of loyalties to the throne and cordial relations with the police, many of whom infamously provided water bottles to thirsty protestors. These scripted rituals had long characterised the protest culture of Amman, and in that sense did not break new ground.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵¹ Curtis R. Ryan, 'Political Opposition and Reform Opposition Coalitions in Jordan', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 3, 2011, pp.367-90.

⁴⁵² Laurie Brand, 'In the Beginning Was the State...: The Quest for Civil Service in Jordan', *Civil Society in the Middle East*, Vol. 1. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1995, pp.148-85.

⁴⁵³ Quintan Wiktorowicz, 'Civil Society as Social Control: State Power in Jordan', *Comparative Politics Journal*, Vol. 33, No. 1, October 2000, pp.43-61.

⁴⁵⁴ Jilian Shwedler, 'The Political Geography of Protest in Neo-Liberal Jordan,' *Middle East Critique*, Vol. 21, No.3, Fall 2002, pp.259-270.

The protest movement in Jordan can be subdivided into three categories. The first category is made up of small groups of autonomous activists not connected to the old political parties, and frequently highlighted by a socialist leaning political direction. The second category is made up of numerous socialist and nationalist political groups, while the last and the most numerous are the Islamic revivalist connected with the Muslim brotherhood movement in Jordan, as mentioned above.

The role of the independent political actors both in the working class protests and in protests groups demanding democratic change are fascinating. This significantly is the case given Jordan's historical context, where, for many years, any political action was very severely curtailed and outlawed by military rule. As a consequence, being politically motivated often resulted in participating in underground activities and was very dangerous for the youth groups. In addition to this, those involved in legal politics were beholden to traditional master-servant relation patterns, necessitating money and resources to keep on track.⁴⁵⁵

(iii) Jordan's segmented and appeased opposition

At present, the factionalised nature of Jordan's political opposition is unlikely to threaten the regime's supremacy. The challenges of the 2012-2014 period have come from disparate groups that generally share similar grievances but are nonetheless distinct in their identities, bases of support and aims. This has made it difficult to give the reform movement coherence or a common leadership⁴⁵⁶. In terms of national

⁴⁵⁵ Mona Christopherson, Protests and reform in Jordan: popular demand and government response 2011-2012, Fafo-report 2013:50, p.24.

⁴⁵⁶ http://www.dayan.org/sites/default/files/Susser_Asher_TA_NOTES_Jordan_and_Faltering_Arab_Spring

identity, it has meant that the opposition has not been able to capitalise on this unsteady and precarious position because the opposition parties have not been successful in the political realm, and they have been largely unable to lead the debate on national identity. Instead, the prime mover and most forceful exponents of Jordanian national identity have been the government and the monarchy, which has always sought to monopolise the construction of national identity in the country.

For example, support for the Islamist movement – led largely by the Muslim Brotherhood and its political arm, the Islamic Action Front (IAF) – comes principally from Palestinians in the urban centres of Amman and Irbid. Islamist demands have focused on political reform. These include a new electoral system that provides greater representation for urban areas, an elected government, including parliamentary selection of the prime minister, a strengthening of ties with the Palestinian territories, and a reduction of the internal security forces' political influence. The Islamist opposition, being heavily represented in the Palestinian urban areas, has sought to articulate a national identity that is more inclusive of Islamist and Palestinian discourses. What this has meant in real terms is that, given the growth of the Palestinian population over the preceding decades and the rise of political Islam in the Arab world since the 1970s, the formulation of national identity in the post-disengagement period has had to make greater reference to the concepts of 'Palestinian-ness' and 'Islamism'.

The Hirak (a youth movement that includes members of the November 14 opposition party), by contrast, is a highly decentralised movement spread across Jordanian towns

and villages. Its origins lie in the dissatisfaction among East Bank Jordanians with predominantly socioeconomic issues, though it has broadened somewhat beyond these concerns over time. Hirak supporters are particularly frustrated by the lack of development efforts outside of Amman, and the neoliberal economic policies under King Abdullah that undermine the traditional patronage system of resource distribution. Hirak supporters want a rebalancing of the Jordanian socioeconomic system and greater attention paid to the needs of the East Bank youth and development projects outside of the urban centres. The Hirak group would like national identity to be less centralised, more inclusive of tribal and East Bank traditions and more mindful of the historic socioeconomic patronage system than the present neoliberal stance of the monarchy is.

The local committees of the Hirak movement are diverse in membership and orientation. What unites this group, however, is its tribal, Transjordanian roots and that those involved come from what has long been the monarchy's traditional base of support. They lament the perceived disregard for the kingdom's tribal foundations, and the more nationalist elements of the Hirak are at sharp variance with the Islamists and leftist groups on Jordan's relationship with Palestine by advocating various levels of disengagement. They are similarly wary of what they consider to be the growing economic influence of Jordan's Palestinian population and would hesitate to advocate drastic political reform that might grant that group greater political power. The recent dissatisfaction of the Hirak youth has meant the monarchy and the authorities have had to rebalance and recalibrate the national identity narrative. More heed now needs to be paid to the aspirations and desires of those from the East Bank who wish to build on disengagement, pronounce a more nationalist agenda and limit the rising influence of the Palestinian middle class. If the East Bankers had their way, Jordanian national identity would be firmly rooted in the monarchical and tribalist traditions of the

country, and it would therefore be less accepting of Palestinian and socialist agendas.

Trade unions, professional associations and leftist groups similarly contribute to the demand for reform. For example, journalists from newspapers, broadcast media and online media have mobilised in opposition to state interference of the press. Topping their list of grievances is a new press and publications law that extends restrictions and registration requirements for Jordan-based online news sites. Public teachers have likewise been emboldened, ultimately unionising, mobilising for higher wages, and striking temporarily against increases in fuel prices in November 2012. All of this activity means matters in Jordan are in flux presently; the future seems uncertain, and the hopes and expectations resting on King Abdullah II sadly have not materialised despite the king's best endeavours. The monarchy is much more in tune with the desires and aspirations of a growing population that is politically astute. The situation in Jordan will need to satisfy multiple demands as demonstrated above: there is a socially mobile, literate, petty bourgeoisie that is tired of political disfranchisement and wants a greater say in the national fortunes of the country. As for national identity, this is in a constant state of flux, and the younger generation wants to chart a future and an identity that is seen to be progressive and respectful of Jordan.

While this framework paints only a basic picture of the complex political field in Jordan, the challenges facing a sustained campaign of mass mobilisation are clear. The differences in the opposition groups' identities and political goals are divisions that reinforce one another. Without a unifying call to topple the monarchy, it is more appropriate to think of multiple oppositions instead of a single, unified movement against the regime.

Furthermore, the monarchy has taken advantage of these divisions in its long-employed

divide-and-rule strategy. Increasing public sector wages, permitting teachers to unionise and promising development funds for areas outside of the capital are some of the ways the regime has for now pacified key segments of the opposition.

The Islamic Action Front and constituencies that make up the Hirak have willingly participated in this pacification historically. The Islamic Action Front has thus far played the role of loyal opposition, which Jordanian politics experts, rather than replace the regime; moreover, the Hirak movement in the south has merely sought to remind those in power of the need to be responsive to their traditional base of support. Tempered by these relations, as well as by the grim reminders from Syria and Egypt that wholesale regime change can be an uncertain and dangerous undertaking, there is little impetus for a full-scale revolutionary effort.⁴⁵⁷

(iv) Hirak opposition in Jordan

After the Jordanian spring commenced with peaceful protests in January 2011, many observers rejected the idea of the breakdown of the Jordanian regime. Existing opposition forces such as the Muslim Brotherhood, old leftist parties and other civil society organisations did mobilise thousands of demonstrators in Amman weekly. However, such protests were elite orientated in that they were driven by organisational leaders rather than ordinary citizens. Further to that they were not spontaneous. Islamists obeyed implicit rules of protest by announcing precise marching routes, keeping crowds nonviolent and dispersing peacefully. They did not personally target

⁴⁵⁷ Michael Makara and Andrew Spath, 'Reform Not Revolution: The Arab Spring in Jordan', *Fair Observer Magazine*, February 2013, <http://www.fairobserver.com/article/reform-not-revolution-arab-spring-jordan>. Accessed on 27/4/14.

King Abdullah or call for the regime's downfall. As it had been accustomed to self-contained protests, the regime tolerated these events with virtually no repression.⁴⁵⁸

These assessments were only half correct. The Brotherhood and other conventional opposition indeed were no mutinous vanguard intent on storming the palace, but they are also no longer the most accurate bellwethers of public opinion. Two newer opposition trends emerging in 2011 embodied popular and more unpredictable vectors of political change grass roots movements, the Hirak movement in tribal communities outside the capital and the explosion in youth mobilisation elsewhere.

(v) The youth group Hirak in Jordan

The Hirak trend touches on a second and broader dynamic of change within Jordanian society: new political activism resulting from generational change. Among the two-thirds of Jordan's population who are aged 30 or less, political mobilisation rose sharply during the Arab Spring for several reasons. The first is the declining prospect for youth employment. The economy does not generate jobs for 60,000 new entrants to the national labour force annually, and real employment is double the official rate of 14 percent. The majority of Jordanians in their 20s are jobless, trapped between a weak private sector that prefers cheaper foreign workers like Egyptians and Syrians and a bloated public sector that has too few openings for bureaucracies already suffering from redundant operations. The growth of tertiary education too has played a role. Even in rural areas, spreading access to university education since 1990 has gradually liberalised youth attitudes.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁸ Jordan Reform Watch, *al islah fiil ulrdun Amman, Jordan 2012: Identity Center, 2013.*

⁴⁵⁹ Naseem Tarawneh, 'the kids are not alright', *Jordan Business*, June 2013, pp.13-16.

The youth trend has eroded the oldest and most contentious social cleavage, the Palestinian-East Bank divide. For decades, the Jordanian government exploited social tensions between the Palestinian majority and most tribal East Bank minorities to prevent a unified national opposition. For example, the electoral system disenfranchised the former through biased voting and distracting laws, while a prejudiced nationalism that celebrated the latter as traditional Jordanians permeated the education system, political system, political discourse and hiring practices.⁴⁶⁰ For example, since the 1988 disengagement from the West Bank, the interior ministry has arbitrarily revoked Jordanian citizenship from thousands of Palestinian-origin residents, most of whom have resided in the kingdom for years. This was a strategy designed to deter new demands for political voice amongst the Palestinian majority in the kingdom.⁴⁶¹

However, many new activists who emerged during 2011-2012 believed that common needs for politics could overcome the demographic divide. Palestinian and East Bank youths worked in unison in urban movements and ensconced their politics in broad principles of dignity rather than the localised language of identity politics.⁴⁶²

Such a false sense of security propelled the popular argument that the Arab Spring bypassed Jordan. The lack of revolutionary turmoil, however should not obscure irreversible shift within state-society relations. Hirak protest groups and urban youth movements claimed a unique space within the area of opposition politics; they could neither be tainted by accusations of Islamic radicalism nor divided by the politics of

⁴⁶⁰ Adnan Abo Odeh, 'Jordanians, Palestinians and the Hashemite Kingdom in the Middle East process', Washington D.C., United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999, pp.237-252.

⁴⁶¹ Human Rights Watch, 'Stateless again: Palestinian-origin Jordanians deprived of their nationality', New York: Human Rights Watch, 2010.

⁴⁶² Curtis Ryan, 'Identity politics, reform and protest in Jordan studies', in *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, Vol. 11, 2011, pp.564-578.

social identity. This new generation came of age by fighting for constitutional monarchy and demanding the king's abdication, representing a growing fragmentation within a social force often assumed to be monolithically supportive of state imperatives. Such politics do not fit within the existing patterns of opposition and protest activity considered by Jordanian experts as moderate and predictable, and hence posing no threat to the stability of the Hashemite kingdom.⁴⁶³

(vi) The government's response to the protests in Jordan

In this section of the chapter, the thesis will analyse the government response to the protests in Jordan. The purpose of this section is to delineate the regime's strategy in order to check the more revolutionary aspects of the Arab Spring. King Abdullah II, mindful of what had unfolded in neighbouring Syria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Yemen, did not want a repetition of these developments in the streets of Amman. The monarchy wanted to chart a national identity that was rooted in the cause of Arab solidarity, Palestinian statehood and the more progressive elements of the Arab Spring.

In response to the Arab Spring protests that took place in neighbouring Arab countries, the king, having been briefed, moved on and dismissed his prime minister, Rifai, on February 1, 2011. Changing governments and moving cabinets is a very old, established way used by both King Abdullah II and the late King Hussein to appease the Jordanian public demand. In this way, Jordanian politics can be re-directed while the king remains immune from criticism. The king has chosen a new prime minister four times since the beginning of the demonstrations at the start of 2011. Furthermore, King Abdullah very

⁴⁶³ Jillian Schwedler, 'The political geography of protest in neoliberal Jordan', *Middle East Critique*, Vol. 21, No. 3, 2012, pp.259-270.

speedily reiterated his promise of change by appointing committees with reform agendas.⁴⁶⁴

The prime minister Samir Rifai was very unpopular and was himself implicated in the economic complaints that were at the heart of the demonstrations. He had previously presided over a number of neo-liberal reforms, putting a very heavy emphasis on the privatisation of many government programmes to deal with the country's increasing deficit. Being of Palestinian descent, he was also labelled by tribal chiefs in Jordan as looking after Palestinian businessmen at the cost of developing tribal regions, which have historically been more reliant on public sector investment and efforts.⁴⁶⁵

King Abdullah appointed Ma'arouf al Bakheet to speed up the reform agenda as a result of the calls for change from the Arab street. Al Bakheet is from a very strong tribe in Jordan, having appeared on the surface to be a sympathiser of the poor who were protesting against low salaries and high food prices. He began by examining the salary scales in the public sector, promising better conditions, as well as fulfilling the King's demand for a national dialogue committee to discuss changes in election law and the law governing political parties.⁴⁶⁶

Prime Minister al Bakheet was not popular with Jordanians of Palestinian background; he had served before as the prime minister, having been assigned to safeguard the

⁴⁶⁴ Julien Barnes-Dacey. 'Europe and Jordan: Reform before it's too late'. Policy Brief, European council on Foreign Relations, ECFR/54. April 2012.

http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR54_JORDAN_BRIEF_AW.pdf Accessed on 16/11/2014.

⁴⁶⁵ International Crises group (ICG) 2012. Popular Protests in North Africa and the Middle East(IX): Dallying with Reform in a Divided Jordan. *Middle East/North Africa Report*, No. 118, March 12.

⁴⁶⁶ A. Vogt, 'Jordan's external promise of reform', Internationale Politik and Gesellschaft Online (IPG) Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. April 2011.
http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/ipg/2011-4/08_a_vogt_eng.pdf

Jordanian interest after the hotel bombing in Amman, which happened in November 2005. He had started a security-orientated policy, leading to confrontation with the Muslim Brotherhood. His re-appointment as prime minister in 2011 led to the first division in the protest movement. The tribal groups saw this as an appropriate time to give the new regime an opportunity, while the Muslim Brotherhood and some of the socialist parties wanted to continue the Friday demonstrations.⁴⁶⁷

During al Bakhiet's time in office, the Muslim Brotherhood decided to put an emphasis on the protest movement, which disturbed the government. The experience from the 24 March 2011 protest and the demonstrators' change of focus towards resentment in tribal areas further diminished al Bakhiet's ability to manoeuvre. While he got mired in corruption charges and increasingly was seen to be opposed to the demands of the protestors, his government came to an end.⁴⁶⁸

October 2011 saw a new government change, in which Awwn al Khasawneh replaced Prime Minister al Bakhiet. In an effort to show that he was very committed to his reforms, the king this time did not appoint a 'returnee' or what the demonstrators called the 'revolving door of the prime minister industry'. Prime ministers have usually been chosen from a select few families, some of them returning and others following in the footsteps of their fathers. This time a high profile judge, well regarded for his integrity and above suspicion of wrong doing was called back from his post as a judge in the International Court of Justice in the Hague, where he had served since 1999. The

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁸ Mona Christophersen, Protest and reform in Jordan, popular demand and government response 2011-2012, <http://www.faf.no/~faf/images/pub/2013/20340.pdf> Accessed on 2/1/2015.

appointment was understood to be a nod to the Muslim Brotherhood. This was very soon confirmed when the new prime minister very quickly proclaimed his wish to hold a conversation with all groups in the country, including the opposition parties and the protest movements. The Muslim Brotherhood turned out to be the focal point of these discussions.

Media experts on the other hand declared that the reshuffle of the government was a response to the former prime minister's proposed election law that was opposed by the different opposition groups. Tribal members of the parliament felt that this favoured the Islamists while the Islamists felt angered because the suggested party list scheme in effect limited the number of parliamentary seats the opposing parties could muster all together under the revised election rules. The Muslim Brotherhood also refused to consider a suggested ban on political parties established on religious grounds, claiming that both measures were aimed at restricting religious influence that they maintained otherwise to rapidly increase under open and fair elections.⁴⁶⁹

Fayez al-Tarawneh, who was also prime minister in the late 1990s, was appointed prime minister after Khasawneh. The reaction to the news of his appointment would suggest it was not seen as an important change. Conservatives from the political state dominated the new government. The king asked al Tarawneh to form a new government for 'a limited transitional period to introduce reforms needed to hold elections before the end of the year 2012'.⁴⁷⁰ In addition to Jordan's increasing economic difficulties, al Tarawneh also had to deal with the same problems as his

⁴⁶⁹<http://www.jpost.com/MiddleEast/Article.aspx?id=267649>,<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/apr/26/jordan-prime-minister-awn-khawasneh-resigns>. Accessed on 14/11/2014.

⁴⁷⁰<http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/05/02/211758.html> Accessed on 20/11/2014.

predecessors, namely, changing elections and political party rules, preparing for parliamentary and postponed regional elections and drafting liberal rules for the media establishment.⁴⁷¹ When he failed to end the protests against economic regression and the lack of political reforms, King Abdullah surprised the Jordanian public by once again appointing a new prime minister after dissolving the parliament in preparation for new parliamentary elections.

The current prime minister, Abdullah Ensour, is a former minister and a strong advocate of democratic change. Ensour is an independent member of parliament and recognised for his many associates both in circles around the royal Hashemite court and with the Islamic Action Front, other opposition groups and trade unions. His main task was to convince the Muslim Brotherhood to forgo the announced boycott of the coming elections, a rather difficult and complex job with an election law book which clearly favoured tribal politicians known to be more supportive of the king.⁴⁷² This was a task in the end that did not materialise as the Islamic Action Front kept with its boycott decision.

As the preceding discussion has highlighted, Jordan seems to have weathered the storm of the Arab Spring. The king has been shrewd and calculating in appeasing the demands of the protesters. By appointing a series of new prime ministers, he was able to dampen the more revolutionary aspects of the protests. King Abdullah and his advisers wish to articulate a national identity for Jordan, which takes into account stability, a benevolent monarch, democratic aspirations and a neo-liberal economic policy. National identity in

⁴⁷¹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14636308> Accessed on 21/11/2014.

⁴⁷²

Jordan in the opening decades of the 21st century is very confident, stable and monarchical based, and seeks to accommodate the demands of a younger, more politically conscious generation.

(vii) Political opposition and reforms in Jordan

The year 2011 began with street protests – but not yet calls for regime change – in Amman and other cities across Jordan, partly inspired by the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions and slogans for reform in the kingdom. The dissatisfaction and feeling of powerlessness that led to these protests were evident and had been rising for a substantial amount of time.

These protests reminded Jordanians of the popular unrest and social demonstrations of April 1989. These earlier protests turned very quickly into street riots, instigated in large part by deficit-reducing measures introduced as part of an international monetary fund maintenance programme.

The protests of 1989, like the ones that took place in 2011, grew very quickly to include demonstrations not only against severe economic measures, but also state corruption, while calling for greater and more open liberalisation. What alarmed the Hashemite monarchy in both cases was the very large visible presence and even domination of the ethnic East Jordanian or Transjordanian subjects.⁴⁷³

To explain it in more detail, the protestors themselves could not be characterised as the

⁴⁷³ The largest ethnic division within Jordanian politics is that between Palestinian Jordanians (whose roots are west of the River Jordan, many of whom came to Jordan as refugees of the Arab-Israeli wars of 1948 and 1967) and east Jordanians, who are known as Trans-Jordanian or East Bankers, since they trace their roots east of the River Jordan. Generally speaking, the Hashemite state, army, security services and public sector have been dominated by East Jordanians, while Palestinian Jordanians have come to dominate the private sector. As the regime's own neoliberal economic reforms shift Jordan's economy from the public to the private sector, ethnic tensions have increased within the kingdom.

usual suspects in oppositional socialist and religious parties or Palestinian agitators. Rather, the protestors ranged across the political spectrum within Jordan and even crossed the ethnic divide between Palestinians and East Bank Jordanians.

With sudden regime change taking place in other Arab states, Jordan's opposition movement has expanded and is now more coordinated in its endeavours to put the regime on the back foot with respect to the reform process, calling for greater democracy and the restricting of the King's more arbitrary powers (this has been highlighted by the king in an official discussion paper in the royal Hashemite court website),⁴⁷⁴ in order to make Jordan a more representative and constitutional Kingdom.⁴⁷⁵

The preceding analysis has shown that the monarchy is acutely aware that in order to avoid revolutionary demands for regime change, some gradual and incremental reform is necessary. The goal that King Abdullah has set himself is ambitious and commendable, as he wishes to bring into being in Jordan a constitutional monarchy, not altogether different from the role of the head of state in the United Kingdom. In terms of identity formation, Jordan aspires to be democratic, yet monarchical. Jordanians aspire to be progressive while avoiding the more revolutionary tendencies of regime change.

⁴⁷⁴ Abdullah Ibn al Hussein, 'Goals, Achievements and Conventions: Pillars for Deepening our Democratic Transition', King Abdullah II official website <http://www.kingabdullah.jo>, Accessed 29 September 2014.

⁴⁷⁵ D. Brumberg, 'The Trap of Liberalized Autocracy', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 13, No. 4, 2002, pp.56-68.

(viii) The reform question in Jordan

Jordan began its liberalisation process in response not to the Arab uprising of 2011, but to widespread popular unrest in April 1989. Even though the motivations were defensive on the part of the regime, it initiated a political and liberalisation process that included the revival of elections and parliamentary life.⁴⁷⁶ At the time, Jordan's liberalisation looked to be the most promising and the most extensive in the entire Arab world. Over time, the process expanded to include the lifting of martial law, the legalisation of political parties, the loosening of restrictions on the media and six rounds of national parliamentary elections (in 1989, 1993, 1997, 2003, 2007 and 2010).⁴⁷⁷ Economically, Jordan moved steadily towards a neo-liberal model of development, with emphasis on privatising state-owned industries, lowering barriers to trade and encouraging extensive foreign investment.

Yet, while economic liberalisation has proceeded apace since 1989, political reform has since faltered, stalled and at times regressed. Over the past two decades, Jordan has experienced both liberalisation and de-liberalisation in its political life, as the state has at times retreated from earlier reforms. This was clear in the aftermath of Jordan's

⁴⁷⁶ G. E. Robinson, 'Defensive Democratization in Jordan', *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 3, pp.387-410.

⁴⁷⁷ C.R. Ryan, 'Elections and Parliamentary Democratization in Jordan', *Democratization Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp.194-214.

peace treaty with Israel in 1994.⁴⁷⁸

In an analysis of stalled reform in Jordan, the International Crisis Group in 2003 suggested the deficit of democratic representation might become the spark for real conflict in the kingdom, even going so far as to compare Jordan to Algeria. But the same report also remarked upon the weakness of Jordan's political opposition, arguing that too often opposition parties and civil society have contented themselves with vacuous slogans and unrealistic proposals that do not resonate with the people and further undermine the credibility of political action.⁴⁷⁹

Analysing rising tensions and unrest in Jordan, the International Crisis Group noted that government reform efforts seemed to focus mainly on procedural democracy, that is the act of elections, without providing meaningful channels for genuine participation, transparency and accountability.⁴⁸⁰

Investigating the unrest that led to six deaths in recurrent violence in the southern town of Ma'an in November 2003, the ICG argued that:

Nevertheless, the regime's Achilles heel is the feeble bond of trust between most citizens and the state. Meaningful relationships are based on family or tribal loyalties, with religion also an important social glue. The state, however, is largely absent from these relations being broadly perceived as non-transparent, unresponsive and unaccountable.⁴⁸¹

The report also cited King Abdullah himself, who is quoted the same year in an

⁴⁷⁸ L.A. Brand 'The Effects of the Peace Process on Political Liberalization in Jordan', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 2, 1999, pp.52-67.

⁴⁷⁹ International Crisis Group, 'The Challenge of Political Reform: Jordanian Democratization and Regional Instability', Middle East Briefing, Amman/Brussels, 8 October, p.1.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid., p.2.

American newspaper stating that:

the leadership of the Middle East don't understand that 50 percent of the population is under eighteen, and if they don't get going to create some means for real participation for these young people, they are going to have serious problems.⁴⁸²

In an attempt to achieve political reform, King Abdullah appointed the kingdom's former foreign minister and prominent reformer Marwan Muasher to the post of deputy prime minister of reform. In that capacity, Muasher was tasked to lead a broad-based committee of Jordanians in what was called 'the national agenda' for reform.

The effort resulted in calls for broader political reforms within the Kingdom, including the rights of women, and a deepening of Jordan's nascent civil society specifically. As Muasher noted at that time, even the concept of civil society has sometimes been reduced to include only charitable NGOs and not political parties, professional associations or trade unions, effectively de-politicising the concept.

Consequently, he called for a broader conceptualisation of civil society, to include all these types of organisation, independent of the state itself, with goals ranging from social to economical. In this way, he surmised political liberalisation in Jordan and elsewhere can move forward, but only with a strengthened civil society as its base.⁴⁸³

As the proceeding paragraphs have demonstrated, Jordan is on its way to becoming a constitutional participatory monarchy. The king recognises the need for reform and has appointed ministers to steer this process along, all of which bodes well for a new and strong Jordan that is ready to face the challenges of 21st century politics with gusto and

⁴⁸² J. Diehl, 'Jordan's Democracy Option', *The Washington Post*, 21 September 2003.

⁴⁸³ M. Muasher, *The Arab Center: The Promise of Modernization*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008, pp.246-253.

a forward-looking, modernising agenda.

(ix) Protests gaining little traction in Jordan

A number of events over the period 2011-2013 might support the idea that the survival of Jordan's monarchy has been jeopardised. For example, the kingdom has witnessed many protests since early 2011, with demonstrators demanding substantive economic and political reforms. In November 2011, the government's decision to lift fuel subsidies angered many Jordanians, as it raised the cost of fuel and gas, resulting in widespread demonstrations that many believed the government would be unable to contain.⁴⁸⁴ Moreover, King Abdullah's frequent cabinet reshuffling – Jordan has had five different prime ministers in the period 2011-2013 – might be considered a sign of desperation from a monarch who has no real vision for reform. This stigmatisation and characterisation of King Abdullah as slow on the reform front has meant that Jordan's national identity has become stymied and non-responsive to the changing situation engulfing the country. The king will need to deliver on his reform promises if his vision of a participatory and inclusive Jordan is to bear fruit. Jordan's national identity and King Abdullah's forthcoming measures, or a lack thereof, will prove very telling for the future.

Most recently, the country's new electoral law generated widespread dissent among citizens demanding fair political representation. The law fell far short of Jordanians' democratic aspirations, and consequently many wondered if the parliamentary elections held under that law in April 2012 would finally motivate citizens to demand a regime

⁴⁸⁴ Fair observer, reform not revolution in Jordan, February 12, 2103, http://www.fairobserver.com/region/middle_east_north_africa/reform-not-revolution-arab-spring-jordan/ Accessed on 12/11/2014.

change. Demand for more open political representation feeds directly into the delineation of a national identity that is accepting of all identities in Jordan, whether one is Palestinian or from the East Bank.⁴⁸⁵

In each of these cases, however, popular dissatisfaction has failed to develop into the kind of widespread unrest that has prompted regime change elsewhere in the region. Jordan's protests have generally been scheduled events, hardly uncontrollable mass demonstrations. They have lacked the sustained occupation of public spaces seen elsewhere, and are remarkable more for their organised nature than for their revolutionary feel.⁴⁸⁶

Even the protests and riots that followed the government's decision to remove fuel subsidies fizzled out after a week or two. This subdued nature of the protests and the lack of revolutionary fervour have meant that national identity creation in Jordan proceeds at an incremental pace, where the questioning of the monarchy and the country's tribal traditions have been kept to a minimum. This cautionary approach to political change, gradualist evolutionary change even, has meant Jordan has weathered the storm of the Arab spring relatively well and emerged unscathed. In terms of national identity, this has meant that the espousal of revolutionary causes has never been a marked feature of Jordanian political life; the country has always been represented by a

⁴⁸⁵ Curtis Ryan the implications of Jordan's electoral law, foreign policy Journal April 2012 <http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/04/13/the-implications-of-jordans-new-electoral-law/> ,Accessed on 16/12/2014.

⁴⁸⁶ Sarah Tobin, Jordan Arab spring and the Middle class, Middle East Policy Council Spring 2012, volume 1 <http://www.mepc.org/journal/middle-east-policy-archives/jordans-arab-spring-middle-class-and-anti-revolution> Accessed on 24/12/2014.

national identity that has been relatively stable, slow to change and rooted in the country's nativist traditions

(x) The issue of identity in Jordanian politics today

There is no question that ethnic identity tensions within Jordan have dramatically increased over the decade. This is due in part to the severe economic hardships, but also to the kingdom's extreme vulnerability to regional tensions, which range from Israeli discussions of Jordan as an alternative homeland for Palestinians, to war in Iraq and the massive Iraqi refugee flows into Jordan after the 2003 Iraq war, and now fears of complete civil war and even the collapse of Syria to the north. These identity dynamics have been most clear in the strong nativist trend that has emerged to protect Jordan for real Jordanians. This has led to unprecedented levels of criticism of the regime and of the monarchy for allegedly selling Jordan to a Palestinian economic class and now an increasingly governmental elite. Tensions have abounded in the East Jordanian southern cities and towns, and within and among Jordanian tribes. These traumatic events that Jordan is currently experiencing open up two different scenarios for the country: 1) Jordan could be convulsed by the bloody changes taking place on its borders; recent events in Syria show that the brutal war there has now spilled into neighbouring Iraq and potentially harmed tribal and ethnic divisions in the north of Iraq. 2) The second option for Jordan is a measured response to the demands for change, greater acceptance of political reform, listening to legitimate dissent in the country and appeasing the nativist discourse of the East Bankers. The king has shown himself to be skilful at handling criticism and calls for change. He has able and experienced advisers to guide him and forewarn him of any potential danger on the horizon.

High-profile criticism of the monarchy has emerged from tribal leaders and retired military officers, and the latter have now also formed their own political party. Recent alarmist accounts of Jordanian politics have indeed picked up on these tensions. But they too often mistake the more polarised views of specific Palestinian and East Jordanian political figures for the views of most Jordanians.

Jordan is actually a diverse country and should not be confused with the ethnic caricatures that both Palestinian and East Jordanian chauvinists use for each other. It is not, in short, a country of tribal bigots and disloyal rich Palestinians. Rather, it is predominantly an Arab state with a significant Circassian minority, and predominantly a Muslim country with a large Christian minority. Some have tribal backgrounds, but many do not, and regardless of the exclusivist nativist trend supported by some in Jordanian politics today, all Jordanians actually have ties across one or more of the kingdom's borders. This more nuanced and more discerning analysis shows the picture to be less black and white and more grey. Those who characterise Jordan as a country of disloyal rich Palestinians and disgruntled poor tribes hide more than they reveal in their analyses. Jordan is in reality a more complex, socially integrated and cohesive country than many political commentators would admit. The analysis that they present counters the narrative of the more alarmist commentators who believe the country to be on the brink of disaster. There is no such scenario for Jordan: identity politics in Jordan is in flux but the longer-term picture is far more encouraging and positive. Matters should therefore be treated with more caution without running headlines based on unconfirmed facts and subjective opinions.

While political tensions in Jordan frequently manifest themselves in ethnic, tribal, or identity terms, they are more often than not about class divisions between rich and poor, and between haves and have-nots. And these cut across ethnic lines. Nevertheless, the

violence in Syria has exacerbated these tensions. Even as the regime remains deeply concerned about the implications of the Syrian imbroglio for Jordan's own security and stability, the kingdom's broad-based reform movement has splintered in its responses. Some of the latter parties, originally allied with the Islamists as part of a broad reform coalition in Jordan, now fear that the Arab uprisings have led only to Islamist empowerment, and even charge that there is a new 'Islamist-American-Zionist' conspiracy to that effect. Yet, despite the various ethnic and ideological fault lines in Jordanian politics, pro-reform and pro-democracy demonstrators from the leftist, nationalist and Islamist parties, and also from non-partisan youth movements across the country, have marched and protested against corruption and for reform almost every Friday for more than a year. The Arab uprisings have certainly helped inspire the reform movement and have also spurred the regime to push through revisions in the constitution and soon in the electoral laws as well.⁴⁸⁷

Section C: The Syrian Crisis

(i) Inside alliances against the backdrop of the Syrian civil war

The protests originated from deep inside different strata of Jordanian society. Part of the momentum that started before the Arab uprising originated in opposition movements, from both inside and outside the registered professional groups. The Arab Spring then

⁴⁸⁷ Curtis Ryan, 'Identity and Corruption in Jordanian Politics', *Foreign Policy Magazine*, 9 February 2012, http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/02/09/identity_and_corruption_in_jordanian_politics in http://pomeps.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/POMEPS_BriefBooklet11_Jordan_Web.pdf Accessed on 10 April 2014.

led to larger demands for constitutional change and political enfranchisement. The earlier protests did not originate from the official opposition parties in Jordan. A number of different of political organisations and alliances outside the political establishment formed very quickly calling for change. These included Bedouin coalitions and coalitions around certain figures with a presence in political affairs, whether within the regime or outside it, including the national front for reform, the popular association of reform, the national initiative and the national Zamzam initiative.⁴⁸⁸

The national initiative, which includes nationalist and socialist parties, hesitated to enter the debate on institutional reform, especially on the electoral law. It is certain that the issue in Jordan is mainly structural, so laying the groundwork for ownership over the kingdom's resources is the most important priority. But the two other coalitions had different interpretations. While the national front for reform was demanding the return of the 1952 constitution, the popular association for reform demanded that parliament should be given the authority to appoint the government, and that the regime should be turned into a constitutional monarchy.⁴⁸⁹

By the end of 2012, the Jordanian government began to handle popular discontent and the demands of the opposition more harshly. This harshness in approach coincided with a number of factors: Jordan received assurance of international and local support, especially from Saudi Arabia. The government of Bashar al-Assad was reinstated in

⁴⁸⁸ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-15579864> Accessed on 19/12/2014

⁴⁸⁹ Mohammed Yaghi Jordan's Election Law: reform or Perish Washington Institute policy analysis October 2012
<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/jordans-election-law-reform-or-perish>
Accessed 21.04.2013

power, which it was on the edge of losing, giving confidence to the Jordanian friends of Damascus. It agreed to take part in the parliamentary election, which took place in December 2013, having asked all the opposition parties to abandon the elections and refrain from taking part in them.

It is clear that the Jordanian government is using the Syrian war to strengthen its base, which has been rocked by social pressure and poor management, and to highlight the importance of its regional rule. Practically, the Jordanian government explains its stance on Syria, as the Syrian situation unfolds, as a difficult position that allows for somewhat contradictory and inconsistent views. The statements made by King Abdullah II have changed from favouring radical reforms in Syria as a solution to stating that, by stepping down from power, President Assad would place Syria on the path to pluralism and democracy.⁴⁹⁰

(ii) Syrian refugee crisis in Jordan

The current estimates of the number of refugees are approximately 641,915. Those estimates are based on a calculations made by the United Nations humanitarian agency which is based in Amman and also is providing assistance to those thousands of refugees who are fleeing the Syrian war.⁴⁹¹ What is certain is that the situation is changing rapidly and appears to be getting worse. For months, Syrians have been fleeing to Jordan in relatively small numbers. The feeling among many of the people

⁴⁹⁰ Robert Satloff and David Scheckner: political instability in Jordan. Council of foreign policy may 2013
<http://www.cfr.org/jordan/political-instability-jordan/p30698> Accessed on 7/1/2014.

⁴⁹¹ United Nations report on refugees
<http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e486566.html> Accessed on 15/11/2014.

already working to help refugees in Jordan was that the situation, though it bore watching, was within the capability of local institutions to manage. Today, that feeling is rapidly dissolving. But so far, the Jordanian government has not put forth much of a strategy for dealing with this crisis, which could evolve in many different ways. In addition to the above, a chart has been added below to show the number of Syrian refugees in Jordan and which areas have the largest numbers of refugees.⁴⁹²

⁴⁹² Source: UNCHR, <http://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/registered-syrians-jordan-16-august-2014>

Registered Syrians in Jordan

31 October 2015



UNHCR Jordan

Total Active Registered Syrians **630,176**



518,264
82.2%

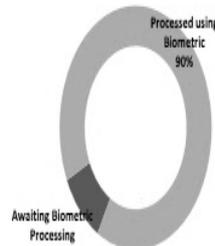


111,912
17.8%

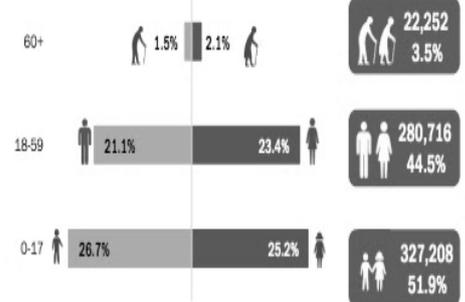
Standard Age and Gender

Age	0-4	5-11	12-17	18-35	36-59	60+	Total	%
Female	51,804	66,393	40,736	95,365	52,309	12,950	319,557	50.7%
Male	54,731	70,072	43,472	88,166	44,876	9,302	310,619	49.3%
Total	106,535	136,465	84,208	183,531	97,185	22,252	630,176	100%
	16.9%	21.7%	13.4%	29.1%	15.4%	3.5%		

Biometric Statistics (IRIS)



Age-Gender Breakdown

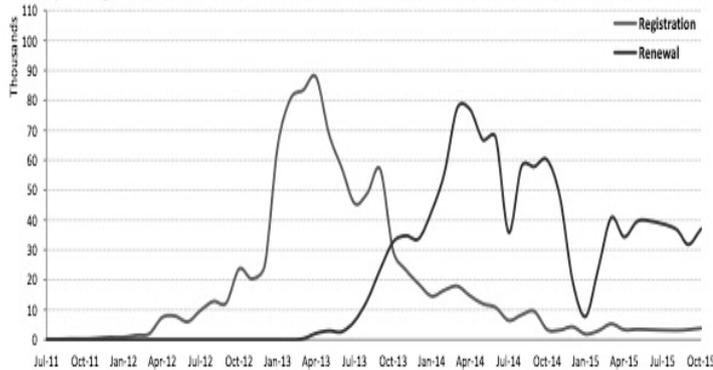


Place of Origin	Specific Needs	Arrivals
Dara	Specific legal and physical protection needs	Pre-2011
Homs	Child at risk	2011
Rural Damascus	Serious medical condition	2012
Aleppo	Woman at risk	2013
Damascus	Single parent	2014
Hama	Disability	2015
Ar-raqqa	Older person at risk	
Idlib	Unaccompanied or separated child	
Al-hasakeh		
Deir-ez-zor		
Quneitra		
As-sweida		
Lattakia		
Tartous		
Other		

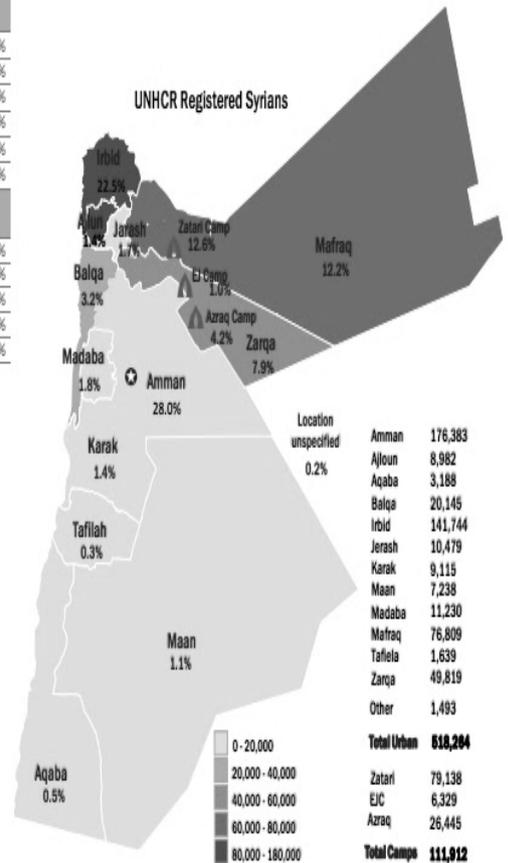
Registration Trend	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Pre-2011	9,520	2,360	129,337	665,229	121,393
2011	22,588	13.6%	69.9%	12.8%	3.5%
2012	181,397	28.8%	12.8%	3.5%	
2013	310,597	49.3%			
2014	82,416	13.1%			
2015	23,658	3.8%			

* An individual can have more than one specific need

Syrian Registration Trend since 01 March 2011



Interagency Portal: <https://data.unhcr.org/SyriansInJordan>
 UNHCR on the web: <http://www.unhcr.org>
 UNHCR on Social network: <https://www.facebook.com/UNHCRJordan> / https://twitter.com/Beal_Hazraa / <https://twitter.com/ZatariCamp>



* Coloured map only reflects refugees living outside camps.

Handling the current uncertainty requires learning the lessons of past forced migrations, and in particular of the Iraqi refugee crisis of 2006-2010, which evolved under somewhat similar circumstances. Jordan's last refugee crisis came about, at least in part, because the Jordanian government and the international community had prepared themselves for the wrong disaster. When the bombs started falling on Baghdad in 2003, everyone expected Jordan's borders to be swamped by tens to hundreds of thousands of Iraqis demanding sanctuary. When that situation did not materialise, it was assumed that the danger was over.⁴⁹³

No one seemed to predict what came next: the slow continuous build-up of a displaced population. The border between Iraq and Jordan had long been heavily trafficked, and by 2006 many more Iraqis were entering Jordan than were leaving. Some came on business or vacation and decided to stay until their home became safer. Some who already lived in Jordan decided to bring their families. Others fled often after a kidnapping or threats of violence against a family member. Many started off able to care for themselves, but months or years in exile when they were unable to work ate away at their savings and left them in desperate need.

Today, in a strange sort of déjà vu situation, the discussion of Syrian displacement appears to centre around the same assumption that a 'crisis' will mean millions of families trying to cross the border all at once. The first response of the Jordanian government to this worry was to build a camp on the Syrian border. The partially state-owned *Jordan Times* recently ran a photo of a vast paved lot surrounded by water tanks,

⁴⁹³ Nicholas Seeley, Jordan open door policy for Syrian refugees, foreign policy journal march 2012 <http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/03/01/jordans-open-door-policy-for-syrian-refugees/> Accessed on 12/11/2014

and unnamed officials told the paper two more camps are being planned and are now being built to house the incoming refugees fleeing from Syria.

But both the government and the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization, which was put in charge of preparing the camps, have declined to talk about how the camps will be managed, or by whom, or even who is supposed to live in them. The first camp opened in mid-February 2012, but there is no news of anyone actually using it. Displaced Syrians, like the Iraqis before them, are taking up residence in Jordan's cities. It is possible that President Bashar al-Assad's next bombing campaign will indeed trigger an epic mass migration, with tens of thousands crowding Jordan's borders, a situation that might call for camps to house the large numbers of displaced.

Though cagey about its plans, the government has been open to acknowledging the presence of displaced Syrians, and even accepting that some may be refugees, a word that carries problematic connotations in this context. The government has also been proactive in making it clear that Syrian children would have full access to Jordanian schools, though it remains unclear how long that commitment will last. So far, the public response to displaced Syrians appears positive. The state media apparatus has sided, to the degree it can, with the Syrian people. Government newspapers faithfully cover both reports of violence over the border and anti-Assad protests at home.

If economic conditions worsen, or if violence in Syria increases and starts to affect Jordanian citizens, attitudes towards Syrians may quickly sour. Already there are tensions within the government, which could cut either way in terms of public perception. That the refugee issue is at the moment manageable is all the more reason for governments and aid organisations to work together to plan, in a transparent manner, for the most likely eventualities. They should work to ensure that assistance is delivered to those who need it, and that Jordan is able to maintain its open-door policy

without being made to suffer economic or social consequences in exchange for its generosity.⁴⁹⁴

(iii) The refugee crisis and its impact on identity in Jordan

With no end to the Syrian civil war in sight, the Syrian refugee crises continue to escalate amid international concerns over how to respond to this humanitarian emergency. The international community commended Jordan for welcoming the Syrian refugees who fled their country during the civil war, which is still ongoing. But as the number of refugees entering Jordan continues to rise, so does the strain on Jordan's political and economic balance, in particular, in a country which has struggled to create a unified national identity since independence.⁴⁹⁵

Over the years the sheer number of refugees living in Jordan has created a series of issues for political life in Jordan. First of all, refugees have been seen as a challenge to the integrity and legitimacy of the Jordanian regime. The fact that Palestinians make up the majority of the population feeds into the notion that Jordan is Palestine that came out from Israel, which claims that the Palestinian right to self-determination could be satisfied by the establishment of a Palestinian state in Jordan. In addition to the above statement, King Abdullah II of Jordan reiterated that Jordan is Jordan and Palestine is Palestine. This is an obvious threat to the regime's power and to Jordan's viability as a

⁴⁹⁴ Nicholas Seely, 'Jordan's Open Door Policy for Syrian Refugees', *Middle East Foreign Policy Magazine*, March 2012.
http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/03/01/jordan_s_open_door_policy_for_syrian_refugees. Accessed on 9/6/14.

Syrian conflict Jordan refugees Report

⁴⁹⁵ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-21179835> Accessed on 27/12/2014

nation state.

The refugee situation also poses a challenge to the key constituencies, which have traditionally kept the Hashemites in power. The Hashemite monarch has long based his support on the loyalty of the East Bank Jordanian tribes. The East Bankers have enjoyed a privileged relationship with the monarchy, which has given them access to free education and public sector jobs, and they fill the ranks of the army and the state intelligence services. But the growing refugee demographic threatens their privileged positions, and has begun to provoke a backlash in recent years.

Faced with these challenges, King Abdullah II has undertaken several measures since he acceded to the throne with a view to fostering a sense of Jordanian patriotism that could be channelled towards supporting the Hashemite rule. His Jordan First campaign could be described as an attempt to construct a national identity defined in territorial rather than pan-Arab terms and foster loyalty to Jordanian interests above all others. The Jordan First campaign, however, has been met with unease by many who distrust its political motives. The brand of Jordanian nationalism encouraged by the campaign implicitly excludes and delegitimises the Palestinian identity and can be regarded as one element in the monarchy's deliberate policy to reserve high-level governmental positions and discriminate against Palestinians despite the king's wife being of Palestinian descent.⁴⁹⁶

With the new wave of refugees, which is creating mounting pressure on Jordan's economy, there is a worrying possibility that attitudes towards refugees could continue

⁴⁹⁶ Jeffery Goldberg The modern King in the Arab spring, The Atlantic magazine April 2013. <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/04/monarch-in-the-middle/309270/> Accessed on 27/12/2014

to sour. The Syrian refugee population is causing a strain on Jordan's scarce water supply as well as its schools and hospitals. Jordanians fear that the influx of Syrians desperate to earn a living will push wages down and heighten the competition for scarce jobs. At the same time, the government in Jordan has suspended subsidies on electricity, water, fuel and bread, which has led to higher prices for everyone. The presence of refugees in the country is a significant strain on the limited resources the country is able to offer.⁴⁹⁷

The Jordanian government needs to balance competing interests; it must look at the current distribution of power in the country amongst the various national groups in a very open and frank way. There is the danger that the influx of more refugees may threaten the balance of power in Jordan, as there is only so much privilege that the monarchy can dispense. The regime needs to take into account these identity pull-and-push factors when delineating a new identity for Jordan, since identity formation in Jordan today is a very complex and multifaceted affair. The country will need to embrace multiple narrative strands: the Palestinian narrative, the tribal narrative and the young pan-Arab, Arab Spring-inspired democratic narrative.⁴⁹⁸

Historically the Hashemite monarchy has had to balance a number of different elements in its desire to enunciate a clear Jordanian national identity. These different elements have included East Bank Jordanian tribes, West Bank Palestinians, Islamists of the

⁴⁹⁷ Ian Black, 'Patience running out in Jordan after influx of Syrian refugees', *The Guardian*, December 2014. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/01/jordan-syrian-refugees-patience-running-out> Accessed 28/12/2014

⁴⁹⁸ Mariam Putlik, 'What Does the Refugee Crises Mean for Jordanian National Identity?', *International Political Forum*, November 2013. <http://internationalpoliticalforum.com/?s=jordanian+national+identity> Accessed 10/6/14.

Muslim brotherhood and Arab Nationalists. The present Syrian refugee influx has affected this delicate balance and complicated more the sense of a clear Jordanian national identity today.

Historically, tribal support for the Hashemite monarchy had been a critical feature of the Jordanian state's political legitimacy. During the early years of the establishment of Jordan as a state, the Hashemite family built the identity of the Jordanian nation around the Bedouin tribes. Beyond representing important characteristics of Jordanian identity, East Bank tribes have played an important role in Jordan's armed forces and security services, from which the Jordanian government derives its traditional power base. The thesis has therefore demonstrated that exclusivity around Jordanian identity originates from attempts by East Bank Jordanians to safeguard their political status and privileges.

Jordan has historically built its political legitimacy around East Jordanian national identity. From the early years since the establishment of the Hashemite Kingdom, the idea that Jordan might become an alternative homeland for Palestinians loomed large in the nation's political mindset and psychology. Palestinians were excluded from government positions, although they formed a large percentage of the Jordanian economic elite. The perceived threat of Palestinians to East Bank political hegemony and Jordanian national identity plays itself out in Jordan's Syria refugee policy as the country puts limitations on the arrival of Palestinian and Syrian refugees.

The protracted nature of the Syrian refugee crises has future political implications for Jordanian national identity. A generation or two from today that translates to 20 or 30 years on, Syrians who have made a life in Jordan will add to the population of non-Jordanian individuals who live with fewer rights and not as fully equal citizens within the kingdom's frontiers. This changing demographic threatens to highlight future political questions about who deserves full citizenship and will provoke a more

challenging discussion of who actually is Jordanian, what does Jordan First mean and how is national identity in Jordan to unfold in the coming years.⁴⁹⁹

Conclusion: Jordan since the Arab uprising: between change and stability

The Islamist movement, in particular the Muslim Brotherhood, has begun to be seen as one of the main beneficiaries of the uprisings in the post-2011 Middle East. The Islamist group's support for public rallies (especially in Egypt, Tunisia and Syria) epitomises a new era of challenge for the incumbent Arab regimes. Although it is too early to speak of structural change or a revolutionary era in the region, the events of the Arab Spring have highlighted the profound effect the Muslim Brotherhood Society is having in most Middle Eastern countries.

Despite the fact that the uprisings sparked changes to certain political rules in the region, the main players within the systems themselves have, to a large degree, remained in place. Rather than wiping the slate clean, the Arab Spring has encouraged former political players in the region to switch positions and activities inside the prevailing system. One of the clearest examples of this is the Muslim Brotherhood and

⁴⁹⁹ Alexandra Francis, Jordan refugee crises, Carnegie Endowment for International peace September 2015, http://carnegieendowment.org/2015/09/18/jordan-s-refugee-crisis/ihwc?mkt_tok=3RkMMJWWfF9wsRogsqXJZKXonjHpfsX57O4oWa6g38431UFwdcjKPmjr1YUGTMd0aPyQAgobGp5I5FEIQ7XYTLB2t60MWA%3D%3D Accessed on 27/09/2015.

its political wing, the Islamic Action Front, in Jordan.⁵⁰⁰

For Jordan, the Islamic Action Front's change in stance is only one outcome of the protests. Jordan's democratisation process has also been influenced by another by-product of the recent uprisings, a resurgence of East Bank engagement, witnessed for the first time since the socioeconomic riots in Maan in 2002. Although not triggered by identity issues within the kingdom, the recent public rallies have led to the re-emergence of historical divisions and called into question the notion of loyalty between Jordanians and the citizens of Jordan with Palestinian origins.

For the Arab Middle East in general, the uprisings can be best explained as a legitimacy crisis in which incumbent regimes have lost the support of the masses. Economic and social pressures have provoked widespread demands for political and economic reform. In Jordan, before the Arab uprisings, political liberalisation efforts were primarily sparked by domestic economic grievances and had little impact when compared to the other countries in the region. This thesis argues that with the onset of the public rallies and Islamist activist insurgence in the Arab world, Jordan came to represent the epitome of new change. Steps taken by the government to uphold its own process of political reform from 2011 onwards resonated in other countries. Due to the permeable nature of the Arab world's borders, Jordan's regime-led style of democratisation has spread, and Islamist activism, the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic Action Front, in particular, have been prompted to redefine and reconstruct themselves.

⁵⁰⁰ Shmuel Bar, *The Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan*, The Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, 1998, p.19.

Until the onset of the Arab Spring, the trend towards democratisation in Jordan was generally influenced by socioeconomic problems, to which the monarchy responded with an agenda of political openness. This changed with the Arab Spring, when East Banker domestic activism combined with repercussions from the Arab subsystem to stimulate the political reform process.

Currently, in the Hashemite kingdom, the Islamist movement has emerged as one of the main actors in the mobilisation of public debate on political reform. As one of the most stable regimes in the Middle East, Jordan is a clear example of the Brotherhood and Islamic Action Front acting both as ‘loyal opposition’ and as an impetus for political liberalisation. Nevertheless, the latest social uprisings have led to growing tensions between the kingdom and the Muslim Brotherhood/Islamic Action Front, despite the latter’s position as the key political party and opposition within post-1992 Jordanian politics.⁵⁰¹

⁵⁰¹ Nur Korpulu, ‘Jordan since the Uprising: Between Change and Stability’, *Middle East Policy Council Journal*, Summer 2014, Vol. 21. <http://mepc.org/journal/middle-east-policy-archives/jordan-uprisings-between-change-and-stability>

Chapter Six: Conclusion.

In conclusion, a reflection on each chapter of the dissertation and how they combine as a whole is appropriate. Chapter One demonstrated that this research must take into consideration the argument that Gellner's Eurocentric perspective, which limits his utility when considering non-European cases, taints his overall analysis. However, for one to presume that his theory is utterly irrelevant is to misconceive the valuable and material methodology that he provides in painting a picture of how nationalism is derived. Gellner's theory is still applicable to states outside Europe, as can be seen in the nationalisms that have taken hold in many Middle Eastern and Arabic countries such as Jordan.

As this chapter shows, the argument can also be endorsed by Gellner's own writings regarding the relationship between nationalism and religion in the Middle East. Thus, it is legitimate to call Gellner's theory relevant to a case study on Jordanian nationalism, and the arguments in this project will be developed in favour of, and in contrast to, Gellner's modernist approach so as to provide a comprehensive answer to the main question regarding the development of Jordanian nationalism in the period since disengagement in 1988.

In fact, despite the ethnic and political discrepancies between Western and Eastern societies, modernism, rather than primordialism or ethno-symbolism, is the most valid theory for the examination of nation formation in the Middle East. This is because, unlike the other theories, modernism defines nationalism in countries such as Jordan as a result of colonialism, political struggle, and social and bureaucratic transformation,

and thereby manages to capture the dynamics underlying the generation of new national identity. Most of these criteria are equally significant for the history of nationalism in the Western world. However, this does not mean that other theories, especially ethno-symbolism, are completely irrelevant. Indeed, ethno-symbolism may prove very useful in approaching aspects of Jordanian nationalism, such as the ethnic past of the Palestinians and other minorities, including Bedouins, who live in Jordan.

Chapter One explored theories applicable to the development of nationalism in the Middle East and highlighted key developments in Jordanian national identity in the period after disengagement.

The second chapter discussed the development of the concept of Jordan First in depth by clarifying the meaning of state power and the regime's survival strategies. It presumes that a new meaning of the concept of Jordan First as a national slogan is considered to be one of the main factors that has weakened traditional powers, and is a new beginning for the political liberalisation process. The underlying assumption is that individuals will begin to define themselves according to their personal achievements. Therefore, Jordan First as the regime's national slogan is an instrument of modernisation that heightens popular demand for the principle of personal achievement.

To summarise Chapter Two, the analysis demonstrated over four sections that the development of national identity with respect to the Hashemite discourse has engendered a clearly defined and coherent understanding of Jordanian national identity. First, with respect to the tribes of Jordan, the analysis demonstrated how tribal and Bedouin identity are integral to any modern concept of Jordanianess. Although increasingly less relevant, the tribal makeup of Jordan for the foreseeable future will remain an important undercurrent of national identity. In relation to the armed forces, the analysis has demonstrated that from the conception of the state of Jordan through to

its present history, the martial qualities represented by the armed forces are an integral and important component of modern Jordanian identity.

The Palestinian analysis in this chapter has shown that this important population of the country is a cohesive and a counter force when it comes to national identity formation. In short, where the segments are not well integrated in Jordan, in socioeconomic terms, there is a greater likelihood that they will espouse a more pronounced Palestinian identity. With respect to Jordan First, this was a response by the monarchy to counter opposing views, but it is too early to determine whether the regime has been wholly successful in inculcating a strong sense of Jordanian identity in view of the effects on the country by the current Syrian situation, which is a scenario that is still unfolding.

Chapter Three analysed the Jordanian government's efforts since the early 1950s to formulate a hybrid Jordanian national identity incorporating how both Jordanians and each community in its own way has resisted Palestinians. At the same time, however, there is strong evidence to suggest that the regime itself did not hesitate when it served its interest to stir up or exploit tensions between the Jordanians and Palestinians in the country. Complicating an already difficult situation is the effect of the Jordanian-Palestinian relations within the ongoing processes of economic and political liberalisation measures that have re-ignited tensions between the two communities.

Each of these processes has led to the formulation of policies that affect the economic and political balance between the Jordanians and Palestinians in Jordan. These changes in the internal communal sharing of power have a specific meaning insofar as this balance has gone some way in the past to forming each group's identity, with Jordanians seeing themselves as being tied to the government and the Palestinians seeing themselves outside the government.

The accumulated effect of economic restructuring and political openings appears to have led the two communities in different directions: sensing a threat to their historic power position, Jordanians have delineated more clearly a narrative that has been referred to as one espousing ‘trans-Jordanian nationalism’. Many Palestinians in Jordan, on the other hand, witnessing an opening up of the political and economic system after disengagement and being more understanding of the king after the Gulf crises have begun to feel that they have to take part in the Jordanian system.

Whatever the outcome of the continuing tensions between Jordanian and Palestinian anxieties, the two groups are certainly going to continue talking and debating and will feature prominently in domestic politics as this current stage in the redefining of the Jordanian national identity after 1988 continues to unfold.

King Hussein was concerned about the possible impact of the emerging Palestinian entity on the relationship between Jordanians and Palestinians in Jordan. On many occasions, the king warned that anyone tampering with Jordanian national unity would be his ‘enemy until doomsday’. The king added that the Palestinians in Jordan enjoyed all rights of citizenship and would continue to do so unless they freely elected to leave for Palestine.⁵⁰²

The king assured the PLO that Jordan’s own self-interest dictated support for the PLO. Jordan’s involvement with the Palestine issue was regarded as a twin-track approach – the political, historical and social bonds between the east and west banks would make strategic ties essential to both nations once the Palestinians fully achieved their national aspirations. After 46 years in power, King Hussein died on February 7, 1999.

⁵⁰² Asher Susser, ‘Jordan’, *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, Vol. xv, 1991, pp.409-410.

Jordan's involvement with the Palestine question has always been, and still remains, one of the most crucial aspects of its national identity narrative. Jordan was born out of the Palestinian struggle and has been tied to its fortunes and misfortunes from the beginning of the Arab-Israeli struggle for the Holy Land. Indeed, as the analysis in the chapter has demonstrated, the geographical factor has been conducive to the development of strong, social, commercial and administrative ties between Jordan and the West Bank.

Chapter Four of the thesis suggested a constructivist link between change, identity and foreign policy conduct. One is in a position to question the idea that identity is a product of ethnic, religious, cultural or state interests. In place of these traditional understandings, the experience of Jordan post disengagement demonstrates that struggles over identity in the national and international settings gave birth to pockets of interests that key elements within the country then try to realise at all cost. Since 1988, Jordan's identity has changed, particularly since it has concluded a difficult peace with Israel in 1994. All of these elements have led to very different understandings of Jordan's identity and interests. The more vocal interpretations of the Arab dimension of Jordan's identity constrained the ability of the monarchy to publicly side with Israel. Even those Jordanians who would have benefited from peace publicly at least tried to demonstrate adherence to Jordan's Arab identity.

Chapter Four also analysed Jordan's relations with Israel from the beginning of its existence to the present day. It has shown how the relationship between the two states has demonstrated both cordiality and deep mistrust. The chapter focused on the peace agreement between the two countries in 1994 and has shown how despite promising a great deal, the treaty failed to deliver on peace and security. Jordanian national identity has had to evolve very carefully, while making subtle reference to its neighbour to the

west. Jordan both defines itself with respect to Israel as being Arab, Islamic, native to the region, monarchical and tribal in a positive sense. It also looks to make similarities with Israel by styling itself as progressive, modern, advanced, democratic and liberal in its governance.

In this context of struggle between the government and the opposition to establish a dominant public frame, popular opposition to the treaty was not foreordained, or inherent in Palestinian communal identity, Islamic beliefs or Arab culture. Identity does not produce interests but rather forms the articulation of interests in public political struggles. Improved relations with Israel involved both strategic interest in state-to-state co-operation and also fundamental challenges to the Arab dimension of Jordan Arab identity.

Jordan's disengagement from the West Bank in 1988 thus offers a very powerful argument for the very real relationship between Jordanian identity and geostrategic interests.

The final chapter of the thesis demonstrated the importance of recent events in Jordan for the stability and long-term security of the country. Jordan in this critical period of the 21st century faces many multi-faceted challenges: it has to understand the changing dynamics of the region, it has to listen to new voices requesting change, and the country needs to stabilise its borders and work with international actors wanting to ensure long-term stability and prosperity.

This thesis has demonstrated that the narratives that shaped the national identity of Jordanians were produced by the state educational system. As demonstrated, the state production of historical narratives is supported by the use of specialists in the discipline who present their reading of history as 'objective and analytical'. By doing this, they

set the rules for what is true and what is considered untrue. The specialists' power under the supervision of the state is presented as a neutral act. Such a work plan obscures the real influence of the authors who construct identity in Jordan and make their research seem neutral and unconnected to the state apparatus.

The second part of my conclusion relates to the study question and the discussion of national identity in Jordan. The main argument advanced in this thesis is supported in the empirical findings. The thesis proposed, first, that identity is socially constructed. Second, this identity develops via difference, and it is in relation to others that a sense of self develops. The Jordanian national narrative was formed in opposition to the other, the other in this instance being Palestinians, Israelis and other Arab nationalities. The first argument is in line with the constructionist view on how identities develop. This view is in contrast to the essentialist approach, which posits the idea that an identity stems from a core essence. As my analysis in the thesis shows, Jordanian national identity, as a social identity, is partly socially constructed by the media, state propaganda and school and college textbooks.⁵⁰³

National discourse in Jordan organised the national narrative by selecting events that came to symbolise the success and defeat of Arab and Jordanian heroes, like the Late King Hussein, and their enemies such as the Israeli state. Another important aspect of the role of power in this difficult process of identity formation in relation to people who are not Jordanian is that it results in an indirect or direct disagreement between the Jordanian self and the non-Jordanian other. Therefore as the thesis has demonstrated,

⁵⁰³ Riad M. Nasser, *Palestinian identity in Jordan and Israel*, Routledge, New York and London, 2005, pp.235-236.

any criteria used to draw a line between self and other is an actual fact, a manifestation of power relations which prepare the ground for a healthy rivalry between the included Jordanian and the excluded non-Jordanian, that is Palestine. As Derrida has argued, any effort by the Jordanian elite to establish the framework of its own identity involves the exclusion or silencing of the voices of others who are perceived to be not authentic Jordanian or traditional Jordanians. As a result, the process of identity formation in Jordan involves acts of highly symbolic violence against the person understood to be non-traditional Jordanian or the opposite. As the case study of Jordanian identity since 1988 has demonstrated, this exclusion of the other is supported by this conclusion.⁵⁰⁴

Identity formation and politics since disengagement in 1988 have been key elements in the Jordanian national discourse. Jordan needs to embrace an identity that is fluid, caters for the different voices in the country and embraces the challenges of modernity. This chapter has also shown that the Arab Spring has had a significant impact on national identity in Jordan, and it continues to alter the national identity dynamics of a country situated in a volatile region. It remains to be seen what the coming months and years have in store for Jordan, as the country struggles to keep a lid on the swelling opposition movement and the lack of progress in the Israeli-Palestinian dispute.

⁵⁰⁴ J. Derrida, Deconstruction and the other: An interview with Jacques Derrida, in *Dialogues with contemporary continental thinkers*, ed. Richard Kearney. Manchester : University of Manchester Press, 1984 p.117

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