# Stuck in a Jordanian Winter: Why the Arab Spring Failed to Result in Lasting Regime Change in Jordan

Zoe Bernstein
Dept. of International Affairs, University of Colorado at Boulder

April 2, 2012

*Thesis Advisor:*
Dr. Gregory Young, Dept. of Political Science

*Defense Committee:*
Dr. Jessica Martin, Dept. of International Affairs
Dr. Victoria Hunter, Dept. of International Affairs

**Abstract**

Jordan is one of several states that did not undergo an "Arab Spring" in 2010 and 2011. Jordanian standards of living and political and civil rights were very similar to those in Egypt in 2010, yet Jordan did not undergo a revolution. Jordan experienced a wave of protests in late 2010 and early 2011, however these failed to materialize into any real reform; even more striking, these protests overwhelmingly did not call for the abolishment of the monarchy, but, rather, for some political and economic reforms.

So why is Jordan special? In other words, why has the Jordanian monarchy survived the Arab Spring almost entirely unscathed, and furthermore, without having to implement any real or lasting political reforms? The answer to this question lies in the failure of Jordan to develop a national and cohesive identity, which inhibited the ability of protesters in Jordan to develop a unified national agenda for their protest movement.

This study's goal is to understand, with the help of revolutionary theory, why Jordan's protest movement did not result in lasting and consequential governmental change. The findings of this study can be used to further the academic discussions taking place with respect to the Arab Spring, and will fit into the wider discourse around revolution.

## Table of Contents

## Introduction

In 2010, a wave of protests broke out across the Middle East and North Africa against corruption, authoritarianism, economic insecurity, and policy brutality. These protests managed to topple long-standing regimes, and profoundly affected the stability of the entire region. While the protests in Egypt and Tunisia gained international attention for their ability to oust what were previously considered to be unshakable dictatorial regimes, and while the Syrian Civil War continues to make headlines, some Arab governments escaped the Arab Spring relatively unscathed.

Despite factors similar to other nations who currently are or have undergone revolution, Jordan has remained a monarchy, and the royal family of Jordan does not appear to be on its way out any time soon. Jordanian standards of living and political and civil rights were very similar to those in Egypt in 2010.[1] Jordanians are in the midst of a severe economic crisis that began in 2009, yet Jordan did not undergo a revolution.[2] Additionally, as the Syrian civil war continues to rage, hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees are pouring into Jordan, and the government has repeatedly admitted that Jordan's economy and infrastructure is unable to sustain such a large refugee population.[3] As of 2013, there were an estimated 800,000 Syrian refugees in Jordan, and the number continues to rise;[4] to make matters more complicated, about 75% of these refugees are women and children who are desperately in need of crucial state services.[5] This influx of refugees makes the situation in Jordan unstable, yet the government still stands. Jordan

[1] Dilshod Achilov, "Social Capital, Islam, and the Arab Spring in the Middle East," *Journal of Civil Society,* 9 (3) (09): 268.
[2] Sarah Tobin, "Jordan's Arab Spring: The Middle Class and Anti-Revolution," *Middle East Policy,* 19 (1) (Spring 2012), 94.
[3] Richard A. Kauffman, "Syrian Refugee Crisis Hits Neighboring Countries," *Christian Century* 130, no. 8 (2013): 18.
[4] Sean L. Yom, "Jordan: the Ruse of Reform," *Journal of Democracy* 24 (3) (07): 127.
[5] Kauffman, 18.

experienced a wave of protests in late 2010 and early 2011, however these failed to materialize into any real reform; even more striking, these protests overwhelmingly did not call for the abolition of the monarchy, but, rather, for some political and economic reforms that would have left the regime mostly intact.[6]

So why is Jordan special? In other words, why has the Jordanian monarchy survived the Arab Spring almost entirely unscathed, and furthermore, without having to implement any real or lasting political reforms?

*The answer to this question lies in the ability of King Abdullah II to take advantage of Jordan's lack of a national and cohesive identity, and his capitalization on the inability of protesters in Jordan to develop a unified national agenda for their protest movement.* This lack of identity is caused by several factors, namely the conflict between Jordanians of Palestinian origin and those of Transjordanian origin, the structure and unique qualities of the Jordanian monarchy, and the particular history of Islamists in Jordan. This paper will explain how these factors prevented the development of a Jordanian national identity, and how that lack of identity negatively impacted the success of protest movements in Jordan in 2010 and 2011. It will go on to argue that King Abdullah II, the reigning monarch of Jordan, is well aware of these societal divisions and actively engages in divide-and-rule politics to further divide his population and Jordan's elites, which has so far successfully prevented revolution in Jordan from occurring.

Jordan is a vital US ally and a cornerstone of Middle East peace, and understanding what makes the Jordanian regime seem so stable in comparison with other Middle Eastern regimes is important the study of US foreign policy and state-building. Additionally, understanding the

[6] Tobin, 96; Ryan Curtis, "Political Opposition and Reform Coalitions in Jordan," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 38 (3) (12), 367; Younghoon Moon "Democracy on the Horizon: How the Arab Spring is Unfolding in Jordan," *Harvard International Review,* 33 (4) (Spring 2012), 28.

factors in Jordan that contributed to the failure of the protests in 2010 and 2011 fits into the wider discourse of identity politics and the role of government structure in ensuring the stability of a regime or system.

## Background

*The foundations of the Jordanian state*

At the close of World War I, an agreement was drafted between Britain and France that allowed the European powers to divide the vanquished Ottoman Empire between themselves. This agreement, called the Sykes-Picot agreement, dictated that the area known as "Southern Syria," which corresponds to modern-day Israel and Jordan, would be under the administration of the British, and, in 1917, Great Britain was granted a League of Nations Mandate over this area; the area was thereafter known as the 'Mandate of Palestine.'[7]

By 1921, the need to create an Arab state in Mandate Palestine had become clear, and the mandate was divided along the Jordan river; the area west of the river would remain known as the Mandate of Palestine, and the land to the east was to become an Arab state, Transjordan, and, later, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, ruled by the Hashemite family, a wealthy family from the Hejaz who had participated with the British in negotiations to divide the mandate.[8] Since the state was established, Jordan has been ruled by four kings: Abdullah I was the first Hashemite ruler, and, after he was assassinated, he was succeeded briefly by his son, Talal, then by his grandson Hussein, and, finally, Jordan is ruled today by Hussein's son, Abdullah II.

[7] As'ad Ghanem, "Palestinian Nationalism: an Overview," *Israel Studies* 18, no. 2 (2013): 12.
[8] Yom, 125.

*The History of Palestinian Nationalism*

The Mandate of Palestine was established by the League of Nations after World War I, and was to be under the administration of the British. This mandate originally included the area that today comprises Israel, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the Kingdom of Jordan. After 1921, the Mandate of Palestine was divided and only the land area west of the Jordan River remained under the mandate. It is impossible to discuss the history of the kingdom of Jordan and its relationship with its neighbors and domestic Palestinian population without understanding the history of Palestinians and Palestinian nationalism in the region. The foundations of a specifically Palestinian nationalism developed as a result of Zionism and increased Jewish immigration to Palestine in the late 1800s and early 1900s. By the 1920s, political parties and organizations that identified themselves as "Palestinian" rather than "Arab" began to emerge in Mandate Palestine.[9]

By the mid-1930s, these parties had become relatively well organized and prevalent in Palestinian society, although they still lacked the coordination and infrastructure of the Zionist entities that existed at the time; in 1936 in response to a marked increase in Jewish immigration to Palestine, these Palestinian groups organized and carried out an organized and coordinated strike against the British which lasted three years and resulted in extreme violence perpetrated by and against all parties in Palestine at the time - the Palestinians, the British and the Jews.[10] The strike was a disappointing failure for the Palestinian parties, and their lack of success led the influence and organization of these Palestinian political groups to decline rapidly.[11] The outbreak of World War II also served as a distraction to both the British who were fighting the Axis

[9] As'ad, 12.
[10] As'ad, 13.
[11] Ibid.

powers, and the Palestinians who hoped the war would bring an end to British rule in Palestine. The Jews of Palestine, on the other hand, responded to the news of Germany's anti-Semitic rhetoric and actions by strengthening their infrastructure and increasing their efforts to increase emigration so that, by the time the war ended, the Jews had developed a relatively sound political framework which they used to assert their claim to Palestine on the international level. As a result, the Palestinians were the least able to participate as a national group in the discussions that took place in Great Britain and the League of Nations in 1947 that would lead to the second partition of Palestine and, eventually, to the Israeli War of Independence and the Palestinian Nakba of 1948.

By the time war broke out in Mandatory Palestine in 1947, 1.3 million Arabs lived in the territory. There was a general sense that they were the Arabs of Palestine, but due to various factors, the political nationalism that had only just begun to emerge in the 1920s had largely disappeared or become entirely ineffective at that point.[12] As impending war between the Jews of Palestine and the surrounding Arabs became more and more likely throughout 1947 and 1948, much of the Palestinian elite left the country, either temporarily with the hope of returning to a victorious Arab state, or permanently; this desertion of the elite left the Palestinian Arabs devoid of any effective and unified national leadership, and this would have consequences for decades after the war as well.[13] During the war, hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs were displaced, and by war's end, the demographic balance of the entire Levant had shifted. Most significant to this study, the west bank of the Jordan River, which had been conquered by the Jordanian army, became home to 742,300 Palestinian Arabs, almost 50% of the Palestinian

[12] Ibid.
[13] As'ad, 16.

community that existed in 1948.[14]

The Jordanian government, therefore, had come to rule over half of the Palestinian population, and the kingdom became the home of the largest population of Palestinian Arabs. After 1948, the development of Palestinian nationalism would take a different form in the Kingdom of Jordan than it would in other Palestinian communities. For one, Jordan was the first and most willing Arab state to offer Palestinians civil and political rights, and within a decade of the war Palestinians were granted Jordanian citizenship, which allowed them to vote in parliamentary elections and to receive state services. This led to a unique problem in Jordan, though as it "left the Hashemites to solve the problem of how to ensure the loyalty of their new Palestinian subjects."[15] One way the Jordanian monarchy chose to do this was to limit the development of Palestinian nationalism within the kingdom. In 1948-1949, there was an attempt by the Arab Higher Committee to form a Palestinian national government based in Gaza that would govern all of Mandatory Palestine and all Palestinians displaced by the war. This plan was enthusiastically encouraged by several Arab states, however Jordan would not allow this Palestinian government to operate within the West Bank; it was at this point that it became clear that King Abdullah I intended to annex the West Bank.[16] The immediate reluctance of Jordan to allow the development of Palestinian nationalism "inaugurated a period of almost total paralysis of Palestinian initiatives to highlight their distinctiveness and national affiliation."[17]

It would take a decade for Palestinian nationalism to begin to re-emerge in Palestinian communities in the Arab states. Fatah, one of the first Palestinian national political organizations

---

[14] As'ad, 13.
[15] Nigel J. Ashton, "Pulling the Strings: King Hussein's Role During the Crisis of 1970 in Jordan," *The International History Review* 28, no. 1 (2006): 95
[15]
[16] As'ad, 14.
[17] As'ad, 16.

was founded in Kuwait in 1957, and by the 1960s, the pan-Arabism publicized and encouraged by Gamal Abdul Nasser in Egypt prompted a political reawakening of the Palestinian community; it was in this environment that the Palestine Liberation Organization and the General Union of Palestinian Students were founded.[18] This development was slow, though, as the conflict between Nasserist Arab nationalists and Arab communists caused nascent Palestinian political groups to actively work against each other in the context of this conflict.[19] Through this environment of international ideological disagreement, the PLO emerged as the most consolidated voice of Palestinian nationalism and represented the "zenith of the institutionalization of the Palestinian national movement and culmination of the process of its consolidation and independence from the patronage of the Arab States."[20] Despite King Hussein's attempt to create a "United Kingdom of Palestine and Jordan" in the early 1960s, the PLO found a foothold in Jordan and Palestinian nationalism was able to develop in the kingdom, especially after the defeat of Jordan and the other Arab states by Israel in 1967.[21] This defeat signaled to the Palestinians that the Arab states were unable to effectively promote the cause of Palestinian nationalism, and Palestinians increasingly turned away from their home governments and towards nationalist Palestinian groups like the PLO.[22]

After 1967, the PLO sought to create a more unified Palestinian national movement, and, in 1969, changed the PLO charter to emphasize "Palestinian Distinctiveness" within the wider Arab community.[23] At this point, the PLO was operating almost exclusively out of Jordan, and began to step up actions against Israel to match their increased focus on Palestinian nationalist

[18] As'ad, 17.
[19] Ibid.
[20] As'ad, 18.
[21] Ashton, 96.
[22] As'ad, 18.
[23] As'ad, 19.

rhetoric. This period was marked by an intense fighting between armed resistance fighters operating within Jordan, the *fedayeen*, and Israel. The *fedayeen* stepped up cross border attacks into Israel, and Israel retaliated with force. Jordan, still reeling from defeat in 1967 and the loss of almost half the kingdom, was unwilling to take on Israeli forces, and Palestinians in Jordan began to feel as though the Jordanian state could no longer protect them or their cause. This feeling of insecurity solidified Palestinian national feelings within Jordan and shifted allegiance from the Jordanian state to the dispersed Palestinian communities and their national leadership in the form of the PLO.[24] These feelings would culminate in the Black September of 1970, in which King Hussein expelled the PLO from Jordan. This event served to cement the antagonism of Palestinians towards the Jordanian monarchy, and this antagonism would last through the remainder of King Hussein's reign.[25] Black September had other significant consequences for the Kingdom which will be discussed at length in later sections of this paper.

After black September, Palestinian Nationalism within Jordan was muted, though not destroyed, as Palestinians continued to identify as distinct from other Arabs living in Jordan, yet no longer engaged in overt and public displays of Palestinian nationalism. In other Arab States and in Israel, Palestinian Nationalism had developed into a full-fledged national movement, and the PLO and other emerging Palestinian groups fostered and encouraged this development, and continue to do so today.

*The Modern Jordanian State and Government Structure*

Jordan is officially known as the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Jordan is a monarchy

[24] Ashton, 99-101.
[25] As'ad, 21.

with a constitution, but does not function as a constitutional monarchy;[26] unlike other constitutional monarchies, for example, the United Kingdom, the King of Jordan essentially retains all political power and has no obligation to defer to his parliament in the way the Queen of England might. According to the Jordanian constitution, all executive power is vested in the office of the King.[27] He alone can appoint the Prime Minister and all members of his cabinet, and he appoints all forty seats of the upper house of the Jordanian National Assembly, which holds veto power over the Assembly's lower house.[28] The King also has the power to dissolve the National Assembly, fire the Prime Minister, and pass royal decrees as he sees fit.[29]

Members of Jordan's National Assembly are elected through a single non-transferable vote system,[30] and Jordan is one of the only countries in the world to use this voting method.[31] This system has a profound effect on Jordanian national politics, as it is "known to discourage the formation of political parties and favor candidates with strong tribal connections. In addition, districts are drawn…in such a way that rural and tribal areas have disproportionate weight."[32] Gerrymandering is extremely common, and quotas determine the ability of minorities to be elected to the National Assembly.[33] Here, too, the king has quite a lot of influence, as he retains the power to change electoral rules at will.[34]

[26] Younghoon, 28.
[27] Tobin, 93.
[28] Younghoon, 29.
[29] Ibid.
[30] John M. Carey, and Andrew Reynolds, "The Impact of Election Systems," *Journal of Democracy* 22, no. 4, (2011): 39.
[31] Younghoon, 30.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Tobin, 97; Carey and Reynolds, 41.
[34] Ryan, 370.

*The 2010-2011 Protests in Jordan*

The most noteworthy round of protests that took place in Jordan during the time period of the Arab Spring occurred from December 2010 until February 2011.[35] These protests "were fewer, calmer, and more stable" than those in other Arab states, like Egypt or Tunisia.[36] About 3,000 people protested in Amman in 2011,[37] and there were a total of seven demonstrations that year.[38] Almost all the protests were registered with the government in accordance with Jordanian law.[39] The protests attracted individuals from all areas of society, even those segments traditionally supportive of the regime.[40] Even so, almost no one demanded the outright removal of the monarchy,[41] and the protests largely died out after 2011. Other, smaller protests have broken out intermittently since 2011, but the targets of these protests have been varied and their length and reach have been relatively short.[42]

**Literature Review**

There is extensive literature that focuses on the lack of Jordanian identity, as well as the Jordanian monarchy and Islamists in Jordan. This literature is extremely useful in understanding the factors of Jordanian society that made the development of a national identity almost impossible. Where this literature is lacking, however, is in explaining how this lack of identity contributed to the failure of the Arab Spring protests in Jordan in 2010 and 2011, and how King Abdullah II has been able to manipulate this lack of identity through divide-and-rule politics to

[35] Achilov, 276.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Younghoon, 28.
[38] Achilov, 276.
[39] Tobin, 99.
[40] Ryan, 370.
[41] Younghoon, 30.
[42] Daoud Kuttab, "Did Gaza Save Jordan," *Huffington Post Online*, 11/22/2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/daoud-kuttab/did-gaza-save-jordan_b_2174525.html.

ensure no revolution occurs.

*The Lack of Homogeneity in Jordanian Society*

A majority of Jordanians cannot, in fact, trace their roots back to Jordan; about 50% of Jordanians are of Palestinian background, while Iraqis and smaller minorities also make up part of the population.[43] Some estimates are even higher, and state that the percentage of Jordanians who can trace some part of their ancestry to areas west of the Jordan River is closer to 70%.[44]

The divide between the Palestinian-Jordanian and East Bank Jordanian segments of the population dates back to the formation of the Jordanian state and the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948. This division became much more pronounced and consequential, though, after the Black September of 1970; many Jordanians still recall the terror and civil war which eventually led to the expulsion of the Palestine Liberation Organization from Jordan entirely.[45] The bloody nature of Black September had two immediate results: the draft in Jordan was abolished and the then resulting volunteer army became overwhelmingly East Bank Jordanian,[46] and xenophobia against Palestinian-Jordanians, many of who had been in Jordan for decades, gripped the East Bank Jordanian population.[47]

Although Palestinian-Jordanians are present at all levels of Jordanian government - the queen herself is of Palestinian descent - the army is still overwhelmingly East Bank Jordanian.[48] In Egypt, the military was a main factor in facilitating the success of the Egyptian Arab Spring;

[43] Tobin, 98; Yom, 130.
[44] James L. Gelvin, *The Arab Uprisings: What Everyone Needs to Know,* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012) 130.
[45] Yom, 133; Curtis, 368.
[46] Curtis, 368.
[47] Yom, 133.
[48] Yom, 134.

the army was made up of Egyptians who identified with the protestors and felt a sense of brotherhood with them. In Jordan, though, the situation is vastly more complicated as the Jordanian military is not necessarily of the same community as the protesters. Additionally, there is a fear among the military leadership, who is almost exclusively East Bank Jordanian, that, if the regime falls and the Palestinian-Jordanian majority gains more ground in government, the Jordanian military leadership will be replaced by a class of Palestinian-Jordanian military commanders, as the majority population would likely demand leadership roles in the post-Hashemite military.[49]

Another lasting consequence of the Jordanian conflict with the PLO was the resurgence of East Bank Jordanian nationalism in the mid-1970s, which served to weaken the already waning ties between East Bank Jordanians and Palestinian-Jordanians.[50] These new nationalists had trouble accepting the Palestinian-Jordanian population as permanent residents, even if some of them accepted granting the Palestinians political rights for the duration of their time in Jordan.[51] This newer nationalism was built around tribal foundations and culture, and rests upon Jordan's Bedouin history.[52] In this system of tribal loyalty, there is little acceptance of outsiders, and Palestinian-Jordanians have again found themselves on the outs with those with political power.

Additionally, although the Palestinian community in Jordan is by no means religiously or economically homogeneous, the legacy of xenophobic attitudes towards Palestinian-Jordanians from Black September ensures that many East Bankers falsely see the Palestinians as a unified

---

[49] Gelvin, 135.
[50] Adnan Abu-Odeh, *Jordanians, Palestinians, and the Hashemite Kingdom in the Middle East Peace Process,* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999) 24.
[51] Abu-Oden, 24.
[52] Yoav Alon, *The Making of Jordan: Tribes, Colonialism, and the Modern State,* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) 72.

and monolithic community. East Bank Jordanians have traditionally worked the public sector, and Palestinian-Jordanians have dominated private business.[53] As economic reforms lead to more and more privatization, East Bank Jordanians from the countryside are moving into the cities in large numbers, and for the first time they are encountering wealthy and urban Palestinian populations, and especially Palestinian populations more wealthy than themselves;[54] as East Bank Jordanians have traditionally dominated the public and government sphere, they have been "disproportionately affected by the wave of privatizations and government cutbacks that the Jordanian government began in earnest in 2003."[55] To complicate matters further, Palestinian-Jordanians often seen their East Bank counterparts as the more successful group, as those Jordanians who have managed to remain in public sector jobs through privatization have a large degree of job security; according to one study of East Bank and Palestinian-Jordanian attitudes in Jordan, each side "sees the other as the wealthy one."[56]

The Palestinian-East Bank Jordanian divide in Jordan is the most important political division in the country.[57] The large presence of Palestinians in Jordan today, and the legacy of distrust between the two groups has several contemporary political consequences. Palestinian-Jordanians are extremely underrepresented in Jordan's parliament, yet East Bank Jordanians have real anxiety over reforms that would lead to more equal representation, thus leading to more representation for the large Palestinian population.[58] Some East Bankers fear that giving Palestinian-Jordanians more of a political voice will encourage them to attempt to establish a

[53] Curtis, 369.
[54] Curtis, 369.
[55] Gelvin, 137.
[56] Curtis, 369.
[57] Curtis, 366.
[58] Tobin, 98; Younghoon, 30.

Palestinian state in Jordan, rather than in the West Bank and Gaza.[59] While this is highly unlikely, since it would extremely delegitimize the Palestinian "Right of Return," a vital aspect of the Palestinian experience vis-a-vis Israel,[60] East Bank Jordanians are so fearful of this outcome that some even oppose more equal district apportionment, even if it would ultimately lead to more democratization for everyone in the country.[61]

These divisions in society carried over into the protest movements in Jordan in 2010 and 2011. Most of the initial protests were divided along Palestinian-East Bank Jordanian lines; while the movements in West Amman were largely led by East Bank Jordanian youth, the downtown protests were generally staged by Palestinian-Jordanians, reflecting the living and working patterns of the two communities in Amman.[62] Palestinian national displays have long been regarded with suspicion in Jordan and are rarely tolerated, and the Palestinian-Jordanian led downtown protests were widely seen as a Palestinian complaint rather than a legitimate call for social action.[63] Thereafter, many Palestinian-Jordanians had little desire to participate in protests at all. It is important to remember that Jordan is one of the only Arab nations to grant citizenship to Palestinians, and the overall position of Palestinians in Jordan is significantly better than that of their peers in most other Arab nations.[64] Because of this, "many Palestinians...indicated that the Arab Spring in Jordan was 'not my fight' and that the 'real' Arab Spring was being fought by the abjectly poor and the politically disenfranchised, not by those who have some marginal ability to participate economically and politically."[65]

[59] Tobin, 98; Curtis, 366.
[60] Tobin, 98.
[61] Curtis, 367.
[62] Curtis, 370.
[63] Curtis, 370. Tobin, 99.
[64] Curtis, 365.
[65] Tobin, 99.

The conversation about reform was therefore dominated by East Bank Jordanians, especially in the more rural areas outside Amman.[66] East Bank leaders even went so far as to submit a petition to the King which cited the Palestinian Queen's excessive spending as one proof of corruption in the government, and in another similar petition, East Bank leaders expressed a strong desire that the Palestinian community be disenfranchised, and that the West Bank should never again become a part of the Jordanian state.[67] These societal divisions gave the Jordanian government an "out" when it came to implementing reforms; instead of creating lasting change, the government merely shifted the ethnic realities of the cabinet and legislature to appease one side or another. The identity politics of Jordan served to "obscure more meaningful discussion of reform and change, as the Jordanian Prime Minister merely fired some Palestinians from the cabinet and hired East Bank Jordanians in their place,[68] thus placating the protesting East Bank Jordanians and, in the same action, flexing the Jordanian muscles of power and control over the Palestinian-Jordanian population.

The Palestinian population in Jordan is an extremely important factor that divides Jordanian society and has served to mitigate any protests that sprung up in Jordan as part of the Arab Spring. Jordanians want more rights, but at the same time are wary of democratization that will weaken the East Bankers' dominance in government. Additionally, the divide between the two communities makes cooperation and coordination difficult at best, and distrust between the two communities has led each to blame the other for economic issues and government corruption. Palestinians in Jordan see themselves as better off in Jordan than they would be in any other Arab state, so there is a reluctance to "rock the boat" when, compared to their peers

[66] Curtis, 98.
[67] Gelvin, 139.
[68] Curtis, 98.

across the Arab world, they are doing quite well.

*The Jordanian Monarchy*

There are currently eight monarchies across the Gulf, Levant, and North Africa[69] and, with respect to the Arab Spring, "Arab monarchies emerged relatively undisturbed from the first wave of popular unrest and protest."[70] In this region, monarchy is defined by Bernard Lewis as "one-man personal rule - the rule of an individual."[71] In addition to this definition, modern Arab monarchies are characterized by the concept of *istibdad*, or, the idea that a ruler is one "who governs in accordance with his personal desires;"[72] in other words, Arab monarchs are largely despotic in their style of rulership. To understand the Jordanian monarchy fully, it is first necessary to briefly discuss the history of statebuilding and monarchy in the Middle East since the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

After World War I, the European powers who concerned themselves with the former empire's lands sought to create new states who could fall under their particular spheres of influence. Monarchies presented an ideal choice for both the European statesmen and the local Arab populations. To the Arabs, used to centuries of empire and at least partial hereditary autocratic rule, monarchies were a familiar choice.[73] Additionally, monarchy was a style of rule condoned by Islam, and kings and queens were associated with the international prestige of the European powers, a prestige many Arab elites and statesmen yearned for, especially after so

[69] Joseph Kostiner, introduction to *Middle East Monarchies: The Challenge of Modernity,* ed. Joseph Kostiner (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Pub, 2000), 1.
[70] Ludger Kundhardt, "The Resilience of Arab Monarchy, *Policy Review,* (173) (Jun): 57.
[71] Kostiner, 15.
[72] Kostiner, 15.
[73] Ami Ayalon, "Post-Ottoman Arab Monarchies: Old Bottles, New Labels?," in *Middle East Monarchies: The Challenge of Modernity,* ed. Joseph Kostiner (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Pub, 200), 23.

many years of declining Ottoman influence.[74] Finally, the British politicians involved in creating the Jordanian State realized that "power based on traditional legitimacy…[plays] a stabilizing role in the transformation of societies and their political systems...traditional hereditary rule seems to be able to maintain power with more respect, possibly even with acquired legitimacy."[75]

Jordan's boundaries were drawn by the British in 1921, and a king for the new territory of Transjordan was chosen from among the Hashemite family; the Hashemites were a politically influential family from the Hejaz who claimed descent from the Prophet Muhammad.[76] Jordan is a classic example of a state that was "built;" Jordan has no historical existence as a nation-state, and there is nothing particularly unique or exceptional about Jordanians ethnically, linguistically, geographically or religiously to link the people together into one nation. States that have been built, rather than those that have developed organically, generally are "centralized, personalistic, and actually or potentially coercive" and Jordan is no exception.[77] Jordan's boundaries were arbitrary, and a strong need emerged early on in the country's history to create a national history to bring a sense of unity to encourage a nation of Jordanians to form within Jordan's new borders.[78]

Monarchies solve the issue of a lack of national cohesiveness in several ways. First, a monarch is able to act as a mediator between competing groups, and a shrewd monarch can be perceived as a neutral third party to handle internal disputes within the territory.[79] Also,

---

[74] Ayalon, 24.
[75] Kundhardt, 57.
[76] Yom, 123; Asher Susser "The Jordanian Monarchy: the Hashemite Success Story," in *Middle East Monarchies: The Challenge of Modernity,* ed. Joseph Kostiner (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Pub, 200), 87
[77] Lisa Anderson "Dynasts and Nationalists: Why Monarchies Survive," in *Middle East Monarchies: The Challenge of Modernity,* ed. Joseph Kostiner (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Pub, 200), 55.
[78] Anderson, 56.
[79] Anderson, 60.

monarchies emphasize tradition and loyalties to traditional social hierarchies, like tribes or sectarian divisions.[80] A government ruled by a monarch "celebrates and reinforces identification with both the narrowest of loyalties - the family - and the broadest of universalist attachments - to a transcendent God. What it avoids...is an exclusive or singular ethnic, linguistic, or cultural identity."[81] This reaffirmation of the connection to both family and the divine are essential characteristics of monarchy that appeal perfectly to Jordanian society. Jordanians have a long history of strong tribal affinities, and even today one's tribe is one's first loyalty for many East Bank Jordanians, especially those living in more rural areas of the country.[82] The Jordanian monarchy has styled itself to be a continuation of this tradition of tribal leadership, and the King, as well as many East Bank Jordanians, view the monarch as fulfilling many of the main functions of a tribal chief.[83] Additionally, most Jordanians identify as Muslim, and the monarch's claim of divine right, especially when the monarch claims to be descendent of the most holy Prophet, is extremely appealing in Jordanian society.[84] Finally, monarchs have traditionally been able to disconnect themselves from the security forces of a society; the monarch is often seen as a divine spectacle, above the petty and mundane issues involved with security and politics. This separation of monarch from the internal security forces allows for the projection of "the monarch as the benevolent symbol of national unity."[85]

The Hashemite family is historically from the Hejaz, and was not a present force in the territory that would become Jordan until the British defined the boundaries of the new state.

---

[80] Russell E. Lucas, "Social Pluralism, Civil Society, Political Stability and Democracy in Arab Monarchies" (workshop on Potential and Limits of Civil Society in the Gulf Region, Gulf Research Meeting, Cambridge, United Kingdom, 6-9 July, 2011,
[81] Anderson, 57.
[82] Curtis, 365.
[83] Gabriel Ben-Dor "Patterns of Monarchy in the Middle East." in *Middle East Monarchies: The Challenge of Modernity,* ed. Joseph Kostiner (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Pub, 200), 74.
[84] Anderson, 57.
[85] Kundhardt, 57.

Therefore, it is possible to say that the monarchy and the state in Jordan developed "hand in hand."[86] Most important to this state development was the evolution of a reliable military. The Hashemites and the British quickly realized that co-opting local traditions and forces would be much more successful than attempting to impose their will upon the population. Therefore, the new King Abdullah I chose the Bedouin, who have a history and culture conducive to a warrior lifestyle, to make up his new "Desert Guard" military force.[87] The King also selectively recruited individuals into all levels of the military from potentially revolutionary classes early on in order to ensure a loyal military force; for example, before the Hashemites established Amman as their capital, Salt was the wealthiest town in Jordan, and King Abdullah I worked hard to recruit elites from Salt to make up much of the initial officer corps of the Jordanian military.[88]

Today, the Jordanian monarchy remains one of the only unifying forces in the country.[89] King Abdullah II works hard to maintain this image, likening himself to a father ruling over his large family; this analogy alludes to the patriarchal family and tribal structure so familiar to and ingrained in the Jordanian consciousness, and even calls to mind the idea of the heavenly father watching over humanity. King Hussein once said, "I have been at pains to build up a family feeling in Jordan so that I may be, if you like, the father of a large family just as much as the king of a small country."[90]

Jordan's monarch is the final authority in Jordanian politics, and he holds all executive power.[91] He has the right to appoint the Prime Minister and his cabinet, and he appoints all forty seats of the upper house in the National Assembly, which has veto power over the National

[86] Susser, 92.
[87] Susser, 89.
[88] Susser, 94.
[89] Curtis, 365.
[90] Anderson, 59.
[91] Tobin, 96.

Assembly's elected lower house.[92] Therefore, the Jordanian monarch has the unique ability to act almost unilaterally on issues. In Jordan, as in some of the Gulf kingdoms, the King reacted to the protests, not with military force, but with promises of increases in salaries for most workers and other economic rewards.[93] These economic rewards come directly from the monarch, and protesters are therefore conditioned to separate their demands against the government from their demands against the monarch; in other words, the government ministers are blamed for enacting bad policies, while the King is praised for raising salaries. King Abdullah II played into this by publicly blaming and dismissing successive Prime Ministers (all appointed by the King himself) for the country's economic woes.[94]

Finally, the Jordanian monarch has tremendous power over the electoral process in Jordan, so even elected representatives are in some ways beholden to the regime and the tribal culture of the state. The King of Jordan has the power to dissolve parliament as he sees fit, and can appoint and fire ministers and cabinet members at will.[95] The King also plays a large role in drawing and redrawing voting districts. Jordan is one of two countries in the world to use a "Single Non-Transferable Vote" system. This system heavily favors rural and tribal areas, and encourages voters to place local and familial loyalties above national ones, and this trend is reinforced by the way in which Jordan's voter districts are drawn.[96] The King is known to suddenly change election rules at crucial times to favor loyal districts and secure outcomes favorable to the King's agenda.[97]

---

[92] Younghoon, 29.
[93] Gelvin, 133; Mehran Kamrava, "The Arab Spring and the Saudi-Led Counterrevolution," *Orbis* 56, no. 1 (2012): 98
[94] Gelvin, 134.
[95] Younghoon, 29.
[96] Carey and Reynolds, 36; Tobin, 97.
[97] Curtis, 365.

*Islamists in Jordan*

Throughout the Arab Spring, Islamists were major players organizing and leading protests, offering tangible alternatives to the current regime, and stepping in to take over once the regime had fallen.[98] In Jordan, though, the voice of Islamists during the 2010 and 2011 protests was noticeably absent in many instances, and subdued when it was present.

The case of Jordanian Islamists is a unique one, and Jordanian Islamists find themselves in a situation unlike that of their ideological brethren anywhere else in Muslim majority countries. The Muslim Brotherhood, as in other Arab states, is the main and most organized Islamist group in Jordan; what makes the Jordanian brotherhood unique is that it has always been legal in the Jordanian state.[99] This has had a profound effect on the structure of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan and on the Brotherhood's relationship with the monarchy. In 1957, political parties were outlawed in Jordan. The Brotherhood, however, stayed legal by asserting its status as a "charitable club or association," and functioned as a social and religious organization until political parties were legalized in 1992.[100] During this time, the Brotherhood continued to legally receive foreign funding, and directed their attention towards the media and education; those Brotherhood members who did get elected to the National Assembly were careful to campaign as individuals, rather than as representatives for the Brotherhood as a whole.[101]

Islamists traditionally position themselves against left-leaning socialist regimes, and

---

[98] Nathan J. Brown, *When Victory is Not an Option: Islamist Movements in Arab Politics,* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012) ix.
[99] Yom, 125.
[100] Gudrun Kramer, "Good Counsel to the King: the Islamist Opposition in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Morocco," in *Middle East Monarchies: The Challenge of Modernity,* ed. Joseph Kostiner (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Pub, 200), 270.
[101] Kramer, 270.

Jordan is considered to be a "better alternative" than the socialist nationalist regimes that emerged in states like Syria and Egypt in the second half of the twentieth century.[102] While the Brotherhood's political activities were on hold in Jordan, Jordanian Brothers watched with concern the intense persecution of Islamists in Nasser's Egypt and in Syria under the Ba'ath party, both states with socialist tendencies.[103] Not only was Jordan a much more conservative state with respect to style of rule and protection of Islamic values, but Jordan simply did not persecute the Brotherhood during this period, and the Jordanian Brotherhood realized that "to confront one of the few Arab regimes not hostile to them would have bordered on suicide."[104] Yusuf al-Azm, a Brotherhood activist in Jordan articulated this feeling when he said that if "a pro-Nasser government had been established in Jordan, the Muslim Brotherhood would have been liquidated, as they were liquidated in Egypt."[105]

For its part, the monarchy was quick to recognize the growing power of Islamists in Arab states. Instead of repressing Islamists further, a strategy which was clearly failing in Egypt and Syria, the Jordanian monarchy developed close relationships with Islamists to co-opt them and their causes into mainstream Jordanian politics; thus, the King was able to monitor and control the agenda of Islamists and ensure a large degree of loyalty from the Islamist bloc.[106] The redistricting power of the King allowed him to reward loyal Islamists with favorable districts through gerrymandering as well.[107] Today, the Islamist bloc in the Jordanian National Assembly plays the role of "His Majesty's loyal opposition," meaning that the Islamists, while sometimes in opposition to large political decisions or policies, are *not* in opposition to the regime or the

[102] Kramer, 247.
[103] Kramer, 270.
[104] Kramer, 270.
[105] Kramer, 270.
[106] Kramer, 271.
[107] Brown, 22.

monarchy.[108]

Currently, Islamists in Jordan are relatively divided and disorganized. When protests broke out in 2010, Islamists were largely absent for two reasons. For one, Islamists in Jordan have had a relatively harmonious relationship with the monarchy, and there was a feeling that confronting the regime in the context of the Arab Spring, when Islamists in other states were leading the call for regime change, would hinder the relationship that had afforded Jordanian Islamists the unique abilities, not just to thrive, but to participate legitimately in the political process.[109] Also, recall that Jordan is located next to Syria and the violent and bloody Anbar province of Iraq, two extremely unstable areas.[110] Islamists, therefore, shared the fear of many Jordanians, that if the protesters in Jordan were to challenge the regime itself, instead of just protesting specific injustices and inequalities, there was a real possibility that Jordan could devolve into chaos like her neighbors.[111]

Two months after protests first broke out in 2010, King Abdullah invited Brotherhood members to discuss with him the demands of the protesters and their perception of the issues facing Jordan. The talks resulted in a promise by the Brotherhood to stand by the monarchy as an institution, and were a shrewd political move by the King to immediately reframe the dialogue taking place with respect to the Islamists in Jordan.[112] The Muslim Brotherhood, and its political wing the Islamic Action Front, boycotted the subsequent National Dialogue Committee commissioned by the King to discuss the issues raised by the protests, and Islamists from other

[108] Kramer, 270.
[109] Brown, 193.
[110] Goldberg, 48.
[111] Brown, 207.
[112] Jeffrey Goldberg, "Monarch in the Middle: the Modern King in the Arab Spring," *The Atlantic,* March 18, 2013, 54.

groups gained massive electoral victories due to the absence of the IAF.[113] This rendered the IAF and the Muslim Brotherhood relatively irrelevant on the Jordanian political scene, and the Brotherhood has still not recovered.[114]

*Revolutionary Theory*

In his *Revolutions and Revolutionary Movements,* James DeFranzo lists five critical factors within a society that lead to revolution. These factors are as follows:

1. Mass frustration resulting in popular uprisings
2. A "dissident elite" who defect from the existing regime
3. Unifying goals and motivations
4. A large and significant political crisis
5. A world or regional context that is permissive of revolution.[115]

DeFranzo's second point, that an elite class that defects from the regime is necessary for revolution to occur, is echoed in the literature on revolution and revolutionary theory. Michael Walzer posits that, even in a "vanguardless" revolution, leadership is required, even if that leadership does not necessarily form a cohesive unit.[116] In his analysis of revolution, Kennedy posits that "sustained anti-government protest that can bring about regime change requires committed elite opposition leaders"[117]

DeFranzo also mentions the need for "unifying goals," and this point is, again, reiterated by other theorists concerned with revolution. In her work on the Arab Spring in the Gulf Monarchies, Mary Ann Tetreault lists "effective and powerful political cultures of resistance,"

---

[113] Goldberg, 54.
[114] Goldberg, 54.
[115] James DeFronzo, *Revolutions and Revolutionary Movements,* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2011), 12-13.
[116] Michael Walzer, "Intellectuals, Social Classes, and Revolutions" in *Democracy, Revolution, and History,* ed. Theda Skocpol (Ithaca: Cornell University Press): 140.
[117] John James Kennedy, "What is the Color of a Non-Revolution? Why the Jasmine Revolution Did Not Spread to China," *The Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations* 13, no. 1 (2012):71.

which develop through a group who are unified in their resistance goals, as a necessary condition for revolution to occur.[118] This need, for group identification with common movement goals, is reiterated time and time again in the literature. Social identification with the movement and its aims is one of two qualifications identified by Liu and Gastardo-Conaco,[119] and El-Affendi discusses the necessity for a unified public to develop and carry out revolutionary plans.[120] Hannes Bauman articulates this point succinctly and argues that the revolutionaries must "construct identity categories that unify the population against the regime and provide an alternative discourse of the nation."[121] Finally, Charles Tilly explains that a "revolutionary outcome requires than an oppressed group committed to social transformation catalyze a transfer of power from a status quo government to a new authority."[122] These theorists all are essentially pointing out that revolution cannot occur successfully without a unified populace who is able to coordinate to develop common revolutionary goals, grievances and motivations.

The final theme in revolutionary theory that is applicable in this case is the issue of repression. According to Ginkel and Smith, "dissident activity is more likely to be effective in motivating rebellious action under highly repressive conditions."[123] Donatella Della Portia writes on this topic extensively. She quotes Goldstein, who asserts that "those countries that were consistently the most repressive, brutal, and obstinate…reaped the harvest by producing

[118] Tetreault, Mary Ann, "The Winter of the Arab Spring in the Gulf Monarchies" in *Arab Revolutions and World Transformations*, eds. Anna M. Aganthangelou and Nevzat Soguk, (New York: Routledge): 634.
[119] James Liu and Cecilia Gastardo-Conaco, "Theory and Methods of a Representational Approach to Understanding Social Movements: the Role of the EDSA Revolution in a National Psychology of Protest for the Philippines," *Social Justice Research* 24, no. 2 (2011): 171.
[120] Abdelwahab El-Affendi, "Constituting Liberty, Healing the Nation: Revolutionary Identity Creation in the Arab World's Delayed 1989," *Third World Quarterly* 32, no. 7 (2011): 1265.
[121] Hannes Baumann, "Introduction: Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Arab Revolutions," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 11, no. 3 (2011): 510.
[122] Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978): 189.
[123] John Ginkel and Alastair Smith, "So You Say You Want a Revolution: A Game Theoretic Explanation of Revolution in Repressive Regimes," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 43, no. 3 (1999): 292.

oppositions that were just as rigid, brutal and obstinate."[124] El-Affendi also argues that the ability of a state to effectively use its monopoly on power in response to revolutionary sentiment leads to the difference between "successful revolution, revolutionary failure, and non-occurrence."[125]

*Divide and Rule Politics*

Bethke defines divide-and-rule as "a strategy of rulers to sustain power by creating coordination problems among potential rivals. Practices associated with divide-and-rule politics are, among others, the frequent reshuffling of political and military elites."[126] Divide and rule politics can be practiced at both the elite and the national level. Elite divide-and-rule effectively serves two purposes: the first purpose is to magnify the collective action problem among a regime's elites, and, the second is to secure the loyalty of that class which is most likely to encourage and carry out revolutionary actions.

A key feature of divide-and-rule politics is the shuffling of elites, which serves to "destroy communications channels among potential opponents and thereby intensify the collective action problem associated with any attempt to depose the ruler."[127] A revolution requires a dissident elite, however a collective action problem often occurs in which elites may not want to risk becoming involved in revolutionary actions if it appears others can accomplish revolutionary goals without their participation. By repeatedly shuffling elites, a ruler concretely asserts his authority over the cabinet and parliament, effectively increasing the perceived risk of participation in revolutionary action, as elites fear losing their posts if they do not display

[124] Donatella Della Portia, "Social Movements and the State: Thoughts on the Policing of Protests" in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements,* eds., Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press): 89.
[125] El-Affendi, 1262.
[126] Felix S. Bethke, "The Consequences of Divide-and-Rule Politics South of the Sahara," *Peace Economics, Peace Science, and Public Policy* 18, no. 3 (2012): 1.
[127] Bethke, 2.

absolute loyalty. This raises the stakes, and an increased number of elites will prefer to let others foment revolution, whereas they may have participated if the stakes were lower. This also magnifies the collective action problem by creating an air of uncertainty amid the elite class, which makes creating secure communication networks extremely difficult, and, therefore, revolution difficult to carry out. This strategy of shuffling and reshuffling ministers and cabinet officials has been empirically proven to effectively forestall revolutionary action among a regime's elite.[128] While this tactic increases elite insecurity by making ministerial positions wholly dependent upon the ruler, elite divide-and-rule politics also create loyalty to the ruler, as the ruler can "make credible their promises to distribute patronage among...the constituencies whom they represent. In this context, increasing the number of appointees becomes a rational strategy for insecure leaders who want to lower the risk of being overthrown"[129] This strategy effectively delays or prevents revolution because "sustained anti-government protest that can bring about regime change requires committed elite opposition leaders,"[130] yet these leaders fail to emerge when the leadership is constantly encouraged to act with suspicion and non-cooperation towards one another.

Divide-and-rule can occur at the national level, as rulers pit segments of their population against each other in order to prevent the citizenry from colluding together to overthrow a ruler. By encouraging social pluralism, the ruler has a role in "encouraging competition between social groups with each other, as compared to competing with the ruling family."[131] As with elites,

[128] Bethke, 12.
[129] Leonard R. Arriola, "Patronage and Political Stability in Africa," *Comparative Political Studies* 42, no.10 (2009): 1340-1341.
[130] John James Kennedy, "What is the Color of a Non-Revolution? Why the Jasmine Revolution and Arab Spring Did Not Spread to China," *The Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations* 13, no. 1 (2012): 71.
[131] Lucas, 5.

divide-and-rule politics at the national level involves encouraging various publics within the society to develop their own goals and motivations that are often conflicting in order to prevent the type of group identity necessary for revolution to occur. Divide-and-rule prevents the formation of "organized opposition groups"[132] which are an essential component of revolutionary movements. If a group – or nation – fails to develop a group identity, it will be impossible for that group to accomplish goals that require collective action.[133] In addition, divide-and-rule politics "promote social pluralism by not only reinforcing existing social divisions, but also activating and reshaping new forms of social organization;"[134] these new forms of social organization are thus manipulated by the ruler engaged in the divide-and-rule policies. Divide-and-rule politics assures that a national identity cannot develop and, instead, populations and their goals are divided along the lines set by the ruler. These more local "forms of contention are fragmented and uncoordinated on a national scale. Since they can be dealt with on a case by case basis, they generally present a manageable challenge to authoritarian regimes."[135] The rulers then encourage the development of leadership at these local levels to prevent the growth of national regime challenging movements.[136] Additionally, the state becomes the center of political opportunity, as state policies actively work to divide the population and discourage collusion on non-state approved forms of political participation.[137]

---

[132] Ibid.
[133] Karl-Dieter Opp, *Theories of Political Protest and Social Movements: A Multidisciplinary Introduction, Critique, and Synthesis,* (New York: Routledge, 2009): 218.
[134] Lucas, 2.
[135] Steve Hess, "From the Arab Spring to the Chinese Winter: The Institutional Source of Authoritarian Vulnerability and Resilience in Egypt, Tunisia and China," *International Political Science Review* 34, no. 254 (213): 263.
[136] Hess, 265.
[137] Lucas, 2.

The literature is exhaustive on these factors, yet there is little research as to how these factors came together in the kingdom of Jordan in 2010 and 2011 to prevent the type of regime toppling Arab Spring protests seen in other Arab nations at the same time.

**Hypothesis and Methodology**

*The lack of a cohesive national identity prevented the Jordanian protest movements in 2010 and 2011 from evolving into the type of regime toppling movements that led to the demise of other Arab states in the Arab Spring.* This lack of cohesive identity was caused by several factors, namely the divisions that exist between the Palestinian and east bank Jordanian populations in Jordan, the fact that Jordan is an extremely unique monarchy, the special history of Islamists in Jordan, and the intense fear in Jordan of devolving into chaos like Syria, which is magnified by the collective memory of Black September in 1970. Although all these factors play an important role, it is the lack of cohesive national identity that is the most important and has done the most to prevent revolution from occurring in Jordan.

King Abdullah II has used this lack of identity to his advantage, and has engaged in divide-and-rule politics to keep these populations separate and, therefore, secure the position of the monarchy in Jordanian society. Application of revolutionary theory specifically to Jordan and a comparison of Jordan to other states who have or have not experienced revolution will make clear the fact that it is the lack of unity, and King Abdullah II's divide-and-rule politics as a result of that lack of unity, that have played the most important role in preventing the successful development of revolution in Jordan.

**Findings**

DeFranzo and other writers on revolutionary theory, write of the need of a unified

national feeling or motivation; in Jordan, though, there is no statewide nationalism of the type DeFranzo mentions that can produce the kind of broad social protest necessary for revolution. To be sure, nationalism exists within the East Bank Jordanian community, and Palestinian-Jordanians feel a sense of identification with one another, but the two groups are so divided that a national motivation for a protest movement is highly unlikely. Palestinian-Jordanians and East Bank Jordanians are very suspicious of one another, and, this mutual suspicion, coupled with the other factors dividing the two populations, have created a situation in which the two sides could not cooperate on goal setting and implementation, which is an essential factor necessary to instigate and carry out a national revolution.[138]

In Jordan, as in the case of the other Arab monarchies, the "national identity" of the state is actually "supplemented with some over-arching bond."[139] In Saudi Arabia, for example, Wahhabism serves as the unifying factor, and, in Kuwait, the shared memory of Iraqi occupation fills this role.[140] In fact, one of the only main unifiers in Jordan is the monarchy, and Jordanian national loyalty lies with the King, not with the state.[141] The monarch acts as the lone symbol of Jordanian unity, and, since Jordanian nationality is constructed so basically and fundamentally around the King, developing a national motivation for protest against that one, unifying factor would be extremely difficult; the various groups in Jordan "do not trust each another [sic], but they do trust the King."[142] Therefore, while protesters in Jordan certainly demanded reform, there was little demand for complete removal of the monarchy.[143] Jordan can be described as a

---

[138] Yom, 136.
[139] Lucas, 6.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Mohammad Ali Al Oudat and Ayman Alshboul, "'Jordan First': Tribalism, Nationalism and Legitimacy of Power in Jordan," *Intellectual Discourse* 18 (1), 2010, 71.
[142] Samuel Helfont and Tally Helfont, "Jordan: Between the Arab Spring and the Gulf Cooperation Council," *Orbis* 56, no. 1 (2012)
[143] Younghoon, 30; Tobin, 96; Curtis, 367.

"linchpin monarchy" because the King is intended to appear to be above the state and its divisive politics.[144] The Jordanian kings have well understood the delicate balance they represent between the various groups within Jordan, and this division of identities has allowed the monarchy to act with tremendous power, power which the monarchy would not so readily relinquish.

Islamists in Jordan also contribute to this lack of unity. The Islamist forces in Jordan are generally divided, especially on issues of foreign policy; this stems from the fact that certain Islamist groups, specifically the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan, draw most of their domestic support from Palestinian-Jordanians, and have a more hawkish foreign policy preference towards Israel and a stronger desire to distance Jordan from the US somewhat.[145] In other Arab states, Islamists rallied the masses under the unifying banner of Islam, and this unifying ideology helped unite the vast majority of people despite differing tribal or socio-economic backgrounds.[146] So, where Islamists were uniting heterogeneous populations in other Arab states, Jordanian Islamists failed to bring the Jordanian people together to create a unified protest ideology in 2010. Additionally, the makeup of the Jordanian Islamist groups is reflexive of the wider divides within Jordanian society. The Muslim Brotherhood is largely made up of Palestinians, while the other Islamist groups generally represent both Palestinians and east bank Jordanians.[147] King Abdullah played into these divides as well by choosing to only include the Muslim Brotherhood as an Islamist voice in the initial dialogues after the protests, and the Muslim Brotherhood widened the divide within the Islamist camp by boycotting the national dialogue, which allowed various other Islamist groups to gain influence and further divided the

[144] Lucas, 3.
[145] Brown, 103.
[146] Achilov, 271.
[147] Kramer, 272.

country.[148] These divides within the Islamist camp, like the divides within the wider Jordanian population, prevented the Islamists from developing a uniform approach to protests in 2010, and the failure of the Islamists to unify themselves led to a failure of the Islamists to unify others.

*Divide and Rule Politics of the Elite in Jordan*

As discussed in the literature, dissident elites and unifying goals are two of the most important characteristics necessary for a revolution to occur. Kings have pitted groups against each other throughout the Kingdom of Jordan's short history by changing electoral rules, rewarding loyal tribes with electoral incentives, and reshuffling the cabinet's national makeup in response to complaints by one group or another.[149] These divide-and-rule political tactics prevent the elite and the people from uniting to defy the king or move against his regime.

As the literature points out, divide-and-rule politics intensify collective action problems among the elite.[150] King Abdullah II has used these tactics throughout his reign to prevent defection of his ministers and important officials. Immediately after protests broke out, King Abdullah II initiated a dialogue with the Muslim Brotherhood which prompted the Brotherhood to pledge their loyalty to the monarchy.[151] This alienated the Brotherhood and IAF from other Islamists in Jordan. When the next round of elections took place, the IAF, which had previously been the most popular and well organized Islamist group in the state, suffered huge electoral losses to other Islamist groups and are, today, relatively uninfluential in Jordan.[152]

By immediately reaching out to the Muslim Brotherhood, a group that was instrumental

[148] Goldberg, 54.
[149] Younghoon, 30; Tobin 95.
[150] Bethke, 2.
[151] Kramer, 272.
[152] Goldberg, 54.

in fomenting revolutionary fervor in other Arab states, King Abdullah II effectively divided the Islamist community, which, if united, could have been a major force to effectively challenge the regime. Additionally, by gaining a pledge of loyalty from the Brotherhood, Abdullah II was able to divide the Brotherhood from the potentially revolutionary factions in society almost immediately. The Brotherhood had pledged their loyalty to the regime, and, therefore, would not join any revolutionary population in helping to stir up anti-regime or anti-monarchy protests. No other Arab state has permitted or cooperated with Islamists to the degree that Jordan has, and in every Arab Spring uprising, the Islamist movement has been instrumental in mobilizing anti-regime forces.[153] In Jordan, though, where Islamists were legal and served as the loyal opposition to the monarchy, Islamists were not leaders of any large-scale anti-regime movement aimed at removing the monarchy from power.

As the final authority in Jordanian politics, King Abdullah II has the power to determine who is and is not in power. During the Arab Spring, he engaged in the type of cabinet and ministerial shuffling that is the hallmark of divide-and-rule politics.[154] King Abdullah II oversaw the resignation of two successive Prime Ministers during the protest period.[155] In addition, he fired ministers at all levels of government.[156] King Abdullah II did this supposedly in the name of reform, however this effectively prevented any elite defection from occurring and stopped true leadership from emerging. The Hashemite kings have more power to openly appoint ministers than the Arab states where revolution occurred. While the regimes in Tunisia, Syria, Egypt and Libya were certainly corrupt, the Jordanian monarch's ability to publicly promote and demote officials is unique to monarchies, and the ability to do so while retaining the façade of

[153] Lucas, 98-99; 104.
[154] Bethke, 12.
[155] Younghoon, 28.
[156] Achilov, 273.

democratic governance is unique to the Jordanian monarchy.

These tactics divided the elite along ethnic or political lines in a manner unseen in other Arab states; in Arab states whose governments fell during the Arab Spring, and even in those states whose governments didn't fall, but who faced destabilizing protest movements, the political and social elite were main actors helping to coordinate and carry out revolutionary activity.[157] Islamist elites in other states were able to join together to effectively provide an elite opposition.[158] In Jordan, though, the monarchy was able to convince some Islamists to cooperate with the government, which earned them the distrust of other Islamist groups and prevented cooperation between them. King Abdullah II's reshuffling of cabinet members is a unique tactic used by the King to create uncertainty and insecurity among the political elite, also preventing cooperation. Additionally, the King has dealt differently with the elites within each community, preventing an overall "Jordanian elite" from forming; in fact, in the wake of the protests in Jordan, the East Bank tribal elite sent a letter to the King citing demands for reform and grievances with the government, yet almost all the grievances were specifically directed at the Palestinian Queen and other influential Palestinian-Jordanians in government.[159] This prevented an elite opposition from forming, which was detrimental to the Jordanian protest movement, as "the massive protests and subsequent fall of the authoritarian regimes in Tunisia and Egypt resulted from a complex combination of factors, which included…an organized elite opposition."[160]

[157] Thomas Juneau, "Yemen and the Arab Spring: Elite Struggles, State Collapse, and Regional Security," *Orbis* 57, no. 3 (2013):411.
[158] Susser, 108.
[159] Helfont, 89.
[160] Kennedy, 63.

*Divide and Rule Politics of the Military in Jordan*

King Abdullah II has continued the policy of his father and his grandfather of using the military as a means to divide the population, which has effects at both the elite and the national level. During the formation of the Jordanian state, King Abdullah I recruited the military leadership from potentially revolutionary East Bank Jordanians in the wealthy city of Salt; this was a shrewd political move intended to create a vested interest in the Hashemite Monarchy's stability among a potentially revolutionary group of individuals.[161] This also ensured that the military elite came almost entirely from the East Bank Jordanian population. Successive Hashemite kings have engineered the loyalty of the military, which has worked to their benefit in tumultuous times, as "a regime's repressive capacity is contingent upon the loyalty of troops."[162] During the Arab Spring, the East Bank Jordanian military elite remained loyal to the regime due to fear that, if the regime was to fall, their position as the sole military leadership would be compromised;[163] for these officers, the cost of defying the regime far outweighed the benefits of regime change, and the military elites had no desire to lose their position in society and potentially their jobs in the name of reform.

Additionally, recall that after Black September, the draft was abolished in Jordan and the army became almost exclusively East Bank Jordanian.[164] Therefore, the military could only identify with one segment of the population. The government of Bahrain has engaged in a similar effort to divide the military to reflect divisions within the population, and this tactic has been effective in much the same way it has been successful in Jordan in preventing a revolution. In

[161] Asher Susser, "The Jordanian Monarchy: A Hashemite Success Story" in *Middle East Monarchies: The Challengee of Modernity,* ed. Joseph Kostiner (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Pub, 2000), 94.
[162] Sharon Erickson Nepstad, "Mutiny and Nonviolence in the Arab Spring: Exploring Military Defections and Loyalty in Egypt, Bahrain, and Syria," *Journal of Peace Research* 50, no.3 (2013): 338.
[163] Gelvin, 130.
[164] Ryan, 368.

Bahrain, the population is largely Shia, however the country is ruled by the Sunni minority. The Sunni government has consistently excluded the Shia majority from the military and security forces, and this "coup-proofing…has been efficient…due to the exclusion of the Shias from the security apparatus in a country ruled by a ruling dynasty from the Sunni minority."[165] In Jordan, the Palestinian majority is ruled by a Hashemite minority who has consistently excluded the Palestinians from the military, which, as in the case of Bahrain, has "coup-proofed" the military and prevented the security forces from aiding in revolution.

The abolition of the draft also resulted in an army more loyal to the regime, since, as was the case in 1989 in East Germany "soldiers doing mandatory military service were reluctant to crack down on protesters because many had friends and family members participating in the demonstrations,"[166] whereas, in Jordan those who volunteered for army service likely had a higher degree of loyalty to the state and came from families or social groups who shared that loyalty. In other Arab states whose governments fell due to Arab Spring protests, the military played a vital role in ensuring that protesters were not harmed and, in many ways, in protecting the success of the revolutionary movement. In Egypt, reports that the military refused to fire in Tahrir Square became media fodder, and, in Tunisia, "the role played by the military leadership and the decision to forgo using force to actively suppress the protesters" was essential to ensuring the success of the Tunisian revolution;[167] in both states, the autocratic rulers Ben Ali and Mubarak "were defeated in part because their militaries sided with the nonviolent opposition movement."[168] Military defection is, in fact, so important to revolution that one study found that

[165] Hillel Frisch, "The Role of Armies in the Arab Uprisings – an Introduction," *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 26, no. 2 (2013): 180.
[166] Nepstad, 340.
[167] Frisch, 179.
[168] Nepstad, 339.

"revolutionary groups were 46 times more likely to usher in regime change if they convinced the military and police to defect."[169] Jordanians simply were unable to convince the military to defect and join the protest movement due to carefully planned factors put in place by the Jordanian monarchy.

*Divide and Rule Politics of the Population in Jordan*

King Abdullah II has also engaged in divide-and-rule politics at the national level, and has worked hard to ensure that a collective identity does not develop in Jordan. Both King Abdullah I and King Hussein attempted to create a unified national identity,[170] however after Black September, King Hussein chose to allow the East Bank Jordanians and Palestinian-Jordanians to remain divided.[171] King Abdullah II, on the other hand, actively attempts to divide the two populations to prevent any sort of unified public from developing, and when protests did break out in Jordan in 2010 and 2011, King Abdullah II's response was "to play all sides by conceding enough to each party...to keep them from threatening the regime."[172] This has been to the advantage of the monarchy, as the successful revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt were largely a result of "a successful united front that was able to overcome entrenched ideological divides to focus its efforts on the common demand for the establishment of democratic rule."[173] This practice of divide-and-rule to prevent the development of nationalist blocs which could unify against the regime is not new to the region; the French intentionally divided the population of

[169] Nepstad, 338.
[170] As'ad, 12-20.
[171] As'ad, 21.
[172] Helfont, 94.
[173] Omar Hesham AlShebabi, "Divide and Rule in Bahrain and the Elusive Pursuit for a United Front: The Experience of the Constitutive Committee and the 1972 Uprising," *Historic Materialism* 21, no. 1 (2013): 120.

Syria "into segments to block nationalist sentiment and action."[174] As in Jordan, French rulers stressed the importance of "communal differences and aspirations" and they did so while supposedly "bowing to political reality and popular feeling."[175] Not only has King Abdullah II engaged in divide-and-rule politics, he has done nothing to alleviate the distrust between the two populations in Jordan, and has allowed the 'political reality and popular feeling' that has been so divisive in Jordan to continue unmitigated.

For one, King Abdullah II has manipulated the economy to benefit either the East Bank Jordanians or the Palestinian-Jordanians, never fully satisfying the needs of either and pitting the demands of the populations against each other. These economic changes may appear to be reforms, however, "replacing the prime minister is enacted with the same pen stroke as increasing salaries and subsidies."[176] King Abdullah II uses economic reform as a political tool, just as he uses the appointment and demotion of ministers. East Bank Jordanians are overwhelmingly employed in the public sector, while Palestinian-Jordanians have traditionally worked in the private sector. The Jordanian government undertook a steady process of economic liberalization, however, in 1994, these liberalizing measures were reduced.[177] The end of the economic liberalization coincided with a series of protests that broke out in 1994 in response to the peace deal with Israel.[178]

Viewed in the context of the 1994 protests, the end of the economic liberalization fits into the wider practice of divide-and-rule. Economic liberalization primarily benefits the private sector, as industries are privatized and business is deregulated. In Jordan, any policy that

[174] Ayse Tedkal Fildis, "The Troubles in Syria: Spawned by French Divide and Rule," *Middle East Policy* 18, no. 8 (2011): 132.
[175] Fildis, 134.
[176] Tobin, 2012.
[177] Curtis, 2011.
[178] Ibid.

primarily benefits the private sector will surely affect the Palestinian-Jordanians significantly more than it will the East Bank Jordanians. Economic liberalization brought wealth to the Palestinians of Jordan, however it also could bring a desire for more power and representation. A peace deal with Israel would also have a more significant effect on the Palestinians of Jordan than it would on the East Bank Jordanians. King Hussein's decision to make peace with Israel was not a popular one, and protests against this peace agreement would draw more criticism from the Palestinian community due to the direct impact this would have on their lives. Therefore, the end to reforms that directly benefitted the Palestinian population could signify a show of strength from the Jordanian government, who would assert their power over the Palestinian-Jordanians who may have been involved in protest activity to remind that population that they were still under the control of the monarchy. By the time King Abdullah II ascended to the throne in 1999, protests against the peace agreement had died down, and he was able to restart the process of economic liberalization.[179]

Also, the economic success of the Palestinians in Jordan, which comes directly as a result of King Abdullah II's liberalizing policies has distinguished the Palestinians in Jordan from other majority groups living under minority rule in the middle east. There are many parallels between Jordan and Bahrain. Both countries were once under the control of the British who appointed the royal family of both states, and both are constitutional monarchies - at least in name - with an established national assembly. Finally, Bahrain's Shi'a population makes up about 70% of the population, yet the leadership is Sunni Muslim,[180] similar to Jordan in which a majority Palestinian population is ruled by the minority Hashemite family. One crucial difference, though, is that, in Bahrain, inequalities between the Sunni and Shi'a Muslims are economic as well as

[179] Ibid.
[180] Nepstad, 343.

political, whereas in Jordan, the Palestinian-Jordanians have been largely economically successful. Bahraini Shi'ites "suffer higher unemployment rates than their Sunni counterparts" which led to frustrations which erupted into large-scale demonstrations in 2011.[181] Palestinians in Jordan have a huge economic stake in the current status quo in Jordan and, although their position in society is similar in many ways to Shi'a Muslims in Bahrain, they simply did not have the economic incentive to protest on a large scale against the regime. Even so, Bahraini government officials have engaged in divide-and-rule with a large degree of success as well. When protests erupted in Bahrain in 2011, the government watched as the opposition split over their demands, and the government then "used this split to justify a violent crackdown on mainly Shia activists...with a deep schism along sectarian lines emerging by the end of 2011."[182] As has been the case in Jordan, the monarchy in Bahrain successfully divided the already heterogeneous population along pre-existing lines to prevent unified opposition from taking down the regime.

Electoral rules are another method through which King Abdullah II is able to practice divide-and-rule politics with respect to the citizens of Jordan. The King retains the right to change electoral rules as he sees fit, and he readily does so to ensure favorable outcomes in elections.[183] Jordan uses a single non-transferable vote system in elections, which is "known to discourage the formation of political parties and favor candidates with strong tribal connections. In addition, districts are drawn and apportioned in such a way that rural and tribal areas have disproportionate weight."[184] Jordan is one of only two countries in the world to use this system,[185] and, since the King is able to change electoral rules, King Abdullah II could change to

[181] Ibid.
[182] AlShebabi, 120.
[183] Curtis, 2011.
[184] Younghoon, 30.
[185] Ibid.

a more popular or preferred system if he so chose, however he does not. Additionally, gerrymandering is extremely common in Jordanian politics, and district boundaries are drawn to reflect tribal and rural political loyalties.[186]

This type of electoral system is extremely useful to the King. The fact that this electoral system encourages tribal ties means that Jordanians' strongest political loyalties are to their own tribes or communities. For East Bank Jordanians, their loyalties lay with local and community leaders with whom they share some kinship bond; for Palestinian-Jordanians, their loyalty is to their own community. Jordanian kings have, since the formation of the state, developed close relationships with the Bedouin and tribal leaders, and the fact that the East Bank Jordanians' political loyalties are to these leaders, whose loyalties, in turn, are to the king, has two consequences. The first is that communities and localities stay divided politically, and the second is that East Bank Jordanians' political loyalties end up laying with the regime vis-à-vis their loyal tribal leaders; this is essential to ensuring the stability of the Jordanian regime.

Palestinian-Jordanians are extremely underrepresented in the Jordanian National Assembly.[187] However, Jordan's electoral system encourages Palestinian-Jordanians to vote for their own. Palestinian-Jordanians could achieve more political power by voting for East Bank Jordanians willing to invite more Palestinians in to the political process. Jordan's electoral process, though, assures that Palestinian-Jordanians will almost always vote for Palestinian-Jordanians, and East Bank Jordanians will primarily vote for individuals who share their background, so the chances that any non-Palestinian will demand more Palestinian rights from within the National Assembly are rare. As long as Palestinian-Jordanians remain a minority in the National Assembly, reforms to increase representation will not originate in the parliament.

[186] Carey and Reynolds, 2011.
[187] Tobin, 2012.

Additionally, while "the rural periphery, which is populated by trans-Jordanians…is the main loser of King Abdullah II's neo-liberal politics,"[188] the overrepresentation of East Bank Jordanians in the National Assembly serves to assuage the anti-regime sentiments that may have developed in the East Bank Jordanian population had they been left with insufficient representation in the national Assembly in addition to their economic disadvantages caused by the King's liberalizing policies.

Additionally, the deep divisions in parliament, reinforced through the King's policies, make developing a protest agenda difficult. As long as politics are heavily divided along ethnic and tribal lines, protests will be divided along those same lines. This reinforces the King's legitimacy, as he can then enter the situation in the role of the "monarch as arbiter."[189] This not only separates the King from the political process and seemingly places him above trite political concerns, but also discourages independent cooperation, as conflicting factions will always expect the King to step in to alleviate tensions.

### *Other factors affecting the Arab Spring in Jordan*

There are certainly factors other than the lack of national identity that have helped to prevent the revolution in Jordan. These factors are important, however, on their own, would not be able to prevent revolution in the way the lack of national identity in Jordan has.

#### *Repression of Protests in Jordan 2010-2011*

As discussed in the literature, state repression of protests or revolutionary feelings is an important factor that can create a revolutionary situation out of what originated as a simple

[188] David, 298.
[189] Frisch, 173.

protest movement.[190] In Arab states whose government was successfully overthrown, the military played a key role. In Tunisia, although the military eventually defected, the security forces were initially loyal to the regime, and the intense early repression of protesters by the police was instrumental in creating the anger necessary to unite the Tunisian people against the government, and, by the end of the protests, one hundred people had been killed.[191] In Egypt, the government initially responded by enforcing prohibitions on public gatherings.[192] And, although reports of the Egyptian military standing down in the face of protesters made international headlines, the Egyptian police actively and violently repressed Egyptian protests; in several incidents, protests turned deadly as police fired on protesters attempting to storm various government buildings.[193] In two more states, Libya and Syria, the political situation devolved into full-blown civil war.[194] In fact, in Libya, the regime's repression of the revolutionary movement was so severe that Libya's deputy ambassador to the United Nations accused the Libyan government under Qaddafi of perpetrating a "'genocide' due to the extent of the killings."[195] In Syria, "the military used tanks and snipers to clear the streets, killing resisters in the process," and this repression caused not only an increase and spread in protests against the government, but also caused portions of the military to defect from the regime.[196]

In Jordan, however, almost every one of the protests that took place in 2010-2011 was registered with the Jordanian government, in compliance with Jordanian law.[197] The fact that these protests were legal prevented the government in most cases from acting with brutal force,

[190] Della Portia, 89; Ginkel and Smith, 292; Tilly, 189.
[191] Lucas, 91.
[192] Lucas, 94.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Ibid; Lucas, 106.
[195] Ibid.
[196] Nepstad, 344.
[197] Tobin, 102.

and, though the reports differ, none report more than five deaths.[198] King Abdullah II, in fact, responded to the protests, not with force, but with promises of political reform.[199] As Nepstad points out, protesters can encourage military or policy defection by raising the "political costs of crackdowns" by televising the military or police repression of protests, they can point out the "immorality of attacking unarmed protesters," they can increase the moral or personal costs of remaining loyal to the regime, or they can "facilitate mutiny by decreasing the personal costs of defection."[200] In Syria, for example, segments of the army defected directly as a result of their refusal to accept "orders to attack unarmed civilians...And, as military attacks of civil resisters grew more vicious...the rate of defections also increased."[201] In Jordan, though, there was not a large-scale violent government response to protests, and the East Bank Jordanian military has benefitted from loyalty to the regime, so these options were not available for protesters in Jordan whose cause would have benefitted from military defection.

While the military and security forces could play a crucial role in either preventing or promoting revolution, in Jordan, the position of these forces is simply not strong enough to play such a role. The military is not representative of Jordanian society at large, and it is precisely because of the lack of national unity that the military and security forces were unable to play a larger role in a potential Jordanian Spring.

*Regional Unrest and Collective Memory of Black September*

Jordanians' fears of descending into chaos like other Arab states has mitigated the development and degree of revolutionary feeling in Jordan. Jordan is unique in that Jordanians

[198] Curtis, 2011.
[199] Achilov, 270.
[200] Nepstad, 339-340.
[201] Nepstad, 344.

very recently experienced extreme domestic unrest, Black September, that shook state to its core. The result of Black September can accurately be described as a cultural trauma, which "occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity."[202] Black September was a mere four decades ago, so many Jordanians today were alive and old enough to remember the trauma of 1971. Not only did Black September signal an end to any attempt to unify East Bank and Palestinian Jordanians,[203] but it ripped the country apart. The removal of the PLO from Jordan was accompanied by extreme violence on both sides of the conflict, and resulted in widespread xenophobia, "Jordanization of the military," and the marginalization of the Palestinian population in Jordan.[204]

Jordanians from all backgrounds have a real fear of again devolving into the type of unrest and civil conflict that characterized the early 1970s.[205] When protesters took to the streets of Amman in 2010 and 2011, many Jordanians were fearful of instability because these "outbursts have rocked Jordan's stability on levels that have not been seen for decades."[206] This fear of instability is compounded by the fact that almost one million Syrian refugees fleeing civil war are currently in Syria.[207] Jordanians are forced to confront head-on the possible future they could face should the Jordanian government seriously falter; for most Jordanians, this cost is too great to bear. While Jordanians do want reform, they fear losing the King, as he is seen as "a bulwark against the chaos that has engulfed neighboring countries."[208]

---

[202] Jeffrey Alexander, "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma" in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity,* ed. Jeffrey Alexander (Berkeley: University of California Press): 1.
[203] Ashton, 101.
[204] Yom, 133; Curtis, 367 .
[205] Yom, 133.
[206] Helfont, 88.
[207] Kauffman, 188.
[208] Helfont, 90-91.

The Jordanian fear of descending into chaos is certainly an important factor that has prevented full-scale revolution against the King, but, as in the case of the Jordanian use of force, this factor simply wasn't enough on its own to prevent revolution. In fact, as was the case with the military, the divisions in Jordanian society between the Palestinian and East Bank Jordanians led directly to Black September, so the Jordanian fear of again facing domestic chaos and violence is largely a result of the lack of national unity in the kingdom.

*Jordan's International Allies*

Jordan is a key force for stability and peace in the region, and both the United States and Saudi Arabia have vested interests in maintaining the Hashemite monarchy. Jordan has had a successful and fruitful peace with Israel since 1994; this peace has led to security for Israel, a close ally of the United States, and has fostered economic and military cooperation between Israel, Jordan, and the United States. This peace treaty, though, is not popular in Jordan, and, if the Hashemite monarchy was to fall, the peace treaty may fall with it.[209] Jordan is one of the largest recipients of US aid, which demonstrates the US' strong commitment to maintaining the stability of the Hashemite regime as a means of ensuring the stability of the region and the safety of other, vital US allies.[210]

Saudi Arabia also has a strong incentive to maintain the security and stability of the Jordanian state. Jordan serves as the gateway between the gulf states and the Levant and North Africa. Jordan shares some characteristics with the gulf states; Jordan is a monarchy, has a strong Bedouin tribal heritage, and the legitimacy of the state relies in part on Islamic religious claims, rather than socialist or nationalist ones. On the other hand, Jordan shares a large degree of history

[209] Curtis, 2011.
[210] Yom, 2013.

with the other former mandate states, and its proximity to Israel has given Jordan a large measure of shared experience with the other Levant states, as well as Egypt. To the Saudis, Jordan serves as a vital linkage between their kingdom and the other Arab states, and the Saudis fear that losing Jordan to revolution may cut them off from other Arab states, or, worse, bring revolution to their doorstep.[211] For this reason, Saudi Arabia has continued to send considerable sums of money to Jordan since the beginning of the Arab Spring, and remains a primary source of aid as the Syrian refugee crisis continues in Jordan.[212]

Jordan's alliances with popular regional and world powers, though, is not enough to prop up the regime on its own. Egypt under Mubarak was also a key ally of the United States for many of the same reasons Jordan is today. This alliance, though, could not save the Mubarak regime from collapse in the face of a united and revolutionary populace. Money alone is clearly not enough to save a regime from collapse when other, more influential, revolutionary factors, are present.

**Conclusion**

In exploring the Jordanian protests of 2010 and 2011 through a theoretical and comparative framework it is clear that the lack of a national Jordanian identity contributed to the failure of the protests to implement any real regime change. This lack of identity has historical roots, but is still a significant issue in Jordan today. King Abdullah II actively engages in divide-and-rule politics at both the elite and the national level. This practice deepens societal divisions between the Palestinian-Jordanians and East Bankers Jordanians, and effectively prevents the unified identity so necessary for an effective opposition from forming. While other factors,

[211] Helfont, 84.
[212] Ibid.

namely the way in which coercive force was used in Jordan during the protest period and the fear in Jordan of domestic unrest, have certainly affected the Jordanian protests, none of these factors alone are as influential as the lack of national identity and the King's ability to manipulate societal divides.

Jordan is a crucial ally of the United States in the Global War on Terror.[213] The Hashemite state has long been known as *Belad al-Amn wa al-Istighrar*, or, the Nation of Security and Stability;[214] Jordanians are extremely proud of this stability, and Jordan's allies like the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Israel, have come to rely heavily upon the continued cooperation of Jordan in military and intelligence matters. The fear that Jordan could devolve into chaos and become another Syria is a real one for Jordanians as well as Jordan's allies in the United States and Europe.[215] Therefore, the stability of Jordan is of the utmost importance to the United States and policy makers around the world.

This analysis reveals, though, that the stability of Jordan is not built upon sturdy foundations. Jordan's lack of national unity certainly makes any effective national protest movement unlikely, however this does not mean that the economic, social, and demographic issues that plague Jordan are any less significant than they would be in other, more stable states. The Middle East is changing rapidly, and long-held assumptions about the stability of allies have been shaken in several countries. As King Abdullah II looks to the future, he must consider the very real possibility that, eventually, the goals of the protesters will converge into a unified ideology. The Syrian civil war will not last forever, and Jordanians, now unified only by fear and love for their King, will eventually move past their fear of devolving into Syria. The monarchy

[213] Goldberg, 50.
[214] Tobin, 98.
[215] Yom, 20013.

alone is not enough to keep an otherwise unified national protest movement at bay and the King must therefore address the complaints of the protesters in a timely manner. Where this research falls short is in predicting what exactly will be the cause large enough to unite the various groups in Jordan together against the King.

*Areas for Further Research*

Further research would focus on the role identity politics has played in other authoritarian regimes. Additionally, more research on the *mukhabarat*, the intelligence agency of Jordan, could provide insight on the actions of the King with respect to the general population, and the fear of many in Jordan of openly cooperating in a protest movement; research into the *mukhabarat* would deepen the overall discussion of the role of regime repression as it relates to revolution. Also, it is clear that the Syrian Civil War has had a profound effect on the psyche of the Jordanian public, however it is difficult to gage exactly how much of an effect this paranoia has had on Jordanian protest movements since Syria's Civil War began. Further research could be done to isolate the variable of Jordanian fear of devolving into chaos and asses the degree to which that variable specifically contributed to Jordan's lack of an Arab Spring. Finally, more research on the role of the military and security forces, especially through a lens of revolutionary theory would be an informative next step in research.

## Bibliography


Achilov, Dilshod. "Social Capital, Islam, and the Arab Spring in the Middle East." *Journal of Civil Society* 9, no. 3 (2009).

Adnan Abu-Odeh. *Jordanians, Palestinians, and the Hashemite Kingdom in the Middle East Peace Process.* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999).

Alexander, Jeffrey. "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma" in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity.* Ed. Jeffrey Alexander (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

Alon, Yoav. *The Making of Jordan: Tribes, Colonialism, and the Modern State.* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

Al Oudat, Mohammad Ali and Ayman Alshboul. "'Jordan First': Tribalism, Nationalism and Legitimacy of Power in Jordan," *Intellectual Discourse* 18, no. 1 (2010).

AlShebabi, Omar Hesham. "Divide and Rule in Bahrain and the Elusive Pursuit for a United Front: The Experience of the Constitutive Committee and the 1972 Uprising." *Historic Materialism* 21, no. 1 (2013).

Anderson, Lisa. "Dynasts and Nationalists: Why Monarchies Survive." in *Middle East Monarchies: The Challenge of Modernity.* Ed. Joseph Kostiner (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Pub, 2000).

Arriola, Leonard R. "Patronage and Political Stability in Africa." *Comparative Political Studies* 42, no.10 (2009).

Ashton, Nigel J. "Pulling the Strings: King Hussein's Role During the Crisis of 1970 in Jordan." *The International History Review* 28, no. 1 (2006).

Assaf, David. "Presence Out, Ideas In: Representation and Socio-Political Change." *Representation* 48, 3 (2012).

Ayalon, Ami. "Post-Ottoman Arab Monarchies: Old Bottles, New Labels?" in *Middle East Monarchies: The Challenge of Modernity.* Ed. Joseph Kostiner (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Pub, 2000).

Barari, Hassan A. "Four Decades After Black September: A Jordanian Perspective." *Civil Wars* 10, no. 3 (2008).

Barwig, Andrew. "The 'New Palace Guards:' Elections and Elites in Morocco and Jordan." *Middle East Journal* 66, no. 3 (2012).

Baumann, Hannes. "Introduction: Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Arab Revolutions." *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 11, no. 3 (2011).

Ben-Dor, Gabriel. "Patterns of Monarchy in the Middle East." in *Middle East Monarchies: The Challenge of Modernity.* Ed. Joseph Kostiner (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Pub, 2000).

Bethke, Felix S. "The Consequences of Divide-and-Rule Politics South of the Sahara." *Peace Economics, Peace Science, and Public Policy* 18, no. 3 (2012).

Brand. Laurie A. "National Narratives and Migration: Discursive Strategies of Inclusion." *International Migration Review* 44, no. 1 (2010).

Brand, Laurie. "The Effects of the Peace Process on Political Liberalization in Jordan." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 28, no. 2 (1999).

Brown, Nathan J. *When Victory is Not an Option: Islamist Movements in Arab Politics.* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012).

Carey, John M, and Andrew Reynolds. "The Impact of Election Systems." *Journal of Democracy* 22, no. 4, (2011).

Corbett, Elena. "Hashemite Antiquity and Modernity: Iconography in Neoliberal Jordan." *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 11, no. 2 (2011).

Curtis, Ryan R. "Identity Politics, Reform, and Protest in Jordan." *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 11, no. 3 (2011).

Curtis, Ryan R. "Political Liberalization and Monarchical Succession in Jordan." *Israel Affairs* 9, no. 3 (2003).

Curtis, Ryan. "Political Opposition and Reform Coalitions in Jordan." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 38, no. 3 (2012).

DeFronzo, James. *Revolutions and Revolutionary Movements.* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2011).

Della Portia, Donatella. "Social Movements and the State: Thoughts on the Policing of Protests" in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements.* Eds. Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

El-Affendi, Abdelwahab. "Constituting Liberty, Healing the Nation: Revolutionary Identity Creation in the Arab World's Delayed 1989." *Third World Quarterly* 32, no. 7 (2011).

Fildis,Ayse Tedkal. "The Troubles in Syria: Spawned by French Divide and Rule." *Middle East Policy* 18, no. 8 (2011).

Frisch, Hillel. "Fuzzy Nationalism: the Case of Jordan." *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 8, no. 4 (2002).

Frisch, Hillel. “The Role of Armies in the Arab Uprisings – an Introduction.” *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 26, no. 2 (2013).

Gelvin, James L. *The Arab Uprisings: What Everyone Needs to Know*. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012) 130.

Ghanem, As’ad, “Palestinian Nationalism: an Overview.” *Israel Studies* 18, no. 2 (2013).

Ginkel, John and Alastair Smith. “So You Say You Want a Revolution: A Game Theoretic Explanation of Revolution in Repressive Regimes.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 43, no. 3 (1999).

Goldberg, Jeffrey. “Monarch in the Middle: the Modern King in the Arab Spring.” *The Atlantic*, March 18, 2013.

Gurr, Ted Robert. *Why Men Rebel*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970).

Helfont, Samuel and Tally Helfont. “Jordan Between the Arab Spring and the Gulf Cooperation Council.” *Orbis* 56, no. 1 (2012).

Hess, Steve, “From the Arab Spring to the Chinese Winter: The Institutional Source of Authoritarian Vulnerability and Resilience in Egypt, Tunisia and China.” *International Political Science Review* 34, no. 254 (213).

Juneau, Thomas. “Yemen and the Arab Spring: Elite Struggles, State Collapse, and Regional Security.” *Orbis* 57, no. 3 (2013).

Kamrava, Mehran. “The Arab Spring and the Saudi-Led Counterrevolution.” *Orbis* 56, no. 1 (2012).

Kauffman, Richard A. “Syrian Refugee Crisis Hits Neighboring Countries.” *Christian Century* 130, no. 8 (2013).

Kennedy, John James. “What is the Color of a Non-Revolution? Why the Jasmine Revolution Did Not Spread to China.” *The Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations* 13, no. 1 (2012).

Kostiner, Joseph. Introduction to *Middle East Monarchies: The Challenge of Modernity*. Ed. Joseph Kostiner (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Pub, 2000).

Kramer, Gudrun. “Good Counsel to the King: the Islamist Opposition in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Morocco.” in *Middle East Monarchies: The Challenge of Modernity*. *E*d. Joseph Kostiner (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Pub, 200).

Kundhardt, Ludger. “The Resilience of Arab Monarchy.” *Policy Review* 173, (Jun).

Kuttab, Daoud. "Did Gaza Save Jordan." *Huffington Post Online*. 11/22/2012. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/daoud-kuttab/did-gaza-save-jordan_b_2174525.html.

Liu, James and Cecilia Gastardo-Conaco. "Theory and Methods of a Representational Approach to Understanding Social Movements: the Role of the EDSA Revolution in a National Psychology of Protest for the Philippines." *Social Justice Research* 24, no. 2 (2011).

Lucas, Russell E. "Side Effects of Regime Building in Jordan: The State and the Nation." *Civil Wars* 10, no. 3 (2008).

Lucas, Russell E. "Social Pluralism, Civil Society, Political Stability and Democracy in Arab Monarchies." (workshop on Potential and Limits of Civil Society in the Gulf Region, Gulf Research Meeting, Cambridge, United Kingdom, 6-9 July, 2011.

Moon, Younghoon. "Democracy on the Horizon: How the Arab Spring is Unfolding in Jordan." *Harvard International Review* 33, no. 4 (Spring 2012).

Nepstad, Sharon Erickson. "Mutiny and Nonviolence in the Arab Spring: Exploring Military Defections and Loyalty in Egypt, Bahrain, and Syria." *Journal of Peace Research* 50, no.3 (2013).

Opp, Karl-Dieter. *Theories of Political Protest and Social Movements: A Multidisciplinary Introduction, Critique, and Synthesis.* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

Shyrock, Andrew. "Dynastic Modernism and its Contradictions: Testing the Limits of Pluralism, Tribalism, and King Hussein's Example in Hashemite Jordan." *Arab Studies Quarterly* 22, no. 3 (2000).

Sullivan, Matthew. "On the Edge." *Harvard Internaitonal Review* 26, no. 4 (2005).

Susser Asher. "The Jordanian Monarchy: the Hashemite Success Story." in *Middle East Monarchies: The Challenge of Modernity*, ed. Joseph Kostiner (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Pub, 2000).

Tetreault, Mary Ann. "The Winter of the Arab Spring in the Gulf Monarchies." in *Arab Revolutions and World Transformations*, eds. Anna M. Aganthangelou and Nevzat Soguk, (New York: Routledge, 2011).

Tilly, Charles. *From Mobilization to Revolution*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

Tobin, Sarah. "Jordan's Arab Spring: The Middle Class and Anti-Revolution." *Middle East Policy* 19, no. 1 (Spring 2012).

Vogt, Achim. "Jordan's Eternal Promise of Reform." *International Politik und Gesellchaft* 4 (2011).

Walzer, Michael. “Intellectuals, Social Classes, and Revolutions.” in *Democracy, Revolution, and History*. Ed. Theda Skocpol (Ithaca: Cornell University Press).

Yom, Sean L. “Jordan: the Ruse of Reform,” *Journal of Democracy* 24, no. 3 (2007).