DEMOCRATIZATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC PRESSURE: THE CASE OF JORDANIAN PALESTINIANS: CURRENT PROBLEMS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

Burak KÜNTAY*

Abstract

Jordan is the country receiving the most Palestinian refugees, who made up almost two thirds of Jordan's population by 2010. Yet refugees and their descendants still face discrimination, political underrepresentation, and unequal treatment under law. Their marginalization led to civil war in 1970 and remains a threat to Jordan's political stability.

Examining Jordanian Palestinians' collective plight links global democratization trends and the future of Jordanian politics. Following the Arab Spring, Jordan's gradual democratic shift may further loosen the Hashemite dynasty's power grip and the delicate political balance it maintains. Shedding light on this domain suggests the likelihood of renewed domestic clashes.

Keywords: Arab-Israeli Conflict, Palestinian Refugees, Jordan, Democratization, Middle East Politics

DEMOKRATİKLEŞME ve DEMOGRAFİK BASKI: ÜRDÜNLÜ FİLİSTİNLİLERİN GÜNCEL PROBLEMLERİ VE GELECEĞE DAİR ÖNGÖRÜLER

Özet

Ürdün açık arayla en fazla sayıda Filistinli göçmene ev sahipliği yapan ülke durumundadır ve 2010lar itibariyle Ürdün nüfusunun yaklaşık üçte ikisi Filistinli mülteciler veya onların soyundan gelenlerdir. Bununla birlikte, bu kişiler hala kendileri aleyhine ayrımcılığa uğramakta, hukuki ve politik olarak yeterince temsil edilmemektedirler. Bu şekilde dışlanmaları 1970lerde iç savaşa dahi sebep olmuştur ve Ürdün'ün siyasi istikrarını tehdit etmektedir.

Ürdünlü Filistinlilerin kolektif çabaları küresel demokratikleşme eğilimini Ürdün siyasetinin geleceğine bağlamaktadır. Arap Baharı'nı takip eden süreçte Ürdün'deki kademeli demokratikleşme çabaları bile Haşimi hanedanının elindeki ipleri gevşeterek uzun süredir devam eden hassas siyasi dengeyi bozabilir. Konuya yakından bakıldığında iç siyasetin yakında karışacağı öngörülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Arap-İsrail Çatışması, Filistinli Mülteciler, Ürdün, Demokratikleşme, Ortadoğu Politikaları

* Yrd. Doç. Dr., Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi İİBF, Siyaset Bilimi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü Öğretim Üyesi, burakkuntay@bahcesehir.edu.tr

The Middle East has been home to conflict and power struggle for centuries, and the twentieth century was no exception. The Arab-Israeli conflict was the dominant issue from 1948 onwards, and it has implications in all areas of politics, from military conflicts to immigration, domestic politics and regional economy. This paper will explain the question of Palestinian Refugees, the biggest and the most important security issue for Jordan since 1950s. Palestinian refugees did and continue to play an important role in the political and economic life in Jordan, despite their systematic underrepresentation in politics, bureaucracy and other institutions critical for the Jordanian state.

Historically, the Middle East remained largely undemocratic throughout the twentieth century, and minor steps were taken towards democratizing existing polities only in the last decades. The same pattern applies to Jordan as well, where the King initiated reforms only as a response to widening popular unrest and demonstrations. Until then, much of the population and especially the Palestinian refugees served as a political leverage for the conduct of foreign policy or strengthening the regime.

The West generally overlooked the neglect and mistreatment of Palestinians due to geopolitical and ideological considerations as well as fear of PLO, but since the PLO is no longer a critical player in regional politics, that picture might change especially when coupled with the global trend for further democratization. This paper argues that if one day Palestinians acquire political power in Jordan, the political landscape will probably be subject to serious reshuffling, and Jordan is likely to be transformed and to embrace its Palestinian component. This analysis will be made through the analysis of democratization process in Jordan, as well as of the electoral outcomes, and also the development and course of the Palestinian identity. Finally, concluding remarks will be presented to clarify the situation and the likely unfolding of future events.

Democratization in Jordan

Despite considerable debate on the meaning and description of democracy, in its narrowest definition, it is the existence of "elections of individuals who are to assemble in order to carry out its [the people's] will" (Schumpeter, 2006, p. 250), or, "selection of leaders through competitive elections by the people they govern" (Huntington S. P., 1991, p. 6). Democratization is a process, briefly summarized as a transition to a more democratic regime. It is about democratic practices, ideals and ideas taking root, consolidating and deepening.

Following a similar vein, Charles Tilly identifies four basic dimensions, and argues that "a regime is democratic to the degree that political relations between the state and its citizens feature broad, equal, protected and mutually binding consultation" (Tilly, 2007, p. 13), and that the "net movement of a regime toward the higher ends of the four dimensions qualifies as democratization" (Ibid., p. 15).

At the simplest level, argues Huntington, "democratization involves: (1) the end of an authoritarian regime; (2) the installation of a democratic regime; and (3) the consolidation

of the democratic regime. Different and contradictory causes may be responsible for each of these three developments" (Huntington S. P., 1991, p. 35). It may be thus the transition from an authoritarian regime to a full democracy, a transition from an authoritarian political system to a semi-democracy or transition from a semi-authoritarian political system to a democratic political system. The outcome may be stable as in the case of Eastern European countries in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, or it may witness frequent ups and downs as it happened in Latin America, the Middle East and Africa. Different patterns of democratization are often used to explain other political phenomena, such as whether a country goes to a war or whether its economy grows. Democratization itself is influenced by various factors, including economic development, history, and civil society.

A number of factors are cited among those who initiate and push democratization further; such as wealth, level of education, culture, political traditions, colonial history, economic system, social equality, or a combination of those which John Stuart Mill chooses to term "general improvement" (Mill, 1861). Modernization theory alone is not capable of completely explaining the phenomenon of democratization, and the Middle East is one of the last regions remaining undemocratic despite a relatively sufficient level of economic development, a phenomenon explained in the need for popular support for democracy as well as the existence of a set of values and norms that are compatible with democratic life. Adam Przeworski reminds that democratization is often considered "inherently more difficult in multinational states" than more uniform polities (Przeworski, 1995, p. 19).

In many cases and even in the oldest and most stable democracies in the world, the establishment of democracy took considerable time. Liberal democracies became stable and consolidated in Europe only after the Second World War, and racial discrimination was eradicated in the USA only in 1960s. Thus, democratization is a long process during which the aforementioned factors play important roles and the outcome is hard to predict for any country, and the daily practices can be harder to effectively change even if legal framework for democracy is implemented in a polity. Meanwhile, the definition of democracy became broader and "the meanings and practices of democracy have undergone important changes" (De Sousa Santos, 2005, p. 378).

Especially in the recent decades, after the "third wave of democratization" that affected Latin America and Eastern Europe, the focus shifted to the Islamic world and the Middle East in particular, since this region shows an anomaly given its above average economic development and very low democratic scores, even though elections have become commonplace (Nohlen, Grotz, & Hartmann, 2001), thus a number of countries became democratic in the narrow sense of the term, as Huntington or Schumpeter argues (Huntington S. P., 1991).

Democratization in Jordan

When it comes to the Middle East, a rather different picture emerges. Already in the 1980s and 90s, elections have become common in a number of countries in the Middle East and Africa (Ehteshami, 1999), and some liberalization occurred in Tunisia, Alge-

ria, Egypt and Jordan (Huntington S. P., 1991, p. 25). Amidst widespread criticism and comment that much of the liberalization took place due to a combination of external pressures and the new global political conjuncture favoring electoral democracies, some leaders were arguably more willing to implement political reforms and advance towards democracy than others. King Hussein of Jordan was slightly an outlier, as he admitted the following: "we are the ones who gave, who granted and who believe in democracy and in the right of each of you to express his opinion in the march so that it may be strong" (Civil Society, VI (69) (1997), p. 5. in Ehteshami, 1999, p. 202). It is also argued that "In sum, it is fair to say that Jordan's political liberalization process was the most extensive in the entire Arab world" (Ryan, 2003).

In the case of Jordan, democratization will mean transitioning from an authoritarian state to a democratic one rather than deepening in democratic institutions and practices, governed by popularly elected rulers and ministers, and increase in civil and political liberties. Huntington (1991) offers four main ways for democratic transitions: transformations, interventions, replacements and transplacements, and if this classification for democratization is to be followed, it can safely be argued that it will be either in the form of transformation where elites bring about democracy, or transplacements in which democratization occurs through cooperation of the government with the opposition; as an external intervention is highly unlikely and a mere replacement would mean outright collapse of the Hashemite regime, I conclude these two ways are not probable for explaining Jordan's future democratization. Whatever the method of the change, its outcome is not easy to predict, as even if one precisely determines which other variables directly affect the likelihood of this particular process, it may persist and resist to easily succumbing to the requirements dictated by the changing variables, such as economic and social conditions.

Thus, despite limited improvements in the Middle East, strong states with authoritarian tendencies prevailed throughout the region, with moves towards democratization remaining as too few and experimental, as most countries did not even take any steps to move to a more democratic society, and those who did so on the basis of regime survival, rather than an adherence to the democratic norms and principles. Accordingly, Ehteshami cites Jordan among the countries where the election process has been "skillfully used to legitimize the ruling regime's hold on power" (Ehteshami, 1999, p. 210), despite, at the same time, inciting an indirect threat of the opposition forces through a boycott in the second half of the 1990s. Another feature of the partial democratization witnessed in the 1990s was the deliberate manipulation of the electoral systems to prevent opposition success, or at least guarantee continued rule of the incumbent elite. Meanwhile, Jordan continues to have a political system in which the King is actively exercising political power, to the point of hiring and firing ministers and influencing ministerial appointments (Ehteshami, 1999, p. 212).

Also, in Jordan's case, even appointing a successor seems not to have solved the probable succession crisis, as King Hussein replaced his successor with his eldest son, Abdullah II shortly before his death. Huntington sees Jordan's liberalization attempts as a result of the snowballing effect that spread to the Eastern Europe in 1990s (Huntington S. P., 1991, p. 16), though he also concedes that it is unlikely that democratization occurs if the

country at stake does not possess favorable internal conditions. One should be cautious with this argument, however, since it approximates tautology when extended too much. Yet, many scholars confirmed the need for a favorable sociopolitical basis for attaining and sustaining democracy, something not easy to obtain as the reverse waves of major waves of democratization have clearly shown. Shapiro warns the partisans of democracy, saying that recent victories "can all too easily be reversed" (Shapiro, 2003, p. 78), still a likely outcome for Jordan.

Another definitive feature of these limited liberalization process was the fact that change was by and large initiated by the rulers themselves, for fear of the pressure the global trend towards more openness might exercise on their rule. Thus, even the regular popular elections did not change much of the political environment.

In this article, the elections that took place in 1989 (first nationwide elections in Jordan since 1967), 1993, 1997, 2003, 2010 and 2013 have been taken into consideration since their reappearance coincides with the collapse of the communism and communist dicta-torships in Eastern Europe, a process described by Huntington (1991) as the "third wave of democratization".

Historical Background of the Development of Democratization in Jordan

Jordan is an outlier in some respects given its relative stability amidst frequent military coups, armed internal and international conflicts and major social and political divides. Yet, it has taken its part in 3 major wars against Israel, and had to devote considerable energy in maintaining its critical relationship with the West cordial, and like many other countries which could avoid the first two waves of democratization, finally felt the popular pressure more as the Cold War came to a close, so much so that Roger Owen sees Jordan a classic case where "the retrenchment measures taken to deal with an economic crisis in 1989 produced popular demonstrations violent enough to encourage King Hussein to al-low the first free elections for forty years" (Owen, 1992, p. 95). To understand how such a development became unavoidable and how the presence of a large number of Palestin-ian refugees affected and might affect political developments in Jordan in the future, one should first take a look at the historical development and current status in this country.

The first wave of Palestinian refugees came to Jordan in the aftermath of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, as a natural consequence of the war that changed boundaries and resulted in the displacement of a substantial amount of people in many countries. Broadly, Palestin-ians fled Palestine and Jews emigrated from neighboring countries to Israel and "large areas of what became Israel were ethnically cleansed during and immediately after the war" (Milton-Edwards & Hinchcliffe, 2001, p. 2).

In 1948, King Abdullah called for a conference to legalize the annexation of the West Bank to Transjordan on 1 December in Jericho. He sent Palestinian deputies to the meet-ing for them to speak on his behalf and thus "those who attended the conference could not be called the representatives of the people of Palestine by any standard of national

electoral representation" (Tannous, 1988, p. 665). Following the conference, a resolution was approved dealing Palestinian sovereignty to King Abdullah. The resolution also "urged the return of all the Palestinian refugees to their homes and properties and the receive compensation for all losses sustained" (Tannous, 1988, p. 666). Following the annexation of the Palestinian West Bank, Transjordan became the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The second major wave of refugees came after another important war, this time in 1967, which reshaped the Middle Eastern map once again and had major political and social consequences for the region.

During the war in 1967, the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Golan Heights, and the Sinai Peninsula were occupied by Israel. The Palestinians residing in refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza were again forced to flee from what was left of historical Palestine. The Palestinians sought shelter mainly in Jordan but also Syria and Egypt where they were classified as "displaced persons". The definition arose from the 4 July 1967 UN General Assembly Resolution, which defined 'displaced persons' as those 'who have been unable to return to the Palestinians territories occupied by Israel since 1967' (United Nations General Assembly, 1967).

Many of the initial refugees as well as inhabitants of West Bank under Jordanian administration were displaced once again and crossed the River Jordan in order to find shelter in the peaceful territories of Jordan. Initially, Jordan did not recognize them. Rather, the government saw the refugees as people who simply moved from one part of Jordan to another, in essence they had moved from the West to the East Bank of Jordan. This wave perhaps amounted to as many as 250.000 in June–July 1967 (one-quarter of the Palestinians formerly under Jordanian rule on the West Bank), swelling the ranks of the 300.000 dispossessed Palestinians already in Transjordan" (Milton-Edwards & Hinchcliffe, 2001). Due to this historical background; "unlike any other state in the region, in Jordan the Arab–Israeli conflict is both a domestic and a foreign policy issue at the same time" (Nevo & Pappé, 1994). Thus, in the aftermath of the Six-Day War in 1967, Jordan lost its control and political power over the West Bank it absorbed in 1948, but "nevertheless gained a large Palestinian community in refuge east of the river, the great majority of whom, naturally enough, were more concerned with regaining their birthright than with making a contribution to their country of exile" (Milton-Edwards & Hinchcliffe, 2001, p. 2). These refugees were somewhat destined to remain as "permanent refugees", and they did so for at least a few generations, up until today. As a result of this particular historical course that led to a large number of refugees, the two main groups in today's Jordanian society, namely the Jordanian Arabs and the Palestinian Arabs live considerably more mixed in comparison to other countries hosting Palestinian refugees and their descendants. While a substantial amount of the refugees continue to reside in camps supervised by the UNRWA, the rest are integrated "at a variety of economic and social levels, into Jordanian society, admittedly some in places in identifiable urban areas – virtual ghettos but with others living cheek by jowl with Jordanian Neighbours" (Milton-Edwards & Hinchcliffe, 2001, p. 2).

The 1960s saw increasing activity from the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). While the Hashemite monarchy feared increasing PLO influence, the organization had

substantial foreign support, mainly from the Egyptian leader Nasser who was enjoying tremendous popularity in the 1960s. It is in these circumstances that the PLO increased its attacks on Israel. The PLO which acted as a political organization did not have any official political obligations to follow and thus had a free hand in undertaking military action, unlike the Hashemite monarchy which walked on a very tight rope. So much so that In February 1965, King Hussein, "informed the Arab states of the grave risk in giving recognition and support to *fidaiyun* groups operating against Israel (Shemesh, 2002, p. 149). Israel occasionally reacted to the PLO attacks, further aggravating the political situation between the two countries. Finally, it captured the West Bank from Jordan during the Six-Day War. Increasingly, PLO acted as a locally sovereign power, which led to a 1968 agreement between PLO and Jordan, in an attempt to resolve and ease political tension.

Jordanian Civil War

However, the picture was far from being positive and peaceful; as such a major population mix would eventually lead to social and political tension that would explode in the right circumstances. Only three years after the second major wave of refugees, in 1970, a civil war –also dubbed the Black September- erupted between the Palestinians represented by the PLO and the Jordanians, which the Jordanian Armed Forces fought for. The primary reason of the war was to determine whether PLO or the Jordanian Hashemite monarchy would rule over the country. This war is remarkable for it shows how quickly the Jordanian refugees became interested in the domestic politics of Jordan, which they presumably did not think separately from Palestine's own fate. Yet, it did not even take a decade for foreign policy issues to take domestic politics as hostage. The conflict lasted between September 1970 and July 1971, causing the death of thousands –mostly Palestinians- and the expulsion of PLO from Jordan, and the emigration of Palestinian fighters to Lebanon. From then on, Lebanon became the headquarters of the PLO until its expulsion in 1980s. This was arguably the most important consequence of the war, effectively saving Jordan from future problems caused by the Arab-Israeli conflict. This way, the Arab-Israeli conflict was exported to Lebanon, which would contribute to the devastation of this country. It can be argued that Palestinian refugees in Jordan and especially their descendants would be more interested in improving their conditions in Jordan over time, rather than seeking to return to their homeland which was constantly suffering from the Arab-Israeli conflict.

At the time, the population in the East Bank contained over 400.000 Palestinian refugees who made up one-third of the Jordanian population; similarly, another third was the Palestinians on the West Bank (Shemesh, 2002, p. 140). Thus, Jordanian Arabs constituted only one third of the total population, being effectively a ruling minority over a Palestinian majority. For Jordan, which incorporated the West Bank, the center of the Palestinian cause and much political struggle, the Palestinian problem had become a "life or death" security issue. PLO's increasing political and military struggle further complicated matters as this struggle was effectively being taken place on Jordanian soil, and any Israeli counterattack was evidently likely to affect Jordanian military.

In the aftermath of the Jordanian Civil War, the Jordanian King Hussein was criticized throughout the Arab world for having attacked the Palestinian resistance. Although he diminished the physical threat to his throne, his legitimacy had suffered a devastating blow among Palestinian refugees constituting the majority in the Kingdom, as well as among the regional Arab countries. Furthermore, the United Nations recognized PLO as the sole representative of Palestine a few years later. This was followed by the Arab League's admission of Palestine to the group in 1976 (United Nations). However, Palestine is far from achieving full recognition from the UN even after the first decade of the 21st century (Carlstrom, 2011). Also, there are other concerns voiced against overly focusing on formal recognition as part of a broader political struggle (Abu Toameh, 2012). Thus, Jordan's long held claims over East Jerusalem and West Bank took a major blow. Only a few years later, in 1974, the Arab League (and then the United Nations) would recognize the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, denying Jordan's long-held claim to ownership of East Jerusalem and sovereignty over the Palestinian West Bank population. Generally, after the expulsion of the PLO leadership and the more radical elements of the Palestinian resistance from Jordan in 1971, the remaining Palestinian community was relatively loyal to its host country. However, the descendants of the original Palestinian refugees who are likely to be even more interested in the Jordanian politics than their parents pose a future problem that is not solved until today, and their existence created a tension that had not been eradicated until now. To understand how these people constitute a distinct political group in the Jordanian politics, one must look at how Palestinian identity was created and carried on through generations, amidst one of the longest lasting politico-military conflicts of the 20th century.

However, the picture substantially changed as the Cold War came to a close. "In 1989, the riots in the south of Jordan and the demands for more democratic rights derived in a cautious process of political liberalization. As a consequence, national elections were held for the East Bank in November 1989, and every four years ever since. Martial law was uplifted in 1990 and the right to form and join political parties was re-established in 1992" (Nohlen, Grotz, & Hartmann, 2001, p. 142). Especially in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, Middle Eastern countries sought to preserve and maintain order in their polities increasingly under pressure from globalization and internal political forces. Roger Owen skillfully describes the new situation, distinguishing between what initially looked like merely a political conflict between competing factions, but was instead

"As far as the Arab states were concerned, early analysis of this complex scene tended to see it as a simple matter of a contest between traditionalists and reformers. But from inside any particular regime the situation looked much more complex, a matter of trying to steer a cautious course between managed change and the measures necessary to contain religious militancy without upsetting the bulk of their overwhelmingly Muslim populations. One thing, however, remained constant, and that was the overriding concern with regime preservation, the need to dampen criticism, to find new sources of support and, in many cases, to ensure a smooth passage for whoever had been named as the ruler's successor" (Owen, 1992, p. 109)

Since 1988, Jordanian Parliament is responsible only for the East Bank (Nohlen, Grotz, & Hartmann, 2001, p. 142), and this surely has implications for the Palestinian issue. One should not ignore that even this partial democratization was due to popular demonstration as Nohlen et al. clearly state: "Nevertheless, as the legal provisions forbid political parties to have an explicit ethnic or religious affiliation, exclusively Palestinian parties have never existed, and if they were grounded they would be immediately outlawed" (Nohlen, Grotz, & Hartmann, 2001, p. 143).

The table below summarizes the parliamentary elections in Jordan and how they resulted for the government and the opposition, with specific events and issues noted for each election. Local elections were not taken into account since our analysis aims at looking at the general conduct of politics and the change in broad political trends in Jordan.

Focus is made on the elections after 1989 since previous elections were held in apolitically and socially very different context, when the West Bank was administered by Jordan, international relations was dominated by the overarching US-Soviet Union competition and nationalistic, secular movements were dominant throughout much of the world.

Tribalism is on the rise in Jordanian politics, and even in 2010, elections peacefully boycotted by the opposition, numerous clashes and large scale violence erupted.

The table below summarizes the election results and the strength of the opposition relative to the government. The electoral law, changed after the 1989 elections to curb the potential of the Muslim Brotherhood as well as the Palestinians (Ryan, 2003) led to a decrease in the number of opposition seats in the parliament in the following elections.

Year	Turnout (%)	Government retaining (loyalists)	Opposition Share	Notes
1989[a]	53.1	30-35 seats/80	22/80 (Muslim Brotherhood)	
1993[b]	54.8	59/80[c]	18 seats with IAF 16 seats[d]	
1997	44.7	A large majority		Change in electoral law. Main opposition –including IAF- boycotts.
2003	58.8	At least 62/110	IAF 17 seats[e]	
2007	54	Majority	only 6 IAF out of 100[f]	
2010	53	Almost all	17/120[g]	Opposition boycotts, unsuccessfully.
2013	56.6	MB boycott unsuccessful, most women ever in the parliament, opposition winning more than 25 percent, loyalists in control however	37/150	Muslim Brotherhood boycotts, widespread complaints about vote-rigging and other manipulation. Reoccurring of small incidents[h]

[a] Inter-Parliamentary Union, Jordan, Parliamentary Chamber: Majlis Al-Nuwaab, retrieved from http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/2163_89.htm, 08.09.2013

[b] political parties were allowed to compete for the first time since 1956

[c] Inter-Parliamentary Union, Jordan, Parliamentary Chamber: Majlis Al-Nuwaab, retrieved from http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/2163_93.htm, 08.09.2013

[d] Islamic Action Front, the political wing of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan

[e] http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/2163_03.htm

[f] (Nohlen, Grotz, & Hartmann, 2001, p. 64)

[g] Ryan, C.R., (2010, November 15). Retrieved August 22, 2013 from http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/11/15/jordanians_go_to_the_polls

[h] Halaby, J. & Gavlak, D. (2013, January 24). Critics of Jordan's King Perform Well in Election. Retrieved August 15, 2013 from http://bigstory.ap.org/article/some-islamists-win-seats-jordans-parliament

The new parliament will for the first time in Jordan's history elect a prime minister — a major power-ceding concession by the king in the wake of street protests over the past two years, inspired by Arab Spring uprisings. As indicated in notes, even recent and consecutive elections differ in scope, ease of access and participation. The legislation forbids "political parties to have an explicit ethnic or religious affiliation, exclusively Palestinian parties have never existed, and if they were grounded they would be immediately outlawed." (Nohlen, Grotz, & Hartmann, 2001, p. 143). The historicity of the legal provisions closely followed Jordan's broader policy towards the Palestinian issue. A rather liberal and inclusive approach initially, followed by ups and downs. Accordingly, "half of the seats in the Lower House were allocated to the inhabitants of the West Bank (1951-1988)" (Ibid.) to be changed in 1986, and amended in 1989. This last amendment is still in force. "One of the basic features of the division has been the extremely unequal number of voters per constituency on the East Bank. Rural areas are favored over the urban ones and the East Jordanian constituencies are favored over the Palestinian-dominated ones." (Ibid.)

Interestingly enough, the literature does not make much reference to Palestinianhood or Palestinians in the electoral history of Jordan, therefore we need proper data to make projections on regarding the political future of Palestinians in the country. Yet, the main opposition being the Muslim Brotherhood, we can infer some patterns which are likely to help the Palestinians as well, such as increasing electoral opposition and influence in the parliament. It is also mentioned that the brotherhood was popular among Palestinians. Policy-makers in fact are concerned of the brotherhood's "representation of Jordanians of Palestinian origin". (Rumman, 2007, p. 77).

Palestinian identity

At the time around the founding of Israel, the Palestinian Arabs shared a great deal of cultural heritage with many of their neighbors. However, rather than being absorbed, the trauma of 1948 strengthened preexisting –perhaps nascent- elements of identity, creating and sustaining a Palestinian identity (Khalidi, 1997, p. 22). The exodus of Palestinians from the Palestine started in 1948 and continued throughout decades with varying de-

grees (Falah, 1996). Already in 1940s, Palestinian refugees acquired Jordanian citizenship and they "began an uneasy relationship with a country where they have formed a majority since 1949, but where political power is out of their control" (Khalidi, 1997, p. 179). Their numbers were increasing, but one should note the suppressing effect of the then popular Arab Nationalist discourse on the emergence of a distinct Palestinian identity. Still, developments worked in favor of Palestinian identity, shaping and bolstering a separate Palestinian identity over time. James Lindsay, Former UNRWA chief-attorney says that "in Jordan, where 2 million Palestinian refugees live, all but 167,000 have citizenship, and are fully eligible for government services including education and health care" (Lazaroff, 2009). Also, Lindsay points out that the receivers of the aid provided by UNRWA generally do not need it, but rather, they receive it because aid is made on a status-basis, not need. In short, the Palestinian "refugees" in Jordan live a relatively normal life, compared to their counterparts in other Arab "host" countries.

One of the biggest transformations that occurred in the second half of the 20th century for Palestinians is that the Palestinian identity is established, to the point that no one even tries to contest its existence and meaning now. "In 1967, the adjective Palestinian, if used at all, served primarily as a modifier for "refugees". This was the context in which the Palestinians were best known. Golda Meir's 1968 statement that "there are no Palestinians" set the tone for two decades of ideological war against the Palestinian people. Today the norm is very nearly diametrically opposite" (Khalidi, 1987). Ironically, while Palestinian future got bleaker in military and political terms, its identity was strengthened.

Finally, demographics played their part in Jordan; by constantly keeping the government cautious and prevented steps "demographics in Jordan have not allowed the state to take serious steps towards either political reform or containment of the Brotherhood (because of its overwhelming representation of the 'Palestinian majority' in Jordan). Instead, the state is following a balancing act in order to 'buy time' until other more mature political options and alternative national movements are able to compete with the Brotherhood, and until a peaceful solution in Palestine becomes a reality" (Rumman, 2007, pp. 79-80). Meanwhile, the brotherhood has also support among Jordanians of Jordanian origin, thus they are not confined to Palestinian refugees and their descendants only.

Palestinian refugees

Under the UNRWA's operational definition, Palestinian refugees are people whose normal place of residence was Palestine between June 1946 and May 1948, who lost both their homes and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict (UNRWA, Palestine refugees). By the end of the 1948 War, almost 750,000 Palestinian Arabs fled from their villages and cities in the new Jewish state, becoming refugees (Gorenberg, 2007, p. 11). When one takes into account unregistered refugees and refugee descendants, Palestinian Arab refugee population is the largest in the World.

As Jordan annexed and ruled the territory of West Bank for nearly two decades between 1948 and 1967, most Palestinian refugees were granted citizenship. Thus, the ratio of

refugees in camps to the total number of refugees is the lowest in Jordan, while the situation is far worse in Syria and Lebanon. This annexation came in favor of Jordanian state and to the detriment of the nascent Palestinian identity and the Arab Nationalism which was becoming more appealing to the large masses throughout the Middle East.

This move, although not recognized internationally and more importantly, officially; was nevertheless considered as a *de facto* development. The Jordanian rhetoric about the protection of the Palestinian heartland was shadowed by that country's geopolitical considerations and goals. As it was obvious to the Palestinian refugees as well as the global community, Jordan had motives beyond the Arab solidarity, which failed to materialize more often than not. "The Jordan Army provided assistance, both overt and covert, first because the general state of Arab opinion left little choice and, secondly because Jordan, with territory to recover, wished to maintain great power interest in the area, if necessary by provoking fresh crisis" (Harris, 1978). "The bulk of the Palestinian Arabs in exile, over half a million in 1956, resided in Jordan, where they then comprised one-third of the population. The only Arab state to do so, Jordan granted the Palestinians Jordanian citizenship, a move signaling Abdullah's intent to absorb the West Bank permanently, and, he hoped, erase Palestinian identity among his new citizen." (Smith, 2010, p. 227)

On the right of return, the UN General Assembly Resolution number 194 defined basic principles on the right of return of the Palestinian refugees, stating "the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so" (Nations, 1948). UNRWA classifies the descendants of the original Palestine refugees as eligible for its services aimed at refugees. (UNRWA, Palestine refugees)

United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA) puts the number of Palestinian refugees in Jordan as 2 million people, residing in 10 different camps (UNRWA, Palestine refugees) as of December 2012, that number amounts to 40% of all Palestinian refugees hosted in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and Gaza Strip. Two thirds of the refugees live in towns and cities of the host countries plus the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Jordan is the country where the percentage of refugees who live in camps to the total number of refugees is the lowest. According to UNRWA, only 17.5% of the Palestinian refugees live in camps in Jordan (UNRWA, 2012). This goes in line with Jordan's long standing practice of granting citizenship to Palestinian refugees.

Jordan was at the forefront of the political and military struggle of Palestine since the first days in this decades-long conflict. After the end of the British Mandate, Arab League discussed the creation of a Palestinian government, but this offer did not materialize. Soon after, the Arab League announced a "head" for a civil administration that was to administer Palestine, buy Jordanians "vigorously opposed it and refused to let the government operate anywhere on the territory it controlled" (Strawson, 2010, p. 135). Furthermore, the Arab League convened a Palestine National Council, on the same day; the Jordanian government came up with the rival "First Palestine Congress". While the former took place in Gaza, the latter naturally took place in Amman, denouncing the Gaza government. This may be seen perhaps as the first incident where Gaza and the West Bank started to

drift apart from each other, leading to today's distinction between the two regions and the debate surrounding the duality of these two physically separated entities. The following Palestine Congress in December 1948 "elected" Abdullah as the King of Jordan. Thus, concludes John Strawson, "the Palestinian leadership had become captive to the rivalries of the Arab League" (136).

Meanwhile, it should also be noted that economic status of Palestinians was better in the West Bank under the Israeli occupation compared to Jordanian occupation (Smith, 2010, pp. 359-360). The 1970s was also a period where tension over the Jewish settlements were comparatively low, especially to the time after which Menachem Begin took Office in 1978, when Jewish settlements increased and the process became rapid.

Eventually, a significant proportion of refugees abandoned the idea to go back and live where their ancestors used to live. Even the Palestine Liberation Organization leader Mahmoud Abbas stated that he would like to visit his hometown, but not to live there, (Vick, 2012) signaling Palestinian refugees' intention to settle in Jordan. One can assume that the descendants of the original refugees, who were born and grew up in Jordan, will be even more likely to stay in Jordan. In line with this, according to at least one survey, only 10% of the refugees stated they would live in Israel if they are given the option (Ibid.). It is also remarkable that Mahmoud Abbas spoke of the "social fabric" in Israel, and that no process of return should harm it.

However, since 1988, thousands of Palestinian refugees who had been given special yellow ID cards to distinguish them from Jordanian citizens, have their citizenship revoked, perhaps as a result of this trend which did not go unnoticed by the Hashemite dynasty. The major reason for this step was Jordanian government's fear that Palestinian refugees and their descendants might one day take over the government. The revoking of citizenship did not stop there, as even in 2009, Jordan continued to do so. This time, Jordan Interior Minister appropriately termed the move as one that "prevents Israel from emptying the Palestinian territories of their original inhabitants" (Oster, 2009). Also, claims are made that PLO requested the Jordanian government to do so, in order to be the sole representative of the Palestinian people. In any case, the pattern underlined by the link between the Jordanian domestic politics and the Arab-Israeli conflict is carrying on. The year 1988 is important because this is the year when Jordan formally ceded the control of the West Bank to the PLO. Thus, revocation of citizenships should be seen as a complementary move. Criticism of Israel is part of the Jordanian discourse, and the kingdom is not alone following this path. Arab governments are sometimes criticized for over-focusing on Israel in order to divert attention from their own problematic approach to Palestine and/or the Palestinian refugees (Zahran, 2010). This line of thinking argues that over representing Israeli atrocities or physical or rhetorical enmity/exclusion towards Palestinian Arabs helped Arab countries' governments and elites to mask their negative behavior towards Palestinians. In Mudar Zahran's words, for instance, "While the security wall being built by Israel has become a symbol of 'apartheid' in the global media; they almost never address the actual walls and separation barriers that have been isolating Palestinian refugee camps in Arab countries for decades." (Ibid.) Similarly, Smith argues that Palestinian

refugees are "subject to the whims of their hosts" (Smith, 2010, p. 227) at least until the foundation of the PLO as the protector of Palestinians' rights. As previously mentioned, Palestinian refugees in the West Bank and East Jerusalem were given Jordanian citizenship, as part of Jordan's annexation of that area; on the same basis as existing residents. Yet, the bulk of the refugees continued to rely on UNRWA help for living. Also, in 1988, West Bank seats in the Jordanian parliament were finally abolished in another complementary move to the revocation of citizenship. Finally, the early 1990s marked a period of ease of tensions and thaw between the two countries and a peace treaty was signed between Jordan and Israel on 1994 (The Madrid Peace Process, 1994).

The years 1984-1993 saw major changes in the world order, which surely had implications for the Middle East and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Intifada took off in Gaza in 1987, creating worldwide sympathy for the Palestinian cause and attracted attention to the issue, leading intensifying diplomatic bargaining. In February 1985 King Hussein and Yasser Arafat issued a joint call "for a Palestinian state on the West Bank that would include East Jerusalem, but this 'state' would exist in confederation with Jordan, whose ruler would have final authority over it." (Smith, 2010, pp. 396-397). Fatah's ultimate failure led to a rapprochement between Arafat and the Jordanian King Hussein in a gradual fashion. However, as tension and physical clashes increased, Palestinian refugees and their camps increasingly got under the control and the influence of Fatah and other rival groups, who attempted to use Jordan as a shield and pursuing tactical military actions, (306) the way they did during the 1960s and 1970s, at least until the PLO rebased in Lebanon.

1990s and 2000s

King Abdullah rose to the throne in 1999, following the death of King Hussein. His tenure saw economic liberalization in line with the global trend, yet the political liberalization stagnated and the country remained largely undemocratic. Jordan became a member of the World Trade Organization in 2000 and cooperated with the IMF, thus integrating with the global community and the major powers, but the second intifada that erupted in 2000 created an obstacle for more economic and political development in the country. Steps taken for more political liberalization included a quota for women's election in the parliamentary elections (Majlis Al-Nuwaab / House of Representatives, 2013) as part of a new electoral law, but overall failed to respond to the Palestinian refugees' needs. Addressing only minor issues that function as a counter-argument to criticisms of democratic deficit and paying lip-service to contemporary democratic ideals, the Jordanian government is extensively criticized of undertaking a defensive democratic approach (Robinson, 1998). A weak civil society, lack of incentives for the development of new channels of political participation and continuing pressure on political liberties make this argument a valid one. In summary, the reforms undertaken have the aim to bolster and sustain the dynasty's rule over the country in a changing political and economic landscape in the turn of the 21st century, and are far from aiming to reach an ideal liberal society. This situation further darkens the prospects of the Jordanian Palestinians, who require a legal basis for political participation, full citizenship and integration with their host country, despite the King's attempts at promoting unity among Jordanians and Palestinians, and even his call for "the

equal treatment of Jordanians of Palestinian origin" (Minorities at Risk Project, 2004).

Palestinians who are deliberately kept away from governmental and especially security positions, ironically, became strong in trade since the private sector gives them the opportunity to compete regardless of the political situation. Thus, their situation is somewhat akin to that of the Jews' in Europe during and after the Middle Ages. It can be argued that the economic power they are likely to accumulate through trade over time will spill over to the political and legal domains. The Jordanians, in return, asked the King to step up and prevent Palestinians from acquiring too much economic power, thus balancing the situation. The Palestinians have also an edge in demography since they constitute the majority in the kingdom.

As of today, the balance in Jordanian politics is based upon the tension between Palestinians and Jordanians, as well as the international system. As a very recent and important event, the Arab Spring deserves special attention for it has already changed regimes in 2 countries, pushed the biggest country in the Middle East into political chaos and incited a civil war in Syria that is going on as of August 2013, immensely affecting the whole region and even global powers. Jordan, too felt this political wave even though it was relatively calm and stable.

Already in January 2011, protests erupted in Jordan, focusing mainly on corruption, inflation and unemployment, with occasional demands for political reforms. Though largely "unsuccessful", the protests so far managed to incite the dismissal of a prime minister and his cabinet in February 2011 (Blomfield, 2011), the dismissal of the following prime minister and his cabinet in October 2011, (Derhally, 2011) the resignation of the following prime minister in April 2012 (Aljazeera, 2012), and finally the dissolution of the parliament by King Abdullah and the appointment of a new prime minister in October 2012 (CNN, 2012). Seen from this perspective, the protests abroad and in the Jordanian territory were somewhat effective, causing widespread fear among the ruling elite, who sought to blame the successive prime ministers for their lack of speed in introducing political reforms and ability to respond to the people's demands.

Yet, Jordan managed to keep its political stability intact given the more liberal nature of its regime compared to its neighbors Syria and Egypt, who were also suffering from playing a more important role in regional affairs, thus possessing a higher number of political challengers such as Islamists and religious minorities. Consequently, the protests remained as peaceful protests, not directly challenging the nature and the structure of the regime and avoiding stigmatizing the King as a political target. This can be considered ironic since, even though Jordan is one of the few Kingdoms affected by the Arab Spring, it felt more secure than its neighbors having a republican regime despite its non-democratic government.

Another irony is present in the structure of the protests, again strengthened by the drift between the Palestinians and the Jordanians. The very nature of the government which caused and fed such a drift was targeted by the protesters, but due to the ruptured situation

of the Jordanian population, unity was far from achieved among protesters, thus their focus diverted away from the King and the regime, as the number of Jordanians among the protesters was relatively low, and the various groups made demands very different from each other. For instance, Jordanians favored the actual electoral system which favored them while the Palestinians aim for a more equal electoral system. Similarly, Jordanians are largely in favor of the continuation of the dynasty and the King's tenure no matter how disturbed they are by the pressure exercised by the regime's secret police and the Queen Rana's economic relations with the Palestinians, thus keeping their privileged status; while the Palestinians ultimately seek for a regime that would treat them as complete equals with the Jordanians.

This complex situation formed a shield around the King and his personality, and enabled him to ease tension by appointing Prime Ministers and pointing them as the responsible for more political reform. King Abdullah so far was successful in maintaining its position by carefully managing different groups.

In addition to the differences among various political actors, the Bedouins' support to the regime also made the situation easier to handle for the King, and lack of a major Sunni-Shiite conflict in the country helped the government to keep the political situation stable. Furthermore, Israel sees Jordan as a very important actor in the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict and fears instability in its neighbors, no matter how high its enmity towards them. Domestic turmoil already took over Egypt and Syria, and in these conditions Israel is expected to continue its support to the Hashemite dynasty, maintaining cordial relations. Similarly, major global powers and especially the U.S. sees Jordan as an important ally, thus they have no hesitation in backing the regime against political protests. The support is expressed even on the level of the U.S. Foreign Spokesperson Mark Toner, who admitted the following: "We support King Abdullah II's roadmap for reform and the aspirations of the Jordanian people to foster a more inclusive political process that will promote security, stability as well as economic development" (Stearns, 2012). In the same fashion, British Prime Minister David Cameron visited Jordan in November 2012 and expressed his support for the regime, also offering financial support for managing the refugee crisis created by the Syrian Civil War (Watt, 2012).

Finally, Arab Monarchies are generally supportive of the Jordanian Hashemite dynasty, as they prefer having a stable monarchy in the most troubled part of the region, who would act as a buffer state between themselves and the regions dominated with political and military clashes. According to this line of thinking, these countries consider Jordan to be the next step in the Arab Spring process, when the crisis in Syria is over. From another point of view, they are likely to think that the wave of change will reach their regime if Jordan voluntarily changes its political regime to one that is more in line with the new political demands expressed by the protesters. In any case, the Gulf Monarchies and Saudi Arabia would prefer keeping Jordan as a safe haven amidst all the political turmoil in the Levant and North Africa, to keep themselves distant from what looks like is going to be one of the most significant political processes of the 21st century.

Therefore, the regime has ample support and does not have to immediately deal with the political demands raised by domestic groups or the pompous rhetoric of the radicals of either the Islamist or pro-Palestinian factions.

In light of all the information shared above, one can argue that the Hashemite regime can keep its power thanks to the combination of internal and external factors and Jordan's unique social balance. While some argue that the King will be replaced and the regime will continue with its existing structure, it seems unlikely that such a major change will take place in the coming future, due to aforementioned reasons.

Conclusion

My above analysis shows that Palestinian refugees and their descendants will become more invested in shaping Jordanian politics to secure freedom and ensure that their voice is heard.

Nevertheless, regime change remains unlikely for various reasons. First of all, Jordan has managed to avoid civil war and devastating defeat in the six-decade long Arab-Israeli conflict, despite having heavily engaged in the conflict via military and political avenues. Even though it lacks national unity and even a distinct identity like that of Egyptian and Iraqi regimes, the regime is highly stable. Unsurprisingly, the regime has substantially consolidated since the foundation of the country, and it will not easily give up its legitimacy and power to a group of refugees—no matter how numerous they may be.

Second, democratic advantage does not necessarily translate to political power in a given country, unless the conditions favoring such a transition arise. Given the regime's intention to prevent these conditions via gerrymandering, electoral legislation, allowing and banning political organizations to form and to take place in elections, it could take a long time before Palestinian refugees hold a proportional amount of political power in Jordan. In many countries, the ruling elite have found various ways of hindering contenders and enjoying popularity and legitimacy despite their having relied on a numerical minority to gain power.

Jordan's warm relations with the West, Gulf countries, and other players in the region, its aloof yet level-headed stance on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and its ability to stay above divisive regional matters, put the regime in a highly advantageous position; especially during political clashes such as the Arab Spring. Jordan's international policies have earned it a reputation for being a "safe haven" or "island of stability" in the Middle East. Moreover, minor steps towards greater political liberalization might also give Jordan legitimacy (albeit minor) and very precious time in the eyes of the global community. Such international credibility could make it very hard for Palestinian refugees to seriously challenge the regime.

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